Department of Social Work
MSW Field Education Manual

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SECTION I:
OVERVIEW OF MSW PROGRAM

A. Edinboro University of Pennsylvania Mission Statement
Distinguished by its focus on individual attention to student success, commitment to diversity, and responsiveness to the evolving needs of the broader community, Edinboro University provides the highest quality undergraduate, graduate and co-curricular education.

B. Social Work Department Mission Statement
The mission of the Department of Social Work is to create and share knowledge by providing access to education and learning experiences for the academic, professional, and personal growth of the students and the larger community we serve.

C. Master of Social Work Program Mission
The mission of the Master of Social Work Program is to prepare students with professional knowledge, values and skills for advanced social work practice providing services to families, and with a commitment to social and economic justice, empowerment of oppressed and at-risk populations, an appreciation of the strengths of diversity, and as contributors to their communities and professions as lifelong learners.

D. Master of Social Work Program Goals & Objectives
The program affirms its commitment to the ideals stated in Educational Policy and Accreditation Standards of the Council on Social Work Education (EPAS) 1.0, Purposes of the Social Work Profession. Social work seeks the enhancement of human well-being and the alleviation of social and economic injustice. Social work professionals work with varied and diverse constituencies to enhance social functioning, to develop resources, to formulate and implement policies, services and programs, to enhance social interactions of individuals, families, groups and communities, to further practice, knowledge and skills through utilization of research, and to provide leadership toward these ends.

Goal 1. To prepare graduates for advanced social work practice providing services to families.

Goal 2. To prepare graduates with requisite opportunities to develop a commitment to a civil society, contribution to the profession and their community, and to lifelong learning.

Goal 3. To prepare graduates who can work with individuals, families, groups and communities of diverse ethnic, racial, religious, and cultural backgrounds, and of differing ages, abilities, social classes, and sexual orientations.

Goal 4. To prepare graduates who can assume the profession’s commitment and responsibility to work to improve the quality of life of populations at greatest risk, and to the promotion of social and economic justice.
Goal 1. To prepare graduates for advanced social work practice providing services to families.

Objective 1.1
Upon completion of the MSW degree program, graduates will work within a generalist practice perspective, use critical thinking and differential communication skills. (EPAS 3.0.1, 3.0M6, 3.0.10)

Objective 1.2
Students will be able to apply the knowledge and skills of advanced social work practice with an advanced concentration that focuses on families to analyze and intervene in systems of diverse types and size. (EPAS 3.1)

Objective 1.3
Students will be guided in their practice by ethical principles and the NASW Code of Ethics. (EPAS 3.0.2)

Objective 1.4
Students will critically analyze and apply knowledge of bio-psycho-social variables that affect individual and family development and behavior, and use theoretical frameworks to understand the interventions among individuals and between individuals and social systems. (EPAS 3.0.7)

Objective 1.5
Students will use supervision and consultation appropriate to advanced social work practice providing services to families. (EPAS 3.0.11)

Objective 1.6
Students will practice without discrimination, understand the forms and mechanisms of oppression and discrimination, and apply strategies of advocacy and social change toward goals of social and economic justice. (EPAS 3.0.3, 3.0.4, 3.0.5, 3.0.8, 3.0.12)

Goal 2. To prepare graduates with requisite opportunities to develop a commitment to a civil society, contribution to the profession and their community, and to lifelong learning.

Objective 2.1
Students will continue to participate in educational activities such as workshops, regional and national conferences, and by pursuing doctoral education following graduation.

Objective 2.2
Students will conduct empirical evaluations of their own practice interventions and those of other relevant systems. (EPAS 3.09, 3.1)

Objective 2.3
Students will evaluate relevant research studies and apply findings to practice, and demonstrate skills in quantitative and qualitative research design, data analysis, and knowledge dissemination. (EPAS 3.0.9, 3.1, 4.5, 4.6)
Goal 3. To prepare graduates who can work with individuals, families, groups and communities of diverse ethnic, racial, religious, and cultural backgrounds, and of differing ages, abilities, social classes, and sexual orientations.

Objective 3.1
Students will work effectively with individuals, families, groups, organizations and communities across ethnic, racial, religious, gender, sexual orientation, geographic, age, economic and class lines. (EPAS 3.0.3, 3.0.4, 3.0.10)

Objective 3.2
Students will maintain self-awareness in their professional activities, and demonstrate an understanding of the importance of the diversity and definition of families as identified by their clients. (EPAS 3.0.3)

Goal 4. To prepare graduates who can assume the profession’s commitment and responsibility to work to improve the quality of life of populations at greatest risk, and to the promotion of social and economic justice.

Objective 4.1
Students will understand the forms and mechanisms of oppression and discrimination and the strategies and skills of change that advance social and economic justice. (EPAS 3.0.3, 3.0.4)

Objective 4.2
Students will understand and interpret the history of the social work profession, its current structures and issues, and demonstrate skill in analyzing the impact of social policies on client systems, workers and agencies, and analyzing, formulating and influencing social policies. (EPAS 3.0.5, 3.0.8)

E. Statement of Non-Discrimination
University Policy on Non-Discrimination and Affirmative Action:
Edinboro University is committed to a policy of equal opportunity for all in every aspect of its operations. The University has pledged not to discriminate on the basis of race, sex, color, age, religion, national origin, disabilities, organizational affiliation, affection or sexual preference, and marital status. This policy extends to all educational, service, and employment programs of the University. In accordance with this policy, all decisions on personnel actions, the awarding and administration of contracts, and student activities are to be made in a manner consistent with this policy.

