



# **BSW social work Practicum Handbook**

## **Letter from the Field Director**

Dear Student,

Congratulations for entering into the field component of your social work education. As the director of field placements, I am excited about working 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 the handbook. This document has been prepared with the field student in mind and you should find many of your questions regarding expectations for field addressed there. Field experiences are designed to be 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, as well as from 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 receive oversight from your field instructor on location. I would encourage you to begin thinking about how you would like to grow and be challenged through your relationship with your field instructor. Clear goals and expectations increase the likelihood of having a successful field experience.

As social work students, your field experience will be an opportunity to practice in diverse settings, work with differing people groups and grapple with real life application of your academic knowledge spiritual paradigm. I challenge 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 placement.

Michelle George MSW, LCSW, BCD  
Field Director

## **Overview**

The Field Education sequence is grounded in the mission and goals of the Messiah University Department of social work. Both classroom and experiential learning is required for students to be effective social work generalist practitioners. The field education opportunities begin early in the Department to reinforce student learning of theory, practice skills, issues with values and ethics, Human Behavior and the Social Environment, development of cultural competence, and research. In addition, supervised practice provides the basis for critical reflection with respect to integrating Christian faith and social work knowledge, skills, values and ethics. This occurs in an environment where students can bring questions, case situations, and ethical dilemmas back to the classroom and grapple with tensions between their beliefs and practice situations.

The Messiah University Department of social work requires students to be in a field placement setting during the sophomore year and during the spring semester of the senior year. Students complete placements in selected social welfare and related agencies in the local region but also in settings that may be approved in distant domestic and international locations. Department faculty are responsible for the course structure and content of these placement experiences but rely on agency field instructors to develop tasks that meet competency expectations and to supervise the daily placement activities. Faculty use these field experiences as part of the evaluation process in determining 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 concurrent with SOWK 250 social work Practice with Individuals and SOWK 360 social work Practice with Families, and offers an opportunity for students 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 during a student's senior spring semester, and the placement is designed to meet CSWE requirements for providing field education in accredited baccalaureate Departments. Students are expected to take SOWK 484 Preparation for Field Practice the semester prior to entering field and SOWK 485 Seminar in social work Practice concurrent with the field experience.

### **Format of the Field Section**

The senior field placement is the culmination of a student's social work education. Therefore, the policies, criteria, and procedures related to the senior field experience are listed first in the field section. The next section contains a description of the various forms that are utilized to manage and assess the senior's field experience. Copies of each form are provided to assure access to these documents as they are needed. A similar format is used in the sophomore field placement section that follows the senior information to assist students in navigating their preliminary field placement experiences.

## **Student Safety**

During agency orientation and supervision, the department expects students and agency supervisors to discuss the potential problems/issues of safety that could be experienced during placement. This includes: the steps for identifying and responding to an issue of safety, agency specific procedures and approaches to take if there is a safety question or concern, steps the agency takes and steps the student should take to reduce risk or safety issues, timelines and methods for addressing problems of safety.

If a student believes that she/he is being placed in a situation that may be unsafe, the student will immediately inform the field instructor, and if necessary, contact the field liaison and field director before proceeding with the assignment. The obligation rests with the student, the field instructor, the field liaison and the field director to reach a common understanding as to what assignments are appropriate from a safety perspective. If no agreement can be reached, the ultimate decisions rests with the field director. Likewise, if a student independently initiates what may be perceived as a potentially unsafe field related activity, the field instructor should direct the student to not proceed with the activity. If a student proceeds with an unsafe activity after being directed otherwise, then existing field policies shall apply regarding continuance in the placement.

If threatened or injured while in a field placement, or if the student is involved in a safety incident of any kind, the field instructor, field liaison, and field director should be contacted immediately by the student. An incident report will be completed by the student and field director with input from all parties involved, and the field director will discuss the issue with the department chair and review the incident with other appropriate Messiah personnel to assure compliance with local, state, and federal policies. The field instructor, field liaison, field director, and department chair need to be informed of any safety related issues in a timely nature in order to be appropriately responsive.

### **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.

*Standard 11. Student Safety:* social workers need to be prepared for safe social work practice during their student years. As practicum experiences are an important part of the social work curriculum, schools of social work are responsible for ensuring that social work students are educated about concepts and techniques related to safety as well as supervised in safe environments. social work safety should be part of the curriculum/training of field practicum instructors. Schools should place students in settings with sound safety policies and procedures that should be reviewed with students in school and in the placement setting. Professional safety should be part of the school and agency orientations. Students who have safety concerns about their placements must be provided with supports until the safety concerns have abated. If the concerns cannot be adequately addressed, the student must be offered an alternative placement.

\* The Department of social work supports student safety in field by adhering to the National Association of social workers (2013). *Guidelines for social work Safety in the Workplace*. Washington D.C., NASW, p.9-23, retrieved from

<https://www.socialworkers.org/LinkClick.aspx?fileticket=6OEdoMjcNC0%3D&portalid=0>

## **Goals, Course Objectives & Policy for the Senior Practicum Placement**

### **Field Education Goals**

1. Demonstrate the ability to integrate and apply generalist social work knowledge from the classroom to the field with various client systems, from problem formation through evaluation and termination.
2. Demonstrate skill in verbal and written communication through preparing, presenting, and discussing relevant issues and case material in a group setting.
3. Analyze the structure and impact of the organization related to social work practice.
4. Demonstrate the ability to develop interpersonal skills in initiating and terminating professional relationships with client systems and peers.
5. Demonstrate the ability to be self-critical, self-reflective, and evaluative in order to improve one's social work practice and to be accountable for one's own behavior.
6. Demonstrate the ability to give and receive constructive criticism, support, and information to enhance one's practice and to work cooperatively with others.
7. Assess one's own practice of social work relative to the values and ethics of the profession.
8. Utilize personal, client, and societal resources to provide for client needs.
9. Demonstrate a sensitivity to and acceptance of cultural, racial, age, gender, ethnic, religious, and sexual differences in one's practice of social work.
10. Demonstrate integration of principles of Christian faith with the knowledge, skills, and values of the social work profession.

### **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

Messiah University Department of social work

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 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 an 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 of Christian social workers in developing group practice skills to facilitate change.

