



# **M.S.S.W. Field Practice Manual 2022-2023**

This manual can be found at:

<http://www.csw.utk.edu>

## **Contents**

<b>1.0 MSSW Program Mission, Goals, and Curriculum</b>	<b>5</b>
1.01 Program Mission and Goals	5
1.02 Commitment to Cultural Diversity and Social Justice	5
1.03 College of Social Work Standards of Professional Conduct	6
1.04 Programs of Study	8
1.05 Curriculum Overview	9
1.06 Certificate Programs	11
1.07 School Social Work Licensure Requirements	13
<b>2.0 Field Education</b>	<b>13</b>
2.01 Educational Philosophy	13
2.02 Generalist Field Placement	14
2.03 Concentration Placement	15
Full-time Students	15
Extended Study and Part-time Advanced Standing	16
<b>3.0 Roles and Responsibilities in Field Education</b>	<b>16</b>
3.01 Director of Field Education	16
3.02 Associate Director of Field Education	17
3.03 UT field coordinator	18
3.04 Field Faculty Liaison (FFL)	18
3.05 UTCSW Field Liaison	20
3.06 Agency field instructor	21
3.07 Task Instructor	22
3.08 Supplemental Supervisor	22
3.09 Student	23
3.10 Major Professor/Advisor	24
<b>4.0 Selection of Field Agencies</b>	<b>24</b>
4.01 Procedures for the Selection of Field Agencies	25
4.02 Criteria for Approval as a Field Agency	26
<b>5.0 Selection and Training of Agency field instructors</b>	<b>26</b>
5.01 Criteria for Selection of Agency field instructors	26
5.02 Agency field instructor Orientation	27

5.03 Agency field instructor Training	27
6.0 Placement Selection Process	28
6.01 Admission to Field	28
6.02 Planning and Interviewing for Placement	28
6.03 Evening and Weekend Placements	32
6.04 Placement in Employment Setting	32
6.05 Students with Disabilities	33
6.06 International Placements	34
6.07 Block Placements	35
6.08 Stipends	35
6.09 Request to Transfer or Move While in MSSW Program	35
7.0 Pre-placement Requirements	36
7.01 Screening procedure requirements	36
7.02 Professional Liability Coverage	37
7.03 Personal Safety Training	38
7.04 Required Pre-Placement Documents	38
8.0 Procedures During Field Placement	38
8.01 Self Screening and Reporting Procedures for COVID-19	38
8.02 Professional Conduct in Field	39
8.03 Orientation to Field Placement	39
8.04 Managing and Recording Time in Field	39
8.05 Additional Field Hours Within and Between Semesters	40
8.06 The Learning Plan	42
8.07 Health Insurance	42
8.08 Transportation and Vehicle Insurance	42
8.09 Use of Technology and social media in Field	43
9.0 Evaluations and Grading Procedures	45
9.01 Evaluation of Student Competency	45
9.02 Field Placement Grading Policy	46
9.03 Incompletes in Field	46
9.04 Student Evaluation of Field Placement	46
10.0 Problems in Field	47

<b>10.01 Managing Problems in Field</b>	<b>47</b>
<b>10.02 Requests to Terminate a Placement</b>	<b>48</b>
<b>10.03 Sexual Harassment</b>	<b>48</b>
<b>10.04 Unsatisfactory Progress in Field</b>	<b>49</b>
<b>10.05 Dismissal from Placement and Appeal Procedure</b>	<b>50</b>
<b>10.06 Student Removal from a Field Placement</b>	<b>53</b>
<b>10.07 Professional Misconduct</b>	<b>54</b>
<b>10.08 Return to Field after Withdrawal from a Field Course</b>	<b>54</b>
<b>10.09 Eligibility for Field Placement While Appealing Program Dismissal</b>	<b>55</b>

## **1.0 MSSW Program Mission, Goals, and Curriculum**

### **1.01 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.

### **1.02 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 2015 Educational Policy Statement), "the dimensions of

diversity are understood as the intersectionality of multiple factors including” age, class, color, culture, mental or physical disability and ability, ethnicity, gender, gender expression, gender identity, immigration status, marital status, national origin, political ideology, race, regionality, religion and spirituality, sex, sexual orientation, and tribal sovereign status. The College values intellectual curiosity, pursuit of knowledge, and academic freedom and integrity. “A person’s diverse life experiences may include oppression, poverty, marginalization, and alienation as well as privilege, power, and acclaim” (CSWE 2015 Educational Policy Statement). 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>