SECTION II: PURPOSE OF MSW FIELD EDUCATION

Social work education is professional education; therefore, it takes place both in the classroom and in the field. Internalization of values imbued, knowledge gained, and skills modeled results in an integration and synthesis of both class and field. Thus, the whole is greater than the sum of its parts with field education being an integral part of the whole.
The *Educational Policy* of the Council on Social Work Education states: “Generalist practice is grounded in the liberal arts and the person-in-environment framework. To promote human and social well-being, generalist practitioners use a range of prevention and intervention methods in their practice with diverse individuals, families, groups, organizations, and communities based on scientific inquiry and best practices. The generalist practitioner identifies with the social work profession and applies ethical principles and critical thinking in practice at the micro, mezzo, and macro levels. Generalist practitioners engage diversity in their practice and advocate for human rights and social and economic justice. They recognize, support, and build on the strengths and resiliency of all human beings. They engage in research-informed practice and are proactive in responding to the impact of context on professional practice.” (EPAS, 2015).

Further, The *Educational Policy* of the Council on Social Work Education identifies field education as the ‘Signature Pedagogy.’ “Signature pedagogies are elements of instruction and of socialization that teach future practitioners the fundamental dimensions of professional work in their discipline—to think, to perform, and to act ethically and with integrity. Field education is the signature pedagogy for social work. The intent of field education is to integrate the theoretical and conceptual contribution of the classroom with the practical world of the practice setting. It is a basic precept of social work education that the two interrelated components of curriculum—classroom and field—are of equal importance within the curriculum, and each contributes to the development of the requisite competencies of professional practice. Field education is systematically designed, supervised, coordinated, and evaluated based on criteria by which students demonstrate the Social Work Competencies. Field education may integrate forms of technology as a component of the program.” (EPAS, 2015).

The primary goal of Edinboro University Masters level field education is to prepare students to be competent, family-focused, advanced practitioners, who are committed to practice that includes: services to the poor and oppressed, and the alleviation of poverty, oppression, and discrimination. For this purpose, students are selectively placed in social service agencies to actively learn with the guidance and support of a qualified field instructor. Students are taught to act honestly and responsibly, and to promote ethical practices on the part of the organizations with which they are affiliated. Students are taught to elevate services to others above self-interest and promote ethical practices, and draw on their knowledge, values, and skills to help people in need and to address social problems.

**Definition of Family**

The definition of family utilized by the program recognizes diversity and fosters inclusiveness. The program views the family as the most fundamental social group and one that functionally provides emotional and/or physical sustenance for its members. Family functions are those that meet biological, psychological, emotional, economic, spiritual, social or other needs of the individuals within the constellation defining itself as a family. The social work program at Edinboro University defines a family as any constellation of individuals that so defines itself and which performs the functions of a family.

The goal of this concentration is to produce a graduate with a solid framework in social work services to families and the skills necessary to work effectively with families in a variety of social service environments. The primary purpose of family social work is to help families learn to function more competently while meeting the developmental and emotional needs of all
members. Family social work encourages connections, support, resource development, and the integration of families as contributing members of their social environments (Collins, Jordan, & Coleman, 1999).

This goal is accomplished through the development of a concentration year, family practice sequence that builds on the principles, theories, and techniques of the foundation year of the MSW program. It seeks to educate students to provide direct services to families as well as to promote the improvement of societal conditions faced by families.

Students will learn to effectively engage, assess and provide intervention for families within the context of family environments commonly encountered by social work practitioners. An emphasis is placed on implementing the social work process with vulnerable families that confront issues related to social injustice, poverty, discrimination, and physical and emotional challenges.

**MSW Program Principles Regarding Family Social Work Practice:**

1. Families represent the most significant social system in the development and ongoing lives of our social work clients, at any age (Collins, et al., 1999; Constable & Lee, 2004; Rothery & Enns, 2001).

2. Families possess strengths and bonds not found in other social systems that are functionally linked to the client system (Orren, Smith, Norlin, & Chess, 2008; Rothery & Enns, 2001; Saleeby, 2008).

3. Social workers need to maximize efforts to engage family members in the assessment, planning, intervention and evaluation of social work services (Constable & Lee, 2004; National Association of Social Workers, 2008).

4. Family social work practice needs to be enacted through a generalist perspective that consistently engages family systems at the micro, mezzo and macro practice levels (Collins, et al., 1999; Rothery & Enns, 2001).

5. Families should be valued and appreciated, and social workers should enhance practice activities that demonstrate these qualities (National Association of Social Workers, 2008).

6. All family systems contain strengths (Miley, O’Melia, & DuBois, 2008; National Association of Social Workers, 2008; Saleeby, 2008).

7. The definition of family needs to be broad enough to address the variety of family configurations and perspectives found in a diverse society (Collins, et al., 1999; National Association of Social Workers, 2008; Schriver, 2003).

8. Social workers should assist helping organizations to evaluate services to families and encourage a role for families in the development of agency policy (Constable & Lee, 2004).

9. Social workers should be aware of the current social climate regarding families and services to families, and assume a role in effecting changes toward goals of social and economic justice and empowerment of families (Kilpatrick & Holland, 2008; National Association of Social Workers, 2008; Rothery & Enns, 2001).

