



THE UNIVERSITY OF  
**TENNESSEE**  
KNOXVILLE

---

COLLEGE OF SOCIAL WORK

**2023-2024**  
**MSSW Field Practice Manual**

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# 1.0 MSSW Program Mission, Goals, and Curriculum

## 1.1 Program Mission and Goals

The mission of the MSSW Program is to educate students for culturally relevant and ethically sound social work practice within a changing global context affecting social work practice. Sensitivity to the personal, social, economic, and political needs of vulnerable, high-risk populations is emphasized within a person in environment perspective. In accordance with the NASW Code of Ethics, importance is placed on client empowerment, individual and political advocacy for greater social and economic justice and challenging the oppression of diverse and vulnerable populations. Both the creation and dissemination of evidence-based knowledge are held to be essential. Critical thinking skills and the ability to evaluate social work knowledge to guide practice as well as the ability to evaluate one's own social work practice are emphasized. Student development of a positive professional identification and appreciation of the professional role is fostered to effectively engage, assess, and intervene with individuals, families, groups, organizations, communities, and societies.

The MSSW program goals are as follows:

1. Graduates will apply advanced critical thinking skills in collaboration with and on behalf of individuals, families, groups, organizations, communities and societies
2. Graduates will practice in accordance with social work values and ethics.
3. Graduates will practice in a culturally affirming manner that promotes social and economic justice with diverse populations as expressed through age, class, culture, disability, ethnicity, family structure, gender, relational status, national origin, race, religion, and sexual orientation.
4. Graduates will evaluate, synthesize, and apply the best available research, knowledge, and skills for practice in collaboration with and on behalf of individuals, families, groups, organizations, communities, and societies.

## 1.2 Commitment to Cultural Diversity and Social Justice

### ***University of Tennessee College of Social Work Diversity Statement***

*The College of Social Work and the University of Tennessee welcome and honor all people. In accordance with the U.S. National Association of Social Workers (NASW) and the U.S. Council on Social Work Education (CSWE 2022 Educational Policy and Accreditation Standards), "the dimensions of diversity are understood as "the intersectionality of multiple factors including but not limited to age, caste, class, color, culture, disability and ability, ethnicity, gender, gender identity and expression, generational status, immigration status, legal status, marital status, political ideology, race, nationality, religion and spirituality, sex, sexual orientation, and tribal sovereign status. The College values intellectual curiosity, pursuit of knowledge, and academic freedom and integrity. "Social workers understand that this intersectionality means that a person's life experiences may include oppression, poverty, marginalization, and alienation as well as privilege and power. Social workers understand the societal and historical roots of social and racial injustices and the forms and mechanisms of oppression and discrimination. Social workers understand cultural humility and recognize the extent to which a culture's structures and values, including social, economic, political, racial, technological, and cultural exclusions, may create privilege and power resulting in systemic oppression." (CSWE 2022 Educational Policy and Accreditation Standards). The College of Social Work promotes social justice and social change, and strives to end discrimination, oppression, poverty, and other forms of social injustice.*

Please refer to the NASW Standards for Culturally Competent Practice for more information. <https://www.socialworkers.org/LinkClick.aspx?fileticket=7dVckZAYUmk%3D&portalid=0>

### 1.3 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 requirements that students must meet to assure 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. Attention to these standards will be part of evaluations made by faculty responsible for evaluating students' field 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 them 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.
- Valuing Diversity. The social work student appreciates the value of human diversity. Social work students do not impose their own personal, religious, sexual, and/or cultural values on other students, faculty, staff, clients or professionals. Social work students are willing to serve in an appropriate manner all persons in need of assistance, regardless of the person's age, class, race, religious affiliation (or lack of), gender, disability, sexual orientation and/or value system.

The following list provides examples, but is not exhaustive, of professional misconduct:

- Misuse, alteration, or falsification of documents, including learning plans and time-sheets.
- Unauthorized or improper use of University equipment, services and facilities
- Harassing, coercing, and intimidating behavior
- Obstruction or disruption of teaching
- Failure to comply with an order from a legitimate university authority and failure to attend required meetings called by university faculty or administration
- Threatening behavior and verbal abuse
- Inappropriate relationships
- Inability to secure, sustain, or perform satisfactorily in a field placement
- Other behaviors determined to be unprofessional conduct towards colleagues, faculty, staff and/or clients.

## **1.4 Programs of Study**

Students are admitted to the full-time, extended study, or advanced standing program of study. The admissions and degree requirements are the same for full-time and extended study students. It is strongly recommended that applicants who will be employed more than 20 hours per week select one of the part time program options.

### **Advanced Standing Program**

Advanced standing students complete the MSSW program (37 semester hours) on a full-time or part-time basis beginning in the summer term. Full-time advanced standing students complete the program in 3 semesters. Part-time advanced standing students generally complete the program in 5 to 6 semesters. These students only complete the concentration year field practicum.

### **Full-time Program**

The full-time program of study begins in the fall semester. Students complete the full-time program (60 semester hours) in two years, or four (4) semesters of full-time study. They complete two field placements. They complete their first placement as part of the generalist curriculum during the first year and their second placement as part of the concentration curriculum in the second year.

