

Messiah University

Bachelor of Social Work

Field Education Manual

2025 -2026

He has shown you, O mortal, what is good.
And what does the Lord require of you?
To act justly and to love mercy
and to walk humbly with your God.
Micah 6: 8



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LETTER FROM THE FIELD DIRECTOR

Dear Student,

Congratulations on entering the field component of your Social Work education. As the Field Director, I am excited to work with you as you take the knowledge obtained in the classroom and give it hands, feet, and a voice in the field. As you prepare for this next step, you are expected to read through and become familiar with this handbook. This document has been prepared with the field student in mind, and you should find many of your questions regarding expectations for field education addressed. Field experiences are designed to be somewhat challenging, but I trust that you will also find meaning and purpose in the work you will be doing.

Your field placement will consist of classroom involvement, field hours, preparation, and research, as well as supervision. The classroom will offer you opportunities to explore issues that you will experience in the field, tackle ethical dilemmas, and formulate your own understanding of faith integration. Utilize peer feedback from your fellow students and faculty to assist you in determining an appropriate field site and addressing field concerns. The experiences of those who have gone before you can prove quite valuable. You will also receive guidance and supervision from your field instructor on-site. I would encourage you to begin thinking about how you would like to grow and be challenged through your relationship with your field instructor. Setting clear goals and expectations enhances the likelihood of successful field experiences.

As a Social Work student, your field experience will be an opportunity to practice in diverse settings, work with differing people groups, and grapple with the real-life application of your social work and spiritual competencies in these contexts. I encourage you to raise the bar high and to make the most of your field placement experience; there is nothing quite like it. I look forward to working with you throughout your field experiences.

Michelle George MSW, LCSW, BCD

Field Director

OVERVIEW OF SOCIAL WORK FIELD EDUCATION

The Council on Social Work Education (CSWE) considers field education the signature pedagogy of the social work profession. “Field education is the signature pedagogy for social work. Signature pedagogies are elements of instruction and socialization that teach future practitioners the fundamental dimensions of professional work in their discipline: to think, to perform, and to act intentionally, ethically, and with integrity” (CSWE, 2022, Education Policy 3.3, p.20). The Field Education sequence is rooted in the mission and goals of the Department of Social Work at Messiah University, designed to fulfill the CSWE competencies crucial for generalist social work practice.

Both classroom and experiential learning are essential for students to become effective generalist social work practitioners. Field education opportunities begin early in the social work training process to reinforce students' understanding of theory, practical skills, issues related to values and ethics, human behavior and the social environment, cultural competence development, and research. Additionally, supervised practice lays the foundation for critical reflection on integrating faith with social work knowledge, skills, values, and ethics. This learning takes place in an environment where students can bring questions, case scenarios, and ethical dilemmas back to the classroom and grapple with the tensions between their beliefs and practical situations.

Through participation in a field placement throughout their sophomore year and the spring semester of their senior year, students develop a person-in-environment approach to understanding and addressing complex social issues. Students will complete placements in selected social welfare and related agencies in the local region, as well as in settings that may be approved in specific domestic and international locations. Department faculty are responsible for the course structure and content of these placement experiences; however, they rely on agency field instructors to develop tasks that meet competency expectations and supervise daily placement activities. Faculty utilize these field experiences as part of the evaluation process to determine student progress and suitability for the profession based on personal observation, interaction with the student, and feedback from the field supervisor(s) in the agency.

The sophomore field placement is a preliminary practice experience that runs concurrently with SOWK 250 *Social Work Practice with Individuals* and SOWK 360 *Social Work Practice with Families*, offering students the opportunity to begin understanding, evaluating, and assessing practice. Students spend a minimum of 100 hours in placement for the academic year.

The senior placement is a full-time, 450-hour block placement experience that occurs during a student's senior spring semester. This placement is designed to fulfill CSWE requirements for providing field education in accredited baccalaureate departments. Students are expected to take SOWK 484 *Preparation for Field Practice* in the fall semester before entering the field, alongside SOWK 485 *Seminar in Social Work Practice*, which should be taken concurrently with the field experience in the spring semester.

The following section describes the various policies, criteria, and procedures related to the field experience. This handbook also includes forms used to manage and evaluate the field experience. Copies of each form are provided to ensure access to these documents as they are needed.

FIELD EDUCATION GOALS AND COURSE OBJECTIVES

The Council on Social Work Education (CSWE) has identified nine social work competencies that are essential to generalist social work practice. The Social Work Program at Messiah University has structured its curriculum around these areas of competency, in addition to the 10th competency related to faith-integrated practice. The learning contract and the field evaluation of student performance in placement are tools used to measure students' field education competency. The learning contract and field evaluation form are available on the BSW Canvas course site.

1. Demonstrate ethical and professional behavior through self-evaluation, self-assessment, peer review and effective use of supervision to advance professional development.
2. Demonstrate engagement of diversity and difference in practice through sensitivity and acceptance of cultural, racial, age, gender, ethnic, religious and sexual differences in the practice of social work.
3. Demonstrate an awareness of generalist social work practices that advance human rights and social, economic, and environmental justice and understand the historical forms and functions of oppression and discrimination.
4. Demonstrate the ability to engage in practice-informed research and research-informed practice to integrate and apply generalist social work knowledge.
5. Demonstrate engagement in policy practice through collaboration with colleagues and client populations for effective policy action.
6. Demonstrate an understanding of the application of skills and techniques for engaging with individuals, families, groups, organizations, and communities.
7. Demonstrate an understanding of the application of skills and techniques assessing individuals, families, groups, organizations, and communities.
8. Demonstrate an understanding of the application of skills and techniques for intervening with individuals, families, groups, organizations, and communities.
9. Demonstrate an understanding of the application of skills and techniques for evaluating practice with individuals, families, groups, organizations, and communities.
10. To critically examine one's Christian faith in the context of the overall Social Work profession and apply faith development principles in an ethical, professional and competent manner.

COURSE OBJECTIVES COVERED IN THE PRACTICE SEQUENCE

OBJECTIVES OF SOWK 251: FIELD EXPERIENCE SOCIAL WORK PRACTICE WITH INDIVIDUALS

1. To develop and apply the skills necessary to effectively assess individuals

2. To demonstrate basic skills of a helping relationship including empathy, active listening, interviewing and assessment.
3. To identify personal values and beliefs and to understand how they operate as strengths or weaknesses in roles as a beginning social worker
4. To demonstrate self-awareness related to the fit and tensions of own Christian faith in the context of social work knowledge and practice with various populations
5. To apply knowledge of human behavior in the social environment to develop mutually agreed on interventions and to select appropriate intervention strategies

OBJECTIVES OF SOWK 361: FIELD EXPERIENCE SOCIAL WORK PRACTICE WITH FAMILIES

1. To identify personal values and beliefs and to understand how they operate as strengths or weaknesses in the roles as a beginning social work student
2. To demonstrate the ability to intervene with individuals, families, groups organizations and communities through the application of theories, techniques and evidence-based practice
3. To demonstrate self-awareness related to the fit and tensions of personal Christian faith in the context of social work knowledge and practice with various populations
4. To demonstrate professional integrity and to apply the values and ethics of the profession in classroom and in various practice situations.

OBJECTIVES OF SOWK 372: SOCIAL WORK PRACTICE WITH GROUPS

1. To develop self-assessment, critical thinking and communication skills that allow for effective group facilitation and to understand and demonstrate appropriate role behavior for a social worker practicing group work.
2. To understand the dynamics and development of group processes that assist members in achieving their goals, and to understand how membership in groups interrelates to effect human behavior and development including issues related to how diversity (racial, ethnic, gender, age, religion, sexual orientation) influences group processes.
3. To be able to plan and implement groups responsive to individual client needs and congruent with agency's mission, and to understand how to utilize group process to advocate for empowerment and opportunity, and to use a group's power to produce social change.
4. To understand the role as Christian Social Workers in developing group practice skills to facilitate change

OBJECTIVES OF SOWK 476: SOCIAL WORK PRACTICE WITH COMMUNITIES AND ORGANIZATIONS

1. To demonstrate the ability to engage, assess, intervene, and evaluate communities and organizations

2. To demonstrate the ability to be professional, ethical and competent in complex macro practice situations with diverse community partners addressing diverse community needs
3. To understand and integrate faith development principles on a macro practice level.
4. By the end of the course/ELI experience, students will: A) Articulate transferable skills gained through the ELI experience to a professional context and, B) Describe the meaning of community in the context of service-learning and identify ways to engage in/contribute to the community in the future

OBJECTIVES OF SOWK490 FIELD PRACTICE IN SOCIAL WORK

1. Demonstrate ethical and professional behavior through self-evaluation, self-assessment, peer review and effective use of supervision to advance professional development.
2. Demonstrate engagement of diversity and difference in practice through sensitivity and acceptance of cultural, racial, age, gender, ethnic, religious and sexual differences in the practice of social work.
3. Demonstrate an awareness of generalist social work practices that advance human rights and social, economic, and environmental justice and understand the historical forms and functions of oppression and discrimination.
4. Demonstrate the ability to engage in practice-informed research and research-informed practice to integrate and apply generalist social work knowledge.
5. Demonstrate engagement in policy practice through collaboration with colleagues and client populations for effective policy action.
6. Demonstrate an understanding of the application of skills and techniques for engaging with individuals, families, groups, organizations, and communities.
7. Demonstrate an understanding of the application of skills and techniques assessing individuals, families, groups, organizations, and communities.
8. Demonstrate an understanding of the application of skills and techniques for intervening with individuals, families, groups, organizations, and communities.
9. Demonstrate an understanding of the application of skills and techniques for evaluating practice with individuals, families, groups, organizations, and communities.
10. To critically examine one's Christian faith in the context of the overall Social Work profession and apply faith development principles in an ethical, professional and competent manner.

