

**San Diego State University  
School of Social Work**

**SW 489 Undergraduate  
Field Experience  
Information Packet**

**(Academic Year 2021- 2022)**

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*School of Social Work*

**Date:** January 19, 2021  
**To:** Prospective SW 489 Undergraduate Field Experience Students, Fall 2021  
**From:** Silvia A. Barragán, LCSW, Director, Undergraduate Field Education  
**Re:** SW 489 Undergraduate Field Experience Procedures, Process, Policies and Guidelines

**Welcome Back for the 2021 Spring Semester!**

In accordance with SDSU School of Social Work policy, the placement process for your fall 2021 SW 489 Undergraduate Field Experience will begin this Spring Semester (as soon as you return from Winter Break). Please carefully review:

- SW 489 Undergraduate Field Experience *Procedures, Process, Policies, and Guidelines*
- SW 489 Undergraduate Field Practicum *Application Course Work Summary* (2 pages)
- SW 489 Undergraduate Field Experience *Student Agreement*
- SW 489 Undergraduate Field Experience *Process Timeline*
- SW 489 Undergraduate Field Experience *Checklist*

I recommend you review the Social Work Undergraduate FAQ's listed on the School of Social Work Field Education website to help you better understand the process. This is the link to FAQ's:  
<https://socialwork.sdsu.edu/field/student-resources/faq/sw-undergraduate-and-graduate/>

Attached to this memo are materials that will outline the process/procedures you must follow and complete in order to be placed for your SW 489 Undergraduate Field Experience course fall 2021. Please be mindful of all of the guidelines, instructions and due dates. At some point the information may seem redundant, but continue reading because the redundancy is intentional in order to highlight key dates and policies.

Completed SW 489 Undergraduate Field Application Packets are due:

**February 5, 2021**

**Complete Application via IPT.**

Trust that you will successfully course through this process if you read the attached material, attend the Placement Planning Meeting and the Agency Fair, and submit the required paperwork in a timely manner.

I hope you have a wonderful spring 2021 semester.

# **SW 489 Undergraduate Field Experience *Procedures, Process, Policies***

## **Procedures**

The selection of your SW 489 Undergraduate Field Experience Placement is a collaborative process, involving the Student, Field Education Faculty, the Field Experience Agency, and the Field Instructor. This process usually begins the second week of the Spring Semester and consists of the following components, described in detail in this memo:

- 1) Attend the SW 489 Undergraduate Field Practicum Placement Planning Meeting on January 22, 2021 from 12:00-3:00PM via Zoom. Attendance Mandatory.
- 2) Complete the entire SW 489 Undergraduate Field Experience Application and submit it by Friday, February 5, 2021. The application can be found in IPT.
- 3) Attend the Agency Fair on Friday, January 29, 2021 being held via Zoom from 9:00AM-12:00PM. Attendance Mandatory.
- 4) Complete the Agency Referral Process and Interview.
- 5) Receive confirmation of field placement from Field Faculty by E-Mail and/or phone.
- 6) Complete in a timely manner successful clearance of all background screenings requested by the field placement site.
- 7) Complete onboarding summer assignment/s by date of the first SW 489 seminar.
- 8) Attend the required and informational SW 489 Undergraduate Field Experience Orientation the first week of the fall 2021 semester. Attendance is Mandatory.

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## **Process**

### **1. Undergraduate Field Experience Information Meeting & Agency Fair:**

Each student who is eligible for the SW 489 Undergraduate Field Experience for the 2021 Fall Semester shall attend the SW 489 Undergraduate Field Practicum Placement Planning meeting scheduled for 01/22/21 and agency fair scheduled for 1/29/21 in order to obtain information regarding the field placement process and visit representatives from a variety of agencies, respectively.

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### **2. Field Experience Application Packet:**

Each prospective SW 489 student is encouraged to **log onto IPT** to review the field application packet prior to the SW 489 Field Practicum Placement Planning Meeting. This will help the student better understand the placement process described at the placement planning meeting

**Unofficial Transcripts:** Include in your application an unofficial copy of your SDSU transcript, which includes all transferred credits. This transcript may be obtained from Web Portal and must include Fall 2020 credits.