### **Extended Study Program**

The extended study program (60 semester hours) allows students to complete the MSSW degree in three or four years depending on individual needs. The program begins in the fall semester. Students generally take two years to complete the generalist coursework and field and one or two years to complete the concentration coursework and field. The generalist coursework and field must be completed before beginning the concentration coursework and field. These students will complete both a generalist and concentration field placement as outlined in their program of study.

### **Locations**

All three programs of study are offered on the Knoxville and Nashville campuses and through the Online MSSW Program. The online program and the Nashville hybrid program is designed to accommodate students who work and/or have obligations that prohibit attendance of courses through a traditional, face-to-face program. Field sites are secured within the student's geographic location.

## **1.5 Curriculum Overview**

All students are expected to develop their program of study with their Advisor. This will ensure that the appropriate sequence of courses is followed.

The MSSW curriculum is grounded in the following CSWE EPAS 2015 core competencies:

**Competency 1** – Demonstrate Ethical and Professional Behavior

**Competency 2** – Engage Diversity and Difference in Practice

**Competency 3** – Advance Human Rights and Social, Economic,  
and Environmental Justice

**Competency 4** – Engage In Practice-informed Research and Research-informed Practice

**Competency 5** – Engage in Policy Practice

Competency 6 - Engage with Individuals, Families, Groups, Organizations, and Communities

Competency 7 - Assess Individuals, Families, Groups, Organizations, and Communities

Competency 8 - Intervene with Individuals, Families, Groups, Organizations, and Communities

Competency 9 - Evaluate Practice with Individuals, Families, Groups, Organizations, and Communities

### Generalist Curriculum

The generalist curriculum for full-time and extended study students consists of 24 credit hours of course work and 6 credit hours of field instruction. It is completed by full-time students during the first year of study and by extended study students during the first two years of study.

The MSSW generalist curriculum is comprised of the following courses:

SW 503 - Intro to Interpersonal SW Practice (3)

SW 504 - Interpersonal SW Skills Lab (3)

SW 511 - Intro to Macro SW Practice (3)

SW 515 - HDC: Pre-Natal through Adolescence (3)

SW 510 - Social Welfare Policy and Programs (3)

SW 516 - HDC: Young Adulthood through Older Adulthood (3)

SW 519 - Foundations of Social Work Research (3)

SW 538 -Social Justice and Anti-oppressive Practices (3)

SW 542, 544 Generalist Field Practice I & II (6 total credit hours)

Total.....30 credit hrs.

### Concentration Curriculum

Students must select a concentration in Clinical Practice or Organizational Leadership. The concentration curriculum consists of 12 credit hours of field instruction and a minimum of 18 credit hours of course work.

The Clinical Practice concentration prepares students for advanced direct social work practice with individuals, groups, and families representing diverse populations. Students develop competencies in advanced assessment, relationship building and enhancement, application of evidence- based interventions, evaluation of practice, and life-long professional development. Potential areas of practice include mental health, child welfare, substance abuse, schools, health care, and other settings providing direct services.

The course requirements are as follows:

SW 560 - Interpersonal Practice with Groups (3 credit hours)

SW 562 - Interpersonal Practice with Adult Individuals (3)

SW 563 - Assessment & Evaluation of Interpersonal Practice (3)



SW 565 – Clinical Assessment, Diagnosis & Formulation in Behavioral Health (3)  
 SW 584 or 586 Concentration Field (total of 12 credit hours)  
 Two SW Electives (6)  
 Total.....30 credit hrs.

The Organizational Leadership concentration prepares students to provide leadership in human service organizations. Students develop competencies in leading and managing programs and organizations, financial management, use of information technology, grant writing, program development and evaluation, advanced policy analysis and advocacy strategies. Graduates will be prepared to work in a variety of settings including varieties of human service agencies, schools, health care facilities, governmental entities, quasi-governmental entities, generalists, funding and membership nonprofits, and policy analysis and advocacy positions.

The course requirements are as follows:

SW 545 Resource Development and Management (3)  
 SW 547 Advanced Organizational Theory and Practice (3)  
 SW 548 Advanced Change Management & Policy Practice (3)  
 SW 549 Program Development & Continuous Improvement (3)  
 SW 584 or 586 Concentration Field (total of 12 credit hours)  
 Two SW Electives (6)  
 Total.....30 credit hrs.

## 1.6 Certificate Programs

Students may elect to complete a certificate program as a part of their course of study. Certificate programs are optional and represent the opportunity for a student to focus on services to a specific population or within a specific field of practice. The certificates that are currently offered include: Gerontology, Treatment of Trauma, Forensic Social Work, and Veterinary Social Work. Each certificate program has an application process and includes specific coursework and field components. Student learning plans should include assignments that reflect the certificate program topic area. More information can be found on the college's website: <https://www.csw.utk.edu/certificate-programs-available/>. Please check with the Chair of the Certificate program you are interested in for more information.

1. Please note that field learning plan assignments are only one component of the certificate programs. Students should comply with all certificate program requirements. Students should familiarize themselves with the field-related components of the certificate program they plan to complete.

Trauma Certificate (must be concentration placement)

12 credit hours (concentration field placement) in a MSSW field placement where student learning plans will include assignments related to trauma.

Veterinary Social Work Certificate (must be concentration placement)

12 credit hours (concentration field placement) in a MSSW field placement where



student learning plans will include assignments related to veterinary social work.

Gerontology Certificate (may be foundation or concentration placement)

At least 6 credit hours (generalist or concentration placement) in a MSSW field placement where student learning plans will include assignments related to the field of gerontology.

