

Online MSW Program  
FIELD MANUAL

**Rutgers, The State University of New Jersey  
The School of Social Work**

**Date of last update: January 4, 2021**

## INTRODUCTION

Welcome to the field component of the social work curriculum. According to the Council on Social Work Education, field education is the “signature pedagogy” of social work education as it is the central learning tool in the preparation and training of students for the profession. At the Rutgers University School of Social Work, field and class experience are closely tied and operate in tandem.

This manual has been developed to help you understand the policies and procedures of the field education program. The information here is appropriate for students in the 100% online MSW program. Please use this manual to better understand the field program and answer your questions. We wish you a very successful educational experience.

### *Field Nomenclature*

Executive Director of Field Education: Chief executive officer of the Field Education Department and oversees and manages field operations on all three campuses. The Executive Director develops new field opportunities and assures program compliance with Council on Social Work Education (CSWE) standards.

Director of Online Education: Oversees all components of the online MSW program. Responsible for all field programs and issues for students in the online program. Work directly with students in arranging field placements. The Director works directly with students in arranging field placements, monitoring student placements and is accessible to students and field agencies offering consultation in all aspects of the field placement process.

Senior Program Coordinator / Field Coordinator - Arranges and monitors student placements and is accessible to students and field agencies offering consultation in all aspects of the field placement process.

Field Liaison: Acts as the connection between the agency, the student and the school and provides support for the Field Instructor and the student.

Field Instructor: The agency-based instructor on site; this person meets with the student weekly and prepares written evaluations at the end of each semester.

Task Supervisor: The agency-based instructor on site who does not have an MSW but who assigns tasks to the students and oversees the student’s schedule.

Faculty Advisor: Faculty member assigned for academic advising and overall educational planning.

## **Rutgers, The State University of New Jersey The University**

**Rutgers, The State University of New Jersey**, has a unique history as a colonial college, a land-grant institution, and a state university. The University was chartered in 1766 as Queen's College and is the eighth institution of higher learning to be founded in the colonies. The school opened its doors in New Brunswick in 1771 with one instructor, one sophomore, and a handful of first-year students. During this early period, the college developed as a classical liberal arts institution. In 1825, the name of the college was changed to Rutgers to honor a former trustee and Revolutionary War veteran, Colonel Henry Rutgers. Today, with more than 50,000 students on campuses in Camden, Newark, and New Brunswick, it is one of the nation's major state university systems. The University comprises twenty-nine degree-granting divisions; twelve undergraduate colleges, eleven graduate schools, and six schools offering both undergraduate and graduate degrees.

For over 60 years, the School of Social Work has offered accredited graduate degree programs in social work in the state of New Jersey. The Doctor of Philosophy is offered on the New Brunswick campus as well as the Doctorate in Social Work (DSW). The Master of Social Work degree is offered on three campuses: New Brunswick, Newark, and Camden and the undergraduate degree, the Bachelor of Arts with a major in Social Work is offered in cooperation with the Faculty of Arts and Sciences on the New Brunswick and Camden Campuses. The program also offers a 100% online, blended online and Intensive Weekend format.

### *Mission of the School of Social Work*

To develop and disseminate knowledge through social work research, education, and training that promotes social and economic justice and strengthens family and community well-being in this diverse and increasingly global environment of New Jersey and beyond.

## **RUTGERS UNIVERSITY POLICIES**

### **Discrimination or Harassment**

If a student believes that they have experienced discrimination or harassment at Rutgers University or in their field placement, please access the links below to the university's policies. If this harassment or discrimination involved another Rutgers student, please contact the SSW Office of Student Affairs, which can direct you to additional resources. Please also notify your field education office if this occurred at your field placement.

[Policy 60.1.28, Policy Prohibiting Sexual Harassment, Sexual Violence, Relationship Violence, Stalking and Related Misconduct by Employees and Third Parties](#)

[Discrimination, Harassment, Workplace Violence, Sexual Misconduct, and Retaliation Complaint Process: Complaints Against University Employees and Third Parties](#)

### **Academic Integrity**

All alleged academic and professional integrity violations by students of the Graduate School of Social Work are referred to the Academic Integrity Facilitator (AIF), Dr. Laura Curran. The student shall be notified in writing, by email or hand delivery, of the alleged violation and of the fact that the matter has been referred to the AIF for adjudication. This notification shall be done

within 10 days of identifying the alleged violation. Once the student has been notified of the allegation, the student may not drop the course or withdraw from the school until the adjudication process is complete. A TF (temporary Fail), NG (No Grade) or incomplete grade shall be assigned until the case is resolved. For the full policy and additional information go to: <http://academicintegrity.rutgers.edu/>

### **Office of Disability Services**

Rutgers, The State University of New Jersey is committed to providing equal educational opportunity for persons with disabilities in accordance with the Nondiscrimination Policy of the University and in compliance with Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 and the Title II of the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990. The University Office of Disability Services assists students who require accommodations in the classroom or field setting. For details about accessing those services go to: <http://disabilityservices.rutgers.edu/>

A person with a disability is someone with a physical or mental impairment which substantially limits one or more of the major life activities of such individual; or a person with a record of such impairment; or a person who is regarded as having such impairment.

The community of Rutgers University is committed to providing equal educational access for individuals with disabilities in accordance with Section 506 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, Section 508 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1988, and the Americans with Disabilities Act Amendments (ADAA) of 2008. An individual with a disability who is qualified to admission will have the same access to programs, services, and activities as all other students. Rutgers University will make reasonable modifications to its policies, practices, and procedures unless doing so would fundamentally alter the nature of the service, program, or activity, or pose an undue administrative or financial burden. The university will provide services in a manner that promotes independence and inclusion in all aspects of university life.

### **University Liability Policy**

In their field placements, students are covered by University malpractice insurance for their own personal and professional protection. An agency wishing to have more information about University insurance may obtain it from the Field Education Department or the Risk Management Office of the University. Students may purchase additional malpractice insurance which is available to members of the National Association of Social Workers.

The following statement clarifies the policy of the University in regard to insurance coverage of students while they are completing their field internships.

Rutgers, the State University of New Jersey, shall indemnify and save harmless the Agency from any claim or suit or action alleging bodily injury to any student from the University and such indemnification shall be against any cost of judgment or cost of defense. This shall not apply in the case of a specific act of negligence against an individual agency or employee of the Agency.

The Agency shall indemnify and save harmless the University and the student against any claim, suit or action or cost of defense brought by a third party alleging any act or omission by the student from the University which results from, or is alleged to result from, any inadequacy of training or

supervision of the agent or employees of the Agency or inadequate supervision or training of the student by Agency agents or employees. With regard to protection for the student and faculty members as a result of suits stemming from their participation in field experience, our comprehensive general liability policy contains an endorsement to provide coverage for University employees and students "while acting within the scope of their duties with respect to the Named Insured (Rutgers, The State University of New Jersey)."

## **POLICY STATEMENT ON STANDARDS OF PROFESSIONAL AND ETHICAL CONDUCT**

### **Standards of Professional and Ethical Conduct**

As the Rutgers University MSW program seeks to prepare students for professional and ethical social work practice, MSW students are expected to maintain a high level of professional and ethical conduct and adhere as closely as possible to professional and ethical standards articulated in the *NASW Code of Ethics* and the Rutgers University School of Social Work's professional conduct standards as articulated below. The program expects students to conduct themselves in a manner concordant with a professional social work practitioner. In addition to the clearly defined academic standards specified in the [School of Social Work \(SSW\) Academics website](#), students are expected to meet the following Standards of Professional and Ethical conduct in the classroom, in the wider university community, and in their field education settings. Failure to maintain these standards at a level appropriate to their years in the program may result in a review by the School of Social Work's Committee on Students. A temporary suspension from field practicum participation may occur during the period of review by the Committee.

- **Adherence to the *NASW Code of Ethics***
- **Professional Communication:** The social work student must communicate effectively and professionally with other students, faculty, staff, clients, field supervisors and other professionals. These standards include, but are not limited to, civility and respectful communication; respectful attention and responsiveness to feedback in communication; self-awareness in communication, including controlling one's emotional reactions and personal stress in communications with others; effective communication of academic and professional challenges and problem solving around these challenges with appropriate supports; and the minimization of inappropriate personal mobile communication device usage in professional and academic settings.
- **Professional Commitment and Behavior:** The social work student must demonstrate a commitment to the profession and behave in a professionally appropriate manner. Demonstration of professional commitment and behavior includes, but is not limited to, adherence to the *NASW Code of Ethics*, maintaining client confidentiality, adherence to appropriate professional boundaries in client-worker relationships, self-care and the ability to control emotional reactions and personal stress so it does not impact professional judgement and performance; appropriate professional attire in professional settings; and, refraining from impaired practice and not allowing one's own personal circumstances or issues to interfere with their professional judgment and performance. Use of alcohol and unlawful use of substances during field education, coursework and other university events may demonstrate a failure to behave and conduct oneself in a professional manner.

- **Respect for Diversity and Commitment to Social Justice:** The social work student must appreciate the value of human diversity and demonstrate a commitment to understanding cultural difference and practicing cultural humility. The student must serve in an appropriate manner all persons in need of assistance, regardless of the person's age, class, race, ethnicity, religious affiliation (or lack thereof), gender identification, ability, sexual orientation, and value system. The student should also respect cultural differences among their peers, faculty, supervisors and other professionals. The student should recognize how larger social inequalities impact the individuals and communities they serve and integrate social work methods that address the eradication of social injustice into their practice as professionally appropriate.

Students who are suspected of violating the SSW's Standards of Professional and Ethical Conduct or engage in behaviors that are harmful to clients, themselves, or the larger professional community while enrolled in the MSW program may be referred to the School of Social Work MSW Program's Committee on Students. Prior to a committee referral, the committee expects that involved parties be engaged in a problem-solving process with the support of the appropriate RU SSW offices (field education, student affairs, academic affairs etc.).

By signing below, I \_\_\_\_\_ hereby certify that I have read and understand the Standards of Professional and Ethical Conduct at the School of Social Work at Rutgers University. Additionally, I acknowledge that I have access to the information on the Standards of Professional and Ethical Conduct at the School of Social Work at Rutgers University. I agree to abide by the Standards set forth in this document.

### **Committee on Students**

In accordance with the Rutgers University School of Social Work MSW Program's Policy Statement on Standards of Professional and Ethical Conduct, students who are suspected of violating the SSW's Standards of Professional and Ethical Conduct or engage in behaviors that are harmful to clients, themselves, or the larger professional community while enrolled in the MSW program may be referred to the School of Social Work MSW Program's Committee on Students. Prior to a committee referral, the committee expects that involved parties be engaged in a problem-solving process with the support of the appropriate RU SSW offices (field education, student affairs, academic affairs etc.). A temporary suspension from field practicum participation may occur during the period of review by the Committee. Referral to the Rutgers' University School of Social Work's Committee on Students does not bar other compliance offices within Rutgers University from investigating and charging students under the appropriate and applicable student policies (including but not limited to the University Code of Student Conduct and the Rutgers University Academic Integrity Policy). The outcomes of any such investigations may be considered by the committee to the extent that the committee deems it relevant to the standards.

The Committee will uphold professional social work values and ethics and is concerned with the well-being of the current and future clients as well as students. Committee members will act judiciously and expect students to engage the School of Social Work's Standards of Professional and Ethical Conduct at the level appropriate for a student.

The Committee on students is comprised of 2 elected faculty members (TT and/or NTT), a field education faculty (appointed by the Dean) and the MSW Director (in their official capacity and as standing chair). The Associate Dean of Academic Affairs serves as an ex-officio member. Committee members who have a potential conflict of interest or dual relationship with a student referred to the COS will be recused from participation. The Dean, if they deem appropriate, may appoint an additional or alternative members for any session. The committee will meet on an as needed basis and no later than 30 days following a referral.