PROCESS FOR SECURING A FIELD EDUCATION PLACEMENT

The senior placement offers students specific social work service delivery experiences within an agency setting. Students complete at least 450 hours of supervised practice aligned with the Department's objectives within an agency. Opportunities are available to link social work theory

with practice, highlight the profession's values and ethics, reinforce the Department's goals, support a generalist approach, apply theory-based practice knowledge, and gain experience across all levels of practice (micro, mezzo, macro). It also exposes students to various practice areas and client populations.

Messiah's senior year field placement occurs during the student's final semester in the social work program. Students begin the placement search and application process in the spring of the year prior to their senior year. Placements must be coordinated with the field director, the agency, and the student. Students meet with the field director both in the fall and spring semesters prior to their senior year to discuss available agencies based on their learning needs and placement opportunities. Students must obtain permission from the field director before contacting any placement agencies, and they are limited to pursuing only one agency at a time.

Once a student receives an offer for a placement, they should not seek another unless there are mitigating circumstances that have been communicated to the field director. When a potential placement agency is identified, the student should contact the agency's field instructor to arrange an interview. If both the agency's field instructor and the student agree on the placement, the student and the agency confirm the placement with the field director. The social work faculty gives final approval for all field placements. Students are also responsible for completing all required paperwork and necessary clearances to begin their field experience in January of their senior year. Field sites will also fill out the Agency Profile Form, Field Instructor Profile Form and sign an Affiliation Agreement (see BSW Program Canvas course site).

Students may apply for senior field experience in three ways. In all three situations, students must notify the field director of any potential placements they plan to pursue before contacting the relevant agency.

1. **Direct Application:** The student identifies a placement of interest and pursues it independent of the department database, but with the approval of the field director. If a student chooses this direct application route, it is their responsibility to first get permission from the field director to proceed, inform the field site of all requirements for a senior field placement, and then provide complete contact information, including the field instructor profile and agency profile, to the Messiah University Social Work Field Director.
2. **Agency in the Database:** The student, in collaboration with the Field Director, may submit an application to an agency listed in the Messiah University Social Work Department Field Placement Database. After making contact, the student should notify the Field Director and update any contact information.

3. **Competitive Field Sites:** These include study abroad senior placements in Uganda and Ecuador, as well as domestic placements through the Chicago Program and Baltimore Urban Studies Program. Students interested in participating in a field experience at one of these sites must complete an application and meet with the Department Chair and Field Director to discuss their reasons for choosing the placement. Each program also requires a recommendation from the Department. Students must obtain prior approval from the Field Director before contacting a Competitive Field Site directly.

Students are expected to accept the first placement offered, although exceptions can be made if the situation warrants and after discussing it with the Field Director. Students may contact or interview with only one placement at a time, and they must seek permission from the Field Director before contacting or interviewing with a second placement if the first agency declines. An agency's acceptance of a student for a senior field experience is considered a contractual agreement between the student, the agency, and the Messiah University Department of Social Work. Therefore, it is crucial to notify the agency immediately after the interview if, during the conversation, the student determines that the placement would not be a good fit. Once an agency accepts a student, the Agency Profile Form, and Field Instructor Profile Form must be completed. Additionally, Affiliation Agreement (BSW Program Information Canvas course site) will be finalized. The student and field instructor will then begin the process of creating the Learning Contract for the senior field experience during the Field Orientation in January.

Students participating in a senior field experience are encouraged to contact an agency during the spring semester before their senior year. Although the goal is to secure a placement in the spring semester prior to senior year, a placement must be confirmed no later than October 1 of the semester in which the student is enrolled in SOWK 484 Preparation for Field during the fall semester. Students who are unable to secure a placement by this date will need to meet with the Field Director to explore alternatives, including the possibility of being assigned a placement or postponing their senior placement to the following year.

Students will receive assistance from the Messiah University Social Work Department Field Director, including agency contact information, to secure a field placement for up to three interviews. Students who fail to contact agencies, complete interviews, and submit the required documentation and clearances may risk their eligibility to advance to the field. The Department of Social Work is not responsible for helping students secure placements beyond what has been outlined here. Students must obtain a senior placement to continue in the social work major, and they must successfully complete this placement to be eligible for graduation. Students dismissed from a placement for violating department, University, agency, or professional ethical standards may be discontinued from the major.

Student Safety

Social workers must be prepared and equipped for safe social work practices. Field experiences play a crucial role in educating students about practice safety. Students are placed in field settings with sound safety policies and procedures that are reviewed with them during field orientation, in the classroom, and at the placement site (see the section on Safety Standards). Each student enrolled in a field-related experience is expected to review the student safety section of the field handbook. The university's field director will provide training on student safety during the field orientation by reviewing the Safety Standards with agencies, field instructors, and supervisors. Students and agency supervisors are expected to discuss potential safety issues that may arise during placement. The discussion on student safety needs to include the steps for identifying and responding to safety issues, agency-specific policies and procedures to follow in the event of safety questions or concerns, actions the agency takes, and actions the student should take to mitigate risk or safety problems, as well as timelines and methods for reporting and addressing safety concerns.

Procedures for Reporting Safety Concerns

Students who have safety concerns about their placements are provided with support until the concerns are resolved. If the concerns cannot be adequately addressed, the student must be offered an alternative placement. The following discussion provides more specific guidelines and directions for ensuring student safety and addressing safety concerns. If a student believes they are being placed in a situation that may be unsafe, they will immediately inform the field instructor and, if necessary, contact the field liaison and field director before proceeding with the assigned task. The student, field instructor, field liaison, and field director will discuss the concern and evaluate the appropriateness of the assigned tasks with the aim of protecting student safety.

If a student is threatened or injured during a field placement or is involved in any safety incident, they should immediately notify the field director, field instructor, and field liaison. The field director, in consultation with the student and field instructor, will prepare an incident report. The field director will then discuss the incident with the department chair and review it with other relevant personnel from Messiah University to ensure student safety and compliance with local, state, and federal policies.

Safety Standards

Standard 1. Organizational Culture of Safety and Security: Agencies that employ social workers should establish and maintain an organizational culture that promotes safety and security for their staff.

Standard 2. Prevention: The goal of organizations that employ social workers should be to create a culture of safety that adopts a proactive preventative approach to violence management and risk.

Standard 3. Office Safety: Social workers' office environments should promote safety for social workers and their clients.

Standard 4. Use of Safety Technology: Organizations that employ social workers should use technology appropriately and effectively to minimize risk.

Standard 5. Use of Mobile Phones: Social workers should be provided with mobile phones to promote their safety in the field.

Standard 6. Risk Assessment for Field Visits: Social workers should assess and take steps to reduce their risk for violence prior to each field visit.

Standard 7. Transporting Clients: Social workers should acknowledge particular safety concerns when transporting clients.

Standard 8. Comprehensive Reporting Practices: Social workers should engage in comprehensive reporting practices regarding field visits.

Standard 9. Post-Incident Reporting and Response: Employers of social workers should develop protocols that follow an incidence of violence or abuse.

Standard 10. Safety Training: Social workers should participate in annual training (or case supervision as needed) that develops and maintains their ability to practice safely.

If there are any potential violations of the University's policy on interpersonal violence and sexual misconduct, faculty members are required to notify the Title IX Coordinator, Hannah McBride. Students can request confidentiality from the institution, which will be communicated to the Title IX Coordinator. Confidential resources are available on and off campus. Regardless of whether a student chooses to report, students at Messiah have access to all information and assistance in accessing academic, medical, and other support services. This information is also available online at: https://www.messiah.edu/info/20592/compliance/1023/title_ix Messiah University prohibits all forms of discrimination and harm, including gender-based harassment, sexual assault, stalking, and interpersonal violence (dating violence, domestic violence, and hazing). When it comes to discrimination and harm, including gender-based harassment, sexual assault, stalking, and interpersonal violence (dating violence, domestic violence, and hazing), students should report any issues related to Title IX. Field instructors, task supervisors, field liaisons, and field directors cannot be confidential and should report. They are expected to keep disclosures private but are required to report.

https://www.messiah.edu/info/20592/compliance/1023/title_ix

For confidential conversation to learn about safety and support measures, reporting and response options, and off-campus options, please contact the Prevention and Education Coordinator Emma Dougherty Human Resources & Compliance Old Main 1st Floor, edougherty@messiah.edu 717-796-5300

The Department of Social Work supports student safety in the field by adhering to the National Association of Social Workers (2013). [*Guidelines for Social Work Safety in the Workplace*](#). Washington D.C., NASW, pp. 9-23.

FIELD EDUCATION PERSONNEL ROLES

Agency: An agency is considered to be a placement setting that is an approved site where students can participate in practice experiences equivalent to their level of practice and within the generalist model of social work.

Field Director: The field director is a faculty member of the Messiah University Department of Social Work who is responsible for the overall development and maintenance of the Department's field practice component.

Field Instructor: The field instructor is a community agency employee approved by the field director to oversee the day-to-day activities of social work students participating in field practice and who has agreed to supervise a student in field practice at the agency where the worker is employed.