### **1.03 College of Social Work Standards of Professional Conduct**

Separate and distinct from the University of Tennessee’s Standards of Conduct, and the CSW’s standards for academic performance, there are certain cognitive, emotional and character requirements that students must possess that provide the CSW with reasonable assurance that students can complete the entire course of study and participate fully in all aspects of social work education and the professional practice of social work. Students in the CSW are expected to possess the following abilities and attributes at a level appropriate to their year in the program. They are expected to meet these standards in the classroom and in their field placement. Attention to these standards will be part of evaluations made by faculty responsible for evaluating applications for admission and faculty responsible for evaluating students’ classroom and 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 and the Tennessee Board of Social Worker Standards of Conduct (1365-01-.10) as found in the Tennessee Board of Social Work Certification and Licensure General Rules and Regulations,  
<https://casetext.com/regulation/tennessee-administrative-code/title-1365-social-worker-certification/chapter-1365-01-general-rules-and-regulations/section-1365-01-10-standards-of-conduct>
- **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 dignity and worth of every individual and their right to a just share of the society's resources). The social work student is knowledgeable about and adheres to the National Association of Social Workers Code of Ethics and the Rules of the Tennessee Board of Social Worker Certification.
- **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 timesheets
- Unauthorized or improper use of University equipment, services and facilities
- Harassing, coercing, and intimidating behavior
- Obstruction or disruption of teaching
- Criminal activity
- Failure to comply with an order from a legitimate university authority and failure to attend required meetings called by university faculty or administration such as Academic Committee Meetings and Field Evaluation Meetings

- Threatening behavior and verbal abuse
- Inappropriate relationships
- Inability to secure, sustain, or perform satisfactorily in a field placement
- Other behaviors determined to be unprofessional conduct towards colleagues, faculty, staff and/or clients

## **1.04 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.

### **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.

### **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 the generalist curriculum during the first year and 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.

## **Locations**

All three programs of study are offered on the Knoxville and Nashville campuses and through the Online MSSW Program. The online 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 geographical location.



## 1.05 Curriculum Overview

All students are expected to develop their plan of study with their Advisor/major professors. This will ensure that the recommended sequence of courses is followed, that adequate field practice plans are made, and that, to the extent possible, the course of study takes into account the student's interests and career plans.

### 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 generalist curriculum contributes to the process of professional identification and provides a comprehensive base of theory, knowledge, and skills for students entering either concentration area so that they may operate in the future as practitioners, supervisors, managers, planners, and program developers.

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 goal-oriented and clinical-based interventions, evaluation of practice, and life-long professional development. Potential areas of practice include mental health, child welfare, substance abuse, health care, and other settings providing services to populations at risk.

The course requirements are as follows:

SW 560 - Clinical practice with Groups (3 credit hours)

SW 562 - Clinical Practice with Adult Individuals (3)

SW 563 - Systematic Planning & Evaluation for Clinical Practice (3) SW 565 -  
Clinical Assessment, Diagnosis and 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 is based on the underlying principles of social, economic and environmental justice. The students graduating from this concentration 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 goal of the concentration is to produce social workers who are critical thinkers in ethically-sound, systemic, skill-based, clinical practice. The social workers who graduate with this concentration will be equipped to be involved in activities such as, but not limited to, leading and managing programs and organizations, planning, asset and financial management, use of information technology, grant writing and management, coordinating, developing and evaluating direct and indirect activities for targeted at-risk populations, clients and client systems. Students will also graduate understanding advanced policy analysis and advocacy strategies.

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.**

## 1.06 Certificate Programs

Students may elect to complete a certificate program as a part of their MSSW 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 requirements for coursework and field placement. Please check with the Chair of the Certificate program you are interested in for more information.

Please note that field requirements are only one component of the certificate programs. Students should review *“Field Placement Procedures for UTCSW MSSW Certificate Programs”* and comply with all certificate program requirements. Student learning plans should include assignments that reflect the certificate program topic area.