10. Social work practice with families needs to be learned and practiced on a foundation of social work skills, knowledge, principles and values generally learned and practiced
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Field placement is an integral component of the Edinboro University MSW curriculum, and considered to be the signature pedagogy of social work education by the Center for Social Work Education. It engages the student in supervised social work practice and provides opportunities to apply and integrate classroom learning in the field setting. The Edinboro University MSW program requires a minimum of 900 hours of field education. This requirement is completed over four semesters with a 3 credit field seminar/course for each semester. Field placement is completed concurrently with MSW coursework.

A. Foundation Year (First Year) MSW Field Placement
The purpose of the foundation year field placement is for the student to apply the professional foundation knowledge, values, skills and ethics from a generalist social work perspective to practice with systems of all sizes. Students will spend approximately 18 hours per week for two semesters in the foundation placement, for a minimum of 150 hours and 250 hours respectively in the fall and spring semesters for a total of a minimum 400 hours for the academic year. The foundation year field placement begins with 4 weeks of seminar (SOWK622) facilitated by a faculty liaison, to prepare students to enter the on-site internship, which begins in the 4th week. This delay in beginning the on-site component of the field placement is designed to prepare the student for entry into an agency-based setting and maximize the learning experience.

The faculty liaison will continue to facilitate field seminars every other week once the on-site component has begun and continues concurrently with the field placement through the entire placement experience (SOWK622/623). This design provides a structured learning opportunity for students to compare practice experiences, integrate placement and course content, and expand knowledge beyond the scope of the placement setting.

The foundation year placement is intended to provide supervised generalist practice experience in the application of knowledge, values and ethics, and practice skills to enhance the well-being of people in this region and to work toward the amelioration of environmental conditions that affect clients adversely. In addition to the faculty liaison, an agency-based field instructor will provide a minimum of 1 hour per week of supervision and field instruction for the student. The course descriptions for the foundation year seminars are as follows:

SOWK622: Field Education Internship I 3 Sem. Hours
This practicum provides structured learning opportunities for students to apply and integrate knowledge, skills, values, and ethics into practice within agency settings. It requires a minimum...
of 150 hours of practice in an agency setting. Students receive professional instruction and supervision from a qualified agency-based field instructor. A professional seminar is included as part of the internship experience. Taken concurrently with SOWK612: Social Work Practice I. Open only to those admitted to the MSW program.

**SOWK623: Field Education Internship II**

This internship is a continuation of SOWK 622 and provides structured learning opportunities for students to apply experience and internalize generalist social work knowledge, skills, values, and ethics into practice within agency settings. It requires a minimum of 250 hours of practice in an agency setting. Students receive professional instruction and supervision from a qualified agency-based field instructor. A professional seminar is included as part of the internship experience. It is taken concurrently with SOWK613: Social Work Practice II. Prerequisite: SOWK612: Social Work Practice I, SOWK622: Field Education Internship I.

**B. Concentration Year (Second Year) MSW Field Placement**

The purpose of the second year placement is to prepare students for advanced family social work practice across a broad spectrum of social problems and diverse populations. Students will spend approximately 18 hours per week, but no more than three days a week, for two semesters, in the second year field placement. They will complete a minimum of 250 hours of field education each semester for a minimum of 500 hours of concentration field placement.

The faculty liaison will continue to facilitate field seminars every other week concurrently with the field placement through the entire placement experience (SOWK722/723). The seminar provides structured learning opportunities for students to compare their advanced family practice experiences, integrate knowledge acquired in the classroom, and expand their knowledge of family social work beyond the scope of the placement setting. The various needs of diverse families can be identified through information shared about experiences with family systems in the various placement settings.

The concentration year field placement will build upon the generalist framework of the foundation year and incorporate course content from the second year. It will broaden and deepen the student’s ability to be an advanced family social work practitioner and apply the program’s assumptions regarding family social work practice. The course descriptions of the concentration year field seminars are as follows:

**SOWK722: Field Education Internship III**

This advanced practicum provides structured learning opportunities for students to apply and integrate knowledge, skills, values, and ethics into advanced practice providing services to families across a broad spectrum of social problems and diverse populations. A professional seminar is included as part of the internship experience. Prerequisite: SOWK613: Social Work Practice II, SOWK623: Field Education Internship II. Taken concurrent with SOWK717: Family Social Work Practice I.

**SOWK723: Field Education Internship IV**

This advanced practicum provides structured learning opportunities for students to apply and integrate knowledge, skills, values, and ethics into advanced practice providing services to
families across a broad spectrum of social problems and diverse populations. A professional seminar is included as part of the internship experience. Prerequisite: SOWK 717: Family Social Work Practice I and SOWK722: Field Education Internship III. Taken concurrent with SOWK719: Family Social Work Practice II.

SECTION IV:
SELECTION OF FIELD PLACEMENT AGENCIES AND FIELD INSTRUCTORS

The Edinboro University MSW Program recognizes that field education represents a partnership among the MSW program, the field placement agency, the field instructor and the student. For this reason, the program uses feedback from all partners to develop and evaluate quality field placements.

Placement agencies are generally selected based on their ability to give a student the opportunity to gain graduate level social work practice experience through qualified professional instruction and supervision. For students completing the campus-based MSW Program, the Social Work Department coordinates the field placements through the Field Education office. Students completing the online MSW Program are responsible for selection of their field placement agency which are reviewed and approved by the Social Work Department's Field Education Office.