Task Supervisor: The task supervisor is an individual at the placement agency who is not the field instructor but who has regular and ongoing interactions with the student in a supervisory role during the field experience. The task supervisor may or may not hold a social work degree. The task supervisor will interact with the field instructor to provide feedback on student performance but does not complete the mid and end of semester evaluations.

Field Liaison: The field liaison is a Messiah social work faculty member assigned to each student in field practice and who serves as a link between the student, the agency, and the social work Department.

Student: A student in the context of the senior field experience is a social work major who has successfully completed all the social work requirements except the field component and senior seminar, in most cases has completed all the general education requirements and is enrolled in the senior field experience and senior seminar.

FIELD DIRECTOR ROLE AND RESPONSIBILITIES

1. A major responsibility of the Field Director is to work with the Social Work Department Chair to ensure that the field component of the Department maintains compliance with CSWE standards and to ensure that all aspects of the field placement meet the requirements of the Department of Social Work.
2. The field director screens, reviews, and approves agencies for field placements and screens, reviews, and approves field instructors to supervise students according to the policies and procedures established by the Department.
3. It is the responsibility of the field director to facilitate the Orientation to Field through individual meetings with students and field instructors, as well as through the Field Orientation for field instructors, site supervisors, field liaisons, and senior social work students. The orientation is provided to share information regarding the organization, sequencing, and content of the educational curriculum, and to emphasize the interrelationships among human behavior, social policy, research, and practice content. The field director will assist in providing additional training opportunities for field instructors as needed.

4. The field director administers all other aspects of the field placement experience for students as necessary so as to develop and maintain a quality field placement.
5. The field director maintains a quarter time course reduction to administer the responsibilities of the field director.
6. The field director is responsible for sharing pertinent information about field practice to students in order to facilitate student learning while at the agency.
7. It is the responsibility of the field director to maintain clear practice and evaluation goals for the field practice experience and for each student.
8. The field director approves and finalizes all student's selection of an agency for field experience. Additionally, the field director may assist in facilitating the resolution of issues that arise because of a student being in placement.

FIELD LIAISON ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

1. The field liaison helps facilitate the relationship between the school, the student, and the agency.
2. The field liaison is expected to meet with the field instructor and the student twice a semester to discuss student progress and concerns. The first meeting should be scheduled no later than the first three weeks of student placement, and the second meeting should occur within the last four weeks of placement. During the first meeting, the liaison should use the Agency Checklist Form, the Learning Contract, and, for seniors, the Mid-semester Evaluation Form to guide the evaluative process. A copy of the completed Field Liaison Site Visit Form should be sent to the student, field instructor, and field director after each visit. The Liaison will review the learning contract and discuss the final evaluation as part of the second visit.
3. It is important for the field liaison to discuss any issues or concerns regarding the learning contract, student progress, or the placement with the field director, the field instructor and/or student.
4. The field liaison has the responsibility to facilitate the mediation of issues that arise between the field instructor and the student that impact student performance or are a result of a student not meeting placement expectations. The field liaison will consult with the field director related to issues that arise between the field instructor and the student.
5. The field liaison will collaborate with the field director to develop and enhance adequate field placement opportunities, thereby improving the field placement component of the Department.
6. The field liaison provides evaluative feedback to the field director regarding the agency's effectiveness in providing field education.

STUDENT ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

1. The student is responsible for ensuring that they meet the admission criteria for field education, which is required to participate in field experience.
2. It is the student's responsibility to obtain all clearances necessary to fulfill the required duties within each agency and to do so in a timely fashion.
3. It is the responsibility of the student to actively participate in the selection of a field placement, as outlined in the policy for field placement, and to complete the process in a timely manner to be approved for that site.
4. The student must complete the learning needs assessment as part of SOWK 484 Preparation for Field by the date designated by the faculty and work with the agency to develop and submit a learning contract to the SOWK 485 Senior Field Experience faculty by the specified date.
5. It is necessary for the student to develop a plan in coordination with the agency field instructor, field liaison, and the field director to complete the 450 placement hours necessary to meet Department requirements.
6. The student is responsible for coordinating their own transportation to and from placement and for clarifying who is responsible for providing transportation when conducting placement responsibilities. The student is also responsible for having adequate liability insurance, as required by state regulations.
7. The student is expected to act ethically and professionally at all times, including arriving at the placement site on time and on the scheduled days.
8. The student is expected to comply fully with Department, school, agency, state, and professional standards and requirements.
9. Students are expected to work with the field director, field liaison, and/or field instructor to complete, within the expected time frame, all assignments, forms, and evaluations necessary to meet the requirements of the Department of Social Work.
10. The student is expected to be an active participant in the field placement experience, under supervision, and to utilize the available resources to learn and develop the skills necessary to practice generalist social work.

POLICIES, CRITERIA, AND PROCEDURES FOR SELECTING PLACEMENT SETTINGS

1. A placement setting is an approved site where students can participate in practice experiences equivalent to their level of practice and within the generalist model of social work.
2. The placement setting should have a clearly defined service, and the goals of the agency should be compatible with the values and objectives of the social work profession and the mission of Messiah's Department of Social Work.

3. The agency needs to be familiar with Messiah's Department of Social Work objectives and support the curriculum objectives of the practice courses.
4. The agency needs to provide students with the opportunity for micro, mezzo, and macro practice from the generalist perspective outlined by the Department of Social Work at Messiah University.
5. The agency demonstrates a level of stability that ensures the continuity of a field experience during a student's placement and provides adequate orientation, space, equipment, clerical services, fiscal support, and personnel policies to create a sufficient learning environment.
6. The agency needs to demonstrate the availability of a qualified field instructor with adequate time to carry out the responsibilities needed to provide the student with quality field experience. In agencies without field instructors that hold a CSWE-accredited baccalaureate or master's social work degree, the social work department may assist students in locating a qualified field instructor for the agency to be approved as a placement setting. In this case, the agency would be required to provide a task supervisor to the student. The task supervisor would interact regularly with the student and communicate with the Field Liaison. Task supervisors are encouraged to attend the Field Orientation.
7. It is important that the agency is able to provide appropriate learning experiences for students, including work assignments, participation in staff conferences, and other agency and community experiences that will enhance the student's field experience.
8. The agency provides consistent and quality opportunities for the student to accumulate a minimum of 450 hours of practice experience related to the Department's objectives.
9. The agency provides adequate time for field instructors to carry out the responsibilities of field instruction, including adequate time for training seminars, supervision, educating students, and mentoring.
10. The responsibilities and tasks assigned to the student need to be consistent with the identified learning needs of the student.
11. The agency participates in a mutual evaluation process involving the agency, the student, and the Department of Social Work. The agency monitors and evaluates the student's performance consistent with the objectives of Messiah's Department of Social Work and consistent with the generalist perspective outlined by the Department and CSWE competencies.
12. The agency is encouraged to accept more than one student for placement, creating a desirable learning environment, and providing additional opportunities and support for student learning.
13. Agency staff, students, and/or faculty may initiate an agency to be selected as a placement site. Once an agency has been identified, the agency is expected to complete

an Agency Profile Form and forward it to the field director for review. Agencies should also complete an Affiliation Agreement.

14. It is the responsibility of the field director to review the Agency Profile Form and determine fit and compatibility as a field placement site. As part of the evaluation process, the field director will contact an agency representative to discuss Department and agency expectations and to evaluate agency fit and compatibility.
15. The agency is encouraged to interview students to help in evaluating students' fit with the agency and decline to accept students when it is determined that there is not a good fit between agency and student needs. Prior to agreeing to host a student an agency may choose to discontinue participation as a field site.

POLICIES FOR INTERNATIONAL AND SPECIFIC DOMESTIC SENIOR FIELD PLACEMENTS

The Messiah University Department of Social Work is committed to offering students opportunities to participate in study abroad experiences as part of their social work education. Students are encouraged to consider a study abroad experience during either the fall or spring semester of their junior year. Additionally, senior field placements are available in two international locations, Ecuador and Uganda, as well as two specific domestic locations in Chicago and Baltimore Urban Studies Program. Due to the demanding requirements of the senior field placement, only programs approved by the department will be considered for international placements. Students interested in either of these specific domestic field experiences must first obtain approval for those sites before making any arrangements. All students applying for an international, Chicago or BUS senior placement must submit an application to the Department Chair and Field Director and meet with faculty. The applications can be found in [the BSW Canvas course](#) site under the "Study Abroad/ Cross-Cultural Experience" module. Acceptance for international, Chicago or BUS senior placements will be determined by the Department Chair and Field Director, based on the student's application, interview, academic performance, and other relevant factors that evaluate student fit and readiness for the demands of this placement. Students may appeal a decision made by the department by following the procedures outlined in the student handbook.

INTERNATIONAL AND DOMESTIC FIELD PLACEMENT: STUDENT ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

1. Students interested in an international senior field placement must consider programs that the Department of Social Work has approved. Students seeking a specific domestic senior field placement must obtain approval before making any arrangements. Only programs recognized and approved by the Department will be accepted.

