



THE UNIVERSITY OF  
**TENNESSEE**  
KNOXVILLE

---

COLLEGE OF SOCIAL WORK

**2025-2026**  
**BSSW Field Practice Manual**

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# **1.0 BSSW Program Mission, Goals, Competencies, and Curriculum**

## **1.1 Program Mission**

The BSSW program equips professional social workers with the skills needed to serve all populations. Embracing a generalist practice model, we prepare the next generation of professional social workers to be critically informed thinkers, opinion shapers, and transformative leaders.

## **1.2 Program Goals**

The BSSW Program prepares our students to become generalist social work practitioners who:

1. are committed to advancing the principles, values, and ethics that guide the social work profession;
2. are grounded in systems theory and operate within a person-in-the-environment framework;
3. use the problem-solving process to intervene in multiple client systems;
4. have an understanding of various populations, and domestic and international challenges, that informs practice interventions;
5. use critical thinking, evaluative, research, and leadership skills to address the needs of a complex, changing global world;
6. are committed to continuous development of professional self; and
7. are committed to evidence-based practice.

## **1.3 Professional Competencies**

The BSSW student is prepared to become an entry level generalist practitioner who is able to serve diverse populations in a variety of practice settings. Students are able to integrate the knowledge, values, and skills of a social worker into their practice and become competent entry level professionals. The BSSW Program has adopted the following nine core competencies from the 2022 Council on Social Work Education Educational Policy and Accreditation Standards.

<https://www.cswe.org/accreditation/policies-process/2022epas/>

## **1.4 BSSW Curriculum**

The social work curriculum is designed to achieve the primary objective of preparing students for entry level professional practice. The curriculum is the same for the campus and online programs. Students should address any questions about curriculum requirements to the BSSW Program Advisor.

The curriculum follows the general education requirements of the University of Tennessee and the Educational Policy and Accreditation Standards of the Council on Social Work Education, the accrediting body for social work programs. Students must graduate with a minimum of 120 credit hours with 50 of those credit hours in social work.

The social work curriculum builds on a strong liberal arts base. The humanities and the social and behavioral sciences are emphasized to help students understand human diversity and the transactions between people and the environment. The curriculum combines classroom experience and agency-based field placements.

Courses provide a knowledge base in social work practice, human behavior, social welfare policy, and research. Each course in the social work sequence builds upon another, reinforces core concepts and skills while including content of greater complexity. An illustration is the three- course social work practice sequence. SW 312 introduces generalist practice with individuals and families, while SW 313 further defines generalist practice with a special focus on crisis intervention and case management with selected client populations. SW 315 emphasizes generalist practice with groups and communities. Each course in this practice sequence has a skills lab that provides opportunities for students to develop and refine interpersonal skills. The Field Placement Learning Plan is used in both the junior and senior field placement to organize the students' learning activities around the identified competencies.

The baccalaureate social work curriculum is outlined below:

- Social Work Curriculum
- Fall (Junior)
- SW 312 Introduction to Interpersonal SW Practice (3)
- SW 314 Human Development in Context: Pre-natal to Adolescence (3)
- SW 316 Social Justice and Anti-oppressive Practices (3)
- Spring (Junior)
- SW 313 Interpersonal SW Skills Lab (3)
- SW 315 Intro to Macro SW Practice (3)
- SW 324 Human Development in Context: Young Adult to Older Adulthood (3)
- SW 380N Field Practicum I (spring or summer junior) (3)
- SW 385 Field Seminar (spring or summer junior) (1)

### Fall (Senior)

- SW 410 Foundations of Social Work Research (3)
- SW 416 Social Welfare Policies and Programs (fall or spring) (3)
- SW 480N Field Practicum II (Or 483N, EI in spring) (6)
- SW 485 Field Seminar II (Or 495 in spring) (1)

### Spring (Senior)

- SW 460 Integrative Seminar (3)
- SW 481N, EI Field Practicum III (Or 483N, EI) (6)
- SW 495 Field Seminar III (Or 496) (1)

The undergraduate social work program is accredited by the Council on Social Work Education (CSWE). Students in the program take requirements in arts and sciences, which are consistent with the CSWE accreditation standard that the BSSW degree has a strong liberal arts foundation. Building on the liberal arts base the social work curriculum includes classroom theory and agency-based field placements. The theoretical courses focus on social work practice, the nature of social work and social welfare, social work research, and the development and behavior of individuals, families, and organizations. Educationally directed field placements, which consist of 500 clock hours of supervised instruction in agency settings provide opportunities for students to apply the lessons of the classroom to the problems of society.

The University of Tennessee Undergraduate Catalog overviews the curriculum across the different Social Work programs, including but not limited to, total credit hours, course descriptions, and prerequisite, and corequisite coursework.

The BSSW program offers opportunities for licensure and/or study in school social work and in child welfare. There are also opportunities to study social work and complete field placements in other countries. See the BSSW Academic Advisor for specific requirements. The curriculum requirements for the Online BSSW Program and Knoxville Campus program are identical.

### Course Descriptions

BSSW course descriptions can be found at: <https://www.csw.utk.edu/bssw-program-courses/> or in the BSSW Program Office.

### BSSW Honors Program

The honors program provides highly motivated social work majors with the opportunity to pursue advanced coursework and graduate with honors. Students completing the honors program must complete a senior research project related to field. Students are to consult with their agency field instructors when planning the research project and are required to obtain all necessary permissions from the field agency in addition to gaining approval from the University IRB.

## 1.5 College of Social Work Standards of Professional Conduct

Separate and distinct from the University of Tennessee's Standards of Conduct, and the CSW's standards for academic performance, there are certain cognitive, emotional and character requirements that students must possess that provide the CSW with reasonable assurance that students can complete the entire course of study and participate fully in all aspects of social work education and the professional practice of social work. Students in the CSW are expected to possess the following abilities and attributes at a level appropriate to their year in the program. They are expected to meet these standards in the classroom and in their practice. Attention to these standards will be part of evaluations made by faculty responsible for evaluating applications for admission and faculty responsible for evaluating students' classroom and placement performance.

- **Professional Behavior.** The social work student behaves professionally by knowing and practicing within the scope of social work, adhering to the National Association of Social Workers Code of Ethics.
- **Interpersonal Skills.** The social work student communicates and interacts with other students, faculty, staff, clients, and professionals in a professional manner, and demonstrates respect for and consideration of other students, faculty, staff, clients, and professionals in spoken, written and electronic form. The social work student expresses their ideas and feelings clearly and demonstrates a willingness and ability to listen to others.
- **Self-awareness.** The social work student is willing to examine and change their behavior when it interferes with working with clients and other professionals and is able to work effectively with others in subordinate positions as well as with those in authority.
- **Professional Commitment.** The social work student has a strong commitment to the essential values of social work. The social work student is knowledgeable about and adheres to the National Association of Social Workers Code of Ethics.
- **Self-care.** The social work student recognizes the signs of stress, develops appropriate means of self-care, and seeks supportive resources if necessary.
- **Social work students do not impose their own personal, religious, sexual, and/ or cultural values on other students, faculty, staff, clients, or professionals.**
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The following list provides examples, but is not exhaustive, of professional misconduct:

- Misuse, alteration, or falsification of documents
- Unauthorized or improper use of University equipment, services, and facilities
- Harassing, coercing, and intimidating behavior
- Obstruction or disruption of teaching
- Criminal activity
- Failure to comply with an order from a legitimate university authority and failure to attend required meetings called by university faculty or administration such as Academic Committee Meetings and Field Evaluation Meetings

- Threatening behavior and verbal abuse
- Inappropriate relationships
- Inability to secure, sustain, or perform satisfactorily in a field placement

## **2.0 BSSW Field Education**

### **2.1 Educational Philosophy**

The Council on Social Work Education has identified field as the signature pedagogy of social work education: “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.”

(Council on Social Work Education, 2022 EPAS 3.3).

The educational philosophy underlying field practice is the integration of classroom theory with experiential, supervised learning experiences. Within a framework of social work values and knowledge, the student in the placement will test out theory, develop skills and demonstrate competencies, learn to evaluate their own performance, and prepare for autonomous practice. The student will also learn how to contribute to the provision of social services, to the development of professional knowledge.



The college considers the field placement agency both as the arena in which practice is carried out and as a valuable source of learning for the student. Through interaction with agency staff, service to clients, and exposure to the structure and policies of a segment of the social welfare system, the student learns from the agency and, in turn, contributes to its programs. The agency field instructor is a professional colleague entrusted by the college with the task of enabling the student to apply and integrate knowledge.

The college is able to provide a wide variety of field experiences for students, and opportunities to work with diverse populations are abundant. The College works closely with field placement agencies and agency field instructors to give each student quality field experience. For the commuting and online student, every effort is made to locate or develop field sites in the community/state where the student resides and plans to practice upon graduation.

In summary, the field placement provides an arena for students to apply and integrate the knowledge, values, and skills learned in the classroom to a real agency setting. It enables students to develop a greater respect for diversity, apply theoretical knowledge to their practice with populations at risk, use critical thinking skills as they struggle with complex practice and ethical problems and demonstrate the use of self in the professional role. This structured and supervised practice setting allows students to develop the competencies needed for generalist and specialized advanced practice.

The college considers the student an adult learner, capable of actively participating in the design of learning experiences that will meet the college's educational competencies and the student's own career goals. Thus, the field placement is the result of a dynamic four-way interaction of college, agency, agency field instructor, and student.

## **2.2 Field Structure**

The field curriculum is sequenced and integrated to provide students with opportunities for developmental learning. Each field course (placement) builds upon the previous one, reinforcing core concepts and skills while introducing content of greater complexity.

Students attend a concurrent field seminar for each field course. Seminar assignments play a critical role in the integration process. The seminar will also provide an opportunity for students to receive support related to their placement. The Field Placement Learning Plan is used in all field courses to organize the student's learning activities around the identified competencies.

The basic structure of BSSW field is as follows:

1. SW 380N Junior Social Work Practicum I - Fall, Spring, or Summer semester.
2. SW 480N (Fall), 481N, EI (Spring) Senior Social Work Practicums II and III
3. SW 483N, EI (Spring Only) Senior Social Work Placement- Also referred to as "Block Field".
4. Junior (SW385) and Senior Field Seminar courses (SW485, 495,496-Block seminar) are held concurrently with the practicum courses.