A. Criteria for Selection of Agencies

▪ The agency views participation in the education of Edinboro University MSW students as a worthwhile activity and agrees to support the mission, goals and objectives of the MSW Program.
▪ The agency demonstrates competence in providing professional services and offers a climate conducive to graduate learning and professional development.
▪ The agency is able to offer learning experiences appropriate to graduate level social work field education.
▪ The agency is prepared to provide supervision of student assignments by a qualified staff member. A qualified staff member has an MSW and at least two years of post-MSW practice experience. See Section B for more details.
▪ The agency permits adequate time for the field instructor to implement the student's field placement and provide educationally-directed field instruction.
▪ The agency will provide the student with a formal orientation to the agency, its programs, policies and staff.
▪ The agency will provide an orientation to safety policies and procedures as well as provide ongoing reinforcement of safety in the field.
▪ The agency has adequate facilities and resources for the student to complete assigned tasks. Ideally, the agency will provide a workspace comparable to that provided the staff.
▪ The agency views the student as both a learner and an active participant in the professional life of the agency.
▪ The agency will provide insurance coverage and mileage reimbursement for students who are expected to use personal vehicles for agency purposes.
▪ The agency has and conforms to policies regarding non-discrimination in service delivery and employment.
B. Criteria for Selection of Field Instructors/Task Supervisors

- The field instructor has an MSW from a CSWE accredited program.
- The field instructor has a minimum of two years post-MSW practice experience.
- The field instructor has a commitment to the values and ethics of the social work profession.
- The field instructor demonstrates competence in social work practice.
- The field instructor has an interest in supporting student education.
- The field instructor is able to be accessible to the student on a regular basis.
- The field instructor will submit a credential verification form to keep on file in the field coordinator’s office.
- A task supervisor may be assigned if the student is not working directly under the field instructor, provided the student has access to the field instructor for supervision.

C. Criteria for Placement at Agencies Where Students are Employed

- The agency agrees to provide release time for course and field instruction.
- Student field assignments and field instructor differ from those associated with the student's employment.
- Field instruction is educationally focused rather than solely centered on agency services.
- Field placement standards are maintained.
- Field placement hours are in addition to the employee’s work hours.
- Employee supervisors will assist the student in completing the ‘Application for Placement Where Student is Employed’ form.

D. Procedure for Affiliating with Field Agencies

- Potential graduate field sites are recommended to the MSW Field Coordinator by department faculty, advisory board members, students, and self-referring agencies throughout the academic year.
- The MSW Field Coordinator reviews identified sites and through phone contact with the organization’s point-of-contact person, verifies that the agency possesses the criteria identified above for foundation and/or concentration placement opportunities and has an interest in serving as a field placement agency for Edinboro University.
- The MSW Field Education Manual is provided to the agency for the purpose of further understanding the MSW Field Education Program.
- Once a field site is determined as an appropriate placement site, agency contact information is provided to the Department of Purchasing and Contracts to execute/negotiate the University Affiliation Agreement with field site. Affiliation Agreements will be renewed every five years when ongoing placements occur and no concerns regarding use of the placement site occur.
- Throughout the academic year, faculty field liaisons evaluate the agency-student experience and any concerns regarding the quality of the experience are reported to the MSW Field Coordinator.
- The MSW Field Coordinator investigates reported concerns and may:
  - Discontinue using an agency,
  - Work with an agency to correct deficiencies, or
  - Find concerns invalid.
Prior to reinstatement of a discontinued agency, the above process will be repeated.

SECTION V: FIELD INSTRUCTION ROLES

A. MSW Field Education Coordinator
- Takes responsibility for the overall management of the Social Work Department MSW Field Education Program.
- Recruits and maintains communication with field placement sites.
- Orients students to the placement process, reviews student field applications, and refers students to appropriate field placement agencies.
- Prepares and provides information and documents needed for field instruction including the MSW Field Education Manual.
- Provides orientation and training seminars for agency field instructors and faculty field liaisons.
- Maintains regular contact with faculty liaisons to support the field instruction process and participate in the resolution of problems that may occur.
- Establishes and monitors educational outcomes of the field placement program.

B. Agency Field Instructor
- Describes and explains the expectations of the student during the placement.
- Provides the student with a thorough orientation to the agency purpose and structure, policy and procedures, ethical standards, and safety practices.
- Meets at least weekly with the student for a minimum of 1 hour field instruction.
- Arranges for suitable office space, equipment and support staff for the student.
- Introduces the student to agency staff and includes the student in staff meetings and training sessions.
- Assigns duties and responsibilities that are appropriate to the student’s educational level and that are increasingly difficult, demanding and challenging.
- Provides opportunities for the student to apply a broad range of social work knowledge and skills.
- Collaborates with the student in the development of the student’s learning plan
- Monitors the student’s work and progress and regularly provides feedback to the student.
- Evaluates the student’s performance in a fair, respectful, rigorous and thorough manner using the evaluative criteria established by the social work program.
- Meets a minimum of three times during the practicum with the student and faculty liaison to discuss the practicum and the student’s progress.
- Exemplifies practice consistent with the NASW Code of Ethics.

C. Task Supervisor (if one is assigned)
- Provides secondary field instruction and on-site guidance to the student on specific tasks, projects, or assignments as delegated and monitored by the field instructor.
● Works in collaboration with the field instructor and student to establish and ensure the student’s learning goals are being met.
● Provides constructive feedback to the student on specific tasks, projects or assignments.
● Keeps the field instructor informed of the student’s progress on specific tasks, projects or assignments.
● Meets a minimum of three times during the practicum with the student and faculty liaison to discuss the practicum and the student’s progress.
● Provides input to the evaluation of the student in collaboration with the primary field instructor and the student.
● Meets with primary field instructor, student as needed.