2. Students with an interest in an international or a specific domestic senior placement are encouraged to discuss this with their advisor as early as the first year, so that appropriate course selection can be made in subsequent semesters.
3. Students must submit an application to the Field Director by April 1 of the year prior to their senior spring semester to be considered for one of these placement slots. There are two applications, one for International and one for placements to Chicago or BUS program. [Application for International Field Placement.docx](#) ; [Application for Field Placement for Domestic Program.docx](#)
4. Consideration will be given to the student's academic status and GPA, relevant experience, interest level in the requested field, and overall fit and aptitude for international or domestic placements.
5. Students completing senior field placements are expected to adhere to the expectations outlined in the Messiah University Community Covenant, regardless of their location. Failure to do so may result in removal from the field placement and a possible failure of the course.
6. Students must participate in the weekly SOWK 485 Senior Seminar, whether they are placed locally, remotely within the country, or internationally. Participation includes attending and actively engaging in weekly classes, completing assigned readings, giving presentations, and fulfilling the writing assignments outlined in the course syllabus. Students in international locations should enroll in the asynchronous section of the Senior Seminar. These students are required to watch class recordings, participate in class presentations recorded or live, and communicate with their peers through email regarding class discussions.
7. Students will utilize the appropriate technology to enable participation alongside their peers in the classroom experience. Students can find the minimum requirements and instructions for using Zoom by contacting the IT department. Arrangements must be made well in advance of departure to the international, BUS or Chicago field placements to determine that the student has the necessary technology. It is the student's responsibility to meet with ITS personnel for a computer system check and for orientation to the technology that will be used for the online classroom experience.

INTERNATIONAL AND DOMESTIC FIELD PLACEMENT: INSTRUCTOR ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

1. International and domestic senior field placements must be supervised by someone in the country or location of study who has obtained an MSW from an accredited social work program.
2. The field instructor will take part in the Field Orientation offered by the Department of Social Work. This orientation, which is required for all field instructors both domestically and internationally, will be provided in a digital format that the field instructor can view in the presence of the students.
3. The field instructor will be responsible for participating in site visits, as well as completing the field evaluation forms.

4. The field instructor will meet with students at least weekly to provide supervision and review student journals related to the placement. Any issues with the student's performance will be communicated by the supervisor to the field director. .
5. The field director or field liaison will review documentation prepared by the supervisor. The field liaison and/or field director will regularly interact with the supervisor, including a mid-semester site visit and a final site visit at the end of the semester. These visits will be used to assess the student's performance and help to determine the final grade for SOWK 490 provided by the instructor for final submission.

POLICIES, CRITERIA, AND PROCEDURES FOR SELECTING FIELD INSTRUCTORS

1. The field instructor is a social worker approved by the field director who has agreed to supervise students in field practice, preferably at the agency where the social worker is employed. A field instructor may also be approved to supervise a student if they are affiliated with a specific agency (e.g., a board of directors), are knowledgeable about the population served, or are a subject expert, even if the agency does not technically employ them.
2. It is expected that the agency supports the field instructor in fulfilling their roles and responsibilities. Additionally, the field instructor's methods should align with the approaches of the Department and generalist social work perspectives.
3. Field instructors will complete a Field Instructor Profile Form , outlining their professional credentials and experiences, to ensure their qualifications meet Department requirements. The form is reviewed by the field director for approval.
4. The field instructor or task supervisor will conduct an interview with a potential student for placement and evaluate the student's suitability for the field experience offered by the agency.
5. The field instructor or task supervisor will ensure that the student is provided adequate preparation, orientation activities, and resources as outlined in the agency checklist in the field manual.
6. It is the field instructor's responsibility to assist in developing a student [Student Learning Contract.docx](#) in collaboration with the student and the Department, and to submit the completed contract to the field director by the deadlines set by the Department.
7. The field instructor is expected to develop and structure a workload for the student that meets the Department's requirements of 450 hours, including micro, mezzo, and macro practice exposure, and which increases in complexity as the student's learning needs develop and change.
8. It is expected that the field instructor will provide at least one hour of weekly supervision for the student and collaborate with the student to develop a mutually agreed-upon agenda for the supervision. Interactions between the field instructor and the student while fulfilling agency responsibilities are considered additional learning

opportunities for the student. Additionally, the field instructor should help the student develop self-awareness during the intervention process, assist the student in using oral and written professional communication consistent with the language of the field experience setting and the profession, facilitate critical assessment, implementation, and evaluation techniques in analyzing agency policy within ethical guidelines, and support the student in applying knowledge, values, ethics, and practice skills to improve the wellbeing of people and work toward alleviating environmental conditions that negatively impact individuals.

9. The field instructor must complete a Senior Mid-Semester Field Evaluation and Senior End of Semester Field Evaluation of the student's progress in coordination with the student and the Department. The evaluation will be reviewed by the field liaison and/or field director by the dates specified by the Department. Additionally, the field instructor (or designee) is expected to sign the student's Time Log to ensure the student is making sufficient progress toward completing the 450 hours of field experiences.
10. To support the Department's evaluation process, the field instructor is expected to complete the Field Instructor Evaluation and Input for Program Improvement survey Updated Field Instructor Eval for BSW Program.
11. The field instructor must be available to meet with the student and the faculty liaison twice during the semester and be willing to share information about the student's progress during these meetings and at other times when issues arise.
12. The field instructor is expected to attend the Department's field orientation and training seminars. Participating in these seminars ensures that the instructor is familiar with the Department's goals, field instruction requirements, and the learning objectives for students.
13. The field instructor will not receive monetary compensation for this role.

POLICIES, CRITERIA, AND PROCEDURES FOR PLACING AND MONITORING STUDENT PLACEMENTS

1. The student must submit verification to the field director demonstrating they meet the requirements to enter the field. Students are not allowed to move into the senior field if they are on non-admission or conditional status in the major.
2. Students will discuss their learning needs and placement options with the field director or a designee. This discussion helps ensure the student chooses a field placement that best aligns with their learning goals. The field director will give the student contact details for an agency placement that supports their educational development.
3. Students will contact a potential placement site and schedule an interview in a timely fashion.

4. Students will develop a learning needs profile Learning Needs Assessment and discuss their learning interests with a potential field experience site. The learning needs profile is used to help students articulate their learning needs with the agency and to develop the learning contract.
5. The agency field instructor, task supervisor, or designee and the student must agree that the student's learning needs align with the agency's role. The field director will address any questions or resolve issues that may occur during this process. The student will report the interview outcome to the field director. Once the agency and the student concur that the student's learning needs can be satisfied by the agency, the field director will review the process and make the final decision on the compatibility between the student and the placement. It is the field director's responsibility to give final approval for the student's placement with an agency.
6. The agency will receive confirmation of the placement, which will also outline important dates related to the field practice experience.
7. Students will be monitored during the SOWK 484 Preparation for Field Practice to ensure continued readiness for the field practice experience.
8. The social work field director, field instructors, task supervisors, field liaison, and students will participate in the Field Orientation Seminar, which is conducted annually before the start of Senior Field Practice. Attendance at these seminars helps ensure that the field instructor is familiar with the Department's objectives, field instruction requirements, and the learning objectives for the students. Students also have the opportunity to discuss placement related issues with their field instructors. Additionally, faculty are provided the opportunity to observe firsthand the initial interactions of the students and their supervisors, and can handle any last minute issues or concerns that may arise.
9. Beginning at the Field Orientation and completed within the first week, a learning contract is developed between the agency and the student. The learning contract will be provided to the field liaison for review. The student is also responsible for providing a copy of the learning contract to the field director. The learning contract outlines the student's learning objectives and tasks designed to demonstrate competencies as identified by the student and the field instructor, along with methods to monitor student progress. The learning contract also serves as a tool to track student progress during site visits by the field liaison and when the field supervisor completes student evaluations.
10. The field liaison is expected to meet with the student and the student's field instructor twice per semester for senior field and once per semester for sophomore field to discuss the student's progress and any issues. The first meeting should be scheduled within the first three weeks of the student's placement. To help monitor student progress, the learning contract should be evaluated, the Senior Field Placement Agency Checklist

reviewed, supervisory issues assessed, and initial discussions about the mid-semester evaluation should take place. During the second meeting, student progress is reviewed by examining their performance during placement, addressing incomplete aspects of the learning contract, and discussing issues related to the final evaluation. After each visit, the field liaison will complete a site visit report, and a copy will be provided to the student and field instructor.

11. The student is expected to log their hours in placement on a Placement Time Log through Exxat. The log will be signed by the field instructor (or designee) to ensure that the student is making adequate progress toward completing the 450 hours of field experiences. These logs will be reviewed by the faculty as a part of the SOWK 490 course.

PROCEDURES FOR RESOLVING PROBLEMS IN THE FIELD PLACEMENT (STUDENT INITIATED)

Students may not unilaterally end a field placement without the knowledge of the field director, field liaison, and field supervisor. This action is contradictory to our contractual agreement with agencies. Students who are experiencing problems should initiate dialogue according to the following process:

1. The student must first discuss the problems being experienced in the field setting with the field instructor and subsequently the field director and field liaison. Factors involved must be clearly identified.
2. The field instructor will discuss problems with the field director.
3. A conference will be held between the student, the field director, the field instructor, and possibly the department chair. A decision will be made regarding the desired change of placement. The discussion of a new field placement will not occur until after such a conference is held.
4. The field director may assist the student in finding a new field placement. Plans for a new placement will specify expectations in terms of hours to be completed, learning goals, tasks, and the basis for evaluation.
5. If the situation is not resolved to the satisfaction of the student, the grievance procedures found in the Messiah University Department of Social Work Student Handbook are to be followed.
6. Students cannot withdraw from field practice without approval from the Department chair and the field director. If a student's schedule is changed to exclude field practice, they must also withdraw from the seminar class. The seminar class and field practice must be taken concurrently.