### **Procedures for the Committee on Students**

- 1) The referring faculty or instructor will consult with the MSW Director as to whether or not a possible violation of the SSW's Standards of Ethical or Professional Conduct or otherwise harmful behaviors towards a client or the larger professional community has occurred. If upon consultation, it is determined that a possible violation or harmful behavior did occur, the MSW Director will instruct the referring party to place their concerns into writing with appropriate documentation (i.e., the request for review form and supporting materials).
- 2) The MSW Director will then notify the committee of the request for review and set a meeting time and date. The student's advisor will also be informed.
- 3) The MSW Director will inform the student of the request for review in writing within 5 business days of receiving the written referral. They will inform the student of their rights and committee procedures as well as the date/time of the committee meeting. The student will be provided with a copy of the request for review form and be asked to submit a written response to the committee within 5 business days of receiving the request. The MSW Director will request a meeting with the student to review the request/concern. The student's assigned SSW advisor will also be present at this meeting.
- 4) Students are encouraged to consult with and engage the support of their assigned School of Social Work advisor throughout the review process and the advisor may be present at the committee meeting if the student so desires. If present at the committee meeting, the advisor cannot advocate for the student or participate in the committee's processes.
- 5) The MSW Director prepares a report for the committee including a summary of the meeting with the student and all accompanying documentation. This should be provided to the committee 5 business days before the scheduled meeting date. The committee can request additional documentation or information to be provided at the time of the hearing. The committee can also request the referring faculty to appear at the meeting.
- 6) At the committee meeting, the committee will meet in closed session to engage in deliberations and determine if the evidence substantiates the concerns. As noted above, the committee may request that the referring faculty appear at the meeting. The student will be invited to speak with committee during this process. The student has the right to refuse participation.
- 7) In addition to their assigned SSW advisor, the student has the right to invite a support person who is a member of the Rutgers University to attend the committee meeting with them. If present at the committee meeting, this guest functions as a source of support for

the student, but cannot advocate for the student or participate in the committee's processes.

- 8) If the violation of the SSW's Standards of Professional and Ethical Conduct is substantiated by the committee, the committee will determine appropriate sanctions and/or make recommendations to the student. If the committee believes issues beyond the scope of the Standards of Professional and Ethical conduct are implicated, the committee will notify School leadership. Sanctions and/or recommendations to students may include but are not limited to:
- Continuation of student in the program with no conditions. The concern has been addressed by the committee and no follow up action is necessary.
  - Warning or reprimand
  - Continuation of the student in the program with conditions that may include
    - Task assignments/papers (such as restitution, extra work, specialized work, or written reflections and/or research on various topics including ethics, specific policies or procedures.)
    - Failure to comply with conditions may result in further recommendations or sanctions
  - Suspension/withdrawal from field practicum and/or withdrawal from co-requisite classes
  - Probation with terms
  - Leave of Absence (recommendation/advisement only)
  - Suspension from MSW program
  - Dismissal
- 9) The Committee's meetings will be documented by the MSW Director in the form of meeting minutes and distributed to the members for review. All decisions, recommendations, or requirements determined by the Committee will be provided to the student and her/his advisor in writing by the MSW Director within 10 business days of the committee meeting. This letter will include information regarding appeal procedures. Failure to submit an appeal by the appropriate deadline will render the decision final and conclude the review process.
- 10) The student may appeal in writing to the Dean of the School within 10 business days of receiving the written determinations of the Committee on Students. The appeal process is an entirely written process. The Dean may uphold, modify, or remand the actions of the Committee. Grounds for appeal are limited to:
- a. Unsupported Conclusion: The decision made by the Student Review Committee is not supported by the facts of the case.
  - b. Procedural Error: The Student Review Committee process did not conform with prescribed procedures. The error committed must be determined to have substantially impacted the fairness of the disciplinary process.



- c. New Information: There is new information available that wasn't available at the time of the original Student Review Committee meeting and it is sufficient to alter the original decision.
  - d. Disproportionate Sanction: The sanction imposed against the student was not appropriate for the offense committed.
- 11) The response to the appeal will be granted within 10 business days. The decision of the Dean of the School of Social Work is final and binding.
  - 12) Throughout the process, all administrative procedures will be monitored by the MSW Director and one of the elected committee members to ensure the Committee's procedures, intentions, and determinations are fully in compliance with School of Social Work policy and protects students' rights articulated below.
  - 13) All decisions/actions made by the Committee are considered private and only shared with appropriate school personnel on a need to know basis.
  - 14) If at any point in the review process, any member of the Committee believes there is an immediate threat to the safety and security of the student or the community (including clients served), the appropriate University/community authorities will be contacted.

**Students' Rights:** The Rutgers University School of Social Work MSW program values student rights and adherence to procedural processes. The student has a right to 1) review the written request for committee review and receive a copy of committee procedures in writing; 2) consult with the MSW Director concerning the suspected violation, their rights and committee procedures; 3) consult with their advisor throughout the review process; 4) submit a written response to the committee; 5) appear at the committee meeting; 6) invite a support person who is a member of the Rutgers University Community to attend, but not participate in, the committee meeting with them; 6) right to a reasonable accommodation as necessary to participate in this review process; 7) receive a written summary of the committee's findings and decisions within 10 business days of the committee's meeting; 8) appeal the Committee's decision; and 9) receive a written response to an appeal within 10 business days of the appeal's submission.

**Technical Standards for Admission, Matriculation, Progression and Program Completion**

As the Rutgers University MSW program seeks to prepare students for professional and ethical social work practice, MSW candidates<sup>1</sup> are expected to meet the program's academic standards, maintain a high level of professional and ethical conduct, and adhere as closely as possible to professional and ethical standards articulated in the *NASW Code of Ethics*. In addition to the clearly defined academic standards specified in the [School of Social Work \(SSW\) Academics website](#) and the School's Standards for Professional and Ethical conduct delineated in the MSW program handbook, the School has identified a set of technical standards that specify the non-academic attributes, abilities, and skills candidates must demonstrate for admission, retention, progression, and graduation from the MSW program.

Admission to the School of Social Work is conditional on the candidate's ability to achieve and

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<sup>1</sup> The term "candidate" refers to candidates for admission to SSW as well as current SSW students who are enrolled and seek to progress and graduate.

meet these technical standards in conjunction with the academic standards, with or without reasonable accommodation, and depends on a process that examines and values all pertinent skills, attitudes, and attributes of each candidate on a case-by-case basis. The School of Social Work adheres to the highest ethical and professional standards of the Social Work profession. In doing so, the School of Social Work reserves the right to deny admission to candidates or to discharge candidates who, upon completion of this interactive process, cannot meet these technical and/or academic standards or who would be deemed to pose a threat to patients and others in the educational and clinical (i.e., field education) environment. Under all circumstances, a candidate should be able to perform in an independent manner. The use of an intermediary in the clinical setting is ordinarily not permitted and may never be used as a substitute for a candidate's judgment or intellectual acumen. The use of an intermediary would be considered only when it does not alter an essential element or function of these technical and/or academic standards.

- **Professional Communication:** The social work candidate must be able to communicate effectively and professionally with other students, faculty, staff, clients, field supervisors and other professionals from a variety of educational and cultural backgrounds in accordance with the NASW Code of Ethics. Candidates must be able to communicate effectively and efficiently (in English) and must be able to clearly and accurately record information and interpret verbal, written, and nonverbal communication. Candidates must also be open to receive feedback from other social work or allied professionals as well as their peers.
- **Observation Skills:** Observation requires the use of visual, auditory, and somatic senses (or the functional equivalent) in a variety of areas related to contemporary social work practice. Candidates must have the ability to observe and evaluate in classroom settings, small group teaching exercises, one-on-one evaluation, social work settings and practice sites. Candidates must be able to observe a client accurately, particularly as related to social work assessment and intervention.
- **Motor and Sensory:** A candidate must demonstrate sufficient motor and sensory function to successfully complete a class and field practicum, with or without reasonable accommodations.
- **Intellectual, Conceptual, and Integrative Abilities:** Candidates must possess adequate intellectual, conceptual and integrative abilities to successfully complete coursework and field practicum. Social work practice entails assessing and intervening in complex situations with vulnerable populations and social workers must possess these abilities to engage in complex problem-solving and practice effectively.
- **Behavioral and Interpersonal Attributes:** A candidate must possess the appropriate behavioral and interpersonal attributes in order to develop and maintain professional relationships with clients, colleagues, instructors, and community members in accordance with the NASW Code of Ethics and the RU SSW Standards of Professional and Ethical Conduct. These include, but are not limited to, emotional self-regulation, self-awareness, flexibility, and compassion. The candidate must be able to serve (in an appropriate manner), all persons in need of assistance, regardless of the person's age, class, race, ethnicity, religious affiliation (or lack thereof), gender identification, ability, sexual orientation, and value system. The candidate should also respect cultural differences among their peers, faculty, supervisors and other professionals.

- **Field Education Practicum:** An integral part of the social work education process is the completion of generalist and specialized social work field education practicum experience. Within the constraints established by law, in these experiences student social work interns are placed in social work practice settings and expected to function at the professional level of a social worker with the highest ethical standards.

Candidates are expected to maintain a high standard of professional behavior including adherence to the School's standards of professional and ethical conduct and the NASW code of ethics. Additionally, candidates are expected to adhere to HIPAA regulations (if applicable), which include but are not limited to maintaining client confidentiality, and the protection of access to client records. Candidates are expected to take responsibility for their own learning and demonstrate a willingness to engage clients, social workers and allied professionals, and others in the provision of client-focused services and care.

A candidate, whose behavior or performance raises questions concerning his/her ability to fulfill these technical standards, will be referred to the Assistant Dean of Student Affairs ([amhunter@ssw.rutgers.edu](mailto:amhunter@ssw.rutgers.edu)) and may be required to obtain an evaluation and/or testing by a health care provider designated/approved by the School, if appropriate. The results will be provided to appropriate School/University leadership to determine whether the student is fit to pursue the educational and/or field education program. If the candidate is deemed fit to pursue the program, the School reserves the right to require actions recommended by the health care provider, including but not limited to further testing, counseling, monitoring, and leaves of absence.

Candidates who cannot meet the technical standards with or without reasonable accommodations may be subject to review by the appropriate University officials to determine the appropriate action, which can include dismissal from the program. Candidates must be proactive in addressing deficiencies in meeting the standards and follow appropriate University policies set forth in doing so.

The RU SSW complies with all applicable laws concerning applicants and students with disabilities. For any eligible student, Rutgers University provides reasonable accommodations in order to ensure that all candidates have an equal opportunity to participate in all programs, services, and practical training activities. These technical standards are not intended to deter any candidate for whom reasonable accommodation would allow the fulfillment of the complete curriculum. RU SSW will provide reasonable accommodations, according to University policies and procedures, to otherwise qualified applicants and matriculated students with disabilities unless: (a) such accommodations impose undue hardship to the institution, (b) direct threats of substantial harm to the health and safety of others due to the disability cannot be eliminated by any reasonable accommodations available, or (c) such accommodations fundamentally alter the educational program or academic standards.

If you have any general questions about this form or its contents, please contact the SSW Student Affairs Office at [studentaffairs@ssw.rutgers.edu](mailto:studentaffairs@ssw.rutgers.edu). Students with questions regarding what types of accommodations may be considered to achieve these standards are encouraged to contact the Office of Disability Services at the Rutgers Campus they are enrolled immediately to begin discussions and register for services at <https://ods.rutgers.edu/students/applying-for-services>.

By submitting this document, the candidate certifies that they are able to meet, with or without reasonable accommodations, the technical standards enclosed in this document, which are required for admission, matriculation, and completion of the School of Social Work program. If the candidate requires any accommodation in order to perform these functions, the candidate agrees to request accommodation, if needed, by promptly following the established policies and procedures set forth by the University.

By signing below, I \_\_\_\_\_ hereby certify that I have read and understand the Technical Standards for Admission, Matriculation, Progression and Program Completion at the School of Social Work at Rutgers University. Additionally, I acknowledge that I have access to the information on the technical and essential standards required for admission, matriculation, progression and completion of the MSW program. If I require any accommodations in order to perform these functions, I agree to request accommodations promptly and in writing. I understand that the School of Social Work in collaboration with the University's Office of Disability Services in collaboration with the School of Social Work, will evaluate the reasonableness of the accommodation before acting on the request.

If my circumstances should change related to these technical standards, I will promptly notify the Office of Student Affairs at the RU School of Social Work and/or the Office of Disability Services if reasonable accommodations are required.