- 1) Students should familiarize themselves with the certificate program requirements related to field education.
    - **Trauma Certificate** *(must be the student’s concentration placement)*
    - **Veterinary Social Work Certificate** *(must be the student’s concentration placement)*
    - **Gerontology Certificate** *(may be the student’s generalist or concentration placement)*
    - **Forensic Social Work Certificate** *(may be the student’s generalist or concentration placement)*
  - 2) Students should notify their UT field coordinator of their intent to complete a specific certificate program on the Field Planning application, and work with the UT field coordinator to identify and discuss field placement options that will allow students to engage in certificate-specific learning opportunities.
- During field placement interviews, students must inform each prospective Agency field instructor of their participation in the certificate program and discuss if/how the student

will be able to complete learning plan assignments related to the certificate. Refer to the specific certificate procedure for questions that may be appropriate for the placement interview.

Some important questions to ask during a field placement interview could include:

- Who is the population being served by the agency?
- What types of clinical-based interventions are provided by the agency?

- 3) After a placement is secured, 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.
- 4) 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.)
- 5) Students are to document completion of certificate learning activities in their Learning Plan in IPT in the column titled *Evidence of Plan Completion*.
- 6) 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.

## **1.07 School Social Work Licensure Requirements**

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 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. 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.

## **1.07 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 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. 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**

### **2.01 Educational Philosophy**

The Council on Social Work Education has identified field as the signature pedagogy of social work education: “It is a basic precept of social work education that the two interrelated components of curriculum - classroom and field - are of equal importance within the curriculum, and each contributes to the development of the requisite competencies of professional practice” (*Council on Social Work Education, Educational Policy 2.3*).

The educational philosophy underlying field practice is a blend of the idealism and pragmatism that is characteristic of the profession. 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 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.

## **2.02 Generalist Field Placement**

The generalist placement consists of an orientation to field education and an ongoing seminar and the Field Placement. 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 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 cultural humility. The seminar 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.

The generalist placement is generally scheduled for two days each week during the fall and spring semesters. Orientation to field and field seminar starts at the beginning of the fall semester for generalist students. Generalist students will start their field placement in mid-September (see 542Canvas sites for field calendar). 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, depending on the number of hours that they completed in the fall. In addition to the hours requirement, students must also complete assignments to address all competencies and practice behaviors and complete field seminar requirements.

Generalist field placements are selected through a joint process involving the student, UT field coordinator, and personnel from potential field placement sites. 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.

### **2.03 Concentration Placement**

Concentration field consists of a 600 hour field placement focused in the student's area of concentration (OL or Clinical Practice) and the concentration field. 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. 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.

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:

The student has a circumstance that makes completing the number of hours in two semesters very difficult.

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.

There are sufficient resources to provide liaison services over the additional semester.

The agency or agency field instructor strongly prefers the student to extend the placement over three semesters given the nature of the field assignments.

### **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/Major Professor and UT field coordinator.

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

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

### **3.01 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. Supervise all field faculty and staff.
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.

### **3.02 Associate Director of Field Education**

The responsibilities for this position are to:

1. Provide leadership and support to field faculty and staff on the Knoxville campus.
2. Collaborate with the field director to provide leadership and support to all field faculty.
3. Lead BSSW field curriculum and policy development.
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 UTK campus placements.
6. Perform special projects to enhance the field curriculum.

### **3.03 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.

### **3.04 Field Faculty Liaison (FFL)**

The Field Faculty Liaison fulfills the dual roles of field liaison and seminar instructor for

generalist students on the Knoxville and Nashville campuses. The field faculty liaison role includes support of the student and agency field instructor to enhance the student's field learning experience and monitoring of the student's placement to ensure compliance with UTC SW field policies. The seminar instructor role includes developing and implementing a process-oriented 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. Conduct regular review of evidence students have entered on Learning Plans. If needed, initiate contacts with students to give feedback on quality of evidence entered.
5. Review, approve, and sign all assigned student learning plans, evaluations, and timesheets in IPT. 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.
6. Provide agency field instructors with field policy, academic curriculum information, access to an interpretation of current course content and syllabi, as needed.
7. 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.

8. 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.

#### **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 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. Conduct regular videoconferencing office hours, at least 1 hour per week during teaching weeks, and 2 hours per week when not teaching seminar, to provide individual consultation and support for students and agency field instructors.

### **3.05 UTCSW Field Liaison**

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. Maintain ongoing contacts with assigned agency field instructors and students via telephone and internet.
2. Meet with each assigned student and agency field instructor at least once per semester. This meeting will be completed by technology according to the protocol. Both the agency field instructor and the student need to be present for the meeting.
3. Complete and submit field liaison report forms within two weeks of a meeting.