PROCEDURES FOR RESOLVING PROBLEMS IN THE FIELD PLACEMENT (FIELD INSTRUCTOR INITIATED)

At times, field Instructors may experience problems with students in field practice and believe a change of placement would be a desirable outcome. In such instances, the following process must be initiated:

1. If the field instructor initiates the request for change, it must be discussed with the field director and subsequently with the student. Factors involved must be clearly identified.
2. The field director will discuss the problem with the student's advisor and, if necessary, the department chair.
3. A conference will be held between the student, the field director, the field liaison, and the field instructor. A decision will be made regarding the desired change of placement. The discussion of a new field placement will not occur until after such a conference is held. The Department Chair may also be consulted.
4. The field instructor is expected to complete a field evaluation in consultation with the student and field director.

POLICIES AND PROCEDURES FOR MAINTAINING FIELD DIRECTOR CONTACTS WITH AGENCIES

The following are requirements of the field practice experience, which facilitate the maintenance of Field Director contacts with placement agencies:

1. The Field Director initiates frequent contacts with community agencies to develop and evaluate possible field experience sites.
2. Field Orientation facilitates contact between agencies and social work faculty.
3. Evaluative measures instituted to assess student progress during field experience facilitate frequent contacts with agencies and field instructors. Department policy dictates at least two site visits per semester to each field experience site.
4. Field Instructors may be invited to periodic trainings and CEU events facilitated by the Department of Social Work
5. Field Instructors are encouraged to attend the end of year senior portfolio presentations.
6. Field Instructors are encouraged to participate in the Community Advisory Committee.

POLICIES AND PROCEDURES FOR EVALUATING STUDENT LEARNING

Student learning in the field is assessed using various methods. The field instructor, in collaboration with the student, completes formal Senior Mid-Semester Field Evaluation and Senior End of Semester Field Evaluation through Exxat. The evaluation documents include an assessment of the 9 CSWE Core Competencies and the Department's 10th Competency, which includes both open-ended and closed-ended questions. These documents which are accessed

through Exxat are to be reviewed with students during the SOWK 484 Preparation for Field Experience course and during the Field Orientation seminar to emphasize their importance as a learning tool.

Additionally, students and field instructors develop a Learning Contract, which identifies specific placement objectives, tasks to be completed that address all the CSWE Core Competencies, and the methods to evaluate progress. Evaluating progress in completing the objectives and tasks also offers insight into student learning during the placement experience, since the plans are based on areas where students will be assessed. Additionally, the field liaison discusses and evaluates student learning during the two scheduled site visits while the student is in placement. The field liaison completes a Field Liaison Site Visit Form during each visit, which identifies the student's progress in placement, any issues to address, and notes action steps to be implemented to facilitate student improvement. The SOWK 490 Senior Field Experience faculty assigns a grade for the field experience based on an assessment of the student's work during placement, including the learning contract, evaluations, time sheets, liaison field visits and Field Liaison Site Visit Forms, feedback from the field instructor, specific assignments designed to evaluate the field experience, field journals, and an overall assessment of professionalism and competency. Each of these evaluation areas is identified in the course syllabus.

Student learning is also assessed through the SOWK 485 Seminar in Social Work Practice course, which runs concurrently with the SOWK 490 Field Practice in Social Work course. The primary method of evaluation is a Social Work Portfolio that students develop and present during the course. Students base their portfolio on the CSWE Core Competencies. They are expected to review and assess their learning in relation to the Department's objectives and evidence of core competencies. The portfolio also functions as a tool to evaluate students' professionalism and identify strengths and areas for growth. Additional evaluation methods in SOWK 485 include writing assignments on social histories, class presentations, and participation in discussions. All evaluation criteria are detailed in the course syllabus.

POLICIES AND PROCEDURES FOR EVALUATING AGENCY EFFECTIVENESS IN PROVIDING FIELD INSTRUCTION

Evaluating agency effectiveness in providing field instruction is an ongoing process that begins before the student enters placement and continues through a student's completion of the placement requirements. The initial process begins when the agency submits an Agency Profile Form. The form provides information on the types of services offered by the agency, the areas where students would be placed, and the responsibilities they would have during their placement. Additionally, the Field Instructor Profile Form, which is required of all field instructors, outlines the qualifications of the field instructor to provide adequate training and supervision to students while in placement. Faculty also evaluate potential agency effectiveness during interactions with the

agencies, both when establishing field sites and during training and orientation seminars. The field liaison assesses agency effectiveness during site visits while the student is in placement. During the visits, the field liaison assesses the agency's effectiveness in developing an effective learning contract, providing adequate orientation, creating a work environment conducive to learning, and assigning appropriate work assignments. Students and field instructors should complete the Senior Field Placement Agency Checklist. Information provided on the student evaluation forms is also a source of information for assessing agency effectiveness. The level of importance a field instructor places on completing the evaluation forms and sharing information about student progress helps the Department assess the quality of the placement. Students also complete a Student Evaluation of Field Placement at the end of the experience to assess how well the placement met their learning needs and professional interests, provided adequate supervision time, created a working environment conducive to learning, and clearly defined their roles and responsibilities.

QUALIFICATIONS OF FIELD INSTRUCTORS

The Messiah University Social Work Department requires that all senior field instructors for baccalaureate students hold a CSWE-accredited baccalaureate or, preferably, a master's social work degree. To ensure compliance with this policy, all potential field instructors must submit a Field Instructor Profile Form detailing their professional credentials and experiences to verify that they meet the Department's requirements. The form is then forwarded to the field director for review and approval. In agencies where a field instructor does not hold a CSWE-accredited baccalaureate or master's social work degree, alternative arrangements may be considered to acquire the necessary field instruction from an alternative source.

FIELD ORIENTATION

Messiah offers SOWK 490 Senior Field Practice in Social Work during the spring semester. A half-day Field Orientation Seminar is provided to field instructors and students in mid-January to ensure that all participants are familiar with the CSWE Core Competencies, Department goals and objectives, field practice policies and expectations, Department requirements, and any changes made to the Department in the previous year. Students are required to attend the field orientation along with their field instructor. The field orientation provides opportunities for field instructors to interact with one another, with faculty and students, and to ask questions. All field instructors are also invited to periodic trainings and CEU seminars sponsored by the Department of Social Work, and to the senior portfolio presentations at the end of the semester. The Field Orientation is recorded and provided to students and field instructors involved in international placements. Students and field instructors in those locations are expected to view the orientation together to process accordingly.

CONTINUING DIALOGUE WITH AGENCIES AND FIELD INSTRUCTORS

Requirements related to teaching practice skills, developing field placement sites, coordinating student placements, and professional development activities help establish reciprocal and mutually

beneficial relationships with the practice community. Social work faculty regularly invite community agency personnel representing a wide range of agencies and diverse fields of practice into the classroom as guest lecturers. Additionally, social work faculty initiate frequent contacts with community agencies to develop and evaluate potential field education sites. Evaluative measures used to assess student progress during the field experience promote regular contact with agencies and field instructors. Department policy requires at least two site visits per semester to each field experience location. Faculty also engage with community agencies through participation on community boards and involvement in community research projects.

COMMUNITY ADVISORY BOARD (CAB) FOR THE DEPARTMENT OF SOCIAL WORK

Many members of the Community Advisory Board (CAB) for the Department of Social Work also serve as field instructors in the social work program. The board also includes alumni of the social work program. CAB's purpose is to build a reciprocal and ongoing relationship between the Department of Social Work and members of the practice community, thereby improving social work education at Messiah University. The CAB serves as an advisory body to the department, offering input on curriculum and issues related to policies and practices. The board meets at least once each semester. It consists of 12-20 members, including all full-time social work faculty, four student representatives (two BSW and two MSW students), and at least eight professional social workers. Every effort is made to strengthen the board by actively seeking members from diverse backgrounds and various fields of practice.

POLICIES RELATED TO FIELD PLACEMENTS IN AN AGENCY WHERE THE STUDENT IS ALSO EMPLOYED

Students interested in completing field placements at agencies where they are employed must meet specific requirements to ensure that their field experiences are different from their job roles and responsibilities. Students requesting a placement at their place of employment must provide the field director with a job description and a list of employment responsibilities. They must also submit a plan showing how employment and field responsibilities will be distinguished. The field director will assess whether sufficient evidence has been provided to confirm that the student's assignments and supervision during fieldwork differ from their regular job duties. If approved, the plan will be monitored in collaboration with the field instructor and during site visits by the field liaison. To get approval for a placement where the student is employed, the following criteria must be met. :

1. Students should engage in assignments and activities that differ from their job duties, ensuring they are actively learning and developing new skills.

2. The field instructor for the placement should be different from the student's employment supervisor to ensure an unbiased evaluation and focus on the student's educational progress.
3. The placement should have specific learning objectives that are distinct from the student's job responsibilities, enabling focused learning and development.
4. Additionally, the employing agency must actively support the student's educational experience by providing sufficient time, resources, and supervision for learning activities. The agency should be committed to creating a learning environment that enables students to integrate theory and practice in a manner that aligns with program requirements.

POLICY ON TERMINATION OF EMPLOYMENT WHEN THE STUDENT ALSO HAS A FIELD PLACEMENT

If a social work student is dismissed, laid off, or fired from an agency where they are also placed, the primary concern should be to minimize the negative impact on the student's educational experience. The aim is to collaborate with the student to provide them with an opportunity to complete their degree requirements. This is handled on a case-by-case basis and includes a review process, which may involve changing placements or, in more serious cases, dismissing the student from the program.