*Objectives of SOWK 476: social work Practice with Communities and Organizations*

1. To gain the ability to critically analyze and assess organization and community structures, issues, resources, gaps in service, and the effects of the environment on populations at risk
2. To develop professional knowledge and critical thinking for understanding communities and organizations from a macro perspective
3. To develop and utilize macro skills and professional behaviors to address social work practice issues and to evaluate social work practice from a macro perspective in order to enact needed changes in communities and organizations
4. To understand how our personal experiences, values, and Christian faith apply to our practice of macro social work

### **Minimum Field Education Requirement of 450 Hours**

The senior placement provides the student with specific social work service delivery experiences within an agency setting. Students receive a minimum of 450 hours of supervised practice experience related to the Department's objectives within an agency setting. Opportunities are provided that connect social work theory with practice, emphasize the values and ethics of the profession, reinforce the Department's goals and objectives, support a generalist approach, utilize theory based practice knowledge, facilitate experiences across all levels of practice (micro, mezzo, macro), and provide exposure to multiple areas of practice and client populations.

Messiah's senior year field placement occurs as part of the student's last semester in the social work Department. Students begin the placement search and process during the spring semester of their third year prior to their senior year. Placements must be arranged in coordination with the field director, the agency, and the student. Students meet with the field director the spring semester prior to senior year to discuss possible agencies that are available for placement depending on student learning needs and placement opportunities available. Agencies may not be contacted prior to February of the spring semester before senior year. Students are not to contact placement agencies without first obtaining permission from the field director. Only one agency at a time can be pursued by the student. Once a student is offered a placement, the student may not attempt to pursue another. Once an agency has been identified as a potential placement for the student, the student must contact the agency field instructor for an interview. If the agency field instructor and the student agree on the placement for the student, the agency and the student confirm the placement with the field director. The social work faculty provides final approval for all field placements. Students are also responsible during this time for completing all of the agency paperwork and completing all of the necessary clearances to begin their field experience in January of their senior year.

Students may make application for a senior field experience by three means. In all three situations, students must notify the field director of potential placements they plan to pursue prior to contacting any agency. The first means is through a direct application where the student identifies a placement of interest and pursues this independent of the department database but with the approval of field director. If a student elects to pursue this direct application approach, it is incumbent upon the student to first obtain permission from the field director to proceed, and to inform the field site of the full 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. Second, the student, in conjunction with the field director, may make application to an agency found in the Messiah University social work Department Field Placement Data Base. After making contact, the student would notify the field director and update any contact information. The third option is a Competitive Field Site which include study abroad senior placements in Uganda and Ecuador as well as domestic placements in the Chicago Program and Baltimore Urban Studies Program. Students interested in pursuing a field experience in one of these field sites would be required to discuss the rationale for such a placement with the Messiah University social work Department field director in advance of making any contact directly with the agency. Students will only make direct contact with a Competitive Field Site with prior approval from the field director.

## Messiah University Department of social work

Students are expected to accept the first placement that is offered to them. Students may only contact/interview with one placement prior to requesting permission from the field director to contact/interview with a second placement if the first agency declines the placement. An agency's acceptance of a student for a senior field experience is viewed as a contract of agreement between the student, agency, and the Messiah University Department of social work. Therefore, it is essential to notify the agency immediately following the interview if, during the interview, the student identifies that the placement would not be a good fit. Once the agency accepts a student, the Field Instructor Profile form and the Agency Profile form must be completed and submitted to the social work Department. The student and field instructor begin the process of completing the Learning Contract for the senior field experience beginning during the Field Orientation in January.

Students who will be engaged in a senior field experience are encouraged to make contact with an agency during the spring semester prior to the Senior semester long field experience. Although the expectation is that a placement is obtained in the spring semester prior to the senior year, a placement must be secured no later than October 1 of the semester in which the student is enrolled in SOWK 484 Preparation for Field. Students who are unable to secure a placement by this date would be required to meet with the field director to discuss other options, including the possibility of being assigned a placement or delaying senior placement to the following year.

Students will be provided assistance from the Messiah University social work Department field director with agency contact information for the purpose of securing a field placement for a maximum of three interviews. The Department of social work does not assume responsibility for assisting a student in securing a placement beyond what has been outlined above. Students must secure a senior placement to continue in the social work major and students must successfully complete a senior placement to be considered for graduation. Students discharged from placement for violating department, University, agency and/or professional ethical standards may be removed from the major.

### **Field Practice 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.

*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 of the social work requirements except the field component and senior seminar, in most cases has completed all of 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 assure that the field component of the Department maintains compliance with CSWE standards and to assure that all aspects of the field placement Department 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 and through the Field Orientation for field instructors, site supervisors, field liaison, and senior social work students. The orientation is provided for the sharing information regarding the organization, sequencing, and content of the educational curriculum, and for emphasizing the interrelationships among human behavior, social policy, research, and practice content. The field director will assist in providing other training opportunities for field instructors as the need arises.
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 a field experience. Additionally, the field director may assist in facilitating the resolution of issues that arise as a result 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 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 work with the field director to develop adequate field placement opportunities and to improve the field placement component of the Department.
6. The field liaison provides evaluative feedback to the field director related to agency effectiveness in providing field education.

### **Student Roles and Responsibilities**

1. The student has the responsibility to assure that he or she meets the criteria for admission to field education 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 fashion for approved for that site.
4. The student needs to complete the learning needs assessment as a part of SOWK 484 Preparation for Field by the date designated by the faculty and to work with the agency to develop and submit a learning contract to the faculty of SOWK 485 Senior Field Experience by the date specified.
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 has the responsibility to coordinate his or her own transportation to and from placement and to clarify who is responsible to provide transportation when conducting placement responsibilities. The student is also responsible to have adequate liability insurance as deemed by state requirements.
7. The student is to act in an ethical and professional manner at all times, including arriving to the placement site on time and on the days that she/he is scheduled.
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 to be an active participant in the field placement experience, in supervision, and to utilize the resources available 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 practices courses.
4. The agency needs to provide students 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 a 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 in order for the agency to be approved as a placement setting.
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 experiences 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 provides additional opportunities and support for student learning.
13. Agency staff, students, and/or faculty may initiate an agency being 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.
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 has the right 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 Remote Domestic Senior Field Placements**

The Messiah University Department of social work is committed to offering students opportunities to engage in study abroad experiences as a part of their social work education. Students are encouraged to consider a study abroad experience during either the fall or spring semester of the junior year. Additionally, senior field placements in international locations in Ecuador and Uganda and remote domestic locations in Chicago and Baltimore are also available. Given the rigorous requirements of the senior field placement, only programs approved by the department will be considered for an international senior placement. Students who have interest in remote domestic field experiences must first gain approval for those sites prior to making any arrangements. All students requesting to complete an international senior placement must submit the department's application for international senior placement and meet with department faculty. The determination of acceptance for international senior placement will be made by the Chair of the Department of social work and the field director and will be based upon student application, interview, academics, and other considerations, which may indicate student fit and aptitude for the rigors of this type of placement. Students may appeal a decision made by the department by following the appeal process found in the student handbook.