PRINT NAME:

\_\_\_\_\_

SIGNATURE:

\_\_\_\_\_ DATE: \_\_\_\_\_

RU ID: \_\_\_\_\_

# MSW CURRICULUM

## MSW Goals and Objectives

The goals and objectives of the MSW program are aligned with the nine competencies, developed by the Council of Social Work Education and the School's faculty, and operationalized through the behaviors of the Generalist, Clinical Social Work, and Management and Policy Curricula. The nine competencies, which need to be achieved by students in the course of their social work education, are addressed in field placements, substantiated in the Learning Contract, and are evaluated at the end of each semester.

### 2015 Educational Policy and Accreditation Standards

Graduates of the MSW program will display competency in the following:

#### Competency 1: Demonstrate Ethical and Professional Behavior

Social workers understand the value base of the profession and its ethical standards, as well as relevant laws and regulations that may impact practice at the micro, mezzo, and macro levels. Social workers understand frameworks of ethical decision-making and how to apply principles of critical thinking to those frameworks in practice, research, and policy arenas. Social workers recognize personal values and the distinction between personal and professional values. They also understand how their personal experiences and affective reactions influence their professional judgment and behavior. Social workers understand the profession's history, its mission, and the roles and responsibilities of the profession. Social Workers also understand the role of other professions when engaged in inter-professional teams. Social workers recognize the importance of life-long learning and are committed to continually updating their skills to ensure they are relevant and effective. Social workers also understand emerging forms of technology and the ethical use of technology in social work practice. Social workers:

- make ethical decisions by applying the standards of the NASW Code of Ethics, relevant laws and regulations, models for ethical decision-making, ethical conduct of research, and additional codes of ethics as appropriate to context;
- use reflection and self-regulation to manage personal values and maintain professionalism in practice situations;
- demonstrate professional demeanor in behavior; appearance; and oral, written, and electronic communication;
- use technology ethically and appropriately to facilitate practice outcomes;
- and use supervision and consultation to guide professional judgment and behavior.

#### Competency 2: Engage Diversity and Difference in Practice

Social workers understand how diversity and difference characterize and shape the human experience and are critical to the formation of identity. The dimensions of diversity are understood as the intersectionality of multiple factors including but not limited to age, class, color, culture, disability and ability, ethnicity, gender, gender identity and expression, immigration status, marital status, political ideology, race, religion/spirituality, sex, sexual orientation, and tribal sovereign status. Social workers understand that, as a consequence of difference, a person's life experiences may include oppression, poverty, marginalization, and alienation as well as privilege, power, and acclaim.

Social workers also understand the forms and mechanisms of oppression and discrimination and recognize the extent to which a culture's structures and values, including social, economic, political, and cultural exclusions, may oppress, marginalize, alienate, or create privilege and power.

Social workers:

- apply and communicate understanding of the importance of diversity and difference in shaping life experiences in practice at the micro, mezzo, and macro levels;
- present themselves as learners and engage clients and constituencies as experts of their own experiences;
- and apply self-awareness and self-regulation to manage the influence of personal biases and values in working with diverse clients and constituencies.

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

Social workers understand that every person regardless of position in society has fundamental human rights such as freedom, safety, privacy, an adequate standard of living, health care, and education. Social workers understand the global interconnections of oppression and human rights violations, and are knowledgeable about theories of human need and social justice and strategies to promote social and economic justice and human rights. Social workers understand strategies designed to eliminate oppressive structural barriers to ensure that social goods, rights, and responsibilities are distributed equitably and that civil, political, environmental, economic, social, and cultural human rights are protected. Social workers:

- apply their understanding of social, economic, and environmental justice to advocate for human rights at the individual and system levels; and
- engage in practices that advance social, economic, and environmental justice.

### **Competency 4: Engage In Practice-informed Research and Research-informed Practice**

Social workers understand quantitative and qualitative research methods and their respective roles in advancing a science of social work and in evaluating their practice. Social workers know the principles of logic, scientific inquiry, and culturally informed and ethical approaches to building knowledge. Social workers understand that evidence that informs practice derives from multi-disciplinary sources and multiple ways of knowing. They also understand the processes for translating research findings into effective practice. Social workers:

- use practice experience and theory to inform scientific inquiry and research;
- apply critical thinking to engage in analysis of quantitative and qualitative research methods and research findings;
- use and translate research evidence to inform and improve practice, policy, and service delivery.

### **Competency 5: Engage in Policy Practice**

Social workers understand that human rights and social justice, as well as social welfare and services, are mediated by policy and its implementation at the federal, state, and local levels. Social workers understand the history and current structures of social policies and services, the role of policy in service delivery, and the role of practice in policy development. Social workers understand their role in policy development and implementation within their practice settings at the micro, mezzo, and macro levels and they actively engage in policy practice to effect change within those settings. Social workers recognize and understand the historical, social, cultural, economic, organizational, environmental, and global influences that affect social policy. They are also knowledgeable about

policy formulation, analysis, implementation, and evaluation.

Social workers:

- Identify social policy at the local, state, and federal level that impacts well-being, service delivery, and access to social services;
- assess how social welfare and economic policies impact the delivery of and access to social services;
- apply critical thinking to analyze, formulate, and advocate for policies that advance human rights and social, economic, and environmental justice.

### **Competency 6: Engage with Individuals, Families, Groups, Organizations, and Communities**

Social workers understand that engagement is an ongoing component of the dynamic and interactive process of social work practice with, and on behalf of, diverse individuals, families, groups, organizations, and communities. Social workers value the importance of human relationships. Social workers understand theories of human behavior and the social environment, and critically evaluate and apply this knowledge to facilitate engagement with clients and constituencies, including individuals, families, groups, organizations, and communities. Social workers understand strategies to engage diverse clients and constituencies to advance practice effectiveness.

Social workers understand how their personal experiences and affective reactions may impact their ability to effectively engage with diverse clients and constituencies. Social workers value principles of relationship-building and inter-professional collaboration to facilitate engagement with clients, constituencies, and other professionals as appropriate. Social workers:

- apply knowledge of human behavior and the social environment, person-in-environment, and other multidisciplinary theoretical frameworks to engage with clients and constituencies;
- and use empathy, reflection, and interpersonal skills to effectively engage diverse clients and constituencies.

### **Competency 7: Assess Individuals, Families, Groups, Organizations, and Communities**

Social workers understand that assessment is an ongoing component of the dynamic and interactive process of social work practice with, and on behalf of, diverse individuals, families, groups, organizations, and communities. Social workers understand theories of human behavior and the social environment, and critically evaluate and apply this knowledge in the assessment of diverse clients and constituencies, including individuals, families, groups, organizations, and communities. Social workers understand methods of assessment with diverse clients and constituencies to advance practice effectiveness. Social workers recognize the implications of the larger practice context in the assessment process and value the importance of inter-professional collaboration in this process. Social workers understand how their personal experiences and affective reactions may affect their assessment and decision-making.

Social workers:

- collect and organize data, and apply critical thinking to interpret information from clients and constituencies;
- apply knowledge of human behavior and the social environment, person-in-environment, and other multidisciplinary theoretical frameworks in the analysis of assessment data from clients and constituencies;
- develop mutually agreed-on intervention goals and objectives based on the critical assessment of strengths, needs, and challenges within clients and constituencies; and

- select appropriate intervention strategies based on the assessment, research knowledge, and values and preferences of clients and constituencies.

### **Competency 8: Intervene with Individuals, Families, Groups, Organizations, and Communities**

Social workers understand that intervention is an ongoing component of the dynamic and interactive process of social work practice with, and on behalf of, diverse individuals, families, groups, organizations, and communities. Social workers are knowledgeable about evidence-informed interventions to achieve the goals of clients and constituencies, including individuals, families, groups, organizations, and communities. Social workers understand theories of human behavior and the social environment, and critically evaluate and apply this knowledge to effectively intervene with clients and constituencies. Social workers understand methods of identifying, analyzing and implementing evidence-informed interventions to achieve client and constituency goals. Social workers value the importance of inter-professional teamwork and communication in interventions, recognizing that beneficial outcomes may require interdisciplinary, inter-professional, and inter-organizational collaboration.

Social workers:

- critically choose and implement interventions to achieve practice goals and enhance capacities of clients and constituencies;
- apply knowledge of human behavior and the social environment, person-in-environment, and other multidisciplinary theoretical frameworks in interventions with clients and constituencies;
- use inter-professional collaboration as appropriate to achieve beneficial practice outcomes;
- negotiate, mediate, and advocate with and on behalf of diverse clients and constituencies; and
- facilitate effective transitions and endings that advance mutually agreed-on goals.

### **Competency 9: Evaluate Practice with Individuals, Families, Groups, Organizations, and Communities**

Social workers understand that evaluation is an ongoing component of the dynamic and interactive process of social work practice with, and on behalf of, diverse individuals, families, groups, organizations and communities. Social workers recognize the importance of evaluating processes and outcomes to advance practice, policy, and service delivery effectiveness. Social workers understand theories of human behavior and the social environment, and critically evaluate and apply this knowledge in evaluating outcomes. Social workers understand qualitative and quantitative methods for evaluating outcomes and practice effectiveness.

Social workers:

- select and use appropriate methods for evaluation of outcomes;
- apply knowledge of human behavior and the social environment, person-in-environment, and other multidisciplinary theoretical frameworks in the evaluation of outcomes;
- critically analyze, monitor, and evaluate intervention and program processes and outcomes; and
- apply evaluation findings to improve practice effectiveness at the micro, mezzo, and macro levels.



## SOCIAL WORK COMPETENCIES

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

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

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

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

**Competency 5:** Engage in Policy Practice

**Competency 6:** Engage with Individuals, Families, Groups, Organizations, and Communities

**Competency 7:** Assess Individuals, Families, Groups, Organizations, and Communities

**Competency 8:** Intervene with Individuals, Families, Groups, Organizations, and Communities

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

## FIELD EDUCATION

### *Rationale*

Field education provides the opportunity for the student to learn and demonstrate the required competencies as defined by CSWE (Council on Social Work Education), 2015. In the 2015 Educational and Policy Accreditation Standards of CSWE, Educational Policy 2.3 states that the “signature pedagogy represents the central form of instruction and learning in a profession that socializes its students to perform the role of practitioner. Professionals have pedagogical norms with which they connect and integrate theory and practice. In social work the signature pedagogy is field education. The intent of field education is to connect the theoretical and conceptual contribution of the classroom with the practical world of the practice setting. It is a basic precept of social work education that the two interrelated components of curriculum-- classroom and field--are of equal importance within the curriculum, and each contributes to the development of the requisite competencies of professional practice. Field education is systematically designed, supervised, coordinated and evaluated based on criteria by which students demonstrate the achievement of program competencies.”

In keeping with the Mission of the School of Social Work and the goals and objectives of the MSW Program, the field education component of the curriculum aims to provide students with opportunities to gain practice skills in the areas of generalist social work, clinical social work and nonprofit and public management, depending on the student’s place in the program or chosen concentration. It is the learning venue through which students gain firsthand experience with evidence-based practice and begin to learn practice wisdom. Field education also provides students with opportunities to gain experience working with diverse social, economic, and ethnic populations in a variety of public and private organizations. The field placement is the environment in which to learn and integrate the profession’s role in focusing on both

social/economic justice and the dignity and worth of the person. A variety of field placements are available representing the range of social work practice.

In keeping with the Mission of the School of Social Work and the goals and objectives of the MSW Program, the field education component of the curriculum aims to provide students with opportunities to gain practice skills in the areas of generalist social work and clinical social work, depending on the student's place in the program. It is the learning venue through which students gain firsthand experience with evidence-based practice and begin to learn practice wisdom. Field education also provides students with opportunities to gain experience working with diverse social, economic, and ethnic populations in a variety of public and private organizations. The field placement is the forum to learn and integrate the profession's role in focusing on both social/economic justice and the dignity and worth of the person. A variety of field placements are available representing the range of social work practice arenas.