1. Review: The Field Director should meet with the student, the placement field instructor or employment supervisor, and potentially the Program Director to discuss the termination and gain a better understanding of the reasons for parting ways with the student. If the student is terminated, they are entitled to due process, including a chance to respond to the concerns. The Department will maintain a record of meetings and documentation related to the termination, which may include the student's response, feedback from the supervisor, and any other relevant information.
2. Addressing the Situation: Depending on the reason for the termination from employment at the agency, the Department may offer the student an opportunity to switch to a different placement. The Department will make efforts to ensure that the student's learning goals and required hours are still met, even if they are unable to complete their full hours at the original placement.
3. Potential for Program Dismissal: In cases where a student's actions are deemed unethical or violate the Department's code of conduct and Goodness of Fit, the Department may initiate a process that could result in dismissal from the program. The Department will follow the policy for reviewing student conduct and determining the appropriate disciplinary action. This could involve meetings with the Field Director, the Program Director, and potentially the School Dean. The student has the right to appeal a decision made by the Department and should follow Department Policy for doing so.

SENIOR FIELD EDUCATION FIELD PLACEMENT FORMS

International Application Form.

A student seeking to complete their placement abroad fills out the Application for International Field Placement. This form serves as a tool to communicate the feasibility of an agency to provide a social work practice experience for the student that is commensurate with the student's learning needs. The application can be found in the BSW Program Information Canvas course site under the “Study Abroad/ Cross-Cultural Experience” module.

All the forms listed below can also be found on the BSW Program Information Canvas course site, under the "Field Education Information and Forms" module.

Agency Profile Form

The Agency Profile Form is completed by an agency identified as a potential field practice site. The field director evaluates the form and uses it as a tool to assess the agency's ability to provide a social work practice experience for the student that is commensurate with the student's learning needs.

Field Instructor Profile Form

This Field Instructor Profile Form is completed by potential field instructors within approved agency sites. A completed form is evaluated by the field director and is designed to assess the applicant's qualifications to provide field instruction to students.

Student and Agency Contact Information Form

This Student and Agency Contact Information Form is to be completed by the student within the first week of placement and submitted to the field director. The information will serve as a guide for determining who to contact in case of an emergency. Students should submit a new form if any of the information changes during the course placement.

Learning Needs Assessment.

The student completes the Learning Needs Assessment Form during the SOWK 484 Preparation for Field Practice class. It is designed to help students develop a plan of action for identifying and addressing specific learning needs during their placement. The learning needs assessment should be used by the student in the decision making process for assessing agency fit in meeting learning needs. Once a student is in placement, the form should also be used by the field instructor and the student to develop a student learning contract.

Student Learning Contract.

Within the first two weeks of placement, the student and the field instructor should develop a Student Learning Contract that identifies the specific goals and objectives for the placement

experience. The Learning Needs Assessment should serve as a guide for both the student and the supervisor in creating a plan of action that meets the student's learning needs and aligns with the Department's goals and objectives for the field experience.

Agency Checklist.

This Agency Checklist form is designed to facilitate student orientation to the field agency. The form should be used by the field instructor and the student during the first few weeks of placement and should be reviewed by the field liaison during the first site visit.

Mid-semester Evaluation.

The Mid-Semester Field Evaluation is conducted during the first half of a student's placement and serves as a tool for the agency, the student, and the Department to assess progress in meeting learning needs and placement objectives. Issues identified during this evaluation should be addressed by the agency, the student, and the field director, and a plan of action should be created to resolve those concerns.

Final Evaluation.

The End of Semester Field Evaluation is completed by the field instructor and the student during the last weeks of placement and serves as a tool for the agency, the student, and the Department to assess the student's overall progress toward meeting their learning needs and placement objectives. The faculty will also use both the mid-semester and final evaluations as tools in assigning a course grade for the placement.

Time Logs

The Time Log is used to document the actual number of field hours a student completes in placement. Students should note that time spent commuting, on breaks, or during lunch is not included in the total number of hours spent at the agency. The student is expected to keep a daily record of hours, which will be submitted to the field instructor to sign off on the time sheet on a biweekly basis. The signed time sheet will be reviewed by the field liaison on a biweekly basis.

Field Liaison Site Visit Form

This Field Liaison Site Visit Form is used by the field liaison to document the issues discussed during any agency site visits completed while a student is in placement and to note actions to be taken to address any issues identified during the visits.

Student Evaluation of Field Placement

At the end of the senior field placement, the student is to complete an Student Evaluation of Field Placement experience and submit it. The Field Director will use the evaluation as a tool to assess the agency's effectiveness in meeting the Department's goals for the placement.

Agency Evaluation of the Social Work Program

This Agency Eval of BSW Program form is completed by the field instructor at the placement agency at the end of the placement. It is used to assess the effectiveness and responsiveness of the field liaison, field director, and the Social Work program in supporting the agency and student during the field experience. The results of this evaluation are used to make quality improvements.

BSW Senior Exit Survey

The Senior social work student is expected to complete an BSW Senior Exit Survey evaluation of the Department of Social Work upon completion of their education. The Department will utilize the instrument to evaluate its goals and objectives related to faculty effectiveness, course curriculum, and field placements, and to assess the need for changes to better serve the student, the agency, and the Department.

Portfolio Evaluation

The student completes the Senior Portfolio Evaluation during the last weeks of placement. It is used as a tool by the agency, the student, and the Department in assessing the student's overall progress toward meeting the student's learning needs, placement objectives, and the student's achievement in meeting the social work competencies outlined by CSWE.

SOPHOMORE YEAR FIELD EDUCATION PLACEMENT COURSE OBJECTIVES

OBJECTIVES OF SOWK 251: FIELD EXPERIENCE SOCIAL WORK PRACTICE WITH INDIVIDUALS

1. To develop and apply the skills necessary to effectively assess individuals
2. To demonstrate basic skills of a helping relationship including empathy, active listening, interviewing and assessment.
3. To identify personal values and beliefs and to understand how they operate as strengths or weaknesses in roles as a beginning social worker
4. To demonstrate self-awareness related to the fit and tensions of own Christian faith in the context of social work knowledge and practice with various populations
5. To apply knowledge of human behavior in the social environment to develop mutually agreed on interventions and to select appropriate intervention strategies

OBJECTIVES OF SOWK 361: FIELD EXPERIENCE SOCIAL WORK PRACTICE WITH FAMILIES

1. To identify personal values and beliefs and to understand how they operate as strengths or weaknesses in the roles as a beginning social work student

2. To demonstrate the ability to intervene with individuals, families, groups organizations and communities through the application of theories, techniques and evidence-based practice.
3. To demonstrate self-awareness related to the fit and tensions of personal Christian faith in the context of social work knowledge and practice with various populations
4. To demonstrate professional integrity and to apply the values and ethics of the profession in classroom and in various practice situations

SOPHOMORE YEAR INTRODUCTORY FIELD EDUCATION INFORMATION

Students complete the Introductory Placement during their sophomore year at agencies in the Harrisburg, Mechanicsburg, Camp Hill, Hershey, York, Halifax, and Carlisle areas. The field courses during the sophomore year (SOWK 251, SOWK 361) must be taken concurrently with practice classes (SOWK 250, SOWK 360). The field courses are 1 credit each. This placement is designed to help students evaluate how classroom learning about social work aligns with real-world practice. It provides an experiential environment where students can work on transforming social work ethics and concepts learned in classes into basic skills for engaging and interacting with client systems. During the fall and spring semesters of their second year, students typically spend about four hours each week in an agency or organization. A semester is typically 15 weeks long; therefore, students spend at least 50 hours in placement each semester (100 hours or more per academic year). Students receive a list of potential placement agencies in the spring before placement and can indicate their preferences. Consideration is given to students' schedules, availability, and transportation challenges. However, the field director makes the final decision on placements. The student is given agency contact information and field instructor contact details, and then must contact the agency, conduct an interview, and obtain placement approval from the field instructor.

PRIMARY GOALS FOR SOPHOMORE YEAR FIELD EDUCATION

1. **Students conducting self-screening to determine whether to pursue a career in social work.**

The student will utilize the experiences gained during this placement when deciding whether to continue pursuing a career in social work. Students submit formal applications for admission to the Messiah University Department of Social Work during the spring semester, which includes the introductory placement.

2. **Screening by the Department of Social Work faculty to determine students' suitability for social work.**

This process starts in SOWK 250/251 and continues through SOWK 360/361. The initial placement provides key data on students' ability to demonstrate social work ethics, aptitude, and potential for applying social work values and knowledge, as well as for developing practice skills.

3. **Connection and identification with the social work profession**

The introductory placement helps students become familiar with professional social work as it is practiced in an agency setting. Students observe and discuss social workers' practice behaviors as well as examine the collaborative relationships between social work and other disciplines within the agency.

4. Professional development

Students begin developing a professional identity as social workers. Field instructors support this growth by challenging students to increase their self-awareness. Additionally, students become aware of their biases, sensitivities, perceptions, strengths, and limitations as they work with field instructors to experience and process their reactions to ethnicity, religious belief or affiliation, social class, age, sexual orientation, and disability. Furthermore, field visits help students realistically assess their initial skills in areas such as observing, interviewing, building relationships with clients, and documentation.