Students in the BSSW Program complete a total of 500 hours in field, 100 hours in junior field (10-12 hours per week in summer, 8-10 hours per week fall/spring) and 400 hours (14-15 hours per week) in senior field. Senior students who complete Block Field complete 27-30 hours a week in spring semester to meet the minimum requirement of 400 senior field hours.

The emphasis in the junior placement is on the introduction to and early development of basic social work skills, the development and demonstration of professionalism. The junior field placement requires students to complete a minimum of 100 placement hours. The junior placement includes a significant amount of time in observation and shadowing and in orientation to the professional agency context. Every effort is made to enable students to remain in the same agency placement for the junior and senior placements. The beginning of a placement experience at any level is focused on orientation to the specific placement agency, staff, and services. If a student is able to complete this process in the junior placement, the student is better able to engage immediately in more advanced placement activities early in the senior placement. This should enable the student to have more time and opportunity to practice and refine social work skills, thereby developing higher levels of competency for practice. Although juniors and seniors use the same Field Learning Plan, juniors are only required to address four competencies and ten specific practice behaviors. This enables the junior student sufficient time to engage in orientation and training activities and to complete the required competencies and practice behaviors for junior placement.

The senior placement emphasizes continued development and refinement of generalist social work practice skills. Concurrent senior placement requires students to complete 200 placement hours in each semester (fall and spring) for a total of 400 hours. Block senior placement is completed in spring semester and requires students to complete all 400 hours in the one semester. Senior students are required to substantively address all nine competencies and related practice behaviors on the learning plan.

Field seminars, held concurrently with field practice, are designed to facilitate the integration of classroom learning and the agency practice experience. The seminar becomes a “safe place” for students to question, share, and learn from each other. Part of field seminar will be in a group style format in which students will be responsible for creating, promoting, and maintaining the group process.

In addition to the face-to-face and online seminars, students also participate in online discussions that require self-reflection and provide a platform to obtain feedback and/or support from their peers in seminar. The seminars are conducted by adjunct instructors, who also serve as field faculty liaisons to the students’ placements.

During the placement, students receive supervision and field instruction from the agency field instructor. Supervision is a minimum of one hour of weekly supervision occurring in the agency setting from the agency field instructor.

## **2.3 School Social Work Licensure Requirements**

Students residing in Tennessee can pursue a State of Tennessee licensure in school social work while in the program. Students who wish to pursue this license will need to take the

school social work elective and complete a School-Based field placement.

Pursuant to the National Child Protection Act of 1993, UTK requires all students completing a placement in PreK-12 school settings to complete a fingerprint background check. Students in the BSSW program who are placed in Tennessee are presumed to enter the school social work licensure program if they select a field placement in a school setting. All students placed in school settings in Tennessee must adhere to this requirement. The law also states that the applicant is required to pay the cost of the background check. Students arrange for this through the School-Based Experiences Office in the College of Education, Health, and Human Sciences. Local school systems may require additional background checks. UT field coordinators provide information to students regarding what is required and how to arrange for background checks.

Other states may have different requirements for school social work placements. Students must meet the requirements of the state in which they reside and are placed.

### **3.0 Roles and Responsibilities in Field Education**

To promote a quality field placement, it is essential that key persons involved in the placement understand the complexity of their roles and work in cooperation with one another. The following section delineates the roles and responsibilities of those key people.

#### **3.1 Director of Field Education**

The Director of Field is responsible for oversight in all College of Social Work programs.

The responsibilities for this position are to:

1. Assure congruence between the College of Social Work BSSW & MSSW curriculum and the field education program.
2. Assure congruence of field education with Council on Social Work Education accreditation standards.
3. Conduct periodic evaluations of placement methodology and outcomes and initiate appropriate changes.
4. Hire, train, supervise and evaluate Field team members.
5. Provide oversight of the development of all written and electronic placement materials, including the field manuals, student forms, and website.
6. Oversee utilization of the online software system for student forms and the agency and agency field instructor databases.
7. Develop and provide oversight of strategies for recruitment, development, and training of agency field instructors.
8. Evaluation and enhancement of field education program.
9. Manage the field budget.

#### **3.2 Assistant and Associate Directors of Field Education**

##### **Associate Director of BSSW Field Education**

The responsibilities for this position are to:

1. Provide leadership for the BSSW program and to BSSW field faculty and adjuncts.
2. Provide support to field faculty and staff on their campus.
3. Lead field curriculum and policy development for BSSW students.
4. Collaborate with the Director of International Education to establish and coordinate international field placements for BSSW students.
5. Serve as the lead point of contact on UT Knoxville campus-based placements.
6. Represent field education director at college meetings as needed.
7. Implement special projects to enhance the field curriculum

#### **Assistant Director of MSSW Field Education**

The responsibilities for this position are to:

1. Provide leadership for the MSSW program and to MSSW faculty and adjuncts.
2. Provide support to field faculty and staff on their campus.
3. Evaluate and oversee training of MSSW field adjuncts.
4. Support MSSW field curriculum and policy development.
5. Collaborate with the Associate Dean of Access, Belonging, and Global Engagement to establish and coordinate international field placements for MSSW students.
6. Represent field education director at college meetings as needed
7. Implement special projects to enhance the field curriculum.

### **3.3 UT Field Coordinator**

The UT field coordinator is responsible for the oversight of the placement for students enrolled in the campus or online program to which they are assigned. This includes the effective and efficient coordination of all field placement activities involving faculty, field liaisons, students, and agencies.

Specifically, the UT field coordinator's responsibilities are to:

1. Identify, develop, and maintain partnerships with field agencies and field instructors.
2. Facilitate student placement planning and agency interviews and confirm placement assignments.
3. Serve as field liaison for various field sites as needed.
4. Select, train, and supervise field faculty liaisons.
5. Maintain efficient reporting systems and records of field practice activities.
6. Confer with the liaison when a student's performance is below expectations and/ or 1 = Insufficient Competence ratings are anticipated.
7. Participate in the preparation and maintenance of a current field practice manual and other materials, which have an educational value for agency field instructors.
8. Develop and deliver orientation and certification training programs for agency field instructors and other training as needed.
9. Provide an orientation to the field placement for all incoming students.
10. Plan, deliver, or coordinate personal safety training for students.
11. Coordinate the field seminar for students.
12. Assign student grades upon review of student competency

evaluations with recommendation from the field faculty liaison.

13. Serve as field liaison, offsite field instructor or supplemental supervisor for various field sites due to special circumstances if needed.

### **3.4 Field Faculty Liaison**

The field faculty liaison fulfills two roles of 1) field liaison and 2) seminar instructor for BSSW students. The Field Faculty Liaison role includes support of the student and agency field instructor to enhance the student's field learning experience and monitoring of the student's placement to ensure compliance with UTC SW field policies. The seminar instructor role includes developing and implementing a process-oriented field seminar to enable students to make deeper connections between field competencies and learning experiences and to process their field experiences. This position reports to the UT field coordinator for the assigned program and campus.

The liaison's responsibilities are to:

1. In the BSSW program the FFL teaches field seminars. FFL's plan and facilitate a process-orientated online seminar for BSSW students. The seminar focuses on three primary areas: enabling students to connect classroom content (course competencies) to field experiences, promoting development of self- reflection and reflective practice, and processing field experiences.
2. Develop and implement didactic and experiential learning activities to deepen student understanding of field competences and to enable them to process field experiences.
3. Initiate and maintain ongoing contact with assigned students and agency field instructors through email, phone, and videoconferencing according to the Field Liaison Protocol timelines.
4. Serve as an expert consultant for students and agency field instructors on development of learning activities, including learning plan assignments to address required competencies, and learning experiences to address students' learning goals and needs.
5. Complete a detailed review of student learning plan assignments by the due date specified in the Field Liaison Protocol. Provide written and/or oral feedback to students and agency field instructors on relevance and substance of assignments.
6. Review, approve, and sign all assigned student learning plans, evaluations, and timesheets. If needed, initiate contacts with students to give feedback on quality of evidence entered on learning plan. Communicate within 24 hours with the student's UT field coordinator regarding any evaluation ratings of 2 or below.
7. Provide agency field instructors with field policy, academic curriculum information, access to an interpretation of current course content and syllabi, as needed.
8. Meet with each assigned student and agency field instructor at least once per semester to review the learning plan, supervision structure, student learning needs, and to address any concerns of the student or agency field instructor. Complete and submit report forms within two weeks of each meeting.
9. Provide consultation, support, and mediation for students and agency field instructors to address concerns or problems in the field placement experience. Meet separately with students and agency field instructors, as needed, and facilitate additional join meetings as needed as outlined in the problem-solving steps.

10. Report to the Field Coordinator as needed related to progress of students in placement and any problems encountered.
11. Assess the quality of placement experiences and make recommendations to the UT Field Coordinator about retention of agency placement sites.

### **3.5 Agency field instructor**

The agency field instructor has the primary responsibility for the student's education in the field placement. The agency field instructor is a role model and an educator who demonstrates professional skills and behaviors and guides the student in the learning and integration of social work knowledge, values, and skills. The agency field instructor:

1. Identifies appropriate assignments that address required competencies and practice behaviors and take into consideration as much as possible the student's past experience, learning style, career goals, strengths, and unique learning needs.
2. Completes, with the student, the Field Placement Learning Plan. The liaison is available for consultation, if needed.
3. Provides an orientation to the agency.
4. Oversees development of the student's learning plan with input from the student and, as needed, field liaison.
5. Informs relevant agency staff about the expectations of the BSSW program and the student's role in the agency.
6. Meets at least one hour each week with the student for educationally focused supervision.
7. Consults with the field liaison if there are questions or concerns and participates in regularly held semester conferences with liaison and student.
8. Assesses the student's progress on a regular basis and completes the mid-term and final evaluations in a timely manner.
9. Participates in agency field instructor training and in other opportunities for college-agency exchange.
10. Contributes knowledge and suggestions to the college for improving the field and/or academic curriculum and program.
11. Selects task instructors and provides coordination and oversight of their work with students.

While most students have an on-site Agency field instructor, occasionally students may be supervised by a field instructor who is not on-site with the agency. In these situations, the offsite field instructor will partner with the agency task instructor in support of the student's learning.

### **3.6 Task Instructor**

The term "task instructor" is used to indicate an agency staff member who assumes certain responsibilities for the student's field education as delegated and monitored by the agency field instructor. The task instructor does not replace the agency field instructor but needs to be well informed of the professional competencies and understand their role in the student's learning. The agency field instructor provides the



task instructor with the necessary resources to accomplish the educational task. The agency field instructor helps the student integrate the task instructor's contribution into the overall educational experience. Not all students will have a task instructor as the decision is up to the agency. However, task instructors are required in situations where the student's field instructor is not on site.

