



# **Master of Social Work Field Education Manual**

## **Policies and Procedures**

Revised 7/2025

## **Acknowledgments**

The School of Social Work faculty deeply appreciates the commitment and dedication of Field Education Supervisors who work so closely with our students. These professional Social Workers devote their time, energy, and skills to perform a critical assessment of both the curriculum and our students and thus contribute to strengthening the overall Grand Valley State University Social Work program.

A key element of the Social Work education process is the partnership between Field Education Supervisors and the School of Social Work. Some of our Field Education Supervisors have been a part of this endeavor for many years while others are more recent contributors. Each Field Education Supervisor and the human service agencies in which they work provide a crucial component in the education and training of future Social Workers.

## **Disclaimer**

The Field Education Manual of the Master of Social Work program at Grand Valley State University is not an irrevocable contract between the student and University. The University reserves the right to make changes to curriculum, policy, and/or other portions of the program at any time during the student's attendance.

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## FOR STUDENTS – How to Use This Manual

Dear Students:

This manual contains all the information you will need to help you during your field education experience, from preparing your field application, to operating effectively and ethically within your practice setting, to completing the necessary paperwork to document your progress. This manual and the documents referred to in this manual are available through the School of Social Work website at: [www.gvsu.edu/ssw](http://www.gvsu.edu/ssw); Master of Social Work Program, Field Education, MSW Field Education Documents.

### Terms Used in This Manual

***Field Education Director*** – provides leadership in the ongoing administration and implementation of BSW & MSW Field Education. Responsibilities include but are not limited to: oversight of and consultation to Faculty Field Liaisons, leading student Field Practicum Review meetings, developing new field education sites, providing field education orientation and training for BSW & MSW students, Field Supervisors, and Field Faculty Liaisons. Secondary responsibility is student placement.

***Field Education Coordinator*** – primary responsibility is student field placement, developing student field seminar groups, assisting with field site development and student and field supervisor field education orientation.

***Academic Advisor*** – the Grand Valley State University faculty member assigned to assist students with course scheduling, field application review, clarification, exploration, and advisement regarding social work fields of practice and career exploration.

***Faculty Field Liaison/Faculty Liaison/Seminar Instructor*** – serves as a consultant to both Field Education Supervisors and students as the Grand Valley State University faculty member who represents the School of Social Work and the University, facilitates the relationship between the student and Field Education Supervisor, teaches field seminar, monitors student progress and completion of learning objectives, and assigns course grade.

***Field Education Supervisor*** – directly observes and assigns learning activities of the student intern and provides guidance, instruction, mentoring, evaluation, and supervision.

***Task Coordinator*** – an individual who may not necessarily hold a Master's degree in social work but provides day to day oversight of the field placement. The Task Coordinator works in collaboration with the Field Education Supervisor for the supervision and assignment of learning opportunities for the student.

**Field Education** (also referred to as Field Practice, Field, Internship, Practicum) – the twelve credit hour (regular status) or eight credit hour (advanced standing) required phase of the Master’s program which provides students with an opportunity to integrate foundation, theory, and practice course material into experiential learning under the instruction of a trained and experienced professional in the field of Social Work.

**Field Education Site** (also Practice Site, Field Setting, Placement Setting) – the social/human service agency, school, medical, or other GVSU School of Social Work approved location to which students are assigned to complete their internship.

**Field Education Seminar** (also Field Seminar, Practice Seminar) – required one credit hour (15 clock hours per semester) mandatory seminar held regularly throughout each semester of a student’s field placement. Faculty Field Liaisons convene the field seminars which are inextricably connected with field practice. Both must be successfully completed simultaneously for students to receive credit.

**Field Education Practice Committee** – comprised of faculty and faculty field liaisons. Co-chaired by the Field Education Coordinators. The Field Education Coordinators are responsible for the agenda and membership. The purpose of the Field Practice Committee includes, but is not limited to, assistance with the development of field curriculum, field policy development and evaluation and field policy implementation.

**Field Education Advisory Committee** – comprised of Social Work faculty members and Field Education Supervisors. Co-chaired and convened by the Field Education Coordinators on an annual basis. The Field Education Advisory Committee is an avenue for the social work community to provide input and advisement to the field education program in addition to addressing the needs of the community and the needs of the GVSU Social Work program.

**Practicum Review Committee** – this committee is convened by the Field Education Director upon disruption of a student’s field education placement or serious concerns regarding a student’s performance or conduct in the field placement. The committee consists of the Field Education Director, the student’s Academic Advisor, and the student’s Faculty Field Liaison. An additional social work faculty member may be selected by the student.

**Learning Contract** – is based on the nine core competencies identified by the Council on Social Work Education (CSWE) as the standards for social work education. Each competency has specific observable behaviors. The Learning Contract guides the Field Education Supervisor and student in establishing tasks/activities that align with the observable behaviors and competencies. At the completion of each semester, the Learning Contract is used to evaluate student performance. A new Learning Contract is required for each semester of Field Education.

# MSW Student Field Education Checklist

## 1. Preparing for Field Education

- Complete Pre-Field Education foundation courses (waived if Advanced Standing):
  - SW 600 Cultural Competency for Social Work
  - SW 601 Foundations of Social Work Practice
  - SW 603 Integrated Methods
  - SW 620 Human Behavior and the Social Environment

\*It is highly recommended that students take SW 622 – Psychopathology and Social Deviance during their first semester of field education or prior to entering field education.

- Attend **mandatory** Field Education Orientation.
- Read the Field Education Manual.
- Prepare for a work/life schedule that will accommodate for 20 hours per week for a field placement including typical business hours (25 hours in the spring/summer semester).
- Decide on the 3 areas of practice in which you are interested.