### **Student Roles and Responsibilities**

1. Students interested in an international senior field placement must consider programs that have been approved by the Department of social work. Students requesting a remote domestic senior field placement must have this placement approved prior to beginning the process of making any arrangements. Only programs recognized and approved by the Department will be considered.
2. Students with interest in an international or remote domestic senior placement are encouraged to discuss this with their advisor even as early as the first year so that appropriate course selection is made in subsequent semesters.
3. Students must submit an application to the department by April 1<sup>st</sup> of the semester prior to the spring of their senior year to be considered for one of these placement slots. There are

two applications, one for International field placements and one for remote domestic field placements to Chicago or Baltimore. These applications may be obtained from the social work Department website and they are also included in the student handbook.

Consideration will be paid to the student's academic status and GPA, relevant experience, and level of interest in the requested field experience, and general fit and aptitude for international or remote domestic placements.

4. Students completing senior field placements are expected to remain in compliance with expectations found in the Messiah University Community Covenant regardless of location. Failure to do so may result in removal from the field placement and potential failure of the course.
5. Students are required to participate in the weekly SOWK 485 Senior Seminar regardless of whether they are placed locally, in a remote domestic location or internationally. Participation involves weekly class attendance and participation, completion of readings, presentations, and writing assignments identified in the course syllabus.
6. Students will utilize the appropriate technology to permit participation along with their peers in the classroom experience. Students can find the minimum requirements and instructions for using Zoom by contacting IT. Arrangements must be made well in advance of departure to the international or remote domestic field placement 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 Remote Domestic Field Instructor Roles and Responsibilities**

1. International and remote 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 participate in the Field Orientation provided by the Department of social work. The orientation, which is required of all supervisors both domestic and international, will be made available in a digital format for viewing by the field instructor in the presence of the students.
3. The field instructor will have the responsibility of participating in the mid-semester and end-of-semester site visit reports in addition to completing the mid-semester and end-of-semester field evaluation forms.
4. The field instructor will also meet with students on at least a weekly basis to provide supervision and will review student journals related to the placement. Any issues with student's performance would be communicated by the supervisor to the field director and to the SOWK 490 instructor for necessary intervention.
5. The field director and/or SOWK 490 instructor will review all documentation prepared by the supervisor. The field liaison and/or field director will interact on a regular basis with the supervisor including a mid-semester site visit and a site visit at the end of the semester. These will be used in determining student level of performance and rendering a final grade. The grade for the course will then be sent to the SOWK 490 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 and 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 he or she is affiliated with a particular agency (e.g., board of directors) but is not technically employed by the agency.
2. It is expected that the field instructor has the support of the agency to fulfill the roles and responsibilities of a field instructor. Additionally, the field instructor's methods are to be congruent with the approaches of the Department and of a generalist's social work perspectives.
3. Field instructors will complete a Field Instructor Profile Form outlining professional credentials and experiences to assure their qualifications meet Department requirements. The form is forwarded to the field director for review and approval.
4. The field instructor (or designee ex task supervisor) will interview a potential student for placement and will evaluate the student's appropriateness for the field experience offered by the agency.
5. The field instructor (or designee ex task supervisor) will assure 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 responsibility of the field instructor to assist in the development of a student learning contract in coordination with the student and the Department, and forward the completed learning contract to the field director by the dates designated by the Department.
7. The field instructor is expected to develop and structure a workload for the student that meets Department requirements of 450 hours and micro, mezzo and macro practice exposure and which increases in complexity as the learning needs of the students develop and change.
8. It is expected that the field instructor provides a minimum of one hour of weekly supervision for the student and work with the student to develop a mutually agreed upon agenda for the supervision. Interactions between the field instructor and the student while carrying out agency responsibilities are considered additional learning opportunities for the student. Additionally, the field instructor should help the student develop an awareness of self in the process of intervention, help the student use oral and written professional communications that are consistent with the language of the field experience setting and of the profession, facilitate critical assessment, implementation, and evaluation techniques in assessing agency policy within ethical guidelines, and assist the student in applying knowledge, values, ethics and practice skills to enhance the wellbeing of people and to work toward the amelioration of environmental conditions that affect people in an adverse manner.
9. The field instructor is to complete a mid-semester and a final evaluation of student progress in coordination with the student and the Department, and forward the evaluation to the field director by the dates designated by the Department.

## Messiah University Department of social work

Additionally, the field instructor (or designee) is expected to sign the student's Placement Time Sheet on a weekly basis to assure that the student is making adequate progress toward completing the 450 hours of field experiences.

10. To assist in the Department evaluation process, the field instructor is expected to complete a Field Instructor Evaluation of the Messiah Department of social work, and forward the form to the field director by the date designated by the Department.
11. The field instructor must be available to meet with the student and faculty liaison twice during the semester and be willing to share information about student progress during these meetings and at other times when issues arise.
12. The field instructor is expected to attend orientation and training seminars provided by the Department. Attendance at these seminars helps assure that the field instructor is familiar with the Department's objectives, field instruction requirements, and the learning objectives for the 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 that he or she meets the requirements to enter field.
2. Students will discuss learning needs and placement resources with the field director or designee. This discussion helps assure that the student selects a field placement which most closely fits his or her learning needs. The field director will provide the student with contact information of an agency placement that will facilitate student learning.
3. Students will contact a potential placement site and schedule an interview in a timely fashion.
4. Students will develop a learning needs profile and discuss their learning needs with a potential field experience site. The learning needs profile is used to help the student articulate 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 learning needs matches the role of the agency. The field director will answer any questions or mediate any issues that may arise during this process. The student will report the outcome of the interview to the field director. Once the agency and the student agree that the student's learning needs can be met by the agency, the field director will review the process and make a final determination of the fit between the student and the placement. It is the field director's responsibility to give final approval for the placement of a student with an agency.
6. A letter of agreement will be sent to the agency and the student confirming the placement and outlining important dates related to the field practice experience.
7. Students will be monitored during the SOWK 484 Preparation for Field Practice to assure continued readiness for the field practice experience.
8. social work faculty, field instructors, task supervisors, field liaison, and students will participate in the Field Orientation Seminar conducted each year prior to the beginning of Field Practice. Attendance at these seminars helps assure 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 are able to 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 and is provided to the field liaison for review. The student is also responsible to provide a copy of the learning contract to the field director. The learning contract outlines the student's learning objectives and tasks designed to evidence competencies as identified by the student and the field instructor, and methods to be used in monitoring student progress. The learning contract is also used as a tool in monitoring student progress during site visits by the field liaison and when student evaluations are completed by the field supervisor.
  10. The field liaison is expected to meet with the student and the student's field instructor twice a semester to discuss student progress and issues. The first meeting should be scheduled no later than the first three weeks of student placement. To assist in monitoring student progress during this meeting, the learning contract should be evaluated, the Senior Field Placement Agency Checklist should be reviewed, supervisory issues should be evaluated, and initial discussions regarding the mid-semester evaluation should occur. During the second meeting, student progress is monitored through reviewing student progress during placement, aspects of the learning contract that may not have been completed and issues related to the final evaluation. The field liaison will complete a site visit report after each visit and a copy will be provided to the student with field instructor.
  11. The student is expected to log his or her hours in placement on a Placement Time Log Sheet. The log must be signed by the field instructor (or designee) on a weekly basis to assure that the student is making adequate progress toward completing the 450 hours of field experiences. These logs will be submitted to faculty as a part of the SOWK 490 course.