D. Field Placement Student
- Completes and submits field application materials a minimum of one month prior to the start of the semester.
- Makes and keeps pre-placement interview appointments and report the results to the field director.
- Attends the agency on days and times agreed upon, and if unable to attend, notifies the agency field instructor prior to the start of the workday.
- Acts in a professional manner, taking responsibility to understand and carry out assignments, meet all deadlines and seek direction or clarification when needed.
- Initiates the learning agreement by formulating learning goals and reviewing them with the agency field instructor within the first three weeks of placement.
- Completes tasks and assignments in a manner consistent with agency policy and procedures.
- Completes all placement monitoring and evaluation forms as required by the agency or the social work department.
- Discusses with the agency field instructor and the faculty liaison any significant areas of disagreement, dissatisfaction, or confusion related to the placement.
- Satisfactorily completes the required number of placement hours.
- Practices in accordance with the NASW Code of Ethics.

E. Faculty Field Liaison (Field Seminar Instructor)
- Contacts the field student and agency field instructor/task supervisor early in the placement and assists with a plan for the placement which specifies appropriate and challenging learning opportunities during the placement.
- Monitors the student’s placement experience and assists in evaluating the student’s performance.
- Is acquainted with the MSW Field Education Manual and clarifies for agency field instructors and other agency personnel the program’s expectations and standards for MSW field students.
- Assists the field student to identify his or her learning needs, formulate goals, and prepare the field learning contract.
- Facilitates the student’s learning by providing guidance and serving as a source of information. The primary source of this activity is the bi-weekly field seminar, facilitated by the respective faculty field liaison.
▪ Meets with the student and agency field instructor/task supervisor at least three times during the placement to discuss the practicum and the student’s progress.
▪ Assists the student in integrating social work theory with specific placement experiences.
▪ Is available to the field instructor/task/supervisor and student to support the field instruction process and assist in resolving problems that might arise during the placement.
▪ Informs the field director of significant problems or changes in the placement.
▪ Assumes responsibility for arranging and securing the midterm and final evaluations of the student’s performance in field and provided completed documents to the field office.
▪ Confirms that the student has fulfilled the expectations of an MSW field student and assigns the final grade for the placement.
▪ Makes recommendations for the improvement of the field placement program, field instructor and/or agency.

F. Program Support for Field Instructors

▪ Field instructor orientations will be held each academic year that will be available via webcast for online field instructors to provide additional information on the MSW program, the curriculum, the generalist perspective, field placement goals, and developing the learning contract.
▪ The faculty field liaison will be the direct link to the MSW program. Liaisons will meet with field instructors a minimum of three times over the duration of the practicum. They are also available to the field instructors on an as-needed basis.
▪ Field instructors will be invited to attend any continuing education program sponsored by the Edinboro University MSW program for which CEUs will be available.

SECTION VI:
FIELD PLACEMENT PROCESS

Students admitted to the MSW program will be given a placement-planning packet prior to their entry into field placement. The ‘Foundation Year Field Application’ must be completed and returned to the MSW Field Coordinator by the date specified. Students accepted for the advanced standing program will be mailed an application packet for the Concentration Year, following their acceptance into that program. Students enrolled in the first year of study for the MSW will be issued an application for the concentration year field placement early in the spring semester of their foundation year.

Campus-based Placement Sequence:
1. Students should complete the ‘Application for Field Placement’ and submit it to the Social Work Field Office. A professional resume must be submitted along with your application. Please mail, fax, or email documents to:

Edinboro University
Social Work Field Office
235 Scotland Road; G49 Hendricks Hall
Edinboro, PA 16444
OR
Fax: 814-732-1108
OR
mswfieldeducation@edinboro.edu

2. Campus-based students will have a field placement arranged for them. The Social Work Field Office will contact you to discuss a field placement that will meet your educational needs. If an application and professional resume are not submitted by the deadline there is no guarantee that a placement will be located for you.

3. Students should begin the process of obtaining the necessary clearances upon receipt of the placement planning packet as it can take some time for some of these clearances to be processed.

The University requires that you obtain Pennsylvania State Police, Child Abuse, and FBI Fingerprinting clearances. Information regarding clearances can be located on the Social Work Department’s webpage, Field Education section. Note: You may also be required to obtain additional clearances and/or testing as required by the field placement agency.

4. Students are required to obtain professional liability insurance (coverage for $1,000,000/$3,000,000). Information regarding liability insurance can be located on the Social Work Department’s webpage, Field Education section.

Note: You must provide copies of your clearances and documentation of liability insurance to the field office one month prior to the first week of classes. If you do not provide this information, you will not be able to begin your field placement as scheduled.

5. Students will need to register for Intent for Field Seminar course, SOWK 622, for the Fall Semester.

Online Program Sequence:
1. Students should complete the ‘Application for Field Placement’ form and submit to the Social Work Field Office. A professional resume must be submitted along with the enclosed application. Please mail, fax, or email documents to:

Edinboro University
Social Work Field Office
235 Scotland Road; G49 Hendricks Hall
Edinboro, PA 16444
OR
Fax: 814-732-1108
OR
mswfieldeducation@edinboro.edu
2. Online students will need to locate potential field placement sites. You should identify three (3) potential field placement sites on your application. Please make contact with all sites and have at least one site that has agreed to accept you as a social work intern. You should confirm there is an MSW on staff, with at least two (2) years post graduate experience, who is willing to serve as your field instructor. Also ask if the placement site has Skype capability to allow for face-to-face contact for site visits. You must provide the technology for Skype site visits if the agency does not have the capability for Skype access. (Please refer to MSW Field Requirements for Concentration Online Students for additional information.)