## 2. Applying for Field Education

- Access the field application from the School of Social Work website: [www.gvsu.edu/ssw](http://www.gvsu.edu/ssw): Master of Social Work program, Field Education, MSW Field Education documents.
- Complete application:
  - Web based field application with all required attachments
  - Sign your application
- In addition to the application, you must include the following attachments:
  - Updated resume with 3 areas of interest essays, approx. 1 page in length each
  - Current photo
  - Employment based field application, if applicable
- Applications are due **October 1** for regular standing students interested in a School Social Work placement, **November 1** for regular standing students in all other fields of practice, and early April for advanced standing students.
- See timeline on pages 25 - 27 for details on the placement process.

## 3. Interviewing for a Placement Setting

- Receive notification of interview via email from the Field Education Coordinator, which will contain contact information for potential placement site.
- Schedule an interview with potential field placement site.
- Research potential placement setting through agency websites, etc.
- Attend interview prepared with questions for the placement setting.
- Send thank you note to the potential site after your interview.
- Receive email from the Field Education Coordinator confirming your placement.

- Arrange first day of Field Education in the placement setting with Field Supervisor.
4. **Registering for Field Education Courses**
- Receive Field Education and Seminar section notification and information about the first seminar session time and location from the Field Education Coordinator.
  - Register for SW 650: Field Education I and SW 651: Field Education Seminar I, regular standing students only. Advanced standing students register for SW 652 and SW 653. Register in section one, all other sections will be “locked”. The field office will assign you to a specific section of field education and seminar and the University will move your registration to your assigned section. You must already have registered for the field education courses to be able to move to your assigned section.
5. **GVSU Health Compliance Requirements**
- Social Work students are required to complete GVSU’s Health Compliance requirements prior to beginning Field Education.
  - These requirements include: providing documentation of immunizations, 2-step TB testing, successful completion of learning modules, and reviewing and signing specific Field Education forms
  - Students must create and purchase an account for an online portal to upload required documents for the Health Compliance office.
6. **Documenting Your Field Education Experience**
- Develop student Learning Contract each semester (within first 4 weeks). The Learning Contract can be accessed here: <https://www.gvsu.edu/ssw/felc/login.htm>
  - Complete web-based time sheet, have Field Education Supervisor approve hours.
  - Attend scheduled site visits with Faculty Field Liaison and Field Education Supervisor.
  - Attend and participate in all Field Seminar classes each semester, completing all seminar assignments.
  - Complete self-evaluation of the learning contract at the end of each semester
  - Have Field Education Supervisor evaluate the learning contract at the completion of each semester.
7. **Completing Your Field Education Experience**
- Complete the Field Education Exit Survey.

**PLEASE NOTE:** Students enrolled in School of Social Work curriculum must be cognizant of the fact that past or future criminal conduct and/or substantiation of child abuse/neglect may limit or prevent placement in a field practice agency. Because Field Education is an MSW curriculum imperative, the social work degree is awarded only after successful completion of all requirements. Furthermore, past or present criminal conduct may render an individual ineligible to secure a state license and the privilege to practice social work.

# **I. Information Regarding the GVSU School of Social Work**

## **Field Education as Signature Pedagogy: EPAS 2022**

The Educational and Policy Accreditation Standards (EPAS) from the Council on Social Work Education clearly identify field education as central to the learning experience and practice development of social work students. The Competencies in academic learning are intertwined in the creation and implementation of the skill development and practice evaluation within field education.

### **Educational Policy 3.3—Signature Pedagogy: Field Education**

Field education is the signature pedagogy for social work. Signature pedagogies are elements of instruction and socialization that teach future practitioners the fundamental dimensions of professional work in their discipline: to think, to perform, and to act intentionally, ethically, and with integrity. The field setting is where students apply human rights principles from global and national social work ethical codes to advance social, racial, economic, and environmental justice. It fosters a learning environment where anti-racism, diversity, equity, and inclusion are valued. Field education is designed to integrate the theoretical and conceptual contributions of the explicit curriculum in the field setting. It is a basic precept of social work education that the two interrelated components of curriculum—classroom and field—are of equal importance, 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 and measures of student acquisition and demonstration of the nine social work competencies. Responding to the changing nature of the practice world and student demographics and characteristics, field education programs articulate how they maintain or enhance students' access to high-quality field practicum experiences. Field education programs develop field models to prepare students for contemporary and interprofessional social work practice, including the use of various forms of technology.

### **A. Mission and Focus of the Master of Social Work Program**

#### **MSW Program Mission**

As an established School of Social Work in the region, the mission of the GVSU MSW program is to prepare excellent advanced generalist social workers who are committed to the advancement of human rights, equity, and well-being among the individuals, families, groups, organizations, and communities of West Michigan, the State, the Nation, and globally. We value diversity, serving our community, scientific inquiry, relationships, and ethical practice and are united by a commitment to our students, the profession, and the University. We are guided by research and ecological, rights-based, anti-racist, and anti-oppressive approaches to teaching and practice. The program is committed to maintaining academically rigorous courses and dynamic field education experiences that prepare graduates to adopt a service-oriented approach to the complex social, behavioral, and systemic challenges they will encounter. Graduates will possess the professions' knowledge, values, skills, and cognitive and affective processes necessary to ethically



adapt and advocate for the comprehensive justice of all people. We strive to develop lifelong learners who are committed to justice, human relationships, cultural competence, humility, and serving the most vulnerable populations. (Adopted 12.2.2024)

The MSW program's goals are derived directly from its mission statement and are designed to meet the social service needs of its Program locations and beyond. The program goals are:

1. To provide a foundational MSW curriculum and an advanced generalist social work curriculum that prepares graduates for autonomous social work practice and instills a commitment to professional development.
2. To prepare graduates for master's level social work practice that promotes social, economic, racial, and environmental justice and endeavors to address poverty and other social problems within individual, family, group, organizational, and community contexts in local, regional, statewide, national, and international settings focused on improving the quality of life for all persons.
3. To award the graduate degree to individuals who are skilled practitioners, adhere to the NASW Code of Ethics, promote human rights, incorporate anti-racism, diversity, equity, and inclusion into their practice, and are capable of assuming leadership and professional roles locally, nationally, and globally.
4. To instill the value of lifelong development and responsibility to contribute to the professional social work knowledge base and practice through leadership, supervision, scholarly inquiry, research, and ethical use of emerging technology.

