



# UNION UNIVERSITY

SCHOOL *of* SOCIAL WORK

**Master of Social Work**

**Field Instruction Manual**

**2018-2019**

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Greetings!

Welcome to the MSW Field Education Program in the School of Social Work at Union University.

The social work profession claims field education as its signature pedagogy. As such, field education is the context in which students are socialized to the social work profession and learn to function as social workers. Field instruction is designed to help students apply and integrate theoretical concepts and practical skills learned in the classroom. To that end and in addition to a field placement, students attend a concurrent field seminar where faculty facilitation encourages explicit connection between class and field.

The Council on Social Work Education requires MSW students to complete 900 hours in an agency placement under the supervision of an MSW field instructor who has at least two years post-graduate social work experience. In the foundation year, students complete 300 hours. Advanced year and Advanced Standing students entering Union's MSW Program after completing the BSW degree will complete 600 hours in the advanced generalist practice year.

This manual is the program's official reference and procedural guide for social work students, program faculty, agency field instructors, and agency task instructors. It is subject to periodic revisions to reflect program improvements. Your feedback on the program is welcome in the form of evaluations contained in this manual and as participants in the broader community of social workers.

As we strive to serve others, yours is a valued contribution to the quality and excellence of the social work program at Union University.

With warm regards,

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Union University School of Social Work  
MSW Field Instruction Manual

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## **I. Graduate Social Work Program Overview**

### **The Mission of the MSW Social Work Program**

The mission of the MSW Program is compatible with the overall mission of the University and is supported by the overall university administrative organization that enables its implementation.

*The mission of the MSW Program is to prepare competent and effective professionals for leadership in advanced generalist practice. In a context of Christian higher education, the program fosters compassionate service, promotes social and economic justice, and equips students for excellence in social work practice.*

The Master of Social Work Program is committed to preparing students for advanced generalist practice with individuals, families, groups, organizations and communities. Students are engaged in learning cognitively, affectively and behaviorally throughout the MSW curriculum so that their preparation ensures preparedness for advanced generalist practice. As they gain this preparedness for advanced generalist social work practice through graduate social work courses and fieldwork, they are in sync with the environment, mission, and goals of the university to prepare MSW students for competent advanced generalist practice. The university's mission is to provide "higher education that promotes excellence and character development in service to Church and society." It is guided by principles of academic excellence, Christian values, developing the whole person, and personal attention. The Master of Social Work Program embraces this mission and these guiding principles through offering a high quality academic curriculum, assisting students through the curriculum and in personal relationships to understand a Christian worldview that promotes justice and values life and its diversity, aiming to create a community of learners who explore and strive for wholeness as persons, and by conducting a program that is attentive to the unique personal needs of each student, including fostering proficient use of technology in our hybrid classes (evenings, online and weekends) for working adult learners. Both the university as a whole and the Department of Social Work envision the task of graduate social work education as preparing competent professionals willing and ready to serve in the world as leaders to make a positive difference.

### **MSW Theoretical Orientations for Social Work Practice**

Four concepts unify the MSW curriculum. These concepts, from which flow theory and practice in the profession of social work, are central to graduate social work education at Union University and undergird the unique context for advanced generalist practice in Jackson, Tennessee and the surrounding area. The four concepts are:

1. Social Justice
2. Strengths-Based Perspective
3. Evidence-Based
4. Ecological Perspective

#### **Social Justice**

In Jackson and surrounding areas of West Tennessee, persons representing ethnic and racial

minorities, experiencing impoverishment, disability, difficulties of aging, and the vulnerabilities of being young, are at-risk for the complications arising out of society's economic realities, whether times are steady or full of change. In its most basic meaning, pursuing social justice means restoring right relationships. Restoration involves advocacy for equal rights, opportunities, protection and fair treatment for all people. Additionally, social workers who pursue social justice identify and work to change unfair laws and policies that affect clients. Pursuing social justice means recognizing the dignity and worth of all individuals and striving to "end discrimination, oppression, poverty, and other forms of social injustice" (NASW Code of Ethics, preamble).

The focus on social justice as one of four conceptual constructs ties the MSW program with the university's mission to be Christ-centered. Social justice is a fundamental value of Christian faith, and followers of Christ are challenged to do justice, love kindness, and live with humility (Holy Bible, Micah 6:8). Students learn that social justice is part of every social work intervention. The MSW curriculum develops skills related to assessing for and intervening with social justice considerations in both direct and indirect practice settings.

### **Strengths-Based**

The MSW program emphasizes social work practice that is consistent with the values and ethical standards of the profession and with an understanding of and respect for the positive value of human experience. These emphases are evident through the program's commitment to the strengths perspective. A strengths-based approach represents a commitment to the view that all clients have strengths, strengths help clients claim and validate those capacities causing them to prevail over life's obstacles, and strengths portend potentially limitless capacity for growth (Saleebey, 2006). Opposite to the approach used by human services systems operating from a deficit-oriented perspective, the strengths-based approach is a collaborative effort between the client (individual, family, group, community, etc) and the social worker that avoids hierarchy with the intent to help clients achieve full empowerment. The social worker aids the client(s) to act in their own best interest, without limiting the upper limits to which the client aspires (Saleebey, 2006). The role of the social worker is to facilitate the client's utilization of his or her strengths and resilience, enabling the client to mobilize his or her solutions to identified problems.

### **Evidence-Based**

An evidence-base for social work inquiry is defined as "treatment based on the best available science" (McNeece & Thyer, 2004, p.8). Evidence-based inquiry is distinguished by an emphasis on theoretically grounded analysis of personal and social needs and problems and testing and elaborating theory through the evaluation of social interventions, and the recognition of the interdependency among levels of analysis and intervention in planning and implementing social interventions. Utilizing evidence-based inquiry in the designing of social interventions is in accord with the mission and values of the social work profession. An important aspect of evidence-based inquiry is strengthening the level-of-fit between human needs and environmental and social resources and supports through empowerment and enablement within a value framework that respects the dignity and worth of all people. The program's conceptualization of evidence-based practice is based upon the theoretical work done by scholars from many different disciplines but most heavily relies on McNeece and Thyer.

## **Ecological Perspective**

The ecological perspective requires social workers to maintain a holistic view of client systems and focuses on goodness of fit between clients - individuals, families, groups, communities, and organizations - and their environments. “The ecological perspective functions as a metaphor that provides an understanding about the reciprocal transactions that take place between people and the social environment in which they function” (Ashford, LeCroy, & Lortie, 2006, p.116). From this perspective, the person-in-environment framework has emerged, providing a basis for analyzing and intervening with the complex social, economic, and political realities facing diverse populations. The MSW program utilizes the ecological perspective to prepare professionals to assess complex social environments and clients’ interactions with them. Furthermore, students are encouraged to develop interventions leading to healthy social functioning. An advanced generalist program will prepare social workers to recognize complexity and chaos in the clients’ circumstances while functioning to effectively reduce stress between systems and advance goodness of fit, whether individuals or communities, and by demonstrating versatility in building resources at micro and macro levels.

## **II. MSW Field Education Program Overview**

### **Educational Goals and Competencies for Field Instruction**

Field instruction is the “signature pedagogy” (CSWE, 2008) of social work education. In community-based agency settings under the supervision of experienced and credentialed social workers, students synthesize and apply theoretical and practical learning gained in the classroom. Field placements are learning laboratories designed for students to practice various social work roles, increasing their competence as they deliver services to individuals, families, groups, organizations and communities. Field instruction activities and assignments are educationally directed and sequenced in such a way that students build successively upon tasks and learning experiences. Furthermore, assignments are designed so that the students’ understanding and application of social work method is enhanced. The field placement is the context for students to explore and develop their professional identity, professional use of self and professional ethics. A substantial portion of program education occurs in the field setting.

Consistent with the primary goal of field instruction and the overall goals of the program, the competencies of the practicum are comprehensive, given the capstone nature of the field experience in the curriculum. Practicum competencies undergird the competencies of the program. Additionally, these competencies are reflected in the evaluation form used to assess each student’s performance in the field experience.

### **MSW Program Goals**

The MSW Program strives to achieve and maintain educational standards specified by the national accrediting organization for graduate social work education, The Council on Social Work Education.

The goals of the MSW Program at Union University are:

1. To equip students with knowledge, values, and skills for excellence in social work practice within the context of Christian higher education;
2. To foster compassionate service and promote social and economic justice;
3. To prepare social workers to be leaders in communities at state, national and international levels;
4. To increase the availability of competent master-level prepared social work professional leadership in the surrounding region; and
5. To prepare students to pursue advanced scholarship in education post-MSW education.

### **Generalist Practice Framework**

The foundation year competencies are directly derived from the CSWE Educational Policy. The final competencies are unique to the Union University program and reflect the context of the program in a faith-based university. While recognizing and respecting diverse belief systems of all students, the program strives to help students understand a Christian perspective that values life, appreciates and respects diversity, and promotes social and economic justice. These identified practice behaviors provide specific, measurable means to assess competencies. Individual course competencies, assignments, field practicum experiences, and non-curricular programming, such as continuing education workshops and events, are built on an understanding and commitment to the development of these competencies.