**Procedures for resolving problems in the field (Student Initiated)**

Students may not unilaterally end a field placement without the knowledge of the faculty advisor/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 problems in the field setting with the field instructor and subsequently the field director and field liaison. Factors involved must be clearly delineated.
2. The field director will discuss problems with the field instructor.
3. A conference will be held between the student, the field director, and the field instructor, and 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 may not withdraw from field practice without permission of the Department chair and the field director. If a student's schedule is revised to exclude field, she/he must also withdraw from the seminar class. The seminar class and field practice must be taken concurrently.

### **Procedures for Resolving Problems in the practicum 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 the student. Factors involved must be clearly delineated.
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, his/her advisor, the field director, field liaison and the field instructor, and 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, Criteria 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. social work faculty initiates frequent contacts with community agencies to develop and evaluate possible field experience sites.
2. Field Orientation and Field Instruction Seminars facilitate regular 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 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 on the Community Advisory Committee.

### **Policies, Criteria, and Procedures for Evaluating Student Learning**

Student learning in the field is evaluated through a variety of methods. The field instructor, in consultation with the student, completes formal mid-semester and final evaluations. Evaluation documents consist of an evaluation of the 9 CSWE Core Competencies and Department's 10<sup>th</sup> Competency with both narrative and Likert items. These forms are to be reviewed with students during the SOWK 484 Preparation for Field Experience course and during 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 of the CSWE Core Competencies and the methods to evaluate progress. Evaluating progress made in completing the objectives and tasks also provides insight into student learning during the placement experience since the plans are based on the areas students will be evaluated. 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 student progress made in placement, any issues to be addressed 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 (learning contract, evaluations, time sheets, liaison field visits and Field Liaison Site Visit Forms, feedback from the field instructor, specific assignments assigned to assess the field experience, field journals and overall assessment of professionalism and competency). Each of these evaluation areas are identified in the course syllabus.

Student learning is also evaluated through the SOWK 485 Seminar in social work Practice course that runs concurrent with SOWK 490 Field Practice in social work course. The primary method of evaluation is through a social work portfolio that is developed and presented during the course. Students use the CSWE Core Competencies as the foundation for developing the theme of the portfolio. Students are expected to review and evaluate their learning through the Department as it relates to the Department objectives and evidence of core competencies. The portfolio is also used as a tool to evaluate the level of professionalism obtained by students and to assess strength and challenge areas for students. Other evaluative tools utilized by the SOWK 485 course include writing assignments related to social histories, class presentations and class discussions. Each of these evaluation areas are identified in the course syllabus.

### **Policies, Criteria, 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 provided by the agency, the areas in which the students would be placed and the responsibilities the student would have while in 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 while 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 that is conducive to learning, and in assigning appropriate work assignments (See 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 in completing the evaluation forms and the information shared about student progress helps the Department in assessing 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 student learning needs and professional interests, provided adequate supervision time, created a working environment that was conducive to learning, and clearly defined student 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 master's social work degree. To assure compliance with this policy, all potential field instructors must submit a Field Instructor Profile Form outlining professional credentials and experiences to assure their qualifications meet Department requirements. The form is forwarded to the field director for review and approval. In Departments where a field instructor does not hold a CSWE-accredited baccalaureate or master's social work degree, alternative arrangements may be considered for obtaining the appropriate field instruction from an alternative source.

### **Field Instructor Orientation and Field Instructor Seminar**

Messiah offers SOWK 490 Field Practice in social work during the spring semester. A half day Field Orientation Seminar is offered to field instructors and students in mid-January to assure that all field instructors and students are familiar with CSWE Core Competencies, Department goals and objectives, field practice policies and expectations, Department requirements, and any Department changes that have been instituted in the previous year. Students are expected to attend the field instructor orientation and seminar along with their field instructor. The field orientation and field instructor seminar provides opportunities for the field instructors to interact with each other, to interact with faculty and students, and to ask questions. All field instructors are also invited to periodic trainings and seminars sponsored by the Department of social work, and to the senior portfolio presentations at the end of the semester. The Field Instructor Orientation is recorded and provided to students with field instructors who are involved in international placements. Students with field instructors in those locations are expected to view the orientation together to process accordingly.

### **Continuing Dialog with Agencies and Field Instructors**

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

relationships with the practice community. social work faculty regularly invites community agency personnel representing a wide range of agencies and diverse fields of practice into the classroom as guest lecturers. Additionally, social work faculty initiates frequent contacts with community agencies to develop and evaluate possible field experience sites. Evaluative measures instituted to assess student progress during the 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. Faculty also interacts with community agencies through participation on community boards and in community research projects. Many members of the Community Advisory Board for the Department of social work are also field instructors for the Department. The purpose of the Community Advisory Board is to promote a reciprocal and ongoing relationship between the Department of social work and members of the practice community in order to enhance social work education at Messiah University. The Community Advisory Board functions as an advisory body to the Department of social work at Messiah University to offer consultation on curriculum and issues related to Department policy and practices. The Board meets at least one time each semester and is composed of eight to twelve members including the Director of the Messiah University social work Department, the Field Director, two student representatives from the Department of social work, and four to eight representatives from the practice community. Every effort is made to enrich the work of the Board by actively seeking members who reflect racial, cultural, and ethnic diversity as well as diversity in fields of practice.