### **3.7 Supplemental Supervisor**

A Supplemental supervisor is a BSSW or MSSW with at least two years post-degree experience who provides ongoing field supervision and support to students with a specific focus on providing a social work perspective to the student's field placement experience. This may be used in rare occasions when an additional social work perspective is needed to support the student's field placement learning experience. Supplemental supervisors will assess student competence at mid-term and the end of each semester and will share this feedback with the student's on-site supervisor.

### **3.8 Student**

The student is an adult learner with a commitment to and investment in preparation for a career in the profession of social work. Students are expected to:

1. Prepare for placement interviews and present in a professional manner. Interview preparation includes review of the agency website and developing questions to ask at the interview. Professional presentation includes all forms of communication in scheduling and completing the interview.
2. Participate with the agency field instructor in examining the professional competencies and the learning assignments for the field placement. These learning assignments are listed on the Field Placement Learning Plan.
3. Demonstrate the professional use of supervision by preparing for the weekly supervisory meeting, developing a written agenda, taking the initiative in raising questions for discussion, and demonstrating the application of theoretical knowledge to practice.
4. Demonstrate professional behavior at all agency meetings and functions and in all interactions with clients and agency staff.
5. Engage actively in the evaluation process, seeking ongoing feedback from the agency field instructor and participating in the semester formal evaluation.
6. Use the NASW Code of Ethics and the college's Code of Professional Conduct as a guide in all placement activities.
7. Treat all information about clients in a confidential manner, whether in the agency, field seminar, or classes.
8. Abide by agency procedures regarding practice activities, dress code, working hours, snow days, and attendance. Some agencies may have policies that prohibit piercings, visible tattoos and specific clothing or shoes.
9. Maintain an accurate record of time on the field placement timesheet.
10. Report absences and/or tardiness to the agency field instructor in advance and make arrangements with the agency field instructor to make up any lost hours as soon as can be arranged.

11. Communicate with the agency field instructor regarding any concerns with the field experience and engage constructively in finding solutions. If these concerns cannot be resolved with the agency field instructor, contact the field liaison to request consultation and assistance.
12. Meet with the field liaison during each semester meeting to review progress and discuss any concerns or problems in the placement experience.
13. Arrange transportation to and from the field practice agency.
14. Pay annual premium for professional liability insurance. Students are typically billed for their liability insurance by the bursar's office as a part of their semester fees. It must be paid before the field placement starting date.
15. Complete the form, Student Evaluation of Field Practice, at the end of each semester.
16. Submit all required forms according to the designated schedule.
17. Read and comply with requirements outlined in field course syllabi.
18. Read the field manual and abide by all field policies and procedures.
19. Participate actively in all field placement seminars.
20. Read and abide by the College of Social Work Standards of Professional Conduct.

### **3.9 Academic Advisor**

Each entering student meets with the BSSW Academic Advisor who is responsible for overseeing the student's degree plan. The academic advisor helps the student plan a course of study and is available to the student if problems arise.

Students who experience problems in field practice may seek consultation from their academic advisor as well as from the field liaison. It is usually appropriate for both to be aware of problems in the field, which may or may not be related to other difficulties the student is having while in the BSSW program.

## **4.0 Selection of Field Agencies**

Each UT field coordinator is administratively responsible for identifying, developing, approving, and maintaining field practice settings for the BSSW program. The UT field coordinator is expected to continuously engage with faculty, field liaisons, students, and community practitioners regarding the identification of potential field sites. The UT field coordinator is also expected to identify the types of settings that are needed to provide an adequate number and variety of placements to serve student needs and interests.

Field practice sites are continuously re-evaluated as new information or changes in agency circumstances arise. Feedback from students and field liaisons is a necessary and essential ingredient in the selection, re-evaluation, and retention of quality placement sites. A field placement site is no longer used when information indicates that the setting no longer meets selection criteria.

### **4.1 Procedures for the Selection of Field Agencies**

The UT field coordinator identifies prospective field settings through contacts with



faculty, students, field liaisons, and community practitioners. The UT field coordinator then contacts prospective field agencies to determine whether they are interested in affiliation with the College to provide field placements. If the organization is open to considering this, the UT field coordinator arranges a site visit or teleconference and collects information regarding the agency through the agency form website and community contacts to determine whether the organization meets the specified criteria. Finally, a memorandum of agreement specifying mutual obligations of the field organization and the BSSW Program must be agreed-upon and signed by the agency administrator and the Dean of the College or the Budget Director. These agreements are on file in the college. A signed copy is also provided to the agency.

Agencies are selected to become generalist field sites depending upon the kinds of educational experiences that are available and the qualifications of available agency field instructors. This determination is made in the selection process after thoughtful consideration of:

1. The congruence of the agency's mission and scope of services with generalist and/or concentration field competencies.
2. The agency field instructor's qualifications, specialized training, and preference for providing supervision for the students.
3. The availability of learning experiences that fit the learning needs of students and address the competencies of the respective placements.
4. Information from other sources, e.g., students, faculty, and community practitioners, regarding the stability, reputation, and quality of services at this agency.

## **4.2 Criteria for Approval as a Field Agency**

The following are criteria for field agency selection:

1. The agency's mission is consistent with the values and ethics of the social work profession.
2. Field agencies must sign and maintain a Memorandum of Agreement with the University.
3. Learning experiences available to students are consistent with the required competencies and practice behaviors of the learning plan.
4. A variety of learning experiences appropriate for BSSW students is available to address all required competencies.
5. The agency is able to provide a field instructor who holds a social work Degree from a CSWE accredited program with two years of post-degree social work practice experience.

There are rare situations where an otherwise qualified agency cannot provide a qualified field instructor. In those situations, agencies may still be approved if one of the following criteria can be met:

- Someone with the field agency who has a related degree and who has been vetted by the Field Coordinator may be assigned as field instructor. In this situation, students will receive supplemental supervision from a qualified social worker through

resources such adjunct MSSW supervisors and/or BSSW/MSSW volunteer social work supervisors.

- If resources are available, an MSSW adjunct hired via the College may provide offsite Field Instruction to students. If the college provides offsite Field Instruction, the agency is required to provide an on-site task instructor who will guide the student's learning and communicate with the field instructor regarding student learning and progress.
- The agency is able to provide the student with the necessary physical resources for the learning experience, e.g., office space and supplies.

## **5.0 Selection and Training of Agency Field Instructors**

The College of Social Work values tremendously the work of the agency field instructor. Persons serving as agency field instructors are expected to have achieved recognition for their skills and be committed to the education of students. Agency field instructors must be committed to providing an educationally directed field experience for their students and have flexibility in their work schedule to devote adequate time to their students' placement experience. The UT field coordinator is responsible for screening and selecting all agency field instructors. Input is solicited from faculty, students, and community practitioners. The college has a large pool of alumni who are well known to faculty, and this facilitates the screening process.

### **5.1 Criteria for the Selection of Agency field instructors**

The following criteria serve as guidelines in the selection of agency field instructors:

1. The agency field instructor has an BSSW or MSSW degree from a CSWE-accredited program and two years post degree social work practice experience. Supervisory and/or teaching experience is preferred. There are rare situations where an otherwise qualified agency cannot provide a qualified social worker to serve as field instructor. In those situations, agencies may still be approved if one of the following criteria can be met:
2. Someone with the field agency who has a related degree and who has been vetted by the Field Coordinator may be assigned as field instructor. In this situation, students will receive supplemental supervision from a qualified social worker through resources such adjunct MSSW supervisors and/or BSSW or MSSW volunteer social work supervisors.
3. If resources are available, a MSSW adjunct hired via the College may provide off-site Field Instruction to students. If the college provides off-site Field Instruction, the agency is required to provide an on-site task instructor who will guide the student's learning and communicate with the field instructor regarding student learning and progress.
4. The agency field instructor must be committed to social work education and be willing to supervise students with diverse learning needs.
5. The agency field instructor must be available to the student while in placement and able to devote adequate time for supervision. At minimum, the student must receive one hour of supervision per week.

6. The agency field instructor must be willing to work cooperatively with agency staff, faculty, field liaisons, and the college to promote a successful placement experience.
7. The agency field instructor must be willing to complete the agency field instructor training program.

## **5.2 Agency Field Instructor Orientation**

Prospective agency field instructors receive an overview of field education at UTK and information about the agency field instructor orientation and training from the UT field coordinator at the initial contact. Additionally, Field Coordinators host monthly Field Instructor orientation on Zoom. Whenever possible, new agency field instructors complete agency field instructor orientation prior to commencing work with a student. If this is not possible, field instructor orientation is held online monthly for field instructors. The UT field coordinator may also meet with the new agency field instructor individually to provide an orientation to the roles and responsibilities of the agency field instructor, additional information about the curriculum, and instruction on how to use the learning plan and evaluation tools. Key topics reviewed in orientation include roles and responsibilities in field, supports and learning opportunities students need to succeed, field documentation, evaluation and the problem-solving process.

## **5.3 Agency Field Instructor Training**

The agency field instructor is central to a successful placement experience for students and every effort is made to identify, train, and develop qualified agency field instructors. Agency field instructors are equipped and encouraged to think and act as educators as well as practitioners and supervisors. The college provides an agency field instructor training program to enhance the knowledge and skills of agency field instructors in their role as educators. The training includes content in the following areas: curriculum, roles and responsibilities, student orientation to field, learning and teaching strategies, supervision, evaluating students, culturally sensitive practice in the field, legal and ethical issues, dealing with challenging student situations, safety and risk management and integration of theory and practice.

A live, in person Field Instructor training is held at least once per year on the Knoxville and Nashville campuses and periodically in other parts of the state for the online program. Field Instructors may also engage in online field instructor training modules, which cover the same topics and slides as the in-person training. Agency field instructors receive certificates for the training, which can be used for continuing education requirements in Tennessee. The UT field coordinators may also conduct orientation and training at the field site when necessary or requested by a particular agency.

## **6.0 Placement Planning Process**

### **6.1 Admission to Field**

Students are required to complete the Field Placement Application to begin the field planning process by the due date. This application will give students the opportunity to share practice interests, experiences, and any unique needs with their field. This information is used by the UT field coordinator to identify prospective placements for each student. The UT field coordinator is responsible for initiating all contacts with agencies regarding student placement and facilitates the placement process for all students. Students are not to contact agencies or agency field instructors without prior permission from the UT field coordinator.