### **Objectives of Field Education**

The objectives of Field Education are to educate students who will be able to:

1. Apply the intervention skills of a generalist problem-solving approach as learned in class and applied in a foundation practicum, to work with individuals, families, groups, organizations, and communities in a variety of settings.
2. Apply and develop the knowledge and intervention skills learned in the advanced curriculum in a field placement focused on Clinical Practice or Management and Policy in a setting that provides experience and exposure to the social work profession.
3. Use professional supervision to enhance intervention skills, develop leadership skills, gain self-awareness, and identify learning needs and solutions.
4. Integrate theories from the foundation and advanced curricula, apply them with discretion within a field practicum, and evaluate their appropriateness and effectiveness with client and organizational systems in the field.
5. Use collaborative and advocacy skills and other social change strategies to address client and community needs, and to demonstrate an understanding of the ways in which social policies, institutions, and social forces such as discrimination and oppression contribute to the presenting problems of diverse clients and their communities.
6. Develop skills to assess and communicate client and service needs.
7. Demonstrate an understanding of, and commitment to, the values and ethics of the social work profession while providing culturally appropriate services to vulnerable populations through demonstration of competence, professional self-awareness, integrity, and respect.
8. Develop practice skills and efficacy through the application of research knowledge, critical thinking, problem-solving, logic, and reason to the implementation and evaluation of practice.
9. Develop professional interpersonal skills that reflect a disciplined, differential, and conscious use of self, including openness to constructive criticism and a capacity for self-critique.
10. Develop an appreciation for the ongoing nature of social work education and instruction that can be realized through post-graduation professional development.

## **ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES OF THE PARTICIPANTS**

### *The School*

Rutgers University, because of its degree-conferring authority, is responsible for the total learning experience of its students. The School has primary responsibility for identification of curriculum content for field instruction as a part of the total curriculum. It determines the criteria for assessment of student performance. It provides continual educational advisement to students through a faculty advisor, and consultation to the agency and the student through the Field Liaison. The School, through the Field Education Department, selects from among potential field practice settings those which offer students a variety of experiences consistent with the objectives of professional education, and specifically, in keeping with the mission statement of the School. It participates with agencies in furthering the professional development of personnel by providing continuing education opportunities for agency staff currently engaged in field instruction.

### *The Online Education Field Department*

The Online program office of field education, comprised of the Director of Online Education and Field Coordinators, is dedicated to arranging, monitoring and assuring the quality of each student placement. The goal is to foster the connection between the theoretical and conceptual contributions of the classroom and practice setting. Field education is systematically designed, supervised, coordinated and evaluated based on criteria by which students demonstrate the achievement of the MSW program's core competencies.

### *The Executive Director of Field Education*

- Oversees the Office of Field Education for all three campuses (Camden, Newark and New Brunswick).
- Assures program compliance with Council on Social Work Education (CSWE) Educational Policy and Accreditation Standards.
- Leads the development and execution of field policies.
- Leads strategic planning for the Field Education Department.
- Develops new field opportunities through serving on community boards and participating in the social work community.
- Consults regularly with the Directors of the Online, Intensive Weekend, and Blended Programs.
- Consults regularly with the MSW and BASW Program Directors to ensure integration of field and coursework.
- Delivers annual reports on field education to faculty and staff, as well as the Dean and the University, delineating the activities, developments, and accomplishments of the field education department, the relationship between class and field, and how field learning reflects the competencies.
- Serves as a member of the Curriculum Committee to participate in the design of the explicit curriculum of the School.

- Recruits members for and conducts the Advisory Committee for Field Education.
- Consults with the Associate Directors and Field Coordinators to solve field problems.
- Represents the Field Education Department in regard to student academic and judicial review in matters related to student infractions in the field placement setting.
- Approves all grades and makes the final decisions on grades of F or Incomplete in Field Education.
- Approves all Temporary F (TF) grades as well as all Performance Improvement Plans for field assignment completion.
- Consults with the Associate Directors, and Field Coordinators to troubleshoot field problems.
- Participates in (or selects a representative to participate in) the NJ, NYC, PA/Delaware Valley Regional Field Directors groups.
- Ensures that field instructors and field settings provide opportunities for students to learn and demonstrate the competencies.
- Works with liaisons to ensure their understanding of the competencies and behaviors that are the expected outcomes of field placement.

#### *The Director of Online Education*

- Coordinates and teaches Field Orientation Seminar.
- Develops and conducts annual Field Liaison training sessions.
- Ensures that field instructors and field settings provide opportunities for students to learn and demonstrate the core competencies.
- Works with liaisons to ensure their understanding of the core competencies that are the expected outcomes of field placement.
- Recruits and selects field agencies and instructors.
- Recruits and supervises Field Liaisons.
- Arranges student placements.
- Maintains regular contact with field instructors and liaisons.
- Monitors and evaluates student field experiences.
- Determines and posts grades for Field Practica.
- Represents the Field Education Department in regard to student academic and judicial review in matters related to student infractions in the field placement setting.
- Approves all grades and makes the final decisions on grades of F or Incomplete in Field Education.
- Approves all Temporary F (TF) grades as well as all Action Plans for field assignment completion.
- Consults with the Executive Director to troubleshoot field problems.
- Consults with students, field instructors and liaisons on all aspects of the field placement process.
- Participates in the Distance Education Field Consortium.

#### **The Field Education Coordinator or Senior Program Coordinator**

- Works closely with the Associate Directors to arrange and monitor student placements.

- Consults with students, field instructors and liaisons on all aspects of the field placement process.

### *The Field Liaison*

The Field Liaison acts as the connection between the agency, the student and the school. The Field Liaison provides support for the Field Instructor and serves as a mentor for the student.

The Field Liaison must have an MSW from a CSWE accredited program, LSW or LCSW, at least 2 years of practice experience after receiving the MSW, and must have experience as a Field Instructor. It is expected that the Field Liaison will be available to both the student and the Field Instructor for consultation and advice as often as needed. The Liaison keeps the Director of Online Education informed of any problems, and meets with the Director along with the student as needed. The Liaison completes an independent assessment of student work by reading their portfolio of process recordings and journals, and provides feedback to both the student and the Field Instructor. The liaison's ongoing monitoring assures that the student is learning the core competencies.

An orientation to field education policies, procedures, and requirements is provided, detailing, among other things, the core competencie. An electronic copy of this manual is available to all Field Liaisons. Meetings can be arranged at any time with other Field Liaisons or field department personnel. Field Liaisons are responsible for knowing the policies in this manual and for acting in compliance with them.

Liaisons will make agency site visits either in-person or remotely to meet with the student and the Field Instructor at least once a semester, and more, if necessary, through the identification of need by any party (student, Field Instructor, field agency administrator, field education staff). Field liaisons will be available to meet via phone, email, and/or video-conferencing with students and field instructors as needed throughout the semester. An agency visit report is electronically submitted for each field visit detailing student progress in meeting the core competencies.

The goals of the field site visit are to:

- a. Review the student's assignments and tasks (via the learning contract).
- b. Provide support for the student.
- c. Provide support for the Field Instructor.
- d. Discuss any issues that have arisen.
- e. Monitor that the student is receiving a quality experience.
- f. Ensure that the student is receiving appropriate supervision (1 hour per week).
- g. Review the portfolio to verify that the student is completing the work and that the Field Instructor is commenting on process/journal recordings (for remote visits, students will be required to scan/upload a process/journal recording with comments prior to the visit).
- h. Discuss the integration of class and field work.
- i. Promote discussion of the student's performance, potential, and interests.
- j. Troubleshoot problems and difficulties.
- k. Compile a report to Field Education staff.

It is the responsibility of the Field Liaison, in consultation with the Field Instructor, to recommend the student field grades (pass or fail/no credit), while the final grading decision rests with the Director of Online Education. To receive a passing field grade, students must be rated as “Meets or Exceeds Competencies” in at least 70% of the competencies.

### *The Field Agency*

The Field Agency provides students the opportunity to develop an identity as a professional social worker and conduct themselves accordingly. This is done by providing learning experiences that enable the student to demonstrate the nine competencies.

The Field Agency provides a qualified MSW Field Instructor (qualifications listed under *The Field Instructor*) for each student. The Field Agency supports the Field Instructor in assigning the student a sufficient number and variety of assignments for learning, and provides space for office work, telephone and computer access.

Students should be provided with an orientation to the agency, its services, personal safety, policies and procedures and the community. Students should also attend staff meetings, training sessions, and other community activities relevant to their assignments. Agencies are expected to assume responsibility for students' assignments when the students are not in field, and provide alternate field instruction and support to the students in the absence of the Field Instructor.

### *The Field Instructor*

The Field Instructor must hold an MSW, and a minimum of two (2) years of employment in the field since completion of the graduate degree from a CSWE accredited program. If the individual has never supervised a student, she or he must take the Seminar in Field Instruction (SIFI) course concurrently with the student's placement. The SIFI curriculum guides Field Instructors in designing and identifying learning opportunities that permit students to demonstrate achievement of the competencies. Field Instructors must be in compliance with all state licensing laws and regulations for their scope of practice as defined by their state Board of Social Work Examiners and the regulations of the agency.

An orientation to the field education policies, procedures, and requirements is provided to Field Instructors, detailing the competencies. An electronic copy of this manual is available to all Field Instructors. Remote communication, including email, phone, and video conferencing can be arranged at any time with other Field Instructors or field faculty. The Field Instructor is expected to know the policies in this manual and to act in compliance with them.

The Field Instructor orients, constructs and oversees the student's experience in the agency. The Field Instructor defines student assignments in the agency and provides regularly scheduled supervision to the student (a minimum of 60 minutes/week). Students in the online Clinical MSW program must spend at least half of their time in the field each week working directly with clients. Students are also expected to spend some of their time in planning or administrative tasks, meetings with other agency staff, with community groups, or with multi agency coordinating teams. The rest of the field time will be spent in weekly individual and group supervision, training and staff meetings, record keeping, telephoning, and correspondence.

The Field Instructor participates in developing the Learning Contract which delineates the core competencies and related tasks to be accomplished. The Field Instructor reads and comments on the student's process recordings or journal entries. During weekly supervisory meetings with the student the process recordings should be reviewed. Each semester, the Field Liaison will make a remote visit to the agency and will review the student's portfolio (see details under student's responsibilities) and discuss the student's progress with the Field Instructor, the student, and any other agency personnel involved in the student's learning. The Field Instructor completes the Field Evaluation collaboratively with the student and meets the deadline for submission to the School. Field Instructors are responsible for contacting the Field Liaison if there are problems, or if information or advice is needed.

It is the responsibility of the Field Instructor to comply with the NASW Code of Ethics and with any social work licensing laws that may apply.

In consultation with the Field Liaison, the Field Instructor recommends a grade of pass or fail/no credit based on the student's level of progress. The grade is submitted by the Field Liaison to the Director of Online Education. The Field Instructor has the opportunity and the responsibility to consult with the Field Liaison before completion of the evaluation.

### *The Student*

The learning demands and time commitments of the field practicum are rigorous. Each student must assess realistically her or his level of readiness to engage in field education and to fulfill the demands of professional social work practice. Readiness for field is dependent upon the presence of various factors, including: commitment, energy, communication skills (both verbal and written), interpersonal skills, objectivity, personal self-awareness, and a schedule that allows sufficient time and flexibility. The student must possess a level of psychological, behavioral, and emotional stability to successfully complete her or his field placement. Questions or doubts about a student's readiness must be addressed by the Director of Online Education, before a field match can be finalized.

Student responsibilities include:

- Being available for field placement 11.25 hours per week for Field Practicum I, II and III and 13.5 hours per week for Field Practicum IV, V, VI, & VII. Students in the Advanced Standing program will complete 16 hours per week for Field Practicum IV, V, VI & VII.
- Attending interviews for potential placements and having confirmation forms signed and returned to finalize the placement.
- Arranging, completing and paying for background checks and fingerprinting as required by individual field placement sites.
- Successfully passing the online ethics course prior to starting placement.
- Participating in the field orientation seminar prior to starting placement
- Educating themselves about the agency and its clients and services.
- Maintaining the confidentiality of client information and using knowledge of the agency in a professionally responsible manner.
- Acting in a professional manner as a representative of the agency.