### **Policies Related to Field Placements in an Agency where the Student is also Employed**

Students who are interested in completing field placements in agencies where they are employed must meet specific requirements to assure that the field experiences are different than the roles and responsibilities the students have as part of their employment. Students who are requesting a placement where they are employed must provide the field director with a job description and a list of employment responsibilities, and submit a plan to show how employment and field responsibilities will be differentiated. The field director will determine if sufficient evidence has been provided to assure that the student assignments and field education supervision is different than those associated with the student's employment. If approval is granted, the plan will be monitored in coordination with the field instructor and during site visits by the field liaison.

### **Description of Senior Placement Forms**

#### *International Application Form*

The international application form is completed by a student who is seeking to complete his/her placement abroad. This form is used 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 students learning needs.

#### *Agency Profile Form*

The agency profile form is completed by an agency identified as a potential field practice site. The form is evaluated by the field director and is used as a tool to assess the

Messiah University Department of social work

feasibility of an agency to provide a social work practice experience for the student that is commensurate with the student's learning needs.

*Field Instructor Profile Form*

This 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 qualifications of the applicant to provide field instruction for students.

*Student and Agency Contact Information Form*

This form is to be completed by the student within the first week of placement and submitted to the field director. The information will be used as a guide for whom 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 Form*

This form is completed by the student during the SOWK 484 Preparation for Field Practice class. It is designed to assist students in developing a plan of action for identifying and meeting specific learning needs while in placement, and the form 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 developing a student learning contract.

*Student Learning Contract*

During the first two weeks of placement, the student and the field instructor should develop a specific learning contract that identifies the specific goals and objectives for the placement experience. The Learning Needs Assessment should be used as a guide for the student and the supervisor in creating a plan of action that meets the learning needs of the student and that meets the Department's goals and objectives for the field experience.

*Agency Checklist*

This form is designed to facilitate student orientation to the field agency. The form should be completed 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 evaluation is completed during the first half of a student's placement and is used as a tool by the agency, the student, and the Department in assessing the student's progress in meeting the learning needs and placement objectives. Issues identified during the mid-semester evaluation process should be addressed by the agency, the student, and the field director and a plan of action should be developed to address those concerns.

*Final Evaluation*

The final evaluation is completed by the field instructor and the student during the last weeks of placement and 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 and placement objectives. Both the mid-semester and the final evaluations will also be used as tools by the faculty in assigning a course grade for the placement.

## Messiah University Department of social work

### *Time Log*

The time sheet is used to document the actual number of work hours a student completes in placement. Students should note that time spent while at lunch is *not* included in the total number of hours spent in the agency. The student is expected to keep a daily record of hours and have the field instructor sign off on the time sheet on a weekly basis. The student is expected to submit a copy of the signed time sheet to the field director on a weekly basis.

### *Field Liaison Site Visit Form*

This 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 evaluation of the field placement experience and submit it to the field director. The evaluation will be used as a tool in assessing agency effectiveness in meeting Department goals for the placement.

### *Exit Survey*

The Senior social work student is expected to complete an evaluation of the Department of social work at the end of a student's education. The instrument will be used by the Department to evaluate Department goals and objectives related to faculty effectiveness, course curriculum and field placements and to assess the need to make changes to better serve the student, the agency and the Department.

### *Portfolio Evaluation*

The portfolio evaluation is completed by the student during the last weeks of placement and 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.

## Application for International Field Placement

Complete the following sections electronically and e-mail the application to Dr. Charlene Lane (clane@messiah.edu) and Michelle George ([mgeorge@messiah.edu](mailto:mgeorge@messiah.edu)) by April 1st.

*I. Please provide the following basic information.*

Name: [Click here to enter text.](#)

Student ID #: [Click here to enter text.](#)

E-mail Address: [Click here to enter text.](#)

Phone Number: [Click here to enter text.](#)

Cumulative GPA: [Click here to enter text.](#)

GPA in social work: [Click here to enter text.](#)

Will all of your coursework (including general education requirements) be completed at the time you begin placement? Choose an item.

*If not, what will you still need to complete?* [Click here to enter text.](#)

Which study abroad program(s) are you applying to? [Click here to enter text.](#)

Have you applied and/or been accepted to the study abroad program(s) you wish to attend?

[Click here to enter text.](#)

*II. Please describe your previous experience.*

Sophomore year field placement agency: [Click here to enter text.](#)

Sophomore field placement supervisor: [Click here to enter text.](#)

Relevant work or volunteer experience:

[Click here to enter text.](#)

Experience with international populations:

[Click here to enter text.](#)

International travel/work experience:

[Click here to enter text.](#)

*III. Please discuss your goals, interests, strengths and challenges:*

Career goals and interests:

[Click here to enter text.](#)

Personal/professional strengths:

[Click here to enter text.](#)

Special personal considerations/challenges:

[Click here to enter text.](#)

Discuss any ethical, disciplinary, or behavioral issues:

Messiah University Department of social work

[Click here to enter text.](#)

*IV. Please respond to the following:*

Identify your reasons for selecting an international field placement. Be clear and specific (100-200 words)

[Click here to enter text.](#)

Explain how an international field placement will help you develop competency and complement your education plans and professional goals. Be specific (100-200 words)

[Click here to enter text.](#)

Describe what specific challenges you anticipate in completing an international field placement and how you plan to address those challenges. What are your expectations and how will you manage the ambiguity associated with international experiences? ( 100-200 words)

[Click here to enter text.](#)

Discuss how you plan to ethically integrate faith development during your field placement abroad. Consider the challenges you will face given that you will be in a different cultural and religious context. (100-200 words)

[Click here to enter text.](#)



## **Sophomore Placement Objectives and Skills to be Learned**

### **Objectives**

*Objectives of SOWK 251: Field Experience social work Practice with Individuals:*

1. Demonstrate beginning knowledge and skills necessary for competent generalist social work practice.
2. To identify personal values and beliefs and to understand and explain how they operate as strengths or weaknesses in your role as a beginning social work student.
3. To describe and apply generalist perspective and systems theory with a variety of client populations.
4. To demonstrate basic skills of a helping relationship including empathy, active listening, interviewing, process recording and assessment.
5. To evaluate personal and agency effectiveness in the delivery of generalist social work services.
6. To demonstrate professional integrity and to apply the values and ethics of the profession in various practice situations.
7. To demonstrate self-awareness related to the fit and tensions of one's own Christian faith in the content of social work knowledge and practice with various populations.