## **B. School of Social Work Master's Program Curriculum**

The School's Advanced Generalist curriculum is designed to foster an integration of theory and practice and to inculcate in students practice-relevant knowledge, skills, and values that can have the broadest and fullest application to culturally and socially diverse client systems, fields of practice, problem situations, organizational settings, levels of intervention and geographic contexts. This is derived from carefully designed and systematically structured courses in methods of Social Work Practice, Human Behavior and the Social Environment, Social Welfare Policy and Services, Social Research, and Field Education. By means of its graduate curriculum, the School of Social Work seeks to produce knowledgeable and competent professionals who can:

1. Attain a level of analytical, interactional, and technical competency essential for effective, self-directed professional practice and meaningful careers in human service;
2. Contribute to the development and improvement of the profession through participation in research, education, practice, and professional organizations;

3. Meet the needs, responsibilities, and professional (personnel) requirements of agencies and programs engaged in the delivery of human and social services in West Michigan, around the State of Michigan, across the country, internationally; and,
4. Pursue postgraduate training in a doctoral program in Social Work or other related fields.

### **C. The Advanced Generalist Model**

The advanced generalist model is built on a liberal education foundation that promotes critical thinking and the conscientious application of advanced practice social work knowledge, skills, values, ethics, and cognitive and affective processes. The features of this model are designed to:

- Enhance the depth and breadth of practice in a multi-method, multi-level, and theoretically grounded perspective;
- Refine and shape advanced practitioners through acquisition of professional competencies to assess, intervene, and evaluate within all systems and within all practice environment;
- Affirm that human problems derive from a complex interplay of psychological, social, cultural, economic, political, biological and physical forces;
- Prepare students to effectively intervene with individuals, families, groups, organizations and communities;
- Expand, extend and enhance the foundation of generalist social work core competencies with advanced knowledge and practice behaviors; and
- Promote the development of advanced knowledge, skills, values and affective and cognitive processes in leadership, collaboration, administration, advocacy, assessment, problem solving, intervention, cultural competency, communication, collaboration, community building, program evaluation, organizational management, policy analysis, and scientific inquiry.

The integration of professional practice skills within the advanced generalist curriculum model culminates in the mastery of social work's core competencies, so that MSW graduates are proficient in a wide range of settings, with a broad diversity of populations at all levels of professional practice in any geographic location.

### **D. MSW Curriculum Pathways**

Curriculum pathways vary between Regular Status, Advanced Standing, School Social Work Certification, MSW/MPA Dual Degree, as well as full and part time status. This link provides access to all of the curriculum pathways including study plans and sample curriculum charts for each pathway:

<https://www.gvsu.edu/ssw/msw-curriculum-pathways-160.htm>

## **II. Information Regarding GVSU's MSW Field Practice**

### **A. Field Education: The Signature Pedagogy**

Field education is the signature pedagogy of social work education and offers students opportunities to fully integrate and practice the skills necessary to demonstrate achievement with the School of Social Work's competencies and practice behaviors. Field education provides practical application of values, skills and knowledge introduced to students in foundation and advanced coursework. Using carefully selected community partnerships and at the direction of qualified Field Education Supervisor's students become participating members of the social work community while learning to apply the ethics and values needed for effective service delivery with populations at risk. Participation in the guided seminar class assists the student to assimilate course content with community-based learning.

### **B. CSWE Core Competencies, Definitions, and Behaviors:**

Regular status MSW students begin their first semester of field education implementing a learning contract addressing generalist social work behaviors. In the second and third semesters students have progressed to Advanced Generalist behaviors. Advanced Standing MSW students, who have mastered the generalist curriculum, complete one less semester of field education solely focused on the Advanced Generalist behaviors.

#### **Generalist:**

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

Social workers understand the value base of the profession and its ethical standards, as well as relevant policies, laws, and regulations that may affect practice with individuals, families, groups, organizations, and communities. Social workers understand that ethics are informed by principles of human rights and apply them toward realizing social, racial, economic, and environmental justice in their practice. Social workers understand frameworks of ethical decision making and apply principles of critical thinking to those frameworks in practice, research, and policy arenas. Social workers recognize and manage personal values and the distinction between personal and professional values. Social workers understand how their evolving worldview, personal experiences, and affective reactions influence their professional judgment and behavior. Social workers take measures to care for themselves professionally and personally, understanding that self-care is paramount for competent and ethical social work practice. Social workers use rights-based, antiracist, and anti-oppressive lenses to understand and critique the profession's history, mission, roles, and responsibilities and recognize historical and current contexts of oppression in shaping institutions and social work. Social workers understand the role of other professionals when engaged in interprofessional practice. Social workers recognize the importance of lifelong learning and are committed to continually updating their skills to ensure relevant and effective practice. Social workers understand digital technology and the ethical use of technology in social work practice.

Social Workers:

- a) make ethical decisions by applying the standards of the National Association of Social Workers Code of Ethics, relevant laws and regulations, models for ethical decision making, ethical conduct of research, and additional codes of ethics within the profession as appropriate to the context;
- b) demonstrate professional behavior; appearance; and oral, written, and electronic communication;

- c) use technology ethically and appropriately to facilitate practice outcomes; and
- d) use supervision and consultation to guide professional judgment and behavior;
- e) demonstrate self-care practices and recognize professional risks including secondary traumatic stress and vicarious trauma.

## **Competency 2: Advance Human Rights and Social, Racial, Economic, and Environmental Justice**

Social workers understand that every person regardless of position in society has fundamental human rights. Social workers are knowledgeable about the global intersecting and ongoing injustices throughout history that result in oppression and racism, including social work's role and response. Social workers critically evaluate the distribution of power and privilege in society in order to promote social, racial, economic, and environmental justice by reducing inequities and ensuring dignity and respect for all. Social workers advocate for and engage in strategies to eliminate oppressive structural barriers to ensure that social resources, rights, and responsibilities are distributed equitably, and that civil, political, economic, social, and cultural human rights are protected.