- Completing all agency and school paperwork, recordings, and assignments in a timely way.
- Completing all professional duties in compliance with the NASW Code of Ethics.

Additionally, students are expected to share the responsibility for their own learning in the field instruction process by maintaining a portfolio of written recordings for supervision, preparing an agenda, and participating actively in the evaluation process. Students initiate contact with their Field Liaison to share information and feedback, and must be present at the agency when the Field Liaison schedules a remote site-visit, even if it is not a regular field day.

## **PROFESSIONAL ETHICS**

Students are responsible for following the NASW Code of Ethics. This includes successful completion of the online Ethics Course. All activities in the field setting involving clients and staff must meet the standards detailed in the Code. This includes an ethical responsibility as social work professionals, as stated in the section of the Code titled “Impairment”:

Social workers should not allow their own personal problems, psychosocial distress, legal problems, substance abuse, or mental health difficulties to interfere with their professional judgment and performance or to jeopardize the best interests of people for whom they have a professional responsibility. (Section 4.05, p. 23)

In order to comply with the NASW Code of Ethics, students in field agencies must identify themselves to clients as students in training for a specific period of time. They should never be asked to represent themselves as staff workers of the agency unless they are, in fact, employees under a Work-Study agreement.

## **FIELD POLICIES AND PROCEDURES**

### *General Information*

The following are basic requirements for students in relation to their field placements.

1. Field placements for students in the traditional online program begin in the third semester of Year 1 (Fall Start = Summer; Spring Start = Fall) and continue through the last semester of Year 3. Students have two separate field placements, one per year. However, they are broken up into seven individually graded courses--Field Practicum I, II & III which is the first year-long field placement, followed by Field Practicum IV, V, VI & VII in the following years. Field placement for students in the Advanced Standing online program start placement in the first semester and continue for all four semesters of the program to complete Field Practicum IV, V, VI & VII.
2. Students are expected to complete the Field Placement Planning Form which directs the Field Education staff to students’ experience and interests.



3. Students in field must always take the required concurrent practice course for the specific semester they are in field (Social Work Practice I or II; Clinical Social Work I or II). If the student fails *either* field *or* the practice course, both must be repeated.
4. In order to be placed in an agency, students must be in good academic standing.
5. Any interruption of enrollment for field must be approved by the Director of Online Education.
6. The field education department will make every reasonable attempt to secure an appropriate field placement for a student. If a student applicant is rejected by multiple agencies during the interview process or if a student refuses multiple placements opportunities, the school is not obligated to place the student
7. All disability accommodation plans that involve field education must be developed by the University Office of Disability Services for Students in coordination with the Director of Online Education. Such plans should be developed prior to the start of field education whenever possible.

*Schedules and Hours*

Students in the MSW program complete 1,125 hours of field during their two years of field placement, 450 in Field Practicum I, II & III in the Generalist Curriculum, and 675 in Field Practicum IV, V, VI & VII in the Specialized Curriculum. Advanced standing students complete 885 hours. The schedules are as follows:

**Fall Start**

	<b>Hours per Week</b>	<b># Of Weeks</b>	<b>Term</b>	<b>Total Hours</b>
<b>Field Practicum I, II &amp; III (Generalist)</b>	11.25	10	Summer (year 1)	112.5
	11.25	15	Fall	168.75
	11.25	15	Spring	168.75
				450
<b>Field Practicum IV, V, VI &amp; VII (Specialized)</b>	13.5	10	Summer (year 2)	135
	13.5	15	Fall	202.5
	13.5	15	Spring	202.5
	13.5	10	Summer	135
				675

**Spring Start**

	<b>Hours per Week</b>	<b># Of Weeks</b>	<b>Term</b>	<b>Total Hours</b>
<b>Field Practicum I, II &amp; III (Generalist)</b>	11.25	15	Fall (year 1)	168.75
	11.25	15	Spring	168.75
	11.25	10	Summer	112.5
				450
<b>Field Practicum IV, V, VI &amp; VII (Specialized)</b>	13.5	15	Fall (year 2)	202.5
	13.5	15	Spring	202.5
	13.5	10	Summer	135
	13.5	10	Fall	135
				675

### Summer Start

	<b>Hours per Week</b>	<b># Of Weeks</b>	<b>Term</b>	<b>Total Hours</b>
<b>Field Practicum I, II &amp; III (Generalist )</b>	11.25	15	Spring (year 1)	168.75
	11.25	10	Summer	112.5
	11.25	15	Fall	168.75
				450
<b>Field Practicum IV, V, VI &amp; VII (Specialized)</b>	13.5	15	Spring (year 2)	202.5
	13.5	10	Summer	135
	13.5	15	Fall	202.5
	13.5	10	Spring	135
				675

### Advanced Standing – Fall Start

	<b>Hours per Week</b>	<b># Of Weeks</b>	<b>Term</b>	<b>Total Hours</b>
<b>Field Practicum IV, V, VI &amp; VII (Advanced)</b>	16	15	Fall	245 (5 hours field orientation)
	16	15	Spring	240
	16	10	Summer	160
	16	15	Fall	240

Any student whose hours fall below these requirements must make up the hours within the semester. The Field Liaison and Director of Online Education will discuss a Performance Improvement Plan with the student. If the hours are not completed by the end of the semester (last day of examinations per the Rutgers academic calendar) an F (Fail) will be issued. In the event of extenuating circumstances, such as extended illness, the student may receive a TF (temporary failure) for the course. All requests for a TF grade must be accompanied by a Performance Improvement Plan which includes the date by which the field hours and assignments will be completed, to be submitted to the Director for approval. If the hours are not finished within the designated time period, the TF will be changed to an F grade and the student will be dismissed from the program.

It is important for students to understand that **field placements cannot be provided for evening and weekends only. It is the responsibility of the student to have the hours available to do the field practicum, Monday –Friday during the business day (9-5).** Placements with some weekend and evening hours may be available pending approval of the Director of Online Education, but this cannot be guaranteed. Occasionally, students may need to accommodate the agency and participate in events that are not during their usually scheduled field hours.

We realize that most online student choose this program in order to balance their academic studies with other responsibilities and provide a schedule that can allow for students to manage other life commitments. At the same time, we need to provide you with the strongest educational opportunities possible. Most agencies cannot offer high quality supervision or other educational opportunities during non-traditional business hours. We encourage you to look closely at the hourly commitments for field listed in the above tables and arrange your schedule far in advance to accommodate your needs. Generally speaking, once field placement begins, you will be spending 1 ½ to two days a week in field:

- Students in Field Practicum I II, & III (Generalist) commit to 11.25 hours per week.
- Students in Field Practicum IV, V, VI, & VII (Specialized) commit to 13.5 hours per week.
- Advanced Standing Students in Field Practicum IV, V, VI & VII commit up to 16 hours per week.

Calendars are distributed for each semester that indicate dates for classes, field, and holidays. A field work day is defined as whatever is consistent with agency policy regarding a normal agency working day, i.e., 9am to 5pm, or 8:30am to 4:30pm. If agency staff takes a lunch break, students are expected to follow the same pattern. Lunch or dinner breaks are not counted as field time.

If any agency is closed for a holiday the student is still required to complete the required number of hours. If the hours are short one week, the expectation is that the total hours will be brought into compliance the next week. The same applies to missing field for religious observances.

School recordings (such as journals, process recordings) can be done at the agency when time and the Field Instructor permits (but should equal no more than 2 hours per week), otherwise these recordings must be completed on the student's own time.

“Banking hours” for early completion of the field placement is NOT PERMITTED. All students are to go to the last day of field as indicated by the field calendar for that semester. If the student exceeds the required hours at the end of the academic year, then that is at the student's discretion and no credit is awarded for those hours.

Some frequently asked questions about hours/schedules:

- Can I get hours for driving to training/internship? - No.
- Does my lunch break count towards my field hours? - No.
- Can I get hours for doing a process recording at home? - No.
- Does pre-training at the agency count towards my hours? - Yes.
- Does a conference related to the field work count towards my hours? - Yes, with prior approval from a Field Instructor.

If the student has a medical issue or an official disability accommodation related to hours, all plans must be reviewed and approved by the Director of Online Education.

### *Supervision*

All students must receive at least one hour of supervision per week with the designated Field Instructor on a planned basis and without interruption. Both the student and Field Instructor should fully prepare for supervisory conferences. Field Instructors should receive recordings in time to read them prior to conferences, and both students and Field Instructors should prepare an agenda ahead of the conference. The dated agendas should be retained as documents and become part of the student's portfolio.

### *Requesting a Change of Placement*

A field placement can be changed only with the approval of the Director of Online Education. Student preference for another setting or another location is not an adequate reason for changing a placement. Students who desire a change must contact their Field Instructor and Field Liaison to discuss the situation and make a formal request. If it is agreed that the educational environment is not appropriate, the Liaison may recommend to the Director of Online Education that the placement be terminated and the student be reassigned.

### *Field Placement Disruption*

Field placement is an integral component of social work education, and a disruption for any reason may interfere not only with a student's professional development and his or her timely completion of the program and eventual graduation. Therefore, it is essential that if a field placement is at risk of disruption for any reason including, but not limited to, the student's dismissal, harassment of any kind, and/or unethical behavior on the part of the agency staff or student, the student must *immediately* contact his or her Field Liaison, the field office and his

or her academic advisor to set up a meeting to discuss and resolve the problems. If a student is dismissed from a field placement as a result of the student's unprofessional behaviors/actions, the field education department is not obligated to find an alternative placement. If a student is dismissed from a field placement as a result of the student's unprofessional behaviors/actions, and the field education department decides to not replace the student, the student will be automatically referred to the Committee on Students

#### *Student Termination of Field Placement without Authorization*

When students are assigned field placements they are committing themselves to that agency and its clients for the duration of the academic year. Very rarely, problems will arise in field that may lead to a student being reassigned. However, if students are experiencing problems in field they must follow proper procedure, namely to discuss their difficulties with their Field Instructor, Field Liaison and Director of Online Education. Only a field staff person can authorize a premature termination of field placement. Students who terminate their field placements without prior authorization from the Director of Online Education may fail their field placement and be dismissed from the program.

#### *Stability of Field Settings*

The School of Social Work requires stability in the administration and continuity of agency programs as important components of a solid educational climate for field instruction. Acceptance of an agency as a field teaching setting is predicated on both parties' agreement that such an educational climate can and will be provided for the student. An affiliation agreement is signed by the School and the field site to formalize the terms of the relationship. Temporary or long-term disruptions of agency operations and programs adversely affect the educational environment. A labor strike is construed as constituting a disruption of services and requires the removal of students from the agency for the duration of the strike. In the event of a strike, students are asked to contact the Director of Online Education.

Major changes in personnel, which may affect the educational program of students such as transfers, departures, or protracted illnesses, can also be construed as disruptions. Discontinuation of services in programs through which student learning was to have taken place, and other incidents of this nature, are included in the category of disruption of the stability or continuity of the agency administration, or program. In the event of such disruptions, the Field Liaison, in consultation with the Field Instructor (if available) and agency administrators (if relevant), shall recommend a suitable course of action to the Director of Online Education. Field staff are responsible for monitoring stability of field placements.

#### *Student Safety in Field Practicum*

Every student in her or his field practicum should receive a full orientation to agency safety policies and procedures. This training should be provided by the field agency itself, since each agency may differ in terms of its needs and challenges regarding worker safety in their organization. Students who do not receive safety orientation and training should take the initiative to inquire about this topic with the Field Instructor. Training may involve information about precautions related to fire and building safety, infection control, home-based services, and working with agitated or violent clients and consumers. It is not acceptable for social work

students to refuse field placements or related field assignments because the neighborhoods where the agencies or clients reside are considered blighted or have elevated crime rates. In such circumstances it is especially important that students learn the agency policies and procedures designed to keep staff safe. Students may not transport clients in their own vehicles. Students may transport clients in agency owned vehicles, with the agency's permission.

In the event that a student in field practicum is involved in an incident that is a risk to his/her own security, the student should immediately contact the Field Instructor and follow agency policy and procedures. The Field Instructor and/or the student should notify the Director of Online Education and the Field Liaison, and follow that with a written report. The incident report should include the date, time, and location of the incident, a detailed description of the events and of those involved, and how the situation was managed.