If a student submits the completed field application after the due date, the student may not be able to be placed for the planned semester. This could result in a change in the student's program plan and delay of graduation. Even if the UT field coordinator is able to place a student whose application is late, the student's options for field may be severely limited.

### **6.2 Planning and Interviewing for Placement**

BSSW field placements are selected through a joint process involving the student, the UT field coordinator, and personnel from potential placement sites. The UT field coordinator is responsible for initiating all contacts with agencies regarding student placement and facilitates the placement process for all students. Students are not to contact agencies or agency field instructors without prior permission from the UT field coordinator. Online students may be asked to provide information about agencies in their communities who may provide placement.

Students are expected to comply with all due dates and timelines for the placement planning process. These dates are set by the UT field coordinator for the program in which the student is enrolled and are communicated to students primarily through email.

This expectation of professional timeliness includes submission of the application by the due date and timely responses to all communication from the UT field coordinator regarding placement.

The field planning process is as follows:

1. BSSW Field Coordinators attend social work classes leading up to practicum to discuss the expectations and procedures of BSSW practicum planning process.
2. Students receive a Procedure for UTCSW BSSW Field Practicum Checklist that includes step by step process.
3. Each student completes a Field Placement Application for field placement, identifying practice interests, experiences, and needs and submits it to the UT field coordinator by the due date. This information is used by the UT field coordinator to identify prospective placements for each student.
4. The UT field coordinator communicates with each student by a combination of email, telephone, other technology, and/or in-person interviews to identify the placement sites that fit the student's interest and educational needs.
5. Each student in the BSSW program meets with their field coordinator for a

professional mock interview, feedback is discussed after the interview.

6. Field Coordinator connects students with an agency for them to begin scheduling an interview to explore the match between the student's interests and needs and what the agency can provide.
7. Students are required to follow the Procedure for UTCSW BSSW Field Practicum checklist.
8. Once a placement has been accepted, students are to complete and sign Confirmation of Field Placement form for approval by the due date established by the student's UT field coordinator. The final decision regarding each student's placement assignment is made by the UT field coordinator for the student's program or campus.

Students are expected to comply with all due dates and timelines for the placement planning process. These dates are set by the UT field coordinator for the program in which the student is enrolled and are communicated to students primarily through email. This expectation of professional timeliness includes submission of the application by the due date and timely responses to all communication from the UT field coordinator regarding placement.

After the student has submitted the completed field application, most communication from the UT field coordinator will be by UTK email. Faculty will use the student's UTK email address, and students should email UT field coordinators using their UTK email rather than a personal email address. Students must check and respond to their UTK email messages daily while involved in the field planning process. Each UT field coordinator is communicating with and coordinating interviews for many students and agencies. If a student fails to respond promptly to a message regarding an interview, the student may lose the opportunity to interview at a desired placement site.

Students are to contact the agency to schedule interview within 2 business days of receiving instructions to do so from the UT field coordinator. Failure to schedule an interview in a timely manner often results in a negative impression of the student by the agency field instructor and may result in loss of opportunity to interview at the agency. If a student does not follow the instructions from the UT field coordinator regarding scheduling interview, the student's field planning process will be placed on hold. The student will need to contact the UT field coordinator to discuss and make plans for moving forward with field planning.

Although the UT field coordinator will make reasonable efforts to assist students in securing a field placement that meets their learning, transportation, and scheduling needs, agencies offer field placements on a voluntary basis. Therefore, the college cannot secure a placement in an agency unwilling to accept a student, nor can the college require any agency to accept a student. Agencies reserve the right to deny a field placement to a student based on a number of factors including, but not limited to, student availability for placement during regular agency hours, availability of positions, assessment of student readiness and match for the specific setting, and results of the interviewing process. Agencies may also decline to offer placement to a student who fails to respond in a timely and appropriate manner to agency contacts regarding interviews or requests for information. Agency field instructors also assess readiness for



placement by the level of professionalism demonstrated in resumes, emails, and phone conversations. Students are advised that any communication with a prospective agency field instructor or agency representative may enhance or diminish the likelihood of acceptance for placement.

The UT field coordinator's role is facilitative, including the development of a wide variety and number of placements and arranging for student interviews. The student must ultimately secure a placement by presenting in a professional manner at the interview. The program is not responsible for securing a field placement if a student is unable to conduct a satisfactory interview with potential field placement agencies or if the student is excluded from placement by legal history or the results of agency screening procedures. A student will not be able to successfully complete the BSSW program if they are unable to secure and successfully complete all required field placements. It is the student's responsibility to adequately prepare for interviews and seek consultation from the UT field coordinator if support related to interviewing is needed. Guidelines regarding professionalism and appropriate interviewing behavior will be discussed with the student during placement planning meetings with the UT field coordinator and at field seminars. Each student in the BSSW program meets with their field coordinator for a professional mock interview, feedback is discussed after the interview. Students are responsible for adhering to professional standards, including, but not limited to, attire, timeliness, preparation, and conduct. Additionally, the UT Center for Career Development (<https://career.utk.edu/>) has resources available to support students in enhancing interviewing skill.

Please note that the student's geographic location, their proximity to other BSSW programs, local agencies' capacity to take on students, and other factors may impact the number of interviews students are able to secure. If the student is unable to secure a field placement after interviewing with the agency, the UT field coordinator will seek feedback from the agency representatives regarding the results of the student's interview. The UT field coordinator will meet with the student to discuss the outcome of the interview and to provide the student with feedback.

Based on the feedback from the agencies, the UT field coordinator may request a meeting to discuss the student's readiness for field and make recommendations. The student may also be referred to the University of Tennessee Center for Career Development for additional training and consultation. If the student was interviewing for very competitive placements and no concerns were identified at interview, the UT field coordinator will work with the student to identify other placement options. As the field placement is a required course, a student's inability, or failure to secure a field placement may result in dismissal from the BSSW program. If after completing all scheduled interviews, a student declines all offered placements, the UT field coordinator will finish facilitating placement interviews for all other students and then contact the student to discuss alternatives. This is likely to a delay in starting the field placement.

### **6.3 Students with Disabilities**

Any student in need of disability related accommodations in field should contact UT Student Disability Services (SDS) on the Knoxville Campus (<http://ods.utk.edu/> or (865) 974-6087).

In order to receive accommodations in field practice, students must be registered with SDS and request that accommodation information be sent to the UT Field Coordinator, who is the instructor for the field courses. SDS will notify the UT field coordinator of approved accommodations. The UT field coordinator will make every effort to identify a placement that meets the College of Social Work requirements and addresses the student's learning needs. UT field coordinators may consult with SDS staff to explore how a student may be accommodated without altering the fundamental requirements of the placement position. It is the student's responsibility to inform the UT Field Coordinator and agency field instructor if accommodations are needed at the field placement agency.

The College of Social Work cannot guarantee that a placement can be identified that will meet all student criteria during any given semester or in a specific location, as organizations provide student placement on a voluntary basis. It is always the social work student's responsibility to secure a placement by preparing for and presenting professionally in the field interview. Agency field instructors are expected to make placement acceptance decisions based on the fit between the learning experience offered by the organization and the student's learning needs and goals.

## **6.4 Evening and Weekend Placements**

There are very few opportunities for evening and/or weekend placements. The vast majority of placements are available only during regular weekday business hours. CSWE accreditation standards require that students be supervised by someone with a social work degree who meets the requirements to be a Field Instructor. Although some agencies serve clients on a 24-hour basis, most BSSW agency field instructors work Monday through Friday, regular business hours. The field placement is a supervised placement, so the student must be able to be at the agency during the hours that the agency field instructor is present.

Students who are requesting evening and/or weekend placements are advised to meet with the UT field coordinator early in order to determine whether any placements are available that meet the student's scheduling request. If no such placement is available, the student may need to delay field until a later semester or consider adjusting their work schedule in order to complete field. Even when evening and/or weekend placements are available, students may be required to be available for orientation, training, supervision, and staff meetings during weekday hours. A student who, for any reason, cannot be present at a field placement during days/hours that appropriate learning activities and supervision are available, may not be eligible for placement.

## **6.5 International Placements**

Students who are interested in pursuing an international placement should first advise their UT field coordinator of their interest. The UT field coordinator will refer the student to the Associate Director of Field Education, who will explore potential options and next steps with the student.

Most international field placements are scheduled during the summer term. The college has an affiliation with organizations in Ghana and Kenya to provide field placements.

Other options may be available through the UT Center for Global Engagement. Working with these pre-approved agencies is strongly encouraged, as Field Coordinators may be unable to vet agencies outside of the existing opportunities. Field Coordinators and the Associate Director of Field Education typically need 6 months-1 year to secure new placements abroad. Students completing a field placement in another country will need to complete an International Travel Request through UTK's Programs Abroad Office, the UTCSW practicum study abroad checklist and meet any other requirements.

Students should be aware of the possibility that participation in study abroad field experiences may extend the length of their program. This is typically known prior to departure. However, international contexts are fluid and sometimes present unexpected challenges related to political instability and security concerns. There may also be unanticipated changes in international university settings and course offerings. The Associate Director of Field Education will make every effort to inform students of changes in the host country and/or university in a timely manner, but delays may be unavoidable.

## **6.6 Placement in Employment Setting**

In certain situations, the Council on Social Work Education (CSWE) accreditation policies allow UTCSW students who are employed in a social service agency to count current employment towards field requirements. The organization and the agency field instructor must meet the criteria for field agencies and agency field instructors as outlined in this field manual.

UTCSW students may be eligible to complete an Employment-Based Placement (EBP) if:

1. The student reviews the material on the EBP website link provided in the field planning email, including the faculty-presented video;
2. The student has completed a four-week probationary period at the agency (has been working at the agency for at least 4 weeks); Until a student has been employed at the agency for at least four weeks, an EBP cannot be explored
3. The student completes the EBP field planning application.

If the initial EBP application is approved, the following steps must be completed:

- The student's employment agency signs a memorandum of agreement with the University of Tennessee.
- A qualified BSW/MSW field instructor must be identified at the placement of employment.
- A qualified field instructor should have a degree in social work and a minimum of two years' post degree experience. The field instructor must be available to provide oversight of the student's educational experience at the agency, including required training, documentation, evaluation of the student's progress and weekly supervision. The field instructor can be the student's employment supervisor or another social worker at the agency.
- In some cases, it is possible for an individual with a related degree to be approved as a field instructor. In these circumstances, the student must receive supplemental



supervision from a BSW/MSW. This supplemental supervision should be provided by the agency. In some cases, and based on available resources, UTC SW may be able to provide supplemental supervision if it is not available through the agency.