Forensic Social Work Certificate (may be foundation or concentration placement)

At least 6 credit hours (generalist or concentration placement) in a MSSW field placement where student learning plans will include assignments related to forensic social work.

\*Note: there are non-field generalist course requirements associated with the Forensic Certificate. Full time/extended study students who did not take those generalist course requirements will not be eligible for the Forensic Social Work Certificate.

2. Students should notify their Field Coordinator of their intent to complete a specific certificate program on the Field Planning application, and work with the Field Coordinator to identify and discuss field placement options.
3. During field placement interviews, students must inform each prospective field instructor of their participation in the certificate program and discuss if/how the student will be able to complete some assignments related to the certificate on their learning plans.

Remember: the agency may not be specifically focused on the certificate program but may still qualify if they are willing to allow the student to work on certificate-related assignments

4. After securing a placement, students must submit the completed Confirmation of Field Placement form to the UT field coordinator for approval. On that form, students must check which certificate program they have been accepted to.
5. When students develop the field Learning Plan in IPT with their Agency field instructor at the beginning of the semester, they must have assignments that are specific to the certificate program entered into their field Learning Plan. (Note: Students in the VSW Certificate Program must refer to the VSW Certificate Competency Rubric to identify learning activities for their field Learning Plans.)
6. Students are to document completion of certificate learning activities in their Learning Plan in IPT in the column titled Evidence of Plan Completion.
7. Students must receive a competency rating of at least 3 on each of the Practice Behaviors related to the certificate program in order to satisfactorily complete field requirements for their certificate program.

## **1.7 School Social Work Licensure Requirements**

While not a certificate program, 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 MSSW 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.

## **2.0 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, 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 humane and equitable social services, to the development of professional knowledge, and to the creation of a more just society.

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 a 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 Generalist Placement and Seminar**

The generalist placement consists of a seminar for processing field experiences and the Field Placement. Generalist seminar begins at the start of the fall semester, and the generalist field placement begins in mid-September. Please see the field calendar in your field Canvas site for more details.

The focus of generalist seminar is the development and demonstration of professionalism and the integration of learning from courses with professional practice in the field placement setting. The field seminar meets for the duration of both semesters. It orients students to field education and policies and focuses on skills, competencies, and knowledge for functioning within an agency. The seminar includes an integration of field competencies with field practice and includes topics such as professionalism and professional relationships, safety in field, making the most of supervision, legal and ethical issues, and anti-racist social work practice. Seminar will also provide an opportunity for students to receive supplemental supervision and support related to their placement. It provides an arena where students can share their concerns, achievements, impressions, and experiences with each other as they move into the role of MSSW student.

If a student is unable to complete the fall generalist field course, the student will wait until the following fall to begin the generalist field placement as the pre-placement seminar is only offered in the fall semester and the spring learning plan builds upon the fall learning plan.

The generalist placement is generally scheduled for two days each week during the fall and spring semesters. Generalist students are required to complete a minimum total of 400 placement hours for the generalist year. During the fall semester, students in generalist field must complete a minimum of 160 placement hours along with all requirements for the field seminar. Students may complete up to 200 placement hours prior to the start of the spring semester, including a maximum of 40 hours completed during the winter break. Students return to their generalist field placement at the start of the spring semester. Students should expect to complete 240 hours in the spring, for a grand total of 400 hours. In addition to the hours requirement, students must complete assignments to address all competencies and practice behaviors and complete field seminar requirements.

Generalist field placements are designed to provide students with supervised generalist practice experience, which is consistent with the generalist knowledge and skill development education experience they receive in the classroom.

## **2.3 Concentration Placement and Seminar**

Concentration field consists of a 600-hour field placement focused in the student's area of concentration (Organizational Leadership or Clinical Practice) and the concentration field placement. The focus of concentration seminar is the continued development and demonstration of professionalism and the integration of learning from courses with professional practice in the field placement setting. The field seminar meets for the duration of both semesters and focuses on the integration of field competencies with field practice. Please see your concentration field Canvas site for the field calendar and seminar dates/times. The seminar provides an arena where students can share their concerns, achievements, impressions, and experiences with each other as they transition into the role of professional social worker.

### Full-time Students

Full-time students in the two-year program of study begin the concentration placement in the fall after completion of all generalist course work, including generalist field. Full-time advanced standing students begin the concentration placement in the fall after completion of required summer coursework. It is strongly recommended that applicants who will be employed more than 20 hours per week select one of the part time program options.

Full-time students are in concentration field practice for two semesters, fall and spring. Students must complete a total of 12 credit hours and 600 clock hours in concentration field or 300 clock hours per semester. On occasion, full-time students may request the option to extend field over three semesters. Full-time students who are requesting to extend field over three semesters must seek the approval of the UT Field Coordinator. One or more of the following criteria are used in evaluating a full-time student request to extend field practice over more than 2 semesters.

1. The student has a circumstance that makes completing the number of hours in two semesters very difficult.
2. A field placement is available that enables the student to meet the learning competencies of the concentration placement and that can accommodate the specific scheduling needs of the student. The agency field instructor must be willing to allow the student to extend the placement over three semesters.
3. The agency or agency field instructor strongly prefers the student to extend the placement over three semesters given the nature of the field assignments.