### *Background Screening*

Students should be aware that some field agencies have additional requirements and screening procedures, such as medical examinations, criminal background screenings, and child abuse screenings. If a fee is charged for background checks or other screening procedures, this fee is the student's responsibility. Students cannot count the time spent being fingerprinted, getting medical testing, etc. as field hours. Students with a criminal conviction or arrest record need to be aware that this may affect internship placement and/or qualification for social work licensure in some states.

### *Professional Ethics*

Students are responsible for becoming familiar with the Code of Ethics of the National Association of Social Workers (NASW). All behavior in the field setting involving clients and staff must meet the standards detailed in the Code. Prior to beginning her or his first field placement, every student must pass the online ethics course.

### *NASW Ethical Principles*

The following broad ethical principles are based on social work's values of service, social justice, dignity and worth of the person, importance of human relationships, integrity, and competence. These principles set forth ideals to which all social workers should aspire.

Value: *Service*

Ethical Principle: ***Social workers' primary goal is to help people in need and to address social problems.*** Social workers elevate service to others above self-interest. Social workers draw on their knowledge, values, and skills to help people in need and to address social problems.

Social workers are encouraged to volunteer some portion of their professional skills with no expectation of significant financial return (pro bono service).

Value: *Social Justice*

Ethical Principle: ***Social workers challenge social injustice.***

Social workers pursue social change, particularly with and on behalf of vulnerable and oppressed individuals and groups of people. Social workers' social change efforts are focused primarily on issues of poverty, unemployment, discrimination, and other forms of social

injustice.

These activities seek to promote sensitivity to and knowledge about oppression and cultural and ethnic diversity. Social workers strive to ensure access to needed information, services, and resources; equality of opportunity; and meaningful participation in decision making for all people.

Value: ***Dignity and Worth of the Person***

Ethical Principle: ***Social workers respect the inherent dignity and worth of the person.***

Social workers treat each person in a caring and respectful fashion, mindful of individual differences and cultural and ethnic diversity. Social workers promote clients' socially responsible self-determination. Social workers seek to enhance clients' capacity and opportunity to change and to address their own needs. Social workers are cognizant of their dual responsibility to clients and to the broader society. They seek to resolve conflicts between clients' interests and the broader society's interests in a socially responsible manner consistent with the values, ethical principles, and ethical standards of the profession.

Value: ***Importance of Human Relationships***

Ethical Principle: ***Social workers recognize the central importance of human relationships.***

Social workers understand that relationships between and among people are an important vehicle for change. Social workers engage people as partners in the helping process. Social workers seek to strengthen relationships among people in a purposeful effort to promote, restore, maintain, and enhance the well-being of individuals, families, social groups, organizations, and communities.

Value: ***Integrity***

Ethical Principle: ***Social workers behave in a trustworthy manner.***

Social workers are continually aware of the profession's mission, values, ethical principles, and ethical standards and practice in a manner consistent with them. Social workers act honestly and responsibly and promote ethical practices on the part of the organizations with which they are affiliated.

Value: ***Competence***

Ethical Principle: ***Social workers practice within their area of competence and develop and enhance their professional expertise.***

Social workers continually strive to increase their professional knowledge and skills and to apply them in practice. Social workers should aspire to contribute to the knowledge base of the profession.

### *Work-Study Field Placements*

It may be possible for a student to obtain a field placement in his or her place of employment, known as a work-study placement, within the following guidelines. The details need to be negotiated between the student and agency, and a work study application must be submitted to the Director of Online Education for approval before such an arrangement can be finalized.

To be approved as a Work-Study setting, the following guidelines must be met:

- In an effort to ensure the student's role as learner, the field assignment must qualitatively differ from the student's work as a regular employee with regard to assignments and designated supervisor (Field Instructor).

- The proposed Field Instructor must have an MSW and a minimum of two years of employment in the field since completion of the graduate degree. This person should not be a current or prior supervisor of the student.
- The student should be given assignments that are appropriate to a student, not an employee. Fifty percent of the fieldwork practicum must be in practice. The other fifty percent can be spent in activities such as staff meetings, case/agency presentations, agency documentation, and supervision. The required time for field instruction supervision is at least one hour per week.
- The Work-Study agreement must be signed by the proposed Field Instructor, agency executive/administrator, and the student. The document with original signatures is submitted to the Director of Online Education for approval. A fully executed copy will be sent to the agency and the student when final approval has been granted.
- The employment situation should be stable enough to bear the challenges of field education. That is, the student, Field Instructor, and Director of Online Education should be reasonably certain that the position will not be disrupted in some way prior to the end of the field education period. Furthermore, the student's schedule needs to take into consideration time for course work, for field activities that are educationally focused, and for receiving field supervision. Likewise, the Field Instructor must have sufficient time in his/her schedule to properly carry out the responsibilities involved in providing an acceptable field experience for the student.
- The agency and Field Instructor must meet all of the criteria established for other field settings and supervisors, including a fully executed agency affiliation agreement.
- Final decision of a field placement as a work-study placement is determined by approval of the Director of Online Education.

#### *Assignment to Field Agency*

The assignment of a student to an agency setting for field placement is an educational decision made by the Director of Online Education and Field Coordinators. Students are asked to contribute information about their experience and interests on the Field Placement Planning Form. Prior work experience, geographical location, and student's interests, when feasible, are considered when making a match with an agency.

Field education staff will consider the preferences of the students whenever possible. Students are expected to accept legitimate referrals for field placement assignments, and should keep in mind that in each field placement they will have the opportunity to learn skills that will be useful in other settings. They should also understand that no one (or two) field placement assignments will restrict future opportunities in the field. For example, if a student



has two field placements working with children in school settings, this in no way means they will not be able to work later in the field of adult mental health if that is their goal. In fact, what the student learns about the effects of educational success and failure, and peer and family relationships on child development, will prove useful in working with adults struggling with mental and emotional problems.

While students may enter the MSW program with an idea of the work they want to do after graduation, they often change their original views after completing their field placements. Students are encouraged to keep an open mind when it comes to field placements and to learn all they can from their field assignments.

Students should not contact agencies directly or to make arrangements without the approval of the Director of Online Education or Field Coordinators. There are several reasons for this. Field placements do not want students contacting them for interviews without first knowing that Rutgers recognizes the students and has made the referrals. Additionally, Rutgers University and the field placements enter into formal affiliation agreements which include insurance coverage and organizational responsibilities.

The Director of Online Education or Field Coordinator contacts the student with potential placement ideas and discusses each one with the student. When the assignment is made, the student is given the contact information for the agency and must arrange an interview at the potential field site. It is the responsibility of the student to familiarize themselves with the agency prior to the interview. Students are to interview with one agency at a time. Attending the interview shows a committed interest in the agency. If the interview goes well and the Field Instructor approves, a match is made. The Field Confirmation form is then signed by the agency and the student and returned to the field office, finalizing the field placement assignment.

This process must occur in this order, as agencies cannot see students or commit to placements without the prior approval of the Online Program Office of Field Education. Once assigned to an agency field site, the student is expected to make arrangements for field hours in cooperation with the field agency.

## **SELECTION OF AGENCIES AND FIELD INSTRUCTORS**

Field sites reflect the diverse settings where professional social workers practice. Some agencies are staffed primarily by social workers; some are “host settings” where other professionals predominate and where social work is part of a multi-disciplinary team, such as in medical center or school.

The School requires that agencies have a clear definition of the social worker role so that students will strengthen their identification as social workers. Appropriate assignments, a qualified MSW with adequate time to supervise a student, and a commitment to teaching the competencies outlined in the learning contract and evaluation, must be provided. In the event that an agency provides a quality service experience but lacks an MSW supervisor, or where the MSW supervisor has fewer than two years post MSW experience,

the agency will provide a Task Supervisor and the School will provide a Faculty Field Instructor, pending the approval of the Director of Online Education.

**The Faculty Field Instructor**

- a. Meets weekly with the student for individual or group supervision.
- b. Reviews all learning contracts and field recordings.
- c. Participates in the liaison visit along with the student and task supervisor.
- d. Monitors student in developing competent practice.
- e. Insures integration of classroom theory and learning with practice experience.
- f. Completes student's evaluation.

**The Task Supervisor**

- a. Oversees the student's day to day learning experiences.
- b. Collaborates with the faculty Field Instructor in integrating assignments.
- c. Provides constructive feedback to the student on specific tasks and agency operations.
- d. Participates in all meetings and evaluations regarding the placement.

*Criteria for the Selection of Field Agency Sites*

An agency, student, or field staff at the School of Social Work can initiate the process to become a field setting. Occasionally, students will initiate this process with applications for Work-Study plans that involve an agency not previously utilized as a field setting. All prospective agencies complete the Agency Interest Form which initiates the formal consideration process. The fully executed affiliation agreement finalizes the relationship and then the agency can receive students.

Criteria used for screening and selecting organizations for field settings:

1. The agency's philosophy of service must be compatible with the values and ethics of the social work profession, and the mission, goals, and objectives of the School of Social Work.
2. Agencies must be involved in the joint endeavor to educate social work students, and be willing to accept and follow the School requirements for participation in the field program. This is formalized by signing the Affiliation Agreement.
3. The agency must provide experienced staff to act as Field Instructors, and provide them with the time and resources necessary to fulfill their teaching and supervisory roles.
4. The agency must provide a comprehensive learning experience for students, including opportunities to attend staff meetings and other training sessions, and clearly articulate the student learning assignments.
5. The agency must provide the physical resources, such as the workspace and telephones or computers, as appropriate, to accommodate student placements.
6. The agency program and services must be delivered without reliance on students, thus

protecting students educational needs, purpose, and function.

### *Criteria for the Selection of New Field Instructors*

The Field Instructor is critical to the success of the placement and the student's learning. Each prospective Field Instructor completes a New Field Instructor Application which delineates the individual's credentials and interest. The following criteria for Field Instructor selection should be met:

1. The Field Instructor should be committed to the values of the social work profession.
2. It is the policy of the School that Field Instructors hold an MSW degree with a minimum of two years of employment in the field since completion of the graduate degree. This person should not be a current or prior supervisor of the student. If this individual has not supervised a social work student, it is necessary that she or he take the Seminar in Field Instruction (SIFI) course concurrently with the student's placement.
3. The Field Instructor should demonstrate a high level of skill in practice.
4. The Field Instructor must have the capacity to teach knowledge and skills to students. This should include sensitivity to the student's contributions and needs as an adult learner in the field learning process.
5. The Field instructor should hold state social work licensure as required by the scope of practice and requirements of the agency.
6. Field Instructors must have the time and flexibility to fully participate in the aspects of the School's program relevant to the role of Field Instructor, including availability to the student for regular weekly supervision and consultation as needed.

## **ORIENTATION, TRAINING AND MONITORING OF FIELD LIAISONS AND FIELD INSTRUCTORS**

### *Field Liaisons*

When a new Field Liaison is hired, the Director of Online Education provides an orientation and training that includes a review and orientation to the following: Overall mission of the school; overall curriculum and program guidelines; policies and procedures of the Field Education Department; travel policies and reimbursements; payroll procedures; learning contracts and their implementation; field visitations and monitoring of the field practicum; use of the portfolio concept of recording/documentation; grading; guidelines on providing technical assistance to students and Field Instructors; guidelines and requirements of Work-Study; NASW Code of Ethics, and requirements that students self-identify as students; safety and risk

management; procedures to evaluate the quality of field placement setting.

The Director of Online Education monitors the quality of field consultation throughout the year by meeting regularly with Field Liaisons as a group, providing one-to-one supervision as needed with Field Liaisons, and reviewing the Liaison's documentation (including records of field site visits and of the Liaison's written assessment of agency/field instruction quality).

### *Field Instructors*

Seminar in Field Instruction (SIFI) certification is required for all Field Instructors providing supervision to students in placement at the Rutgers University School of Social Work. The SIFI certification is offered by Rutgers online. Twenty continuing education credits are awarded for course completion, which includes ten clinical credits. The course requirements include readings, written assignments, and threaded discussions, all online. The course is presented in Canvas, an on-line course system available at Rutgers. Field Instructors are enrolled in the on-line course and log on to the program at their convenience. The course may be completed within an academic year. Some knowledge of computers is needed, as well as the availability or access to a computer.