### **Generalist Foundation Year Competencies**

#### **1. Demonstrate ethical and professional behavior**

- 1.1 Make ethical decisions by applying standards of the profession (e.g. NASW Code of Ethics, relevant laws and regulations, models for ethical decision-making, ethical conduct of research, and additional codes of ethics as appropriate to context).
- 1.2 Use reflection and self-regulation to manage personal values and maintain professionalism in practice situations (e.g. self-care, safety needs, professional roles and boundaries)
- 1.3 Demonstrate professional demeanor in behavior; appearance; and oral, written, and electronic communication;
- 1.4 Use technology ethically and appropriately to facilitate practice outcomes; and
- 1.5 Use supervision and consultation to guide professional judgment and behavior.
- 1.6 Know the history and philosophy of the social work profession

#### **2. Engage diversity and difference in practice**



- 2.1 Communicate understanding of the importance of diversity and difference in shaping life experiences at the micro, mezzo, and macro levels;
- 2.2 Present as learners and engage clients and constituencies as experts of their own experiences; and
- 2.3 Apply self-awareness and self-regulation to manage the influence of personal biases and values in working with diverse clients and constituencies.

### **3. Advance human rights and social, economic, and environmental justice**

- 3.1 Apply understanding of social, economic, and environmental justice to advocate for human rights at the individual and system levels; and
- 3.2 Engage in practices that advance social, economic, and environmental justice.
- 3.3 Understand how Christian thought and practice values human life and advances social and economic justice

### **4. Engage in practice-informed research and research-informed practice**

- 4.1 Use practice experience and theory to inform scientific inquiry and research
- 4.2 Apply critical thinking to engage in analysis of quantitative and qualitative research methods and research findings; and
- 4.3 Use and translate research evidence to inform and improve practice, policy, and service delivery

### **5. Engage in policy practice**

- 5.1 Identify social policy at the local, state, and federal level that impacts well-being, service delivery, and access to social services;
- 5.2 Assess how social welfare and economic policies impact the delivery of and access to social services;
- 5.3 Apply critical thinking to analyze, formulate, and advocate for policies that advance human rights and social, economic, and environmental justice.

### **6. Engage with individuals, families, groups, organizations, and communities**

- 6.1 Apply knowledge of human behavior and the social environment, person-in-environment, and other multidisciplinary theoretical frameworks to engage with clients and constituencies; and
- 6.2 Use empathy, reflection, and interpersonal skills to effectively engage diverse clients and constituencies.

## **7. Assess individuals, families, groups, organizations, and communities**

- 7.1 Collect and organize data, and apply critical thinking to interpret information from clients and constituencies;
- 7.2 Apply knowledge of human behavior and the social environment, person-in-environment, and other multidisciplinary theoretical frameworks in the analysis of assessment data from clients and constituencies;
- 7.3 Develop mutually agreed-on intervention goals and objectives based on the critical assessment of strengths, needs, and challenges within clients and constituencies; and
- 7.4 Select appropriate intervention strategies based on the assessment, research knowledge, and values and preferences of clients and constituencies.

## **8. Intervene with individuals, families, groups, organizations, and communities**

- 8.1 Critically choose and implement interventions to achieve practice goals and enhance capacities of clients and constituencies (e.g. prevention, treatment, etc.)
- 8.2 Apply knowledge of human behavior and the social environment, person-in-environment, and other multidisciplinary theoretical frameworks in interventions with clients and constituencies;
- 8.3 Use inter-professional collaboration as appropriate to achieve beneficial practice outcomes;
- 8.4 Negotiate, mediate, and advocate with and on behalf of diverse clients and constituencies; and
- 8.5 Facilitate effective transitions and endings that advance mutually agreed-on goals.

## **9. Evaluate practice with individuals, families, groups, organizations, and communities**

- 9.1 Select and use appropriate methods for evaluation of outcomes;
- 9.2 Apply knowledge of human behavior and the social environment, person-in-environment, and other multidisciplinary theoretical frameworks in the evaluation of outcomes;
- 9.3 Critically analyze, monitor, and evaluate intervention and program processes and outcomes; and
- 9.4 Apply evaluation findings to improve practice effectiveness at the micro, mezzo, and macro levels.

## **10. Appreciate the context of Christian higher education for social work education**

- 10.1 Understand how Christian thought and practice supports the core values of the social work profession

- 10.2 Understand how personal religious/spiritual beliefs and practices can be a resource for both the practitioner and the client
- 10.3 Understand how personal religious/spiritual beliefs and practices can impede one's practice or well-being

### **Advanced Generalist Concentration Practice Framework**

The advanced concentration competencies deepen the generalist foundation and prepare students for competent and effective social work practice. The program conceptualizes professional development and education as a continuum beginning with the BSW, or foundation year in the MSW program, progressing to advanced practice in the second year of the MSW program, and beyond the MSW to include continuing education.

Building on the foundation year competencies and curriculum, the MSW program prepares students for advanced generalist practice in social work. The advanced generalist practitioner is a leader in direct service delivery with individuals, families, groups, and communities, and has indirect practice management capabilities in the areas of supervision, administration, program development, and evaluation. The advanced generalist model at Union University builds on the four concepts adopted by the faculty - social justice, strengths-based perspective, evidence-based practice, and ecological perspective – for its framework. In the foundation year, students are grounded in these concepts and in direct and indirect practice skills so that in the advanced concentration year, they may prepare to effectively maximize opportunities to “encompass the full spectrum of direct and indirect services” (GlenMaye, Lewandowski, & Bolin, 2004, p. 127), regardless of the practice setting or client.

The complexities of ever-changing practice environments require direct practitioners who are also skilled in supervision and administration while fully committed to respecting and prioritizing client needs. Agency services struggle with limited resources while facing increased human needs requiring complex intervention modalities. The advanced generalist model assumes that human events represent multi-layered and multi-dimensional realities best addressed by social workers utilizing theoretically sound, empirically driven, culturally competent approaches to practice. These social workers recognize the characteristics of change at individual, community, and organizational levels and the elements of chaos that often accompany change. The advanced generalist practitioner tolerates and manages change amid the chaos of complex systems, valuing the process and envisioning the transformative potential. “The goal of advanced generalist practice is not to understand the complexity of the client system, but rather to understand the natural movement of systems through stable, bifurcated, and chaotic states and to help promote self-organization” (GlenMaye, Lewandowski, & Bolin, 2004, p. 128). As such the social work leader will bring together important roles of advocate, broker, counselor, presenter, listener, presence, supervisor, researcher, policy maker, fund raiser, problem-solver, and evaluator while conscious of process and its impact on outcomes.

### **Advanced Generalist Concentration Year Competencies**

#### **1. Demonstrate ethical and professional behavior**

- 1.1 Demonstrate leadership in the integration of personal and professional values.
- 1.2 Apply models of ethical decision making for leadership in social work practice using consultation appropriately
- 1.3 Promote self-directed, career-long learning by evaluating one's own learning and self-care needs and those they might supervise in selection of CEU offerings.
- 1.4 Engage in supervision with initiative, independence, responsibility for agenda and appropriate use of consultation within the agency structure and lines of authority
- 1.5 Recognize and manage safety needs in social work practice settings
- 1.6 Demonstrate professionally appropriate communication: In writing (clinical records, reports, group curricula); Verbally (team meetings, case conferences, communications with collaterals)

## **2. Engage diversity and difference in practice**

- 2.1 Demonstrate culturally sensitive practice skills that integrate self-awareness with knowledge from clients and related sources
- 2.2 Analyze sociocultural structures and values which may oppress, marginalize, alienate or create or enhance privilege and power

## **3. Advance human rights and social, economic, and environmental justice**

- 3.1 Articulate how Christian thought and practice values human life and advances social and economic justice
- 3.2 Analyze the potentially challenging and/or oppressive effects of economic, social, cultural, and global factors on client systems
- 3.3 Advocate for the inclusion, participation, and voice of diverse people, communities and organizations affected by oppressive conditions

## **4. Engage in practice-informed research and research-informed practice**

- 4.1 Use evidence-based research to identify effective social work practice for specific populations, problems, and settings
- 4.2 Develop and implement a research project
- 4.3 Demonstrate critical thinking for leadership in social work practice (e.g. logic models for agency processes, organizational audits, stakeholder analysis, decisions about treatment with individual cases, peer evaluation)
- 4.4 Analyze and apply bio-psychosocial, cultural, and spiritual context (e.g. strengths, ecological, cognitive-behavioral, interpersonal, family systems, life-span development,

psychodynamic) to guide assessment, intervention, and evaluation

## **5. Engage in policy practice**

- 5.1 Analyze the reciprocal relationships of clients and practice with both public and organizational policy
- 5.2 Demonstrate leadership in collaboration with colleagues and clients for effective policy action that promotes social and economic justice

## **6. Engage with individuals, families, groups, organizations, and communities**

- 6.1 Foster relationships with clients that are professional, purposeful, culturally appropriate, and characterized by clear boundaries
- 6.2 Encourage and empower clients to be equal partners in the establishment of treatment goals and methods
- 6.3 Assess interpersonal dynamics and contextual factors that both strengthen and potentially threaten the alliances in organizational and community contexts