*Objectives of SOWK 361: Field Experience social work Practice with Families:*

1. Demonstrate beginning knowledge and skills necessary for competent generalist social work practice with individuals and families.
2. Utilize supervision, consultation, and self-awareness to enhance professional growth and development.
3. To analyze models of assessment, prevention, intervention, and evaluation with families and to demonstrate effective verbal, nonverbal, and written communication skills with this population.
4. To recognize the role and value of client populations to inform self-understanding.
5. To critically evaluate and apply theories of human behavior within the social environment.
6. To work cooperatively with families to assess and develop interventions.
7. To critically examine one's Christian faith within the context of social work knowledge and practice with families.

### **Skills**

*Skills to be practiced through the field experience:*

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

## **Second Year social work: Introductory Placement Information**

Students complete the Introductory Placement during their sophomore year in agencies around the Harrisburg, Mechanicsburg, Camp Hill, Hershey, York, Halifax and Carlisle areas. This placement is designed to test the fit between the conceptions of social work and the realities of day-to-day social work practice. The placement serves as an experimental setting for students to grapple with translating the abstract concepts of social work practice obtained in classes into rudimentary skills for relating and interacting with client systems.

Students complete the Admission for Application into the social work Department after completing the required courses and placement hours for SOWK 250/251. Students generally complete approximately four hours per week during the fall and spring semester of their second year in an agency or organization. A semester is typically 15 weeks long; therefore, the students spend at least 50 hours in placement each semester (100 hours or more per academic year). Students are provided a list of potential placement agencies and may indicate their preference. However, the field director will make the final decision regarding placements. The student is then required to contact the agency, interview and obtain placement approval from the field instructor.

### **Major Purposes of Introductory Placement**

#### *Self-screening by students to decide about pursuing a social work career*

The student will use the experiences gained during this placement when deciding whether to continue social work education. Students make formal application for admission to the Messiah University Department of social work during the spring semester, which includes this Introductory Placement.

#### *Screening by Department of social work faculty to identify student's match with social work*

This process begins in SOWK 250/251 and continues throughout SOWK 360/361. The introductory placement is a primary source of data about student ability to demonstrate aptitude and potential for operationalizing social work values and knowledge and for gaining practice skills.

#### *Beginning socialization to and identification with the profession of social work*

The introductory placement allows students to become familiar with professional social work as it is practiced in an agency setting. Students observe and discuss the social worker's purposes and roles as well as the working relationships which exist between social work and other disciplines which may be represented within the agency.

#### *Professional development*

Students need to begin to develop a professional identity as a social worker. Field instructors assist in this process by challenging students to increase their level of self-awareness. Additionally, students become aware of their sensitivities, perceptions, strengths, and limitations by working with field instructors to experience and process their reactions to ethnicity, religious belief/affiliation, social class, age, sexual orientation, and disability. In addition, field visits help students to realistically evaluate their beginning skills in such areas as observing, interviewing, establishing relationships with client systems, and documentation.

#### *Exposure to a social welfare agency*

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

*Exposure to client systems*

Students need to interact purposefully with client systems of various sizes including individuals, families, groups, and communities served by the placement agency.

*Exposure to a variety of neighborhoods*

Students should be exposed to the neighborhoods surrounding the agency building. Access should be provided to the general consumer community served by the agency to raise student consciousness of social problems, community needs, and the views of community residents. Outreach efforts, home visits, and contact with community organizations and other agencies are useful in achieving this goal.

### **Suggestions for Types of the Introductory Placement Agency Experiences**

While recognizing that agencies vary greatly in the services they provide and in the opportunities available to students, there are, nevertheless, certain experiences that the Department believes are essential for every social work students. Those essential experiences are listed below.

Department faculty are aware that the time-limited and concentrated nature of this field experience may present come challenges in regard to how much depth can be achieved in each of the essential activities and that uneven emphases may result. We are convinced, however, of the importance of addressing each of the essential CSWE Core Competencies to the extent possible during a 50-hour time frame. In those instances where a particular experiential opportunity is not available within the agency, our expectation is that the agency will make reasonable efforts to expose the student to that aspect of social work practice in some other department within the agency. Students should also utilize professional development opportunities to gain additional experiences.

### **Agency Experiences**

*Orientation to the placement agency or Department*

Most students will be unfamiliar with the agency in which they are placed. It is expected that students are provided some designated space in which to work (i.e. desk, small room). In addition, an orientation of the agency is necessary for each student. Students should take some initiative to plan their own orientation with direction from the field instructor. This is a learning experience for practicing generalist social work skills and becoming acquainted with any new agency and not simply orientation to a specific agency. A field site orientation, explanation of office procedures, and documentation expectations assists with the student's adjustment. Some suggested activities include observation of the waiting room, study of the administrative structure of the agency (a flow chart depicting agency services), viewing an agency video, reading case notes or reports, attending staff meetings, and observing agency staff in direct practice.

*Development of the idea of a professional self*

## Messiah University Department of social work

The student must know how she/he is to be designated at the agency and how she/he is related to the work of the agency. She/he needs to have a recognized role as well as understand the role of others in the agency. This is best accomplished by providing the student a specific title and showing the student where she/he would fit into the agency organizational structure. The student should also be clear as to how she/he will be referred to at the agency (i.e. first name, Ms., Mr., etc.) and how she/he should dress. This is an important step toward development of a professional identity.

Another step in this process is the development of a professional relationship with the field instructor. This can best be accomplished by scheduling a regular conference time (once a week) and specifying the responsibilities of each party for the conference. Mutual preparation of a concise agenda may lend structure to the conferences.

Confidentiality is explored explicitly in the classroom and is expected to be practiced in both the classroom and field setting. Supervision with student's field instructor is an opportunity to explore the concept further with emphasis on how it is used to protect individuals, groups, and community members. Agency specific policies for keeping information confidential can be explored as well.

Self-awareness and the conscious pursuit of self should be a significant part of the developing professional identity of the student. This can be accomplished by using part of the field instructor's time to provide feedback to the student about her/his work in using self. Frequent feedback is essential given the concentrated nature of this early field experience.