Additionally, there must be resources available to provide liaison support over the additional semester.

### Extended Study and Part-time Advanced Standing

Extended Study and part-time Advanced Standing students must also complete a total of 12 credit hours and 600 clock hours in concentration field and must develop a plan for completion of the concentration field placement with their UT field coordinator. The Program of Study for Extended study/PTAS students reflects that they complete concentration field over three semesters, generally beginning in the summer after completion of all generalist coursework. Exceptions to this Program of Study must be approved by the student's Advisor and UT Field Coordinator.

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

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

The Director of Field Education is responsible for oversight of field education in all College of Social Work programs. The responsibilities for this position are to:

1. Assure congruence between the College of Social Work 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 and MSSW students.
5. Serve as the lead point of contact on UT Knoxville campus-based placements.
6. 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. Lead and evaluate special projects to enhance the field curriculum.

### **3.3 UT Field Coordinator**

The UT Field Coordinator is administratively responsible for the oversight of the field placement for the students enrolled in the campus or 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 effective partnerships with field agencies and agency 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 liaisons and/or 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 when a grade of "No Credit" is 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 certification training program for agency field instructors and other training as needed.
9. Provide an orientation to field education for all incoming students.
10. Plan, deliver or coordinate personal safety training for students.
11. Coordinate and/or deliver the field seminar for generalist students.
12. Assign student grades upon review of student competency evaluations and with recommendation from the field liaison.

### **3.4 UTCSW Field Faculty Liaison (FFL) for Generalist Students**

The Field Faculty Liaison fulfills the dual roles of 1) field liaison and 2) seminar instructor for generalist 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 UTCSW field policies. The seminar instructor role includes developing and implementing a process-oriented online 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.

#### **FFL Liaison Responsibilities:**

1. Initiate and maintain ongoing contact with assigned students and agency field instructors through email, phone, and videoconferencing according to the Field Liaison Protocol timelines.
2. 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.
3. 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.



4. Review, approve, and sign all assigned student learning plans, evaluations, and time-sheets in IPT. If needed, initiate contacts with students to give feedback on quality of evidence entered Communicate within 24 hours with the student's UT field coordinator regarding any evaluation ratings below 2 in the fall semester or below 3 in the spring semester.
5. Provide agency field instructors with field policy, academic curriculum information, access to an interpretation of current course content and syllabi, as needed.
6. 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.
7. 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 joint meetings as needed as outlined in the problem-solving steps.
8. Report to the Field Coordinator as needed related to progress of students in placement and any problems encountered.
9. Assess the quality of placement experiences and make recommendations to the UT Field Coordinator about retention of agency placement sites.

#### FFL Seminar Instructor Responsibilities:

1. Plan and facilitate a process-orientated online seminar for generalist MSSW 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 knowledge of and skills for online teaching and training, including effective use of Zoom and other technology platforms, as needed.
3. Develop and implement didactic and experiential learning activities to deepen student understanding of field competences and to enable them to process field experiences.
4. Provide individual consultation and support for students and agency field instructors.
5. Consult with Field Coordinator as needed.

### **3.5 UTCSW Field Liaison for Concentration Students**

The field liaison serves as liaison between the agency and the College for concentration students. The liaison acts as an educational consultant for the agency field instructor and the student and, when necessary, provides a mediating or problem-solving function in the student's field education. The liaison's responsibilities are to:

1. Initiate and maintain ongoing contact with assigned students and agency field instructors through email, phone, and videoconferencing according to the Field Liaison Protocol timelines.
2. 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.
3. 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.



4. Review, approve, and sign all assigned student learning plans, evaluations, and time-sheets in IPT. If needed, initiate contacts with students to give feedback on quality of evidence entered. Communicate within 24 hours with the student's UT field coordinator regarding any evaluation ratings below 2 in the fall semester or below 3 in the spring semester.
5. Provide agency field instructors with field policy, academic curriculum information, access to an interpretation of current course content and syllabi, as needed.
6. 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.
7. 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 joint meetings as needed as outlined in the problem-solving steps.
8. Report to the Field Coordinator as needed related to progress of students in placement and any problems encountered.
9. Assess the quality of placement experiences and make recommendations to the UT Field Coordinator about retention of agency placement sites.

### **3.6 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 an educator and a role model 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 the educational competencies for the placement and that take into consideration as much as possible the student's experience, learning styles, career goals, strengths and unique learning needs.
2. Provides an orientation to the agency.
3. Informs relevant agency staff about the MSSW program and the student's role in the agency.
4. Oversees development of the student's learning plan with input from the student and, as needed, field liaison.
5. Meets at least one hour each week with the student for an educationally focused supervision.
6. Reviews and signs student field placement time-sheet.
7. Contacts the field liaison, if consultation or assistance is needed, and participates in regularly held semester meetings with the liaison and student.
8. Assesses the student's progress on a regular basis and completes all evaluation instruments in a timely manner.
9. Participates in agency field instructor certification training and in other opportunities for college-agency exchange.
10. Contributes knowledge and suggestions to the college for updating the field placement and/or master's curriculum.

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

### **3.7 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 may provide direct daily supervision of the student’s learning activities. The task instructor does not replace the field instructor but is expected to be well informed of the college’s educational plan and understand their role in the student’s learning plan. 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.

### **3.8 Supplemental Supervisor**

A Supplemental supervisor is a MSSW who provides ongoing 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.