Note: The application needs to be completed in its entirety. Please make certain that you complete all demographic information including your EUP email address, phone number(s) where you can be reached during the day, in addition to emergency contact information. When completing the field questionnaire section of the Application, identify the site that has agreed to accept you as the first choice.

The Social Work Field Office staff will then contact your first choice placement and review, approve and finalize the placement. Should your first choice not be approved as an appropriate placement site, the Social Work Field Office staff will then contact the second and third choice agencies in an attempt to locate an appropriate field placement. You will be notified by the Social Work Field Office staff once a placement has been approved and finalized.

Note: If an application and professional resume are not submitted by the above date there is no guarantee that a placement will be located, approved and finalized for you.

3. Students should begin the process of obtaining the necessary clearances.

Pennsylvania Residents: The University requires that you obtain Pennsylvania State Police, Child Abuse, and FBI Fingerprinting clearances. Information regarding clearances can be located on the Social Work Department’s webpage, Field Education section. Note: You may also be required to obtain additional clearances and/or testing as required by the field placement agency. A link can be found on this page: http://www.edinboro.edu/academics/schools-and-departments/cshp/departments/social-work/field-education/msw.html

Non-Pennsylvania Residents: As a Non-Pennsylvania resident, you are required to obtain clearances and testing as required by the field placement agency. If your field placement agency does not require clearances and/or testing, they must submit a letter to the Social Work Field Office documenting this information.

4. Students are required to obtain professional liability insurance (coverage for $1,000,000/$3,000,000). Information regarding liability insurance can be located on the Social Work Department’s webpage, Field Education section.

Note: You must provide copies of your clearances and documentation of liability insurance to the field office one month prior to the first week of classes. If you do not provide this information, you will not be able to begin your field placement as scheduled.

5. Students will need to register for Intent for Field Seminar course, SOWK 622, for the Fall Semester.
SECTION VII:
THE LEARNING CONTRACT

Purpose of the Learning Contract
The learning contract is a written agreement between the field student and the agency field instructor/task supervisor describing the nature and content of the student’s placement experience. This agreement provides a focus for mutual planning in the development of the placement and serves as a reference point for ongoing planning and evaluation of the learning experience.

The field placement learning contract structures an individualized field placement experience for each student in each setting. Learning contracts should incorporate the CSWE Core Competencies and Practice Behaviors. The student’s individualized learning contract goals should be adapted to the unique opportunities for learning in each placement setting. Learning contracts facilitate an organized but flexible student placement experience.

Developing the learning contract
The student is expected to initiate the preparation of the learning contract within the first few weeks of the placement. Relevant reference sections in this manual are the MSW program goals and objectives (pg. 3-5) and the field placement purposes for either the foundation or concentration year as applicable (pg. 8-9). With this information as a point of reference the student formulates a draft of her/his learning goals.

Learning goals should be stated in general terms that broadly define the intended learning outcomes. For example, a foundation learning goal might be: “To identify and understand major social policies affecting clients and services in this agency”. Another example is: “To increase awareness and understanding of myself as a professional”. The objectives for the Concentration placement should focus on family social work practice. Learning contracts for concentration year placement should reflect a family social work practice focus.

The agency field instructor then reviews the draft of the student’s goals. The field instructor provides guidance on the selection of goals appropriate to the setting and suggests specific activities, tasks or experiences that will help the student to achieve each of the learning goals.

The final step in preparing the learning contract is the establishment of methods or criteria for evaluating progress toward each goal. This should involve target dates for the completion of tasks, reviewing documentation, or specification of other processes by which the field instructor can verify satisfactory completion.

The faculty field liaison is responsible for reviewing learning contract. The liaison may approve the contract or provide suggestions to the student and field instructor regarding modifications. Review and discussion of the learning contract by all three parties occurs during the initial phase of the placement, at the end of the first semester and near the end of the second semester. Changes and modifications to the learning contract should be documented as an addendum and given to the Faculty Field Liaison and the Coordinator of Social Work Field Internships.
Students and field instructors are encouraged to reflect upon the learning contract frequently during the experience to assure students are fulfilling placement goals.

_For Learning Contracts, see _APPENDIX_

**SECTION VIII: STUDENT SAFETY IN THE FIELD**

_Agency Protocol_

- It is important for students to know the agency’s protocol for safety and security. The following are guidelines and suggestions that may be helpful to students, field instructors, and faculty liaisons as they consider the particular safety issues in their settings. Specific steps taken by students or agency personnel will obviously have to be determined by the individual situation, the nature of the setting, etc. The agency should know the student’s schedule and whereabouts at all times, especially when the student is working outside the building.

__Security of Belongings__

- The agency is responsible for providing students with a secure place to keep belongings while at placement. It is preferable that the space be one that can be locked (e.g., a desk drawer or filing cabinet). Students should not leave cell phones, laptops, backpacks, purses, and other personal articles visible and unattended, even in an office with the door closed. Valuables should not be brought to placement settings. Items of value should not be left in cars, and should not be placed out of view just prior to leaving a vehicle.

