

**SDSU**

College of Health and Human Services  
School of Social Work

# **Field Education Manual**

## **2022-2023**

*“Cultivating the knowledge for global change...one community at a time”*

## TABLE OF CONTENTS

<b>Field Faculty</b>	<b>5</b>
<b>Field Administration Staff</b>	<b>6</b>
<b>Introduction</b>	<b>7</b>
THE IMPORTANCE OF SELF CARE	7
Resources on the practice of self-care include:	8
COMMITMENT TO RACIAL AND SOCIAL JUSTICE	9
Resources addressing racial and social justice include:	9
<b>Internship Placement Tracking (IPT)</b>	<b>10</b>
GETTING STARTED WITH IPT	10
<b>The Baccalaureate Field Education Program</b>	<b>11</b>
PROGRAM OBJECTIVES OF THE BASW PROGRAM	11
REQUIREMENTS AND CURRICULUM DESIGN	12
STUDENT ELIGIBILITY FOR ENROLLMENT IN FIELD PRACTICUM OVER ENROLLMENT	13
BACCALAUREATE FIELD PLACEMENT PROCESS	13
CONCURRENT FIELD EDUCATION	14
BACCALAUREATE FIELD EDUCATION STRUCTURE	15
SW 489 FIELD PRACTICUM COURSE REQUIREMENTS	15
2022 EPAS Social Work Core Competencies	16
STUDENT FIELD EXPERIENCE INTERNSHIP AT EMPLOYMENT SITE	18
<b>The MSW Field Education Program</b>	<b>19</b>
MISSION AND GOALS OF THE MSW PROGRAM	19
PROGRAM OBJECTIVES OF THE MSW PROGRAM	19
MSW ACADEMIC PROGRAMS AND FIELD PRACTICUM	21
Academic Year	21
Advanced Standing Program (ASP)	21
Specialized Programs	22
Dual Degree Programs:	22
Master of Social Work Degree and Master of Public Health Degree (MSW-MPH)	22
Master of Social Work Degree and Juris Doctor Degree (MSW-JD)	22
Summer Block Field Practicum Placement Option for Joint MSW-JD Advanced Year Administration and Community Development Students (SW 755)	23
CalSWEC's Title IV-E Child Welfare Stipend Program	23
CalSWEC's Integrated Behavioral Health (IBH) Program (Offered when funding is available)	24
Pupil Personnel Services Credential (PPS-C)	24

Early Childhood-Transdisciplinary Education and Mental Health (EC-TEaMH) Certificate	25
SDSU Imperial Valley Campus Program	25
REQUIREMENTS AND CURRICULUM DESIGN	26
MSW FIELD PLACEMENT PROCESS	27
MSW I Foundation Year Field Practicum Students (SW 650)	27
MSW II Advanced Year Field Practicum Students (SW 750 or SW 755)	29
ELIGIBILITY FOR ENROLLMENT IN MSW FIELD PRACTICUM	31
FIELD EDUCATION STRUCTURE - HOURS – REQUIREMENTS	34
GRADING POLICIES IN FIELD PRACTICUM	35
Employer-Based Field Placement	37
ADMINISTRATION/COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT MSW II ADVANCED FIELD PRACTICUM (SW 755)	39
<b>MSW Field Practicum Curriculum</b>	<b>39</b>
MSW I FOUNDATION YEAR AND MSW II ADVANCED YEAR COURSE REQUIREMENTS	39
SUPERVISION	40
MSW FIELD ORIENTATION	40
AGENCY ORIENTATION	41
ORIENTATION CHECKLIST	41
FIELD SEMINARS	42
CLIENT SYSTEMS ASSESSMENTS	42
LEARNING AGREEMENT	43
INTERNSHIP TIME LOGS	43
SITE VISITS	43
PROCESS RECORDINGS	44
EVALUATIONS	45
<b>Policies for Field Education</b>	<b>47</b>
HOURS – REQUIREMENTS	47
ATTENDANCE AND ACCOUNTABILITY	48
HOLIDAYS	49
MAINTAINING STUDENT ELIGIBILITY FOR FIELD PRACTICUM	50
PROFESSIONAL BOUNDARY VIOLATIONS	51
CONFIDENTIALITY, LEGAL AND ETHICAL STANDARDS	53
SOCIAL MEDIA GUIDELINES	55
PROMOTING SUCCESS IN THE FIELD PRACTICUM	58
Social Work Intern Rights:	60
Social Work Student Intern Responsibilities:	61
Examples of challenges related to an agency and/or Field Instructor (FI) may include:	62
Steps Students Can Take:	63
Concerns related to a student’s performance:	65

PROFESSIONAL LIABILITY INSURANCE	68
TRANSPORTATION AND TRAVEL	68
EQUAL ACCESS AND OPPORTUNITY	69
SDSU STUDENT ABILITY SUCCESS CENTER (SASC)	70
USE OF CELL PHONES AND/OR PAGERS	71
INTERRUPTION OF FIELD PLACEMENT DUE TO NATIONAL OR LOCAL EVENTS	71
Work Action or Strike during Field Practicum Period	72
Work Action or Strike before Field Practicum Period	73
Work Action or Strike Extending for More than Two Weeks	73
Procedures:	74
Disasters	75
Public Health Emergencies	75
SAFETY CONSIDERATIONS IN FIELD PRACTICUM	76
SEXUAL HARASSMENT	78
<b>Field Education Administration</b>	<b>80</b>
ROLES IN FIELD EDUCATION	80
Director of Field Education	81
Director of Undergraduate Field Education	81
Field Administrative Support Staff	82
Site and Field Coordinator, SDSU Imperial Valley Campus	82
Cal-SWEC Title IV-E Child Welfare Stipend Coordinator	83
Pupil Personnel Services Credential (PPS-C) Coordinator	84
Field Faculty	84
Student Interns	86
Field Instructor	86
Task Supervisor	88
<b>Agency and Field Instructor/Task Supervisor Application Process</b>	<b>88</b>
NEW AGENCY ONBOARDING PROCESS	88
Agency Standards	89
NEW FIELD INSTRUCTOR ONBOARDING PROCESS	92
SELECTION OF FIELD INSTRUCTORS	94
Criteria for Social Work Field Instructors	94
TASK SUPERVISORS	96
FIELD INSTRUCTOR ROLES VS. TASK SUPERVISOR ROLES	96
EVALUATION OF AGENCIES AND FIELD INSTRUCTORS	97
FIELD INSTRUCTORS - EVENTS AND TRAINING	98
Annual Field Instructor Meeting	98
NEW FIELD INSTRUCTOR TRAINING COURSE	98
COMMUNITY SUPPORT AND COLLABORATION	100
Field Advisory Board	100

Field Instructor Appreciation Event	100
Director of Field Education Consortiums	100
<b>Appendices</b>	<b>101</b>
Appendix 1.	101
NASW CODE OF ETHICS	101
Appendix 2.	101
GUIDELINES FOR THE USE OF SOCIAL MEDIA SDSU SCHOOL OF SOCIAL WORK FIELD EDUCATION PROGRAM	101
Appendix 3.	104
ARTICLES – RESOURCES AND REFERENCE FOR NEW FIELD INSTRUCTORS	104
CHALLENGES FOR THE FIELD INSTRUCTOR	105
THREE ESSENTIAL COMPONENTS TO SUPERVISION	106
Appendix 4.	107
NATIONAL REPOSITORY OF FIELD INSTRUCTOR TRAINING	108
Appendix 5.	108
BLANK TEMPLATE OF SDSU SERVICE LEARNING AGREEMENT (SLA)	108

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# Introduction

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**Field Education** is an essential element of the curriculum in the [School of Social Work at San Diego State University](#) (SDSU). Field Education is the “signature pedagogy” of social work education and provides students with the opportunity to integrate classroom theory and knowledge with practice skills in developing professional competence and identity. This includes the application of social work theory in real-life practice situations, skill building, and upholding the professional standards of social work ethics and values, under the professional supervision of qualified social workers in their role as field instructors.

Over the years, SDSU’s School of Social Work and San Diego/Imperial County community agencies have developed strong ties and worked in close collaboration for our baccalaureate and master’s degree programs. Unique partnerships have been formed with hundreds of outstanding social service agencies and programs. The field practicum agencies, in conjunction with the School’s curriculum, have provided our BASW and MSW program students with quality field placements in a broad array of agencies, including public, non-profit, multi-disciplinary, inpatient/outpatient settings within psychiatric settings, child welfare agencies, hospitals, family service agencies, hospices, community behavioral health, substance abuse, law enforcement, senior care settings, schools, community health care clinics, etc. The School strives to place students in field practicum sites which offer diversity in both the communities and populations served and in the structure of the agencies themselves.

The result of this joint endeavor between the School and field practicum agency provides learning opportunities in training students to acquire the professionalism, ethics, attitudes, critical thinking, knowledge, skills and holistic competencies which defines the profession of social work. The goal of providing the best learning opportunities for students is a priority of the School. This is achieved when mutual regard and commitment exists for each partner to the Service Learning Agreement (refer to Appendices Section), based on clear definitions of the respective roles and the responsibilities of the School, the agency, and the student as a learner.

The Field Education curriculum for the baccalaureate and master’s degree programs are specifically outlined in the following sections. Similar functions, policies and procedures applying to both programs, e.g. selections of agencies, selection of field instructors, field instructor training, etc., are profiled in later sections of this field education manual.

## THE IMPORTANCE OF SELF CARE

The field internship can be challenging for students as they juggle the multiple demands of a rigorous academic program, 16-20 hours of field internship and the rest of their life



responsibilities. This is the first time that many have been exposed to the front lines of a social service agency. Social work education and the profession has become more sensitive in recent years to the impact of trauma on our clients and the risk of vicarious trauma on interns as well as seasoned social workers. The field is also becoming more attuned to the importance of self-care to avoid burnout.

Effective June 1, 2021, the [NASW Code of Ethics](#) included explicit attention to self-care, bringing an important legitimacy to self-care within the profession. The explicit attention to self-care gives practitioners in varied capacities motivational impetus and useful leverage for promoting and practicing self-care as a core ethical practice. These updates include a statement encouraging macro-systems to “promote policies, practices, and materials to support social workers’ self-care.”

The School of Social Work encourages students to prioritize the practice of self-care and to be mindful about their physical, emotional, and spiritual health. Helping professionals often put others’ needs ahead of their own and fall short of looking after themselves. Students are encouraged to adopt healthy habits such as eating a balanced diet, exercising regularly, getting adequate sleep, and seeking out social and emotional support when needed. Students should also consider seeking their own psychotherapy as part of their personal and professional growth and development. Field instructors are entrusted to model self-care at the agency setting and discuss the importance of self-care in supervision. Field Seminars are also a forum for self-care and mutual support for students.

## **Resources on the practice of self-care include:**

### **The University at Buffalo School of Social Work’s Self-Care Starter Kit <sup>SM</sup>**

<https://socialwork.buffalo.edu/resources/self-care-starter-kit.html>

### **SELF-CARE DURING THE CORONAVIRUS PANDEMIC**

[www.socialworkers.org/Practice/Infectious-Diseases/Coronavirus/Self-Care-During-the-Coronavirus-Pandemic](http://www.socialworkers.org/Practice/Infectious-Diseases/Coronavirus/Self-Care-During-the-Coronavirus-Pandemic)

### **JUSTICE AND JOY: SELF-CARE IN 2020**

[www.socialworkers.org/News/Social-Work-Talks-Podcast/EP61-Justice-and-Joy-Self-Care-in-2020](http://www.socialworkers.org/News/Social-Work-Talks-Podcast/EP61-Justice-and-Joy-Self-Care-in-2020)

### **SELF-CARE AND AVOIDING BURNOUT**

[www.socialworkers.org/News/Social-Work-Talks-Podcast/EP17-Self-Care-and-Avoiding-Burnout](http://www.socialworkers.org/News/Social-Work-Talks-Podcast/EP17-Self-Care-and-Avoiding-Burnout)

### **NASW PRESS PUBLICATIONS**

<https://naswpress.org/product/53484/burnout-and-self-care-in-social-work>

<https://naswpress.org/product/53634/self-care-in-social-work>

### **SDSU Well-Being & Health Promotion**

<https://sacd.sdsu.edu/health-promotion>

## **SDSU Counseling & Psychological Services**

<https://sacd.sdsu.edu/cps>

## **Aztec Recreation**

<https://arc.sdsu.edu/>

Social work is a rewarding, but sometimes stressful vocation, and so we urge our students to make self-care a priority.

# **COMMITMENT TO RACIAL AND SOCIAL JUSTICE**

The SDSU School of Social Work is committed to collaborate with students, alumni, and our community partners to take action to effect positive social change. The School pledges to foster a welcoming and safe climate for its students through disarming biased speech and behavior by interrupting and changing these dynamics, engaging in courageous conversations about equity and overcoming oppression, and advocating for policy and change that challenges systemic and institutional racism.

Additionally, as stated in July 2022 by the Council on Social Work Education (CSWE), the [2022 Educational Policies and Accreditation Standards \(EPAS\)](#) affirms and strengthens the enduring commitment of social work education to principles of anti-racism, diversity, equity, and inclusion. The 2022 EPAS supports social work programs in developing a workforce of social workers who are knowledgeable about the ways positionality, power, privilege, and difference affect practice areas, and how social workers challenge systems of oppression that affect diverse populations.

As field faculty we hope to model the essential nature of self-work through reflecting on how our own biases impact how we interact with students, colleagues and community partners. We aim to ensure that our field education curricula, which includes our field instructor training, acknowledges relevant socio political and historical contexts, and will promote understanding around the root causes of biases and how to take proactive steps to challenge and transform them in our practice. We invite students to also take the opportunity to engage in this self-reflective practice and commit to promoting racial and social justice as developing social workers.

## **Resources addressing racial and social justice include:**

### **SDSU School of Social Work DEI Plan**

<https://socialwork.sdsu.edu/dei-diversity-equality-and-inclusion/>

### **SDSU Cultural Centers**

<https://sacd.sdsu.edu/cultural-centers>

### **Assist in Creating a Welcoming and Safe Climate for SDSU's African-American Community**

<https://sacd.sdsu.edu/diversity-initiatives/african-american-pledge>

## COMMIT TO CREATING A WELCOMING AND SAFE CLIMATE FOR SDSU'S ASIAN PACIFIC ISLANDER DESI AMERICAN COMMUNITY

<https://sacd.sdsu.edu/diversity-initiatives/apida-pledge>

### Joining Together for Calls to End Anti-Asian Violence

<https://socialwork.sdsu.edu/joining-together-for-calls-to-end-anti-asian-violence/>

### NASW ETHNICITY AND RACE PRACTICE TOOLS

[www.socialworkers.org/Practice/Ethnicity-Race/EthnicityRace-Tools](http://www.socialworkers.org/Practice/Ethnicity-Race/EthnicityRace-Tools)

### Grand Challenges for Social Work

<https://grandchallengesforsocialwork.org/>

# Internship Placement Tracking (IPT)

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The [Intern Placement Tracking \(IPT\)](#) system is a web-based field practicum monitoring system. The SDSU School of Social Work implemented IPT in order to more effectively track student placements while providing students with a valuable tool allowing them to research prospective field agencies. The IPT system links students, field faculty and agency field instructors. IPT also provides a paperless solution for tracking and archiving field forms. All forms are completed, signed and submitted electronically on IPT. It is essential for students and field instructors to check that their contact information is accurate and current on their IPT profile. Students should become familiar with IPT and contact Field Administration Support at [swfield@sdsu.edu](mailto:swfield@sdsu.edu) (or their assigned Field Faculty) with any questions regarding IPT.

## GETTING STARTED WITH IPT

IPT can be accessed at [www.runipt.com](http://www.runipt.com). Please bookmark this page for easy reference.

There are three fields required for login: **Organization ID**, **Username** and **Password**. All information entered in these fields is *case sensitive*. The Organization ID for anyone using the SDSU School of Social Work IPT system is: **sdsu**. The School of Social Work will supply all students with a unique default username and default password prior to their first year of field practicum. Three-year and four-year part-time students do not need to log in to IPT for their first year of study, when they are not in field practicum. Students should contact Field Administration Support at [swfield@sdsu.edu](mailto:swfield@sdsu.edu) if they have questions regarding their IPT login.

When a student first logs in to IPT using their default user name and default password, they are required to set a new username and new password. Please note that the IPT and Webportal systems are not connected.

Students are encouraged to review the [IPT Tutorial](#) located on the [Field Education Website](#).

# The Baccalaureate Field Education Program

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## PROGRAM OBJECTIVES OF THE BASW PROGRAM

The BASW program's overall purpose is to prepare students for entry-level generalist social work practice, competence in working with diverse and vulnerable populations, particularly in the Southern California border region. The program seeks to respond to the workforce development needs of health and human services agencies within the region by providing them with graduates grounded in evidence-based practice.

### **The formal mission statement of the BASW program is as follows:**

*The mission of the Baccalaureate Program is to prepare entry-level generalist practitioners for professional, ethical and evidence-based social work practice with a global and domestic perspective, to become critical consumers of research, to provide the required base for future professional and educational growth. It subscribes to the stated philosophy and the overall mission of the School by offering an integrated and coherent curriculum emphasizing professional values, ethics, knowledge, and skills that enable graduates to work in public and non-profit social services agencies with diverse and vulnerable populations, particularly in the Southern California border region. Faculty believe its mission statement provides a rationale and direction for the Baccalaureate of Social Work's explicit and implicit curriculum in preparing students for entry-level practice.*

### **Program mission is consistent with the social work profession's purpose:**

The mission of the BASW program is in line with the social work profession's purpose in the following areas: serving vulnerable populations, respecting human diversity, conducting professional and ethical behaviors, practice guided by evidence and scientific research, and being engaged in life-long learning and continued professional growth.

Since the inception of social work, its dedicated purpose is to serve those who are vulnerable and disadvantaged and alleviate their pain and suffering. The mission statement articulates this purpose and actualizes it via implicit curriculum that emphasizes assessment, engagement, and interventions across micro, mezzo, and macro levels. A generalist framework is infused in courses across the program. Students gain the knowledge and skills necessary to effectively serve vulnerable populations in the community.

The social work profession's commitment to diversity is reflected in the mission statement and in its implicit and explicit curriculum. The BASW Program recognizes the diversity of the Southern

California border region as a strength, but that it also requires multiple modes of understanding and necessitates calibrating interventions, albeit at the clinical to community-level, to best fit the values and perspective of those social workers seek to help.

The social work profession distinguishes itself from other disciplines or professions because of the high professional and ethical standards it holds. The BASW program greatly emphasizes professional and ethical behaviors of the social work profession in its mission statement and translates that explicitly throughout its implicit and explicit curriculum. It is recognized that the BASW program is the prime time for orienting students to a lifelong conduct of professional and ethical behaviors during the formative years of their professional life.

The BASW Program has embraced evidence-based practice as being central to linking theory to practice and to seeking out effective interventions at all levels. Key to evidence-based practice is the ability to assess the quality of evidence by understanding scientific inquiry and use that evidence to justify and support their practice. The BASW Program prepares students to become active consumers of research.

The BASW Program recognizes the importance of continued growth in each student's professional career and states that explicitly in its mission statement. The BASW program not only prepares entry-level generalist practitioners, but also lays the foundation for them to embark on future professional and educational growth.

## REQUIREMENTS AND CURRICULUM DESIGN

The baccalaureate social work courses educate students to work with individuals, families, groups, organizations, and communities. Students are exposed to generalist content on social work values and ethics, diversity, social justice, populations-at-risk, human behavior and development within various settings, current social welfare policies, social work practice methods, research and the use of evidence-based practice, and field. Students learn and apply this content beginning at the lower division level and continuing at the upper division level and field practicum in the senior year.

For integration in the baccalaureate social work program, the senior year of the major is focused on enhancing students' social work skills through more advanced courses in social work practice, research, and the application of these skills in the field within an agency setting.

Students take two social work practice courses concurrent with the two-semester field practicum and field seminars. The first course focuses on intervention, evaluation, and follow-up with individuals, families and groups, as well as crisis intervention, case management, and group work as necessary social work skills. The second course addresses generalist practice interventions and evaluation in neighborhoods and communities, with an emphasis on community organizing.

Evidence-based practice is covered in all courses and vertical integration is achieved through a literature review assignment regarding the student's field population and a written grant proposal. The **field seminar** content and assignments further the vertical integration through coverage of generalist practice with integration of all course content and concurrent field experiences.

## STUDENT ELIGIBILITY FOR ENROLLMENT IN FIELD PRACTICUM

In order to qualify for the Undergraduate Field Practicum, students must meet the following requirements by the end of the spring semester prior to their enrolling in the SW 489A course for the fall semester of the following year. If the undergraduate student cannot meet these requirements by the end of the spring semester the student should not file the Undergraduate Field Application since the student is not eligible for the course. Summer session cannot be used to meet the following eligibility criteria:

- Must have Senior status class level 4 (at least 90 earned units)
- Must have major status (Major code 558201)
- Must have completed and passed the 21 units of 300 level social work courses (350 / 360 / 361 / 370 / 381 / 382 / 391) .
- Must have a major GPA of 2.4 or higher (includes all upper division social work courses taken—I, SP or U grades will be counted as an “F” in the GPA calculation)
- Must have obtained a grade of “C” or better in SW 381 and SW 382 (or students must retake courses to meet this criteria)
- Must have a minimum cumulative overall 2.0 GPA and be in good academic standing (cannot be on probation or disqualified) at the University

## OVER ENROLLMENT

It is the student's responsibility to meet all required field placement process deadlines. Late field applications will not be accepted and the student will need to re-apply for field in the next academic school year. During the spring semester all student applications are verified by the Director of Undergraduate Field Education to determine if the student has completed all courses and grades as indicated above. Spring grades are not calculated in the rankings, but are verified after spring semester that eligibility requirements are still in effect. If students have not met the eligibility criteria at that time, they are notified that they are ineligible. Ineligibility requires the student to wait one full academic year in order to re-apply for the field practicum experience. The student must correct the deficiency during the upcoming academic year and begin the placement process again in the spring semester with attendance at the mandatory Placement Planning Meeting.

Students deemed ineligible will not be afforded an advantage during the next placement process and will rejoin the general applicant pool of new applicants applying for their field

practicum experience. Once verified, students must go through the actual placement process (see below) and meet the criteria established. These are described in the SW 489 Field Application in IPT and discussed with students at the mandatory Placement Planning Meeting. If students do not meet these criteria they will be ineligible and must reapply after correcting whatever criteria has not been met.

## BACCALAUREATE FIELD PLACEMENT PROCESS

The Director of Undergraduate Field Education implements and facilitates the process in all field practicum assignments for the undergraduate social work majors, beginning in the spring semester of their junior year. Assignments are made during the spring semester prior to the beginning of the academic year. The process begins with a **mandatory Placement Planning Meeting** scheduled on the first Friday after students return from their Winter Break. The Placement Planning Meeting provides students with an overview of the undergraduate field placement process and what students can expect when they attend the **mandatory Agency Fair** which is held on the Friday immediately after the Placement Planning Meeting. Failure to attend either the Placement Planning Meeting or the Agency Fair will delay a student from proceeding with their field placement process. Undergraduate students, majoring in Social Work, must meet all eligibility requirements by the end of the spring semester before entering their field practicum.

Students must complete an **IPT Face Sheet** by the indicated due date. Upon completing the IPT Face Sheet, the student will receive a detailed memo at their [sdsu.edu](mailto:sdsu.edu) email from the Director of Undergraduate Field Education that includes an overview of the field education program and field placement process and related policies. Students are responsible for checking their [sdsu.edu](mailto:sdsu.edu) email accounts so that they do not miss important communications from the field education team, and failure to do so will delay a student from proceeding with their field placement process.