The content of SIFI includes: mission of the School; curriculum and program guidelines, policies and procedures of the Field Education Department, competencies; orientation of student to agency; learning contracts and their implementation; use of the portfolio concept of recording/documentation; grading; guidelines and requirements of Work-Study; NASW Code of Ethics, and requirements that students self-identify as students; field visitations and monitoring of the field practicum; procedures for evaluation of student field performance; characteristics and needs of adult learners; stages of learning for a social worker; learning patterns and style; issues of cultural competence in supervision and practice; processes and relationships in field education; parallel process, transference, counter-transference; safety and risk management; and issues of termination. Throughout the seminar opportunities are provided to Field Instructors to raise questions or concerns regarding their students.

Field instructors will also be provided opportunities for virtual training throughout the year on different topics such as supervision, problem resolution or completing required documentation. Field instructors will also receive an orientation packet at the start of each semester to orient them to the program requirements.

### *Students*

As part of the first year field experience, students are required to participate in an online Field Orientation Seminar. The orientation provides the opportunity for students to ask questions and become fully acquainted with the field policies and procedures. Completion of the Field Orientation Seminar is required prior to entering into field placement.

## **REQUIRED STUDENT FIELD DOCUMENTS**

### **Time Sheets, Recordings, Learning Contracts and Portfolios**

#### *Submitting Field Documents*

To insure accuracy, students use Canvas to submit their timesheets, learning contracts, recordings and evaluations to the school. Ongoing tracking of field hours via time sheets, process recordings and journal entries prevents unpleasant surprises at the end of the semester and enables early intervention for students who may be having trouble. Our goal is to insure accountability, accessibility of the documents, and transparency so that all parties have verification of what has been submitted by the student.

The students, field office, and the liaisons have access to the students files in Canvas. The onus is on the student to complete the work in a timely fashion. All work that needs to be reviewed by the agency Field Instructor must be emailed or printed by the student and given to the Field Instructor. The student's progress and completion of the work will be monitored by the liaison monthly. All work and hours will be verified by the liaison at the agency visit.

#### *Timesheets*

Time sheets are kept in an excel workbook available to students on Canvas. The workbook is designed to calculate the student's hours and total them in a summary tab. At the end of each month, the student uploads to Canvas the same workbook with the various monthly hours added. This workbook will total the hours completed and be monitored by the Field Liaison.

#### *Learning Contracts*

All students in the field complete a Learning Contract with their Field Instructor at the beginning of the first semester of their Generalist and Specialized field placements. The purpose of the Learning Contract is for the student and the Field Instructor to plan jointly for the assignments and learning to be accomplished during the year. The Learning Contract creates an understanding of expectations for both the student and the agency. It should be specific and measurable, and be used as the basis for the end of semester evaluation.

The Learning Contract incorporates the core competencies of social work education. Through tasks at their field work students operationalize and demonstrate the competencies.

The Learning Contract is available on Canvas and accessible to all field education students. Students download the document and complete it in conjunction with their Field Instructor. The completed document is then electronically submitted by the student to the DROPBOX. The Learning Contract is read and given a PASS or FAIL grade by the Field Liaison. If the Learning Contract is deemed to be unsatisfactory, the student is to redo it until it is approved by the liaison.

The Learning Contract should be revised as needed by the student and the Field Instructor at the start of each remaining semester and should be resubmitted to Canvas by the designated due date on the field calendar.

### *Process Recordings and Journal Entries*

Process recordings and journal entries are all to be submitted via Canvas. This allows for efficient storage and tracking of all student work. Please note that the recordings submitted to Canvas are not intended to include the Field Instructor's comments. In addition to submission to Canvas, recordings are to be printed or sent electronically to the Field Instructor for comment and discussion during supervisory sessions. The recordings, with comments, will be reviewed by the Field Liaison at the agency visit and upon request.

#### *Recording requirements:*

- Recordings (process recordings and journal entries) are to be done on a regular basis. There must be a consistent flow of submissions--do not wait to submit recordings until the end of the semester. Recording submissions will be periodically reviewed by the liaison. Students will be notified by email if they are falling out of compliance. Continued disregard for regularly submitting recordings will place students in jeopardy of failing.
- Generalist year (Field Practicum I, II & III) – 24 process recordings (for the first few weeks journal entries may be written in lieu of process recordings); detailed schedule of the number of recordings due each semester is provided in Canvas.
- Specialized year (Field Practicum IV, V, VI & VII): 24 process recordings across four semesters (detailed schedule in Canvas)

It is at the discretion of the agency to give students time to complete field recordings while at the agency. If the nature of the work is such that this is not possible then students must complete the recordings on their own time.

#### *Purpose of Process Recordings and Journal Entries:*

- Serves as the basic instrument in guiding learning, and helps students conceptualize and organize ongoing activities with client systems.
- Helps to clarify the purpose of an interview or activity, and the role of the student in it.
- Provides a basic tool for stimulating communication and self-awareness.
- Provides a base for both the student and Field Instructor to identify the student's strengths and areas for growth.
- Plays an important part in providing direction and a structural framework for the supervisory conference.
- Enables the Field Instructor to quickly assess the student's response to emotion, process and content.

- Reflects the extent to which the student is able to integrate knowledge and theory gained from previous experiences, classroom courses, and outside readings.
- Provides “data” for end-of-the semester student evaluation.

The writing of process and journal recordings is an acquired skill. It takes time for most students to produce a recording that fits both the student’s needs and the Field Instructor’s objectives for learning. Process/journal recordings differ from agency recordings and are not to be included in agency files. Any encounter may be used for recording: individual sessions with clients; family or group meetings; professional contacts including agency staff, community, school, or service providers. It is expected that records will vary in detail, as some aspect of an interview, such as the beginning, might be highlighted for teaching purposes, while in another record the beginning might be summarized and another part of the interview written in detail to focus on supervisory work. A complete verbatim of an interview or meeting may also be expected.

Students should write a summary paragraph to pull together what was accomplished in the session and to identify future goals. A second paragraph should be written by the student critiquing the work before discussion with the Field Instructor. These two reflective paragraphs will also provide the student with items for the agenda for supervision.

#### *Instructional Use of Recordings*

Field Instructors: Field Instructors should read the student’s recordings prior to supervisory conferences and prepare an agenda for teaching. Field Instructors should make comments on each recording, as they are useful for the student to review before and after conferences. Field Instructors should keep in mind that the use of recordings is intended to meet learning goals. For example, summary records require students to conceptualize their ideas. The student's effort to comment on the non-verbal content of a session will help develop awareness of their professional selves and their use of self as therapeutic agents. Assessment paragraphs increase the ability of the student to make assessments and diagnoses in a variety of situations.

Field Liaisons: The liaison will track that regular submissions (at least monthly) are being made to Canvas. The liaison may choose to read the recordings to assist the student with an issue or question. Prior to a remote site-visit, the student at placement, the liaison will review a sampling of the recordings in Canvas. During the visit, the liaison will review a portfolio of the student’s recordings and other agency work, including time sheets and recordings with the Field Instructor’s comments. The Field Liaison will make an assessment of the student’s work and progress as well as the overall placement experience, and submit an Agency Visit Report to the field office.

#### *Field Portfolio*

All students are required to maintain a portfolio of field materials throughout field placement in order to reinforce learning and to chronicle and illustrate their field experiences. The portfolio may include the following: attendance logs, journal entries, recordings, audio or videotapes,

brochures, research notes, and samples of meeting notes.

It is expected that the Field Instructor will review recordings or other materials from the portfolio prior to supervision and prepare feedback. Field Liaisons are expected to review the portfolio as part of their assessment of the student's work and progress. Students who do not complete recording requirements for the semester will receive an F in their Field Practicum.

## **GUIDELINES FOR PROBLEM RESOLUTION**

To most effectively address problems related to field placement, the following stepwise procedure should be followed by the student. The goal is to resolve the issue quickly and to promote the relationship between the student and the Field Instructor.

Step 1: Speak to the Field Instructor at the agency. Many issues can be resolved at this level.

Step 2: Speak to the Field Liaison. The Field Liaison is there to assist students and facilitate communication between all parties.

Step 3: Speak to the Director of Online Education.

### **Performance Improvement Plan**

The Performance Improvement Plan (PIP) is intended to identify behavior or performance problems clearly, with the written participation of all parties, in order to improve the behavior or performance outcomes.

The Performance Improvement Plan is a form document and is to be completed by the Field Instructor in consultation with the Field Education Liaison, and the student. Upon completion, the form must be submitted for approval to the Director of Online Education.

### *Grade Grievance Procedure*

1. A grade grievance may be initiated by the student notifying his/her advisor and by submitting a letter outlining the basis of the grievance to the Director of Online Education within two weeks of notification or posting of the grade. The Director of Online Education will render a decision in writing whether or not to uphold the grade within two weeks of receipt of the grievance letter.
2. If the outcome of Step 1 is not satisfactory to all involved parties, the student may appeal in writing to the Executive Director of Field Education. This appeal must be communicated in writing no later than one week after the student has received the letter from the Director of Online Education. Within one week of receipt of this letter, the Executive Director will render a decision as to whether or not to uphold the grade.
3. If the outcome of step 2 is not satisfactory to all involved parties within one week of the determination of the Executive Director of Field Education, the grievance may be



presented in writing to the Director of the MSW program. The Program Director will give make a determination as to whether to uphold the grade within two weeks of receipt of the grievance letter. The Program Director's decision is final and binding.

## EVALUATION OF STUDENT PERFORMANCE

### *Evaluation tool*

At the end of each semester the student receives an evaluation. The evaluation is completed by the Field Instructor with input from the student and task supervisor, if applicable. There are separate evaluation forms for the Generalist Practica and for the Specialized Practica in Clinical Social Work, as there are distinct competencies addressed in these two types of field placements. The evaluation is based on mastery and demonstration of the competencies, through assignments specified by the Learning Contract. A grade of Pass or Fail is recommended by the Field Instructor. The evaluation sent to the Field Instructor by Rutgers with a link to an electronic version managed in Qualtrics. After completion, the evaluation is submitted by the field instructor by the due date on the field calendar. The student will upload the final evaluation to Canvas.

### *Grades*

The grade for field placement performance is either PASS or FAIL (no credit). The Director of Online Education gives the grade at the end of each semester; however, the Director must approve and enter all F's. The Field Instructor is asked to rate the level of student performance with submission of the written evaluation. The Field Liaison also recommends a grade based on the site visit and portfolio review. The written evaluation must be received before grades are due. A passing grade is contingent upon the student successfully completing the required hours and recordings, as well as receiving a passing evaluation. To receive a passing field grade, students must be rated as "Meets or Exceeds Competencies" in at least 70% of the competencies.

If a student receives a grade of F in field, the student will be referred to the Director of Online Education for review and the student will be referred to the Associate Dean of Student Affairs for appropriate follow-up.

## FIELD CURRICULUM

The MSW Goals and Objectives for the online program are operationalized through a field curriculum comprised of a Foundation (Generalist) field placement and an Advanced Clinical (Specialized) Social Work Practice field placement.

### *Generalist Curriculum*

The primary purpose of the Generalist Practicum is to educate students to:

- Apply a generalist problem-solving approach within a person-in-environment perspective.
- Use professional supervision to advance learning.
- Apply foundation knowledge and social work ethics and values to practice that enhances social well-being.

The Generalist Practice Curriculum includes two required foundation courses: Social Work Practice I, which provides an introduction to the generalist perspective and its application to the early phases of problem-solving on the individual, family, and group levels; Social Work Practice II, which covers the problem-solving process to the agency, community and societal levels. The two-course sequence assumes that the social welfare of individuals is paramount, and that the application of the generalist perspective means that practitioners differentially engage with, make formal assessments of, and intervene on the individual, family, group, community, and organizational levels to promote social well-being, and prevent its deterioration. Thus, the curriculum applies a person-in-environment framework to analyze systems, with an eye to understanding how systems may disadvantage individuals, especially those who are more vulnerable in our society due to their race-ethnicity, gender, sexual orientation, or socio-economic background. The course is conducted concurrently with field placement requirements.