- The placement supervision must be distinct from the employee evaluation process.
- The student and agency field instructor must remain employed through the field placement. In the event the field instructor separates from the agency, the agency will find a replacement field instructor.
- The student, employment supervisor and agency field instructor must meet with the student's UTK field coordinator to discuss and sign the Employment-Based Placement Plan.
- Student assignments and activities fulfill the learning plan competencies and are linked to the appropriate level of social work practice for the student.
- The student works with the field instructor to complete and submit the confirmation of field form.

**Note:** If the student is the highest-ranking staff member in their organization, then an EBP would not be an appropriate learning environment.

Students are advised to carefully consider any risks to their employment, education, and future employment if they elect to complete a field placement within their employment setting.

For the EBP to be approved by the field coordinator, the following conditions must be met:

1. The student must ensure the timely completion and submission of all the field placement forms.
2. The agency has an up-to-date memorandum of agreement with the University of Tennessee, Knoxville.
3. The agency-based field instructor must complete the UTK College of Social Work field instructor application and orientation or training.

At each point in this process, the Field Coordinator will review the student's documents, make a decision, and communicate about the next steps.

### **Termination or Resignation from an Employment Based Placement:**

Students are advised to carefully consider any risks to their employment, education, and future employment if they elect to complete a field placement within their employment setting. Please note that a disruption in your field placement, including a resignation or termination, is very likely to delay your graduation.

If a student with an Employment Based Placement is terminated from their place of employment, then it is the student's responsibility to contact the UT field coordinator within 24 hours of the decision to discuss next steps.

If a student with an Employment Based Placement wishes to resign from their place of employment, then it is the student's responsibility to contact the UT field coordinator prior to resignation to discuss risks and next steps.

#### **Job offers at Field Placement:**

Occasionally, a student may receive an offer of employment from the placement agency during the field placement. Students who have been at their field agency for at least four weeks are eligible for an Employment Based placement at their agency as part of their current field placement. If this happens, the student needs to contact the Field Coordinator immediately to discuss the risks involved with accepting a paid position at the agency. Additionally, students will be required to follow the steps above for Employment Based placements.

## **6.7 Field Placement with Stipends**

A placement with a student stipend is not considered an Employment based placement and is not subject to the EBP policy. These placements will be vetted through the same process as non- EBP placements.

Students who are interested in stipend-funded placements should consult with their UT field coordinator to determine which agencies may be offering stipends in the relevant academic year. Students are advised that stipend-funded placements are generally limited.

While the College of Social Work encourages agencies to provide stipends, this is something that cannot be guaranteed. Agencies contribute enormously to the student's education by providing free access to learning experiences and supervision. Although students pay for their field courses, none of these funds are given to the field agency.

Student stipends may be given as lump sums, paid on an hourly basis, or provided as reimbursement for mileage. If a student is completing a placement within their employment agency, the student may receive salaried compensation for field activities upon agency approval. Students who are offered stipends should check with the UTK One Stop to see if this could impact on their financial aid.

## **7.0 Pre-Placement Requirements**

### **7.1 Screening Procedure Requirements**

Most organizations require students to undergo additional screening procedures or provide specific health records or legal documents as a condition of placement. The specific background checks, screening procedures, and records requirements are stipulated by the agencies.

Criminal background checks may include fingerprints, online records checks, or local law enforcement background checks. Medical records may include immunization records, proof of health insurance, physical exams, and results of TB skin tests and drug screens. Agencies may require specific immunizations as a condition of placement. Having this

information easily accessible will avoid delays in the start of field placement.

Students are usually required to incur the costs of such procedures. The College of Social Work has a vendor (Castlebranch) that provides online registration and payment for background checks and drug screens. UT field coordinators will share the requirements and costs of screening procedures with students as a part of the placement planning process.

The results of criminal background checks and drug screens may exclude students from specific field placements. Students are encouraged to share with the UT field coordinator any concerns that they may have regarding these requirements during the placement planning process. If, for any reason, a student does not elect to undergo a background check or provide medical records required by a specific placement, the UT field coordinator will work with the student to identify other placement sites that do not have these requirements. However, the College cannot guarantee placement if the results of background checks and other screening procedures exclude students from placement.

Pursuant to the National Child Protection Act of 1993, UTK requires all students completing a placement in K-12 school settings to complete a fingerprint background check. Students in the BSSW program who are placed in Tennessee are presumed to enter the school social work licensure program if they select a field placement in a school setting. All students placed in school settings in Tennessee must adhere to this requirement as outlined in Section 2.3 of this manual. A student in a School-Based placement operates under one of these background checks until they graduate, as long as they are continuously enrolled at UTK. Students who withdraw or stop attending classes will need a new background check. Students who are out of state will have additional steps to take in the School-Based background check process and should be advised that this process can take at least four weeks to complete.

## **7.2 BSSW Intra College Transfer Process**

Any enrolled student who wishes to transfer from one campus to another must have approval. Please note that intra-college transfers are not automatic. These transfers are approved only as space is available and under special circumstances. Requests to transfer mid-academic year are highly discouraged for students who are currently in field placement.

Procedures for requesting an intra-college transfer are as follows:

1. The student must meet with their academic advisor to discuss the feasibility of a transfer and develop a proposed academic plan in the event the transfer is granted.
2. The student completes the BSSW Intra College Transfer Application (see Advisor for application). Students will also be required to attach a copy of the proposed academic plan to the application.
3. The BSSW field team and BSSW Programs Director will review the application and follow-up with the student with any concerns and/or questions.
4. The BSSW Programs Director will communicate the outcome of the transfer to the student, BSSW field team, and academic advisor.

5. Students who are relocating should be aware that availability of a field placement cannot be guaranteed, and therefore they risk a delay in graduation.

## **7.2 Professional Liability Coverage**

Students in field placement can be sued for malpractice. Therefore, participation in a group plan for professional liability coverage is required by the University of all students enrolled in field placement courses. Student Professional Liability Insurance covers liability of students and/or faculty members for the actions of the students while they are engaged in a University of Tennessee directed educational activity relating to their professional field. The professional liability insurance fee is paid each year before beginning the placement experience. The cost of this insurance varies according to the current agreement with the University's insurance carrier. An effort is made to obtain the most economical coverage possible. Students are generally billed annually for this coverage by the University Bursar.

Students are not allowed to begin field placement without paying this fee. This policy provides \$1,000,000 per claim and \$6,000,000 per annual aggregate per student. Students must be registered as a student (enrolled) in order to be eligible to purchase UT professional liability insurance. If a student has a grade of Incomplete for field, they do not have to pay for the field course again in the following semester, but the student must maintain current professional liability insurance coverage. In order to be eligible for the required liability insurance coverage, the student may a) register for an additional social work course or b) register and pay for 1 credit hour of SW 493 Independent Study, and pay.

## **7.3 Personal Safety Training**

All students must participate in the personal safety training provided as they begin their junior field experience. The training includes content on topics such as infectious disease control, sexual harassment, and practical advice to minimize risks to safety at the agency, community and when making home visits. Students should complete the Field Placement Incident Report if any of the following occur during the field placement: personal injuries, including but not limited to, those caused by a client or other person or an animal, harassment or discrimination, or damage to or loss of personal property. There is a Canvas module on Safety and one of the first assignments in junior seminar is a Field Orientation and Safety Discussion Checklist.

## **7.4 Required Pre-Placement Documents**

Each student is required to review and sign the Field Placement Risks and Responsibilities form as part of the Field Placement Application prior to beginning the agency placement.

## **8.0 Procedures during Agency Placement**

### **8.1 Professional Conduct in Field**

The student in the field placement is expected to conduct themselves in a professional and ethical manner and to abide by the policies of the college, the university, and the

field agency. This includes, but is not limited to, the following:

1. Meeting the requirements of the College of Social Work Standards of Professional Conduct (Section 1 of this document)
2. Abiding by the NASW Code of Ethics at (<http://www.socialworkers.org/pubs/code/default.asp>) and as applicable by the International Federation of Social Workers/International Association of Schools of Social Work Ethics in Social Work, Statement of Principles (<https://www.ifsw.org/global-social-work-statement-of-ethical-principles/>) .
3. Protecting the privacy and confidentiality of all clients both in the field agency and the classroom setting. Various laws and regulations such as HIPAA apply within agency settings. Some agencies may require special training in specific policy areas. See HIPAA at: <https://www.hhs.gov/hipaa/index.html>

## **8.2 Orientation to Field Placement**

The UT field coordinator provides an orientation to the field placement for all junior students beginning field. This orientation provides a comprehensive overview of relevant policies and procedures and addresses field practice etiquette and the initial anxieties that many beginning students may feel. The orientation provides ample opportunity to ask questions and hear the questions of fellow students.

## **8.3 Managing and Recording Time in Field**

Students are expected to confirm their placement schedules with their agency field instructors. This schedule must conform to BSSW Program requirements and must be documented on the Confirmation of Field Placement form and approved by the UT field coordinator. Students are expected to follow the agreed-upon schedule except in unusual circumstances, such as illness or inclement weather. Students are prohibited from starting field before the first day of the semester without permission from the UT field coordinator. This may be approved when students need to complete agency orientation or attend training that cannot be completed during the semester. Students are not to engage in client services before the start of the first semester of placement in an agency.

Students are to record their own placement hours as completed on the timesheet in IPT. This time sheet should not be used as a planner--hours are to be documented only after completion. Students are to enter their hours daily, or at least weekly, so that they can be reviewed and approved by the agency field instructor. The agency field instructor's entry of supervision at the end of each week and the agency field instructor signature at the end of the semester signify approval of time documented by the student.

Classroom work should not be completed during field placement and conversely students should not be asked to fulfill field obligations during class time. Field placement does not take precedence over scheduled class times. Field seminar is a required component of field education, and students may have to step away from their practicum to complete in the field seminar. Time spent specifically in field seminar can be counted as field hours with permission of the agency field instructor.

A student who works overtime in field placement for client emergencies or special

projects may arrange with the agency field instructor to take compensatory time off from regularly scheduled field times. Also, some students with part-time jobs or caretaking responsibilities may request flexibility in scheduling for field practice. The college has no objection to any arrangement that provides the necessary learning experiences, meets the required number of field practice hours, is mutually satisfactory to the agency and student, and ensures good services to clients.