4. Be available to the student and the agency field instructor if problems arise. If necessary, make additional visits to the agency or meet separately with the student and/or agency field instructor for consultation.
5. Assist the agency field instructor in the designing of learning experiences for the student if needed and consult with/advise the agency field instructor regarding the student's learning needs.
6. Provide the agency field instructor with current knowledge about the academic curriculum and any necessary assistance in relating it to field practice assignments.
7. Review, approve, and sign the student learning plan, evaluations, and time sheet.
8. Report to the UT field coordinator each semester on the progress of the student in placement and any problems encountered.
9. Contribute ideas for innovation and upgrading of the field placement and for expansion into new agencies and practice fields.
10. Assess the quality of placement experiences and make recommendations to the UT field coordinator about retention of agency placement sites. Evaluate the quality of placements at the end of the year.

### **3.06 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. Selects and makes appropriate assignments that address the educational competencies for the placement and that take into consideration as much as possible the student's past experience, learning styles, career goals, 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. Develops the student's learning plan after receiving input from the student and field liaison, as needed.
5. Meets at least one hour each week with the student for an educationally focused conference and supervision.
6. Reviews and signs student field placement timesheet.
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 offsite Agency field instructor will partner with the agency task instructor in support of the student's learning.*

### **3.07 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 agency field instructor but is expected to be well informed of the college's educational plan and understand their role in the student's learning. 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.

### **3.08 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.

### **3.09 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 some questions to ask at interview. Professional presentation includes manner of dress and 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 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 and norms that prohibit piercings, visible tattoos and specific clothing or shoes.
9. Maintain an accurate record of time on the field placement timesheet.

10. Report absences 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. Transport self 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 the field manual and abide by all field policies and procedures.
18. Read and abide by the College of Social Work Standards of Professional Conduct.

### **3.10 Major Professor/Advisor**

Each entering student is assigned a major professor or advisor who is responsible for overseeing the student's progress. The Advisor/Major Professor helps the student plan a course of study and is available to the student if problems arise. The major professor or 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/Major Professor 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.

#### **4.01 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.

#### **4.02 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 an agency field instructor who holds an MSSW Degree from a CSWE-accredited program with two years of post-master's social work practice experience.
5. 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 have achieved recognition for their skills and be committed to the education of students. Agency field instructors must be committed to providing an educationally directed field experience for their students and have flexibility in their work schedule to devote adequate time to their students' placement experience. The UT field coordinator is responsible for screening and selecting all agency field instructors. Input is solicited from faculty, students, and community practitioners. The college has a large pool of alumni who are well known to faculty, and this facilitates the screening process.

#### **5.01 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.

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. At minimum, the student must 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.

If an MSSW agency field instructor is not available within the agency, the College may locate an MSSW practitioner in the community who is willing to serve as an off-site agency field instructor or as a supplemental supervisor. The plan for field instruction should be clearly identified for the student, supervisor, agency and the College.

### **5.02 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.

### **5.03 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, Clinical practice and integration of theory and practice.

Agency field instructor training is offered at least one time per year for each campus. This training is also available in an online format and may be offered in person on the Nashville and Knoxville campuses. Each year one or more additional training sessions are offered to agency field instructors. Topics have included ethics, diversity, neuroscience, and Clinical practice. Agency field instructors receive contact hours for the training. 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**

### **6.01 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.

### **6.02 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.

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. 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.
4. Students are required to follow the Field Planning Protocol checklist that their assigned UT field coordinator will share with them.
5. Students and prospective agency field instructors are expected to contact the UT field coordinator to report on the outcome of interviews. Agency field instructors notify the UT field coordinator as to whether the student has been offered a placement. Students are required to contact their UT field coordinator to report on the outcome of interviews and to submit to the UT field coordinator a completed *Confirmation of Field Placement* 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.

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

After the student has submitted the completed field application, most communication from the UT field coordinator will be by UTK email. Faculty will use the student's UTK email address, and students should email UT field coordinators using their UTK email rather than a personal email address. Students must check and respond to their UTK email messages daily while involved in the field planning process. Each UT field coordinator is communicating with and coordinating interviews for many students and agencies. If a student fails to respond promptly to a message regarding an interview, the student may lose the opportunity to interview at a desired placement site. Students are to contact 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 often results in a negative impression of the student by the agency field instructor and may result in loss of opportunity to interview at the agency. If a student does not follow the instructions from the UT field coordinator regarding scheduling 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 also assess readiness for placement by the level of professionalism demonstrated in resumes, emails, and phone conversations. Students are advised that any communication with a prospective agency field instructor or agency representative may enhance or diminish the likelihood of acceptance for placement.