Please review each section of the application and ensure that the following items are completed in their entirety:

- The Application
- Summary of Courses
- Unofficial Transcript
- Resume
- Student Agreement – signed and dated

**IMPORTANT:** 1. Please, utilize the attached Field Experience Document Checklist to ensure you complete all items in the application packet and attach all the necessary materials. You want to maximize your field placement opportunities and avoid a delay in entering the SW 489 Field Experience, so do not leave any blanks and attach all required materials. Field placement agencies may request a hard copy of your SW 489 Field Experience Application Packet, so I strongly recommend you print a copy of the completed application packet in the event you need to submit it to the agency.

2. Please make sure you schedule an appointment with the School of Social Work Undergraduate Student Advisor, Jennifer Cosio (jcosio@mail.sdsu.edu) to review your social work major requirements.

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### **3. Placement Selection and Referral Process:**

Undergraduate students are permitted to request or select specific agencies; however, the placement process takes your educational and experiential needs, goals, objectives, and preferences into consideration and you may be in competition with other students for placement sites. We will do our best to meet your request but students must realize that not all who apply to agencies will be selected to their first choice in field placements. Students must attend the 2021 Agency Fair that is scheduled to be held on January 29, 2021 via Zoom from 9AM-12PM. Please Note: In accordance with the SDSU School of Social Work policy, undergraduate social work interns shall ***not*** use their employment site as their Field Experience Internship.

As the Field Experience Application Packet is the ONLY means by which Field Placement Committee can identify your needs, please complete these forms thoughtfully, specifying any special accommodations, restrictions, physical limitations and any problems or concerns.

After reviewing all completed applications, the Field Placement Committee will begin the placement process by contacting field placement agencies in early February. ***DO NOT*** contact any agency on your own without a direct referral from the Field Education Faculty.

- a) When an agency agrees to interview the student, the Field Education Faculty will make a referral to the student alerting them to contact the agency.
- b) The referral will be made either by E-mail or phone contact.
- c) You are responsible for calling and arranging an interview with the agency contact person immediately. Delay in contacting the prospective field experience agency immediately can result in a loss of opportunity or interview. Other universities (CSUSM, PLN, USC and others) are also placing interns. Long delays in setting up an interview could result in the agency filling up their internship slots before you have a chance to interview. Please be as flexible as possible in being available for an interview.
- d) For the interview, the agency representative may expect to review a copy of your SW 489 Field Experience Application Packet (*which I recommended you make prior to submitting your application*) and a resume. A resume should be a brief summary of your paid work, unpaid work or volunteer experience, education and training. It should also highlight the special skills, achievements, experiences, knowledge and potential that you would bring to an undergraduate social work internship.
- e) As part of the interview process and in order to be confirmed for the SW 489 Field Experience, agencies may request, at your expense, additional screenings, e.g. random drug screenings; health examination; verification of immunizations; TB test; security evaluations; fingerprinting, DMV validation of driver's license; etc. In addition, agencies may require random drug screening at any time during the year. Some agencies may charge for parking.
- f) Be prepared for the interview process. Remember you are interviewing for a "professional internship." Your internship is considered "service learning" and it means exactly what it says, you provide a service as you learn. The interview is the first, and sometimes the only, opportunity you will have to present yourself to the field placement agency and to learn about the agency itself, although you can Google the agency to learn what it has to offer. Therefore, arrive with time to spare and dress appropriately. During this professional encounter you will want to explore how you and the agency would work together to accomplish your educational goals, while assisting the delivery of services to the agency's clients. Issues concerning agency workload, hours, winter break and other professional expectations should be addressed.
- g) The interview is viewed as a confirmation interview. However, the student not interviewing in a professional manner can be denied an internship placement. The student stating, "I am not interested in this particular agency and/or population" or "this was not the agency that I selected" during the interview process may not receive another referral for placement. We receive feedback from the agencies when they decline a student and this type of feedback is not beneficial to the student as it hinders opportunities with other agencies. Students who have received (or are receiving) services from the interviewing agency should notify Field Faculty before the

interview to determine if there is a conflict of interest. The Field Education Faculty will review the circumstances. Agencies have the right to turn down any student for placement. Please note: *Any information contained in this field experience application and/or any pertinent information relating to your professional student role shall be discussed between SDSU Faculty and approved field experience agencies and their representatives. Your signature on the Student Agreement form confirms that you are aware of this fact.*

- h) **IMPORTANT:** The student is not considered confirmed until she passes the required screenings requested by the agency. If the student fails these screenings, the Field Education Faculty will review the student's circumstances. Depending on the time-frame and the professionalism demonstrated, the outcome may result in the student being placed in another agency, becoming ineligible for field experience at this time, and delayed placement for an entire academic year. Some agencies review student legal activities and request additional screenings throughout the field experience.
- i) **Please note:** Students who have misdemeanor and/or felony convictions may not be eligible for placement in certain agencies, and may be delayed from beginning their SW 489 Undergraduate Field Experience course.