### **Goals and Expectations: First Semester**

Students have a beginning understanding of an agency's mission and goals and its role within the social service community and neighborhood, as well as a basic understanding of the agency's structure, organization, and policies. Students are able to work within and interpret agency policies and regulations. Students learn about the generalist perspective with an emphasis on the problem solving approach to working with clients, and begin to apply this to the field setting.

Students have an initial identification with the profession and are beginning to incorporate social work values in practice (e.g. they understand the value of self-determination for clients). Students are familiar with the NASW Code of Ethics and how it applies to social work. Students are punctual, conscientious about the use of time and presentation of their professional self, and efficient in completing paperwork and other tasks in a timely way.

Students are able to take a self-reflective stance on a beginning level and respond to constructive criticism or feedback in a positive way. They develop the ability to identify their own strengths and weaknesses and train for supervision by preparing an agenda and recording contacts with clients and other agency experiences.

### **Goals and Expectations: Second and Third Semester**

Students should have a thorough knowledge of the agency and the community, and should understand the interaction of the larger organizations related to the agency and the positive and negative impacts these have on client services. Students should be able to not only recognize these influences but be able to articulate needed changes. Students should view and address the

individual client or family presenting problem within the context of the larger systems. Students should be able to apply the generalist perspective to organizations and communities, and integrate these ideas with assessments and practice (for example, how discriminatory housing policies established by a community affect who can live in a neighborhood).

Students' knowledge of the agency goes beyond an understanding of broadly-stated goals to an appreciation of how effectively and efficiently the agency structure and function carry out or inhibit those goals. Students' views of the social services for the target population of the agency extends beyond the concrete knowledge of agencies and their eligibility requirements, and they are able to identify gaps in services and use collaborative and advocacy skills to address client and community needs.

Students will be able to enter a range of types of groups, from therapeutic to community task-based, with an ability to make a beginning assessment of the dynamics and stages of group development. Students will clearly understand their functions in the different groups and will be active in participating in the formation of contracts, goal-setting, and problem-solving.

Students understand the variety of types of families and are aware of their biases and judgments about them. Their ability to make a beginning assessment of a family is expected. Depending on the amount of work done with family groups, students will have some basic intervention skills related to problem-solving and using the self in family work.

All students should be able to make assessments that take into account factors from the client's intrapersonal, interpersonal, and social milieu. Students will be able to obtain histories and personal data, and will be able to tell the difference between facts and inferences.

Students will demonstrate empathy and consistent listening and focusing skills. The ability to relate to a wide range of feelings is present and students can use the skills of confrontation, clarification, partialization, and exploration. Students will be problem and strengths focused and able to help clients problem-solve in an organized, thoughtful, and supportive way. Students will understand and accept the impact of cultural, racial, gender and other differences in their clients, and talk with them about these influences. Students should understand the importance of the termination process and their own impact on this process.

Students will identify with the profession's social work values, ethics, and mission while providing generalist services to vulnerable populations. All work behavior should be thoroughly professional and consistent with agency policies and practices. Students should be open to new learning and ready to experience the stress that accompanies change, and be willing to hear both positive and negative criticism. There may be areas that are still difficult for the student, but the overall motivation to learn and take risks should be present at year's end. Student self-awareness should include a realistic appraisal of abilities and biases. It is expected that there will be an ability to abstract principles of generalist practice from field experience, to translate concepts into action, to carry over learning from case to case or conference to case, and to generalize from learning to other situations. Students should show the ability to make connections between theory and practice and to assess the relevance of practice.

There should be a reflection of learning issues identified in the Learning Contract. Also, students

should be able to identify areas for their future work and assume responsibility for their own learning.

## **Skills and Tasks**

The Generalist Practicum emphasizes the use of a problem-solving model of practice within a person-in-environment framework, incorporating social work values and ethics. It is expected that field agencies will provide opportunities for students to use the skills of engagement, assessment, contracting, intervention, evaluation, and termination. An effort should be made to assign students at least one client or client system that will allow for a *sustained, on-going* relationship (with a minimum of three service contacts). Note that the Foundation (generalist) field year requires that students participate in both micro and macro-oriented activities so learning will take place not just in the traditional worker-client dyad, but also within the context of group, community, and organization. Examples of appropriate tasks include:

**Social Work with Individuals:** Intake and assessments; creating service plans; provision of concrete services; case management; advocacy; supportive counseling and psychotherapy; research and evaluation of services via single-subject design, client feedback, goal attainment, measurement of task completion; termination issues, (i.e., client preparation, reviewing progress, making referrals, planning for future, transferring cases); follow-up.

**Social Work with Families:** Intake and assessments; assessment of impact of family dynamics on individuals; helping families change dysfunctional dynamics, creating service plans; provision of concrete services; case management; advocacy; supportive counseling; research and evaluation of services via single-subject design, client feedback, goal attainment, measurement of task completion; termination issues, (i.e., client preparation, reviewing progress, making referrals, planning for future, transferring cases); follow-up.

**Social Work with Groups** (groups include treatment groups, peer support groups, boards of directors, task groups, committees, staff groups): Review of membership criteria; interviews with potential group members; review of prior minutes and group reports; contracting with a group; co-facilitation or facilitation of a group; committee participation; staff group participation; research and evaluation of services via single-subject design, client feedback, goal attainment, measurement of task completion; termination issues, (i.e., client preparation, reviewing progress, making referrals, planning for future, transferring cases); follow-up.

**Social Work with Organizations** (this category includes both the placement site and outside organizations): Awareness of placement site policies and procedures, mission, goals, and role (required for all students); identification of management theories/structure; organizational assessment; program assessment; program implementation and coordination; grant-writing; in-service training; supervisory activities; research and evaluation via program monitoring, program evaluation design, organizational analysis; termination issues, (i.e., transferring workload, summarizing status of projects/activities, exit interview); follow-up.

**Social Work with the Community:** Research on community demographics and characteristics; speaking with residents and members; identification of resources; program implementation; outreach services; community education; resource coordination; research and evaluation via

community organization scale, monitoring attendance and participation, community feedback, monitoring rates of problem incidence; termination issues, (i.e., transferring workload, informing cooperating agencies); follow-up.

### *Clinical Social Work Practicum*

The specialization in Clinical Social Work prepares students to conceptualize, provide, and supervise the delivery of clinical social work services to individuals, couples, families, and small groups. Emphasis is on developing competence in those helping processes used to ameliorate psychological, social and behavioral problems and to enhance, develop, and restore social functioning. Courses required for the specialization and which must be taken concurrently with a direct practice field practicum are:

19:910:511 Clinical Social Work I (3)

19:910:512 Clinical Social Work II (3)

The Clinical Social Work concentration focuses on methods of intervention with individuals, couples, families, and groups. As a result of this concentration, students will:

- Develop professional interpersonal skills including the disciplined, differential, and conscious use of the self, the ability to establish working alliances, and collaborative relationships.
- Develop the conceptual and logical skills involved in problem analysis and planning of direct practice interventions with client systems, and the mastery of assessment and case formulation from a variety of clinical perspectives.
- Analyze, evaluate, and integrate clinical practice theories to become a more sophisticated and critical consumer of theory.
- Use psychotherapy skills such as engagement, assessment, and intervention in a variety of settings including those that do not primarily provide psychotherapy, such as child welfare settings, hospitals, hospices, and schools.
- Enhance skills in working with special populations including the poor, LGBTQ individuals, the disabled, and clients from diverse cultural and ethnic groups.
- Identify, analyze, and respond professionally to ethical and value dilemmas encountered in day-to-day clinical practice.

The Clinical Social Work field experience emphasizes clinical and advanced casework interventions with diverse individuals, couples, families, and groups. Students are provided assignments that allow *sustained, on-going* relationships with individuals, couples, families, and groups.

The Clinical Social Work field practicum builds on the skills and perspectives taught in the

foundation curriculum and Social Work Practice, in which there is an emphasis on the roles of advocate, broker, and case manager. Advanced clinical theories are applied within the context of person-in-environment, with assessment including interventions that address personal and/or interpersonal systems. The roles of clinician, counselor, and advanced case manager are emphasized.

### *Goals and Expectations*

Advanced-year field placement students in the Clinical Social Work curriculum will build upon their work during the foundation of their previous year of generalist practice. This will provide students with an understanding and ability to assess and interact with the systems that impact clients. As they work to alleviate the emotional suffering of their clients, their approach should take into account the effects of society's discrimination, organizational perspectives, and the opportunities and limitations of service agencies. This understanding will have been integrated in the student's work with individuals, families, and small groups in their field placement. Students will have learned to practice with their clients within the systems in which their clients operate, from family to school to community to organization.

Students in their first semester of advanced practice will develop skills in identifying gaps in services in local social service systems. They will be sensitive to the need for activity on behalf of their clients, and be willing to become involved in working on concrete issues. Students will have a beginning understanding of the bureaucratic structure and its concomitant opportunities and demands.

Students' assessment skills should be well-developed in this semester and they should perceive this development as a dynamic process. They will be applying various conceptualizations of family structures and patterns, and evaluating their clients within these family systems. Their ability to present themselves as professionals with empathy and respect is present in this semester, and students should be comfortable with clients who are different from themselves. Students' intervention skills will be uneven as they are applying skills and specialized knowledge learned from class and readings. Theory is understood in some situations, and students are expected to seek out information when needed.

Students will continue to identify their own biases and judgments of clients and should be willing to criticize their own work. Openness in the approach to learning is expected in this semester, as well as a willingness to experience the stress that accompanies learning. Work with other professionals and staff should be done with respect and full understanding of confidentiality needs. By the end of this semester, students should be taking responsibility for their continued learning and should be clear about their skill deficits and how they will address them.

An important aspect of this first semester advanced evaluation is the assessment of the kind of learner that a student is, including the identification of strengths and learning needs and the patterns that are beginning to emerge in the work. A Field Instructor who is clear about the ways in which a student learns best, e.g., through detailed examination of written recording or through role playing of troublesome interactions, will be able to plan the learning for the rest of the year in a productive manner. Students should be contributing their own understanding of how they learn best, thus increasing the mutuality of the educational process and helping to take

responsibility for their own progress and learning.

Students about to graduate from the Master's program who specialized in the Clinical Social Work track should be ready to assume a professional role. This means they will have integrated the ethics and values of the profession and are dedicated to providing services to vulnerable and needy populations. They should have a sophisticated understanding of the interplay of the social policies, social institutions, and social norms that contribute to the presenting problems of clients. They should identify themselves as professional social workers ready to provide any necessary services for clients.

Students should be skilled in making assessments and providing clinical services to individuals, families, and small groups, based on a solid foundation of knowledge and theory about human behavior and social systems. There will, of course, be variations in the levels of specific skills; some will be stronger than others. All students, however, should be performing as beginning professionals. Students should be able to make skillful judgments about the services needed for their clients and be comfortable providing different kinds of services. Their advanced-year specialization of cluster courses has provided them with in-depth knowledge and theory about a specific population. Finally, graduating students will have self-awareness and a sense of responsibility about the quality of their practice knowledge and skills, and will be motivated to continue their learning.

### **Skills and Tasks**

**Social Work with Individuals:** Intake and assessments including development of diagnostic impression using the DSM-V and other instruments; creating service plans; advanced case management; advocacy; counseling and therapy; research and evaluation of service via single subject design, client feedback, goal attainment, measurement of task completion; termination issues.

**Social Work with Couples and Families:** Intake and assessments; assessment of the impact of family dynamics on individuals; creating service plans; advanced case management; advocacy; counseling and therapy; research and evaluation of services via single-subject design, client feedback, goal attainment, measurement of task completion; termination issues.

**Social Work with Groups (including treatment groups, peer support groups, boards of directors, task groups, committees):** Review of membership criteria; interviews with potential members; review of minutes and reports; contracting with a group; co-facilitation or facilitation of a group; committee participation; staff group participation; research and evaluation; termination issues.

**Social Work Supervision and Consultation:** Prepare and present a staff training; prepare and present a workshop to members of the community; participate in supervising agency volunteers; provide consultation to a community volunteer organization.