Students will complete an **Undergraduate Field Application** in their IPT account and this is reviewed and utilized by field faculty to refer students to their preferred field practicum site. Students have an opportunity to indicate their background and experience, their areas of interest, and specific needs such as academic accommodations, geographic preference, etc. in their Field Application. Placement decisions are guided by the following considerations: the expressed interest and career goals of the student; prior work and life experiences that the student highlights; geographic location preference; the special needs and characteristics of the student; the policies and procedures of the field placement process as overseen by the School and dictated by the Council on Social Work Education (CSWE); and the capacity and/or availability of the agency/field instructor. Field faculty will give careful consideration to students' preferences as noted in their Field Application and will strive to support students in achieving them; however, there may be instances when a student's preference(s) may not be met.

The Field Application is reviewed with the agency field instructor. Students are then referred via email to the agency by the field faculty for an interview. Agencies confirm acceptance with the referring field faculty and the student is contacted via email regarding their assigned field placement. If the student is denied acceptance by the agency, the field faculty will provide feedback to the student and discuss next steps, such as interview strategies and may also include referring the student to [SDSU Career Services](#). Students are then sent on subsequent interviews. **Failing to pass the second interview will result in disqualification from the field placement process**, unless otherwise determined by the Director of Undergraduate Field Education. Evidence indicating that a student has purposely sabotaged their interview with an agency will result in a one-year delay in the field placement process or disqualification from the program. Final confirmation of students entering the field practicum are typically made by June, upon review of students' grades and the students' successful completion of agency screenings and clearances. Students are responsible for informing the Director of Undergraduate Field Education of any changes to their ability to meet the minimum requirements to proceed with their field practicum experience. This must be done in a timely manner, and no later than the last day of the spring semester preceding the fall semester of which the field practicum experience would have commenced. Failure to do so will result in a delay to a student's field placement process.

The field placement process takes place within the School's designated time frame, with students meeting the required deadlines for course eligibility. Students are required to meet the timeline for submitting their IPT Face Sheet and Field Application. Failure to follow these policies will result in the student not being eligible for the field practicum, delay in the field placement for up to one year or disqualification from the BASW program.

## CONCURRENT FIELD EDUCATION

The undergraduate field education curriculum begins only in the fall semester and continues to the spring semester for one academic year. The field placement provides students with the opportunity to gain hands-on experience in settings and with populations or social problems that differ from or build upon their previous work or volunteer experiences. All students in field must also be concurrently enrolled in, and must satisfactorily complete the appropriate practice classes (SW 483 A and SW 489B) to foster the integration of theory and practice. Students must have a "C" or better in SW 483A to continue with 483B and will be unable to continue in their field practicum if deemed ineligible for SW 483B.

## BACCALAUREATE FIELD EDUCATION STRUCTURE

In preparation for the field practicum course, students must attend a **mandatory Field Orientation** during the first week of the fall semester. The format of the field practicum course (SW 489) is as follows: In the fall semester, students attend field seminars every week for the first six weeks for an hour and 45 minutes each, and then transition to meeting every other week



for the remainder of the fall semester. In the spring semester, students attend approximately eight field seminars which meet every other week for an hour and 45 minutes. Each student in a field placement is assigned an undergraduate field faculty member who serves as a liaison between the student, School and the agency/field instructor. The field faculty supports students through professional advising, problem-solving, support, mediation, consultation, and advocacy on a range of learning issues and needs. However, Field Faculty do not provide academic advising. Students seeking academic advising should make an appointment with their Undergraduate Advisor.

## SW 489 FIELD PRACTICUM COURSE REQUIREMENTS

SW 489 field practicum course requirements:

1. **Supervision:** Beginning the first week of the field practicum course, students should engage in weekly individualized, formalized, face-to-face, one-hour (minimum) supervision with their agency field instructor. Supervision is to be held each week of the semester by the student's assigned field instructor. If a student does not receive supervision from their field instructor on a weekly basis, this may result in the student not receiving the required hours and experiences. Students are responsible for informing their field faculty immediately if there is a lack of supervision.
2. **The field agency is responsible for orienting the intern in:** Each field agency is required to provide students with a comprehensive orientation to the agency, its policies and procedures, the services it provides, the community it serves, the collaborative agencies it associates with, laws, values, ethics governed by social work practice in their agency, emergencies, how to reach the field instructor in a crisis situation, the name of the assigned professional the student consults with in field instructor's absence; future scheduling with the student – internship hours, attendance and participation practices, expectations, assignments, supervision, etc. Agency safety issues for individuals in the agency; in the car; in the office; in the community; conducting home visits, etc. security policies and practices; harassment policies within their organization; HIPAA compliance in accordance with agency training; following policies and procedures, signing an agency statement of compliance, etc.
3. **Orientation Checklist:** Students are required to complete an Orientation Checklist embedded within their Learning Agreement in IPT once they begin their field practicum experience.
4. **Field Seminars:** The SW 489 field seminars are designed to supplement and integrate the generalist content students receive in their concurrent social work courses. These seminars address specific skills, topics, issues, concerns related to the field practicum experience. Please refer to the course syllabus for specified content and issues discussed. SW 489 students are assigned to a particular field seminar section. A student's field seminar assignment information is sent to their [sdsu.edu](mailto:sdsu.edu) email address by

the Director of Undergraduate Field Education over the summer. For SW 489 course continuity in the spring semester, students will remain in the same field seminar sections.

5. **Learning Agreement:** The Learning Agreement provides each student with the opportunity to participate in the planning of their field practicum experience, clarifying expectations for the student, the field instructor, the field faculty and the Director of Undergraduate Field Education. The function of the Learning Agreement is to operationalize the field practicum goals and objectives by outlining specific student activities in the field setting and the means by which their achievement will be assessed. The goals and objections of the Learning Agreement should address the core areas found in the Undergraduate Field Comprehensive Skills Evaluation. The Learning Agreement and Comprehensive Skills Evaluation are completed as one form on IPT.

In addition to its usefulness in monitoring a student's progress during the academic year, the Learning Agreement can be used by a student's field instructor in completing the student's fall and spring Comprehensive Skills Evaluations. It also serves as a basis for the agency site visit that the student, field instructor, and the field faculty schedule. Students are required to write a new learning agreement if the student is placed in a new field practicum site during the academic year.

6. **Agency Site Visit(s) with Student, Field Instructor and Field Faculty:** Field Faculty schedule a minimum of one agency visit per academic year. This is a three-way meeting between the student, agency field instructor and field faculty. The student's learning agreement, SW 489 curriculum requirements, success stories or concerns shared by the student and/or field instructor are reviewed and a discussion is facilitated by the field faculty conducting the site visit. Field instructors and students are informed that the field faculty are available for immediate consultation and may provide additional agency visits as needed. Agency site visit(s) are held as part of the student's regularly scheduled internship hours and are typically held at the agency site, although they may also occur through teleconferencing.
7. **Process Recordings:** Students should refer to their course syllabus for process recording requirements and due dates. Students should go over the procedures for completing process recordings with their agency field instructor, including, but not limited to, how to inform clients of this process, how to document the process recordings and the due dates involved. The field instructor should provide constructive feedback to the student on each process recording within an appropriate time frame and discuss the recording in supervision to further the student's learning and growth. Refer to Process Recording formats, located on the Field Education Website under [Student Forms](#).
8. **Comprehensive Skills Evaluations:** All evaluations should be joint ventures in which the student and agency field instructor actively participate. The field instructor carries the final responsibility of facilitating a constructive discussion regarding their feedback on the student's performance during the semester and completing the required forms. At the

end of each semester, the School also requires each student to write a **Self Reflection Narrative Essay** in which they identify their strengths, limitations, progress, and future goals as related to the nine social work core competencies (see below).

The SW 489 Comprehensive Skills Evaluation (Appendices Section) is meant to assist the field instructor and student in identifying learning needs, and assessing progress toward the overall objectives. The deadlines for completing and submitting the form in IPT are indicated in the [Field Education Calendar](#) and in the SW 489 course syllabus. The field instructor should be mindful of the due dates to ensure that the student is not penalized with an incomplete grade for the semester. Student performance expectations are sequenced over the two semesters of the experience course. Each student should achieve the minimum expectations for each semester and show sustained growth throughout the year.

## 2022 EPAS Social Work Core Competencies

1	<b>Demonstrate Ethical and Professional Behavior</b>
2	<b>Advance Human Rights and Social, Racial, Economic and Environmental Justice</b>
3	<b>Engage Anti-Racism, Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (ADEI) in Practice</b>
4	<b>Engage in Practice-Informed Research and Research-Informed Practice</b>
5	<b>Engage in Policy Practice</b>
6	<b>Engage with Individuals, Families, Groups, Organizations, and Communities</b>
7	<b>Assess Individuals, Families, Groups, Organizations, and Communities</b>
8	<b>Intervene with Individuals, Families, Groups, Organizations, and Communities</b>
9	<b>Evaluate Practice with Individuals, Families, Groups, Organizations, and Communities</b>

Field performance expectations for the baccalaureate program are organized into nine core competency areas as outlined above by [CSWE 2022 Educational Policy Accreditation Standards](#) (EPAS).

Basic expectations in each of the above core areas for each of the two semesters have been delineated. Each core area contains particular objectives and behavioral measures that are used to evaluate a student's performance. Students must demonstrate adequate performance in all areas and in the field seminars to receive a grade of "credit" for the SW 489 course.

9. **Agency and Field Instructor Evaluations:** At the end of the spring semester, students have the opportunity to evaluate their agency and field instructor in IPT.

Students should refer to their SW 489 course syllabus for each semester for further course assignments and detailed information.

As part of the undergraduate student's grade, the student will be required to follow all field education policies, procedures, time lines, performance expectations and demonstrate responsibility as an adult learner.

## STUDENT FIELD EXPERIENCE INTERNSHIP AT EMPLOYMENT SITE

Employment sites for internships as field practicum settings for BASW students are not allowed under current School of Social Work policies in accordance with our accrediting body CSWE.

# The MSW Field Education Program

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## MISSION AND GOALS OF THE MSW PROGRAM

*The mission of the MSW Program is to prepare graduates competent to work in public and private sector health and human service agencies. Using both generalist and advanced specialist frameworks, graduates work both with and on behalf of diverse and vulnerable populations in the Southern California border region and beyond. Graduates enhance human and community well-being and eliminate social disparities. Grounded in the ethics of the social work profession, graduates apply evidence-based approaches in their work with individuals, families, groups, communities, and the agencies that serve them.*

The goals of the graduate program are to implement the mission by preparing advanced social work practitioners who:

- Are well-grounded in the values and ethics of the profession.
- Demonstrate competencies that can be used in a wide variety of settings, with systems of various sizes and with diverse and vulnerable populations.
- Critically examine issues of social, economic and environmental justice and are committed to the realization of human rights
- Utilize research evidence in practice decision making.
- Are committed to lifelong professional development.
- Are prepared to be leaders in the profession.

## PROGRAM OBJECTIVES OF THE MSW PROGRAM

- Based on the mission and goals stated above and consistent with the Curriculum Policy Statement for graduate social work education, the MSW program is designed to prepare advanced autonomous social work practitioners with specialized skills and knowledge in a social work method, who can use a generalist perspective, and implement evidenced-based multiple-level interventions. The achievement of the MSW Program mission and goals is operationalized through an educational program that prepares graduates who:
  - Apply critical thinking skills within the context of professional social work practice;
  - Understand and interpret the history of social work and its current structure and issues;
  - Are well-grounded in social work knowledge, skills, values, competencies, and ethics as they engage in multiple levels of social work intervention;
  - Practice without discrimination and who are responsive to the needs of diverse groups distinguished by race, ethnicity, culture, national origin, religion, gender, age, social class, sexual orientation, physical or mental ability, family structure, marital status, religion, or other important characteristics;
  - Are committed to social and economic justice and who can apply strategies of advocacy and social change to empower oppressed groups to participate more fully and equitably in society;
  - Use interdisciplinary and strengths-based perspectives to provide high-quality services to client systems of various size;
  - Can function within the structure of organizations and service delivery systems, and can guide necessary organizational change to improve service delivery systems;
  - Use theoretical frameworks supported by empirical evidence to understand individual development and behavior across the lifespan and the interactions among individuals and between individuals, families, groups, organizations, and communities;
  - Use a Biopsychosocial and generalist perspective, the best available research evidence, and specialized knowledge and skills to intervene effectively with vulnerable populations, e.g. children, youth and families; the mentally ill; and those who are physically ill or elderly;
  - Have specialized knowledge and skills in a major social work intervention method, e.g. direct practice or administration or community development, and who demonstrate a high level of professional competency that includes the appropriate use of supervision and consultation;

- Possess the skills to assume professional leadership roles in the community and to influence the development and implementation of sound social policies;
- Are able to integrate and use quantitative and qualitative empirical research to monitor and evaluate the appropriateness and effectiveness of various modes of intervention to assist diverse vulnerable populations and resolve social problems;
- Understand and value social work practice research and who are able to conduct and apply studies to assure best practice interventions;
- Are committed to their continuing education, professional growth and lifelong learning;
- Use communication skills differently across client populations, colleagues, and communities.

## MSW ACADEMIC PROGRAMS AND FIELD PRACTICUM

All of the MSW and joint degree programs have field practicum curriculum components:

### Academic Year

This model parallels the Academic Year schedule. Students take required and elective courses, including the required field practicum courses. The Field Education sequence provides seven units of academic credit for the Foundation Year and eight units of academic credit for the Advanced Year, for a total of 15 units of academic credit. The graduate internships require a total of **1050 hours**; **450 hours** during the Foundation Year field practicum and **600 hours** in the Advanced Year field practicum. No credit is given for any student's prior work or educational/life experiences. Field seminars are held through the Foundation and Advanced years when students are enrolled in field practicum courses.

Students have two field practicum internships in two different agencies during their course of study. Regardless of the size of the agency and the availability of multiple geographic locations and/or programs, the agency can be utilized as an internship site for only one of the two periods of field instruction.

### Advanced Standing Program (ASP)

This program is designed to facilitate completion of the MSW degree requirements for students who have earned a Bachelor's degree in Social Work (BASW or BSW). The ASP eliminates the redundancy of repeating core social work concepts taught at the BASW level, such as values,

ethics, and methods of practice, which are also taught during the Foundation Year of the MSW program.

Upon successful completion of the School's Bridge Courses that are held during the summer session, students obtain advanced candidacy and begin the Advanced Year MSW field practicum courses and year two of the academic year MSW program curriculum.

## **Specialized Programs**

### **Dual Degree Programs:**

#### **Master of Social Work Degree and Master of Public Health Degree (MSW-MPH)**

The School of Social Work and the Graduate School of Public Health offer a three-year concurrent graduate program leading to a Master of Social Work and a Master of Public Health. The objective of the concurrent program is to offer preparation in the fields of social work and public health. Students in this concurrent program must select the social work administration methods focus area.

A four-semester field practicum is required and is held in years two and three of the student's program. Students are also required to complete a thesis. The thesis, incorporating theory, method, and analytic techniques from both disciplines, is the culminating experience for the concurrent program leading to the MSW and MPH degrees.

#### **Master of Social Work Degree and Juris Doctor Degree (MSW-JD)**

The School of Social Work and the California Western School of Law offer a four-year concurrent graduate program which allows students to simultaneously earn a Master of Social Work and Juris Doctor (JD) degree in law. The objective of the concurrent degree program is to prepare students who are competent in advanced practice where social work and law converge. This is a four-year full time program, including a four-semester field practicum, held in years two and four. The first year of the program will be completed at the Law School and consist of the traditional first year law curriculum. The second year is completed at the School of Social Work, while the third and fourth years are completed at both campuses. A thesis is also required.

#### **Summer Block Field Practicum Placement Option for Joint MSW-JD Advanced Year Administration and Community Development Students (SW 755)**

In 2011-12, the School of Social Work piloted a summer block placement program for joint degree, MSW-JD Advanced Year Administration and Community Development students who wished to complete a summer full time block placement at the end of their Foundation Year. The criteria that have been established by the Field and Curriculum Committee are that students can pursue this option if they have an extraordinary learning opportunity outside of San Diego

County, which they would like to pursue in an agency that accepts full time summer social work interns. The student needs to locate the agency and program and make sure that the agency is able to meet the advanced year SW 755 curriculum requirements, appropriate supervision by an MSW is available and that the agency is willing to complete the necessary steps to become an approved SDSU School of Social Work field agency.

There are three agencies that have previously completed Service Learning Agreements with the SDSU School of Social Work and have accepted MSW-JD Administration/Community Development Students: 1. Alliance for Children's Rights in Los Angeles, 2. The Children's Defense Fund in Washington DC, 3. East Bay Sanctuary - Refugee Rights in Berkley, California.

Students who are interested in exploring this option should contact the Director of Field Education in February prior to the summer of their Advanced Year of field practicum.

### **CalSWEC's Title IV-E Child Welfare Stipend Program**

This program is a unique partnership between social work education and the publicly supported child welfare system. The CalSWEC program mission and goal is to help professionalize public child welfare. The intent of the program is to strengthen and enhance the quality of practice by increasing the number of professionally trained and educated public child welfare social workers. Additionally, the Title IV-E program seeks to increase Tribal Social Workers in Child Welfare and to prioritize the enrollment of students who reflect the diversity of California's Child Welfare population.

Selected students receive a stipend, generally for two years, funded through Title IV-E monies from the federal government that have been designated for child welfare training. They participate in specialized training seminars and activities throughout the year. Students complete a seminar series of presentations on child welfare skills. Students must commit to work in a State of California public child welfare agency for a minimum of one year for every year of support received. Students in the CalSWEC program do one of their internships in a public child welfare agency and one year in a private non-profit agency. Support for three-year and four-year students are limited to current employees of the County of San Diego, Health & Human Services Agency, Child Welfare Services. They receive full tuition and fees, costs for required books, and a travel allowance. They must return to their agency of employment and work for one year as an employee for each year of financial support they receive.

Support for current employees of the Department of Social Services, Imperial Valley, is available as part of the Title IV-E program. They receive full tuition and fees, costs for required books, and a travel allowance. They must return to their agency of employment and work two years in that agency post MSW graduation.

The Title IV-E program provides a stipend to select Bachelor in Social Work students in their senior year. Students must commit to work in a State of California public child welfare agency



for a one year post BASW graduation. Applications are submitted to the Title IV-E Coordinator in the student's junior year.

### **CalSWEC's Integrated Behavioral Health (IBH) Program** (Offered when funding is available)

This program provides stipends for students interested in careers in public mental health. Students entering their Advanced Year of internship who are willing and able to be placed at county and county-contracted mental health outpatient agencies are eligible to apply for this program. This program provides specialized electives in mental health, psychosocial rehabilitation and recovery, additional enrichment seminars and field trips to community mental health agencies, such as Patton State Hospital and The Village in Long Beach.

Students who complete this program are required to secure employment in a county or county-contracted agency immediately after graduation. Interested students should contact the IBH Stipend Program Coordinator prior to their Advanced Year field practicum. An informational meeting is typically held in December. Applications are due at the end of January. Check the School of Social Work website for updates.

### **San Diego-Imperial Geriatric Education Center (SDIGEC) Geriatric MSW Stipend Program**

A primary aim of the geriatric Master of Social Work (MSW) Training Stipend Program is to develop AD RDspecialized gerontological social workers who are well equipped to meet workforce needs. The GWEP- MSW Training Stipend is available to Direct Practice MSW students in their advanced year and provides \$8,000. The program will provide eligible students with Training, education, and opportunities necessary to work with AD RD patients, their families, caregivers, and other inter-professional teams of social work professionals.

### **Pupil Personnel Services Credential (PPS-C)**

The School of Social Work is approved by the California Commission on Teacher Credentialing as a site to offer the PPS-C, with specializations in School Social Work and Child Welfare and Attendance. This credential program was developed to meet the increasing demand for services to children and families within the context of the educational system.

Students in the direct practice concentration wishing to acquire a credential for School Social Work must complete a **600-hour** Advanced Year MSW field practicum in an approved school site under a PPSC-credentialed field instructor's supervision. This is generally available for Advanced Year MSW field practicum students only; however, Title IV-E students who wish to complete the PPS-C in their Foundation Year and are willing to commit to the extra hours, may discuss this option with the School's PPS-C Coordinator. Interns at the Imperial Valley Campus may opt for a PPS-C internship their Foundation or Advanced Year internship. Due to PPS-C requirements, students placed in schools during their Foundation year would agree to complete 600

hours of internship instead of the typical 450 hours. Candidates would take their school social work course in the summer between their second and third year.

The credential covers pre-kindergarten through 12-grade service in public and public charter schools and requires experiences with two different developmental levels. Students must complete the School Social Work electives in order to obtain the credential. Students must also complete the certificate of clearance process prior to the start of internship for their internship hours to count toward the credential.

### **Early Childhood-Transdisciplinary Education and Mental Health (EC-TEaMH) Certificate**

This is an opportunity for MSW students who wish to obtain this certificate in the final year of their MSW. This certificate includes **15 units** taken over the two semesters of the Advanced Year. 12 units of seminar courses address core knowledge foundations and 3 units address practicum/field experience. Students will complete a total of 120 hours of supervised practicum with young children in San Diego County. Students are assigned to an internship in an approved and supervised Social Work/Early Childhood Mental Health placement.

Students interested in the EC-TEaMH Certificate need to complete the Advanced Year field application during the spring semester prior to enrollment in the certificate program. Admission requirements include successful completion of a BA or BS degree in Child Development or related field, completion of a Cal State Apply application and all supplementary documentation submitted online to the program application, and 2 letters of recommendation required from individuals you have interacted with professionally. Unless the demand is high, students will generally be admitted to the certificate program. For further information, contact Director of MSW Admissions, Kellie Scott.

### **SDSU Imperial Valley Campus Program**

This program helps fulfill the SDSU School of Social Work's mission of being responsive to the needs of agencies and their clients, along with communities, students, and the profession of social work in Imperial Valley. This program serves the Imperial Valley County areas (El Centro, Calexico, Brawley, etc.) of California.

Working closely and cooperatively with the SDSU Imperial Valley campus, a three-year curriculum based on the direct practice concentration is offered. Admission to the program is based on the same School of Social Work criteria that is applied to applicants for the SDSU main campus. Enrolled students will complete the same 60-unit curriculum, including the field practicums within three years. A four-semester field practicum is required and is held in years two and three of the student's program.

## REQUIREMENTS AND CURRICULUM DESIGN

Field Education is an integral part of the curriculum and a core requirement for the MSW program. Each field course includes two major components: the practicum agency internship and the school-based field seminars. It provides the social work student with an opportunity to integrate and apply course theoretical knowledge and engage in social work practice in a community-based agency setting with supervised field learning experience. Field education prepares students for professional practice and competence in social work by helping them develop the values, knowledge, and skills they will need to assume a range of professional roles.

The field practicum process is organized, sequential, selective, and individualized within the framework of a specified social work agency, and in congruence with the goals, requirements, and expectations of the School. Over the course of a two-year period, MSW Program Field Education is expected to include:

- Direct practice interventions with individuals, families, and groups;
- Indirect practice interventions focusing on community, organizational, and/or institutional change;
- A diversity of modalities, populations, treatment issues; and
- A range of theoretical and teaching methodologies and models.

The field practicum year-long course begins only at the start of the fall semester and continues through to the end of the spring semester. Placements extend over the Academic Year, excluding University break periods. The traditional Academic Year consists of four semesters over two years, with classroom and field practicum beginning at the end of August/early September and ending in mid-May.

### Emphasis in the Foundation Year

The first year of field practicum is based upon developing the foundation of appropriate social work practice skills and knowledge, which includes developing relationships, acquiring interviewing skills, mastering beginning psychosocial assessment, making diagnostic assessments, and developing intervention skills.

### Emphasis in the Advanced Year

In the second year, students are expected to develop an increased insight and depth of understanding of agency and client systems and social work practice skills. Students may select either an advanced field practicum in **direct practice** or **administrative/ community development** concentrations.

Foundation Year and Advanced Year field practicum placements *must be in different agencies*, each of which must meet the criteria and objectives as stated in the curriculum requirements. Students are assigned to the Foundation Year MSW field practicum that exposes them to a generalist practice experience, including micro, mezzo, and macro practice and a broad range of clientele. The Advanced Year MSW field practicum is coordinated with a student's choice of concentration and specialization.