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#### **4. Confirmation of the SW489 Undergraduate Field Experience:**

If you are accepted by the agency, **the Field Education Faculty will notify you**, either verbally, by phone, IPT and/or e-mail. Please make sure IPT reflects changes to your residential address, phone number and e-mail address. You can also alert <http://socialwork.sdsu.edu/field/> of any changes to your contact information. If **the School** has **not** notified you of acceptance, then the placement is **not** yet confirmed. Follow-up with the field faculty who referred you if it is nearing the end of the spring semester and you have not received confirmation. If you are not accepted by the first agency with which you interview, the Field Faculty will meet with you to discuss issues, which may have led to you not being accepted. If it is determined that you are appropriate for another interview, you will be interviewing with another agency. The same placement process is followed for the second interview referral. *In accordance with School Policy, in some circumstances, if an agency denies acceptance to a student for internship, the student can be delayed in field placement until the following year; and/or can be disqualified for field placement; and will be referred to the Student Affairs Committee for immediate review.*

**After you have received confirmation** (by either phone or E-mail) from the Field Education Faculty, call the agency contact person to confirm your starting date (first week of classes, Fall Semester) and to take care of any paperwork, screening, background checks, or miscellaneous details. It is also a good idea to provide the agency with your e-mail address, summer residence address and phone number so they can keep you informed of any changes or trainings needed prior to your return to campus in the fall. Communicate clearly regarding the aforementioned in order to avoid a delay in beginning your SW 489 Undergraduate Field Experience.

Once a placement is confirmed, agency assignment changes cannot be made unless there are emergent issues and/or problems, which cannot be resolved, and all efforts to resolve them have been exhausted. Changes are made **ONLY** through the Field Education Faculty and are not made once the Fall Semester begins. If you are asked to leave your agency due to performance or conflict with a field instructor, there is a chance that you would need to wait until the following school year to be replaced.

*Please note that while the field placement will be finalized in Spring, your eligibility for SW 489 and the concurrent Experience course SW 483A, will not be confirmed until the spring semester is completed and you have a cumulative SDSU GPA of 2.0, your senior class status, and other Field Experience prerequisites, as outlined in the Student Handbook. If any problems arise with this process, you may become ineligible to enroll for SW 489 and SW 483. You will be notified by mid-June 2021, if such problems exist. Be sure the Field Education Faculty knows how to contact you during the summer by keeping your IPT information up to date. Alert <http://socialwork.sdsu.edu/field/> of any changes to your contact information.*

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#### **Policies**

- a) **Schedule:** All Student and Agency schedules need to be discussed at time of interview. Students are required

to defer vacations so they are not absent from field experience when school is in session. Students are required to be in their Field placements from the first week of school until the end of spring 2022 semester. When arranging the internship schedule with the agency, the student and agency must follow School Policy, which states that an intern's schedule in the Field is the responsibility of the student and the agency. Priority in scheduling is given, in this order, to 1) social work-on campus classes, 2) SW 489 Field Experience Course, 3) student's other life responsibilities.

Field Instructors cannot waive School Policy. If the agency has specific scheduling requirements, such as staff meetings, case conferences, etc., the student should register for social work class sections that do not conflict with Field if possible. The student cannot ask the agency to arrange the internship around the student's other responsibilities, such as employment or childcare.