## **7. Assess individuals, families, groups, organizations, and communities**

- 7.1 Collaborate with the client system to define goals and target behaviors.
- 7.2 Assess client system readiness for change, coping strategies, strengths, & safety needs.
- 7.3 Utilize clinical models/theoretical approaches and techniques to assess client systems (e.g. crisis theory, clinical theories, management theories, and community development theories)

## **8. Intervene with individuals, families, groups, organizations, and communities**

- 8.1 Craft and implement intervention plans, informed by appropriate theory (e.g. HBSE, PIE, and clinical, management, and leadership theories) and research evidence, with client systems (individuals, families, groups, organizations, and communities) to meet goals
- 8.2 Collaborate with other professionals/constituents to coordinate interventions
- 8.3 Coordinate with client systems to develop and implement interventions
- 8.4 Provide leadership in promoting sustainable change in service delivery and practice with client systems

## **9. Evaluate practice with individuals, families, groups, organizations, and communities**

- 9.1 Evaluate client system(s) progress and intervention effectiveness (e.g. client self-assessment, surveys, needs assessments, collateral reports, behavioral outcome measures, singles-subject design)

- 9.2 Use evaluation outcomes to provide leadership in promoting sustainable change in service delivery
- 9.3 Demonstrate flexibility and creativity in the context of change in advance practice with individuals, families, groups, organizations, and communities

### **10. Appreciate the context of Christian higher education for social work education**

- 10.1 Articulate how the Christian mandate comports with the NASW Code of Ethics to treat all persons with unconditional dignity, to do justice, and practice compassion
- 10.2 Articulate historical, spiritual, and religious influences on the profession of social work
- 10.3 Formulate responses to societal needs that follow ethical practice for spiritually sensitive social work practice (e.g. appreciate how personal religious and spiritual beliefs and practices can be a resource or impediment)

## **III. Field Education Program Policies and Procedures**

### **Field Practicum Structure**

Field Practicum serves both as a time and place for content reinforcement and as a period of instruction and supervised “hands on” learning. Field is educationally directed and professionally supervised to provide students with opportunities for advanced generalist social work activities in social service settings.

The Social Work Program requires that all students complete an agency orientation prior to officially beginning the required hours of field instruction. Some agency guidelines may have specific orientation requirements in addition to Union’s requirement. If so, then students are expected to adhere to the agency policy for attending orientation.

Students enrolled in field instruction develop a schedule with the agency field instructor that ensures the completion of the required hours in field. Foundation year students are required to complete a minimum of 300 clock hours in the agency setting. Concentration year students, which include advanced standing students, must complete a minimum of 600 clock hours in the agency setting.

### **Field Instructor Orientation**

~~The field education faculty holds orientation sessions annually for all agency field instructors and task instructors.~~ The Field education faculty provide an online orientation annually for returning field instructors and will provide a face to face orientation for new field instructors. These sessions are designed to familiarize the agency representatives with the requirements of the MSW Field Education Program. The Field Instruction Manual is online and available to all Field Instructors and Field Liaisons. All field and task instructors are strongly urged to attend and provide input about ways to enhance or improve the MSW Field Education program. Field Instructors and Field Liaisons receive the most current revision of the MSW program field manual and are educated regarding proper policies and procedures.

The following topics are included in the orientation:

- CSWE Educational Policy and Accreditation Standards (EPAS)
- NASW Code of Ethics
- Access of students to agency orientation
- Advanced Generalist Practice approach to social work education
- Conveyance of program's conceptual themes in field education
- Goals and objectives of field practicum
- Learning Contract
- MSW Program Curriculum Model
- Policies, procedures, and expectations – including problem-solving field difficulties
- Student evaluation process: mid-term and final for semester
- Function of weekly seminar classes
- Training on the web-based data system (IPT system) that is used for all field related forms used by agencies and students

### **Field Practicum Learning Contract**

The program competencies and associated practice behaviors for both foundation year and concentration year are reflected in the evaluation instruments used to assess the student's performance at mid-term and at the conclusion of the practicum experience. The field practicum learning contract is developed based on the program competencies and practice behaviors. Students are expected to have learning tasks in their field placement related to each of the program competencies/practice behaviors over the course of the practicum. Within one week of the placement's start, the field instructor, task instructor, and the student are expected to jointly begin to craft a comprehensive learning contract.

### **Specific Expectations for the Practicum**

The field practicum must include a variety of activities to fulfill the program competencies/practice behaviors, the learning tasks of the practicum, and accreditation requirements. Although settings and individual students differ, basic requirements are as follows:

#### **1. Foundation Year**

- a. Comprehensive agency orientation
- b. Interviewing experiences
- c. Experience with individuals and families
- d. Experience with groups
- e. Experience in community activities and with organizations
- f. Experiences with data collection, assessment, intervention, evaluation, and termination
- g. Experience of working with clients who are different from the student. This includes assignments to work with clients of different races, genders, ethnic background, sexual orientations, ages, socioeconomic status, physical and mental abilities
- h. Documentation

- i. Professional Development

## **2. Concentration Year**

- a. Comprehensive agency orientation
- b. Advanced assessment, intervention, and evaluation opportunities
- c. Advanced practice experiences with individuals, families, groups, organizations, and communities, including experiences with cultural diversity.
- d. Opportunities to evaluate programs and practice
- e. Professional development
- f. Leadership opportunities
- g. Experiences navigating ethical dilemmas

### **Employment-Based Field Placements Procedure**

The Employment-Based Field Placement Application must be requested from the MSW field director. Consultation with the field director is required before pursuing this option. Students are strongly cautioned about the potential problems of these placement situations. The field director reserves the right to approve field placements on site of paid employment-based on the following guidelines.

1. All of the required field hours must take place under the supervision of a new (to the student) MSW field instructor. This field instructor must also meet the standards of Union's MSW program.
2. Field activities must be compatible with the expectations of course competencies and practice behaviors for the appropriate course level (foundation or concentration year).
3. Field activities must constitute new learning for the student, such as working with a new population, utilizing new treatment methods, or working in a new field of practice.
4. The student's learning tasks must be the primary focus rather than the needs of the agency.
5. The start date in the agency must be coordinated with the semester in which the student is registered to begin the placement to ensure that the field education experience follows the course work.
6. The field director retains the right to grant an employment-based placement to students who demonstrate high standards of professional and ethical behavior and have a strong academic record.
7. Students may only complete one employment-based placement while a student in the MSW program, with the exception of students who change employment.

Employment-based placements are an exception to the program's standard practice, which is that field placements should be separate from employment. Final authority to grant the exception rests with the field education committee. Students should not assume these placements are automatically approved.



## **Evaluations**

### **Agency Evaluation of Practicum Students**

The agency field instructor at the end of the practicum will evaluate students. The student and the field instructor will each complete the field evaluation, then meet to negotiate the outcomes of field for the semester. The MSW faculty liaison will be present at a joint meeting in closing the placement for the semester. The task instructor, where applicable, should be involved in the final evaluation meeting.

Each student will receive a copy of the evaluation and a copy will be placed in the student's social work practicum file. Any student disagreeing with the final evaluation has the right to submit a written statement to the agency instructor and the MSW field director explaining and/or defending any aspects of the evaluation with which he/she does not agree.

The field seminar instructor/faculty liaison assigns the student's final grade in consultation with the field instructor, based on the field evaluation. Students are made aware of the standards, expectations, and evaluation procedures at the beginning of field instruction.

### **Agency Evaluation of the Social Work Program**

At the conclusion of each field practicum, the agency field instructor and the agency task instructor, where applicable, are asked to evaluate the Social Work Program, the field practicum component, and the effectiveness of the social work faculty liaison. All information obtained from the evaluations will be used to improve the program and practicum experience for both the agency and the student.

### **Student Evaluation of the Agency**

At the conclusion of field practicum, all students are required to evaluate their placement experiences and the overall effectiveness of the agency as a practicum site. The information along with other evaluative standards may be used as a basis for evaluating further field placements in the agency.

## **Field Instruction Grievance Procedure**

### **Student Grievance**

Students are placed in a field agency for a period of 300 hours of field experience in the foundation year and 600 hours in the concentration year. The conduct of each student is expected to be professional and ethical. Any student grievance or area of concern related to the agency setting should first be discussed with the agency field instructor. If the concern is not satisfactorily resolved at this level then the following course of action is available to the student:

- a. The student should communicate the concern with the social work faculty liaison. The liaison may suggest ways for the student to readdress the issue with the field instructor.

- b. If the concern is not satisfactorily resolved, the social work faculty liaison and/or the student should communicate the concern to the social work field director.
- c. If these avenues fail, the student should submit, within 10 calendar days of the initial meeting with the field instructor, a written statement and appeal to the MSW field director describing the circumstances. The field director will review the statement, confer with the field liaison and the student together, and make a decision as to next step (i.e. meet with the field instructor for more information, to deny the student's appeal, to accept the student's appeal, to consult with faculty members, or to table the matter pending outcome of the student's performance for the semester).