Students are entitled to holidays listed on the college calendar which fall on field placement days. However, these holidays do not count as field time and should not be recorded on the student's time sheet as field time. Also, it is critical for students to inform their agency field instructors well in advance of the university holiday schedule to make sure that this can be accommodated by the agency without disruption of the student's educational experience or client services. A student and agency field instructor may agree that the student will attend field on a university holiday and take that holiday time off on a day when the agency is closed for a different holiday.

Each student is responsible for completing the required number of hours for placement. The hours requirement for each field course is listed on the course syllabus. Students who take university or agency holidays or sick leave or miss field days due to inclement weather are required to make up the hours. Students should not record field hours on their time sheets for any days that they were off for holidays, illness, or inclement weather. It is prudent for students and agency field instructors to discuss and plan for these types of agency closures and, if possible, to develop some competency-related activities on the learning plan that can be completed by the student at another location if the agency is closed for a holiday or inclement weather. These hours may be recorded on the student's time sheet upon approval by the agency field instructor when the student has provided sufficient evidence and information regarding activities completed away from the agency.

#### **Students who fall behind in field hours:**

There may be legitimate reasons for a student to fall behind in field hours. Examples include, but are not limited to, documented medical or family emergencies. In these cases, students are to complete the following procedure:

1. Consult with the agency field instructor and field liaison immediately to discuss reason(s) for incomplete hours.
2. Develop a written plan to complete hours by the last day of the semester. The agency field instructor must approve of the plan.
3. Submit the written plan to the field liaison. The field liaison will review and submit the plan to the UT field coordinator for approval. Failure to comply with the approved written plan may result in a failing grade in the field course.

#### **Students who do not complete field hours:**

Failure to complete field hours by the end of the semester may result in a failing grade for the field course. It is important for students to understand that field courses may not be repeated.

In extraordinary circumstances, the UT field coordinator may assign a grade of Incomplete (I).



The criteria for an incomplete grade include the following:

- The student must have completed the majority of field hours, learning plan assignments, and seminar assignments.
- The students' work is satisfactory in all areas.
- The student is unable to complete the hours and/or assignments due to extraordinary circumstances beyond the student's control.

## **8.4 Field Hours Within and Between Semesters**

Each field course requires a specific minimum number of placement hours to be completed over the course of the semester. Students are to consult their course syllabi to confirm the required number of hours for their field course. Students may complete additional hours between semesters upon approval of the agency field instructor and UT field coordinator.

Students are not allowed to begin field before the first day of the semester without permission from the UT field coordinator. This may be approved when students need to complete agency orientation or attend training that cannot be completed during the semester. If an agency requires 40 or more orientation hours before a student begins field, only half of the hours can count towards field hours.

Students are generally expected to be able to take their break between fall and spring semesters of senior field. However, students may be allowed to complete field hours between the fall and spring semesters in order to fulfill professional responsibilities, provide continuity of care, assist with an event that is scheduled between semesters, or to take advantage of special learning opportunities available during that time.

Students will not be allowed to complete their field placement any earlier than two weeks before the end of the semester. Any plan to complete a field placement prior to the last day of the semester must be approved by the agency field instructor and the UT field coordinator.

**The following procedure applies to field hours between semesters:**

- Students who wish to count hours completed during the winter break toward spring semester must submit a completed Request to Earn Field Hours Between Semesters form to the UT field coordinator before the end of fall semester. This request must indicate the number of hours to be applied to the following semester and the schedule for those hours. The request must also indicate which competencies/ activities practice behaviors will be addressed while completing the hours. The proposal to earn hours should be completed in collaboration with the agency field instructor.
- The UT field coordinator will determine whether the request will be approved, including the number of hours approved for carryover to the following semester. The maximum amount of hours to be carried over is 40 hours.

## **8.5 Use of Technology and Social Media in Field**

Students routinely use technology in their academic, field, and personal experiences.

The past few years have yielded exponential growth in the number and type of platforms for online communication. Students use technology in the field setting to manage client records, meet with colleagues, evaluate practice, and research interventions, to name only a few uses. Students are also actively engaging with technology for personal and social relationships, including use of social media, personal blogs, etc.

Although the use of technology has the capacity to greatly enhance professional relationships, organizational function, and learning, students must be aware of the professional and ethical risks of using technology in the field setting.

Students must consider the impact of technology on three critical areas: protection of client and agency privacy and confidentiality, development and maintenance of appropriate boundaries, and development and presentation of the professional self.

Perhaps the most obvious related ethical requirement is to maintain client privacy and confidentiality. This requirement extends to all forms of communication, including the internet. This means that students must be attuned to whether networks are secure when transmitting confidential information. This also means that students must be very careful about the use of personal phones, laptops, tablets, etc. to document or transmit confidential information. In addition to protecting the privacy of clients, students are expected to keep confidential information that they receive regarding the field organization and should refrain from sharing confidential agency information through any medium of communication.

One of the most confusing and difficult aspects of use of technology arises in the area of social media. Although most students originally engage with social media for personal use, they find that most field agencies are deeply engaged in use of social media for outreach, fundraising, public education, etc. Agencies now routinely use Facebook, Twitter, and other venues. This makes it very difficult for students to determine where the line is between personal and professional use of social media.

Most social work students are in the process of identifying, developing and presenting to clients and colleagues a “professional self.” This is an essential part of joining and becoming socialized within a profession. In classes and in field, students are actively learning to identify behaviors that are considered appropriate in a professional context and those which should be expressed only in personal or social contexts. Students must be aware of the fact that they are communicating professionalism or lack of professionalism through their use of technology and social media. This means that students have to carefully consider what they post on social media sites and to whom it will be accessible. Students also must remember that information and photographs transmitted over the internet can never be fully recalled but may remain accessible indefinitely to current or future clients, colleagues, and prospective employers.

Another area of challenge for most students is to determine when it is appropriate to use cell phones and/or other technology for personal use in the professional setting. Many students are accustomed to virtually constant access to and interaction with smart phones and other devices. Students are expected to demonstrate an attentive presence while in field. This is expected whether the student is working directly with clients or meeting with agency staff. Use of personal phones can, at the least, convey lack of



focused attention and, at worst, convey disrespect and disregard for the client.

Given all of these challenges, students are encouraged to talk to their agency field instructors very early in placement to clarify agency policy and receive guidance on ethical and appropriate use of technology in the field setting.

Students are also advised to comply with the following guidelines for use of technology in field:

- Students should determine whether agency staff and/or students are allowed to use social media for personal use during agency hours and follow the agency policy. This includes the use of Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, Snapchat, etc.
- Students should set their social media settings at the highest level to prevent agency clients and staff from accessing the student's personal information.
- Students should never "friend" an agency client on Facebook and should, whenever possible, refrain from "friending" agency staff during the term of placement.
- Students should not post any information about clients or the agency on personal media sites, with one exception. Students may share links to info about agency outreach or development events.
- Students should refrain from use of personal phones during any client contact.
- Whenever possible, students should use only agency computers to manage documentation regarding client contacts and services. If students are expected to use personal laptops or tablets, the student must ensure that the network is secure, and that the information cannot be accessed by anyone who is not authorized to access the information.
- Students who are completing field hours remotely should discuss technology and privacy needs and expectations with the field agency.
- When in doubt about the use of any technology or social media at field, the student should first consult with the agency field instructor.

## **8.6 The Learning Plan**

The BSSW student is an adult learner who is involved from the beginning in planning for the field placement. During the student's orientation to the agency, the agency field instructor and student review the educational competencies, the student's past experiences, career interests, and make plans for assignments. The college requires a written learning plan for each semester. The plan is completed and signed online and may be revised as needed by mutual agreement of the student and agency field instructor. Any revisions can be made to the learning plan when necessary. The completed learning plan is reviewed by the field liaison and UT field coordinator.

BSSW learning plans have all prepopulated assignments on the form, student and field instructor can tailor assignments or add assignments to form. Junior students address competencies 1, 2, 3, 6. Senior first semester students address 1,2,3,4,6,7,8 competencies with the last semester of senior (and Block Senior field) address all 9 competencies.

## **8.7 Health Insurance**

Students are responsible for their own health insurance and for paying all of their own medical expenses, including expenses for treatment of illness or injuries related to field. Some field agencies may require that students document current health insurance coverage. The professional liability insurance does not cover student illness or injuries. Students are not eligible for Workers' Compensation coverage for accidental injury at their agency placements.

## **8.8 Transportation and Vehicle Insurance**

All students are responsible for their own transportation to and from the agency. The use of a vehicle is essential in some placements due to the nature of student assignments and the limited availability of public transportation. Please ensure you have a reliable plan for transportation to and from your field placement. If transportation is a concern for you, this should be communicated to the UT field coordinator. UT field coordinators will try to identify placements that can be accessed by public transportation, but the college cannot guarantee placement for a student who is relying on public transportation for field. Many agencies will pay mileage for travel required to perform agency work.

Students should ask their agency field instructor about mileage reimbursement if they are required to travel as part of their placement experience.

Students should inquire if they will be asked to transport clients as part of their field practicum and should take this information into consideration when interviewing with a placement. If a student is uncomfortable with this responsibility, they should communicate with the agency and UT Field Coordinator before accepting the placement.

Additionally, if a student who has accepted a placement is asked to transport clients is uncomfortable with this responsibility, the student should notify the agency field instructor. If a student is asked to transport clients as a part of their placement, the student should contact their automobile insurance carrier to clarify whether this risk is covered by the student's policy. If this is not covered or would impose additional cost to the student, the student should take this expense into consideration when selecting a placement. A student should never transport a client unless the student has a valid, current driver's license and is confident that their personal vehicle insurance will cover the costs of any accident that may occur.

## **9.0 Evaluation and Grading Procedures**

### **9.1 Evaluation of Student Competency**

An evaluation of each student's progress in meeting the educational competencies for field practice is required at mid-semester and at the end of each academic semester. It is imperative that students thoroughly document throughout the placement the Evidence of Plan Completion on the Learning Plan. The agency field instructor will refer to this evidence when assigning ratings for each practice behavior. Due dates of evaluations can be found on each field practicum syllabus and Canvas. Each student should read and sign the evaluation. Signing the evaluation indicates the student has read it, not that they agree entirely with its contents. The student has the right to appeal rating/s on

evaluation as stated in 9.2 of this document.