Each field practicum course is divided into two required components:

- Field Practicum Agency Internship
- Field Practicum Seminars

Students are assigned to a particular field seminar section by the Director of Field Education. Students are informed of their field seminar assignment via email from the Director of Field Education.

Refer to field course syllabus requirements for each semester. Refer to the SSW Field Education Website's [FAQ](#) and the [MSW Handbook](#).

## MSW FIELD PLACEMENT PROCESS

Field faculty coordinate all field practicum assignments for both Foundation Year and Advanced Year MSW students.

All MSW students must meet the eligibility requirements before they are enrolled in the required field practicum course. The field placement process takes place within the School's designated time frame, mid-January until June, with students meeting the required deadlines. All field practicum assignments are arranged by the **Field Faculty Placement Committee**. The Director of Field Education is administratively responsible for the final field practicum assignments. All field students are required to meet each field course's Application Policies and Procedures as detailed in the Field Application. Failure to follow these policies will result in a student not being eligible for the field practicum, delay in the field practicum for up to one year or disqualification from the MSW program.

### MSW I Foundation Year Field Practicum Students (SW 650)

Foundation Year field assignments are made during early spring and summer prior to the beginning of the academic year. Students newly entering the MSW program and existing part-time or dual program students receive information on the field program and field placement process of planning for their Foundation Year field practicum experience from the Director of Field Education via email. The information contained in the MSW I Foundation Year Field

Application which is completed by the student in IPT is used by the Field Faculty Placement Committee (or in the case of Imperial Valley, the Field Coordinator) to make the Foundation Year field practicum referral.

Students have an opportunity to indicate their background and experience, their areas of interest, and specific needs such as academic accommodations, geographic preference, etc. in their Field Application; however, *they cannot choose a specific agency or site* for their Foundation Year field practicum.

Placement referrals are decided upon and made by the Field Faculty Placement Committee (or in the case of Imperial Valley, the Field Coordinator) and guided by the following considerations: the expressed interest and career goals of the student; prior work and life experiences that the student highlights; geographic location preference; the special needs and characteristics of the student; the policies and procedures of the field placement process as overseen by the School and dictated by the Council on Social Work Education (CSWE); and the capacity and/or availability of the agency/field instructor. Field faculty will give careful consideration to students' preferences as noted in their Field Application and will strive to support students in achieving them; however, there may be instances when a student's preference(s) may not be met.

The content of the Field Application may be shared with the agency field instructor. Students are then referred for an interview. Agencies confirm acceptance with field faculty directly and the student is contacted regarding their assigned field placement.

Three-Year and Four-Year part-time MSW program students, including the Imperial Valley cohort, and dual degree MSW-MPH and MSW-JD program students begin the field placement process in mid-February by attending a **mandatory Placement Planning Meeting**. These students complete the field application materials and follow the standard Foundation Year placement procedures in the spring semester preceding the students' enrollment in the field practicum course.

If a student does not pass their field practicum interview, and the agency has documented their feedback regarding the interview process and contacted the School, then the student may not be eligible for the field practicum course. The field faculty will contact the student immediately if this situation arises to discuss the feedback provided by the agency. If a student's professional behavior and adherence to the [NASW Code of Ethics](#) is in question, the student may become ineligible for the field practicum course after only one interview. Students automatically become ineligible for the field practicum course after two placement interviews, unless otherwise determined by the Director of Field Education. The field faculty will contact the student regarding their field placement status and course eligibility.

The Director of Field Education will make the final determination if the student is eligible for an additional interview, based on professional ethics and performance required in the course. Student ineligibility can delay field placement until the following academic year and/or disqualify

the student from the field practicum course. In the latter case, the student will be referred to the **Graduate Advisor** and the **Student Affairs Committee** for review.

Most field placement agencies require fingerprinting, criminal/security clearance evaluations, random drug testing (including marijuana), health and immunization screenings, vaccination records and TB testing. Students are required to complete and pass the requested screenings before official placement confirmation can be provided. Each agency will notify the student as to which of the above screenings are requested and these screenings are usually conducted in the summer preceding the start of the field practicum in late August.

Students will be required to cover the cost of these clearances. The School does not cover any costs pertaining to a student's onboarding process. In some agencies these costs can be over \$200. If onboarding costs are a concern to a student, the student should notify field faculty before being referred to an agency.

Students may need to complete onboarding tasks such as electronic health documentation training over the summer, prior to the start of the academic year, in order to avoid any potential delays to the start of their field practicum experience. Hours completed on onboarding tasks prior to the start of the academic year do not count toward the required field hours, but may be necessary to secure a placement opportunity.

Students should review field policies and procedures pertaining to all aspects of the field practicum experience such as transportation, clearance eligibility, conflicts of interest, [NASW Code of Ethics](#) adherence, etc.

## **MSW II Advanced Year Field Practicum Students (SW 750 or SW 755)**

Beginning in the spring semester of the Foundation Year, students participate in activities that facilitate the selection of the MSW II Advanced Year Field Practicum. The process begins with a **mandatory Placement Planning Meeting** for the Advanced Year field placement process which is typically held on the first Friday after Winter Break, followed by the **Agency Fair** which is usually attended by agency representatives, students, and faculty. The goal of the Agency Fair is to provide students with the opportunity to learn more about agencies they may be interested in interning with for their Advanced Year field practicum experience. Students can also use IPT as a resource to learn more about agencies of interest as many agencies will have brochures uploaded onto their profile page. Following attendance of the Agency Fair, students are then encouraged to consult with field faculty, the Director of Field Education, and other faculty within the School regarding their Advanced Year field placement choices. Students may also seek to be connected with students currently placed at a field setting of interest. Imperial Valley students, rather than attending the Agency Fair (which is focused on agencies based in San Diego County), meet with the Imperial Valley Field Coordinator to review available agencies.

Students are required to complete the entire MSW II Field Application and Field Placement Process during the semester preceding their Advanced Year field practicum experience. Failure to meet the necessary due dates will delay the student beginning or re-entering the field practicum sequence on time and shall delay the student 1-2 years in the field practicum sequence.

Students are referred for an interview via email by the **Field Faculty Placement Committee** (or in the case of Imperial Valley, the Field Coordinator) based on their specialization, focus area, and placement choices as indicated on their Field Application in IPT. Once an interview has taken place, both the student and agency provide feedback to the field faculty, indicating whether they accept or decline the match. If a student is declined by a placement, the field faculty will review feedback with the student and discuss interview strategies which may include referring the student to [SDSU Career Services](#) for additional support with resume writing, interview practice, etc. Students who are not accepted by the agency are sent on subsequent interviews. *Students cannot interview with more than one agency choice at a time.* If a student declines an offer from an agency and chooses to move on to the next interview, the student acknowledges that they are not able to return to that agency as an option. After interviews are held, Advanced Year field practicum assignments are finalized and confirmed.

Field instructors cannot waive School policy. Agencies should avoid asking students to schedule their internship hours when it conflicts with the time they need to attend their classes. If the agency has specific scheduling requirements, students should register for classes that do not conflict with the field course. Students cannot expect the agency to arrange the internship around the student's other responsibilities, such as employment or childcare.

Students sometimes find it challenging to balance the demands of the field practicum course with other life commitments. Students are expected to be in the field practicum during normal business hours for the entire academic year. A limited number of internships offer evening and weekend hours, as most internships occur during normal business hours. The field practicum schedule should be discussed during the interview process, including expectations for winter and spring break. When arranging the internship schedule with the agency, the student and the agency must follow School policy, which states that an intern's schedule in the field course is the responsibility of the agency, along with the student's input, in accordance with School of Social Work policy.

If a student does not pass their field practicum interview, and the agency has documented their feedback regarding the interview process and contacted the School, then the student may not be eligible for the field practicum course. The field faculty will contact the student immediately if this situation arises to discuss the feedback provided by the agency. If a student's professional behavior and adherence to the [NASW Code of Ethics](#) is in question, the student may become ineligible for the field practicum course after only one interview. Students automatically become ineligible for the field practicum course after two placement interviews, unless otherwise determined by the Director of Field Education. The field faculty will contact the student regarding their field placement status and course eligibility.

The Director of Field Education will make the final determination if the student is eligible for an additional interview, based on professional ethics and performance required in the course. Student ineligibility can delay field placement until the following academic year and/or disqualify the student from the field practicum course. In the latter case, the student will be referred to the **Graduate Advisor** and the **Student Affairs Committee** for review.

Most field placement agencies require fingerprinting, criminal/security clearance evaluations, random drug testing (including marijuana), health and immunization screenings, vaccination records and TB testing. Students are required to complete and pass the requested screenings before official placement confirmation can be provided. Each agency will notify the student as to which of the above screenings are requested and these screenings are usually conducted in the summer preceding the start of the field practicum in late August.

Students will be required to cover the cost of these clearances. The School does not cover any costs pertaining to a student's onboarding process. In some agencies these costs can be over \$200. If onboarding costs are a concern to a student, the student should notify field faculty before being referred to an agency.

Students may need to complete onboarding tasks such as electronic health documentation training over the summer, prior to the start of the academic year, in order to avoid any potential delays to the start of their field practicum experience. Hours completed on onboarding tasks prior to the start of the academic year do not count toward the required field hours, but may be necessary to secure a placement opportunity.

Students should review field policies and procedures pertaining to all aspects of the field practicum experience such as transportation, clearance eligibility, conflicts of interest, [NASW Code of Ethics](#) adherence, etc.

## ELIGIBILITY FOR ENROLLMENT IN MSW FIELD PRACTICUM

To enroll in the Field Education course sequence, students must have completed all required prerequisite classes and must be enrolled in the corequisite practice classes. To foster the integration process, all students in the field practicum must be concurrently enrolled in and must satisfactorily complete the appropriate practice classes during the first and second years of field. Students must have a "C" or better in the practice class to continue the field education process.

The schedule of concurrent MSW field education and practice courses is as follows:

	<b>Field Practicum Course</b>	<b>Practice Course</b>
<b>MSW I – Foundation</b>	SW 650 - Field Practicum	SW 630 – Social Work



<b>Year Fall Semester</b>		Practice: A Generalist Perspective
<b>MSW I – Foundation Year Spring Semester</b>	SW 650 - Field Practicum	SW 631 – Social Work Practice: Individuals, Families, and Groups  SW 632 – Social Work Practice: Organizations and Communities
<b>MSW II – Advanced Year Fall Semester</b>	SW 750 – Direct Practice Social Work, Advanced Field Practicum  <u>OR</u>  SW 755 – Social Work Administration/Community Development, Advanced Field Practicum	SW 744 – Advanced Seminar in Selected Topics in Direct Practice Social Work  <u>OR</u>  SW 740 – Advanced Seminar in Social Work Administration
<b>MSW II – Advanced Year Spring Semester</b>	SW 750 – Direct Practice Social Work, Advanced Field Practicum  <u>OR</u>  SW 755 – Social Work Administration/Community Development, Advanced Field Practicum	SW 739 – Advanced Seminar in Social Work Practice with Families  <u>OR</u>  SW 745 – Advanced Seminar in Selected Topics in Social Work Administration or Community Development

Integration is a two-way process. The field practicum is expected to provide “in vivo” experiences relevant to academic content, and the student is expected to apply this content to their activities in the field. Also, the student is expected to share course information with their agency field instructor for purposes of planning, integration, and to meet course requirements. The student is also expected to utilize relevant field material in their course work through class discussion and case presentation.

1. Field practicum placements begin in the fall semester for the academic year ONLY. No mid-semester placements are permitted unless there are extenuating circumstances and the Director of Field Education has approved this arrangement.
2. Students are expected to remain in the same field placement for the entire field practicum period in each academic year.

**2.1.** When a student discontinues their respective field practicum during the semester and has not completed at least 70% of their field practicum hours, requirements/ expectations

for the semester with current satisfactory performance, and the required number of field seminars, they will receive a grade of “NO CREDIT” for the semester and will need to re-start the field practicum at the beginning of the following field practicum cycle.

**2.2.** The graduate field practicum courses are an entire academic year course. If the student discontinues their field practicum course any time during the academic year, the student will be required to re-start, if eligible, the field sequence next fall semester. Please refer to “Grading Policies in Field Practicum” for further detailed information.

**2.3.** Prior to a student's re-entry, a meeting may be held with the student, Graduate or Undergraduate Advisor, Director of Field Education, the respective field faculty, and other requested faculty. The purpose of the meeting is to evaluate and re-establish readiness to enter the field, review coursework, and make final arrangements for the field practicum internship and co-requisite courses. Students must enroll in the field practicum course according to the sequenced position in the field education program of the MSW program to which they have been admitted, e.g., one year Advanced Standing Program, 2-year, 3-year or 4- year.

**2.4.** Students will complete the full number of required hours specified for each semester, the required course assignments, and attend the field seminars during each semester. Please refer to “Hours Requirements Policy” for further detailed information.

**2.5.** When a student re-enters the field practicum, they shall be required to enroll in the concurrent practice class specified for that field practicum semester.

**2.6.** In exceptional circumstances, when a student has already received a grade for the concurrent practice course, and is re-starting the field practicum for this specific semester, the student may be required to audit the required concurrent practice class. (When auditing a class, students are responsible for registration fees, regular attendance, class participation and completion of all assignments.)

**2.7.** The special circumstances necessitating the discontinuance of the field practicum shall be discussed with the field faculty and the Director of Field Education so that appropriate arrangements can be made for the restart of field education activities. The field faculty will determine the specifics and timing of the student's re-entering the field practicum sequence. Prior to a student re-entering into the field work sequence, a meeting will be held with the student, the Graduate Advisor, the Director of Field Education, and designated field faculty to re-establish readiness and eligibility to enter the field placement, review coursework and audit requirements, and to make final arrangements for the field placement.

**3.** Students are required to be enrolled in the concurrent practice class designated for each semester of field practicum, and must complete any prerequisites for these classes. If a student receives a failing grade in a practice class (C- grade in a MSW practice class), they may not advance to the next practice class, and thus, the next field practicum, due to not fulfilling the prerequisite requirements. In addition, students with an “Incomplete” grade in the concurrent

practice class must correct the “Incomplete” grade to a passing grade prior to the beginning of the next University semester to be eligible for the field placement process. Failure to do so will delay the student beginning or re-entering the field practicum sequence on time and shall delay the student 1-2 years in the field practicum sequence.

4. Students must maintain a 3.0 GPA prior to the initial enrollment in field education and throughout the entire field practicum period. Notification of students who are on academic probation which affects their field practicum status will be coordinated by the Graduate Advisor, and the Director of Field Education will be informed.

5. Students must be in good academic standing and have completed all prerequisite coursework to participate in the field education program. When a student is not in good academic standing, the field practicum agency and/or a potential field practicum agency shall be notified.

6. A student who must defer their enrollment in the field practicum due to extenuating circumstances, e.g. illness, personal emergency, etc. must discuss this issue with the field faculty, Director of Field Education, and academic Advisor, and receive approval for this request. Course schedule must also be adjusted to reflect the taking of appropriate concurrent courses when enrolled in field placement. Refer to “Student Eligibility for Field Practicum Internship” for additional information.

7. Many field practicum agencies require certain proof of clearance prior to placement (medical clearance, drug testing (including marijuana) TB clearance, criminal evaluation, security check, fingerprinting, vaccination records, etc.). Students placed in these agencies requiring these clearances are responsible for completing the necessary activities or forms, and submitting them to the agency for final agency confirmation. Failure to submit and follow-through on the required agency clearances and evaluations will result in the student not enrolling in the field practicum course for that semester.

8. The SDSU School of Social Work will only accept transferred units for field work and concurrent practice coursework when the period of study represents a full academic year of field placement and the student is in good standing from the accredited former school of social work.

## FIELD EDUCATION STRUCTURE - HOURS – REQUIREMENTS

1. Each student shall complete **1050 hours** of field practicum during the course of the MSW

Graduate Program. In the MSW I Foundation Year of field education, **450 hours** are required (210 hours during the fall semester and 240 hours in the spring semester). In the MSW II Advanced Year Field Practicum, students will be responsible for 300 hours in the fall and spring semester for a total of **600 hours** in the academic year. The field practicum is in two distinct agencies with different field instructors for two years.

2. The Foundation Year MSW field practicum is *approximately 10 hours for the first two weeks*, and then **16 hours per week** for the remainder of the academic year, for a total of **seven units** (3 units in the fall, 4 units in the spring). For the Advanced Year MSW field practicum, students complete **20 hours per week** during the academic year, for a total of **eight units** (four units per semester).

In the MSW II Advanced Year MSW field practicum, dual degree program students (**MSW-MPH or MSW-JD**) only conduct their practicum for **16 hours per week**, for a total of **480 hours**.

- The assigned field placement will designate hours and distribute the student's hours over two to four days during the week.
- Students shall be in their field practicum for a **minimum of a 4-hour block** of time.
- The student's field placement schedule is determined by their coursework schedule, including the field seminars, and the agency's schedule.
- Field practicum students are not expected to spend additional hours in preparation for field seminar assignments. When reading or preparation is required for any field assignments, or specific readings assigned by the agency, students should discuss with their field instructor that time be assigned during hours at the agency to do so. For example, researching and gathering material for a presentation about the agency in the field seminar, process recordings, or development of Learning Agreement. Students are not expected to spend more than the assigned 16 or 20 hours a week in their agency. If they choose to do so, this is on a voluntary basis.

## GRADING POLICIES IN FIELD PRACTICUM

Grades will be administered in accordance with the policies set forth in the SDSU Bulletin of the Graduate Division, and will follow the School of Social Work Grading Policy documented in the [MSW Student Handbook](#). All graduate courses in the MSW program field education curriculum are on a "Credit / No Credit – Cr/NC" grading system.

According to the Graduate Bulletin, a grade of "Credit" in graduate level courses is awarded for work equivalent to all grades that earn 3.0 or more grade points (A through B). "No Credit" is awarded for work equivalent to all grades, which earn less than 3.0 grade points (B- through F).

"A" grade is defined as "outstanding achievement; available for the highest accomplishment". "B" proficiency is defined as "average; awarded for satisfactory performance."

Students enrolled in field education courses can be awarded a "Report in Progress – RP" grade in lieu of a grade of "Credit". The "RP" grade is used for graduate courses that extend beyond

one academic term. "It indicates that work is in progress." The "RP" grade will be changed to a grade of "Credit or No Credit" for fall semester in mid-spring semester.

**1.** Students should refer to their course syllabi for the required assignments and expectations for that specified semester in field education. Some of the requirements will be submitted directly to the field faculty, while other required field assignments will be evaluated by both your agency field Instructor and the field faculty. Assignments will be evaluated according to the following rubric with the expectation that all work will be at a B level or better for credit. See grading expectations in each course syllabus.

**2.** The grade for the field practicum is recommended by the field faculty and determined by the Director of Field Education, based on the following criteria: 1) student's performance in the agency placement, as reflected in the oral and written documentation evaluation by the agency field instructor, and any meetings with student, field instructor, and field faculty; 2) satisfactory completion of all required written assignments for the field practicum; 3) satisfactory completion of all the required caseload volume, project activities, supervision, hours, attendance, etc. and 4) student's performance and participation in the field seminars. Failure to perform satisfactorily, as defined by a "B" proficiency level, in any of these areas, including attendance requirements shall result in a grade of No Credit.

**3.** An "Incomplete (I)" grade signifies that a portion of the required course work (not more than 30%) has not been completed and evaluated in the prescribed time period due to unforeseen but fully justified emergent reasons. At least seventy percent (70%) of the required number of hours, written assignments, attendance, seminar performance, etc. in good standing must be completed by the student for the "I" or "RP" grade to be considered. Failure to complete and perform in this required time frame will result in a grade of No Credit.

Agreement to the conditions for removal of the "Incomplete" or "Report in Progress" grade shall be put in writing (in the University's specific form) with the proper signatures by the agency field instructor, field faculty, and Director of Field Education. A final grade is assigned when the course requirements have been completed and evaluated in the required written plan time frame, and when the student, field instructor, and field faculty have provided written documentation of completion.

**4.** If a grade of "Incomplete" or "Report in Progress" is given in the field practicum course, the remaining course requirements identified by the student, agency field instructor, field faculty, and Director of Field Education must be completed prior to the next period (semester) of field practicum, as each semester is a pre-requisite for the subsequent semester. The complete date for course requirements will be indicated on the "Incomplete Authorization" form prepared by the field faculty, completed, dated, and signed by the student, field faculty and the Director of Field Education.

**5.** When a student receives a grade of "NO CREDIT", the field faculty will review the student's performance, in consultation with the agency field instructor, to determine the student's status in

the field education component of the program. The Graduate Advisor will be informed and the student will be referred to the Student Affairs Committee.

6. If a student receives a grade of “NO CREDIT” in the field practicum, hours completed during the semester in which the “NO CREDIT” grade was given and the field seminars attended will not count toward the total completed field practicum hours and course requirements.

7. Students are expected to maintain an overall grade point average of 3.0 (B) throughout the course of the MSW program, and during the period in which they are enrolled in the field practicum sequence.

Field practicum grading policies are under the auspices of the University’s and the School’s policies. Refer to the San Diego State University Graduate Bulletin for the current Academic Year and the School of Social Work’s [MSW Student Handbook](#) for further information.

## Employer-Based Field Placement

Students can apply to use their employment site during their regular working hours for the field practicum experience. Students who are employed in social service agencies may request their agency to be evaluated for suitability as a field practicum site. The student, agency and field instructor must be able to meet established criteria to:

- assure the educational focus of field work;
- provide new and challenging experiences to the student and be able to differentiate practicum activities from regular employment activities;
- maximize learning opportunities; and
- conform to the high standards required by all field experiences.

In order to meet the requirements of an educationally based field placement, the student, agency and field instructor must meet the following criteria:

1. Student wants to use their place of employment during regular working hours as a field education site for an internship.
2. Student is employed no less than 32 hours per week.
3. Student has permanent employment status, has worked for a minimum of nine months at the agency prior to starting their internship, has passed the agency probationary period and has received satisfactory level employment reviews at 6 months / 9 months.
4. The agency will pay for student’s field practicum internship responsibilities and duties.

5. A MSW field instructor with two or more years of experience, preferably at a supervisory level in the agency, who is not the current student's employment supervisor and has not been a former supervisor for the student in the past, will provide field instruction in accordance with the School's curriculum and policies for the student's field practicum. The field instructor is required to be on-site with the student during their internship and meet all of the field instructor qualifications and School policies.
6. Student's internship roles, responsibilities, assignments, etc. will have a clear delineation from their regular employment and will be in accordance with the SDSU School of Social Work's field curriculum and course requirements. This will be written and established in the student's "Field Practicum Internship at Employment Site" application.
7. The field practicum will occur during sustained periods of time during the student's workweek, Monday through Friday only, at a minimum of 4 hours at a time, in a different program, service area, or unit, and preferably in a different location.
8. The "Field Practicum Internship at Employment Site" application is completed in its entirety, by the student and submitted by the required due date in the field placement process time line with the required signatures and submitting proof of their satisfactory job performance evaluation.
9. If the application request is approved and granted, the student is aware and in accordance with School policies, that they will use the employment site for field practicum for one academic year only.

The Title IV-E MSW Child Welfare Stipend Program may have exceptions to this policy. The student consults with the Title IV-E Stipend Program Coordinator for further details.

If the student does not meet ALL of the criteria listed above, the student does not qualify for a field practicum internship at their employment site. If the student requires additional information, they should reach out to the Director of Field Education as early as possible.

Completing the "Field Practicum Internship at Employment Site" application does not guarantee approval of utilizing the field education site for internship. All "Field Practicum Internship at Employment Site" applications must be approved by the Director of Field Education.

Students applying for the above, MUST still complete their MSW I or MSW II Field Practicum Application in IPT and submit by the required due date also.

Students should expect that an alternative plan, such as the usual field placement process, will be necessary if the "Field Practicum Internship at Employment Site" application is not approved and/or does not meet the School's educational requirements. Refer to the MSW "Field Practicum Internship at Employment Site" Application and due dates located on the [Field Education Website](#).

## ADMINISTRATION/COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT MSW II ADVANCED FIELD PRACTICUM (SW 755)

This policy was initiated and developed by the administration macro task group, with cooperation by the field education task group, approved by the school's curriculum committee and finally by SDSU SSW faculty.