__Safety Issues Related to Working with Clients__

- Social work students work with clients/consumers in a range of settings and situations. Some of these include work with individuals dealing with overwhelming emotions and environmental stressors that result in behaviors that are or appear to be threatening. These behaviors may include (but are not limited to) swearing, yelling, insulting, threatening or acting to cause physical harm, and other out-of-control behavior.
- Some individuals may be prone to violence and may possess a weapon. Others may be intoxicated, high on drugs, in withdrawal, or may have other medical, psychiatric, or neurological disorders. Again, we would like to emphasize that students should always consult with agency field instructors regarding preparation for and handling of specific situations that are potentially difficult or threatening, such as medical emergencies, suicide or homicide risks, potential abuse of others, and the presence of
Safety for Office Meetings

- When considering the location of an office meeting, it is important to consider what is in the room, whether there is more than one exit, and where each person will sit. When scheduling an appointment, it is helpful to think about whether other people should be around and available at the time of the meeting for help if needed. Also, it is important to have a plan for assistance in the event that a client/consumer becomes agitated. This may include having another staff person in the meeting.

Safety for Travel

- When a student is traveling by car for field education activities, it is advisable to have clear directions and know where he or she is going. In general, it is important to be alert and attentive to one’s surroundings, and to lock doors and close windows. Valuables should be placed out of sight in one’s vehicle prior to parking at the destination.

- When traveling by foot or public transportation, it is advisable that students carry as little as possible. Money, license, keys, and other essentials should be carried in a pocket if possible. If a bag or briefcase is grabbed, it is best to let go of it. It is advisable to dress in comfortable clothes that are loose fitting, and to wear sturdy, flat walking shoes. It is also helpful to be alert, and to walk with a purpose, as if one has a clear destination. One should be aware of people in the immediate area, without staring or maintaining eye contact.

Safety for Home Visits

- Prior to making a home visit, the student should discuss any issues related to safety with their field instructor. On an initial home visit, it is often advisable to go with another worker. Most agencies will want to know the location and scheduling of the home visits. Some agencies require a confirmation telephone call upon arrival and departure from the home visit. If the student feels unsafe upon arrival or at any time during the visit, he or she should not proceed with the meeting. It might be preferable to meet at a neutral location.

SECTION IX:
EVALUATING THE FIELD EDUCATION PROGRAM

A. Evaluating Student Performance

1. At the beginning of foundation and concentration year placements, the student, the field instructor(s), and the faculty liaison collaborate in the development of a learning contract that will guide the student in meeting program, field, and student learning goals and objectives.

2. During the semester, the field instructor meets for a minimum of 1 hour weekly with the
student to review the student's progress in relation to the learning contact, assigned tasks, provide feedback regarding the student’s performance and provide ongoing social work supervision for the experience.

3. At the end of the each semester the field instructor and the student complete the corresponding Foundation Year or Concentration Year Field Student Evaluation. Although the completion of the evaluation is expected to be a cooperative effort between the student and the field instructor, the field instructor is ultimately responsible for the assessment and documenting and summarizing of the student's performance.

4. The student, field instructor and faculty liaison should meet at the end of each semester to review the evaluation. End of semester evaluations require a scored rating on each of the evaluative criteria. Efforts should be made to be objective to the degree possible when completing evaluations. Examples of behaviors that result in a rating should be cited and described. The learning contract, contact notes from weekly reviews, student recordings, student documentation, observations of student interactions with others, client satisfaction surveys, or other supporting data may be used and discussed during the evaluative process.

B. Grading
A field instructor may recommend a rating based on his/her perceptions of the student’s performance in the placement setting but it is the faculty liaison’s responsibility to consider the overall student performance and assign a final grade for the course. Grading criteria should be clear to all parties at the start of the placement. A student must complete the entire placement to receive credit. The faculty liaison will incorporate both field and seminar performance in calculating the student’s final grade in the following manner: 30% seminar performance and 70% field performance.

C. Quality of Program
The MSW program seeks to continuously improve their field experience to ensure excellence; therefore, we gather information from students, field instructors, and faculty liaisons in the following manner:

**Students**
1. Informal feedback from students is solicited via: the seminar class setting, during faculty liaison visits and other liaison contacts, and through verbal feedback provided to the Social Work Field Office.
2. Formal evaluations from students are solicited via: the field seminar Course Evaluation survey administered by the university, and the Student Evaluation of Field survey administered by the Coordinator of Social Work Field Education.

**Field Instructors**
1. Informal feedback from field instructors is solicited via: verbal feedback to the Coordinator of Social Work Field Education, and to faculty liaisons during visits and other liaison contacts.
2. Formal evaluations from field instructors are solicited via: the Field Instructor Evaluation of Program survey administered by the Coordinator of Social Work Field Education.

**Faculty Liaisons**
1. Informal feedback from faculty liaisons are solicited via: verbal feedback to the Coordinator of Social Work Field Education.
2. Evaluations from faculty liaisons are solicited concerning the placement agency and field instructor.

SECTION X:
FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS ABOUT FIELD PLACEMENT

1. What should I do before I go to the placement agency?
   It is helpful if you call a week ahead to introduce yourself to your field instructor if you have not personally met them prior to placement, or to remind them that you are starting placement on X date. This is a good opportunity to confirm some specifics like: parking arrangements, specific time they are expecting you, who you should check in with when you first arrive, etc.

2. What should I wear?
   As with your pre-placement interview, it is very important to present yourself as a professional intern, and dress in comfortable but professional work clothing. Revealing clothing as well as overly casual dress (e.g. jeans and tee shirts) are not appropriate. In some settings, such as residential settings, a certain day’s planned activities may dictate what you plan to wear as you become more involved in the placement. This is a good conversation to have with your field instructor at early phases of your internship.