Agency field instructors rate student performance on each practice behavior using the scale below. The rating is based on the evidence the student has entered on the learning plan and also on the field and task instructors' observations of the student's performance.

**4 = Advanced Competence** -- Student consistently demonstrates effective integration of knowledge, values, and skills at a more advanced level than would be expected for a student at this point in the BSSW program. Student consistently exceeds performance expectations. Student goes "above and beyond" on assignments and consistently seeks and integrates feedback to enhance competency.

**3 = Competence** - Student demonstrates consistent integration of knowledge, values, and skills at the expected level of performance for a student at this point in the BSSW program. Student is meeting expectations on all assignments and integrates feedback to enhance competency.

**2 = Emerging Competence** - Student demonstrates beginning capacity to integrate knowledge, values, and skills. Student is using feedback to build competency, but performance is not yet at the expected level for where the student is in the BSSW program. In the first semester of placement, a student often receives a rating of 2 on one or more practice behaviors due to insufficient opportunity to practice the skill.

Please note: Students are expected to demonstrate appropriate competence and receive a rating of at least 3 on all practice behaviors by the end of the placement. A rating of 2 should not be assigned to a student on the end of semester evaluation for the final semester of placement unless there are concerns about the student's readiness for graduation and performance as a new professional social worker. If a student earns multiple ratings of 2 on an evaluation, the student and Agency field instructor should discuss and document what is needed for the student to achieve competence and forward the documentation to the UT field coordinator.

**1 = Insufficient Competence** - Student does not demonstrate essential knowledge, values, and/or skills. Student is not completing assignments adequately and is not responding appropriately to feedback. This student may receive a grade of No Credit for field.

## **9.2 Field Placement Grading Policy**

Field courses must be completed with a grade of C or higher and may not be repeated. The grade for each Field Placement course will be based on the end-of-semester field evaluation of the student's performance in the field agency.

In order to earn an "A" in field placement, students must demonstrate Advanced Competence (rating of a 4) on the majority of practice behaviors and all remaining ratings are 3's. The scale is listed on each field practicum syllabus.

Student's grade for field seminar will be based on participation and assignments of each seminar course.

Students also have the right to appeal any rating assigned by the agency field instructor. The following steps include:

- The student must provide evidence that their practice skill or knowledge has been demonstrated at a higher level than reflected by the agency field instructor's rating. The student is to document the appeal and evidence under the End-of-Semester Student Feedback section for the specific competency and practice behaviors.
- The student should indicate what rating they believe is accurate and request that the agency field instructor reevaluate the rating based on the additional documented evidence.
- The Student is to request to the agency field instructor to review their added documentation and reassess the ratings.
- The student is to notify the UT field coordinator of the appeal.
- If the agency field instructor does not reassess the added documentation and if the documentation does equate to a high rating, the Field Coordinator will change the rating/s accordingly.

The grade will be assigned by the UT field coordinator. Undergraduate grades are as follows:

- A 94 - 100
- A- 90 - 93.9
- B+ 86 - 89.9
- B 83 - 85.9
- B- 80 - 82.9
- C+ 76 - 79.9
- C 73 - 75.9
- C- 70 - 72.9
- D 63 - 65.9
- F 59.9 and below

### **9.3 Student Evaluation of Field Placement**

BSSW students are required to evaluate their placement experience each semester. Using the Student Evaluation of Field Placement form, students are encouraged to comment on various aspects of the field placement and make any recommendations for change. The UT field coordinator reviews this information to evaluate the quality of the field agency, agency field instructor and learning assignments. If the student gives permission, the evaluation will be shared with the student's agency field instructor.

Students are also asked to complete anonymous evaluations of their field liaisons and field coordinators. These evaluations are completed online and are used to promote program improvement.

## **9.4 Incompletes in Field**

A grade of incomplete (I) is a temporary grade showing that the student has performed satisfactorily in the course but, due to unforeseen circumstances, has been unable to finish all requirements. The UT field coordinator will determine whether a student is eligible for the grade of Incomplete. The UT field coordinator, in consultation with the student, decides the terms for the removal of the incomplete, including the time limit for removal. If the incomplete is not removed within one calendar year, the grade will automatically be changed to an F grade.

All students are required to have UT's professional liability insurance while in field, and students must be registered as a student (enrolled) in order to be eligible to purchase UT professional liability insurance. If a student has a grade of Incomplete for field, they do not have to pay for the field course again in the following semester, but the student must maintain current professional liability insurance coverage.

In order to be eligible for the required liability insurance coverage, the student may a) register for an additional social work course or b) register and pay for 1 credit hour of SW 493, Independent Study, and pay the insurance fee.

## **10.0 Problems in Field**

### **10.1 Managing Problems in Field**

Managing problems in field placement is an important component of students' professional development. Problems are often related to unsatisfactory progress in student learning, incidents related to ethics or professional standards, or issues with the agency. There are five phases in the field problem solving process. If a student wishes to appeal a decision after going through those five phases, they will follow the college's Academic and Professional Standards problem-solving process. As you review these five phases of field problem-solving, please note:

- Throughout this process, Field Coordinators, Directors, and Liaisons may provide individual processing and consultation as needed.
- As Field Liaisons are adjunct faculty with time restraints, there may be times the Field Coordinator, Director or Asst. Director takes their place in Phases 1-5.
- Agencies and the Field Coordinator have the authority to end a placement at any point in this process.
- Students should remain enrolled in classes while they are engaging in the problem-solving process but should communicate with their advisor about their options.
- If a student is in a situation where they are experiencing serious concerns such as discrimination, bullying, harassment, hostile work environment, etc., the student should notify the Field Liaison and Field Coordinator as soon as possible so that the appropriate steps can be taken.
- Problems in field related to Title IX must follow the policies of the UTK Office of Title IX: <https://titleix.utk.edu/> and Section 10.03 of this field manual. (Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972 prohibits sex and gender discrimination in all programs and activities that receive federal financial assistance.)

- If a student is uncertain about how to best begin addressing a problem/concern, the student may first request a consultation with their field liaison or field coordinator.
- If the student or field educator will not address placement concerns using the outlined process, the UT Field Coordinator will start with Phase 4 in this process.
- If there are concerns related to student mental health or wellness, the UTK Center for Care and Resilience may be engaged online at <https://studentlife.utk.edu/care/> or by calling 865-974-HELP.

#### Phase 1 of the Field Problem-Solving Process:

1. An individual (student or Field Educator) identifies a challenge
2. Student and Field Educator meet to discuss the challenge.
3. Issue is resolved or plan is developed to address the challenge.
4. Resolution, lack of resolution, or plan to address the challenge is documented by person who identified the challenge. If the concern is serious enough, the field educator should document this on the Performance Improvement Plan in IPT.
5. If student & field educator cannot come to resolution, OR if student and/or field educator want consultation regarding the problem, the process will move to Phase 2.

#### Phase 2 of the Field Problem-Solving Process:

1. Individual who identified the challenge reaches out to set a consultation appointment with the field liaison.
2. Student and/or field educator receive coaching from Field Liaison regarding possible solutions.
3. Field educator and student discuss the issue with proposed solutions.
4. Plan is developed to address the challenge.
5. Resolution, lack of resolution, or plan to address the challenge is documented by person who identified the challenge. If the concern is serious enough, this should be documented on the Performance Improvement Plan in IPT.
6. If student & field educator cannot come to resolution, the process will move to Phase 3.

#### Phase 3 of the Field Problem-Solving Process:

1. Person who identified the challenge notifies Field Liaison that issue was not resolved.
2. Field Liaison notifies Field Coordinator and consults as needed.
3. Field Liaison schedules and facilitates a problem-solving meeting between field educator and student. Field Coordinator may also participate.
4. Resolution, lack of resolution or plan to address the challenge is documented in the IPT on the Performance Improvement Plan as instructed on this form. Students must sign off on the Performance Improvement Plan and is encouraged to enter a response.
5. Student documents actions taken to resolve the issue on the Performance Improvement Plan.



6. If participants cannot come to resolution, or if student is removed/dismissed from the field placement, the process will move to Phase 4.

#### Phase 4 of the Field Problem-Solving Process:

1. The student and Field Coordinator meet to see if they can come to resolution on next steps. Next steps may include removal/dismissal from the field placement, a change in placement, a remediation plan, and/or a decision not to re-place the student in field.
2. The Field Coordinator will notify the student of this decision via email within 10 working days of the meeting.
3. If the student wishes to appeal the decision of the Field Coordinator, the process will move to Phase 5.

#### Phase 5 of the Field Problem-Solving Process:

1. The student submits a written request to appeal the Field Coordinator's decision to the Program Director for the student's campus within 10 working days of the notification.
2. The Program Director for that student's campus meets with the Field Coordinator and student in an attempt to resolve the matter.
3. The Program Director will notify the student and Field Coordinator of their decision via email within the 10 working days of the meeting.
4. If the student wishes to appeal the decision of the Program Director, college policy related to the Academic/Professional Standards Committee will be followed as outlined in the BSSW student handbook

## 10.2 Requests to Terminate a Placement

A student may request to terminate a placement if problems/concerns interfere with learning. However, the decision to terminate a placement is only made after all reasonable efforts to resolve the concerns have been exhausted. If a student is in a situation where they are experiencing serious concerns such as discrimination, bullying, harassment, hostile work environment, etc., the student should notify the Field Liaison and Field Coordinator as soon as possible so that appropriate steps can be taken.

Students are not permitted to resign from a field placement without prior approval from the UT field coordinator.

Any student who wants to request termination of placement must first engage in the problem-solving process described in Section 10.01. Following that, a student may submit a written request for placement termination to the UT field coordinator. The request should include in detail the student's concerns about the placement experience and all efforts that have been made to resolve the issues. The field liaison and agency field instructor should be copied on the request for termination. The UT field coordinator will review the student's request and may consult with the agency field instructor and/or the field liaison. The decision to terminate a placement is made by the UT field coordinator.

Termination of a placement may result in a change in the student's program of study

and/or graduation date. The UT field coordinator will review the hours and activities completed by the student in the initial placement to determine whether any of these hours may be carried over to a new placement. However, a new placement agency may require the student to complete the full-term hours as a condition of placement. The student may need to complete additional hours at a new field placement so that adequate orientation and learning opportunities can be ensured.

Students will not begin interviewing for a new placement until after a decision has been made to terminate the existing placement.