- All students enrolled in their chosen concentration of Administration or Community Development, and thus in the SW 755 Administration or Community Development Advanced Field Practicum course shall spend all required field practicum hours (20 hours per week; 300 hours per semester for a total of 600 hours in the Academic Year) in administration or community development content only.
- If the SW 755 agency/field instructor wishes to have the student conduct their hours in direct practice/clinical service delivery, the student may engage in clinical practice for a **maximum of 25%** of their overall practicum hours only if the agency field instructor deems it as a possible learning opportunity for the student to perform program evaluation, data analysis, policies and procedures, etc.
- This additional experience must be discussed with the field faculty and the Director of Field Education before the student and agency enter into any agreement.

## MSW Field Practicum Curriculum

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### MSW I FOUNDATION YEAR AND MSW II ADVANCED YEAR COURSE REQUIREMENTS

#### 1. Agency Field Practicum Internship

Field practicum assignments at the agency are as follows:

- a. Agency Orientation;
- b. Social Work Student Orientation Checklist;
- c. Learning Agreement;
- d. Supervision;
- e. Internship Time Log to monitor hours;
- f. Client Systems Assessments – using agency's intake or psychosocial assessment tool
- g. Agency Site Visit – Student, Field Instructor, and Field Faculty meeting conducted at agency;



- h. Process recordings, macro process recordings, and educationally-based recordings;
- i. Comprehensive Skills Evaluation;
- j. Self-Reflection Narrative Essay

The Learning Agreement, Agency Orientation Checklist, and the Comprehensive Skills Evaluation are all completed electronically in IPT.

Self-Reflection Narrative assignment is also completed in IPT by the last seminar of each semester. Field instructors also review and sign off on this assignment.

## 2. Field Seminars

Assignments in the field seminars consist of:

- a. Attendance and field seminar participation
- b. Agency assessment and verbal presentation in seminar
- c. Case presentations and role plays
- d. Experiential learning
- e. Skills application demonstration
- f. Biopsychosocial assessment and evaluation role plays
- g. Small group exercises involving theoretical practice

## SUPERVISION

Beginning the first week of the field practicum course, students should engage in weekly individualized, formalized, face-to-face, one-hour (minimum) supervision with their agency field instructor. Supervision is to be held each week of the semester by the student's assigned field instructor. If a student does not receive supervision from their field instructor on a weekly basis, this may result in the student not receiving the required hours and experiences. **Students are responsible for informing their field faculty immediately if there is a lack of supervision.**

## MSW FIELD ORIENTATION

Students (including the Imperial Valley cohort) entering their Foundation Year of field practicum attend a **mandatory Field Orientation** held in August of each year. Students meet as a large group in which the Director of Field Education provides an overview of the Field Education program and related policies and procedures to ensure student success during their field practicum experience.

Topics covered in the MSW Field Orientation include, but are not limited to:

- Introduction of the Field Education Team
- Overview of the Field Practicum Experience and Curriculum Requirements
- Demo of Internship Placement Tracking (IPT)
- Mindfulness of Field Education Policies and Procedures
- Application of Attachment Theory & the Developmental Stages of the Internship
- Review of the Role of the Social Work Student Intern
- Resolution of Challenges in Field
- Mandated Reporting
- Resources available to Students

## AGENCY ORIENTATION

Each field practicum agency is required to provide a comprehensive orientation regarding its policies and procedures, the services it provides, the community it serves, the collaborative agencies it associates with, laws, values, ethics governed by social work practice in their agency, emergencies, how to reach the field instructor in a crisis situation, who is the assigned professional the student consults with in field instructor's absence; scheduling with the student – internship hours, attendance and participation practices, expectations, assignments, supervision, etc.

Also, the agency is responsible for orienting the intern in:

- Safety concerns; in the car; in the office; in the community; conducting home visits, etc.;
- Security policies and practices;
- Harassment policies within their organization;
- HIPAA compliance in accordance with agency training; following policies and procedures, signing an agency's statement of compliance, etc.

## ORIENTATION CHECKLIST

The Social Work Student Orientation Checklist is to be completed via IPT as part of the student's Learning Agreement. Thorough orientation to the agency and completion of this checklist is vital as a safety measure, and reduces risk and liability for the student, the agency and the School.

Refer to the [Social Work Student Orientation Checklist](#) on the Field Education Website and in the Learning Agreement on IPT.

## FIELD SEMINARS

Field seminars are designed to supplement and integrate the generalist content students receive in their concurrent courses. In the Foundation Year, the field seminars meet weekly for the first six weeks, and then meet bi-weekly for the remainder of the academic year. During the Advanced Year, field seminars meet on a bi-weekly throughout the academic year. Field seminars are a forum for students to share and process their experiences, address their concerns related to the field practicum experience in a constructive manner, engage in skill-building and build a “community of practice” that promotes mutual support and resource sharing.

Field seminars provide a framework for social work generalist practice. The field seminars are designed to:

- Integrate field and classroom learning;
- Assist student’s learning in understanding their cases in terms of applicable theories;
- Integrate experiences, e.g. practice with content from another course, such as policy or research implications;
- Practice skills application and development via role-playing, supervision, vignettes and other learning exercises;
- Allow for case conferencing and consultation, input and feedback, as to how the student is presenting their professional self;
- Provide students with an environment to learn and provide feedback in a group process framework, specifically with the focus on student’s verbal and non-verbal communication skills;
- Address "gaps" between coursework at SDSU and practice experiences; and
- Facilitate in developing the student's role as a social work professional; and
- Provide a support network for students.

## CLIENT SYSTEMS ASSESSMENTS

Students are encouraged to complete a biopsychosocial client systems assessment on each client that is assigned to them. Every agency setting will have a different biopsychosocial assessment tool. The goal is for Foundation Year MSW students to become competent in case conceptualization and completing biopsychosocial assessments including micro, mezzo and macro dimensions.

## LEARNING AGREEMENT

The Learning Agreement provides students with the opportunity to take an active role in the planning of their field education experience, clarifying expectations for the student, the field instructor, the task supervisor (if applicable), the field faculty, and the Director of Field Education. The function of the Learning Agreement is to operationalize the field practicum goals and objectives by outlining specific student learning activities in the field setting and the means by which their achievement will be assessed. The Learning Agreement Form is completed via IPT.

The graduate level learning agreement addresses the core areas found in the Comprehensive Skills Evaluation and facilitates the student in individualizing their learning. A written learning agreement is developed with the consultation and assistance of the field instructor. The Learning Agreement will be **completed** by the fourth week of field practicum experience, then **reviewed and signed** by the field instructor, student and field faculty by the sixth week of field.

The Learning Agreement shall incorporate relevant readings and other learning activities to address student's individualized learning goals and objectives, which have been identified. The Learning Agreement may be revised any time revision is appropriate. All revisions need to be discussed, approved, and signed off by the student, field instructor, and respective field faculty.

The student is required to write a new Learning Agreement if the student is placed in a new field practicum site.

## INTERNSHIP TIME LOGS

The Internship Time Log is a tool that students are encouraged to utilize to track their hours in the field setting. Ideally, the Time Log should be reviewed and signed by the agency field instructor on a weekly basis. Field instructors also confirm the completion of all required hours by the student at the end of each semester in IPT on the Comprehensive Skills Evaluation. Time Logs do not need to be turned in to the School. The Internship Time Log template is available on the Field Education website under [Student Forms](#).

## SITE VISITS

Field faculty schedule a minimum of one agency site visit in the fall semester each academic year. The site visit is a three-way meeting between the student, agency field instructor (and task supervisor if applicable) and field faculty. The site visit is used to review the student's Learning Agreement and the field practicum course's curriculum requirements, to highlight the student's progress and success, and to address questions raised by the student and/or field instructor. Should the student or field instructor have concerns about the field practicum experience, they

are encouraged to contact the field faculty before the site visit. This will aid the field faculty by making them aware of the situation and possible interventions that may be explored during the site visit. This will also provide the student and/or field instructor with an opportunity to express their concerns in private with the field faculty and seek consultation. Timely communication of concerns to field faculty is critical and gives all stakeholders the chance for due process.

Field faculty remain available to students and field instructors for consultation throughout the academic year, and may provide additional agency visits as needed. Agency site visits are conducted during the time a student is typically scheduled to be at their internship site.

## PROCESS RECORDINGS

The use of recordings as a teaching and learning tool in the field practicum experience is strongly encouraged by the School. A variety of types of recordings for educational purposes can be used by the student. The most common type of recording is the **Process Recording** and is a written account of the interaction between the student and their client(s). The process recording allows for an account of the actual content during an interview session, as well as the dynamic interaction which is taking place. Process recordings should also include a clear statement of the purpose of the interview, the student's impressions and assessment of the interview, and plans for the next session. Other types of educationally based recording include macro process recordings, selective process recording, group recording, summary recording, developing agendas, etc.

Educationally based recordings have a significant value for the student's professional learning and growth. It assists the student in rethinking the interview process, remembering interventions and integrating theoretical and practice materials, in preparation for supervision and further learning of practice skills.

Field instructors and students are encouraged to use other learning tools, such as audio tapes, video tapes, observed interviews, and one-way mirrors in place of, or in addition to, written recordings. The field faculty may wish to review the recordings during the scheduled agency site visit, or may request an example. Confidentiality of the client will be preserved at all times. Field instructors will receive suggested formats of educationally based recordings, as well as other pertinent references. Additionally, students are responsible for any recording/ documentation required by the agency itself for its own records and files.

A minimum of two (2) process recordings are required for both the fall and spring semester.

Students should discuss with their field instructors and assigned field faculty the process recording procedures, how they will be informing their clients of this process, how to document process recordings and due dates involved. It is up to the field instructor's professional judgment as to how many process recordings a student should conduct (in addition to the

minimum of two process recordings per semester as required by the School), which clients to choose and how many clients to utilize process recordings with. The field instructor will provide feedback on each process recording within an appropriate time frame and discuss the recording in order to further the student's learning and growth.

Process Recording formats are available under [Student Forms](#) on the Field Education Website.

## EVALUATIONS

The process of evaluation of student performance is continuous throughout the field education program. The student will take responsibility for their learning, progress, and self-assessment. The student's own appraisal is consistent with a philosophy that encourages self-determination, self-awareness and motivation toward the highest level of development possible for the individual. Each student should actively engage in the evaluation process with their agency field instructor. The evaluation process should be collaborative in which both the student and field instructor participate, with the field instructor carrying the final responsibility.

- At the end of each semester, the student will engage in a Self-Reflection Narrative assignment in IPT, identifying their strengths, areas for further growth, progress, and future goals.
- The Comprehensive Skills Evaluation is meant to assist the student and field instructor in identifying learning needs, and assessing progress toward the overall objectives. The deadlines for completing and submitting the Self-Reflection Narrative assignment and Comprehensive Skills Evaluation are noted in the [Field Education Calendar](#). The field instructor is encouraged to observe the due dates to ensure that the student is able to receive credit for the course.

Student performance expectations are sequenced over two years of the field practicum, thus they are continuous and progressive in nature. The rate of this progression is dependent upon the individual student, but each student should achieve the minimum expectations for each semester and ought to show sustained growth throughout the year.

Field performance expectations are organized into nine core social work competencies per CSWE's 2022 EPAS (Educational Policy Accreditation Standards).

Basic expectations in each of the core competencies (shown below) for each of the four semesters have been delineated in the Comprehensive Skills Evaluation. Each core competency contains particular objectives and behavioral measures that are used to evaluate the student's performance. The student must demonstrate adequate performance in all competencies to receive a grade of "Credit" in the field course.

Failure to obtain ratings of “2” in all of the competencies will result in the student engaging in a “Student Performance Agreement” process, or discontinuance of the student in the fieldwork placement, and a grade of “NO CREDIT”.

## 2022 EPAS Social Work Core Competencies

1	<b>Demonstrate Ethical and Professional Behavior</b>
2	<b>Advance Human Rights and Social, Racial, Economic and Environmental Justice</b>
3	<b>Engage Anti-Racism, Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (ADEI) in Practice</b>
4	<b>Engage in Practice-Informed Research and Research-Informed Practice</b>
5	<b>Engage in Policy Practice</b>
6	<b>Engage with Individuals, Families, Groups, Organizations, and Communities</b>
7	<b>Assess Individuals, Families, Groups, Organizations, and Communities</b>
8	<b>Intervene with Individuals, Families, Groups, Organizations, and Communities</b>
9	<b>Evaluate Practice with Individuals, Families, Groups, Organizations, and Communities</b>

The Comprehensive Skills Evaluation is completed via IPT. Students should keep a hard and electronic “soft” copy for their records as old forms are “archived” in IPT by June of every year and are no longer available after the academic year is completed.

The field instructor is responsible for facilitating a meeting with the student, and Task Supervisor (if applicable), to evaluate the student’s performance. The student's signature signifies that they have reviewed the Comprehensive Skills Evaluation with their field instructor.

Each evaluation contains the agency's name, the names of the student, field instructor, and field faculty (and the names of Task Supervisors when appropriate). If necessary, the student can submit a written addendum to an evaluation when there is an apparent difference with the field instructor’s point of view. This addendum needs to be shared with the field instructor and the field faculty. The evaluation is reviewed by the field faculty at the end of each semester, then signed, and kept on the student's IPT profile.

### Mid-Semester Comprehensive Skills Evaluation

The field instructor may complete a mid-semester evaluation only when there are concerns detected early on regarding the student’s performance. The mid-semester evaluation addresses both the student’s areas of competence as well as difficulties, suggesting the need for attention. The timing of this evaluation is purposely designed to afford enough time to introduce remedial actions, if necessary. Also a *Student Performance Agreement* meeting will be held with the

student, field instructor, field faculty, and Director of Field Education, in order to assess, evaluate and document specifics as to how the student will raise their performance level to achieve a satisfactory outcome in the field practicum course.

The following evaluations are completed by students at the end of the academic year:

- Student Evaluation of Field Instructor
- Student Evaluation of the Agency

These evaluation forms will be available to students via IPT during the last few weeks of the spring semester.

## Policies for Field Education

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All School policies and procedures impacting field education apply to both the BASW and MSW Field Education programs.

### HOURS – REQUIREMENTS

- Hours at most internships are scheduled during normal business hours of operation (8:00 AM - 5:00 PM), Monday through Friday. Weeknights and/or weekend field placement hours are only available at a limited number of agencies. A small portion of practicum hours may take place after regular agency hours (a weeknight), provided there is appropriate professional supervision, e.g. the student is able to access the support of their field instructor. Field faculty and the Director of Field Education must pre-approve in writing (email) any non-regular working hours due to liability and insurance coverage issues.
- Field practicum hours will be counted throughout the Academic Year period only. Students may not “bank” hours and complete their field practicum prior to the end of the field placement period.
- Students are expected to adhere to the [Field Calendar](#) for all field education activities, including beginning and ending dates of field placement, and identified winter/spring break periods. University Holidays are indicated on the Field Calendar (Thanksgiving Holiday: 2-days, Veteran’s Day, Winter Intersession, Cesar Chavez Holiday observance, and Spring Break). Students cannot be in their field internship during University Holidays, when the **campus is closed**. If a field practicum day falls upon an agency observed holiday which is not observed by the University, the student must make up the missed hours.



- If a field day falls upon an agency observed holiday which is not observed by the University, missed hours must be made up. A plan for making up missed hours should be completed and shared with the field instructor and field faculty within one week of the missed days.
- The student's internship schedule will be determined by the student's course work schedule, including the field seminars, and the agency schedule. Students are required to be in their field placements for a minimum of a 4-hour block of time. Students should plan to discuss their schedules with the assigned field instructor during the agency placement interview and/or when they are notified of their placement confirmation.
- Students are required to take a **lunch break** while at the field internship, either 30 minutes or 1 hour in length. This time **is not included in the 16 or 20 hours per week calculation of hours**. Therefore, the student is actually in field internship for either 8.5 or 9 hours each day, depending on whether they take a half hour or one hour lunch break. Determination of whether the lunch break is 30 minutes or 1 hour in length is made by the agency field instructor and may vary by agency. The student must adhere to the agency's policies regarding the duration of lunch break.
- Students are expected to remain in the same field placement for the entire Academic Year period.
- At the discretion of the field instructor, field faculty, and Director of Field Education, problem resolution will occur in a situation where a change is necessary or advisable.
- While enrolled in the field practicum, students will participate in the required field seminars, which meet throughout the Academic Year. Attendance and participation at the field seminars are mandatory. The hours in the field seminars do not count toward the required 480 BASW Program Field Experience or the 1050 MSW Program Field Experience hours.
- No field practicum credit will be given for any student's prior work or educational experience.
- Some agencies offer field practicum students extended experience as paid staff following the field placement period. The University has no involvement or responsibility for the student, and hours worked under these circumstances, and these hours may not be counted for subsequent field practicum hours.

## ATTENDANCE AND ACCOUNTABILITY

- Students are expected to observe the normal working hours, personnel policies, and practices of the field practicum agency in which they are placed.

- Students are expected to defer family vacations so they do not cause an absence from their field practicum experience when School is in session.
- Any anticipated, necessary absences must be communicated and mutually agreed upon with the field instructor and field faculty in a timely manner, and must include plans to make up the time.
- In the event of unanticipated absences (illnesses or emergencies), students must notify their field instructor immediately, or as soon as possible, and the field faculty should also be informed. Failure to notify the field instructor can result in discontinuance of the student in the field placement, and a “NO CREDIT” grade.
- Each student should discuss with their field instructor how to handle emergency contact situations.
- Field faculty may assign make-up assignments for missed field seminars.

## HOLIDAYS

Students should refer to the [Field Calendar](#) and the [Academic Calendars](#) from the Office of the Registrar for official University holidays, during which time the campus is closed. Students should be certain that their Field Instructor is aware of these dates.

**When an agency is closed** for a holiday and SDSU Campus is open for this holiday, e.g. Indigenous Peoples’ Day, President’s Day, etc. and the student has scheduled internship hours on the day the agency is closed, the student is responsible for making-up those hours during the semester to meet the required curriculum hours in the field education course. Students who miss internship days for personal or religious reasons must make up the hours before the end of the semester in which the holiday occurred. Students should be proactive in communicating any anticipated absences with their field instructor and field faculty in writing.

**When the SDSU campus is closed, the student cannot conduct internship hours on that day even if the agency is open**, such as on Veteran’s Day, the Friday after the Thanksgiving Holiday, Christmas break, and New Year’s Day. If the student has scheduled internship hours on that day, the student is responsible for making up those hours to meet the required curriculum hours in the field education practicum course.

Students often face the challenge of balancing multiple demands of a rigorous academic program, internship requirements, paid employment, and their personal commitments to family. Winter Break provides students with an opportunity for rest and restoration; therefore, the School appreciates flexibility given by agencies allowing for students to take as much time off during the Winter Break as possible. Students should be given a minimum of two consecutive

weeks off during the Winter Break. Students who attend their field practicum during the Winter Break do so on a voluntary basis. A student's hours volunteered during this time frame cannot be applied towards required field practicum course hours. In order to meet the continuity of care needs of clients, to engage in additional learning opportunities and to remain competitive with students from other schools of social work or other professional schools, students often volunteer their time during the academic breaks. A modified schedule (reduced hours) is usually worked out with their field instructor, instead of the student attending for the full 16 or 20 hours.

Students are covered by the University's [liability insurance](#) during the academic break, but cannot be at the field agency when campus is closed during the winter break, New Year's Day, and Martin Luther King Jr. Day.

## MAINTAINING STUDENT ELIGIBILITY FOR FIELD PRACTICUM

In order to qualify for the field practicum internship and begin social work practice as interns, students are required to be academically, behaviorally and ethically appropriate. The student must be able to fulfill the conditions encompassed in the following policies and procedures in order to be admitted and continue in the field practicum internship.

- Students must maintain a 3.0 GPA for the MSW Program and a 2.0 SDSU overall campus GPA prior to the initial enrollment in field education and throughout the entire field practicum period. Notification of students who are on academic probation which affects their Field Practicum status will be coordinated by the Undergraduate Advisor or Graduate Advisor, and the Director of Field Education will be informed.
- Students shall demonstrate at all times:
  - Emotional maturity, exhibiting consistent professional & ethical behavior;
  - Stability and mood regulation to succeed in the field learning environment working with clients and staff;
  - A professional manner consistent with social work;
  - Abstaining from all substances while attending field practicum;
  - Understanding of and adherence to the [NASW Code of Ethics](#), and commitment to social work professional values, beliefs, etc.; and
  - Consistent professional boundaries
- Deficiencies in these areas will result in the immediate delay and/or termination of the Field Practicum/Field Placement process. In addition, students with deficiencies in these areas will be referred to the Student Affairs Committee for review and for possible disqualification from the School of Social Work program. The behaviors mentioned above must be embodied by the student starting from when the student has been accepted to the School of Social Work program, BASW or MSW, and includes the field placement process and the student's continued enrollment in the program.

- Ongoing active major mental health and/or substance abuse problems will substantially interfere with learning and professional performance. Current problems in these areas may result in referral to SDSU [Student Ability Success Center](#) (SASC), delay of placement and/or recommendation for Program disqualification. The student is encouraged to consult with their field instructor, field faculty, and Director of Field Education regarding these challenges.
- Students' behavior shall conform to the ethical standards set forth in the:
  - [NASW Code of Ethics](#);
  - Social work values; and
  - Laws directing social work practice
- Violations will result in the immediate termination of the Field Practicum/Field Placement process. In addition, students will be recommended to their respective Advisor and Student Affairs Committee for review and for possible disqualification from the School of Social Work program.
- Students must adhere to the Council on Social Work Education (CSWE) Curriculum policies and standards and thus the School's Curriculum and Field Education policies, standards and procedures. Violations will result in delay of placement, recommendation for disqualification, and/or recommendation to the Student Affairs Committee for review.

## PROFESSIONAL BOUNDARY VIOLATIONS

Examples of professional boundary violations resulting in the delay of Field Practicum/Field Placement process, termination, or disqualification from Program:

- Exhibiting behavior in class or field practicum that is assessed by faculty that indicates an inability to perform with the maturity, sensitivity, or wisdom required for satisfactory social work practice, such as insubordination with field instructor, agency staff or field faculty, refusing to comply with directions;
- Exhibiting unethical behavior in a situation where the student knew or should have known that the behavior was unethical;
- Applying practice outside the scope of social work practice (e.g. dispensing of medications, providing legal consultation, & providing financial planning);
- Violating professional boundaries by engaging in dual relationships with clients;
- Exploiting professional relationships for personal gain;
- Non-compliance with agency policies and procedures;
- Violation of confidentiality or privileged information expectations;
- Misrepresenting self as other than social work intern during placement in Field Practicum;
- Breaching ethical and professional standards;
- Continuance of relationship with client after termination of service;

- Providing professional counseling to friend or family member;
- Providing services and/or interventions in exchange for direct compensation (money) and compensation other than money;
- Providing clients with personal telephone number;
- Using information obtained from clients for career gains;
- Engaging in sexual activities with clients or former clients;
- Inability to respect human diversity;
- Inability to appropriately build helping relationships; and
- Being grossly negligent in the practice of their profession.

Procedures:

- Field faculty will review the student's Field Application forms and evaluate any information which suggests that the student might have difficulty in field according to the above policies.
  - Such evaluation may include, but is not limited to, verification of academic record, review of student file, consultation with other faculty and/or agency field instructor and student interview.
  - If based on this evaluation the field faculty determines that there is a concern, they will consult with the Director of Field Education before referring the student for a placement interview.
  - Following consultation with the Director of Field Education, if there is sufficient reason to conclude that the student is not suitable for the field practicum, the Director of Field Education and field faculty will:
    - Meet with the student to discuss concerns and reasons for ineligibility, or inform student in writing;
    - Meet with the student to discuss and/or inform the student in writing of, what steps, if any, might be taken to meet requirements and/or;
    - Recommend remedial actions to be taken and refer student for evaluation review by their respective advisor and/or;
    - Recommend the student for review at the Student Affairs Committee and/or disqualification from the undergraduate or graduate program.
- If after a field placement interview by an agency, a student is rejected for placement, the field faculty will determine whether the rejection was caused by concerns about the student's professional behavior or ability to deal appropriately with the practicum learning experience.
- If a student fails two (2) field placement interviews by two different agencies, the student will immediately be ineligible for the field practicum and will be removed from the field placement process, unless otherwise determined by the Director of Field Education.
  - The Director of Field Education will request a statement in writing from the agency before initiating another field placement interview referral or implement procedures outlined above.