Social Workers:

- a) advocate for human rights at the individual, family, group, organizational, and community system levels; and
- b) engage in practices that advance human rights to promote social, racial, economic, and environmental justice.

## **Competency 3: Engage in Anti-Racism, Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (ADEI) in Practice**

Social workers understand how racism and oppression shape human experiences and how these two constructs influence practice at the individual, family, group, organizational, and community levels and in policy and research. Social workers understand the pervasive impact of White supremacy and privilege and use their knowledge, awareness, and skills to engage in anti-racist practice. Social workers understand how diversity and intersectionality shape human experiences and identity development and affect equity and inclusion. The dimensions of diversity are understood as the intersectionality of factors including but not limited to age, caste, class, color, culture, disability and ability, ethnicity, gender, gender identity and expression, generational status, immigration status, legal status, marital status, political ideology, race, nationality, religion and spirituality, sex, sexual orientation, and tribal sovereign status. Social workers understand that this intersectionality means that a person's life experiences may include oppression, poverty, marginalization, and alienation as well as privilege and power. Social workers understand the societal and historical roots of social and racial injustices and the forms and mechanisms of oppression and discrimination. Social workers understand cultural humility and recognize the extent to which a culture's structures and values, including social, economic, political, racial, technological, and cultural exclusions, may create privilege and power resulting in systemic oppression.

Social Workers:

- a) demonstrate anti-racist and anti-oppressive social work practice at the individual, family, group, organizational, community, research, and policy levels; and
- b) demonstrate cultural humility by applying critical reflection, self-awareness, and self-regulation to manage the influence of bias, power, privilege, and values in working with clients and constituencies, acknowledging them as experts of their own lived experiences.

**Competency 4: Engage in Practice-Informed Research and Research-Informed Practice**

Social workers use ethical, culturally informed, anti-racist, and anti-oppressive approaches in conducting research and building knowledge. Social workers use research to inform their practice decision making and articulate how their practice experience informs research and evaluation decisions. Social workers critically evaluate and critique current, empirically sound research to inform decisions pertaining to practice, policy, and programs. Social workers understand the inherent bias in research and evaluate design, analysis, and interpretation using an anti-racist and anti-oppressive perspective. Social workers know how to access, critique, and synthesize the current literature to develop appropriate research questions and hypotheses. Social workers demonstrate knowledge and skills regarding qualitative and quantitative research methods and analysis, and they interpret data derived from these methods. Social workers demonstrate knowledge about methods to assess reliability and validity in social work research. Social workers can articulate and share research findings in ways that are usable to a variety of clients and constituencies. Social workers understand the value of evidence derived from interprofessional and diverse research methods, approaches, and sources.

Social Workers:

- a) apply research findings to inform and improve practice, policy, and programs; and
- b) identify ethical, culturally informed, anti-racist, and anti-oppressive strategies that address inherent biases for use in quantitative and qualitative research methods to advance the purposes of social work.

**Competency 5: Engage in Policy Practice**

Social workers identify social policy at the local, state, federal, and global level that affects wellbeing, human rights and justice, service delivery, and access to social services. Social workers recognize the historical, social, racial, cultural, economic, organizational, environmental, and global influences that affect social policy. Social workers understand and critique the history and current structures of social policies and services and the role of policy in service delivery through rights-based, anti-oppressive, and anti-racist lenses. Social workers influence policy formulation, analysis, implementation, and evaluation within their practice settings with individuals, families, groups, organizations, and communities. Social workers actively engage in and advocate for anti-racist and anti-oppressive policy practice to effect change in those settings.

Social Workers:

- a) use social justice, anti-racist, and anti-oppressive lenses to assess how social welfare policies affect the delivery of and access to social services; and
- b) apply critical thinking to analyze, formulate, and advocate for policies that advance human rights and social, racial, 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 individuals, families, groups, organizations, and communities.

Social workers value the importance of human relationships. Social workers understand theories of human behavior and person-in-environment and critically evaluate and apply this knowledge to facilitate engagement with clients and constituencies, including individuals, families, groups, organizations, and communities. Social workers are self-reflective and understand how bias,

power, and privilege as well as their personal values and personal experiences may affect their ability to engage effectively with diverse clients and constituencies. Social workers use the principles of interprofessional collaboration to facilitate engagement with clients, constituencies, and other professionals as appropriate.

Social Workers:

- a) apply knowledge of human behavior and person-in-environment, as well as interprofessional conceptual frameworks, to engage with clients and constituencies; and
- b) use empathy, reflection, and interpersonal skills to engage in culturally responsive practice with 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. Social workers understand theories of human behavior and person-in-environment, as well as interprofessional conceptual frameworks, and they critically evaluate and apply this knowledge in culturally responsive assessment with clients and constituencies, including individuals, families, groups, organizations, and communities. Assessment involves a collaborative process of defining presenting challenges and identifying strengths with individuals, families, groups, organizations, and communities to develop a mutually agreed-upon plan. Social workers recognize the implications of the larger practice context in the assessment process and use interprofessional collaboration in this process. Social workers are self-reflective and understand how bias, power, privilege, and their personal values and experiences may affect their assessment and decision making.

Social Workers:

- a) apply theories of human behavior and person-in-environment, as well as other culturally responsive and interprofessional conceptual frameworks, when assessing clients and constituencies; and
- b) demonstrate respect for client self-determination during the assessment process by collaborating with clients and constituencies in developing a mutually agreed-upon plan.

### **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. Social workers understand theories of human behavior, person-in-environment, and other interprofessional conceptual frameworks, and they critically evaluate and apply this knowledge in selecting culturally responsive interventions with clients and constituencies, including individuals, families, groups, organizations, and communities. Social workers understand methods of identifying, analyzing, and implementing evidence-informed interventions and participate in interprofessional collaboration to achieve client and constituency goals. Social workers facilitate effective transitions and endings.