### **Agency Grievance**

Any agency grievance or area of concern related to the field student should first be discussed with the student. If the concern is not resolved, then the field instructor should request a meeting with the faculty liaison and the student. If the concern is of a very serious nature, such as breach of confidentiality or other breach of the NASW Code of Ethics or agency policy, the faculty liaison should be notified immediately. The faculty liaison will discuss the concern with all parties involved (individually and/or collectively) and may consult the MSW field director. If the concern is not resolved satisfactorily, then the student will be immediately removed from the placement. Depending on the nature of the grievance, the student may or may not be assigned to another agency.

An agency that feels it is necessary to "terminate" a student must first contact the faculty liaison that will then contact the MSW field director. A meeting with the student and faculty liaison must take place within one week of the termination. Agency personnel and field director will compile appropriate documentation of meeting outcome and reason for termination. This meeting is designed to give closure and understanding as to the reason behind the agency termination.

### **Termination Policy**

A student enrolled in field practicum may be placed on probation or terminated from field experience and/or the Union University Social Work Program if, in the professional judgment of the social work faculty, violations of professional and/or ethical codes have occurred. Please refer to Suspension/Termination Policy in the MSW Student Handbook (page 44) for additional information.

### **Practicum Site Changes**

Any changes in field placement after the agency assignment is made are the sole responsibility of the MSW field director. Only in extreme and exceptional cases may students be placed in a new agency during the semester. Prior to any change, the student and MSW field director must determine one of the following:

1. The agency is unable to provide learning experiences that will be conducive to continued student growth.
2. The student/field instructor relationship is such that continued learning will be difficult.

3. Unethical practice and/or exploitation of the student is occurring at the agency.

The MSW field director will meet with all parties involved to discuss the situation. All efforts will be made to rectify any problems before removing a student from an agency. In a situation where a student is removed from an agency the following process will be followed:

1. The field director shall notify the field instructor regarding the removal.
2. The field director and faculty liaison will meet with the student to notify him/her that removal from the placement is necessary.
3. A mutual decision regarding the student's future plans, new placement, or other arrangement will be made between the field director, faculty liaison, and the student.
4. Documentation detailing the change of placement will be recorded in the student's file and the agency file in the School of Social Work.

### **Field Program Evaluation**

The MSW Program strives to maintain close relationships with the practice community in order to assess new knowledge and remain vital and progressive. This is accomplished by: supporting and encouraging faculty and student involvement in community organizations and projects; holding meetings with the School of Social Work Advisory Council, field instructors, and student organizations; participating in professional social work organizations, conferences, and continuing education programs; and regularly soliciting feedback from student focus groups and surveys. These multiple means of assessing and renewing the MSW program help insure that the program is one of quality.

### **Statement of Nondiscrimination**

In compliance with all applicable state and federal law, including provisions of the Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972 and Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, Union University does not illegally discriminate on the basis of race, sex, color, national origin, age, disability, or military service in admissions; in the administration of its education policies, programs, or activities; or in employment. Under federal law. The University may discriminate on the basis of religion in order to fulfill its purposes. Persons who believe their rights under this policy have been violated should contact the Office of the President.

### **Transfer Credit**

The School of Social Work will work closely with the Office of the Registrar in order to facilitate the transfer of credits for MSW students from other schools. Every attempt will be made to ensure that transferring students receive credit for any curriculum that they have already had in order that they do not repeat content.

Graduate credit earned in accredited graduate schools and carrying a grade of B or better will be transferable toward a graduate degree at Union University to the extent that the student can demonstrate correspondence to course(s) in the Union MSW degree program and pending

approval by the MSW program. This correspondence can be demonstrated by students providing catalog course descriptions, course syllabi, and completed assignments for the course(s) being considered for transfer.

A maximum of 9 graduate credit hours, with a grade of “B” or higher, taken by students on a non-matriculated basis may be transferred toward the 60-credit MSW degree requirement. Transfer courses may be accepted for credit if they have been completed within 5 years from the time of acceptance into the MSW program.

Transfer credit is not accepted for credits earned following matriculation at Union University.

Applicants to the 2-year program may transfer up to one full year of credit from another CSWE-accredited MSW Program in which they were matriculated graduate students in good standing. A minimum of 30 credits of graduate coursework from Union University is required for those in the 2-year program.

Decisions regarding credit when entering the graduate program initially are made by the MSW Admissions Committee. Courses taken at another CSWE-accredited college or university will be evaluated on a case-by-case basis.

### **Credit for Life Experience and Previous Work Experience**

Academic credit for life experience and previous work experience shall not be given, in whole or in part, in lieu of the field practicum or of the courses in the graduate curriculum.

### **Professional Conduct**

A student in field placement has the same professional responsibilities as an employed staff member of the agency. He or she is expected to follow agency policy and abide by rules and regulations. These include, but are not limited to, the following:

1. Notifying the field instructor of any unavoidable absences or lateness in advance, if possible, and quickly informing him or her when prior notice is impossible.
2. Making up time lost due to absences and/or tardiness.
3. Being available, as appropriate, for client emergencies or crises, even though these may occur after regular hours.
4. Refraining from engaging in negative office politics.
5. Adhering to the agency dress code at all times.

Above all, if the student is unsure of something, ask the field instructor!

### **Confidentiality**

Students should respect clients’ rights to privacy and protect the confidentiality of all information obtained in the course of professional service, except for compelling professional

reasons. During the formal agency orientation, students must take initiative and responsibility for knowing the confidentiality policy of the agency. All practicum students are required by the MSW Program to review and sign the agency's confidentiality form(s) during the orientation process, in addition to confidentiality agreements signed as part of the application to field placement.

### **Personal Liability Insurance**

All Union University social work students are required to have liability insurance before starting Social Work field placement. Students are assessed a fee of \$25.00 per year for the cost of coverage under the university's liability insurance. This fee is assessed in the fall semester upon entering field seminar I and III. It is the responsibility of the field director to inform the university's Business Office of students enrolled in field practicum and secure the necessary student liability insurance. The MSW field director will provide the practicum agency with students' proof of coverage.

### **Transportation**

Students are responsible for their own transportation to and from their field placement agency. Students who drive must have a current, valid driver's license and automobile insurance. All students are prohibited from transporting agency clients in their personal vehicles. Students are also prohibited from transporting agency clients in agency provided vehicles.

Some agencies pay mileage for travel required to perform agency work. Students should ask the field instructor during the agency orientation about mileage reimbursement if required to travel.

### **Spring Break/Holidays**

Students in field experiences are not entitled to university holidays that fall on practicum dates unless their agency field instructor has given prior approval. Students should remember that they must still complete the required number of clock hours at the agency regardless of university holidays and/or breaks.

### **Length of Placement**

The foundation year practicum requires 300 hours of field experience. The advanced year practicum requires 600 hours of field experience. Students participate in field a minimum of 22 weeks. Advanced year students participate in field at least 33 weeks. Students are responsible for arranging their schedule with their field instructor so that the final week of placement occurs no sooner than the last week of April. Students can schedule their placements to end later in the spring if this is valuable to client service, or if the student needs extra time.

### **Employment Offers from Field Agencies**

Field Practicum offers heightened visibility and many exciting opportunities and experiences

for social work students. Agencies often anticipate employment openings by the time student's complete placements. Occasionally, students are offered positions in their placement agencies. If the student is offered employment then a plan should be developed in order for the student's field experience and employment to be interwoven.

#### **IV. Roles and Responsibilities of Participants in Field Placement Experience**

The success of the field instruction is dependent to a large extent upon the cooperative and collaborative relationships between the university, field agencies, and students. Mutual agreement and understanding of roles and functions are essential to the development of an atmosphere that fosters creative, educationally directed field instruction experiences. The following information delineates the roles, responsibilities, and expectations of all individuals involved.

##### **MSW Field Director**

The MSW Field Director has primary responsibility for the practicum component of the MSW Program. This includes implementation of field processes and procedures and maintaining effective working relationships with placement sites, field instructors, faculty liaisons, and students.

##### **Other responsibilities include:**

1. Fulfilling administrative responsibilities, which are:
  - a. to locate and study new field agencies;
  - b. to assign students to placements;
  - c. to maintain efficient reporting systems and records of current field practicum activities;
  - d. to participate in the preparation and maintenance of a current field placement manual;
  - e. to organize a training session for agency field placement instructors annually, and
  - f. to organize and orient faculty liaisons.
2. Initiate and respond to faculty, student, and agency suggestions for the continuous upgrading of the field practicum curriculum.
3. Conduct periodic evaluations of practicum methodology and outcomes and initiate appropriate changes.
4. Consults with faculty liaisons as needed.

It is not the field director's responsibility to accommodate the student's work and family life schedule. It is the student's responsibility to make arrangements regarding how they will be able to successfully complete the required field hours each semester.

##### **Field Liaison/Field Seminar Instructor**

Concurrent with each semester that a student is in field, field seminars are a required component focused on integration of classroom and practicum experiences. Seminar classes are held weekly or bi-weekly and conducted by the university faculty liaison for the student and

agency.