- b) **English Proficiency:** Students must be proficient in their ability to use and understand English at the university level. They must be able to speak and be understood by faculty, staff and clients in the field placement. If a student needs additional assistance in English, s/he may be asked to take the Toefl test, obtain additional practice in written and spoken English and/or removed from field until proficiency is established.
- c) **Winter Break** should be discussed at the interview. Most agencies will want you to put in some time during the Winter Intercession, (as a volunteer, not an intern) for purposes of continuity with your clients. During the Winter Break, you are considered a volunteer and are not accruing hours toward the total needed for the semester. Students should not volunteer at the agency during finals week and in addition, the School encourages you have a two-week Winter Break (which is taken consecutively, in blocks of weeks, not days, and is scheduled by the agency with you). You will want to establish what is expected of you, by the agency, during the initial interview and again at the start of the Fall Semester.
- d) The Field Experience is a "professional" internship, thus it is very different from volunteer or work experience. It is educationally focused and geared toward integrating classroom knowledge with practical experience. Students are expected to fulfill their internship commitment of being in the field 16 hours a week for the entire semester, during which time their attention is devoted to Experience matters only.
- d) In the unlikely event that you are released from your field placement in the fall, it may not always be possible to place you at a new agency in the spring semester.
- e) The School of Social Work will make every reasonable effort to meet special accommodations, which may be requested. However, due to limited resources (Field Experience sites) available to meet special accommodations, the student's Field Experience can be delayed up to 2 years. If the Director, Undergraduate Field Education is notified of a Special Accommodations request after submission of the Field Experience Application packet, there is no guarantee that the Special Accommodation can be met for the current fall semester.
- f) You should read the Field Education Bulletin Board (located next to HH-119) on a weekly basis for any changes, which may occur during the semester.
- g) SW 489 Field Experience requires 16 hours per week, for a total of 240 hours each semester for the Academic Year.
- h) All placements are made in San Diego County (in accordance with School policies and procedures). Requests for placements outside of this area are not considered at this time due to the inability to provide quality field education, appropriate monitoring, and professional accountability.
- i) Students must be available for placement during usual agency business hours in order to participate in appropriate experiences and receive proper supervision. *Evening and weekend placements are not usually available*; if they are the agency is responsible for providing appropriate supervision during your time at the site.
- j) **Transportation:** You must show proof of automobile insurance and California Driver's License upon request by your agency. Most settings require the use of a car. Students can expect driving time of up to 1 hour (each way) between your residence and field practicum site. The hours spent driving to and from your agency are not

included in your field placement hours. Some agencies require travel; please inquire about reimbursement before the placement is finalized. Not all agencies reimburse for mileage.

- k) SW 489 Field Experience **must** be taken concurrently with the specified practice class (SW 483). Please refer to the general catalog, SDSU Class Schedule, and SW Undergraduate Student Handbook for further details.

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### Guidelines

- You will be assigned your Field Education Faculty by July and the information about which section of SW 489 to enroll in will be e-mailed to you. Field seminars are held on Tuesday or Thursday. Once assigned a particular day or faculty member you are not allowed to make any changes.
- Please download a copy of the latest edition of the Social Work Undergraduate Student Handbook, which will be available at the end of August on the Field Website. You are responsible for knowing the latest School Policies and Procedures, new Field Experience Calendars and new Field Evaluations for the next Academic year.

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For further information or questions, please contact Silvia A. Barragán, Director, Undergraduate Field Education at (619) 913-2245 or contact me via e-mail at [silvia.barragan@sdsu.edu](mailto:silvia.barragan@sdsu.edu). You can also visit me at my office in HH-105 or call me to schedule an appointment. I look forward to helping you have a successful SW 489 Undergraduate Field Experience Placement process.

**SCROLL DOWN TO VIEW:**

Undergraduate Field Placement Process Timeline (spring 2021)

*San Diego State University  
School of Social Work*

<b><i>Undergraduate Field Placement Process Timeline (Spring 2021)</i></b>
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<u><i>Date</i></u>	<u><i>Activity</i></u>
January 22, 2021 12:00 –3:00 p.m.	Attend the SW 489 Undergraduate Field Experience Placement Planning Zoom Meeting
January 29, 2021	First day Field Practicum Application Materials will be accepted. February 5, 2021 is the Deadline to submit the application.
January 29, 2021 12:00 p.m. – 3:00 p.m.	Agency Fair will take place virtually via Zoom. Visit agencies to explore the best fit for your professional aspirations and Undergraduate Field Experience. <b>Attendance is mandatory.</b>
February 5, 2021	Last day to submit the Field Practicum Application. Late applications will not be accepted and your internship will be delayed by a minimum of one year.
February 11, 2021	Field Placement Committee will begin referring students for placement interviews.
After March 1, 2021	Prof. Barragán will contact you if you are <b>not eligible</b> for field, or if there are any questions about your field application
May 5, 2021	Last day of classes as well as the completion date for field referrals and interviews. Our goal is to have ALL field placements confirmed by the end of May.
Early July	Fall SW489 Seminar Assignments emailed to students. Cumulative GPA and senior status verified after spring semester.
Fall 2021	Students attend <b>Mandatory</b> Undergraduate Field Orientation.