5. Exposure to a social welfare agency

Students gain firsthand experience with the structure and functions of a social welfare agency. They observe and begin to understand the agency's services, staff roles and functions, its relationship to the broader community, its history, and underlying philosophy, as well as its formal organizational structure.

6. Exposure to client systems

Students interact and communicate intentionally with client systems of different sizes, including individuals, families, groups, and communities served by the placement agency.

7. Exposure to various neighborhoods

Students are exposed to the neighborhoods surrounding the agency's location and the communities where the client population resides. Access is provided to the general community served by the agency to increase student awareness of social problems, community needs, and residents' perspectives. Outreach efforts, home visits, and engagement with community organizations and other agencies are helpful in achieving this goal.

SKILLS TO BE PRACTICED THROUGH THE FIELD EXPERIENCE

1. Demonstration of the skills including professionalism with ethical behavior.
2. Demonstration of interviewing and assessment skills.
3. Demonstration of relational skills with individuals, families, groups and communities.

SOPHOMORE YEAR FIELD EDUCATION PLACEMENT EXPECTATIONS

AGENCY EXPERIENCES

1. Orientation to the placement agency or department.

Most students may be unfamiliar with the agency to which they are assigned. It is expected that students will be provided with a designated workspace, such as a desk or a small room. Students can use shared spaces as long as they have been assigned a specific area.

Additionally, an orientation to the agency is necessary for each student. Students should take the initiative to plan their orientation with guidance from the field instructor. This serves as a learning experience to practice generalist social work skills and to get acquainted with the new agency, not just to orient to a specific one. A site orientation, an explanation of office procedures, and documentation expectations help students adjust. Suggested activities include observing the waiting room, studying the agency's administrative structure (such as a flow chart of services), watching an agency video, reading case notes or reports, attending staff meetings, and observing staff in direct practice.

2. Development of the concept of a professional self

The student must understand how they will be identified at the agency and how their role relates to the agency's work. They need a recognized role and should be aware of the roles of others in the agency. This is best achieved by assigning the student a specific title and clearly indicating their position within the organizational structure. The student should also be aware of how they will be addressed at the agency (e.g., by first name, Ms., Mr., etc.) and what attire is expected. This is a crucial step in establishing a professional identity.

Another step in this process is to establish a professional relationship with the field instructor. This can be best achieved by scheduling a regular conference time (once a week) and clearly defining each party's responsibilities for the meeting. Preparing a concise agenda together can help give structure to the conferences.

Confidentiality is explicitly discussed in the classroom and is expected to be maintained both in the classroom and in field settings. Supervision with the student's field instructor is an opportunity to explore this concept further, especially focusing on how it is applied to protect individuals, groups, and community members. Agency-specific policies regarding confidentiality can also be reviewed.

Self-awareness and the intentional pursuit of self should be central to a student's developing professional identity. This can be achieved by allocating a portion of the field instructor's time to provide feedback to the student about how they are applying themselves in the practical setting. Regular feedback is crucial due to the demanding nature of this early field experience.

3. Experience in Interviewing and Assessment

The Messiah University Department of Social Work believes that interviewing and assessment are essential helping skills and should be a focus of student learning during this early field experience. All students enrolled in the Introductory Field Placement have participated in numerous role-play interviews and have received classroom instruction and written exercises related to basic interviewing and assessment skills in SOWK 250 Social Work Practice with Individuals. Some field instructors prefer students to start by observing

an interview conducted by an experienced interviewer, while others prefer to review the fundamental principles with students and help them carefully plan their initial interviews.

4. Experience in relating to client systems of various sizes.

Building relationships with client systems of different sizes is a core part of generalist social work practice. Students need to gain experience working with groups, communities, and individual clients. For students in this initial placement, group engagement should begin with observational opportunities, as many may not yet possess the skills to co-facilitate or facilitate a group. However, many students are prepared to co-facilitate groups at some point during this initial placement.

The student should be assisted in understanding the relationship between the agency and their placement, as well as the overall community's needs for services. Identification of community social problems, along with awareness of similar agencies, is a means of enhancing student understanding of interrelated components. Student attendance at community and staff meetings is encouraged.

5. Experience in gathering information, assessing situations, and planning for change.

Students need to experience the challenges of gathering information as a foundation for assessing client situations and planning for intervention. Although students will receive some instruction in the formal assessment process, the field instructor can demonstrate to the student how social workers gather information through procedures when intervening with client systems.

6. Record keeping

The student should gain experience in recording social work data and documentation. Summarizing information gathered from interactions with clients, including individuals, group sessions, or community meetings, is an essential social work skill.

7. Evaluation

Self-evaluation and the ability to accept feedback are key parts of assessment and should be demonstrated for students during supervisory meetings. Students need to understand that evaluation is not only directed by others but is an ongoing process vital to professional growth.

All the forms listed below can be found on the BSW Program Information Canvas course site, under the "Field Education Information and Forms" and "Sophomore Field Education Forms" modules.

STUDENT AND AGENCY CONTACT FORM

Students should complete this Student and Agency Contact Information Form within the first week of placement and submit it to the field director. The information will serve as a reference for emergency contacts. If any details change during the placement, students must submit a new form.

SOPHOMORE YEAR FIELD EDUCATION PLACEMENT LEARNING CONTRACT (FOR BOTH SOWK 251 & SOWK 361).

During the first two weeks of placement, the student and the field instructor should create a specific BSW Sophomore Learning Contract that outlines the goals and objectives for the placement experience. This contract should serve as a guide for the student and supervisor in developing an action plan that addresses the student's learning needs and aligns with the Department's goals and objectives for the field experience.

SOPHOMORE FALL FIELD EDUCATION PLACEMENT EVALUATION

The field instructor completes the Sophomore Field Evaluation and reviews it with the student at the end of the semester. It serves as a tool for the agency, the student, and the Department to assess the student's progress in meeting learning needs and placement objectives. Any issues identified during the fall semester evaluation should be addressed by the agency, the student, and the field director, and a plan of action should be developed to resolve those concerns.

SOPHOMORE SPRING FIELD EDUCATION PLACEMENT EVALUATION

The spring Sophomore Field Evaluation is completed by the field instructor and reviewed with the student during the final weeks of placement. This serves as a tool for the agency, the student, and the Department to assess the student's overall progress toward meeting their learning needs and placement objectives. Both the fall and spring semester evaluations will also be used by the faculty as tools to assign a course grade for the placement.

SITE VISIT REPORT

At approximately the mid-semester point in the fall semester for SOWK 251 and the mid-semester point in the spring for SOWK 361, the field director or field liaison will conduct a site visit for each student's field placement. During the meeting, the field director or liaison will meet with the field instructor to review the student's progress on the learning contract goals and tasks and address any concerns that arise. A summary of the site visit, along with recommended goals and revisions to the learning contract, will be documented in the Sophomore Site Visit Form and sent to both the field instructor and the student. Students and field instructors will use the site visit report to revise the learning contract and should discuss the report's content as part of their supervision.

SOPHOMORE FIELD PLACEMENT TIMESHEETS

The Field Logs template is used to document micro, mezzo, and macro tasks at placement, along with the actual number of hours a student completes during the field placement. Students should note that time spent at lunch is not included in the total hours worked at the agency. The student is expected to keep a daily record of hours and have the field instructor sign off on the timesheet on a weekly basis. Additionally, the student must submit a copy of the signed time sheet as instructed in the SOWK 251 and 361 syllabi.

SOPHOMORE STUDENT EVALUATION OF FIELD PLACEMENT

At the end of the sophomore field placement, students are required to complete an evaluation of the field placement experience and submit it to the field director. The evaluation will serve as a tool for assessing the agency's effectiveness in meeting the Department's goals for the placement.

CLEARANCES AND BACKGROUND CHECKS INFORMATION

In accordance with the Commonwealth of PA Older Adult Protective Services Act and Chapter 63 of 23 PA Consolidated Statutes Annotated related to the Child Protective Services law, social work students must complete the following clearances:

1. PA Criminal History Record Check
2. PA Child Abuse History Clearance, and
3. FBI Fingerprint Record Check.

COMMUNICATION AND DISCLOSURE

The student pursuing a Social Work degree at Messiah University understands that these clearances must be obtained in the time frame required by Department of Social Work policy and the results reported to the Department of Social Work and Field Agencies. Progression in the Social Work major depends on the completion and results of criminal history background checks. Failure to comply with criminal background checks will prevent advancement in the major. All procedures and related costs for background checks are the student's responsibility. The Department is willing to work with students who are experiencing financial challenges completing clearances.

Transportation to and from testing sites is also the student's responsibility. Timely completion and submission of clearances are necessary to pursue placement. **Students cannot begin placement until all required clearance documents are submitted and reviewed.** Failure to submit clearances on time may result in the student losing their placement.

CLEARANCE REQUIREMENTS AND ASSOCIATED COURSES

First Year Service Learning Experience Courses: SOWK 120 & SOWK 221

Some agencies may require students to complete clearances as part of the first-year service learning experience in SOWK 120: Introduction to Social Work and SOWK 221: Human Behavior in the Social Environment. These first-year clearances are coordinated through the Agape Center.

Field Experience Courses: SOWK 251, SOWK 361, SOWK 372, SOWK 476, and SOWK 490

All Social Work students must complete new clearances before starting the following field experiences:

SOWK 251 Field Experience with Individuals

SOWK 361 Field Experience with Families

SOWK 490 Field Practice in Social Work

Students must verify that there have been no changes to their criminal record status for the following courses:

SOWK 372 Practice with Groups

SOWK 476 Field Experience with Communities and Organizations

Note: Students will not be permitted to begin field experience courses until all required clearances are submitted and reviewed by the Field Director.