The faculty liaison will:

1. Maintain regular telephone contact with the agency field instructor regarding the student's progress as needed, at least at mid-term and at close of the semester for evaluation.
2. Have conferences with the agency field instructor regarding the student's progress as deemed appropriate.
3. Meet with the student weekly in an integrated seminar if leading SW 590 Field Seminar I, or bi-weekly if leading SW 591 Field Seminar II, to discuss the placement and collect assignments and forms related to the field practicum experience, and to be available to the student if problems arise. SW 690 Field Seminar III and SW 691 Field Seminar IV is web-based, all discussions, and assignments will take place in Moodlerooms. There will be practicum site visits that happen throughout the semesters and one on one office meetings can be held as needed.
4. Assist the field instructor in designing learning experiences for the student; to assess in collaboration with the field instructor the adequacy of the student's field performance, and to consult with and advise the field instructor regarding learning problems which the student may have.
5. Ensure that the field instructor completes appropriate evaluations of the student, attend a final evaluation conference with the student and the agency field placement instructor, and assign the final grade for the field practicum experience.

### **Agency Field Instructor**

The Agency will provide a staff member designated as the field instructor who will:

1. Provide the student with an orientation of the agency, promote the agency's understanding of the Union University Social Work Program and acceptance of the student, enable the student to feel a part of the agency, and provide the student and social work faculty liaison with a copy of the orientation.
2. Assist the student in identifying goals/desired outcomes and learning competencies for the field placement experience commensurate with the educational competencies of the Social Work Program.
3. Select and make appropriate agency assignments that take into consideration, as much as possible, the student's past experience, learning patterns, career expectations, and the Social Work Program's educational competencies.
4. Suggest written materials for the student to examine during the course of field experience.
5. Provide on-the-job instruction and supervision of the student.
6. Hold a regular one-hour weekly conference with the student, sign student's weekly time

sheet verifying the hours and tasks completed that week, and hold additional conferences with the student as deemed necessary.

7. Attend conferences with the social work field director as deemed appropriate.
8. Complete an online short mid-term evaluation of the student's performance thus far and note any problems requiring notifying the liaison.
9. Complete a written, formal, final evaluation of the student's performance, utilizing the Union University Practicum Evaluation Form.
10. Attend a final evaluation conference with the student, task instructor, and social work field director where the final evaluation will be discussed.
11. Contribute knowledge and suggestions to Union University's Social Work Program for upgrading the field instruction program as needed.
12. Immediately consult with the social work field director regarding any problems or concerns noted with a particular field placement experience.

### **Agency Task Instructor**

The term "Agency Task Instructor" is used to indicate an agency staff member who assumes certain responsibilities for the student's field education as delegated and monitored by the agency field instructor. The task instructor is required to accompany the agency field instructor to the yearly orientation for field instructor's conducted by the field education faculty. The agency task instructor should generally be well informed of the social work program's educational competencies, should understand that his/her instruction makes a contribution to the student's learning, and should be provided with any necessary resources to accomplish the educational task by the agency field instructor and/or the School of Social Work. The task instructor is expected to collaborate and assist with the development of the student's learning contract. The task instructor may contribute information to the agency field instructor regarding the student's progress and completion of assignments for evaluation purposes, but the final written evaluation is the responsibility of the agency field instructor. The task instructor participates in the mid-semester and final evaluation conferences.

### **Field Practicum Student**

Student responsibilities and expectations require he or she will:

1. Arrange to complete the required hours of field, recognizing that there are very few agencies that offer non-traditional hours and that you will be required to work out your schedule to meet the needs of your practicum.
2. Complete an application for field practicum and submit it, along with a resume, to the social work field director.
3. Schedule and complete an interview with at least one community agency, as approved by the social work field director, and to submit appropriate forms by the designated dates.



4. Purchase professional liability insurance, paid through a yearly fee charged by the university, to cover the period during which the practicum will be completed.
5. Fulfill the assignment schedule that he/she and the field instructor agree on, to contact the agency field instructor in case of absence, and to make up any missed time to insure the completion of the required clock hours of field experience.
6. Identify, in collaboration with the field instructor, learning tasks and competencies for the field placement experience commensurate with the educational competencies of the Social Work Program and to document these goals in the practicum-learning contract.
7. Complete all required forms for the field practicum and submit them to the appropriate persons by the designated dates.
8. Schedule, prepare, and attend for weekly conferences with the field instructor and take the initiative in raising questions for discussion and application of theoretical knowledge to practice.
9. Participate actively in agency staff meetings and in-service training.
10. Complete a weekly journal on the designated form that reflects the week's field experiences, integrating them with theoretical knowledge and demonstrating how the educational competencies and practice behaviors are being fulfilled, if required by the seminar class.
11. Engage actively in the evaluation process, seeking ongoing feedback from the field instructor and participating in the end-of-semester formal evaluation.
12. Attend field seminars at the university and complete assignments affiliated with this course.
13. Consult with the social work faculty liaison as needed regarding progress and/or problems in the field placement experience.
14. Avoid the use of agency time to complete classroom work.
15. Use the NASW Code of Ethics as a guideline in all agency activities and professional interpersonal relationships.
16. Bring to the field instructor any problems or dissatisfaction with the field experience and engage constructively in finding possible solutions.

## **V. Placement Process for Field Instruction**

### **Selection of Settings for Field Placements**

Field placement is essential to and an integral part of social work education. Once a student is

accepted into the MSW program they receive information on how to go online to the field database so that they can complete the field practicum application. After they complete the application, the MSW Field Director will be notified that the application is completed and will contact the student to set up a time to meet and discuss field options. Administrative responsibility for the practicum component rests with the MSW Field Director. However, the field director understands that the field practicum is a personal experience for each student. A pre-placement conference held between the MSW Field Director and the student explores the student's professional and educational goals, interests, and needs.

The School of Social Work maintains relationships with many social service agencies and institutions in West Tennessee and the surrounding areas. Each field placement setting must have a Memorandum of Understanding with Union University before a field placement may be arranged with any student. Foundation year students, regardless of concentration interests, are encouraged to gain experience in an agency setting that will socialize them into the field of social work and provide them with generalist practice skills. If possible, placements will be arranged in agencies offering educational experiences of interest to students, although limitations may exist related to students' professional development and readiness, as well as availability of social service agencies. Every effort will be made to provide concentration year students with placements that will provide them with advanced social work skills in their area of interest.

Each student in the concentration year is expected to arrange a pre-placement interview with the field instructor of the agency. Students have the option to decline agencies, and agencies have the right to decline students. The final decision regarding a field placement is made in conjecture with the agency field instructor, the student, and the MSW Field Director but the MSW Field Director ultimately makes the final decision. It must be understood that choices may be limited by availability of social service agencies. Requests for placements may originate from the MSW Field Director, from social service agencies contacting the Field Director directly, or MSW students may recommend potential field practicum sites to the MSW Field Director, who will follow up on the recommendation.

### **Criteria for Employment-Based Field Placements**

Social work field placements are typically educationally focused and unpaid experiences. However, under some circumstances paid employment may be considered. Paid employment can present many complicating factors that limit students' full utilization of the field placement experience and should be weighed carefully by the student and the employer. Among the considerations that must be given are the following:

1. The agency must emphasize productivity of the student employee, rather than the student's own learning.
2. If job duties change, the position may no longer meet our criteria for social work activities for that student's concentration.
3. Both the student and the agency may be less willing to disclose problems that arise during the field placement, such as inadequate supervision, activities which are incongruent with placement expectations, and situations that threaten their employment status, and so forth.

Therefore, an additional application is required and must be requested from the MSW Field Director for students interested in an employment-based placement. The purpose of the additional application is to document conditions that provide for new learning opportunities in the agency. The following three conditions must be met:

1. the field placement experience constitutes new learning in tasks different from those the student carries out for his or her job,
2. the student will have appropriate MSW supervision from someone who is not the student's work supervisor, and
3. the student has the opportunity to apply theories and knowledge from a classroom in a practice setting.

### **Criteria for Selecting Field Agencies**

1. The ethics and values of social work should be demonstrated through the policies, program design, and delivery of services of the agency. The agency should be legally established with adequate financial support and meet the approved criteria of appropriate governmental agencies, as well as local and national standard setting bodies.
2. The agency's student training program must be compatible with the MSW program's educational competencies. The agency's orientation and objectives must be educational rather than apprenticeship in nature.
3. There should be a correlation between the agency and the MSW Program's practice perspective so as to provide an integrated class-field curriculum and a consistent learning experience for the student.
4. The agency should provide a range of assignments on an ongoing basis that are appropriate to meet the student's educational needs as an MSW student. The student workload in the foundation year should reflect opportunity for involvement in varying modalities of service, as well as exposure to a diversity of people and problems. Every effort will be made that the concentration year practicum, including advanced standing MSW placements, will provide a focus pertinent to the student's professional goals.
5. The agency must provide the necessary space and facilities, including privacy for interviewing, desk and file space, and clerical assistance.
6. The setting provides adequate field instruction with release time for field instructors to provide a minimum of 1 hour of weekly supervision, to adequately prepare evaluations each semester and interact with the field liaison about the student, and to participate in orientation and training events conducted by the MSW Field Director. There should be a staff of sufficient size to administrate programs. Students will not be utilized to substitute for regularly needed staff.
7. The setting should agree to treat all field instruction information, especially evaluations of the student, as confidential, and refer all inquiries about the student to the Faculty Liaison and/or the MSW Director of Field Education.