- Refer to the Field Placement process policy for further detailed information.
- If it is determined by the Director of Field Education, based on the recommendation of the field faculty, that there is sufficient reason to delay placement, the field faculty will:
  - Inform the student what is needed for field practicum readiness.
  - Document this for the student (along with the student's response) for the School's record.
  - Notify the Undergraduate or Graduate Advisor.
- Field faculty is obligated by CSWE requirements to share information with prospective field placement agencies regarding potential problems.
- The student will be responsible for knowing all requirements, responsibilities, policies, procedures, due dates, and changes in Field Education curriculum in the event of a delay of the field practicum. Students may wish to consult with the Undergraduate or Graduate Advisor and the Director of Field Education.
- All information regarding field problems, evaluation and resolution will be documented by the appropriate field faculty. The student will receive a copy of documentation upon request.
- All of the above policies and procedures will continue to be in effect after field practicum is confirmed. The field faculty assigned to the student will continue to monitor the student's professionalism.
- Students are expected to remain in the same internship for the entire field practicum year. If a situation develops where a change/re-placement is necessary, specific steps will be taken to address the need for and subsequent transition. Only the field faculty and the Director of Field Education will determine if the student is eligible for re-placement in another agency.

## CONFIDENTIALITY, LEGAL AND ETHICAL STANDARDS

- Students shall adhere to all policies and procedures regarding confidentiality and client rights of the field practicum agency in which they are placed. Students shall abide by the laws, ethics, and values regulating social work practice.
- Students have the responsibility of understanding and ensuring the protection of client confidentiality and right to privacy. This not only applies to the confidentiality of clients, but also to the confidentiality of the agency as interns may be privy to information that is not necessarily public. Any case material and/or administration/community projects which are used for educational or instructional purposes must be completely disguised so that total anonymity of the client/agency is assured. All case material required for the

School's educational purposes shall be gathered from the field practicum experience (not from an employment or volunteer experience).

- Students are responsible for reading SDSU School of Social Work Policy and Guidelines “On Maintaining Client Confidentiality” (Milstein & Rasmussen, 2000) located in the [BASW Handbook](#) and [MSW Handbook](#).
- Any agency materials or information used for professional, educational, or instructional purposes must be cleared for use by the field instructor.
- Student interns shall be professional and act in accordance and compliance with the laws, social work values, ethics, and SDSU academic standards, including the NASW Code of Ethics which govern social work practice.
- Felony and/or misdemeanor convictions depending on the severity, duration, time frame, type, can lead to:
  - a delay in field placement;
  - immediate field practicum ineligibility; and/or
  - disqualification from the School

Each case is reviewed in relation to the requirements of the SDSU School of Social Work policies, curriculum requirements, laws, ethics and values directing the standards in the social work profession. Misrepresentation and/or omissions will be considered for immediate ineligibility for the Field Education courses. During the academic year, field practicum agencies may check for recent arrests, convictions, and violations of NASW Ethical Codes. Agency policy and/or legal issues may be cause for termination from the field practicum and thus, the field practicum course.

- Students are responsible for adhering to the laws, legal, and ethical standards pertaining to the social work profession, and specifically in the State of California. Field practicums should familiarize the students with the following:
  - child abuse and neglect reporting laws and procedures;
  - elder and dependent adult abuse reporting and procedures;
  - suicide and homicide reporting;
  - Tarasoff decision;
  - voluntary vs. involuntary hospitalization (5150 LPS Act);
  - grave disability;
  - privileged communication;
  - informed consent, release of information;
  - scope of practice;
  - safety and risk management; and
  - any other potential high risk situations that students may be exposed to.
- Violations of confidentiality or other ethical or professional principles shall result in the student's termination from the field practicum, referral to the Undergraduate or Graduate

Advisor for review; referral to the Student Affairs Committee for review; and automatic referral for disqualification from the BASW or MSW Program.

- Refer to “Maintaining Student Eligibility for Field Practicum” policy and procedures.
- Students should refer to their agency’s written protocols around the use of technology and confidentiality, and should adhere to the following best practices:
  - Students must obtain client consent, at minimum verbally, and when possible through a written consent form, to conduct services over a telehealth format, ensuring that they also explain to the client the potential risks and benefits associated with the use of such a format. Students should ask for a client’s specific location/address at the beginning of each telehealth session.
  - Students should not record client sessions conducted through a telehealth platform.
  - Students should take reasonable steps to maintain appropriate boundaries when using phone and electronic communication.
  - Students should be mindful of the position of their web cameras and aware of what others can see in the frame, ensuring that all confidential data is removed from the camera’s view.
  - Students should conduct all sensitive conversations in a private and safe location, encouraging clients to do the same when and if possible, and should be mindful of the potential for the client’s family members or others to overhear portions of the conversation.
  - Students should utilize a HIPAA compliant platform(s) and should check with their agency to ensure they have the appropriate equipment.
  - Students must follow the field practicum agency’s policies and procedures and are mandated to be in accordance with the [NASW Code of Ethics](#) (adopted by the School of Social Work as University Academic Standards) and California State law, statutes and regulations when conducting telehealth services with clients.

## SOCIAL MEDIA GUIDELINES

With the dawn of the digital age, the explosion of social media, smart phones, etc. the potential for boundary violations has dramatically expanded.

Social media platforms, such as Facebook, Twitter, YouTube, Instagram, Snapchat and various blog sites are just a few examples of ways to connect with others through digital means and share information. However, the rapid growth of social media communication tools and their ease of accessibility can also have unintended and potentially damaging consequences to users if basic guidelines are ignored. Students are expected to adhere to social work values, ethics and engage in professional conduct as outlined in the [NASW Code of Ethics](#) when using social



media communication tools, whether using a personal site or an agency site. Common issues that students need to understand and manage when utilizing social media include, but are not limited to, privacy and confidentiality (Section 1.07), conflicts of interest and dual relationships (Section 1.06), and informed consent (Section 1.03) in our relationships with clients, colleagues and in our practice settings. Utilizing social media communication tools as a social work professional requires ongoing attention to these ethical challenges.

According to an article, "[New NASW Code of Ethics Standards for the Digital Age](#)", from *Social Work Today*, in August, 2017, NASW adopted a revised code with extensive technology-related additions pertaining to informed consent, competent practice, conflicts of interest, privacy and confidentiality, sexual relationships, sexual harassment, interruption of services, unethical conduct of colleagues, supervision and consultation, education and training, client records, and evaluation and research.

Social workers should become familiar with a number of key additions to the NASW Code of Ethics. The most significant updates from 2017 to the code include the following:

- Encourage social workers to discuss with clients policies concerning use of technology in the provision of professional services. Clients should have a clear understanding of the ways in which social workers use technology to deliver services, communicate with clients, search for information about clients online, and store sensitive information about clients.
- Encourage social workers who plan to use technology in the provision of services to obtain client consent to the use of technology at the beginning of the professional-client relationship.
- Advise social workers who use technology to communicate with clients to assess each client's capacity to provide informed consent.
- Advise social workers to verify the identity and location of clients they serve remotely (especially in case there is an emergency and to enable social workers to comply with laws in the client's jurisdiction).
- Alert social workers to the need to assess clients' ability to access and use technology, particularly for online and remote services. They also encourage social workers to help clients identify alternate methods of service delivery if the use of technology to deliver services is not appropriate.
- Advise social workers to obtain client consent before conducting an online search for information about clients, as a way to respect clients' privacy (unless there are emergency circumstances).

- Highlight the need for social workers to understand the special communication challenges associated with electronic and remote service delivery and how to address these challenges.
- Advise social workers who use technology to comply with the laws of both the jurisdiction where the social worker is regulated and located and where the client is located (given that social workers and clients might be in different states or countries).
- Advise social workers to be aware of, assess, and respond to cultural, environmental, economic, disability, linguistic, and other social diversity issues that may affect delivery or use of services.
- Discourage social workers from communicating with clients using technology for personal or nonwork-related purposes, in order to maintain appropriate boundaries.
- Advise social workers to take reasonable steps to prevent client access to social workers' personal social networking sites and personal technology, again to avoid boundary confusion and inappropriate dual relationships.
- Suggest that social workers should be aware that posting personal information on professional websites or other media could cause boundary confusion, inappropriate dual relationships, or harm to clients.
- Remind social workers to be aware that clients may discover personal information about them based on their personal affiliations and use of social media.
- Suggest that social workers should avoid accepting requests from or engaging in personal relationships with clients on online social networks or other electronic media.
- Advise social workers to take reasonable steps (such as use of encryption, firewalls, and secure passwords) to protect the confidentiality of electronic communications, including information provided to clients or third parties.
- Advise social workers to develop and disclose policies and procedures for notifying clients of any breach of confidential information in a timely manner.
- Advise social workers to inform clients of unauthorized access to the social worker's electronic communication or storage systems (e.g., cloud storage).
- Advise social workers to develop and inform clients about their policies on the use of electronic technology to gather information about clients.
- Advise social workers to avoid posting any identifying or confidential information about clients on professional websites or other forms of social media.

- Advise social workers using technology to facilitate evaluation or research to obtain clients' informed consent for the use of such technology. They also encourage social workers to assess clients' ability to use the technology and, when appropriate, offer reasonable alternatives.

As social work professionals, it is important for students to consider how they are using social media channels for professional activities such as advancing social justice issues, advocating for vulnerable populations and promoting their professional identity as well as how they are using these sites to maintain contact with friends and family. A student's professional social work image, that is, the professional self they develop that is guided by social work values and ethical standards, extends beyond the field agency and physical setting of an office. As social workers, it is imperative to be cognizant of the legal, ethical and clinical responsibilities we have as professionals and that those obligations extend to the virtual world of the Internet and include the use of social media tools. As with the Hippocratic oath to "first do no harm", it is imperative for students to consider how to be connected within the context of social media while protecting themselves, their field site, their clients, the School of Social Work, and the profession.

Review the full documents, **Guidelines for Use of Social Media** in Appendices at the end of the Field Manual.

## PROMOTING SUCCESS IN THE FIELD PRACTICUM

The SDSU School of Social Work is committed to assisting students to maximize their learning opportunities in an educational field practicum experience according to accreditation standards set by the [Council on Social Work Education \(CSWE\)](#).

The School is mindful of the opportunities and challenges that are inherent to an undergraduate or graduate level social work field practicum. Students, in their capacity as social work interns, are given a variety of learning opportunities in their field setting and are expected to adhere to the policies and procedures of the School and agency during their practice experience. While the field practicum provides a chance to *learn and practice skills, increase professional confidence, and develop a professional social work identity*. It is also natural that practice experiences within a field practicum may present personal and professional challenges. Therefore, the School adheres to the standards of its accrediting body, the **Council on Social Work Education (CSWE)**, and regularly consults with its **Field Advisory Board** and other accredited Southern California schools of social work that are a part of the **Southern California Field Directors' Consortium**, to provide appropriate and responsive support to students and their respective field settings.

The School has identified resources that prepare students for the field education experience, promoting professional growth and learning. Some of these measures include, but are not limited to, a large-scale **agency fair**, a **field orientation** in the fall for incoming BASW and MSW students and a **placement planning meeting** for existing students preparing for their field

placement process in the spring. Field Education policies and procedures are reviewed in detail at these events, providing critical information and resources to promote students' success in the process. Additional topics covered in these meetings include the following: Introduction to Field Education Team Members, Overview of the Field Practicum Experience, Demo of Internship Placement Tracking (IPT), Application of Attachment Theory to Field Education and the Developmental Stages of the Internship, Review of the Role of the Social Work Student Intern, Common Challenges in Field Education and Resolutions and Resources Available to Students. Additional resources that are in place to ensure student success and transparency in field education are the [Field Education Website](#), **Field Education Manual**, **Curriculum Requirements**, [Field Calendar](#), and Field Seminar **Course Syllabi**. Field Education goes one step further by collaborating with the Direct Practice Task Group to provide a **"Life After Graduation" event** for all graduating students at the end of each academic year to prepare them for success as degree-bearing social work professionals entering the field. Students are also made aware of the University's resources that promote student success such as the [Student Ability Success Center \(SASC\)](#), [Economic Crisis and Response Team \(ECRT\)](#), [Counseling & Psychological Services \(C&PS\)](#) and [Well-Being & Health Promotion](#).

The **Field Seminars** and **Field Faculty** are also key components to Field Education and are available to students as resources. Field Seminars serve as **"Communities of Practice"** providing students with opportunities for *peer support*, to practice seeking *consultation* and providing *feedback*, for *problem-solving* and *critical thinking*, to engage in *networking* and *referrals*, and to focus on cultivating *professional and community care*. Field Faculty, in addition to facilitating the Field Seminars, are available to students during designated **office hours** and conduct comprehensive **site visits** to agencies during the fall semester and additionally as needed over the course of the academic year. Field Faculty work closely with student interns and agency Field Instructors to identify clear and realistic expectations and opportunities for learning. They also play an intermediary role in addressing concerns arising from the field setting.

Potential challenges need to be identified, addressed explicitly, proactively, professionally, and acted upon immediately and collaboratively by students, the agency/Field Instructor, and the School (represented by the Field Faculty, and if needed, the Director of Field Education/Director of Undergraduate Field Education) to allow resolution and/or corrective action as necessary. Every effort is made to assure that students' rights to **due process**, as outlined below, are protected, as well as assuring the appropriate protections to agency and client interests. The School takes an active role in any decision made about its students in a field practicum and makes every effort to safeguard students from decisions that are biased in nature or made arbitrarily by an agency. The School uses the same procedures to evaluate all students.

It is important to acknowledge the inherent power dynamics of the student/agency Field Instructor and student/Field Faculty relationships. At times, the power dynamics may be rooted in longstanding and systemic injustices. The success of Field Education is dependent on an open triadic partnership of student, agency Field Instructor and the School (as represented by the Field Faculty). Input from any member of the triad is equally weighted and valid. Part of the learning that students engage in during any social work program is to build and navigate

relationships with different stakeholders to achieve desired outcomes. Sometimes this process can be challenging to a student as it may require a degree of self-examination but presents a rewarding opportunity for personal and professional growth. It is the hope of the Field Education Team that students will practice professionalism and appropriate self-advocacy by first trying to address concerns regarding their field practicum experience directly with their Field Faculty and/or agency Field Instructor in a productive and respectful manner as outlined below. Students may also seek additional support from their Field Seminar peers, their “Community of Practice”, and/or the Director of Field Education/Director of Undergraduate Field Education. Students also have recourse through the **Student Affairs Committee** should they disagree with an outcome.

## Social Work Intern Rights:

Regarding the field practicum experience, the social work student intern has the right to:

*A thorough and structured orientation, and ongoing training and support from the agency throughout the field practicum experience*

*Access to resources that facilitate the student intern’s role in the agency, such as, but not limited to, a workspace, computer, office supplies, etc.*

*Opportunities to apply social work skills and knowledge with the population(s) served by agency and to participate in meaningful projects/tasks*

*Clear standards and expectations by which they are evaluated as explicitly communicated in the curriculum requirements, learning agreement and comprehensive skills evaluation*

*Receive, at minimum, one hour of regularly scheduled individual supervision on a weekly basis with their agency Field Instructor*

*Stable and consistent supervision and oversight by a designated agency Field Instructor (and Task Supervisor, if applicable) who has completed or is in the process of completing the required field instructor training*

*Receive constructive feedback on their progress and performance, highlighting successes and strengths, and ongoing support of their learning goals from their Field Instructor during supervision*

*An opportunity for mentorship and discussion of professional development goals during supervision*

*An environment free from discrimination, where the student intern enjoys the same respect as other team members*

*Bring up and address concerns with their agency Field Instructor and/or Field Faculty without the fear of retaliation*

*Due process, when/if challenges arise, as outlined below*

Regarding the Field Seminar experience, the social work student intern has the right to:

*A syllabus that clearly outlines the expectations of the field practicum course, including but not limited to, assignments, due dates, grading, etc.*

*Clear standards and expectations by which they are evaluated as explicitly communicated in the syllabus, curriculum requirements, learning agreement and comprehensive skills evaluation*

*Information provided within the syllabus, Field Education Manual and the Field Education Website on School and Field Education policies and procedures, as well as resources, that facilitate the student intern's field practicum experience*

*The availability of their Field Faculty for support and consultation through the Field Seminar meetings, office hours, and as otherwise noted in the respective instructor's syllabus*

*Opportunities to discuss and practice how to apply social work skills and knowledge with the population(s) served by their agency and how to engage in meaningful projects/tasks*

*Opportunities for processing field practicum experiences with their "Community of Practice," peers within the Field Seminar, highlighting successes and strengths, as well as constructively addressing challenges*

*Opportunities for mutual support, networking, referral/outreach within their "Community of Practice," peers within the Field Seminar*

*Opportunities to address physical, psychological, and professional well-being through identification of various related resources, on and off campus*

*An environment free from discrimination, where the student enjoys the same respect as other peers*

## **Social Work Student Intern Responsibilities:**

Regarding student intern behavior and performance either at the field setting or within the Field Seminar, the general expectations are that the student intern will:

*Be aware of and follow the policies and procedures of the agency they are interning at and the SDSU School of Social Work Field Education Manual, and to ask for support if unclear*

*Refer to competencies, curriculum requirements, field seminar syllabus and field calendar to identify and clearly communicate learning needs/objectives/expectations*

*Make a good faith effort to address challenges regarding the field practicum experience directly with their Field Faculty and/or agency Field Instructor in a productive and respectful manner as outlined below*

*Practice prevention and early intervention to address challenges in field practicum experience through timely consultation with Field Instructor, Field Faculty and/or Field Seminar Peers (as appropriate)*

*Understand the purpose of a student situation report and/or performance agreement is not to be punitive, but to clarify expectations for all stakeholders, providing guidance and support. This report provides accountability not only to the student, but to the Field Instructor and Field Faculty as well to assist the student in meeting the goals of the agreement.*

*Be aware of the right to due process and appeals process through the Student Affairs Committee*

*Be aware of and access resources, such as the Academic Advising Team (Undergraduate and Graduate Academic Advisers), Student Ability Success Center (SASC), Economic Crisis and Response Team (ECRT), Counseling and Psychological Services (CP&S), etc., when needed*

*Reflect on and address the potential impact of power dynamics through supervision and field seminar*

*Practice timely, clear, and professional communication in all formats (such as email, phone, text, verbal and non-verbal) with Field Faculty s and agency Field Instructors/Task Supervisors*

*Adhere to the values of the social work profession by behaving professionally at their field setting and in their interactions with agency Field Instructors/Task Supervisors, Field Faculty, Field Administrative Staff, and peers*

*Adhere to the [NASW Code of Ethics](#)*

*Practice within the bounds of the laws and regulations of the State of California*

Examples of challenges related to an agency and/or Field Instructor (FI) may include:

- Rushed and/or unstructured process to orient students to the agency and their role, e.g., student feels “thrown into the deep end”.
- Problems related to the agency’s ability to provide an appropriate learning experience due to agency changes, such as administrative and/or policy changes that may negatively impact the placement experience, e.g., sudden loss of grants/funding that creates financial pressure on an agency or agency receives a poor outcome on an audit or turnover of leadership and staff.
- Student is treated more like an employee than an intern focused on learning
- Unexpected loss of a qualified Field Instructor, e.g., Field Instructor leaves their role at the agency for another opportunity mid-year, Field Instructor takes a leave of absence due to pregnancy or other reason.

- Inconsistent or lack of individual supervision, e.g., no set time and day for supervision meetings, or group supervision is substituted for individual supervision.
- Perceived unavailability, either practically or emotionally, of Field Instructor due to the Field Instructor's workload or other barriers.
- Differences in communication/learning-teaching styles between a student and Field Instructor.
- Inappropriate and/or unethical behavior exhibited by either Field Instructor and/or other staff at the agency.

### Steps Students Can Take:

Students are ultimately responsible, as adult learners, for bringing any issue related to their learning experience at the agency and/or with their Field Instructor to the attention of the School (as represented first and foremost by their Field Faculty). The Field Faculty cannot assist a student if they are not aware of the concern(s). Timely communication of challenges encountered by the student can lead to opportunities for successful resolutions.

To do so, students should be aware of these steps:

1. **If the student is comfortable doing so, any concern(s) should be brought to the attention of their Field Instructor in a timely manner**, e.g., during supervision, so that there can be an attempt made to address the concern(s).
2. At the same time, students should also **reach out immediately to their Field Faculty** either during their Field Seminar meetings, during office hours, via email, or through any other means that is offered by their Field Faculty . If a student's next Field Seminar meeting is not until a week later, the student should not wait, but utilize another means of getting in contact with their Field Faculty. Again, students are encouraged to report issues promptly as delaying the process may result in missed opportunities for resolution and unintentional outcomes. If a student has reached out to their Field Faculty but has not heard back from them within a reasonable time frame or the student's situation is emergent, the student should contact the Director of Field Education or the Director of Undergraduate Field Education. Students may request to have a peer support them when they meet to discuss their concerns with their Field Faculty . Anything pertaining to a student's field practicum experience is private and protected by the [Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act \(FERPA\)](#); therefore, a student would need to consent to having the support of a peer. The request to include a peer will be at the discretion of the Field Faculty who may advise that the student meet one-on-one with them instead if there are concerns for privacy, conflicts of interest, etc.
3. **Once the concern(s) has been communicated to the Field Faculty, they address the concern(s) first in consultation with the student directly, and if needed, with the Director of Field Education and/or the Director of Undergraduate Field Education as appropriate.** Students' autonomy in the process is respected by the Field Faculty and the Director of Field Education and/or Director of Undergraduate Field Education, unless there is an egregious and



urgent situation assessed by the School that requires immediate intervention. Options are explored with the student prior to any action from the School.

4. **The Field Faculty and the Director of Field Education and/or Director of Undergraduate Field Education may also reach out to the agency and/or Field Instructor to obtain additional information**, e.g., by calling a meeting with the agency/Field Instructor either with or without the student's presence depending on the circumstances. **Students will be informed at every step of the process, and to the extent possible, their privacy will be upheld.**

5. **Any resolution of an issue pertaining to field education should be a collaborative process between the student, agency/Field Instructor and the School whenever possible.**

A common option utilized to seek the resolution of a challenge is scheduling a joint meeting with the student, agency Field Instructor and the School. The School (represented by the Field Faculty and/or the Director of Field Education and/or Director of Undergraduate Field Education) facilitates the discussion of the identified issue(s) and possible solutions. Students are often encouraged, if they feel comfortable doing so, to vocalize their concern(s) in their own words as a means of practicing self-advocacy on a professional level. If the student, due to the power differential or other reasons, does not feel comfortable speaking up on their own, the School will advocate on their behalf, being mindful of opportunities to engage and include the student's voice. Sometimes, a student, once speaking with their Field Faculty, may elect to first attempt to address their concern(s) with the agency Field Instructor directly. Students may role play their planned approach and dialogue with their Field Faculty before meeting with their Field Instructor. Students may also develop a checklist of talking points and go over these with their Field Faculty prior to the meeting with their Field Instructor. Oftentimes, students find that they can successfully address their concern(s) without further intervention from the School; however, if they continue to run into barriers, they should return to their Field Faculty to explore other options and support.

6. It is important to note that sometimes a student's concern(s) may initially resolve; however, the same concern(s) may resurface later or new concern(s) may develop. The student is encouraged to revisit any concerns with their agency Field Instructor, if they are comfortable doing so, and/or their Field Faculty .

7. If it is the best option available and feasible to do so, **the decision to move a student to a different placement setting will be made by the Director of Field Education and/or Director of Undergraduate Field Education.** The selection of the new field practicum site will be guided by the Field Faculty's recommendations, availability of sites, and the learning needs of the student. The goal is to reduce the amount of disruption to the student's learning and to reflect on the learning that is also inherent in the challenge that the student has tried, with the support of the School, to overcome whilst applying social work strategies and techniques.

