Frequently Asked Questions Regarding Campus-Based Field Education

1. How many hours are students required to complete in order to fulfill the requirement for field education?

In the Foundation Year of the program students are required to complete a minimum of 400 hours over the course of two semesters. Approximately 150 hours are completed in the first field course (SOWK 622) and 250 hours are completed in the second field course (SOWK 623).

In the Concentration Year students are required to complete a minimum of 500 hours over the course of two semesters, which is approximately 250 hours each semester (SOWK 722 and SOWK 723).

Students are generally in their field placements between 16-20 hours/week (usually 2-2 ½ days a week) in order for them to complete the minimum required hours.

2. How many agencies do students do field placements in?

Students complete two field placements at two different field sites over the course of the two year program; one placement, at one agency is completed in the Foundation Year of the curriculum (SOWK 622 & 623, throughout which students remain at the same field site) and one placement at a second agency is completed in the Concentration Year of the curriculum (SOWK 722 & 723, throughout which students remain at the same field site). Advanced Standing Students are waived from completing the Foundation Year placement as their BSW Field Placement has fulfilled the Foundation Year field requirement. Therefore Advanced Standing Students only complete one field placement which occurs in the Concentration Year of the curriculum (SOWK 722 & 723) and is done at one field site over the course of the academic year.

3. What is the process for locating a field placement?

Students should complete the Field Placement Application for Campus based students and attach a copy of their resume and submit it to the MSW Field Coordinator. Once the materials are received and reviewed the MSW Field Coordinator will contact the student to discuss possible field placement sites. The MSW Field Coordinator will then contact agency to determine their appropriateness as a field site and their ability and willingness to accept a student for an internship. The student will then be notified of the agency’s willingness to accept the student as an intern. The student then schedules an interview with the staff at the field agency to determine if the agency is able to meet the student’s learning needs and if the agency believes that the student would be compatible with the agency. Once this process is completed a date (in accordance with the beginning of the semester) is established for the student to begin the placement.
4. I work full-time, am I able to do my field placement on weekends and in the evenings?

The agencies in which students can complete placement hours only during evening and weekends are limited. Students need to be prepared to complete their field education internship during normal agency business hours and during the time a field instructor is on duty and available to the student since the number of agencies providing fully staffed services on evenings and weekends is limited. These requirements make it extremely unlikely that students can do their entire field education internship during evenings or on weekends. The Field Education Office will do its best to work with a student to locate a placement that will accommodate the student’s work schedule. Students should also be aware that it may be necessary for students to make some temporary adjustments to their work schedules to accommodate their educational goals in order to successfully complete their field education requirements. The Field Education Department is committed to working with every student to assist in making the field education internship a positive educational experience.

5. Can I complete my field placement at my current place of employment?

Under special circumstances students are granted permission to complete their field placement at their current place of employment. Students may only complete one field placement (two semesters) at their place of employment. Students who are interested in requesting permission to do so should complete the “Application to Complete MSW ‘Foundation Practicum at Place of Employment” which can be located under the “MSW Field Manual & Related Forms” section of the Social Work Field Department webpage. The completed form should be submitted to the MSW Field Coordinator for approval.

6. What are the requirements for an agency to qualify as a field site?

Agencies must be committed to assisting in the education of MSW students and see this as worthwhile activity, agree to support the mission, goals and objectives of the MSW Program, be willing to allow qualified staff to spend time in the process of teaching students through supervision and training and working with the MSW faculty, and be able to provide students with adequate resources (work space, equipment, etc) to complete organization tasks or assignments as they relate to the students’ learning.

7. What are the requirements for an individual to be a field instructor?

Field instructors must have a MSW from a Council on Social Work Education (CSWE) accredited program and have a minimum of two years post MSW practice experience. Additionally, field instructors should possess a commitment to the social work profession and demonstrate competence in social work practice. Field instructors should have an interest in supporting the education of MSW students and be able to be accessible to students on a regular basis as well as being available to periodically meet with faculty of the MSW Program and Social Work Department Field Office.
8. **How far will I need to travel to do my field placement?**

   The Social Work Department’s Field Education Office collaborates with the student to locate a field site in the area which the student lives or in a reasonable commuting distance.

9. **I went to register for my field seminar course and am unable to register for the course, what is the problem?**

   Students are only able to register for the field seminar classes after a field site has been located and the placement has been confirmed for the academic year. Once that occurs, the department secretary will notify the student that he/she is now able to register of the field seminar course as well as which section of the seminar course they should register. Please note the e-mail sent by the department secretary does not register you for the course. You must go into SCOTS and register for the course once you receive the e-mail.

10. **What clearances are required for a student to begin field placement?**

    Students are required to obtain the following clearances:

    * Pennsylvania Child Abuse History Clearance (Department of Public Welfare)
    * Pennsylvania State Police Request for Criminal Record Check
    * FBI Fingerprint/Background Check

    There is a fee for each of the clearances and students are responsible for payment for each of the clearances.

    All clearances must be **current within the year of the students starting their field placements** and copies of those clearances must be provided to the University before students can begin their field placements.

11. **Where do I apply for these clearances?**

    Students can register for these clearances on the Social Work Department’s Field Education webpage. The links are listed on the left side of the webpage.

    When requesting clearances the “purpose” of the clearances are as follows:

    * Child Abuse: “school”
    * State Police: “education”
    * FBI: “employment with significant likelihood of regular contact with children”

    **Please note** that these clearances can take up to 6 weeks to process.
12. Do I need to obtain **professional liability insurance**?

Yes. All students who will be in field placement are required to obtain professional liability insurance. The Social Work Department requires that students obtain professional liability insurance through the National Association of Social Workers (NASW). Professional liability insurance through NASW is the least expensive professional liability insurance that students can obtain and assures that students have the appropriate liability insurance required for social workers.

13. What is the **required level of coverage needed for professional liability insurance**?

Students are required to purchase the minimum level of coverage, $1,000,000/$3,000,000 at the cost of $35/year. You may choose to purchase a higher level of coverage based on your personal circumstances.

The link to apply for Student Liability Insurance-NASW Assurance is also located on the Social Work Field Education Program webpage.

14. Do students need to join NASW in order to purchase **Student Liability Insurance-NASW Assurance**?

Yes. Students need to become members of NASW to be eligible to purchase Student Liability Insurance-NASW Assurance. The Student Membership fee for MSW students is $48/annually. A link to join NASW can also be found on the Social Work Field Education Program webpage.

15. Where can I locate my **Degree Evaluation**?

Students can locate their degree evaluations by logging into SCOTS and going to STUDENT SERVICES AND FINANCIAL AID and then going to:

- Student Records ➔ Degree Evaluation ➔ Select a Term ➔ Generate New Evaluation ➔ Generate Request (click on Program/Degree/Major, first) ➔ Detailed Requirements ➔ Submit