The UT field coordinator's role is facilitative, including the development of a wide variety and

number of placements and arranging for student interviews. The student must ultimately secure a placement by presenting in a professional manner at the interview. The program is not responsible for securing a field placement if a student is unable to conduct a satisfactory interview with potential field placement agencies or if the student is excluded from placement by legal history or the results of agency screening procedures. A student will not be able to successfully complete the 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 and at field seminar. Students are responsible for adhering to professional standards, including, but not limited to, attire, timeliness, preparation, and conduct. Additionally, the UT Center for Career Development (<https://career.utk.edu/>) has resources available to support students in enhancing interviewing skill.

The UT field coordinator will assist generalist students in securing one interview and the concentration students with up to up to three interviews. 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 UT field coordinator may request an Academic Committee meeting to discuss the student's readiness for field and make recommendations which may include dismissal. The student may also be referred to the University of Tennessee Career Services for additional training and consultation. If the student was interviewing for very competitive placements and no concerns were identified at interview, the UT field coordinator will work with the student to identify other placement options. As the field placement is a required course, a student's inability or failure to secure a field placement may result in dismissal from the MSSW program.

If after completing all scheduled interviews, a student declines all offered placements, the UT field coordinator will finish facilitating placement interviews for all other students and then contact the student to discuss alternatives.

### 6.03 Evening and Weekend Placements

As was outlined in the MSSW application process, very few opportunities exist for evening and/or weekend placements. Field agencies generally expect students to be in placement during regular weekday business hours. Although some agencies serve clients on a 24-hour basis, most MSSW agency field instructors work Monday through Friday, regular business hours. 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.

### 6.04 Placement in Employment Setting

Some students may be working in social service agencies and request a field placement in their place of employment. The Council on Social Work Education has stipulated that students may be allowed to complete a field placement during work hours if the work tasks address required competencies. **The organization and the agency field instructor must meet the criteria for field agencies and agency field instructors as outlined in the field manual.** 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, may 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.*



*If a student wants to pursue this an Employment-Based placement, the following conditions must be met:*

1. **Student completes the Probationary Period at their place of employment:** This probationary period is determined by the agency).
2. **Meet with the UT field coordinator:** the student must meet with the UT field coordinator to discuss a plan to pursue an employment-based placement.
3. **Identify an MSW Agency field instructor:** A qualified agency field instructor must be available to provide oversight of the student's field experience and provide one hour of supervision per week.
4. **Complete a Placement Plan:** The student must submit the "*Employment Based Placement Field Plan*" form to the UT field coordinator. This form must be signed by the Agency field instructor/Employment Supervisor.
5. **Sign the Agreement:** The student and agency must submit the signed "*Agreement for Placement in Employment Setting*" Form. This form acknowledges that the student understands the risks involved with an EBP placement, and the steps that are to be taken if a student resigns from their employment or is terminated. The student's UT field coordinator will provide the student with that form.

***Once all of these documents are returned, the UT field coordinator will review the documents, make a decision, and communicate about next steps.***

Occasionally, a student may receive an offer of employment by the placement agency during the field placement. If this happens, the student needs to contact the UT 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.

## **6.05 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). In order to receive accommodations in field practice, students must be registered with SDS. The SDS will notify the UT field coordinator of approved accommodations. It is the student's

responsibility to inform the UT field coordinator and the agency field instructor if accommodations are needed at the field placement agency. 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.

The College of Social Work cannot guarantee that a placement can be identified that will meet all of these criteria during any given semester or in a specific location. Organizations provide student placement on a voluntary basis and may not offer placements in every semester. 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. 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.

## **6.06 International Placements**

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

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 Education.

Students completing a field placement in another country will need to register with the Center for Global Education and purchase an International student ID card. Additionally, students traveling outside of the Continental US are required to obtain the necessary travel visa and vaccinations – all of which are coordinated with the Study Abroad office.

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

## **6.07 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/Major professor. 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.

## **6.08 Stipends**

Most of the organizations that provide student field placements do not have funds to compensate students for the work that they contribute to the agency as a part of their field experience. Agencies contribute enormously to the student's education by providing free access to learning experiences and supervision. Although students pay for their field courses in tuition, field fee, and liability insurance, none of these funds are given to the field agency.

Given the cost of graduate education, the College is supportive of efforts by agencies to provide student stipends. 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.