Social Workers:

- a) engage with clients and constituencies to critically choose and implement culturally responsive, evidence-informed interventions to achieve client and constituency goals; and
- b) incorporate culturally responsive methods to negotiate, mediate, and advocate with and on behalf of clients and constituencies.

### **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 evaluate processes and outcomes to increase practice, policy, and service delivery effectiveness. Social workers apply anti-racist and anti-oppressive perspectives in evaluating outcomes. Social workers understand theories of human behavior and person-in-environment, as well as interprofessional conceptual frameworks, and critically evaluate and apply this knowledge in evaluating outcomes. Social workers use qualitative and quantitative methods for evaluating outcomes and practice effectiveness.

Social Workers:

- a) select and use culturally responsive methods for evaluation of outcomes; and
- b) critically analyze outcomes and apply evaluation findings to improve practice effectiveness with individuals, families, groups, organizations, and communities.

### **Advanced Generalist**

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

Advanced Generalist Social Workers understand and apply the value base of the profession and its ethical standards, as well as relevant policies, laws, and regulations that may affect practice with individuals, families, groups, organizations, and communities. Advanced Generalists seek to inform and reform social work ethics and practice with principles of human rights and apply them toward realizing social, racial, economic, and environmental justice. Advanced Generalists evaluate and implement frameworks of ethical decision-making and apply principles of critical thinking to those frameworks in practice, research, and policy arenas. Advanced Generalists engage in self-reflection, seek collegial feedback on their professional skills, and integrate this feedback regularly into autonomous practice. Advanced Generalists critically analyze how their evolving worldview, individual experiences, social location, power, privilege, and affective reactions influence their professional judgment and behavior.

Advanced Generalists prioritize professional and personal self-care for themselves and those they supervise, understanding that environments that promote and prioritize self-care are paramount for competent and ethical social work practice.

Advanced Generalists provide critical leadership regarding rights-based, anti-racist, and anti-oppressive lenses to understand and critique the profession's history, mission, roles, and responsibilities and recognize historical and current contexts of oppression in shaping institutions and social work. Advanced Generalists advocate for and implement social work values and ethics whenever they engage and collaborate with other professionals. They recognize the importance of lifelong learning and are committed to continually updating their skills to ensure relevant and

effective practice. Advanced Generalists make effective use of digital technology and are committed to educating themselves on best practices and the ethical applications of technology in social work practice.

Advanced Generalist Social Workers:

- a) develop a professional identity through the utilization of regularly scheduled professional supervision and by contributing content that reflects upon personal values, the National Association of Social Workers Code of Ethics, human rights, workplace performance, and ethical dilemmas while being receptive and integrating guidance offered;
- b) intentionally develop self-awareness, advocate for and implement a personal self-care practice based on holistic principles of wellness;
- c) identify and resolve ethical dilemmas encountered in practice situations by applying an interprofessional understanding of social work values; and
- d) critically evaluate the use of technology at the workplace, including remote work arrangements and digital presence, and the implications for the ethical delivery of services with special attention to equity and accessibility.

### **Competency 2: Advance Human Rights and Social, Racial, Economic, and Environmental Justice**

Advanced Generalist Social Workers value advocacy for fundamental human rights and justice, including rights-based, anti-racist, and anti-oppressive practices. Advanced Generalists examine the impact of historical legacies, global interconnections, and ongoing injustices throughout history, economic systems, and the political context that impacts human rights, including social work's role and response. Advanced Generalists critically evaluate social location, power, and privilege to synthesize theories of human need and social justice to promote justice and human rights and stand in solidarity with disenfranchised groups. Advanced Generalists create strategies and advocate for change so that resources and services are distributed equitably; and human, civil, political, cultural, social, racial, economic, and environmental rights are recognized and protected.

Advanced Generalist Social Workers:

- a) identify and contextualize historical injustices, global interconnections, economic systems, and political contexts and provide leadership in advocating for the equitable distribution of resources and services, and recognition of human rights; and
- b) engage in solidarity with groups, organizations, and communities to jointly develop strategies that advance human rights and social, racial, economic, and environmental justice consistent with the National Association of Social Workers Code of Ethics.

### **Competency 3: Engage Anti-Racism, Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (ADEI) in Practice**

Advanced Generalist Social Workers consistently examine how systemic oppression, colonialism, and racism impact practice at the micro, mezzo, and macro levels with individuals, families, groups, organizations, and communities. Advanced Generalists have a well-developed understanding of the pervasiveness of White supremacy and privilege and how diversity and intersectionality shape human experiences and identity development and affect equity and inclusion. Advanced Generalists operate from strengths-based and empowerment perspectives, grounded in a deep understanding of inherent human dignity, and that intersecting identities come from experiences of both oppression and privilege. The dimensions of diversity are understood as



the intersectionality of factors including but not limited to age, caste, class, color, culture, disability and ability, ethnicity, gender, gender identity and expression, generational status, immigration status, legal status, marital status, nationality, political ideology, race, religion and spirituality, sex, sexual orientation, and tribal sovereign status and/or tribal affiliation.

Advanced Generalists translate their knowledge of ecological systems into culturally responsive services and service delivery systems, utilizing well-developed self-awareness to recognize the influences of their own cultural backgrounds and manage the influences of their cognitive and affective processes related to personal values, biases, social location, power, and privilege.

Advanced Generalists structure actions and interventions using rights-based, anti-racist, and anti-oppressive lenses that elevate voices, uphold dignity and worth, and increase choice while maintaining cultural humility, especially for those who are vulnerable, oppressed, or disadvantaged.

Advanced Generalist Social Workers:

- a) identify inequities and initiate proactive interventions with individuals, families, groups, organizations, and communities using rights-based, anti-racist, and anti-oppressive lenses;
- b) recognize and challenge systemic forms and mechanisms of oppression, implicit bias, and discrimination; and
- c) provide leadership that affirmatively contributes to the development and growth of culturally responsive practices, including language and communication.