### **3.9 Student**

The student is expected to be an active adult learner with a commitment to and investment in preparation for a career in the profession of social work. The expectations for the knowledge, values, and skills that students must acquire in field practice are specified in detail in the College’s educational competencies for each placement. 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 interview. Professional presentation includes all forms of communication in scheduling and completing the interview.
2. Participate with the agency field instructor in examining the educational competencies and practice behaviors and developing learning assignments for the field placement.
3. Demonstrate the professional use of supervision by preparing for the weekly supervisory meeting, taking initiative to raise questions for discussion and demonstrating application of theory to practice.
4. Demonstrate professional behavior at all agency meetings and functions and in all interactions with agency staff.
5. Engage actively in the evaluation process by seeking ongoing feedback from the agency field instructor and participating in all formal evaluations.
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 agency clients in a confidential matter.
8. Abide by agency policies regarding practice activities, dress codes, working hours, inclement weather, 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 time-sheet.
10. Report absences to the agency field instructor in advance when possible and make arrangements with the agency field instructor to make up any lost hours in a timely manner.
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 for 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 the placement.
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. Read and abide by the College of Social Work Standards of Professional Conduct.

### **3.10 Advisor**

Each entering student is assigned an advisor who helps the student plan a course of study and is available to the student if problems arise. The Advisor may be notified by the UT field coordinator when the student is doing less than satisfactory work in field. Students who experience problems in field practice may seek consultation from their Advisor in addition to their 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 MSSW 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 MSSW 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 information form, the 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 MSSW 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 and/or concentration 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 generalist or one of the concentrations.
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 criteria are used for field agency selection:

1. The agency's mission is consistent with the values and ethics of the social work profession.
2. Learning experiences available to students are consistent with the required competencies and practice behaviors of the generalist and/or concentration field courses.
3. A variety of learning experiences appropriate for MSSW students is available.
4. The agency is able to provide a field instructor who holds an MSSW Degree from a CSWE accredited program with two years of post-master's social work practice experience.
5. There are rare situations where an otherwise qualified agency cannot provide a qualified MSSW to serve as field instructor. In those situations, agencies may still be approved if one of the following criteria can be met:
  - a) 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 MSSW through resources such as field seminar, adjunct MSSW supervisors and/or volunteer MSSW supervisors.
  - b) 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.
6. The agency is able to provide the student with the necessary physical resources for the learning experiences, e.g., work space and supplies, etc.

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

The College of Social Work values the work of the agency field instructor. Persons serving as agency field instructors are expected to be committed to the education of students, and to providing an educationally directed field experience for their students. Agency field instructors will need to have some 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 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 MSSW from a CSWE-accredited program and two years post master's social work practice experience. Supervisory and/or teaching experience is preferred. There are rare situations where an otherwise qualified agency cannot provide a qualified MSSW to serve as field instructor. In those situations, agencies may still be approved if one of the following criteria can be met:
  - a) 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 MSSW through resources such as field seminar, adjunct MSSW supervisors and/or volunteer MSSW supervisors.
  - b) 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.
2. The agency field instructor must be committed to master's level social work education and be willing to supervise students with diverse learning needs.
3. The agency field instructor must be available to the student while in placement and able to devote adequate time for supervision. Students are to receive one hour of supervision per week.
4. 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.
5. The agency field instructor must be willing to complete agency field instructor orientation and training.

### **5.2 Agency Field Instructor Orientation**

Prospective agency field instructors receive an overview of field education at UTK, information about the agency field instructor training, and the curriculum from the UT field coordinator at the initial contact. Whenever possible, new agency field instructors complete agency field instructor training prior to commencing work with a student. If this is not possible, the agency field instructor may complete the online orientation program. 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.



## 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: MSSW curriculum, student orientation to field, adult learning and teaching strategies, evaluating students, culturally sensitive practice in the field, legal and ethical issues, dealing with challenging student situations, risk management, evidence-based practice and integration of theory and practice.

Agency field instructor training is available in an online format and in person on the Nashville and Knoxville campuses. Each year one or more additional training sessions are offered to agency field instructors. Agency field instructors receive certificates for the training, which can be used for continuing education requirements in Tennessee. The UT field coordinators also make themselves available to conduct orientation and training at the field site when necessary or requested by a particular agency.

## 6.0 Placement Selection 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. The UT field coordinator will send this application to student when it is time to begin the field planning process. 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

Generalist and concentration 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 who live in other states may be asked to provide information about agencies in their communities who may provide placement. Field placements are selected through a joint process involving the student, the UT field coordinator, and personnel from potential placement sites. Generalist students generally interview at only one site, while concentration students may interview at up to three sites, depending on location and availability.

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. Each student completes a Field Placement Application for the generalist and/or concentration 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.
2. 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.
3. Students are required to follow the Field Planning Protocol checklist that their assigned UT field coordinator will share with them.
4. The UT field coordinator engages with the prospective placement sites to assure they can provide placements that meet the college's requirements.
5. Student interview(s) are scheduled with agency field instructors in order to explore the match between the student's interests and needs and what the agency can provide.
6. Students and prospective agency field instructors are expected to contact the UT field coordinator to report on the status and outcome of interviews. Agency field instructors may notify the UT field coordinator or the student as to whether the student has been offered a placement.
7. Once a placement has been accepted, students are to submit to the completed Confirmation of Field Placement form for approval. Students are expected to submit the completed and signed Confirmation of Field Placement 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.