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 very competitive.

## **6.09 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 UTCSW 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/Major professor, 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 this situation 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.

## **7.0 Pre-placement Requirements**

### **7.01 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 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.

Additionally, Social Work practice and field education have been deeply impacted by COVID-19. The College of Social Work takes very seriously its responsibility to balance the concern for student safety and well-being with our concern for a quality learning experience. This has been particularly challenging for field education because field takes place in the social work practice setting. Agencies may require proof of vaccination as a condition of placement, and UTK strongly encourages all students to be vaccinated. As data and recommendations related to COVID-19 are dynamic, please refer to <https://www.utk.edu/coronavirus/> for the latest information on UTK's policies and recommendations related to COVID-19. As it pertains to field, students are expected to follow all guidance outlined in on the field course Canvas site.

## **7.02 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.

### **7.03 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 document *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.

### **7.04 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**

### **8.01 Self Screening and Reporting Procedures for COVID-19**

As information related to COVID-19 is dynamic, please refer to <https://www.utk.edu/coronavirus/> for the latest information on UTK's policies and recommendations related to COVID-19. As it pertains to field, students are expected to follow all guidance outlined in the document "22-23 UTCSW Student COVID Guidelines for Field Placement," which can be found on the field course Canvas site. This document may be updated as needed over the course of the year.

## 8.02 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
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 HIPAA apply within agency settings. Some agencies may require special training in specific policy areas. See HIPAA at: <http://www.hhs.gov/ocr/hippa/>

## 8.03 Orientation to Field Placement

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

## 8.04 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 timesheet in IPT. This time sheet should not be used as a planner--hours are to be documented only after completion. Students are to enter their hours daily, or at least weekly, so that they can be reviewed and

approved by the agency field instructor. The agency field instructor's entry of supervision at the end of each week and the agency field instructor signature at the end of the semester signify approval of time documented by the student.

Classroom work should not be completed during field placement and conversely students should not be asked to fulfill field obligations during class time. Field placement does not take precedence over scheduled class times. 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.

## **8.05 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.

- Students in generalist field may complete up to 40 hours between semesters to be applied to the total required hours for generalist field.
- Students in concentration field may complete up to 80 additional hours between semesters to be applied to the total required hours for concentration field.
  - 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.
  - 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 April

21 for those ending field in spring or November 18 for those ending field in fall. 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.

### **8.06 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 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.

### **8.07 Health Insurance**

Students are responsible for their own health insurance and for paying all of 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.

### **8.08 Transportation and Vehicle Insurance**

All students are responsible for their own transportation to and from the agency. Use of a car 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.

If a student is required 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.

### **8.09 Use of Technology and social media in Field**

Students routinely use technology in their academic, field, and personal experiences. The past few years have yielded exponential growth in the number and type of platforms for online communication. Students use technology in the field setting to manage client records, meet with colleagues, evaluate practice, and research interventions, to name only a few uses. 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. This is a fairly recent area of challenge 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. Consequently, students must consider not only the factual information they post online, but also the values and attitudes which may or may not be consistent with professional standards and values.

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 Facebook and should, whenever possible, refrain from "friending" agency staff during the term of placement.
- Students should not post any information about clients or the agency on personal media sites, with one exception. Students may share links to info about agency outreach or development events.
- Students should refrain from use of personal phones during any client contact.
- Whenever possible, students should use only agency computers to manage documentation regarding client contacts and services. If students are expected to

use personal laptops or tablets, the student must ensure that the network is secure and that the information cannot be accessed by anyone who is not authorized to access the information.

- 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**

### **9.01 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.

## **9.02 Field Placement 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 or 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.

## **9.03 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).

## **9.04 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 through Qualtrics and are also used to promote program improvement.

## **10.0 Problems in Field**

### **10.01 Managing Problems in Field**

Managing problems in field placement is considered to be a part of students' professional development.

The expected problem-solving steps are:

1. Student shares concerns directly with the agency field instructor to discuss how problems/concerns can be managed or resolved. A follow-up email from the student to the agency field instructor documenting discussions is recommended.
2. If the collaboration with the agency field instructor in Step 1 does not adequately manage the problem, the student should notify the assigned field liaison or UT field coordinator so that a problem-solving meeting between the student, the agency field instructor, and the field liaison can be convened.
3. If concerns continue following a meeting with the field liaison, then the UT field coordinator will meet with the student, agency field instructor, and field liaison for additional collaboration and solution finding.