8. The agency personnel recognition that the NASW is the standard-setting body for the profession and that the Council on Social Work Education is the standard-setting body for social work education.
9. The agency must provide necessary measures to protect students' safety. This may minimally include policies and procedures regarding conducting home visits, interacting with potentially difficult clients and handling emergencies.
10. Agency's policies recognize that professional social work field instruction is essential to academic instruction. Therefore, the agency should genuinely want to teach students and regard the practicum as an important part of its function. Further, there should be recognition that the educational relationship is mutually strengthening to the agency, the college, and the profession.

### **Criteria for Selecting Agency Field Instructors**

Selecting an agency field instructor is the responsibility of the social work field director in consultation with the agency. A master of social work degree and postgraduate experience sufficient to have achieved autonomous practice are required. Prior supervisory experience is desirable. Field instructors are expected to have demonstrated a high level of practice, including sound communication skills, and the commitment and desire to participate in the education of students.

In consultation with the social work field director, an agency field instructor may delegate specified areas of instruction to another senior staff member, who is known as an agency task instructor. The agency task instructor must have a demonstrated capacity for facilitative relationships, maturity, a broad perspective of social work practice, and high standards of professional behavior. However, the field instructor is responsible for relating that instruction to the educational competencies of field practice, for monitoring and evaluating the student's performance, and for maintaining weekly conferences with the student.

The field instructor is the designated agency staff member who guides and supervises the student in acquiring knowledge and skills from the practicum experience. Field students and their instructors share a unique academic relationship. Instructors must be prepared to shift their roles from providing services to clients to educating students. The quality of field instruction significantly determines the overall excellence of the student's practicum experience and the student's satisfaction in that experience. Meeting minimal criteria indicates that a field instructor:

1. Possesses a master in social work degree from a CSWE accredited program and at least two years post graduate practice experience, preferably with licensure commensurate with years and experience;
2. Possesses the ability:
  - a. To provide students with individualized learning experiences in a variety of social work practice roles through which they can achieve professional practice behavior by integration of social work knowledge, values and skills;

- b. To place a teaching emphasis in the practicum on students' acquisition of generalist and advanced practice skills;
- c. To enable students to use their sensitivities as well as their knowledge in a professional manner in all their relationships with people;
- d. To evaluate (a) the student's potential capacity for social work; and (b) the methods by which the student's learning may be facilitated. Translate the evaluation into learning situations;

3. Willing:

- a. To provide adequate time for supervisory activities including weekly one-hour student supervision and semester-based student evaluation. It is expected that the field instructor would be available for periodic conferences with Union's faculty liaison to discuss student performance, supervision and other concerns;
- b. To attend seminars related to student supervision and other relevant social work topics. Field Instructors supervising for the first time will attend training seminars conducted by the MSW Program;

4. Is committed to the NASW Code of Ethics and understands current developments in the profession of social work;

5. Appreciates and respects all people, is sensitive to cultural and ethnic diversity, and willing to challenge social injustice on behalf of vulnerable and oppressed individuals and groups of people in society.

6. Demonstrates:

- a. Knowledge of the placement setting and the ability to involve the student in learning about its structural and administrative patterns, service delivery systems, populations served, linkages with related programs, and relevant socio-political factors;
- b. Interest and competence in teaching practicum, based on the ability to gain satisfaction in the professional growth of other people. Possess the ability to develop a sensitive, educationally oriented relationship with students, accepting them, their feelings, and their capacity for growth and change.
- c. Understanding and acceptance of the partnership between the University and the placement in providing well-developed, graduate professional education.

Occasionally an agency can offer a valuable learning opportunity for practicum students because of their client population and service delivery system, but the prospective field instructor does not have an MSW degree. In such cases, the agency, in consultation with the MSW Field Director, must identify an MSW professional to work closely with the agency staff and the student to insure that the educational competencies of field are being met. If there are no MSW employees working at the agency, then the following guidelines would apply:

1. An MSW professional from the community or university will contract with the agency, student, or university to be the field instructor, as will be determined on a case by case basis.
2. The utilization of agencies as practicum sites that provide a social service benefit to the community but do not have professionally trained social workers on staff will be an exception rather than the rule of the Social Work Program.

### **Student Participation in Selection**

In order to accomplish their goals and the agency's expectations of them in the field placement experience, MSW students are responsible to do the following:

1. Are responsible for working out a schedule with their employment and their family life that allows them to complete their practicum hours. There are few practicums with non-traditional hours. Working a schedule to get the hours completed is **NOT** the School of Social Work's responsibility.
2. Assume responsibility for making an appointment with the MSW Field Director to discuss Field Instruction placement plans.
3. Receive confirmation of the placement, after all pre-placement interviews, from the MSW Field Director.
4. Work with the Field Instructor in developing a written learning agreement identifying performance expectations based on the field education competencies.
5. Assume responsibility for following agency procedures, including the agency's time and holiday schedules.
6. Respect client and agency confidentiality and conduct themselves in a manner consistent with the values and ethics of the social work profession, based on the NASW Code of Ethics.
7. Assume responsibility for informing the agency field instructor and faculty liaison of any changes in schedules, including necessary absences from the agency for any reason, agreeing to make up the time to the satisfaction of the faculty liaison and field instructor.
8. Assume responsibility for the integration of theoretical knowledge with practice for evaluating the field experience and for being active seekers in the development of their professional capacities.
9. Discuss with the field instructor matters concerning the agency's responsibilities for the learning experience, field instruction, agency policies, conferences, and evaluations.
10. Meet standard responsibilities as outlined in this manual; including the fulfillment of all assigned responsibilities; exhibiting conduct in accordance with professional social work standards encompassing ethics, critical thinking, use of self/task management, self-awareness, professional relationships, and communication.

11. Make faculty liaison aware of actual or potential difficulties.
12. Participate in agency orientation and become familiar with the agency's policies and procedures. This includes information and procedures related to safety awareness.

**Students Expectation of the Placement Agency:**

1. Provision of the learning opportunities and educational supports outlined in this manual;
2. Adequate opportunities to test themselves and their skills, within limits;
3. Opportunity to express concerns about their assignments and to receive careful consideration of such concerns, although decisions about such matters will rest with the educational judgment of the faculty liaison and field instructor;
4. Development of a clear learning agreement with the field instructor concerning performance expectations, service responsibilities, agency routines, conferences, recording, attendance, and so forth.

**APPENDIX A**

**MSW**

**CURRICULUM**

**SUMMARY**



## **MSW Curriculum Summary**

### **Foundation Year Courses:**

#### **Foundation Curriculum Summary**

***SW 500: Human Behavior in the Social Environment I: Theoretical Foundations:*** This first course in the 2-semester HBSE sequence will focus on major theories of human behavior from infancy through adulthood in the context of the interaction between and among the range of social systems (individuals, families, groups, organizations, communities) and with consideration of the impact of social and economic forces on all aspects of human development. The aim of this course is to provide a framework for creating, organizing, and understanding of theory, research, and practice issues of human behavior and the social environment as a foundation to practice advanced generalist social work, and on which to build advanced generalist practice skills. The focus of this course is on behavior and the continuous, reciprocal interchange and influence in, between, and among different systems of the larger environment. A strengths-based and person-in-environment theory approach leads to an understanding of how the biological, psychological, social, cultural and spiritual systems are interrelated and affect human development throughout the life span. Special attention is given to the impact of human diversity, discrimination, social injustices and oppression on the ability to reach or maintain optimal health and well-being. Values and ethical issues related to the theories presented will also be considered. Throughout the course, students will be encouraged to consider the crucial relationship between evidence-based theory and social work practice.

***SW 501: Human Behavior in the Social Environment II: Assessment through the Lifespan*** builds on HBSE I, which provided knowledge and understanding of theory, research, and practice issues of human development within the context of biological, psychological, and socio-cultural factors. Emphasis is placed on understanding of the relevance of evidence-based theory for practice and how race, ethnicity, culture, gender, and socioeconomic variables influence and contribute to human development and behavior within social systems. This second course in the 2-semester HBSE sequence further examines theories and knowledge of human bio-psycho-social-cultural-spiritual development from childhood to later adulthood in the context of the range of social systems (individuals, families, groups, organizations, communities), and with consideration of the impact of social and economic forces on all aspects of human development. The aim of this course is to use a strengths-based and person-in-environment theoretical framework to provide students with the knowledge, skills, and values necessary for understanding human behavior as a function of biological, social, psychological, spiritual, and cultural systems across the life span. The focus of this course is on behavior and the impact of the larger environment on the individual. Special attention is given to the impact of social injustice, discrimination and oppression on the ability to reach or maintain human well-being.

***SW 510: Social Justice and Social Welfare*** is the first of two foundational graduate courses focusing on social welfare policy. This course introduces social work students to social welfare problems and policies through the lens of social justice, examining the impact of welfare policies on individuals, families, groups, and communities within their unique environments. A historical overview of social welfare, social work, and service delivery will be discussed along with a review of current welfare structures and evidence-based research. The role of policy in service

delivery, social work practice, and the attainment of individual and social well-being will be examined within the strengths-based construct. Content will provide students with beginning knowledge and skills to understand major policies that form the foundation of the social welfare system at the local, state, federal, and international levels. Policies and programs affecting those living in poverty and other marginalized populations will be emphasized.