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

Advanced Generalist Social Workers critically evaluate evidence and knowledge generated through qualitative and quantitative research methodologies through rights-based, anti-racist, and anti-oppressive perspectives. Advanced Generalists respect indigenous ways of knowing and prioritize ethical, culturally responsive, evidence-informed, and decolonized practices. Advanced Generalists practice reflexivity to recognize inherent bias, social location, power, and privilege in the research process, including how race and racism may have shaped the research process and evidence-based practice. Advanced Generalists critically identify, assess, and work to address gaps in evidence-informed practice, policy, theory, and service delivery, and value evidence-informed practice derived from multidisciplinary sources and multiple ways of knowing to improve equitable client and program outcomes and service delivery processes.

Advanced Generalist Social Workers:

- a) critically evaluate published evidence-based research and outcome studies to identify ethical and methodologically sound evidence-informed practices for use with individuals, families, groups, organizations, and communities; and
- b) examine and translate research evidence to inform and improve practice, policy, programs, and services consistent with advanced generalist practice that is culturally responsive, rights-based, anti-racist, and anti-oppressive.

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

Advanced Generalist Social Workers identify and engage with social policy at the local, state, federal, and global level that impacts well-being, human rights and justice, service delivery, and access to social services. Advanced Generalists recognize the historical, institutional, global, social, racial, economic, and environmental influences that impact social policy. Advanced Generalists critically analyze how their evolving worldview, individual experiences, social

location, power, privilege, and affective reactions influence policy practice. Advanced Generalists understand and evaluate the history and current structure of social policy and services while advocating for rights-based, anti-racist, and anti-oppressive policy practices. Advanced Generalists influence policy formulation, analysis, implementation, and evaluation within micro, mezzo, and macro practice settings with individuals, families, groups, organizations, and communities.

Advanced Generalist Social Workers:

- a) develop, implement, and/or evaluate policies that advance a rights-based approach to social, racial, economic, and environmental justice, consistent with the National Association of Social Workers Code of Ethics; and
- b) advocate using a rights-based, anti-racist, and anti-oppressive approaches to shape formal and informal organizational policies that impact systems and constituents.

### **Competency 6: Engage with individuals, families, groups, organizations, and communities**

Advanced Generalist Social Workers ethically approach engagement as an ongoing component of the dynamic and interactive process of social work practice. Advanced Generalists engage with and on behalf of diverse constituencies incorporating rights-based, anti-racist, and anti-oppressive approaches that emphasize rapport, empathy, authenticity, open and honest communication, flexibility, cultural responsiveness, humility, and collaboration while maintaining professional boundaries. Advanced Generalists understand theories of human behavior and person-in-environment which form a critical foundation for engaging at the micro, mezzo, and macro practice levels with individuals, families, groups, organizations, and communities. Advanced Generalists value strengths-based and empowerment approaches and recognize how oppression, institutional racism, colonialism, and systemic barriers impact the lives of others. Advanced Generalists also analyze and consider engagement processes that may be enhanced by the use of technology. They exercise self-awareness of personal bias, social location, power, and privilege during engagement while recognizing the limitations of their abilities and seeking consultation and interprofessional collaboration to achieve diverse client and constituency goals.

Advanced Generalist Social Workers:

- a) build professional relationships to engage with individuals, families, groups, organizations, and communities using collaborative and strengths-based and empowerment approaches; and
- b) adapt best practices through self-reflection, consultation, and multifaceted approaches that recognize the impact of power differentials and systemic barriers and are inclusive of human behavior and person-in-environment dimensions to engage diverse clients and constituencies.

### **Competency 7: Assess individuals, families, groups, organizations, and communities**

Advanced Generalist Social Workers ethically approach assessment as an ongoing component of the dynamic and interactive process of social work practice. Advanced Generalists respect the multidimensional nature of clients and constituents and know that change emanates from a holistic, culturally grounded, and empowering assessment. Advanced Generalists design and utilize culturally interactive and responsive strengths-based assessment processes at the micro, mezzo, and macro practice levels in collaboration and partnership with individuals, families, groups, organizations, and communities. Advanced Generalists design and utilize assessment tools that examine human behavior and person-in-environment and prioritize decolonized evidence-based

ecological tools that are rights-based, anti-racist, and anti-oppressive. Advanced Generalists also analyze and consider assessment practices that may be enhanced by the use of technology. They practice self-reflection to weigh how personal bias, social location, power, and privilege, as well as their personal values and experiences, may affect their ability to assess effectively and critically adapt approaches to meet clients' contextual backgrounds and needs.

Advanced Generalist Social Workers:

- a) reflectively gather and critically evaluate relevant data on presenting issues in a collaborative process to assess the client and their environment through multi-systemic frameworks and strengths-based assessment lens; and
- b) integrate self-reflective and culturally responsive lenses to implement and continuously evaluate tools used for assessment.

### **Competency 8: Intervene with individuals, families, groups, organizations, and communities**

Advanced Generalist Social Workers ethically approach intervention as an ongoing component of the dynamic and interactive process of social work practice. Advanced Generalists utilize theories of human behavior and person-in-environment and other interprofessional conceptual frameworks. Advanced Generalists critically evaluate and apply this knowledge in selecting systemic micro, mezzo, and macro interventions that are rights-based, anti-racist, and anti-oppressive for work with individuals, families, groups, organizations, and communities. Advanced Generalists understand methods of identifying, analyzing, and implementing evidence-informed interventions when intervening with clients and constituencies. Advanced Generalists also analyze and consider interventions that may be enhanced by the use of technology. They exercise self-awareness of personal bias, social location, power, and privilege in determining interventions while recognizing the limitations of their abilities and seeking consultation and interprofessional collaboration to achieve diverse client and constituency goals.

Advanced Generalist Social Workers:

- a) demonstrate the ability to plan, lead, and intervene utilizing an advanced understanding of culturally responsive and evidence-informed interventions accounting for historical, social, racial, economic, and environmental factors at the micro, mezzo, and macro levels; and
- b) engage with clients and constituencies to critically choose and implement culturally responsive, evidence-informed interventions and actively participate in interprofessional collaboration to achieve client and constituency goals.