Please note: If a student is uncertain about how to best begin addressing a problem/concern, the student may first request a consultation with the field liaison or UT field coordinator prior to Step 1. Following this preliminary consultation, the student is expected to engage in each of the steps outlined above as necessary to manage the problems/concerns.

If the student refuses to address placement concerns with the agency field instructor using the process described above, the UT field coordinator will request a meeting of the student's academic committee. Refusal to engage in the problem-solving process could result in dismissal from field.

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

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

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

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

## **10.03 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. Consult with the Title IX office to discuss next steps.
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. Upon receiving such a complaint, 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.

#### **10.04 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 some commitment to their own learning, agency field instructors may be willing to give students the opportunity to achieve satisfactory performance. The following process is followed when a student's performance or progress in field is unsatisfactory, and the agency field instructor is willing to continue to work with the student.

1. The agency field instructor should first discuss the concern(s) with the student and give the student the opportunity to respond to feedback and improve performance. The agency field instructor is asked to document discussions with students regarding problems with performance or conduct on the Field Concerns Report in IPT.

2. If the student's performance does not improve, the College asks that agency field instructors contact their field liaison to discuss concerns regarding student performance. If the field liaison is not available or the situation warrants, agency field instructors are encouraged to contact the student's UT field coordinator. The field liaison and UT field coordinator will discuss the situation and make a decision about how to respond.
3. If there are serious concerns that the student may not succeed in placement, the UT field coordinator and/or field liaison will arrange a meeting with the agency field instructor and the student to discuss the concerns and to develop a written plan to address the issues regarding student performance. The UT field coordinator may also meet separately with the student in order to explore the student's perspective on the issue. 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 placement course.
4. The plan for demonstrating improvement will be documented on the Field Concerns Report in IPT. If the student does not agree to the plan, the student's placement at the agency will be terminated.
5. 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. The UT field coordinator may request a meeting of the student's academic committee to review the concerns and progress and recommend if any additional action should be taken.
6. If the student does not achieve the competencies and performance standards of the field placement, a grade of NC (No Credit) will be assigned. A grade of No Credit in field terminates a student from the program.

### **10.05 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 Section 10.03).

Upon notification by the agency of a student's dismissal, the UT field coordinator will upload a Dismissal Form on the student's page in IPT. The Dismissal from Placement 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. The UT field coordinator may also meet with the student to get the student's perspective on the situation. The UT field coordinator will make a decision as to whether the student is A) Eligible for placement in another setting, or B) Not Eligible for placement in another setting.

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

1. The student is to schedule a meeting with the UT field coordinator to initiate placement planning. The UT field coordinator will work with the student to evaluate appropriate options for placement.
2. The UT field coordinator will request that the student sign a *Release of Information* form so that information about the student's prior field experience and learning needs can be shared with prospective agency field instructors.
3. The UT field coordinator will facilitate an opportunity for the student to interview for another placement. The College cannot guarantee that the student will be accepted by an organization for another placement. It is the student's responsibility to secure 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 placement and will receive a grade of No Credit for the course. The UT field coordinator may request a meeting of the student's academic committee to review the situation and provide consultation before the UT field coordinator makes a final decision. The

UT field coordinator will notify the student of this decision in writing and may request a meeting with the student to discuss.

**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 opportunities for appeal associated with this decision: 1) Student may appeal the UT field coordinator's Decision to not re-place the student and 2) Student may appeal the grade of NC once this grade has been entered.**

**1) 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 the following procedure.*

- The student must submit the appeal in writing to the UT field coordinator, detailing specific reasons the decision is being appealed. The written appeal must be submitted within 14 working days of the student's written notification of ineligibility for placement. Students may appeal the UT field coordinator's decision only on the basis of one or more of the following allowable grounds: (1) A clearly unfair decision (such as lack of consideration of circumstances clearly beyond the control of the student, e.g., a death in the family, illness, or accident); (2) Unacceptable instruction/evaluation procedures (such as deviation from stated policies on required learning activities, supervision, agency field instructor evaluation, etc.).
- The UT field coordinator is to review the student's statement and provide a decision via written reply within 14 working days.
- If the UT field coordinator decides not to grant the student's request to be placed in another setting, the student may appeal this decision to the student's academic committee. The student must submit a request for an Academic Committee meeting in writing to the student's Advisor/major professor within 14 working days, requesting committee review of the decision. The student must explain in the written request for review the grounds for appealing the UT field coordinator's decision. The student may also attach any relevant documentation.
- The Advisor/major professor is to schedule a committee meeting within 14 working days of receiving the student's written request.
- The Advisor/major professor will request a copy of the UT field coordinator's written

reply to the appeal. The UT field coordinator may also submit additional documentation relevant to the situation. The Advisor/major professor will disseminate all of the documents to the committee for review prior to the meeting.