***SW 520: Social Work Practice I: Communities and Organizations*** is the first in a sequence of three required social work practice courses offered in the foundation year of the MSW program. Students will gain professional knowledge, values, and skills in social work practice with communities and organizations. This course will provide an overview of the role of macro practice in the historical evolution of social work as a profession, and the interrelationship between micro and macro practice models. Students will learn how to analyze the concepts of community and social justice through various worldview or philosophical perspectives and the ethics and values of the profession. The importance of using direct practice skills in building relationships with key community and organizational stakeholders will be stressed. Students will learn to assess communities and organizations from an ecological perspective, craft culturally-relevant interventions that are based on existing strengths and evidence-based best practices, and to continually evaluate practice outcomes. This course will also provide the student with an appreciation for the limited resources that are available to many vulnerable populations. Students will be able to formulate community development plans and advocate for social and economic justice to address resource inequalities. This course also provides an initial overview into best leadership practices when managing a social service organization. Students will also develop the skills to critically analyze ethical dilemmas and select the best course of action.

***SW 521: Foundations for Research*** is the first of two required research courses which provides graduate social work students with the necessary values, knowledge, and skills for utilizing methods of evidence-based research and evaluation in their professional employment. This course presents the conceptual foundations and methods of evidence-based research in order to help students integrate research knowledge with professional social work practice. The basic processes of research are covered, including the development of research questions, formulating hypotheses, choosing research designs, measurement decision making, sampling processes, and data collection, management, and analysis. Some content areas will be familiar to those course participants who took a social research course as part of their undergraduate curriculum. For those course participants, this course will expand that familiarity by providing examples and application of social research methods relevant to social work practice and adhere to social work principles as stated in the NASW Code of Ethics and under the standards of the Council on Social Work Education. Special attention is given to issues of ethics, social justice as related to the use and misuse of research, the inclusion or omission of diverse populations in research studies, the implications of research for addressing social injustices of oppressed groups and the encouragement of a critical perspective when reading research on interventions as they apply to populations at risk.

***SW 530: Social Work Practice II: Individuals and Families*** is the second in a required sequence of three social work practice courses taken during the foundation year of the MSW program. This course gives students a general overview of the history, philosophy, process, and efficacy of direct social work practice with individuals and families. Students are provided an overview of the various roles that social workers play, the client groups with which they work, and the organizational contexts in which they practice. The values and ethics of social work practice are discussed within a historical context, and a framework is presented for critiquing those values and

ethics within a Christian worldview that seeks to promote social justice. Students learn the basic interpersonal skills needed to establish rapport with individuals and families in a professional social work setting and practice those skills in an effort to build and refine their ability to engage individuals and families in the helping process. The processes of assessing the client's problem within an ecological context, formulating measurable outcome goals that build on existing client strengths, implementing evidence-based interventions to meet those goals, and constantly evaluating progress towards those goals are examined in detail.

**SW 535: Policy Analysis and Advocacy** is the second of two required courses in social welfare policy in the foundation year of Union University's MSW program of study. Building on material learned in *Social Justice and Social Welfare*, this course will focus on major social welfare policies and will underscore professional skills in social policy advocacy and practice. This course will equip students with knowledge and skill to analyze organizational, local, state, national, and international issues in social welfare policy and social service delivery. Students will acquire skills in conducting evidence-based policy analysis, and will learn to advocate for socially just policies and conditions that take into account vulnerable individuals, groups, and communities within their unique environments. Ethical issues involved in policy advocacy and practice will be examined in deference to the assumption that all persons, groups, and communities hold inherent dignity and strengths. The course will further provide an overview of the structure, funding, dynamics and related aspects of social welfare delivery systems in a variety of arenas.

**SW 540: Social Work Practice III: Social Work with Groups** is the third course in the sequence of the three required social work practice courses offered in the foundation year of the MSW curriculum. This course introduces students to social work practice with groups. Students will study a basic typology of group purposes, composition, and methodologies utilized in social work practice. Group practice will be distinguished from micro and macro practice formats with a particular emphasis on how the three areas of practice are interdependent. The basics of assessing the need for a group will be presented, along with guidelines for establishing the logistical parameters of the group. An overview of research on best practices in group work will be provided, and methods for evaluating group work will be introduced. Students will also gain an understanding of how to use interpersonal helping skills in leading group members toward established goals by building on existing strengths. A framework for critically analyzing ethical dilemmas will be presented, along with discussions on how to promote social and economic justice through group work.

**SW 590: Field Seminar I** is systematically designed, supervised, coordinated, and evaluated on the basis of criteria by which students demonstrate the achievement of program competencies. This course is intended to help students apply foundation knowledge of social work skills, values, and ethics to practice and to assist students in integrating classroom learning with the direct experience of the Field I practicum. Students will be expected to develop and discuss knowledge, understanding and skills concerning relationships with clients, supervisors, coworkers and external constituencies. In addition, students will be expected to develop a foundational understanding of the context of social work practice as it relates to evidence- and strengths-based research and practice, and social justice. In the Foundation Field Seminar students will share learning experiences across a variety of field sites. Students will participate in and learn group process as well as practice group leadership skills. Students should end the course with an increased understanding of the needs/problems of populations-at-risk as informed social workers. Lastly, students will discuss and understand the professional use of self in the social work role.

**SW 591: Field Seminar II** is systematically designed, supervised, coordinated, and evaluated on the basis of criteria by which students demonstrate the achievement of program competencies. This graduate field seminar is the second in a series of four seminars designed to assist the MSW student in the integration of theory and practice in the practice setting. Building on Field Seminar I, this seminar and field experience allows the student to enhance his/her skills in the knowledge, value and skills of competent social work, as well as to gain experience with new models of evidence-based practice, working with a variety of client systems, including individuals, families, couples, groups, and organizations. Working from a strengths based perspective, students will have the opportunity to refine their assessment skills using a person-in environment approach. Under the guidance of a field supervisor, each student will also have opportunity to expand the use of self in client relationships to afford greater understanding of human behavior, individual competencies and strengths within the client and self, and the values and ethics of social work practice. Students will begin to evaluate their own practice, assume increasing levels of autonomy in practice, and evaluate policy within the agency and its application for social justice and diversity. Students should end the course with an increased understanding of the needs/problems of populations-at-risk as informed social workers.

### **Concentration and Advanced Standing Curriculum Summary**

**SW 599: Advanced Standing Bridge Course** is a concentrated, rigorous seminar-styled course that is designed to prepare the advanced standing student for the second year of the MSW curriculum. This class links the student's undergraduate BSW education and practice experience in preparation for the rigor of the final year of MSW classes utilizing interactive lectures, readings, focused writing, and experiential exercises. This class requires a very high level of reading, critical analysis, and commitment to the learning process. Prerequisites for this class are a BSW degree, and at least a 3.0 GPA in undergraduate classes. The student will examine the four central themes of Union University's Department of Social Work's curriculum and begin to develop supportive, collegial relationships that will serve them well in this academic program and in future professional endeavors.

**SW 605: Psychopathology: Assessment, Diagnostics, and Treatment** will prepare students for clinical social work practice by establishing a working knowledge of psychopathology and use of the DSM-5 for assessment, diagnosis, and treatment of mental health and mental disorders. From strengths-based perspective that also considers person-in-environment and bio-psychosocial and ethno-cultural factors. Students will examine human behaviors and ways of relating that may be considered outside societal norms. The major mental disorders will be examined along with current empirically-supported best-treatment standards. Services for persons who are severely and persistently mentally ill (SPMI) will be explored as well as the impact of persistent societal stigma against this vulnerable population group. Social and economic injustice for all persons impacted by mental illness will be studied. Case vignettes descriptive of how specific mental disorders impact the person in his or her environment will aid in integrating a working knowledge of mental health assessment, diagnostics, and treatment into social work practice paradigms.

**SW 623: Theory and Ethics in Advanced Practice (The Capstone Seminar)** integrates professional knowledge, values, and skills under a rubric of theoretical and ethical practice. Social work strategies, informed by theoretical processes and ethical standards, will be qualified as advanced social work practice with individuals, families, groups, and communities. This course will feature a review of empirically sound practice theories useful to the social work professional in advanced generalist practice. Students will be challenged to examine concurrent practicum

experiences through various conceptual lenses, including the strengths perspective, ecological perspective, and social justice, and will be able to articulate stages of social work practice specific to theory. Students will demonstrate the ability to effectively choose and make application of appropriate theoretical strategies through class debriefings and documentations of their work with practicum-based clients. Ethics and values of the profession will be examined in depth, with particular attention focused on ethical dilemmas and risks commonly encountered in social work practice with special attention to vulnerable and diverse populations (age, class, color, disability, ethnicity, family structure, gender, marital status, national origin, race, religion, sex, and sexual orientation). A model for resolving such dilemmas will be utilized to teach students how to skillfully process and safely mediate ethical challenges in a variety of social work settings.