8. If a student wishes to appeal a decision regarding their field practicum experience, they can do so through the **Student Affairs Committee.**

9. Students are also invited to provide feedback regarding their field agency and Field Instructor at the end of the academic year through IPT which is reviewed internally by the Field Education Team; however, students should not wait until these evaluations to communicate any concerns they may have.

### Concerns related to a student's performance:

Examples of common challenges, as related to the core social work competencies, that students may experience at their field practicum are:

- Issues regarding ethical and professional behaviors such as inappropriate behavior in the agency
- Violations of the NASW Code of Ethics
- Difficulty completing assigned tasks and responsibilities
- Difficulty with engaging and keeping clients
- Showing a lack of respect for human diversity and difference
- Boundary crossings and/or boundary violations
- Inappropriate use of self-disclosure
- Sharing confidential client information on social media
- Mental and/or physical health conditions impacting performance, examples:
  - Substance use
  - Financial stress
  - Burnout/Compassion Fatigue
- Unresolved and unaddressed past trauma
- Difficulty balancing field practicum obligations with other aspects of life
- Attendance and/or tardiness issues

**When a student has difficulty with their professional performance, early intervention is essential.** Field Instructors, in addition to supporting a student intern's success, play a key role in monitoring and minimizing risk and liability for their agency and ensuring a high standard of care for clients. Field Instructors model ethical practice for their student interns and help them to navigate ethical dilemmas. Strategies to minimize risk and liability as a Field Instructor include:

- Consistent supervision and record keeping of supervision (refer to [Supervision Form](#) template)
- Thorough review of student documentation
- Ongoing assessment of student intern's skill level
- Modeling, monitoring, and reinforcing professional boundaries
- Reviewing agency policies and procedures with students and checking for understanding
- Focusing on the safety of the student intern and clients

When an area or concern is identified by the agency Field Instructor, the following steps should be taken:

1. **The student and Field Instructor should use *supervision*** to clarify the problem area(s) and issue(s); identify strategies for improvement, expectations for change and support needed to do so.

A. Field Instructor will communicate to the student the issues and concerns, including identified obstacles to the student's learning and adequate performance, and may identify specific activities and steps that need to be taken to resolve the problem areas

B. Field Instructor will reach out to the Field Faculty for consultation

**Possible Outcomes:**

- Identified problems are resolved and field practicum continues, or
- Identified problems are not resolved; proceed to step 2.

2. **Conference between Student, Field Instructor, and Field Faculty** to discuss the challenges constructively, in an issue-oriented manner.

a. To ensure *due process* for all concerned, the Field Faculty will communicate with the student and Field Instructor individually prior to a 3-way conference

3. **Conference between Student, Field Instructor, Field Faculty , and Director of Field Education**

a. A conference is held between the student, Field Instructor, Field Faculty , and the Director of Field Education (or Director of Undergraduate Field Education) to review identified problem areas and obstacles to resolution. At this meeting, the Field Faculty should have an opportunity to review evidence of the student's work in the field practicum, including process recordings, feedback from other sources, e.g., Task Supervisor, case documentation, and a review of possible outcomes and consequences.

b. The Director of Field Education (or Director of Undergraduate Field Education) is available for consultation and will be available to attend this conference when requested.

c. During the conference, the use of a "**Student Performance Agreement**" is reviewed and developed verbally, including the performance issue(s); remediation steps;

expectations for change; time frame for remediation; evaluation process; and review of possible outcomes and consequences.

d. Immediately following the conference, this “Student Performance Agreement” is written by the Field Instructor, with assistance from Field Faculty , clearly identifying each of the above areas. The student is given 24 hours to review and sign the agreement. The agreement goes into effect after the 24 hours with or without the student’s signature. The Field Instructor and student sign the contract and send the original and a copy to the Field Faculty. The Field Faculty signs the Agreement and then delivers the agreement to the Director of Field Education for review and signature. All participants will sign the agreement and will receive a copy. This signifies agreement by all parties to the content and conditions contained in the agreement.

### **Possible Outcomes:**

1. The student follows through with a remediation plan resulting in successful completion of agreement within specified time frame.
2. The student attempts to follow through with a remediation plan but does not show progress or does not satisfactorily meet the conditions of the agreement within the specified time frame. Additionally, the student does not demonstrate the potential to successfully complete the terms of the agreement. Student is terminated from the field practicum with a grade of No Credit in field practicum.
3. The student does not follow through with the remediation plan, and therefore, does not satisfactorily meet the conditions of the agreement within the specified time frame. Student is terminated from the field practicum with a grade of No Credit in field practicum.
4. The student refuses to sign the “Student Performance Agreement” and does not satisfactorily meet the conditions of the agreement. Student is terminated from the field practicum with a grade of No Credit in field practicum. Termination from the field practicum, with a grade of No Credit will be authorized by the Director of Field Education, the course instructor of record. A student who is terminated from the field practicum, with a grade of No Credit will automatically be referred to the undergraduate advisor or graduate advisor, and possibly the Student Affairs Committee for review. In any situation when: a) there is imminent danger of harm to clients, to students, to other professionals, etc.; b) breaches of client confidentiality; c) major apathetic performances; d) unexplained absences; e) exhibiting display of inappropriate professional boundaries; or f) other significant professional issues and ethical concerns, the student will be *immediately removed from the field placement and the above administrative procedures will be initiated.*

These policies and procedures are in conjunction with the SDSU School of Social Work “*Maintaining Student Eligibility for Field Practicum*” policies and procedures. Please refer to this policy for further detailed information.

## PROFESSIONAL LIABILITY INSURANCE

The University and all field practicum agencies require student liability insurance coverage. In accordance with the SDSU and Community-Based Organization **Service Learning Agreement (SLA)**, the University shall provide professional and general liability coverage for students enrolled in Social Work programs performing community service for academic credit (internships) through the [Student Professional Liability Insurance Program \(SPLIP\)](#) and the [SAFECLIP \(Student Academic Field Experience for Credit Liability Insurance Program\)](#) policy. Students do not need to obtain coverage on their own.

The student’s malpractice liability insurance coverage is not in effect for other than the assigned field practicum experience.

While students are enrolled in the field practicum, (SW 489, SW 650, SW 750 or SW 755) the University will provide liability insurance coverage during the Academic Year period (fall & spring semesters, including spring and winter break). Students are not covered during University Holidays (Thanksgiving, Veteran’s Day, Christmas Day, Caesar Chavez Holiday observance, when campus is closed).

Students are covered during the winter and spring breaks, either when the student is required to complete hours/assignments in their field practicum and has received an “Incomplete or Report in Progress” grade OR if they are volunteering their time at the agency to maintain continuity of care for their clients during school breaks. Field faculty need to be aware of and approve beforehand in a written plan (via email is acceptable) before the end of the semester, if a student will be at the agency during school breaks to make up missed hours, or to volunteer their time. Field faculty needs to have approved these hours prior to ensure that there will be a field faculty available if any issues arise during the academic break period, when the student is in their field setting.

The Director of Field Education is responsible for knowing officially all students enrolled in field practicum and their field placement assignments for insurance and liability reasons. Therefore, it is imperative for the student, field instructor, and field faculty to immediately inform the Director of Field Education of any changes in field placement.

## TRANSPORTATION AND TRAVEL

Usually agencies require students to have a car to perform field assignments that involve home visits, collaborative meetings, community work, etc. San Diego and Imperial Counties comprise

an extensive geographical area, and public transportation is a limited resource. Therefore, it is strongly encouraged for students to have daily access to a dependable automobile to commute to field practicum agencies and to carry out assignments required by the field practicum agency. Students should plan and expect up to an average driving time of **one hour each way** between their residence and the field practicum site.

- Students are responsible for their own day-to-day transportation to engage in field-related activities. Not having dependable transportation will limit the student's placement options. However, the School will make every reasonable effort to accommodate non-driving students.
- Students who drive must show proof of a valid California Driver's License, automobile registration, and insurance meeting the State of California minimum requirements when requested by the practicum agency prior to beginning their internship. Students must maintain automobile insurance coverage throughout the entire field practicum period.
- The University does not assume responsibility for any claims arising from the use of an automobile by the student in the completion of field practicum activities. The University does not assume responsibility for student travel expenses.
- In accordance with School policies, **students shall not use their personal automobile to transport clients**. Students may transport clients in agency vehicles only after all agency driving training and insurance policies are met.
- It is expected that agencies requiring major travel activities reimburse the students for mileage accumulated during the placement hours. Agencies do not reimburse students for the costs of traveling from home to the agency and the return trip home. Students should ask whether mileage reimbursement is provided during their interview with the agency or at the time of onboarding.

## EQUAL ACCESS AND OPPORTUNITY

SDSU has a professional, cultural, and ethical commitment to provide a climate that enables students to realize their potential for excellence and that nurtures academic growth and professional development. The University takes pride in the diversity of its student body and employees, and affirms that this diversity enriches the work and learning environment of the campus. For this reason, the recognition of diversity in our University community extends beyond the limits established by federal or state laws or regulations.

In addition to fully meeting its obligations of nondiscrimination under federal and state law, SDSU is committed to creating a community in which a diverse population can learn, live, and work. Moreover, the atmosphere shall be one of tolerance, civility, and respect for the rights and

sensibilities of each individual, without regard to professional rank, employment status, economic status, ethnic background, political views, or other personal characteristics or beliefs.

The University also takes seriously its responsibility to ensure equal educational opportunities for all students, including students with disabilities. This responsibility is based on Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, and on Title II of the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990, which are enforced by the U.S. Department of Education, Office for Civil Rights.

SDSU affirms the equal worth of every individual and of distinct groups of people, and fosters fair and equal treatment and access for all members of the University community. Therefore, the University is committed to the principles of equal opportunity in education and employment, to policies and practices that ensure equal opportunity and consideration, and to the protection of civil rights.

It is the policy of SDSU to provide programs, services, and benefits, including employment, without regard to race, religion, color, ancestry, ethnicity, gender/gender identity, marital status, pregnancy, national origin, age, mental or physical disability, sexual orientation, disabled veterans' status, Vietnam-era or other covered [veteran status](#).

## SDSU STUDENT ABILITY SUCCESS CENTER (SASC)

Students who have disabilities that can potentially impact their academic performance in their field practicum courses may request special accommodations by contacting the SDSU [Student Ability Success Center](#) (SASC) and having an evaluation. If a student has a documented disability, they should contact SASC and request an informational session with a counselor.

If a SASC evaluation determines that a student has a disability and is eligible for academic accommodations, it is the student's responsibility to inform their field faculty in a timely manner. They should meet with their instructor(s) and provide the necessary paperwork from SASC for appropriate academic accommodations. The Undergraduate and Graduate Advisors are available to expedite a student's referral to SASC.

For students in field practicum courses who are requesting reasonable accommodations for their internships, the following procedures listed are in effect:

- Before the student's field practicum application due date, the student should contact SASC for a consultation and an evaluation;
- The student should then obtain a letter from SASC stating the requested appropriate academic accommodations in internships specifically;

- Then, the student should obtain and provide a copy of the completed Release of Information form from SASC for the Director of Field Education, field faculty, and agency field instructor for consultation with SASC; and
- The student should inform their agency field instructor regarding their special accommodation needs as related to their field practicum directly and provide written authorization/documentation for the School to inform the agency field instructor.

Course instructors, field faculty, and agency field instructors are not responsible for adhering to the student's academic accommodations, requested via SASC, after the fact (e.g. student informing field faculty and/or agency field instructor after the start of their internship, after practicum assignments and presentations are due, at the end of the semester, etc.).

## USE OF CELL PHONES AND/OR PAGERS

Agencies may request that students utilize pagers and/or cell phones issued by the agency during their field practicum internship activities. Student use of these agency supplied devices is acceptable only during assigned field practicum hours. Under no circumstances should a student be expected to be available by cell phone, pager, or on-call status during hours in which they are not assigned for field practicum. Students are not permitted to use their own personal cell phones or pagers for their field practicum. Students are also not permitted to use their own personal laptop/computer to provide telehealth to clients.

## INTERRUPTION OF FIELD PLACEMENT DUE TO NATIONAL OR LOCAL EVENTS

The SDSU School of Social Work has policies and protocols in place to address temporary disruptions to students' social work field placements due to national or local events such as work actions/strikes, disasters, public health emergencies, etc. These policies and protocols are based on principles of educational integrity and focus on educational expectations, goals and objectives being met and maintained. The interests of the students' (both graduate and undergraduate) educational experiences are of primary consideration.

If students are advised by their field practicum agency and/or the government to not attend their field setting, or if safety concerns warrant a temporary disruption in their field practicum, students should immediately consult with their agency field instructor and their field faculty, who will inform the Director of Field Education.

If a student or agency is requesting the option to conduct field practicum remotely, and the accommodation can be made without unduly burdening the parties involved and can uphold educational integrity and expectations, protocols described below must be followed.



Field faculty will collaborate with the agency field instructor to provide alternate learning activities, also known as “remote competency development”, that can be completed off-site to support a students’ ability to complete their required field hours and adequately address educational competencies during temporary field placement stoppages.

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

## **Work Action or Strike during Field Practicum Period**

If a work action or strike situation occurs in an agency where students are placed during the course of the academic year, a variety of options may be considered:

- Students may request not to remain in the field practicum setting (agency) during the period of the work action or strike. The student will be supported in this decision by the School and will suffer no academic consequences unless the field requirements are not met.
  - The mandated field practicum hours missed during the work action/strike period must be made up by the student during the regular semester and break periods, and before the next academic semester of field begins.
    - For example, if a work action/strike occurs during the fall semester, the student will be required to make up missed hours during the fall semester and winter break intersession. All required hours must be completed before the Spring Semester begins.
    - The student will receive an “Incomplete” final grade for any semester that they are unable to complete their required hours. The grade of “Incomplete” will be changed only when the missed hours are made-up before the beginning of the next semester according to the plan the the student field faculty and Director of Field Education have documented.
    - Decisions regarding missed hours make-up will ultimately be decided by the Director of Field Education in consultation with the student, agency field instructor and field faculty.
- Students may request to remain in the field practicum setting during the work action or strike. This option will be available only when the School is assured that the educational integrity of the field practicum will be maintained. The student will be supported in this decision and will suffer no academic consequences.

- This means that the supervisory requirements, caseload requirements and other curriculum requirements will be consistently met by the agency during the work action/strike period.
- The School will also be assured that there is no danger to the student during this work action/strike period.
- Students who are employees of the agency involved:
  - Whether the employee/intern is involved or is not involved in the work action/strike and is currently utilizing this agency as their field practicum site, the above policies will apply.
- Students participating in specialized programs, e.g. Title IV-E Child Welfare Stipend Program; Pupil Personnel Services Credential Certificate Program; etc.
  - When the student is a participant in a specialized program, the above policies will apply.

## **Work Action or Strike before Field Practicum Period**

If a work action or strike situation occurs in an agency prior to the beginning of the field practicum period, no students will be placed for field practicum in that agency for that academic year.

If the agency reaches resolution of the work action/strike situation at some point during the academic year, the agency may be used for a mid-year placement depending on re-assessment of the agency and its ability to meet the learning and educational expectations of the School.

## **Work Action or Strike Extending for More than Two Weeks**

If the work action/strike continues beyond two weeks (32 hours for MSW I Foundation Year and BASW students and 40 hours for MSW II Advanced Year students), a re- assessment of the agency's ability to provide the appropriate supervision and educational experiences will be made by the field faculty.

Field faculty and the Director of Field Education will consult and ensure that if the student continues the field practicum at this agency, they will have a sound and appropriate learning experience (according to the School's field practicum policies and procedures). If it is evaluated that the student will not be provided the full educational requirements and expectations in the field practicum setting, the student will be relocated to an alternative field placement site for the remainder of the academic year.

## Procedures:

- As the Director of Field Education becomes aware of a potential work action or strike in a particular field setting (agency), it will be the responsibility of the Field Education Team to implement and act upon the above policies.
- These policies and procedures will be distributed as soon as possible to:
  - all students placed in the field practicum site involved in the work action/strike;
  - agency field instructors, managers, administrative representatives, etc. at the agency; and
  - field faculty.
- It is the responsibility of the student to review and fully understand these policies and procedures, consult with their agency field instructor and field faculty when making the decision to remain at or depart the field practicum site during the work action or strike. The Director of Field Education is available for additional student consultation when requested.
- Students should make a sound, professional decision based on all the facts and issues involved. Students will inform their field faculty regarding their decision before the student takes any specific action, such as whether to be involved in the work action/strike or not; and whether to remain at or depart the agency during the work action/strike situation.
- The field faculty will contact the agency field instructor in order to begin assessment/evaluation procedures of whether the student's field practicum site will be able to provide the required supervision and educational experiences.
- The field faculty will review the student's decision with the student. If the student requests to remain at the agency, they will be followed and supported. If the student chooses to depart the agency, they will be followed and supported.
  - The student and field faculty will discuss any potential missed field hours and develop a written plan for hours make-up.
  - This written plan will be reviewed by the Director of Field Education for approval.
- If the agency work action or strike seems to be extending (2 - 3 weeks), the field faculty will schedule a group meeting for all students involved to discuss options, answer questions, review policies, and to provide a forum to address concerns.

- By the beginning of the third week, the above policies will be followed and placement policies and procedures for re-placing students will be initiated by the field faculty in consultation with the Director of Field Education.

## Disasters

- Should any type of disaster occur while students are at their internship, students should follow the safety protocols of their respective agencies, as well as use their personal judgment regarding their own well-being.
- Should a disaster occur while students are in their field seminars, students and faculty will follow the safety protocols of the University.
- Should the University decide to officially close campus during a disaster, students and field instructors/agency field practicum sites will be contacted immediately by email and/or phone (in accordance with the School Administration process and procedures) for students to leave the agency internship sites. In accordance with University policy, when campus is closed, students will not be able to attend internships.
- The School of Social Work will follow University regulations regarding time that is missed from internships and classes due to disasters.

## Public Health Emergencies

The SDSU School of Social Work is committed to safeguarding student safety during public health emergencies to the greatest extent possible. Students and agencies should be aware that the School reserves the right to pause or discontinue a student's in-person attendance indefinitely at their field site under certain circumstances. If there is a disruption to in-person field attendance, whether initiated by the School or the agency, students and field instructors will be supported by the School to continue to engage in meaningful remote learning activities that meet the Council on Social Work Education's requirements to fulfill required field hours. If the agency and/or field instructor is unable to continue to support the student remotely to meet their learning requirements, then the student will either be redirected to an alternate field placement (if feasible) or will be supported by the field faculty (capacity allowing), through remote competency development activities, to fulfill their required hours.

Students who have special accommodation needs, such as requesting a field practicum experience that is fully remote due to the nature of the public health emergency and their personal circumstances, must work with the [Student Ability Success Center](#) (SASC) to identify and outline their special accommodation needs and provide this in the format of an official letter from SASC to their field faculty in a timely manner. Field faculty will work closely with the student, field instructor, agency site, and as needed will consult with the Director of Field Education (or Director of Undergraduate Field Education) to determine if and how the student's

accommodations can be met. Delays by the student in notifying the field faculty regarding any special accommodation needs could result in the inability of the field agency to adequately meet the needs of the student. There is no guarantee that the student will be able to be placed at an alternate agency.

The School recognizes that social work professionals are regarded as essential workers and play a key role in responding to the needs of the community, especially during public health emergencies, through providing in-person, and where possible, virtual or "telehealth", services. This attitude is also reflected in the [NASW Code of Ethics](#) which states, "Social workers should provide appropriate professional services in public emergencies to the greatest extent possible."

The School will ultimately follow the University's guidelines when determining if and how students are able to conduct their field practicum experiences during a public health emergency. For example, in the 2020-21 academic year, students were provided with the option to complete their field practicum experiences in-person (or a hybrid format of both in-person/remote experiences) at their field sites by completing a safety training and signing an acknowledgement of risk ("waiver") specific to COVID-19 which was developed by the University. Students were required to sign the "waiver" to pursue an in-person (or partially in-person) field practicum experience. Field agency sites may also choose to ask students to sign a site-specific waiver prior to starting their assignment. The School will also follow guidelines put forth by the Council on Social Work Education (CSWE) Commission on Accreditation, as well as other entities that have oversight of specialized programs such as the Pupil Personnel Services Credential and Title IV-E Stipend Program and will consult with the School's curriculum committee as appropriate.

Agency partners are expected to do their due diligence to safeguard their staff, volunteers, and student interns through implementation of applicable health and safety protocols, in response to public health emergencies, as directed by local, state, and national guidelines. We highly encourage students and their agency field instructors to have an explicit discussion about the policies and procedures addressing health and safety during a public health emergency. Agencies are also encouraged to share their health and safety protocols with field faculty.

## SAFETY CONSIDERATIONS IN FIELD PRACTICUM

The following safety policies and procedures regarding student interns in the field practicum have been created in recognition of the fact that physical vulnerability of professional social workers and potential volatile situations in the lives of clients are a reality. While social workers may be more aware of these issues in urban areas, the issues of safety are relevant in all communities and settings.

- The School is responsible for providing all students and field faculty with general information about safety in the field practicum.

- Faculty will address safety issues as they relate to the content of lectures and discussions in the classroom.
- Each agency is responsible for orienting student interns to the safety policies and procedures in that particular field practicum. Such orientation should include, but is not limited to:
  - discussion of safety issues in the community, including students conducting home visits, etc.;
  - discussion of safety issues within the agency building(s);
  - safety issues with particular clients exhibiting high risk behavior and/or prone to violent behavior;
  - security of personal belongings; and
  - procedures for the student to follow in the event of a safety or security problem.
- Students should not be forced to engage in assignments in which they feel physically at risk. The agency needs to make the same accommodations to ensure students' safety as they make for staff. If a student's concerns about safety begin to interfere with the learning process, the agency field instructor should explore these issues with the student immediately and the field faculty should be contacted to facilitate exploration of the concerns.

Procedures:

- Safety procedures are discussed in the field orientation and first seminars detailing the general steps students can take in the field practicum to maximize safety and minimize security risks. Safety measures will be discussed in student Field Orientation and field seminars and followed up in discussions with the students' agency field instructors and field faculty.
- If an incident occurs in which a student is personally threatened or hurt, the agency field instructor, agency contact person or agency director will contact the field faculty and the Director of Field Education immediately to discuss what actions the agency and School should take to ensure the student's physical and emotional well-being. The School Director will also be immediately informed of the situation.
- The field faculty, in consultation with the Director of Field Education, will:
  - document the incident and the steps taken to address it;

- meet the student to assess the student's readiness to return to the field practicum; and
- address any other issues relevant to the situation.
- Refer to “**Procedure for Emergencies or Injury at Practicum Site**” on Field Education Website under Student Resources → [Student Forms](#).

## SEXUAL HARASSMENT

It is the policy of the SDSU School of Social Work, that in order to maintain an environment in which the dignity and worth of all students is respected, that harassment of students in their field placements is intolerable and unacceptable. It is seen as a form of behavior that seriously undermines the atmosphere of trust essential to the learning environment. Also, willful false accusations of harassment will not be condoned.

The School of Social Work recognizes that, the harassment policies and procedures adopted by SDSU may not apply to the harassment of a student in the field practicum agency where they are not an employee of the agency or where harassment is coming from someone who is not a University instructor. The following guidelines are provided in case there are situations or complaints regarding harassment of students (due to the unavoidable subordinate position students experience in field placement at times). Harassment of student interns may include harassment from an agency field instructor, agency employee, community representative, etc.

Harassment may be defined as unwanted sexual advances, or visual, verbal or physical conduct of an inappropriate nature. It may involve the behavior of the agency field instructor or any person employed by the field practicum agency of any gender when such behavior falls within the definition outlined below (the following is a partial list):

- Harassment of a student from SDSU is defined as unwelcome sexual advances, requests for sexual favors, verbal or other expressive behaviors, or physical conduct commonly understood to be of a sexual nature when:
  - submission to such conduct is made either explicitly or implicitly a term or condition of an individual's continued placement;
  - submission to or rejection of such conduct is used as a basis for decisions or assessments affecting the individual's welfare as a student placed in the agency;
  - such conduct has the purpose or effect of unreasonably and substantially interfering with an individual's welfare, academic, or professional performance, or

creates an intimidating, hostile, offensive, and demeaning internship/educational environment.