- The academic committee will meet with the student and UT field coordinator to conduct a full review of the student's appeal.
- After the meeting, the committee will discuss the situation and make a determination as to whether the student's appeal to be eligible for placement will be granted. The committee will notify the student within 3 working days as to the decision. The committee's decision will be binding.
- If the student is determined to be eligible for re-placement, the steps outlined in this manual, section 10.05A will be followed.

**2) Appealing Final Grade:** Student may appeal the grade of NC. If the student elects to appeal the grade of NC, the student is to follow the grade appeals procedure in the MSSW Student Handbook. This appeal process begins after the end of semester grade has been submitted. The initial grade appeal must be must be filed no later than 30 days after the final grade has been issued.

## **10.06 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 his or her performance, an academic committee meeting may be convened to explore the student's readiness for placement and to make recommendations to the UT field coordinator.

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.

### **10.07 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 located in this manual, section 1.03 and 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 by the student's agency field instructor and submitted to the UT field coordinator. Upon review of the documentation, the UT field coordinator will make a determination as to whether to make a report to the program director who may then call a meeting of the Professional Standards Committee.

### **10.08 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, the UT field coordinator will request a meeting of the student's Academic Committee to consider the student's eligibility to return to field. The Academic Committee will review the circumstances leading to withdrawal and determine whether the student will be eligible to register for a field course in a later semester. The Academic Committee may stipulate specific conditions that must be met for the student to be eligible for field, including timeframes for completion. The Academic Committee will have access to documentation relevant to student performance in field. The UT field coordinator will attend the Academic Committee Meeting to provide information and consultation but will not be a voting member of the committee. The Academic Committee decision will be binding. The student may appeal the Academic Committee decision according to the appeals process detailed in the MSSW Student Handbook and Hilltopics.

If the Academic Committee has approved the student's eligibility to return to field after withdrawal, the student is to notify the appropriate UT field coordinator of their request to register for the field course and 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.

The UT field coordinator will send the student the current Application for Field Placement. In addition to the regular 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 Committee stipulated any conditions that must be met for return to field, the student must submit evidence of completion of requirements to the Major Professor/Advisor for approval by the Academic Committee.

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

A student who receives a grade of D or F in any required social work course will be dismissed from the MSSW program. If the student elects to appeal the grade and dismissal, the student will not be permitted to commence or return to field while pursuing the appeal. If the student wins the appeal and the dismissal is rescinded, the student may commence or return to field. If the student has missed the fall generalist field course, the student must wait until the following fall to begin the generalist field placement as the pre-placement seminar is only offered in the fall semester. Students in concentration field may begin or return to their placement the semester following approval of their appeal, as long as the field agency approves the plan.

Students who are placed in field agencies take on responsibility for direct services to vulnerable clients and/or projects that may have critical timelines. When the College places a student in a field setting, there is a good faith understanding that the student is expected to complete the placement and not expose clients to abrupt disruption of services or the agency to the consequences of unfinished projects. Many of the agency affiliation agreements for student placement stipulate that the student must have satisfactorily completed the required didactic portion of the school's curriculum. A student who has failed a required course would not meet this requirement. Consequently, it is neither ethical nor congruent with binding affiliation agreements for the College to allow a student to return to field while appealing dismissal from the MSSW program.

The following sections of the NASW Code of Ethics are referenced in support of this policy:

- Section 1.01- Commitment to Clients

Social workers' primary responsibility is to promote the well-being of clients. In general, clients' interests are primary. However, social workers' responsibility to the larger society or specific legal obligations may on limited occasions supersede the loyalty owed clients, and clients should be so advised. (Examples include when a social worker is required by law to report that a client has abused a child or has threatened to harm self or others.)

- Section 1.17b- Termination

Social workers should take reasonable steps to avoid abandoning clients who are still in need of services. Social workers should withdraw services precipitously only under unusual circumstances, giving careful consideration to all factors in the situation and taking care to minimize possible adverse effects. Social workers should assist in making appropriate arrangements for continuation of services when necessary.