### **Competency 9: Evaluate practice with individuals, families, groups, organizations, and communities**

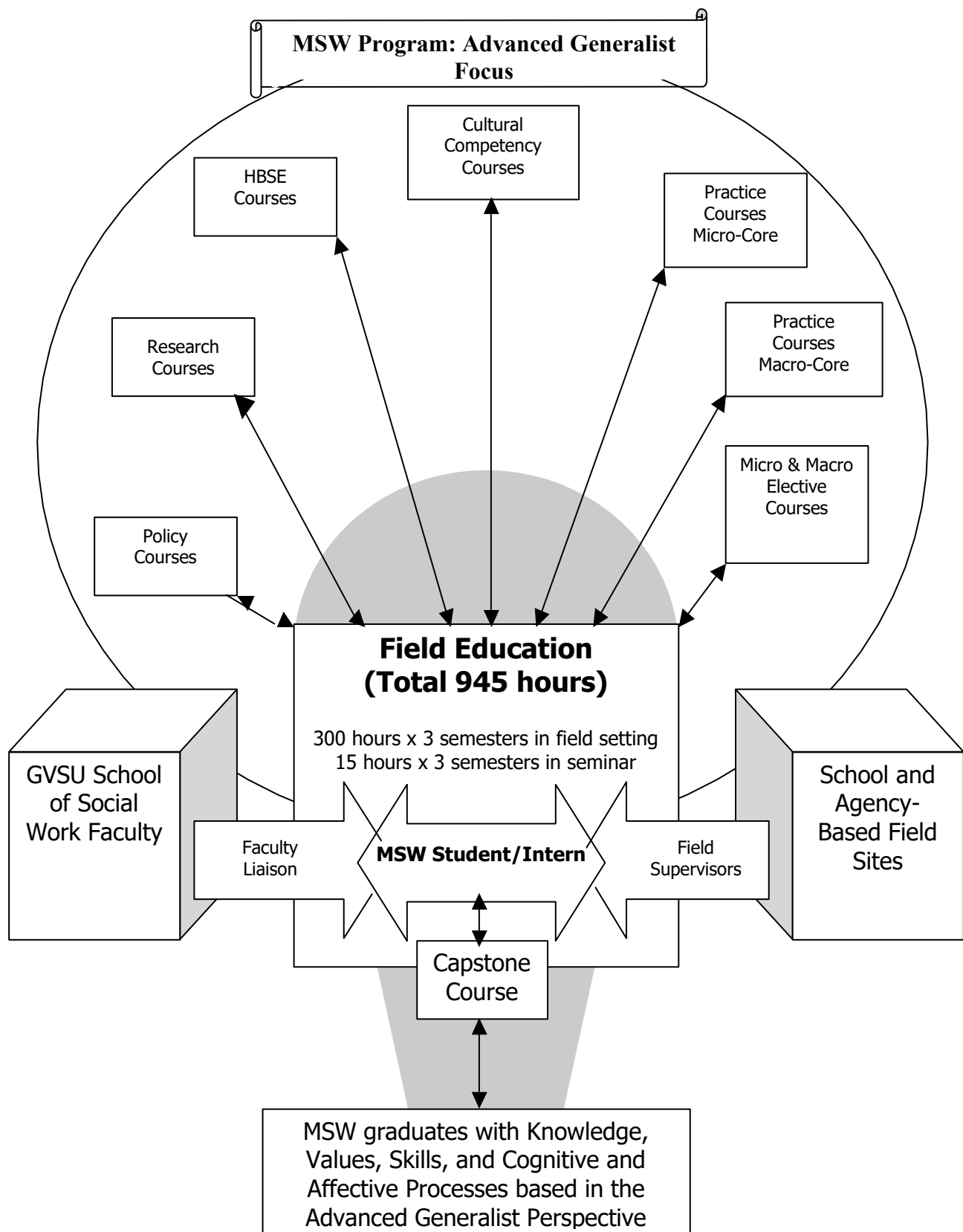
Advanced Generalist Social Workers ethically approach formative and summative evaluation as an ongoing component of the dynamic and interactive process of social work practice. Advanced Generalists understand methods of identifying, analyzing, and implementing evidence-informed evaluations throughout the cycle of service delivery. Advanced Generalists design and apply models of research and evaluation to select appropriate micro, mezzo, and macro processes to evaluate engagement, assessment, and interventions with individuals, families, groups, organizations, and communities. Advanced Generalists also analyze and consider evaluations that may be enhanced by the use of technology. They exercise self-awareness of personal bias, social location, power, and privilege in conducting and utilizing evaluations while recognizing the

limitations of their abilities and seeking consultation and interprofessional collaboration to achieve diverse client and constituency goals.

Advanced Generalist Social Workers:

- a) analyze existing organizational evaluation practices and outcomes to continuously improve effective methods with particular attention to culturally responsive and rights-based approaches; and
- b) apply evidence-informed methodologies to evaluate the service delivery process and its efficacy guided by rights-based, anti-racist, and anti-oppressive perspectives.

### C. Diagram of Course Integration with Field Education



## **D. Field Education Course Objectives**

The Field Education course has the following objectives:

Students will:

1. Model values, skills and knowledge introduced to students in foundation and advanced coursework.
2. Develop professional social work identity, self-reflection and self-awareness, and practice competence in each student.
3. Model critical thinking skills, good judgment, and an understanding of how their emotional reactions impact engagement, assessment, intervention, and evaluation.

## **E. Relationship to Other Courses: Philosophy of Field Education**

In keeping with the most recent practice standards, as outlined by the Council on Social Work Education, the Grand Valley State University School of Social Work recognizes the centrality of field education curriculum in addressing both foundation and advanced practice competencies at the BSW and MSW level respectively.

Field education is an integral part of the MSW program curriculum as it provides students with an opportunity to put classroom knowledge to use in developing practice skills. The emphasis on utilizing full-time faculty as Faculty Field Liaisons and soliciting feedback from the Field Education Practice Committee ensures the integration of field education into the total curriculum.