***Please note: 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 agencies to schedule interviews within 2 business days of receiving instructions to do so from the UT field coordinator. Failure to schedule an interview in a timely manner can result 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 interviews, 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 may 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 variety 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 MSSW 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. Students are responsible for adhering to professional standards, including, but not limited to, 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.

The UT field coordinator will assist generalist students in securing one interview and the concentration students with up to three interviews, depending on location and availability. Please note that the student's geographic location, their proximity to other MSW/MSSW 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 three agencies, the UT field coordinator will seek feedback from the agency representatives regarding the results of the student's interviews. The UT field coordinator will meet with the student to discuss the outcome of the interviews and to provide the student with feedback.

Based on the feedback from the agencies, the student may be referred to the University of Tennessee Center for Career Development for additional training and consultation. If concerns were identified from interviews, the UT field coordinator may begin implementing the college's Academic and Professional Standards problem-solving process to determine the student's readiness for field and make recommendations. 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 would prevent the student from progressing through the MSSW program.

If after completing all scheduled interviews, a student declines all offered placements, the UT field coordinator will first finish facilitating placement interviews for all other students and then contact the student to discuss alternatives. This is likely to lead to a delay in starting the field placement.

## **6.3 Evening and Weekend Placements**

As was outlined in the MSSW application process, very few opportunities exist 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 there are some organizations that serve clients 24 hours a day, seven days a week, the social work staff usually works during normal daytime business hours. If students can only complete their field placement during evening and weekend hours, they will likely be unable to complete the MSSW program. The field placement is a supervised practicum, so the student must be able to be at the agency during 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.

## **6.4 Placement in Employment Setting**

Some students may be working in social service agencies and request a field placement in their place of employment. New Council on Social Work Education (CSWE) accreditation policies allow UTCSW students 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:

- The student has completed a four-week probationary period at the agency (has been working at the agency for at least 4 weeks);
- There is a trained social worker who meets the qualifications to serve as the student's field education supervisor;
- Supervision process for field education is distinct from employee evaluation process;
- The student and agency field instructor remain employed at the agency during the time of the field placement;
- The student's employment agency is able to sign an agency affiliation agreement with UTK;
- The employment supervisor and agency Field Instructor meet with the student's field coordinator and sign off on an Employment-Based Learning Plan and Agreement; and
- Student assignments and activities fulfill CSWE learning objectives, learning plan competencies, and are linked to the appropriate level of social work practice for the student.

**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.

If a student wants to pursue this option, the following conditions must be met:

1. Student watches the EBP video or attends an EBP information session to see if they may qualify to apply for an EBP
2. Student has completed a 4-week probationary period at their place of employment (has been working at the agency for at least 4 weeks). Until a student has completed this probationary period, and EBP cannot be explored.
3. Student completes an Employment Based Placement Field Planning Application. If the application is approved, the student will need to meet additional requirements below.
  - a) Identify an MSW Field Instructor at the place of employment: A qualified Field Instructor should have a master's degree in social work and at least two years' post-MSW experience. The Field Instructor must be available to provide oversight of the student's educational experience at the agency, including required documentation, evaluation of student progress and weekly supervision. This Field Instructor can be the same person as the student's employment supervisor, but the weekly field supervision should be separate from employment supervision. If the Field Instructor has a related degree (Not an MSW) the student must receive supplemental supervision twice a month from a master's level social worker. This supplemental supervision should be provided by the agency. In some cases and based on availability of resources, UTC SW may be able to provide supplemental supervision if there is no MSW at the agency.
  - b) Meet with Field Coordinator: The student, agency-based field instructor and employment supervisor (if different) must meet with the Field Coordinator to discuss the requirements for and risks of an employment-based placement, and next steps. It is the student's responsibility to notify the agency-based Field Instructor and Employment Supervisor that this meeting needs to occur, coordinate a date and time that they are all available to meet, and to schedule time with the Field Coordinator.
  - c) Complete an Employment Based Placement Plan/Agreement: The student, agency Field Instructor & Employment supervisor (if different) must complete, sign and submit the "Employment Based Placement Field Plan/Agreement" form to the Field Coordinator.
  - d) Complete Confirmation of Field form: The student and agency Field Instructor complete, sign and submit the Confirmation of Field form to the Field Coordinator.

Once a student accepts a field placement and completes the confirmation of field form, they have made a commitment to the agency and are expected to stay at the field placement unless there are serious challenges that cannot be resolved through the problem-solving process. UTC SW ensures that students are supported through field planning process to obtain a field placement to fulfill their course requirement. There is no guarantee that a student will receive employment or a stipend-based placement through field.

For the Employment-Based Placement Plan/Agreement to be approved by the Field Coordinator:

1. The student must ensure timely completion and submission of all Field Placement Forms to Field Coordinator.
2. The agency must complete a Memorandum of Agreement. The agency must sign a Memorandum of Agreement with the University of Tennessee, Knoxville if they do not have a current Memorandum of Agreement.
3. The Field Instructor must complete Field Instructor Training. The agency-based field instructor must complete the UTK College of Social Work Field Instructor training if they have not done previously. This training is offered in person in Nashville and in Knoxville and live on zoom. A recorded version is also available.