***SW 631: Practice and Program Evaluation*** is an advanced research course that requires students at the concentration level to use research knowledge, values, and skills to evaluate social work practice as advanced generalist practitioners. Critical review of empirical and evidence-based best practice models for social work is emphasized. Students plan, develop, and evaluate social service programs in public and private settings, demonstrating advanced theoretical and practical approaches to individual practice and program effectiveness. Research skills taught in this course can be generalized to any setting. The focus is on the acquisition and demonstration of applied techniques with particular emphasis given to issues of ethics, social justice as related to the use and misuse of research, the inclusion or omission of diverse populations in research studies, the implications of research for addressing social injustices of oppressed groups, and the encouragement of a critical perspective when reading research on interventions as they apply to populations at risk.

***SW 650: Advanced Practice with Individuals and Families*** builds upon the foundation practice courses and focuses on advanced social work practice with individuals and families. Students will refine their interpersonal helping skill by learning ways to intervene in particularly challenging situations. The importance of assessing individual and family needs within an ecological context is stressed. Students are taught how to formulate culturally-sensitive interventions that build on client strengths and have evidence of effectiveness through research. Methods for continually evaluating practice outcomes are presented, along with analysis of common ethical dilemmas faced in social work practice with individuals and families. Students gain an understanding of how direct practice can be a vehicle for promotion social and economic justice, particularly by addressing the needs of vulnerable populations.

***SW 660: Advanced Practice in Community Development and Administration*** builds upon the foundation macro practice content by specifically focusing on methods utilized in community development and on the knowledge and skills needed to lead and manage social service organizations. Students will learn how to assess community and organizational needs from an ecological perspective that takes into account the specific needs of members of diverse and vulnerable populations. Facilitating the empowerment of communities and their members is examined. Students will become familiar with intervention strategies shown by research to be effective and that enhance existing community strengths. Students will also examine how social work practice with communities and organizations can be a vehicle for examining ethical dilemmas and promoting social and economic justice.

***SW 690: Field Seminar III***: This advanced field seminar is the third in a series of four seminars designed to assist the MSW student in the integration of theory and practice in the practice setting. This seminar and field experience allows the student to enhance his/her skills in the

knowledge, value and skills of competent social work, as well as to gain experience with new models of evidence-based practice, working with a variety of client systems, including individuals, families, couples, groups, and organizations. Working from a strengths based perspective, students will have the opportunity to refine their assessment skills using a person-in-environment approach. Under the guidance of a field supervisor, each student will also have opportunity to expand the use of self in client relationships to afford greater understanding of human behavior, individual competencies and strengths within the client and self, and the values and ethics of social work practice. Students will evaluate their own practice, assume increasing levels of autonomy in advanced generalist practice, and evaluate policy within the agency and its application for social justice and diversity. Students should complete the course with an increased understanding of the strengths/needs/problems of populations-at-risk as informed social workers.

***SW 691: Field Seminar IV:*** This advanced field seminar is the final in a series of four seminars designed to assist the MSW student in the integration of theory and practice in the agency setting. Building on Field Seminar III, this seminar and field experience allows the student to further enhance his/her skills in the knowledge, value and skills of competent social work, as well as to gain experience with new models of evidence-based practice, working with a variety of client systems, including individuals, families, couples, groups, and organizations. Working from a strengths-based perspective, students will further refine their assessment skills using an ecological perspective. Under the guidance of a field supervisor, each student will also expand the use of self in client relationships to afford greater understanding of human behavior, individual competencies and strengths within the client and self, and the values and ethics of social work practice. Students will give particular attention to issues of burnout and self-care required as social work professionals.

## **APPENDIX B**

# **FIELD PRACTICUM CONTRACT (MOU)**



**Field Practicum Contract**  
**Between**  
**Union University School of Social Work**  
**And**

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**Agency**

This contractual agreement, entered into this \_\_\_\_ day of \_\_\_\_\_, 20\_\_\_\_, establishes an agreement between Union University School of Social Work, hereinafter referred to as the University, and \_\_\_\_\_, hereinafter referred to as the Agency. It specifies the basis on which the Agency will serve as a field instruction placement for students and in which faculty personnel will provide educational direction of students assigned with said Agency. The purpose of this agreement is to specify the general activities planned and the assignment of responsibilities between the parties.

**A. It is agreed and understood that:**

The Agency will serve as a field instruction placement for the University students in such number and at such time as the parties hereto mutually agree. This agreement will remain in force as long as both the University and the Agency mutually agree upon the terms of the contract or until this agreement will need to be updated.

The particular facilities/programs/services to be used, the number of students, and the particular instruction–consultation to be provided will be determined by mutual agreement of the parties as governed by the stated stipulations.

1. The students in this field instruction placement:  
Will receive remuneration \_\_\_\_\_ (specify in addendum)  
Will not receive remuneration \_\_\_\_\_
2. The University does not assume responsibility for or provide insurance against any physical or professional liability, which might be assessed due to injury to students or clients on the premises of the Agency.
3. The student is required to carry liability insurance to cover any malpractice involvement by error, negligence, or omission.
4. The representatives of the Agency and/or University, after consultation with the student, may suspend the participation of said student in the educational program if they find that the student's continued participation in the program is not in the best interests of the student, the Agency, and/or the University.
5. Agency regulations, policies, procedures, and goals will be applicable to the students while they are engaged in field education unless otherwise stated in writing by both parties. These policies, procedures, and goals will be described during orientation and will be reviewed periodically.
6. All days and hours for the student's participation in field instruction shall be arranged between the student and the Agency representative after consultation with the Field Director or Field Liaison in keeping with the University policy.

**B. Scheduling of activities**

The scheduling of activities of students in the field instruction program will be in accordance with the schedule of courses at the University and will be explored and planned with the appropriate faculty personnel of the University, the Agency in which field instruction is conducted, and the student. Planning of the specifics of field instruction shall be a joint effort of the Agency representative and the student with the consultation from the Field Director.

**C. The University will provide a faculty member designated as the Social Work Field Director who will:**

1. Enable and expedite the field practicum curriculum.



2. Fulfill administrative responsibilities such as:
  - a. locate and assess new field agencies;
  - b. assigns students to placements;
  - c. maintains efficient reporting systems and records of field practicum activities;
  - d. participate in the preparation and maintenance of a current field placement manual; and
  - e. organize a training session for Agency Field Instructors when necessary.
3. Initiate and respond to faculty, student, and Agency suggestions for the continuous upgrading of the field practicum curriculum.

**D. The University will provide a faculty member designated as the Social Work Field Liaison who will: (the below responsibilities may be conducted by the Social Work Field Director instead of the Liaison)**

1. Conduct periodic evaluations of practicum methodology and outcomes, and initiate appropriate changes.
2. Maintain regular telephone contact with the Agency Field Instructor regarding the student's progress on at least a monthly basis.
3. Have conferences with the Agency Field Instructor regarding the student's progress as deemed appropriate.
4. Meet with the student weekly in an integrated seminar to discuss the placement, collect assignments and forms related to the Field Practicum experience, and be available to the student if problems arise.
5. Assist the Agency Field Instructor in the designing of learning experiences for the student; assess with the Agency Instructor the adequacy of the student's field performance; and consult with and advise the Agency Field Instructor regarding learning problems which the student may have.
6. Ensure that the Agency Field Instructor completes appropriate evaluations of the student; attend a final evaluation conference with the student and the Agency Field Instructor; and assign the final grade for the Field Practicum.

**E. The Agency will provide a staff member designated as the Agency Field Instructor who will:**

1. Provide the student with a formal orientation of the agency, promote the Agency's understanding of the Union University School of Social Work and acceptance of the student, and enable the student to feel a part of the Agency. Provide a copy of the orientation schedule to the student and the Social Work Faculty Liaison at the beginning of the practicum.
2. Assist the student in identifying goals/desired outcome and learning tasks for the field placement experience commensurate with the educational competencies of the School of Social Work.

3. Select and make appropriate Agency assignments that take into consideration, as much as possible, the student's past experience, learning patterns, career expectations, and the social work program's educational competencies.
4. Suggest written materials for the student to examine during the course of field experience.
5. Provide on-the-job instruction and supervision of the student.
6. Hold a regular one hour weekly conference with the student, sign the student's weekly time form verifying the hours and tasks completed that week, and hold additional conferences with the student as deemed necessary.
7. Attend conferences with the Field Director as deemed appropriate.
8. Complete a written, formal, final evaluation of the student's performance, utilizing the Union University Practicum Evaluation Form.
9. Attend a final evaluation conference with the student and Social Work Field Liaison, where the final evaluation will be discussed.
10. Contribute knowledge and suggestions to Union University's School of Social Work for upgrading the Field Instruction Program as needed.
11. Immediately consult with the Social Work Field Liaison regarding any problems or concerns noted with a particular field placement experience.

**In testimony whereof witness the duly authorized signatures of the parties hereto:**

\_\_\_\_\_  
Agency Representative Signature

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

\_\_\_\_\_  
Director, Field Education

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

**Please make a signed copy for your records and return the original agreement to the to:**

Union University School of Social Work  
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