- Consensual relationships are deemed unwise and seen as professionally inappropriate when they occur between members of the teaching staff or other agency staff (specifically, in field for this policy) and students. A professional power differential exists in these situations in terms of the influence and authority which one can exercise over the other. Also, this type of relationship becomes a professional and ethical concern according to the [NASW Code of Ethics](#).
- Harassment of any student intern from the School shall not be tolerated from an agency field instructor, employee, or representative of the field practicum agency. To best ensure that students are placed in an agency environment free from sexual harassment, the following needs to occur:
  - Each field practicum agency, including the field instructor shall receive a copy of the School's policy, entitled, "Harassment in the Field Practicum" and a copy of the University's policy/brochure, "Sexual Harassment is Forbidden By Law" (located on the next two pages of this manual).
  - Any field practicum setting approved for use as a field placement shall provide the student with a copy of its own "harassment policy" utilized within the agency setting. Agency policies and procedures shall be reviewed in detail with the student. Students should be clear on who to inform and who are the designated persons to share the matter with.

The School and field faculty may also request a copy of the agency's policy at any given time. If the agency has no such policy, the School of Social Work strongly urges that one be developed.

- Each field practicum agency is responsible for orienting student interns to the harassment policies and procedures in that particular setting. This orientation should include, but not be limited to:
  - discussion of harassment within the agency setting, including professional and non-professional staff, field instructors, Task Supervisors, etc.;
  - discussion of harassment issues with clients; and
  - harassment from fellow colleagues.
- If a student believes that they have been the subject of harassment in the field practicum setting, the student will notify the agency field instructor (unless this is the person who is doing the harassing), field faculty and/or the Director of Field Education.
  - Any student who believes that they have encountered harassment is encouraged to discuss the concern with any one of the following persons at the University with whom they feel comfortable: field faculty as mentioned above; the



Undergraduate or Graduate Advisor; Department Director; Dean of the College; Equal Opportunity Counselors; University Personnel Services; etc.

- If the field practicum setting has a specifically designated individual or office to deal with these matters, that person or office should also be notified by the student. The student is strongly encouraged to notify agency personnel.
- The School faculty member receiving the report shall immediately notify the School Director, Director of Field Education, field faculty, designated Personnel Services officer, etc. and follow procedures in accordance with the University policies.
  - Title IX protects students, educators and school employees against all forms of sex or gender discrimination, including: sexual harassment, dating and domestic violence, other forms of sexual misconduct, stalking and retaliation. Students or staff experiencing discrimination based on sex or gender should contact their campus [Title IX office](#).
  - There are a number of individuals at SDSU who can provide assistance and support such as the Title IX Coordinator, the Deputy Title IX Coordinators and the university's Sexual Assault Victim Advocate.
- Based on the exploration or investigation of this matter, the School shall ensure the student is safe and free from harassment. The resolution of the concern may include several options.

Students following these procedures are in no way inhibited from pursuing other options such as bringing the matter to the attention of the School's Student Affairs Committee, etc. No student intern will be subject to restraint, interference, or reprisal for seeking information about harassment or filing a harassment complaint, etc.

# Field Education Administration

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## ROLES IN FIELD EDUCATION

**Field Faculty** and staff are responsible for the implementation of the **Field Education** program in the SDSU School of Social Work. They are responsible to students and to participating community agencies, in a mutual partnership.

## **Director of Field Education**

- Has overall responsibility for Field Education program development and administration, and works closely with the Director of Undergraduate Field Director.
- Approves, in collaboration with field faculty, agencies interested in participating with the School of Social Work as a field practicum agency.
- Oversees development of relevant training materials for agency field instructors and field faculty around issues of field instruction, supervision, and other relevant topics.
- Provides ongoing support and assistance to the agency field instructors and field faculty to enhance the provision of an educationally focused field education program.
- Supervises field faculty and field administrative support staff.
- Collaborates with other faculty and staff to help ensure that the objectives of the Field Education sequence are achieved.
- Collaborates with other Directors of Field Education locally, statewide, and nationally to ensure that the School's program meets or exceeds national standards and is beneficial to students and our community partners.

## **Director of Undergraduate Field Education**

- Vets undergraduate students for field eligibility.
- Assigns students to SW 489 Field Seminars.
- Develops and conducts SW 489 Field Placement Planning Meeting.
- Develops and conducts SW 489 Field Orientation Meeting.
- Addresses, in consultation with the Field Directors, undergraduate student performance issues.
- Develops and conducts field instructor training.
- Recruits and evaluates field placement sites.

## **Field Administrative Support Staff**

- There is one full-time and two part-time field administrative support staff members, as well as one part-time student assistant, who provide support to the Field Education program, including the BASW and MSW program and all the projects that have a field education component.
- Interfaces with the SDSU Contracts and Procurement department to coordinate the Service Learning Agreement (SLA) process
- Manages Intern Placement Tracking (IPT) system for 300+ students in internships and hundreds of agencies that partner with the School in support of social work field education.
- Plans and coordinates in-person and virtual events
- Processes forms, program payables, and provides summaries for review, including the program budget
- Manages the San Diego Allied Health Consortium database used for onboarding interns at partnering agencies
- Supports Director of Field Education, Director of Undergraduate Field Education, and Field Faculty

## **Site and Field Coordinator, SDSU Imperial Valley Campus**

- Responsible for the overall coordination, development, implementation and administration of the field education for SDSU-IV. Includes planning and implementing field educational experiences and project activities for students and agency partners
- Recruitment, screening, development, evaluation and retention of field practicum sites and field instructors
- Coordinating and conducting introductory practicum site visits with county and community partners (members)
- Recruits new partner agencies (internship sites) and Field Instructors/Task Supervisors continually
- Oversees and coordinates with the Director of Field Education the MSW Field Practicum process for students in accordance with school policies, procedures and timelines
- Teaches graduate field courses (SW 650/750 seminars) as assigned, e.g. lab instructor, field liaison, conducts agency site visits, etc.

- Develops, schedules, plans and supports field education projects and school activities relevant to the IV campus cohort
- Monitors, evaluates liability, due process and risk management issues for MSW students and agencies
- Field administration activities for field education program, e.g. field database, agency documentation compliance, student field placement process and progress.
- Develops and teaches field course orientations, informational meetings and field instructor trainings to educate student and agency field instructors to curriculum, supervision, evaluation and practice needs
- Reports to the Director of Field Education and collaborates on duties, responsibilities and tasks
- Works in collaboration with the Title IV-E Project, Field Education Coordinator and County liaisons to develop and deliver academic materials and learning opportunities to support and integrate the intern's field experience with the educational goals of the University
- Participates in field education, Title IV-E and faculty meetings as required
- Recruits prospective students for new upcoming MSW cohorts-every three years

### **Cal-SWEC Title IV-E Child Welfare Stipend Coordinator**

- Implements general policy of Title IV-E program with the University, including student recruitment, screening, selection, tracking, job internships, and retention.
- Develops policies and procedures in integrating the Title IV-E program with the University's program, including curriculum development; student support and advisement; and development.
- Works with field faculty and/or agency representatives to develop and oversee appropriate field internships and experiences for Title IV-E stipend students, including involvement with both the University and community.
- Collaborates with other faculty and staff to help ensure that the objectives and minimum competencies of the Title IV-E Child Welfare program are achieved.

## **Pupil Personnel Services Credential (PPS-C) Coordinator**

- Responsible for placing students in school district social work internships.
- Participates in field orientation meetings to share the role of school social workers and how to enter into the PPS-C program.
- Guides students through the credentialing process, including fingerprinting requirements, basic skills requirements, and applying for the credential.
- Responsible for advising students about the PPS-C and eligibility requirements
- Collaborates with school districts to create internship opportunities.
- Collaborates with school district field instructors to ensure they are knowledgeable about changes related to California Commission on Teacher Credentialing and PPS-C performance expectations.
- Collaborates with other universities to ensure fidelity with PPS-C requirements.
- Responsible for completing the PPS-C candidate recommendation form, then submitting that to the university credential's office.

## **Field Faculty**

- Responsible for communication with students and agency practicums as assigned.
- Participates in the field application process for students as assigned in accordance with School policies, procedures, due dates, and time lines. Involved in the student placement process, interview referrals, and confirmation process.
- Participates in the recruitment, screening, development, and evaluation of prospective agency field practicum sites, field instructors, and task supervisors for graduate and undergraduate programs. Includes conducting introductory practicum site visits, processing practicum applications, contracts, field instructor profiles, etc.
- Collaborates with the Director of Field Education and field faculty to plan and implement educational experiences and activities for the undergraduate and graduate field education programs.
- Teaches and functions as field faculty in assigned field practicum courses, e.g. seminar instructor, field liaison, conducts agency site visits, etc.

- Interprets School policies and requirements; monitors and evaluates students' progress; evaluates agency field instructors' and agency's performance; mediates problems and/or disputes; immediately informs and consults with the Director of Field Education regarding any student, agency, field instructor concerns and/or issues.
- Consultant to specified agencies and field instructors, including implementation of field education experiences as required. Provides ongoing consultation and collaboration with field instructors to discuss questions and concerns, to enhance the effectiveness of the field practicum learning experience and the integration of classroom learning to ensure that satisfactory progress is being made by the students.
- Serve as the major link between the students, agency field instructors, field practicum agencies and the School.
- Participates in field orientations, teaches field practicum seminars, conducts field instructor trainings, and other field education events/projects as assigned, in order to educate student and agency field instructors regarding curriculum requirements, and supervision, evaluation, and practice needs.
- Develops relevant written administrative and course materials, e.g. field practicum course syllabus, field manual, learning agreements, School policies that impact the field education curriculum and support the internships.
- Monitors and evaluates liability, malpractice, and risk management issues for students and agencies. Provide due process, input, and feedback for agencies, field instructors, and students. Implements and collaborates with agencies regarding Service Learning Agreements.
- Responds to emails and phone calls from students, field instructors, and community members in a timely manner and is responsive to students' needs for field and academic guidance as they develop their professional role.
- Reviews field seminar course assignments, student self-learning opportunities and experiences being provided, as well as student performance, assessment and evaluation, grade recommendations, and future plans.
- Collaborates with other faculty and staff to help ensure that objectives of the Field Education sequence are achieved.
- Evaluates assigned internship settings at the end of the internship period, making recommendations as to continued use of the setting.

## Student Interns

- Students are placed by the School in a field practicum agency site to have the opportunity to experience hands on learning and to integrate the knowledge, skills and values of the social work profession taught by the School, under the supervision of the field instructor, field faculty, guided by the School's field education curriculum requirements, policies and procedures.
- Engages in and adheres to the School's field placement process and policies.
- Attends and participates actively in their field practicum, supervision with field instructor, and field practicum seminars.
- Adheres and is committed to the [NASW Code of Ethics](#) at all times.
- Accepts and integrates constructive feedback.
- Identifies learning needs and seeks support to meet them.
- Follows agency standards, policies, and practice guidelines.
- Completes and submits assignments on time to field instructor and field faculty, e.g. Orientation Checklist, Learning Agreement, Process Recordings, Time Logs, Self-Reflection Narrative Essays, Comprehensive Skills Evaluations, etc.
- Communicates concerns, issues, questions as they arise with their field instructor and/or their assigned field faculty.
- Practices self-reflection; takes time to process feelings, thoughts, and actions.
- Engages in self-care practices, e.g. practices good sleep hygiene, takes care of physical health and well-being, seeks out own therapy and other relevant resources, etc.
- Conducts learning activities with clients in a culturally responsive manner that respects diversity.

## Field Instructor

- The agency team member who is partnered with the student and serves as their supervisor.

- Responsible for setting up the student's overall educational program in the field practicum agency and follows the School's policies, curriculum requirements and guidelines, in consultation with field faculty.
- Develops a plan for orientating the student to the agency and the community the agency serves.
- Provides ongoing, regularly scheduled, weekly individual supervision; including case assignments, review of agency policies and requirements, review of student goals, and evaluation for the student's progress and performance.
- Aids the student in integrating classroom learning with field experience.
- Adheres to the School's policies, procedures, curriculum requirements, field education requirements, and the NASW Code of Ethics.
- Facilitates student attendance at agency meetings, seminars, etc. as opportunities for teaching.
- Provides resources to the student to enable them to work productively (e.g. work space, client cases, phone, clerical support, etc.)
- Maintains communication with the School through regular email and/or phone contact with the assigned field faculty.
- Regulates the size and variety of student's caseload and work responsibilities towards maximizing student's growth, and meeting their learning objectives.
- Facilitates and assists the student in developing their Learning Agreement and incorporating the core social work competency areas.
- Reviews process recordings, provides constructive feedback, and returns them to the student for discussion in a timely manner.
- Continually evaluates student's performance and professional growth, and supports the student to overcome barriers that impede their learning and development.
- Encourages the student to practice self-reflection, self-awareness, and appropriate professional use of self.
- Completes fall and spring semester Comprehensive Skills Evaluations in IPT, and fully discusses these evaluations with the student in a timely manner, meets due dates set by the School in the Field Calendar, and facilitates transition and termination process.



## Task Supervisor

- An agency team member who partners with the field instructor, as appropriate, and takes responsibility for aspects of the student's learning experience.
- Teaches a specific expertise, skill, function within the social work scope of practice at the agency setting.
- Meets with the student regularly for on site assistance.
- Provides feedback to the student and field instructor, and to be included in the Comprehensive Skills Evaluation in IPT, regarding the student's progress.

# Agency and Field Instructor/Task Supervisor Application Process

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Field instruction takes place in approved agencies, located throughout San Diego and Imperial Counties only. These agencies represent a comprehensive range of social services, and are approved based on the quality of their professional practice, their commitment to addressing social problems, their interest in participating in professional education, and their ability to make personnel and material resources available to support student learning opportunities.

The School is affiliated with hundreds of agencies. These agencies must be approved and confirmed by the School. Field instructors, employed and recommended by the agency, are responsible for supervising students in their field practicums. Field instructors must also receive prior approval and confirmation by the School and are required to complete a New Field Instructor Training Course. Each academic year, there are a large number of approved social work professionals who serve as active field instructors for our SDSU School of Social Work students. Students receive supervision from these qualified field instructors, which includes a minimum of one-hour per week of formalized, individualized, face-to-face, supervision.

## NEW AGENCY ONBOARDING PROCESS

The selection of an agency or program to be affiliated with the SDSU School of Social Work in its field education program is a joint process between the School and the agency. It is based on mutual commitment to the advancement of the profession of social work in the fulfillment of its professional and societal defined tasks on behalf of those that it serves.

The field practicum setting provides the crucial context and content required for the student's field experience. It is essential that the participating agencies in the field education component of the School be of the highest quality, both in the services they provide and with the staff they employ.

Effective field education requires a significant commitment on the part of the agencies. Thus, all agencies will be evaluated according to the following criteria:

## Agency Standards

- Refer to the [NEW Agency Process](#) outlined on the [Field Education Website](#).
- Ability to provide exposure to diverse client/population/service delivery systems, with particular emphasis on cultural, ethnic, and social diversity. The agency must be concerned with groups that have been consistently affected by social, economic and legal bias or oppression.
  - Such groups include, but are not limited to, those distinguished by age, religion, physically or mentally challenged, sexual orientation, culture, race, gender, ethnicity, class, etc.
- Agency standards and mission that is acceptable and respected in the practice community and by the School.
- Policies and practices reflecting non-discrimination applied to clients, staff and students.
- Adequate staffing patterns such that the agency can perform and maintain the service delivery mission of the agency without reliance on students.
- Commitment to the School's philosophy and mission in the training of social work professionals.
- Agency willingness to complete the new Learning Activity Site Application and sign the [Service Learning Agreement \(SLA\)](#) with the University's Department of Contract and Procurement Management.
- Ability to accommodate students for a successful field practicum site by providing the following resources/support:
  - Adequate and appropriate work space;
  - Appropriate equipment and supplies;

- Access to a telephone, etc.;
  - Clerical/support staff assistance;
  - Mileage reimbursement for travel and incurred for services provided to clients;
  - Appropriate number and type of learning activities for student assignments in accordance with the School's curriculum requirements and the student's Learning Agreement.
- The number of students an agency can accommodate and its flexibility in being used for either BASW, Foundation Year MSW or Advanced year MSW students.
  - While it may be necessary in some instances to place only one student in an agency, the School aims to place no less than two students in an agency.
    - The School's goal is to create "teaching units" to ensure the possibility of peer learning, group supervision, diversity of student assignments, and economy of effort on the part of the School and the agency.
  - Commitment to uphold the [NASW Code of Ethics](#) and professional social work values.
  - Opportunities for Paid Internships/Stipends.
    - The School recognizes that the primary purpose of the field practicum is to provide a hands-on learning experience for students rather than serve as paid employment; however, whenever possible, agencies are encouraged to explore opportunities for commensurate financial reimbursement to students for their contributions to the agency's capacity for service provision while balancing this with the costs associated with hosting an intern. The School does not and cannot require that field placement agencies provide paid internships/stipends to students and respects each agency's unique circumstances and self-determination regarding this; however, any commensurate financial reimbursement for students' energy, time, and commitment reinforces the value of students' contributions and an investment in social work workforce development by the agency.
    - Agencies should be aware that although paid internships/stipends are not a current industry standard for the profession of social work, there are contemporary advocacy efforts to address societal disparities faced by marginalized groups when it comes to bearing the financial burden of higher education and professional advancement.

- The School must be informed of any paid internship/stipend opportunity provided by an agency to ensure that the arrangement adheres to field policies and procedures and does not compromise students' learning experiences which again remains the primary focus of Field Education.
- Paid internships/stipends are distinct from a student requesting to utilize their place of employment as their field practicum site. Refer to Employer-based field placement guidelines.
- Please refer to [CSWE's Statement on Field Placements](#) (July 2022).

**Procedure:**

- Agencies interested in applying and being considered as a field practicum site will contact the Director of Field Education stating their intent.
  - Due to timeline constraints, there may only be certain times of the calendar year when new agencies are referred students for the following academic year.
  - Due to specific timelines for referring and placing students at agencies and the availability of existing field placement sites, the Director of Field Education will determine whether a new agency will be utilized as a formal site for either the current or a future academic year.
- The agency administrator/representative will complete the **New Learning Activity Site Application** via AdobeSign. Once the application is signed by the agency, the School will review and approve the application, and then issue a Service Learning Agreement (SLA) via AdobeSign to be reviewed and signed by the agency, the School, the Dean of the College of Health and Human Services and the SDSU Contracts and Procurement department.
- An in-person site visit to the agency, or a virtual visit, will be made by field faculty responsible for vetting the agency or by the Director of Field Education.
- Upon agency confirmation for use as a field placement site, the School will distribute additional resource materials to assist the agency in:
  - preparing for student's field experience;
  - understanding the basic and specific requirements and expectations provided by the School;
  - becoming aware of annual mandatory field instructor orientations and trainings; etc.

- Field practicum agencies will be evaluated at the end of each semester by both the Student and the Field Faculty. Areas of evaluation will include:
  - the agency's ability to provide a comprehensive educational experience;
  - the quality of the instructional abilities of the Field Instructor;
  - the nature and volume of the assignments given to the student;
  - the overall educational activities, instruction and impressions of the agency;
  - how well the agency is adhering to the above policies/standards and procedures.

## NEW FIELD INSTRUCTOR ONBOARDING PROCESS

- While it is the agency's responsibility to nominate the staff members believed to be best suited to provide field instruction, it is the joint task of the School and agency to confirm that the field instructor meets [criteria](#) before onboarding is finalized.
  - Field instructors recommended by an agency must meet the criteria set forth by the School (please refer to the [NEW Field Instructor or Task Supervisor Process](#) outlined on the [Field Education Website](#)), must complete all required paperwork prior to hosting a student intern and follow, on an on-going basis, the School's policies and procedures.
- Availability of a qualified field instructor who is an employee of the agency and who is available during the hours in which the student is in field practicum in the agency.
  - With the field instructor being an employee of the agency and, as such, compensation for their services is the responsibility of the agency, as are other personnel matters.
  - If the field instructor is not available on the agency site, the agency may recommend an external, contracted consultant social worker for their field instructor. This is not preferred by the School, but will be accepted under special circumstances. It is the responsibility of the agency to contract with the external field instructor and the contract is only between these two entities.
- Willingness of the agency to modify the schedule of any employee selected to be a field instructor to ensure that adequate time is available for teaching and student supervision activities, including meetings and/or field instructor training sessions that are held and required by the School.

- A minimum of one hour per week of formal, individual supervision is required for each student. Supervision may occur in person or through video teleconferencing. It is the School's experience that a field instructor's time allocation for student teaching/consulting averages a minimum of 2-3 hours per student per week with additional time as required to address concerns and support student success. Students may require additional time at the beginning of the academic year as they are orienting to the agency.
- The field instructor should agree to schedule vacations and other time off during University holidays and recesses (generally not during the academic year), so that they can ensure the continuity of oversight and support of the student.
- Agency must provide a designated alternate supervisor whom the student can approach for support and direction when the field instructor is unavailable. When the field instructor is unable to provide the formalized supervision for longer than a one to two week period, another confirmed field instructor (previously certified by the School) will be provided by the agency. This arrangement will be made as early as possible with the student and field faculty being notified.

**Additional Educational Standards:**

- Provides a comprehensive range of learning experiences for students including work with individuals, families, groups, communities, and organizations.
- Committed to educational objectives of an educationally based field practicum experience.
- Includes students in professional development and training opportunities.
- Addresses the learning needs of students' area of concentration, e.g., Direct Practice or Administration/Community Development).
- Prospective agencies should refer to the [Agency and Field Instructor/Task Supervisor Application Process](#) for more information.
- The agency's proposed new field instructor must also complete the **New Field Instructor Application** via AdobeSign. Approval of the agency is a separate process from the onboarding process for a new field instructor.

## SELECTION OF FIELD INSTRUCTORS

The Field Instructor is a key influence in the professional education of social work students. A major factor in the success of a field education program is in partnering with highly qualified and experienced field instructors.

Field instructors play a vital role in the professional development of students, providing them with the learning experiences and an introduction to social work practice in the agency setting, and also serving as a professional role model in the field of social work. Thus, the selection of field instructors must be considered carefully by the agency and the School.

In accordance with CSWE Curriculum policy and standards, and the School's policies and procedures, the following factors are taken into consideration when selecting and confirming field instructors:

### Criteria for Social Work Field Instructors

1. MSW from an accredited school of Social Work; two years of experience post master's degree; employed by the agency for at least 9 months prior to becoming a Field Instructor. A state of California LCSW is preferred.
2. For specialized and optimal student learning experiences, non-MSW Master-level Professionals (MHP, Ph.D./Psy.D. Psychologists, LMFTs, LPCCs, MBA, JD) may at times be requested by the School and eligible to become Field Instructors. These professionals must also be from an accredited school in their discipline, have two years of experience post master's degree, and employed by the agency for at least 9 months prior to becoming a Field Instructor.
3. New Field Instructors and Task Supervisors are required to attend the Field Instructor Training Course to meet CSWE standards. The seminars are provided as in-vivo learning workshops (live, face-to-face) and on-line modules, beginning in August each year and continuing through February. Note: California Board of Behavioral Sciences (BBS) professional continuing education units (CEU's) are awarded for attendance.
4. Ability to provide a minimum of 1.0 hour(s) of formalized, individual, face-to-face, regularly scheduled supervision each week. Assessment materials shall be prepared by the student and reviewed by the Field Instructor (i.e., process recordings, audio/videotapes, case presentation, projects, educational learning plan, etc.) on an on-going basis.