CRIMINAL RECORD STATUS VERIFICATION

Students enrolled in SOWK 372 Practice with Groups and SOWK 476 Field Experience with Communities and Organizations who have completed clearances within the past two years must verify that their status remains unchanged since their last record check. It is the students' responsibility to promptly report any incident that could affect their criminal record check or child abuse clearance to the Department. If a student is found to have an undisclosed criminal history that later appears on a background check, their placement process will be suspended. The undisclosed record may also threaten the student's status in the major.

Criminal Record

The Messiah University Department of Social Work cannot guarantee placements for students with misdemeanor or felony convictions or those who cannot pass Child Abuse &/or Criminal History checks. The Department also cannot guarantee placements for students unable to pass health or drug and alcohol screenings for any reason.

A Criminal Record (Federal and/or State) indicating past interactions with the legal system, or a founded Child Abuse History, may lead to limitations on potential field placements, delays in placement, inability to obtain a placement, or dismissal from the process. A criminal record will be evaluated based on its relevance to the student's suitability for placement. If a criminal record is likely to prevent placement, the student will be notified.

A Social Work student with a Federal Criminal History Background check showing a 'Disqualification' status will be unable to proceed with a field placement. Other criminal or abuse records will be reviewed by the Department of Social Work to determine eligibility for working

with vulnerable populations, in accordance with the Child Protective Services Law and the Older Adults Protective Services Act. Any new charges after the submission of the background check must be reported immediately to the Social Work Department Chair and Field Director. The Department's decision to allow a student with criminal convictions to pursue a field experience does not guarantee placement acceptance. Agencies reserve the right to refuse a student based on their criminal record.

Students with a criminal record or child abuse background must also provide the Department and the Field Agency with a written statement detailing what occurred, including the date, nature of the incident(s), criminal rulings, and the context of the events. Students should complete a FERPA release. However, failing to have a FERPA release on file will not prevent the Department from communicating with field organizations about a student's background status. The level of disclosure required from students to the Department and later to Field Agencies is necessary because of their engagement with vulnerable populations and the risks involved in placing students in a field setting. This information is essential to assess and minimize potential risks.

ADDITIONAL SCREENING REQUIREMENTS

Some agencies may require medical testing, vaccinations, or drug screening prior to commencing placement. The completion of these additional requirements, along with all associated fees, is the responsibility of the student.

INSTRUCTIONS FOR COMPLETION OF CLEARANCES

Internet access is required for students to complete the clearance process and to download certain forms and instructions. Links are provided for completing these clearances. Please follow the instructions carefully to ensure the process is done correctly. Allow enough time for clearances to be processed before starting placements. The time it takes for clearances to be returned after the application process varies and should be considered when beginning. Students cannot start a placement without proof of clearance completion. All students must complete the following clearances:

1. Child Abuse clearance
2. PA State Police Check
3. FBI (Cogent) Fingerprinting Check *

**In additionally, non-Pennsylvania residents and students placed with agencies that require them to complete FBI fingerprinting.*

Child Abuse Clearance <https://www.compass.state.pa.us/cwis/public/home>

Please note that in order to proceed in filling out the online Child Abuse Clearance Application, you must create an account. At the start of the account form, you will be asked to fill in a Keystone ID. It is not readily obvious, but when setting up your account, you need to make up a Keystone ID of your choice. After you have set up an account, you will be given a temporary password through email, and then log in again to create your personal password. This online form requests personal

information, including extensive address history. Please do not select “Volunteer” since this will limit your access and ability to obtain a free clearance within the next 3 years. The completed on-line form is sent directly to the department of welfare, and typically takes less than 14 days to process. You will receive an email response of the outcome of your clearance. At that point, you may log in where you will be given an option to have the results sent to your home address, and again, you will need to include this with your other two clearances. This requires a credit card for payment. Students should not indicate volunteer as the status category.

PA State Police Criminal Background Check (PATCH)- <https://epatch.pa.gov/home> Choose “Submit a New Record Check” This is the Pennsylvania State Police check which can be processed online and the results typically are available immediately or within the same business day. You will need to print the clearance results to include with the other two clearances. You do not receive a paper copy of this clearance from the PA State Police. Please follow the directions after completing the application process and print out the certificate and or save it electronically. If you close out the page or use the back arrow, your results may no longer be available. Please use caution while finishing this process to ensure success. This requires a credit card for payment.

FBI Clearances <https://uenroll.identogo.com>
(FBI Fingerprint Clearance (IDENTOGO) Instructions)
The FBI check is a three-step process.

- A) First, you must register online and print the receipt (*See instructional steps below to register*).
- B) Second, take the receipt, two forms of ID, and payment method (credit card or money order) to a fingerprinting facility.
- C) Third, after providing the fingerprints at the facility, the results will be mailed to the home address that you entered online when you registered.

When you register online, you will have the opportunity to schedule your specific fingerprinting appointment. There is also the option of selecting ‘walk-in’, for which you take the chance that they will be able to see you sooner. Be sure to check out the hours of operation before proceeding to a fingerprint location. Scheduled appointments are given priority over walk-ins. Fingerprinting sites and hours are listed online.

You must go to a fingerprinting site in Pennsylvania or fill out a fingerprint card (see below).

Instructional Steps

1. Go to: IDENTOGO
2. Enter the Service Code: You will be asked to enter a service code to begin, for example **1KG756** for Human Services. Students must check with the specific field site to determine the correct service code. Entering the wrong service code might mean you have to repeat the process and prolong the completion time.
3. Select ‘Schedule or Manage Appointment’
4. Fill in the requested information on each screen and click ‘next’ to proceed to the next screen.

5. Schedule an appointment date, time, and location (*or choose 'walk-in' if preferred*).
6. Print the 'Registration Complete' page, which includes the Registration ID. (*You will also receive an email confirmation.*)
7. Go to the fingerprint site as scheduled. You are required to have with you the Registration code from the confirmation email and a valid state or federal photo ID (e.g., driver's license). A credit card or money order is required for payment.
8. Results will be mailed to you generally within 4 weeks.
9. When you receive the report, keep copies of the clearance. **Students will not be allowed to begin placement until all required clearances are verified.** When a student gets clearance results, they should save them and keep all original documents. Students must provide copies of all clearances to the Field Director and the respective placement agencies.

Fingerprint Cards

Fingerprint cards may be the only option for some out-of-state applicants or an option for applicants who are unable to be printed electronically within Pennsylvania. Below are the steps required to complete the fingerprint card process:

1. Go to your local police department to request fingerprints
2. They will need to put the fingerprints on the FD258 cards; please request two (2) copies just in case one is rejected. Please also ensure that the cards include both a timestamp and the location (including the name of the police department). If your local police department does not have FD-258 cards, they can be downloaded from the FBI's website.
3. Register online at IDENTOGO
4. Enter the correct Service Code
5. Select Submit a Fingerprint Card
6. Registrant will receive an e-mail that includes a barcode and address to submit cards/paperwork for processing
7. Mail both fingerprint cards with the email to the provided address

TRANSPORTATION

It will be the student's responsibility in placement to arrange for transportation to and from the placement. Additionally, some placements may require travel when at the job site. Make transportation arrangements for your placements well in advance of the start of the academic year. The Field Director does attempt to take into account a student's transportation status when making placement arrangements. However, this may not guarantee that students have a placement at an agency where another student may be able to provide transportation. Students should make efforts to secure transportation arrangements in advance of the beginning of a term where they are in placement.

INSURANCE

The University provides liability insurance for students involved in a field experience. In some cases, cooperating agencies may request proof of insurance. This proof is known as a “Certificate of Insurance.” All Messiah students, staff, and faculty who need a certificate of professional liability insurance for practicum experience; or a certificate of liability insurance for a business transaction or facility use, must complete a “Request for Certificate of Insurance Form” which can be found online at: [Request for Certificate of Insurance](#). All completed forms should be sent to Operations@Messiah.edu at least 3 business days in advance of the event or date needed. To request a certificate, the student must provide the name of the agency, the contact person at the agency, that person’s mailing address, telephone number, and fax, as well as the dates the student is doing the internship or practicum. The student must also provide his or her name and the name of his or her faculty advisor. The insurance broker will be contacted, and the certificate will be issued to the requesting agency and to the University for the faculty advisor.

The following information describes the Professional Liability Coverage that the University provides for students doing internships and/or practicum placements. It is the student’s responsibility to determine if the coverage is adequate, or if additional coverage should be purchased.

Named Insured: Messiah University

Policy Period: Yearly renewal on September 1

Limits of Liability: The liability for each claim including expenses under this policy shall not exceed - \$1,000,000; and, subject to that limit for each claim, the total limit of liability for all claims including claim expenses under this policy shall not exceed the aggregate - \$3,000,000.

Deductible: \$10,000

Disclaimer

Students who complete the Social Work program at Messiah University and obtain a BSW degree are eligible for licensure or credentialing by a governing body or will be eligible to work for a specific employer. Licensure and credentialing authorities and employers apply their own standards for evaluating whether criminal convictions are disqualifying based on state laws and agency-specific regulations. Messiah University and the Department of Social Work accept no liability in cases where a third party deems criminal convictions sufficiently serious to cause denial of the applicable license or credential or to refuse employment opportunities.