### *Experience in Interviewing and Assessment*

The Messiah University Department of social work believes that interviewing and assessment are fundamental helping skills and should be a focus of student learning during this early field experience. All students enrolled in the Introductory Field Placement have engaged in numerous role-play interviews and have had classroom instruction and written exercises pertaining to rudimentary interviewing and assessment skills in SOWK 250 social work Practice with Individuals. Some field instructors prefer to have students begin by observing an interview conducted by an experienced interviewer while others prefer to review the basic principles with the student and help them carefully plan their initial interviews.

### *Experience in relating to client systems of various sizes.*

The development of relationships with client systems of various sizes is a fundamental part of generalist social work practice. It is important that the student gain experience working with groups and communities as well as with individual clients.

For students in this initial placement, group engagement will most appropriately begin with observational opportunities, as many may not have the beginning skills to co-facilitate or facilitate a group. However, many students are prepared for co-facilitation of groups at some point during this initial placement experience.

The student should be assisted to understand the relationship of the agency or Department where he/she is placed to total community needs and services. Identification of community social problems along with awareness of similar agencies and departments is

a means of enhancing student understanding of interrelated components. Student attendance at community and staff meetings is desirable.

*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 have some instruction in the formal assessment process, the field instructor can demonstrate for the student the procedural nature of information gathering by a social worker in intervening with client systems.

*Record keeping*

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

*Evaluation*

Self-evaluation and the ability to receive feedback are important components of evaluation and should be modeled for the student in supervisory conferences. Students should understand that evaluation is not other-directed only but a continuous process central to professional development.

## **Description of Sophomore Placement Forms**

*Student and Agency Contact Form*

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

*Sophomore Learning Contract Form (for both SOWK 251 & SOWK 361)*

During the first two weeks of placement the student and the field instructor should develop a specific learning contract that identifies the specific goals and objectives for the placement experience. This should be used as a guide for the student and the supervisor in creating a plan of action that meets the learning needs of the student and that meets the Department's goals and objectives for the field experience.

*Sophomore Fall Field Evaluation Form*

The fall semester evaluation is completed by the field instructor and reviewed with the student at the end of the fall semester and is used as a tool by the agency, the student and the Department in assessing the student's progress in meeting the learning needs and placement objectives. Issues identified during the fall semester evaluation process should be addressed by the agency, the student and the field director and a plan of action should be developed to address those concerns.

## Messiah University Department of social work

### *Sophomore Spring Field Evaluation Form*

The spring semester evaluation is completed by the field instructor and reviewed with the student during the last weeks of placement. This 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 and placement objectives. Both the fall and spring semester evaluations will also be used as tools by the faculty in assigning 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 of 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 identified. A summary of the site visit with recommended goals and revisions to the learning contract will be documented on the site visit report and sent to the field instructor and student. Students and field instructors will use the site visit report to revise the learning contract and should discuss the content of the report as a part of supervision.

### *Preliminary Placement Timesheet Form*

The time sheet is used to document micro, mezzo and macro tasks at placement and the actual number of work hours a student completes in placement. Students should note that time spent while at lunch is *not* included in the total number of hours spent in the agency. The student is expected to keep a daily record of hours and have the field instructor sign off on the time sheet on a weekly basis. The student is also expected to submit a copy of the signed time sheet as directed in the SOWK 251 and 361 syllabus.

### *Student Evaluation of Field Placement Form*

At the end of the placement the student is to complete an evaluation of the field placement experience and submit it to the field director. The evaluation will be used as a tool in assessing agency effectiveness in meeting Department goals for the placement.

## **Additional Field Information**

### **Professional Expectations**

All social work students are required to complete new clearances prior to beginning field experiences. These courses include the Sophomore Field Placement SOWK 251 and SOWK361 and the Senior Field Placement SOWK 490. Students will not be permitted to begin the Sophomore Field Placement or the Senior Field Placement until all required clearances are submitted, returned, and reviewed by the field director. Some agencies may require medical testing, vaccines or drug screening prior to beginning placement. The completion of these additional requirements as well as all fees associated with them are the responsibility of the student. Students may be required by some agencies to complete clearances as a part of the first-year service learning experience in SOWK 120 Introduction to social work. These first-year clearances are coordinated through the Agape Center. Students taking SOWK 372 and SOWK 476 who have completed clearances at a maximum of two years prior will be required to provide

## Messiah University Department of social work

verification that Criminal status has not changed since the previous records check. It is the student's responsibility to immediately report to the Department any occurrence that could affect her/his Criminal Record or Child Abuse status. If a student is discovered to have an undisclosed criminal history that subsequently appears on an agency background check, this will suspend the placement process. The faculty of the Department of social work will convene to consider next steps in the field placement process and determine the student's status in the program.

Prior to beginning any field engagement for SOWK 372 and SOWK 476, the student will complete the Criminal Record Status Verification Form and submit this to the Department. Students recognize that when clearances are completed for SOWK 490 Senior Field if a Criminal finding or Child Abuse report is found that dates back to the Criminal Record Status Verification and the student had not reported it, this will indicate that the student fabricated the status verification. The student will be immediately removed from the major and may only reapply the following year at the earliest.

### **Background Checks**

In compliance with the Commonwealth of PA Older Adult Protective Services Act and the Chapter 63 of 23 PA Consolidated Statutes Annotated relating to the Child Protective Services law, social work students must complete the following clearances: PA Criminal History Record Check, PA Child Abuse History Clearance and FBI Fingerprint Record Check. The student who pursues a social work degree at Messiah University does so with the understanding that these clearances will need to be obtained and the results made known to the Department of social work and Field Agencies. Progression in the social work major is conditional pending results of the criminal history background checks. Failure to comply with criminal background checks will prohibit progression in the social work major. All background check procedures and associated costs will be the responsibility of the student. Transportation to and from criminal background testing sites will be the responsibility of the student.

### **Criminal Record**

The Messiah University Department of social work cannot guarantee placements for students who have been convicted of misdemeanors and/or felonies or are unable to pass Child Abuse &/or Criminal History. The Department also cannot guarantee placements for students who for whatever reason are unable to pass health or drug and alcohol screenings.

A positive Criminal Record (Federal and/or State), and or positive Child Abuse History may result in any of the following: limitation of potential field placements, delay in placement, inability to obtain a field placement, dismissal from placement. A positive Criminal finding will be considered to the extent to which it relates to the student's suitability for placement. If a criminal record is likely to preclude placement, the student will be notified.