5. Commitment of availability for the entire academic year field instruction period (end of August through mid-May) and the hours the students are in placement.
6. Being familiar with and following the policies and procedures set forth in the Field Education Manual. Familiarity with the School's mission, goals, program, and curriculum objectives.
7. Attendance at the Annual Field Instructor Meeting (held in mid-August each year) regarding school, program, and curriculum updates.
8. Potential for teaching as demonstrated in: an ability to conceptualize theory and practice; implementing school curriculum with the student; ability to provide the necessary time to the student in planning, preparation, and review for student's supervision; and an ability and willingness to evaluate the student's performance on an on-going, consistent basis and in the required formal written evaluations.
9. Field Instructors will become familiar with and consistently use the respective field education curriculum in developing clear expectations of student performance. Includes required course objectives and competencies, learning plans, process recordings, evaluations, agency site visits, etc. as outlined in the field course syllabi.
10. Identifies individualized learning opportunities, clients, projects, and tasks within and outside the agency setting in line with the needs and the school's curriculum and goals of the student. Knowledge of the community and its resources.
11. Provision of a comprehensive orientation to the agency and its services; provide on-going orientation and in-service training regarding pertinent issues, including review of risk management policies and procedures, e.g. office and community safety, harassment, transporting of clients, medical precautions, etc.
12. Upholds NASW Code of Ethics, identifies with the social work profession, demonstrates a strong commitment to social work values, and adheres to the laws that regulate social work practice.
13. Ongoing collaboration with the Field Faculty to enhance the student's educational experiences in the internship.
14. Notifies and consults with the student's assigned Field Faculty and/or Director of Field Education of any changes and/or difficulties encountered in the placement experience.

For the selection of Field Instructors supervising BASW student interns only:

- Possession of a BASW or BSW degree from an accredited school of social work and holds a minimum of two years post-BSW experience.



## TASK SUPERVISORS

It is the School's understanding that staff from other professional disciplines may collaborate with the field instructor in providing support to and learning experiences for the student. These individuals are known as "Task Supervisors". The inclusion of task supervisors serves to enrich students' learning experiences at the agency.

If an agency identifies a specific learning experience for our students, e.g. a specific group; participating on a task force; a specialized learning program, etc. and another professional (psychologist, psychiatrist, MFT, PCC, etc.) is responsible for said program, then the agency will recommend this person to be an approved task supervisor.

The prospective task supervisor enters the same process as new field instructors, e.g. submitting the required paperwork, School review and confirmation, and attending the required Field Instructor Training Course for developing supervision styles, knowledge of the School's field education curriculum requirements, Service Learning Agreement, and School policies. The field instructor maintains overall responsibility for the student's specific teaching functions, assigning micro, mezzo and macro activities, and the student is ultimately accountable to the field instructor.

## FIELD INSTRUCTOR ROLES VS. TASK SUPERVISOR ROLES

### **Field Instructor Role:**

Has primary responsibility for student's learning in the field placement to reinforce the student's identification with the purposes, values, and ethics of the profession of social work; to foster the integration of empirical and practice-based knowledge; and to promote the development of professional skills and competencies (Council on Social Work Education).

The Field Instructor is responsible for weekly, reflective supervision with the student to work towards achieving the student's learning objectives, goals, competencies, and progress.

### **Task Supervisor Role:**

A Task Supervisor may be designated by the Agency or Field Instructor to assume specific responsibilities for a student's learning on a particular task, case, project, or experience. The Task Supervisor does not replace the Field Instructor, and must work in collaboration with the Field Instructor to ensure that the student's learning goals are being met and regular feedback is provided.

<b>Field Instructor</b>	<b>Task Supervisor</b>
Assumes the primary role of instructor and supervisor, and commits to understanding the role of student as learner.	Provides secondary field instruction to students on a specific task, project, or assignment as delegated and monitored by the Field Instructor.
Creates the student learning experiences that integrate social work theory, practice, and research. Reviews learning objectives, tasks, and activities on student's education learning agreement.	Responsible for the day-to-day on site guidance for specific project, case, or task.
Provides support and feedback to students as they critically analyze their strengths and areas for student growth and progress.	Collaborates with field instructor in integrating assignments provided by the task supervisor into the student's overall learning experience.
Provides a minimum of one hour of scheduled supervisory time weekly to confer and reflect on field assignments.	Keeps the field instructor informed of the student's progress on projects, cases undertaken with the task supervisor.
Provides ongoing constructive feedback on the student's performance and completes all written evaluations.	Provides input to the student's evaluation in collaboration with the field instructor and student.
Responsible for orienting students to agency procedures, policies, mission, documentation requirements, personnel, safety issues, etc.	Assists in the orientation process for specific cases, projects, assignments, etc. in collaboration with the field instructor.
Consults with Field Faculty regarding learning agreements, performance issues, and integration between field practicum and course work.	Collaborates with the field instructor and provides input regarding student's learning assessments and evaluations.
<p><u>Field Instructor Qualifications:</u></p> <p>Refer to <a href="#">Field Instructor Criteria, Roles and Responsibilities</a> on Field Education Website.</p> <p>Completes the Field Instructor Training Course.</p>	<p><u>Task Supervisor Qualifications:</u></p> <p>Completes the Field Instructor Training Course.</p> <p>The task supervisor typically has expertise in an area that expands a student's learning opportunities.</p>

## EVALUATION OF AGENCIES AND FIELD INSTRUCTORS

At the end of the academic year, the BASW and MSW students have an opportunity to evaluate their field practicum agency, field instructor, and field practicum learning experiences. Throughout the academic year, students have the opportunity to check in with their respective

field faculty and provide feedback. During the academic year, the field faculty also provide on-going assessments of their assigned agencies and field instructors. The Director of Field Education reviews all field program evaluations for continued monitoring and evaluation purposes.

## FIELD INSTRUCTORS - EVENTS AND TRAINING

The following events and training are intended for all Field Instructors and Task Supervisors hosting BASW and/or MSW student interns at their agency.

### Annual Field Instructor Meeting

The Annual Field Instructor Meeting consists of a half day workshop, held in August every year. Approximately 150 field instructors and agency representatives, those supervising BASW, Foundation Year MSW and Advanced Year MSW students, attend. Generally, this meeting tends to be representative of the largest gathering of social workers in the San Diego and Imperial County areas, providing a strong professional linkage between the School and the community.

The Annual Meeting typically includes: updates on the BASW and MSW field and academic programs; updates regarding the School; the “Above and Beyond” Field Instructor Award Ceremony; faculty presenting specific topics, e.g. generalist practice, their areas of research; survey results; guest speakers discussing special county-wide issues relevant to our community. In addition, this meeting provides a forum for the San Diego and Imperial County social work community at large and an opportunity to network and exchange ideas.

### NEW FIELD INSTRUCTOR TRAINING COURSE

New Field Instructors and Task Supervisors are required to take a course concurrent with the first semester of field instruction.

The [New Field Instructor Training Course](#) consists of nine [online training modules](#) completed in IPT, and a minimum of [two synchronous trainings](#), held during the academic year, for Field instructors and task supervisors providing field instruction to SDSU School of Social Work student interns. The purpose of the course is to train new field instructors and task supervisors with the necessary knowledge and skills so they can effectively meet the range of educational responsibilities in their role as supervisors of social work students. The general content areas covered will address identification and application of relevant knowledge and skills, course assignments, teaching concepts, methodology, and evaluation processes required in the practice of field instruction. Field instructors and task supervisors will become knowledgeable in the School’s field education curriculum and course requirements. Discussions and audience participation will include social work values, ethics, laws, cultural considerations, etc. in the

supervisory relationship and practice. Those who complete the new field instructor training course will be provided with a certificate of completion. Free CEUs are offered for certain synchronous field instructor training topics.

### **Learning Objectives:**

- Participants will begin to understand the role of the Field Instructor and Task Supervisor in social work education.
- Participants will become oriented to the SDSU School of Social Work's field education component and gain knowledge in the School's expectations of being a Field Instructor or Task Supervisor.
- Participants will become familiar with the central ingredients, which promote learning within the supervisory relationship.
- Participants will become familiar with the use of supervisory learning tools and the timing of their use according to the developmental learning needs of the student.
- Participants will learn skills in assessing student's educational learning needs.
- Participants will develop increased awareness of diversity and its role in the supervisory relationship.
- Through various didactic exercises, participants will evaluate their own supervisory practice and skills.
- To provide a strong linkage between the Field Instructor or Task Supervisor in the community and the School of Social Work.

### **Course Content:**

- Roles, tasks, and responsibilities of the Field Instructor Task Supervisor;
- Planning ahead for the phases of field instruction and intern supervision;
- Stages, patterns, and characteristics of adult learners;
- Principles of teaching-learning;
- Differential teaching methodologies;
- Use of process recordings in field instruction;

- Evaluation processes in field instruction;
- Working with problems that arise in field; and
- The termination process in field instruction.

## COMMUNITY SUPPORT AND COLLABORATION

### Field Advisory Board

The Field Advisory Board represents the diversity of our field instructors in significant areas: clinical and administrative expertise, public and private agencies, BASW and MSW programs, geographical, ethnic and gender, and area of community service. Members are invited to serve because of the specific perspectives they bring to the committee, commensurate with their demonstrated leadership and commitment to field education.

A member from this Field Advisory Board is selected to be the liaison representative for the School's Field Curriculum Task Group Committee (sub-committee for the curriculum committee, representing the BASW and MSW programs).

The Field Advisory Board provides critical feedback to the School of Social Work field education program on developments in the community as they relate to social work education. The committee participates in the planning and implementation of events, with particular emphasis on the field seminars and ways to support field instructors. The Field Advisory Board meets quarterly.

### Field Instructor Appreciation Event

Each year at the conclusion of the spring semester, the field education program and the School host a luncheon to show appreciation for Field Instructors and Task Supervisors.

### Director of Field Education Consortiums

Directors of Field Education meet regularly with colleagues on local, state, and national levels to share policies, programs, practice, and research leading to improved social work education. Several universities belonging to the **Southern California Field Directors' Consortium** collaborate on field instruction activities, including sponsoring workshops for Field Instructors and Task Supervisors, developing learning and assessment tools, and sharing resources. The consortium includes the social work programs at the CSU campuses at San Marcos, Dominguez Hills, Fullerton, Los Angeles, Northridge, etc., as well as the University of California,

Los Angeles, Cal Baptist University, and the University of Southern California. Meetings are rotated, and are hosted by each university.

Statewide, a number of schools and departments of social work—public and private—meet together twice a year to share ideas and strategies to strengthen social work education. They also communicate by [listserv](#) to obtain peer support and information. Meetings are hosted on rotation from Northern to Central to Southern California. The School's Director of Field Education represents Field Faculty at state-wide Field Director meetings. Nationally, there is also an association for field educators. The Council on Social Work Education (CSWE) holds meetings and workshops to address cutting-edge issues related to Field Education. All Field Faculty are invited to participate in these meetings

# Appendices

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## Appendix 1.

### NASW CODE OF ETHICS

[NASW Code of Ethics](#) (1996, Rev. 1999, 2008 and 2021)

## Appendix 2.

### GUIDELINES FOR THE USE OF SOCIAL MEDIA SDSU SCHOOL OF SOCIAL WORK FIELD EDUCATION PROGRAM

Social media channels, such as Facebook, Twitter, YouTube, Flickr, Second Life and various blog sites are just a few examples of new and exciting ways to connect with others and share information. However the rapid growth of social media communication tools and their ease of accessibility can also have unintended and potentially damaging consequences to users if basic guidelines are ignored. Students are expected to adhere to social work values, ethics and engage in professional conduct as outlined in the [NASW Code of Ethics](#) when using social media communication tools, whether using a personal site or an agency site. Common issues that students need to understand and manage when utilizing social media include, but are not limited to, privacy and confidentiality (Section 1.07), conflicts of interest and dual relationships (Section 1.06), and informed consent (Section 1.03) in our relationships with clients, colleagues and in our practice settings. Utilizing social media communication tools as a social work professional requires ongoing attention to these ethical challenges.

As a social work professional, it is important to consider whether you are using social media channels for professional activities such as advancing social justice issues, advocating for vulnerable populations and promoting your professional identity versus using these sites to maintain contact with friends and family. Your professional image, that is, the professional self you develop that is guided by social work values and ethical standards, extends beyond the field agency and physical setting of an office. As social workers, we must be cognizant of the legal, ethical and clinical responsibilities we have as professionals and that those obligations extend to the virtual world of the Internet and include the use of social media communication tools. As with the Hippocratic oath to “first do no harm”, it is imperative to consider how to be connected within the context of social media while protecting yourself, your field site, your clients, the School of Social Work, and the profession.

As you get started in your field placement, it may be helpful to explore the following questions with your field instructor and/or task supervisor.

- Does your field site have a policy on the use of social media communication tools? If so, review the policy with your field instructor. If not, what expectation does the agency have regarding the use of social media during field hours?
- How much personal information is shared with clients and former clients as well as agency staff and professional colleagues?
- What are the most common ethical concerns you should be aware of when using social media as a professional social worker?

To help facilitate these conversations, consider the following topics for discussion with your field instructor and/or task supervisor.

### **What are the agency guidelines regarding the use of Facebook and who can you friend?**

Managing friend requests and maintaining privacy settings is critical regardless of whether you use social media for personal and/or professional reasons. Allowing clients, former clients, or others in your professional circle to cross into your personal life may complicate and blur your professional boundaries. This is particularly tricky when managing Facebook accounts. As a professional, you must fully consider the extent of your privacy settings, how you will manage friend requests, your level of self-disclosure, and how you will monitor wall posts or other interactions on your site. Be aware that if you do not employ any privacy settings on your social media site, your profile is public and anyone can see what is on your page. Additionally, people can see when you are tagged in photos, view comments made by others, note your status updates and see who you've friended. All professionals must evaluate the scope of their social media connections. Since this is still an emerging professional topic, some professionals may be cautious and guarded in their use of social media while others may be more open and exposed. It is your responsibility as a professional social worker to abide by the Code of Ethics,

including your virtual communications and use social work values and principles to guide your interactions.

### **What privacy and confidentiality concerns should I consider when texting, emailing and/or using Twitter?**

With the proliferation of handheld devices such as smartphones, iPhones and Blackberries, accessing the Internet and connecting with others is literally in the palm of our hands. Text, email and Twitter are quick and effective ways to communicate with others however many ethical, legal, and clinical issues must be addressed when using these communication tools. There is a huge potential for unintentionally sharing protected information so always use good ethical judgment. Be cautious about discussing information about your field placement, classroom work, or agency staff. Do not discuss confidential or private information about clients, colleagues, or agency practices even if you are disguising the information. In general, consider the security, privacy and confidentiality of all communication methods and when in doubt, seek consultation and supervision before embarking into unfamiliar or uncertain areas.

### **Can I check my personal social media accounts during the field hours?**

In general, your time in field and the resources provided to you in your field placement are to be used for field related matters. Before using social media communication tools on behalf of your agency, be sure to seek approval of any messages or posts. Be careful not to endorse or promote a product, cause or position without prior approval. If you have personal sites, it is best to maintain them on your own time using your own computer.

### **I can't find anything in the Code of Ethics that specifically mentions social media, so does that mean the Code of Ethics does not apply?**

Absolutely not! The [NASW Code of Ethics](#) provides a variety of standards that social workers should consider when engaging in use of social media. Here are a few examples of the Codes applicability to social media.

Standard 1.06 states that “social workers should not engage in dual or multiple relationships...in which there is a risk or exploitation or potential harm to the client...and social workers...are responsible for setting clear, appropriate, and culturally sensitive boundaries” (1.06c). The Code goes on to note that “dual or multiple relationships can occur simultaneously or consecutively” (1.06c). Our ethical obligations to clients, colleagues and other professionals are no different when using Facebook, Twitter or other social media channels as well as communications via our cell phones such as texting or email.

Standard 1.07(i) states that “social workers should not discuss confidential information in any setting unless privacy can be ensured.” We all know there is no such thing as privacy on a social media site or the Internet. Comments can be forwarded or copied, posts and pictures can be found on search engines years after the initial publication, and archival systems save



information even after you delete it. Always consider the image you are portraying by the photos and comments you post. Understand how privacy settings work and review them regularly. Refrain from providing too much personal information such as your home address or full birth date. Don't post in advance when you plan to be on vacation or away from home for an extended period of times. Be sure to project the image you want potential faculty members, future employers, advisors and friends to know you by.

Standard 4.03 states that "social workers should not permit their private conduct to interfere with their ability to fulfill their professional responsibilities." Social media channels provide an excellent means to build community; however, as you navigate these channels, do no harm to yourself, your field site, your clients, the School of Social Work, or to the social work profession in the process. Do not pretend to be someone else or hide your identity when using social media. Be clear if you are sharing personal views and use good judgment regarding sensitive issues. Verify information before you post it, correct mistakes in a timely manner, and be aware of legal liability issues such as copyright infringement, defamation, and posting proprietary information.

### **What should I do next?**

Take some time to review these guidelines with your field instructor and seek to identify other ethical standards that are applicable in your practice setting. As a social work student, you are continually developing a professional identity and you must be cognizant that your private world has a greater likelihood of becoming public when using social media. Field instructors, colleagues, and even clients may have access to information via the Internet that you would otherwise limit to your friends and families so we encourage you to consider the personal versus professional role of social media in your life and your field setting.

*\*Adapted from UNC-Chapel Hill School of Social Work.*

## **Appendix 3.**

### **ARTICLES – RESOURCES AND REFERENCE FOR NEW FIELD INSTRUCTORS**

- The Field Instruction Process – Challenges for the Field Instructor.
- The Three Essential Components of Supervision
  - (Adapted with permission from USC & LA Consortium Field Manual.)

## CHALLENGES FOR THE FIELD INSTRUCTOR

The field education experience is one filled with challenges, and you, the field instructor, must balance what often seems like opposing forces in your efforts to facilitate the student's educational process. Remember these forces can be complimentary, and only seem to be problems when out of balance for your particular student. Some of these opposing/complementary forces in your supervision are:

### **1. Challenge vs. Support**

You want to offer your student the opportunity to explore their thinking, feeling and doing, in an environment that helps them feel supported and safe in doing this exploration, yet continues to challenge them to grow. How do you begin to create this climate for your students?

### **2. Autonomy vs. Dependence**

You need to find a balance between encouraging your student to rely on you by making a safe environment and affirming the student's actions; and encouraging your student to develop independence, and self-reliance. As your student grows your job is to help them become appropriately self-reliant, and take on some autonomy in their professional role. How might you deal with a student who has to check out EVERYTHING with you first? How might you deal with a student who NEVER checks anything out with you first?

### **3. Learning Objectives vs. Agency Objectives**

You are in the middle, balancing between the needs and demands of the school, the students, and your agency. Oftentimes the agency thinks that the students will be "free" workers, and may pressure you to assign cases/projects that are not in the best interests of the students. Sometimes the amount of time needed for supervision is not clear to the agency director, who may not want to release the supervisor for the necessary time needed for supervision. How might you prepare your agency for the students, and their role in the agency? How might you prepare your agency director and or supervisor for the time you will need to supervise students? What might happen if your student requires more than the one to one and one-half hours of supervision time each week?

### **4. Authority vs. Mutuality**

There is a difference in power between you and your student. You do evaluate the student, and you do have authority in making judgments about their performance and their assignments. While it is ideal that the student will be allowed to collaborate with you in deciding some issues, and in making many decisions, you are the teacher and the evaluator. How would you deal with

a student, who despite your instructions, does not follow through on a directive, e.g., does not turn in process recordings on time? How would you deal with a student who is habitually late to field placement or to supervision? How would you help a student become more of a partner with you in their learning process?

## **5. Education vs. Training**

Teaching your student to integrate knowledge and skills learned in the classroom and in the field is an important role. It is you, who will help the student to connect feeling, knowing and doing. You will continually focus on the learning objectives developed in the beginning of the year, based on the core areas of learning identified by the School. At the same time, you will have to teach agency-specific information to your students, training them on the use of particular forms and job-related tasks and rules. Sometimes field is ahead of the classroom and you may need to teach your student practice theory and skills in a particular area like how to start a group, select members, create goals, focus, and facilitate interaction.

How would you help a beginning student link up the particulars of a case to understanding broader issues in the client's behavior patterns and in their own? How would you help the student connect their feelings with what is happening in their work with clients? How would you help a student think about what to look for in the assessment of a particular client? How would you help a student meet the agency's requirement for a psychosocial assessment completed after the first session?

## **THREE ESSENTIAL COMPONENTS TO SUPERVISION**

### **1. Case and Project Analysis/Individual Field Instruction**

More than just a case conference, this is a discussion with the student to help them examine their work from multiple perspectives, addressing the learning objectives outlined in the learning agreement, and contained in the evaluation instrument. These discussions should help the student examine their work in relation to theory, to current policy, to their own and professional values, to diversity variables, and to their own feelings and attitudes. The purpose is to help the student connect the doing with the knowing and the feeling, and to grow in their understanding and application of practice theory and principles. This is where educational process recordings are invaluable. Here you might also use role-playing, video/audio taping and observation, as ways to enrich the students' learning.

### **2. Personal and Professional Issues**

You need to offer your students opportunities to examine themselves in relation to their work with clients, and in relation to you, their supervisor. Clearly, you are not their therapist, but you are their instructor, and you must facilitate their close examination of themselves, as this relates to their work. It is your responsibility to help the student identify feelings, attitudes, and prejudices that affect their work with clients systems, and/ or work with you and other

professionals. Ours is a value-laden profession and identifying one's own values and the value dilemmas is essential. Again process recordings will be a wonderful asset as well as role-plays, tape recordings, and other experiential learning exercises. It is your job to help the student identify blocks to learning and to effective practice, it is the student's job to work to remove these blocks. Time management, the student's use of supervision, and the development of an active learning process are important parts of professional development that you must facilitate and evaluate.

### 3. Feedback on the Student's Performance/Evaluation

Evaluation is an ongoing process, beginning on the first day of field placement and continuing throughout the course of the field instruction experience. Feedback helps the student understand where they are in the learning process, and helps them use each experience to further their growth. Most of this feedback will be on the process recordings and in the supervision conference. Feedback needs to be:

- **Timely** - given as soon after the event as possible
- **Clear** - stated directly, so that it is easily understood
- **Balanced** - including both positives and negatives
- **Focused** - on the goals set by you and the student: even though you may see a dozen points to comment on, only focus on those that relate to the goals of this particular session.
- **Useful** - helps the student look at alternatives and options
- **Relevant** - relates to a specific event or action
- **Reciprocal** - invites the student's reactions, and feedback

**Example:** "Your interview skills need work." Looking at the above guide points, what can you, the Field Instructor say to make this feedback more useful?

**Example:** "You need to learn how to deal with anger." Again, how might you make this feedback more useful?

The student is formally evaluated twice, once at the end of each semester. It is the Field Instructor's responsibility to continually give the student feedback regarding their performance so that these semester end evaluations are merely a formalized written form of the feedback the student has been receiving from the Field Instructor throughout the placement experience.

## Appendix 4.

### **NATIONAL REPOSITORY OF FIELD INSTRUCTOR TRAINING**

CSWE's Council on Field Education (COFE) launched its National Repository of Field Instructor Training in July 2021. Their charge was to produce an accessible, useful resource for field directors, particularly newer field directors, to be able to offer excellent training to their field instructors so as to enhance the quality of field instruction and, therefore, field education. The repository is organized into 10 topical folders including orientation to the role; justice, equity, diversity, and inclusion in supervision; developing the learning agreement; navigating challenges; trauma-informed field instruction; and principles of competency-based evaluation. Each folder contains sample agenda, Powerpoint slides, handouts, key readings, and supplemental materials that can be adapted by and customized to each program. Access the repository [here](#).

Council of Field Education (COFE) members who developed this resource described how the National Repository of Field Instructor Training was developed, previewed materials in key folders, and made the folders accessible to all participants at no charge. Access recording and PowerPoint of Connect Session introducing the tool [here](#).

## Appendix 5.

### **BLANK TEMPLATE OF SDSU SERVICE LEARNING AGREEMENT (SLA)**

To see instructions on how to complete or renew a SLA, [please see instructions for completing or renewing the Agency Service Learning Agreement. View the SLA template.](#)