3. What should I expect in the orientation phase of placement?
   Every agency approaches orientation somewhat differently; large agencies which have many interns may have a very formal, organized orientation, while smaller agencies may have a more informal schedule. We encourage all agencies to plan an orientation for students which should include:
   - Introduction to key personnel, support staff, and team/program members.
   - Physical orientation to the setting including day schedules, opening and closing procedures, telephone systems, office management requirements, submitting schedules, emergency policies in regard to safety issues as well as calling in the event of an unexpected absence, etc.
   - Program orientation to the agency mission, key agency policies and daily procedures.
   - Routine schedules including staff meetings, team meetings, and consultation, group supervision or training sessions you will be expected to attend.
   - Other agency-specific orientation manuals, materials, and helpful information.

4. To whom am I responsible for my internship hours and daily schedule?
   This is your responsibility to address with your primary internship field instructor. While you
are with the placement, your attendance, scheduled hours, and assigned tasks are the responsibility of the agency field instructor and you. Each agency may have slightly different expectation about opening and closing times, preference for some evening hours, specific policies regarding signing in/out, transporting clients, etc. It is important that you clarify these early in the placement. Specific arrangements for days and hours at placement should be reflected in your learning contract. Students are required to submit monthly time sheet to their faculty field liaisons documenting the hours spent in the field and ensuring that they are meeting the minimum number of hours required for their field placements.

5. **What if I put in extra hours in a week or, for some reason, not enough hours?**
   Again, your schedule should be addressed with your field instructor. Any changes or unexpected alteration should be addressed weekly so that you both keep a running record as the placement continues of weekly hours completed, in order to complete the placement in a timely manner. It is important to be prepared to be flexible as you get more involved in the life of the agency, and to adapt to schedules with a flexible and reasonable attitude. Monthly time sheets should be maintained by the student and initialed by the faculty field liaison.

6. **What if I am not familiar with some of the language, acronyms, or clinical terms being used at meetings?**
   This is perfectly natural as you are entering an agency and system ‘culture’. It is very appropriate to ask meeting members to explain abbreviations, and to ask follow-up questions in supervision. Seize these learning moments!

7. **What if my Field Instructor is not in on certain days?**
   If your field instructor needs to be out of the agency or off-site for a period, you should consult with your task supervisor if one is assigned and who should be identified in your learning contract. If your field instructor needs to be away for an extended period of time, you should discuss this with your field instructor and task supervisor and inform your faculty field liaison.

8. **What if I am the only professional on-site or expected to cover a shift by myself?**
   As a student, you are not expected to cover staff shifts by yourself; students are to be ancillary assistants to organization-based responsible program staff, and to have on-site supervision at all times. If you appear to be put in this position, discuss it immediately with your agency field instructor and faculty field liaison.

9. **What if I am expected to perform responsibilities with which I am uncomfortable?**
   There are undoubtedly first experiences or new skills which feel uncomfortable and are anxiety provoking to most students. This is a natural part of the learning process which can be addressed and prepared for in supervision by role play through ‘what if’ examples of other staff experiences etc. If you feel you are being expected to perform beyond the accepted graduate student role, inform your field instructor and liaison. These situations might appropriately include: administering medication to clients; covering dangerous or risky situations alone; transporting clients with violent histories; providing outreach alone in dangerous or unfamiliar environments.
10. Do I get paid for mileage for client transport?
Most agencies do cover staff, student, and volunteer expenses involved in the approved transportation and client visitation, especially children or clients who have few resources. This should be clarified at the orientation phase along with procedures for reimbursement. Typical procedures involve providing receipts for mileage, travel records, and parking receipts. All documentation of this nature should be kept by the student for approval/submission as necessary.

11. Do I need to purchase Professional Liability Insurance?
Every student entering field placement must secure Professional Liability Insurance Coverage prior to placement. See section VI item #4 for more information. You will be expected to provide written confirmation that you have coverage.

12. What holidays do I take and how to I plan for personal days?
Students take off any holiday the agency extends to other staff, or the University identifies as a holiday. Personal days are planned days when you need to be away from the agency for unavoidable reasons identified by Edinboro University policy as excused absences. These are requested and approved by your agency site field instructor and the time must be made-up.

13. What do I do in an emergency with clients?
Your field instructor should orient you to agency protocol in keeping with the mandate and mission of the agency. You should be familiar with agency safety and emergency protocol; it is important to debrief and review the events of an emergency immediately following the event.

14. What can I expect in being evaluated for my internship performance?
You are provided in advance a copy of the Foundation or Concentration Year Student Evaluation instrument. This is intended to directly assess the learning goals you collaboratively articulate in your learning contract at the outset of placement. We encourage students and field instructors to collaboratively enter the evaluation process, so that students are involved in learning the important practice skill of self-assessment, as well as assessment by and with the field instructor. You will meet initially with your field instructor, then with your field instructor and liaison to review the evaluation. You have the right to add additional comments to the evaluation, should you wish to do so. A field instructor may recommend a rating based on his or her perceptions of the student’s performance in the placement setting but it is the faculty liaison’s responsibility to consider the overall student performance and assign a final grade for the course. Grading criteria should be clear to all parties at the start of the placement. A student must complete the entire placement to receive credit. The faculty liaison will incorporate both field and seminar performance in calculating the student’s final grade in the following manner: 30% seminar performance and 70% field performance.
APPENDIX

A. Online Program Field Placement Documents:


B. Campus-Based Program Field Placement Documents


ALL MSW FIELD PLACEMENT FORMS CAN ALSO BE FOUND ON THE EDINBORO UNIVERSITY’S SCHOOL OF SOCIAL WORK WEBSITE. CLICK HERE TO ACCESS.

REFERENCES