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

#### Stipends for Field Placements:

A placement with a student stipend is not considered an Employment based placement and is not subject to 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 and very competitive.

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 their financial aid.

## **6.5 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://sds.utk.edu/> or (865) 974-6087) or [sds@utk.edu](mailto:sds@utk.edu).

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 approved accommodations are needed at a particular 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.

## **6.6 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 start with 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 an organization in Ghana 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 on the Center for Global Engagement website and meet any other requirements. The Center for Global Engagement can assist MSSW students with necessary travel visa and vaccinations and may provide a pre-departure training for students.

Students should be aware of the possibility that participation in international 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.

## **6.7 Block Placements**

A student who has serious extenuating circumstances may request to complete a placement on a block basis. This may mean that the student is completing an entire placement in one semester or that the student needs to complete more than the usual number of placement and credit hours in one semester. This plan is an exception to the curriculum structure and requires prior approval by the UT field coordinator and Advisor. Because field requires the integration of theory with field practice, students must have



taken or be taking certain classes for this option to be a possibility. Additionally, block placements can never be guaranteed as an agency would have to agree to this schedule and assure that students could achieve all required competencies during this short time frame. Students are advised to contact their UT field coordinators as soon as they become aware of any serious extenuating circumstance that would lead to this type of request.

## **6.8 Request to Transfer or Move While in MSSW Program**

Occasionally, students may face extenuating circumstances that cause them to need to relocate while in the MSSW program, or to transfer to a different UTC SW campus. These moves and transfers can cause serious disruptions in the field planning process. Moving or transferring can cause a potential delay in finding a placement, disrupt their program of study, and lead to a delay in graduation.

Students who wish to request to transfer to a different MSSW campus should start by talking with their Advisor, and then proceed by following the steps outlined in the College's Student Handbook.

Students who are in the online MSSW program may experience serious extenuating circumstances that triggers a need to move, while still hoping to remain in the Online MSSW program. A student in the online MSSW program who needs to move but plans to remain in the online MSSW program should immediately request this move using this online form: <https://forms.gle/PKmv8zzUa3rpUet36>. If needed, the Field Director will meet with the student to hear the student's request and review the risks associated with a move while in the MSSW program. If the student's request is approved, the student may be transferred to a different UT field coordinator that serves that part of the country.

When students are moving to a new location, field planning will not begin until the student's request to move/transfer has been approved. Moving while in the MSSW program can lead to delays related to field placement.

## **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 for 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 MSSW 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 1.07 of this manual.

## **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 502- Use of Facilities and pay the insurance fee.

## **7.3 Personal Safety Training**

All generalist students must participate in the personal safety training provided during seminar. The training includes content on: infectious disease control, sexual harassment, and practical advice to minimize risks to safety at the agency, in the community, and when making home visits. If students are involved in an incident that jeopardizes their personal safety, they must complete the Field Placement Safety Incident Report form, which is available on the college's website. Before students begin field placement, they must sign the Acknowledgment of Risk in the Field Placement in IPT. Concentration students are presumed to have completed safety training during the generalist year. Safety guidelines are reviewed with advanced standing students during orientation and through materials provided on Canvas.

## **6.4 Required Pre-Placement Documents**

Each student is required to review and sign the ***Student Field Placement Contract*** and the ***Acknowledgment of Risk in the Field Placement*** in IPT prior to beginning the agency placement.



## **8.0 Procedures During Field 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 (<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 (<http://www.ifsw.org/home>).
3. Protecting the privacy and confidentiality of all clients both in the field agency and the classroom setting. Various laws and regulations such as HIPPA apply within agency settings. Some agencies may require special training in specific policy areas. See HIPAA at: <http://www.hhs.gov/ocr/hippa/>

### **8.2 Orientation to Field Education**

The UT field coordinator provides an orientation to field education for all incoming first year field students. This orientation provides a comprehensive overview of relevant field policies and procedures and addresses the initial anxieties that many beginning students may feel.

### **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 MSSW 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 time-sheet 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. 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 childcare 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 hour 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.

## **8.4 Additional 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. Additional hours may be used during the following semester in case of illness, personal or family needs, or preparation for the comprehensive exam.

The Request to complete field hours between semesters form contains important details about limitations on hours between semesters depending on the student's program of study.

1. Students in generalist field may complete up to 40 hours between semesters to be applied to the total required hours for generalist field.
2. Students in concentration field may complete up to 80 additional hours between semesters to be applied to the total required hours for concentration field.
3. Students in SW586 may carry over and apply to the spring requirement up to 80 additional hours between the fall and spring semesters for a grand total of 380 hours before the start of the spring semester.
4. Students in SW584 may carry over and apply to the spring requirement up to 80 additional hours total/max between the summer/fall and fall/spring semesters for a grand total of 448 hours before the start of the spring semester.

Although students are generally expected to be able to take their semester breaks, many agencies require students to continue in placement between semesters in order to fulfill professional responsibilities. Students may apply the additional hours required by the agency to field hours requirements up to the total maximum additional hours allowed for generalist and concentration field.

The following procedure applies to field hours between semesters:

- Students who wish to complete additional hours between semesters must submit a completed Request to Complete Field Hours Between Semesters form to the UT field coordinator by the date specified. This form must be approved and signed by the student's agency field instructor. 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 complete hours should be completed in collaboration with the agency field instructor.
- The UT field coordinator will determine whether the request is approved and will notify the student by email.
- Students will not be allowed to complete their field placement any earlier than the date outlined on their syllabus, which is typically a few 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.

