



BSW Employment-Based Field Education Placement Policy

Field education is the signature pedagogy of social work education, where students develop their professional identity and integrate the skills and concepts learned throughout their coursework. The current best practice for field education requires students to engage in learning activities that are qualitatively different from prior volunteer or employment experiences and allow for the attainment of the Council on Social Work Education (CSWE) competencies and behaviors.

GVSU School of Social Work makes available the option of field placement where a student is employed. Students seeking to complete their field placement at their place of employment must submit an employment-based field education proposal and receive approval by the Field Education office.

There are two types of employment-based field placement proposals a BSW student may pursue:

Option #1: Students who are not in a social work position at their place of employment can request an employment-based field placement in another department that *is* in a social work position and promotes undergraduate level generalist social work competency development.

Similarly, if a student is working in a social work position but wants to intern in a different area within their place of employment to maximize new learning, they can. (i.e. the student works at Agency A as a Foster Care case manager but wants to gain new experiences with the same employer in the Refugee unit). In either of these cases, no employment hours will count toward the field education placement. The student would need to accrue 13-14 field placement hours per week outside of their employment.

Option #2: Students who are engaged in job duties that align with the CSWE competencies and behaviors and promote undergraduate generalist social work practice and skills may request an employment-based field placement. In this scenario, students may count 3 employment hours per week as their field placement hours if the proposal demonstrates new learning that aligns with the CSWE competencies and behaviors, and is approved by the

Field Education office. In this scenario, the student would need to accrue 10-11 field placement hours per week outside of their employment.

When determining if a student's employment is eligible for Option #2, several factors will be considered:

- The student's job title
- The student's job description
- If the job duties align with the CSWE competencies and behaviors ([Generalist competencies here](#))
- If the job duties align with the NASW [Social Work Grid for Scope of Practice](#).

Student Responsibility:

When a student opts to pursue an employment-based field placement, it is the student's responsibility to manage the process. This includes completing an application and demonstrating how the employment-based placement will offer new learning that aligns with the CSWE competencies and behaviors. The student is also responsible for gathering required signatures and ensuring all parties agree with and will adhere to the proposed employment-based field placement.

Employment-based Placement Requirements:

The following requirements for an employment-based field placement must be met and are in accordance with the Council on Social Work Education (CSWE) Accreditation Standards. The requirements are designed to help recognize the role transition that is expected of employees who are engaging in employment-based field experiences.

Requirements for Option #2:

- The student must be employed in a position that promotes undergraduate level generalist social work practice and skills and is **already** engaged in employment related activities that align with the Council on Social Work Education (CSWE) social work competencies and behaviors.
- The employment-based field placement proposal must demonstrate how the student's current job duties align with CSWE generalist competencies and behaviors.
- The employment-based field placement proposal must identify proposed learning activities that are **different** from the student's job duties and demonstrate how they align with the CSWE generalist competencies and behaviors.

Requirements for Option #1 and Option #2:

- The agency must provide a field education supervisor who has a BSW or MSW degree with at least two years post-graduate social work experience. When possible, this person is not to be the student's current employment supervisor. In cases where the Field Supervisor is also the employment supervisor, supervision for Field Education must be separate from supervision time for employment. The goal is to ensure the role of the student is a learner while they are engaging in their paid employment position.
- The agency must be willing to allow the Field Supervisor to attend field education orientation and/or training, site visits, and provide the minimum of one hour per week of supervision with the student.
- The agency must establish an affiliation agreement with the School of Social Work to accept BSW students, if such an agreement does not already exist.
- The agency must allow the student/employee to attend classes and have an educationally focused field experience.
- Students must document field placement hours (200 hours per semester) in the learning contract portal. The field education supervisor is expected to monitor and approve the hours. Hours must be spread equally throughout the semester and across all semesters the student is in field education. Additional hours beyond employment may be required to address all generalist competencies and behaviors.
- The Field Supervisor must assist the student with developing the learning contract and evaluate the student's progress at the end of each semester.
- The student's Field Liaison will provide oversight of the field placement and conduct site visit meetings.

Disruption in Employment:

It is important to note that a student who agrees to an employment-based field placement acknowledges that a disruption in employment (i.e. student voluntarily ends employment or student's employment is terminated) may adversely affect the student's field placement. Similarly, a disruption in the employment-based field placement may adversely affect the

student's employment and may also delay the student's graduation. The following outlines the procedures if a student's employment and/or employment-based field placement is terminated.

Student's employment is terminated:

1. Student must notify their field liaison promptly.
2. The field liaison will consult with the Field Education Director.
3. Depending on the circumstances, student, field liaison and/or field education director will consult with the field supervisor and field site to determine if student can remain in the employment-based field placement.
4. Student may choose not to stay in the employment-based field placement.
5. If the student does not remain in the employment-based field placement, the Field Education Director will assess the circumstances and may call a Practicum Review meeting to determine next steps.
6. If a Practicum Review meeting is not warranted, the student will be replaced at another field education site and is expected to complete the full field education hours requirement.
7. If the student remains in the employment-based field placement while not an employee, the student is responsible for fulfilling the full field education hours requirement since employment hours are no longer attainable.

Student's employment-based field placement is terminated:

1. Student must notify their field liaison promptly.
2. The field liaison will consult with the Field Education Director.
3. The policies and procedures concerning conflict resolution/termination as outlined in the BSW Field Education Manual will be followed.
4. The student is responsible for fulfilling the full field education hours requirement since employment hours are no longer attainable.

Employment-based field application:

The employment-based field application must be received by the deadline, which is established by the Field Education office. Once the application is received, it is reviewed by the Field Education Office for approval or denial, or the Field Education Office may request additional information before a decision can be made.

The following examples illustrate employment-based field education settings that would need close consideration and discussion for approval:

- The agency and agency staff are limited in size, making it difficult to distinguish employee and student roles.

- The student has worked for the agency for a considerable period of time with no experience elsewhere.
- Conflicts of interest would exist between the student and proposed supervisor.
- Potential conflicts of interest or dual relationships may exist (i.e. more than one student in the SW program works at the agency, requests an employer-based placement, and is in a supervisor/supervisee relationship with the other student).