A social work student with a Federal Criminal History Background check that indicates a status of 'Disqualification' will be unable to move into a field placement. Other criminal or abuse records will be reviewed by the Department of social work to determine eligibility to work with vulnerable populations in accordance with the Child Protective Services Law and the Older Adults Protective Services Act. Any new charges after submission of the background check must be reported to the social work Department Chair and field director immediately. The decision by the Department of social work to permit a student, despite criminal convictions, to seek a field experience does not guarantee that the student will obtain that particular placement. Agencies reserve the right to not accept a student based on her/ his criminal record.

## **Communication and Disclosure**

Students in the Department of social work recognize that a component of field participation requires allowing the Department to communicate with agencies related to placements. This includes communication related to Criminal findings or Child Abuse history. Students must provide to the Department and to the Field Agency, information adequate to assess the situation and the level of risk. This includes Criminal Background checks, Child Abuse Clearances, and FBI record checks when required. Students with a Criminal Record or Child Abuse background will also be expected to provide the Department and the Field Agency with a written statement about what occurred including the date, nature of the incident(s), criminal rulings and the context for what happened. Students should complete a FERPA release. However, a lack of FERPA release on file will not preclude the Department from communicating with field organizations regarding a student's background status. The level of disclosure required of students to the Department and subsequently to Field Agencies is necessary due to student engagement with vulnerable populations and the risk and liability being assumed by placing students in a field setting. This information is required to assess and minimize risk.

The student who pursues a social work degree at Messiah University does so with the understanding that these clearances will need to be obtained and the results made known to the Department of social work and Field Agencies. Progression in the social work major is conditional pending results of the criminal history background checks. Failure to comply with Criminal Background checks will prohibit progression in the social work major. All background check procedures and associated costs will be the responsibility of the student. Transportation to and from criminal background testing sites will be 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 have been provided for the completion of these clearances. Please follow the instructions provided to ensure that the process is completed correctly. Allow sufficient time for clearances to be processed prior to beginning placements. The time for clearances to be returned following the application process varies and must be taken into consideration when beginning the process. Students should not expect to begin 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 addition, non-Pennsylvania residents and students placed with agencies which require need 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. 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.

#### *PA State Police Criminal Background Check*

<https://epatch.state.pa.us/Home.jsp>

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. 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*

(FBI Fingerprint Clearance (IDENTOGO) Instructions Rev. 1/22/18)

The FBI check is a three-step process.

First, you must register online and print the receipt (*See instructional steps below to register.*)

Second, take the receipt, 2 forms of ID, and payment method (credit card or money order) to a fingerprinting facility.

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, there will be an opportunity to set up your specific finger-printing 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 finger print card (see below).

#### Instructional Steps

1. Go to: <https://uenroll.identogo.com>
2. Enter the Service Code: You will be asked to enter a service code to begin, for example 1KG756 for Human Services. Students must be sure to check with the specific field site to determine the correct service code – entering the incorrect service code may require you to repeat the process or at the least lengthen the amount of time for completion)
3. Select 'Schedule or Manage Appointment'
4. Fill in requested information on each screen and click 'next' to proceed to next screen.
5. Schedule an appointment date, time, and location (*or you may choose 'walk-in'*).
6. Print the Registration Complete page with the Registration ID included. (*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 qualified State or Federal photo ID (example: driver's license). A credit card or money order is required for payment.
8. Results will be mailed to you within 2-4 weeks.
9. When you receive the report, retain copies of the clearance: Students will not be permitted to start placement until verification of all required clearances are provided. When a student receives clearance results, she/he should save them and retain all originals. Students are required to provide copies of all clearances to field director and respective placement agencies.

#### *Fingerprint Cards*

## Messiah University Department of social work

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 location (name of police department) If your local police department does not have FD258 cards, they can download them from the FBI's website at <http://www.fbi.gov/about-us/cjis/background-checks/standard-fingerprint-form-fd-258>
3. Register online at [www.uenroll.identogo.com](http://www.uenroll.identogo.com)
4. Enter the correct Service Code
5. Select Submit a Fingerprint Card
6. Registrant will receive an e-mail that includes a bar code and address to submit cards/paperwork for processing
7. Mail both fingerprint cards with the e-mail to the provided address

### **Disclaimer**

If the student completes the social work program at Messiah University and obtains a BSW degree, the student will be eligible for licensure or credentialing by a governing body or will be eligible to work for a particular employer. Licensure and credentialing authorities and employers apply their own standards for evaluating whether criminal convictions are disqualifying based on state laws and facility-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.

### **Transportation**

It will be the responsibility of the student in placement to arrange for transportation to and from placement. Additionally, some placements may require travel when at the job site. Make transportation arrangements for your placements prior to the start of the academic year.

### **Insurance**

The University provides liability insurance for students involved in a practicum. It is your responsibility to determine if the coverage is adequate, or if you wish to purchase additional coverage. All Messiah students, staff, and faculty who are in need of a certificate of professional liability insurance for an internship, field experience, and/or practicum; 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: [www.messiah.edu/Operations](http://www.messiah.edu/Operations).

### **Statement of Understanding**

At the beginning of each academic year, or as a condition for changing one's major to social work, every social work major is required to thoroughly review the handbook, and then sign and submit the *Statement of Understanding Form* to the Department of social work Office (by the second week of the semester, or two weeks after declaring social work as your major).

Student Name (Print) \_\_\_\_\_

As a social work student...

1. I understand that I am expected to adhere to the values, ethics, and standards of Messiah University, the Department of social work, and the profession of social work.
2. I commit myself to seeking increased understanding of the Christian faith.
3. I understand that as a social work student it is the student's responsibility to be intentional about developing the competencies to practice social work.
4. I understand that it is the expectation of the Department of social work and of the profession to act in a professional manner at all times.
5. I realize that although I may be accepted to the social work major at Messiah University, if my professional development is not deemed satisfactory by the department faculty or the University, the department has the right and responsibility to request a reevaluation of my acceptance and suitability for the major.

My signature below indicates that I understand and agree to the expectations of a social work major, and that I have read, understand and agree to abide by all policies and guidelines established by Messiah University and the Messiah University Department of social work. My signature also indicates that I authorize the Department to regularly review my progress within the major and to evaluate my academic and disciplinary records for the purpose of monitoring my eligibility for progression in the social work major. I understand that eligibility to continue at any time in the social work major is contingent upon satisfactorily meeting all stated expectations and progression in the major criteria.

Student Signature \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_