### **10.3 Sexual Harassment**

Sexual harassment of students is a violation of Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972 which prohibits sex discrimination in education. Unwelcome sexual advances, requests for sexual favors, and/or other verbal or physical conduct of a sexual nature constitutes sexual harassment when grades or educational progress are made contingent upon submission to such conduct, or when the conduct has the purpose or effect of interfering with the individual's academic performance, or of creating an intimidating, hostile, or offensive educational environment.

Students should follow the procedure below if they experience sexual harassment in their field agency:

1. Contact the UT field coordinator as soon as possible to report this situation and to receive advice on how to proceed. The UT field coordinator will determine whether the student should return to the field setting while the issue is under review.
2. Complete the Field Incident Report form located on the College of Social Work website and submit the completed form to the UT field coordinator ASAP.
3. The UT field coordinator will:
4. Contact the Office of Title IX to complete the mandatory reporter obligations and discuss the next steps listed below.
5. Determine, with the student, whether they feel safe returning to the agency setting. If appropriate, a plan may be developed to assure the student's safety and comfort in the field setting.
6. After review with the Office of Title IX, notify the field faculty liaison who will work with the agency field instructor and/or agency administrator to further assess the situation and to decide on an intervention strategy.
7. As appropriate, confer with the Associate Dean of Access, Belonging, and Global Engagement regarding the situation and the planned strategy for intervention.
8. Determine the status of the student's placement in the agency after a thorough assessment.
9. Make referrals, if needed, to appropriate resources for assisting the student to cope with the situation.

### **10.4 Unsatisfactory Progress in Field**

If a student does not demonstrate satisfactory progress toward competency in field, an agency field instructor has the right to terminate the student's placement at any time.

If students have demonstrated commitment to their own learning, agency field instructors may be willing to give students the opportunity to achieve satisfactory performance. If a student's performance or progress in field is unsatisfactory, and the agency field instructor is willing to continue to work with the student, the field problem-solving process outlined in 10.01 should be initiated.

- If there are concerns that the student may not succeed in placement, there will be meetings as outlined in the field problem-solving process to discuss the concerns and to develop a plan to address the issues regarding student performance. If the agency is willing to proceed with the student, a deadline will be set for demonstrating performance improvement. The student will be informed that failure to meet performance standards may result in dismissal from the agency and/or a failing grade in the field course.
- The student may enter comments on the Performance Improvement Plan and is expected to sign off on the report. The student's signature does not indicate agreement with the concerns, but does indicate an agreement to move forward with the plan for improvement. If the student does not agree to the plan, the student's placement at the agency will be terminated.
- If the student has not demonstrated adequate progress by the designated date, the agency field instructor may decide to terminate the student's placement.
- If the placement is terminated, the agency field instructor should contact the UT field coordinator to request that a Dismissal from Placement form be loaded on the student's page in IPT. The Dismissal from Placement form will be completed and will document reasons for the dismissal. Phase 4 of the field problem-solving process begins at this point.

## **10.5 Dismissal from Placement and Appeal Procedure**

Every field agency must sign an agreement for student placement with the University. The agreements stipulate that the Agency may dismiss from placement any student whose performance or conduct does not justify continuance in field placement at the Agency.

Consequently, any field agency that determines that a student's continuation in placement jeopardizes the quality of client services or agency reputation, or disrupts normal agency operations, may elect to immediately terminate the student's placement. Whenever possible, agency field instructors are asked to contact the field liaison and/or the UT field coordinator before making a decision to dismiss the student to proactively address any concerns about student performance that might lead to termination of placement (See Sections 10.01 and 10.04)

Upon notification by the agency of a student's dismissal, the UT field coordinator will request a Dismissal Form to be completed with documented reasons for the dismissal. The UT field coordinator may contact the agency for additional information and will review all documentation of cause for dismissal.

At this point, Phase 4 of the Field problem-solving process will be initiated, and the UT field coordinator will determine whether the student is A) Eligible for placement in another setting, or B) Not Eligible for placement in another setting.

**A: Students eligible for Re-placement:** If the UT field coordinator determines that the student is eligible for another placement, the following steps will be followed. Please note that it is highly unlikely that the student will be able to begin placement at another agency before the start of the following semester. Consequently, the student will likely receive the grade of Incomplete, and the following procedure will be implemented:

1. The student is to schedule a meeting with the UT field coordinator to initiate placement planning. The UT field coordinator will work with the student to evaluate appropriate options for placement.
2. The UT field coordinator will request that the student sign a Release of Information form so that information about the student's prior field experience and learning needs can be shared with prospective agency field instructors.
3. The UT field coordinator will facilitate an opportunity for the student to interview for another placement. The College cannot guarantee that the student will be accepted by an organization for another placement. It is the student's responsibility to secure placement through a successful interview. Additionally, identifying another agency can take some time and students should be prepared that they may not secure another placement quickly.
4. If the student does not follow these steps or does not meet deadlines, the field coordinator can a) determine that the student is not eligible for re-placement or b) request a meeting of the Academic and Professional Standards committee.

**B: Students Not Eligible for Re-Placement:** If a student's placement is terminated by the agency due to poor student performance, ethics violations, violation of agency policy, or professional misconduct, the UT field coordinator may determine that the student is not eligible for re-placement.

The UT field coordinator will notify the student of this decision via email within 10 working days of the meeting). The student may appeal this decision as outlined in the Managing Problems in this Manual and the Student Handbook. If the UT field coordinator determines that the student is not eligible to interview for another placement or to receive a grade of Incomplete, the student will receive a failing grade for the course at the end of the semester. There will be two pathways for appeal associated with this decision: A) Student may appeal the UT field coordinator's decision to not re-place the student or B) Student may appeal the failing grade once this grade has been entered at the end of the semester.

**A: Appealing Decision not to re-place the student:** The student may appeal the decision by the UT field coordinator not to place the student in another setting by continuing to follow the steps outlined in Managing Problems in Field and in the BSSW student handbook. Students who are following this appeal process should continue attending their BSSW classes, including field seminar, but should consult with their advisor regarding their options.

Students who are participating in the appeal process will not engage in field planning (no interviews, etc) for the next year until after a final decision has been made. This can cause delays in starting field, which could ultimately lead to delays in graduation.

**B: Appealing Final Grade:** Students may appeal the failing grade once that grade is entered at the end of the semester. If the student elects to appeal the failing grade, the student is to follow the grade appeals procedure in the BSSW Student Handbook. Please note the deadlines associated with this appeal process.

## **10.6 Student Removal from a Field Placement**

The UT field coordinator has the authority to withdraw a student from a placement based on concerns about the student's performance, the agency environment, quality and consistency of supervision, or the student's refusal to address concerns about the placement. If a student is removed from a placement by the UT field coordinator due to the student's performance, the problem-solving process will be initiated.

Circumstances in which a student may be removed from a placement include, but are not limited, to the following:

1. Attempts to harm themselves or any client or agency staff person.
2. Is repeatedly absent from field, repeatedly absent without notification, or absent for a period of two weeks for any reason not approved by the UT field coordinator.
3. Has personal or legal hardships that negatively impact their performance in the field placement.
4. Has a physical or mental health challenge, active substance abuse issues, or undocumented disabilities that severely limit the student's effectiveness in the field placement.
5. Consistently performs in a manner that does not meet agency and/or CSW Expectations.
6. Violates the NASW Code of Ethics (depending on nature and severity of the infraction).
7. Fails to maintain confidentiality as mandated by the field agency policy, the NASW Code of Ethics, or HIPAA.
8. Fails to comply with agency policies, procedures, or standards of conduct.

## **10.7 Professional Misconduct**

Students must conduct themselves in a professional and ethical manner toward clients, students, faculty, and agency colleagues. Because membership in a profession implies commitment to an encompassing set of values, professional conduct is expected at all times in any field-related activity. The college subscribes to the NASW Code of Ethics which is discussed in the classroom and in field placements. The college's policy on professional conduct is at the beginning of this manual, and in the BSSW Student Handbook. Each student is required to sign the Student Field Placement Contract before starting field. This contract stipulates the student's understanding of the expectation of professional conduct. Any incident of professional misconduct which is committed during field placement should be documented and submitted to the UT field faculty liaison and/or coordinator in the Field Concerns report, and the field problem solving process should be initiated. If there are concerns related to student mental health or wellness, the UTK Center for Care and Resilience may be engaged online via their website [https:// studentlife.utk.edu/care/](https://studentlife.utk.edu/care/) or by calling 865-974-HELP.

## **10.8 Return to Field after Withdrawal from a Field Course**

If a student withdraws from a field course, the student is required to apply to return to field in another semester. If a student who has previously withdrawn from the course registers without the instructor's permission, the student will be removed from the



course. If a student withdraws from the field course after receiving a substandard evaluation or critical feedback regarding field performance and wishes to return to field in a future semester, the student must request the "Request to Return to Field" form from CSWplacement@utk.edu and submit this form by the deadline. Once this form is submitted, the UT field coordinator will request a meeting of the Academic/Professional Standards (APS) committee to consider the student's eligibility to return to field. The APS Committee will have access to documentation relevant to student performance in the field and may stipulate specific conditions that must be met for the student to be eligible for field, including timeframes for completion. The student may appeal to the Committee decision according to the appeals process detailed in the BSSW Student Handbook and Hilltopics.

If the Academic/Professional Standards committee has approved the student's eligibility to return to field after withdrawal, the student is to notify the appropriate UT field coordinator apply for a field placement. In order to allow for processing and placement planning, the application and statement must be submitted to the UT field coordinator at least 3 months prior to the start of the semester in which the student intends to return to field. Students living in rural areas of Tennessee are encouraged to submit this earlier. The UT field coordinator will request the student complete the current Application for Field Placement. In addition to this application, the student is to attach a statement detailing the circumstances under which they withdrew from field and how the circumstances have been addressed. If the student withdrew after receiving a substandard evaluation or critical feedback regarding field performance, the student should detail any actions taken to address performance concerns. If the Academic/ Professional Standards Committee stipulated any conditions that must be met for return to field, the student must submit evidence of completion of requirements to the Advisor for approval by the Committee.

### **10.9 Eligibility for Field Placement While Appealing Program Dismissal**

A student who receives a final grade of a C- or below in any required social work field course will be dismissed from the BSSW program. If the student elects to appeal the grade and subsequent dismissal, the student will be permitted to commence or return to field while pursuing the appeal, as long as the field agency approves, and they are registered for field. If the student's grade appeal is denied, the student may not return to field and would be required to withdraw from current social work classes.