## **8.9 The Learning Plan**

The graduate 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 tentative plans for assignments. The college requires a written learning plan for each semester. Students are responsible for maintaining awareness of due dates for learning plans and evaluations and giving timely reminders to their agency field instructor. The plan is completed and signed online in Intern Placement Tracking (IPT) and may be revised as needed by mutual agreement of the student and agency field instructor. The completed learning plan is reviewed by the field liaison and UT field coordinator.

## **8.10 Health Insurance**

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

## **8.11 Transportation and Vehicle Insurance**

All students are responsible for their own transportation to and from the agency. 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.

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

Students routinely use technology in their academic, field, and personal experiences. The past decade has 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.

Meanwhile, students are also actively engaging with technology for personal and social relationships, including use of Facebook, Twitter, 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 and can lead to challenges in developing and maintaining appropriate boundaries with agency clients and agency staff.

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 use of Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, etc.
- Students should set their social media privacy 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 social media 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.
- When in doubt about the use of any technology or social media at field, the student should first consult with the agency field instructor.

## **9.0 Evaluations and Grading Procedures**



## 9.1 Evaluation of Student Competency

An evaluation of each student's progress in field placement is completed by the agency field instructor at midterm and at the end of each academic semester. Due dates of evaluations can be found in the annual calendar distributed by each campus and on IPT at the beginning of the academic year.

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 MSSW 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 MSSW 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 MSSW 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.

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 submit a written statement to the college setting forth aspects of the evaluation with which there is disagreement.

## 9.2 Field Education Grading Policy

The UT field coordinator is the course instructor for field courses and is responsible for assigning the final grade. The UT field coordinator assigns the final grade after review of learning plan evidence and final evaluations, field liaison report forms, and, if applicable, seminar grades. Field placement is graded “Satisfactory” or “No Credit.” If a student

receives a grade of “No Credit” for field, the student is not allowed to repeat the course and will not be able to complete the master’s program. If a student wishes to appeal this grade, they should refer to the “Student Appeal Process” listed in the MSSW Student Handbook.

### **9.3 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 be changed to No Credit (NC).

### **9.4 Student Evaluation of Field Placement**

Students are required to evaluate their placement experience during the spring 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. This form is completed in IPT. The UT field coordinator reviews this information to evaluate the quality of the field agency, agency field instructor and field liaison services. If the student gives permission, the evaluation will be shared with the student’s agency field instructor.

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

## **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 may 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



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 Field Concerns report 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 Field Concerns report 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 Field Concerns Report as instructed on this form. Student must sign off on IPT Field Concerns report and is encouraged to enter a response.
5. Student documents actions taken to resolve the issue on the Field Concerns Report.
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 in 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 MSSW 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. Students who resign from a field placement without prior approval are at risk of receiving a grade of No Credit for field.

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 should submit an email to the UT field coordinator and copy the field liaison requesting placement termination. 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 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 Placement Safety Incident Report form located on the College of Social Work website and submit the completed form to the UT field coordinator ASAP.

The UT field coordinator will:

1. Contact the Office of Title IX to complete the mandatory reporter obligations and discuss next steps listed below.
2. 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.
3. After review with the Office of Title IX, notify the field 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.
4. As appropriate, confer with the Office of Equity and Diversity and the Program Director regarding the situation and the planned strategy for intervention.
5. Determine the status of the student's placement in the agency after a thorough assessment.
6. 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 learning and growth, agency field instructors may be willing to give students the opportunity to achieve satisfactory performance. If student 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 overview of concerns and plan for demonstrating improvement will be documented on the Field Concerns Report in IPT.
- The student may enter comments on the Field Concerns report and is expected to sign off on the report. The student's signature does not indicate an agreement with the concerns, but 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, a **Dismissal Form** will be uploaded on the student's page in IPT. The Dismissal Form will be completed and will document 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 meet with the student to discuss the dismissal. 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 may 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 the placement through a successful interview.

**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 Section 10.01 of this Field 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 No Credit 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 grade of NC 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 section 10.01 and in the MSSW student handbook.

Students who are following this appeal process should continue attending their MSSW classes, including field seminar, but should consult with their advisor regarding their options.

**B. Appealing Final Grade:** Students may appeal the grade of NC once that grade is entered at the end of the semester. If the student elects to appeal the grade of NC, the student is to follow the grade appeals procedure in the MSSW 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 will or 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 in Section 1 of this manual, and in the MSSW 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 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/> 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. Each field course is listed in the graduate catalog with the following registration permission: Must have Instructor Permission to register if student previously withdrew from the course. 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 UT field coordinator will request a meeting of the Academic/Professional Standards committee to consider the student's eligibility to return to field. The Committee will review the circumstances leading to withdrawal and determine whether the student is eligible to register for a field course. The Committee will have access to documentation relevant to student performance in 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 the Committee decision according to the appeals process detailed in the MSSW 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 out of state or in rural areas of Tennessee are encouraged to submit this earlier.

The UT field coordinator will send the student 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 grade of D, F or No Credit in any required social work course will be dismissed from the MSSW 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 appeal is denied, the student may not return to field and would be required to withdraw from current social work classes.