Field education curriculum provides students with an experiential and imitative learning opportunity to explore and use social work ideas, concepts and behaviors first encountered in the classroom. These learning opportunities are designed to further develop professional social work identity, self-reflection and self-awareness, and practice competence in each student. In each semester of field placement students develop concrete and measurable activities that address specific observable behaviors using the Learning Contract and Evaluation Tool. The development and monitoring of these activities requires the collaboration of the student, the agency-based Field Education Supervisor and the university-based Faculty Field Liaison. This model of collaborative competency-based field education is implemented at both the BSW and MSW level.

Field education is inextricably related to and congruent with the overall goals and objectives of the School of Social Work. Field practice is designed to facilitate the attainment of the program's objectives by providing the student with the opportunities to engage in "experiential," "observational," and "imitative" learning opportunities. Further, students learn to become participating agency members who possess the knowledge, skills, and values necessary to provide effective service delivery.

Additional emphasis on the integration of coursework into the practice is provided by the guided seminar coursework, providing students with the opportunity to actively reflect on the

connection between classroom theory and agency application. Furthering the centrality and integrative nature of the field experience is the use of tenure and tenure track faculty actively engaged in teaching. These faculty members further ensure the reciprocal nature of the field practice on courses and the field experience.

At the core of the MSW program is recognition that students must be prepared to be culturally responsive practitioners in an increasingly complex, global society. In GVSU's MSW program, students focus on the diversity among groups in society, particularly the examination of their commonalities and differences and the implications for practice. Students in field education critically examine and explore the ways in which ethnic, racial, spiritual, sexual, social class and other cultural factors impact the need for and the use of social services and the skills required for cross-cultural social work practice. This ensures that the knowledge of individuals, families, groups, organizations, and communities – both here and abroad – gained in the classroom is translated into real-world experiences.

The School of Social Work is responsible for developing supervised student practice opportunities that allow for this integration of competencies and coursework in our communities. The field office is responsible for monitoring and reporting on aggregate student progress in practice so as to affect the development of curriculum that more fully prepares students for the realities of competent day to day practice. The Field Education Director and Field Education Coordinator works closely with the Directors of the BSW and MSW programs to review student preparation in courses and provide ongoing feedback regarding student and Field Education Supervisor progress in attainment of competency in assigned professional practice behaviors.

## **F. Field Education Structure**

**The School of Social Work does not grant credit for past or current work or life experience. (CSWE Standard 3.1.5)**

The Field Education component of the curriculum consists of six courses:

SW 650\* – Field Education I (3 credits)  
SW 651\* – Field Education Seminar I (1 credit)  
\*Advanced Standing students are exempt

SW 652 – Field Education II (3 credits)  
SW 653 – Field Education Seminar II (1 credit)

SW 654 – Field Education III (3 credits)  
SW 655 – Field Education Seminar III (1 credit)

These six (four for Advanced Standing students) courses are required of all degree-seeking students in the MSW program.

The courses are designed to be taken in order, with four credits taken per semester on a credit/no-credit grading system. Field education and field seminar are inextricably related and must both

be successfully completed simultaneously to receive credit. The pattern of these field education offerings is based upon the concurrent model: these courses are designed to be taken simultaneously with supporting classroom-based courses. Twelve of the 60 credit hours (8 of the 41 credit hours for Advanced Standing students) required for the MSW degree are granted for successful completion of field education.

Field education for regular standing students consists of a minimum of 900 hours spread over three consecutive semesters. Each of the three semesters requires students to undergo an educationally guided field experience for approximately 20-25 hours per week over a twelve-fifteen-week period, for a total of 300 hours. Fifteen additional hours will be completed in the field education seminar each semester.

Advanced Standing students complete 600 hours spread over 2 consecutive semesters. This will translate into 20 hours per week over a fifteen-week semester. Fifteen additional hours will be completed in the field education seminar each semester.

**As a general rule, students remain in the same field placement setting throughout their field education experience, spending all semesters at one agency or organization, under the supervision of an experienced agency-based Field Education Supervisor. See page 56 for more information regarding changes in Field Placement.**

## **G. Developmental Nature of Field Education**

### **1. First Semester (Foundation)**

- a. Focus:** The focus of the first semester is based upon demonstration and use of basic assessment skills, intervention strategies, and self-evaluative techniques as they apply to the provision of social work services for individuals, families, small groups, organizations and communities. During the first semester the student is learning the scope of agency practice, agency policies and procedures, gaining an orientation to population served, the broader system of care, networking with agencies involved in the field of practice, receiving safety training, and observing social workers as they perform their responsibilities. Learning activities may include visiting partner agencies, reviewing policies and procedures, interviewing staff, reporting on or recording their observations based upon their shadowing experiences, role playing, labeling/naming skills and identifying specific techniques, partializing, and developing self-awareness and critical thinking skills. Students who are granted Advanced Standing Status are waived from this semester of field education as the student's BSW Field Education Placement would have prepared these students with the equivalent level of knowledge, values, and skills.

### **2. Second Semester (Advanced Generalist)**

- a. Prerequisite:** Successful completion of SW 650 – SW 651 or Advanced Standing Status
- b. Focus:** As classroom courses encompasses greater depth and breadth of practice knowledge, skills and values, there is a major emphasis in the second semester of field education to integrate the content of these into an evolving



Advanced Generalist framework. The second semester involves opportunities for observation and independent activities; opportunities for supervisor and others to observe the student and offer feedback. Learning activities in this phase could include doing assessments, developing treatment plans, maintaining a small caseload, co-facilitating a group, contributing to the grant writing process, exploring the community network of resources and community engagement. Advanced Standing Students begin field education in this semester.

### **3. Third Semester (Advanced Generalist)**

- a. Prerequisite:** Successful completion of SW 652 and SW 653
- b. Focus:** During their third semester in the field students continue to take advanced practice courses concurrently with the field experience. At this stage, students are also enrolled in SW 640 – Advanced Generalist Seminar, the capstone of the curriculum. The emphasis during this semester is on the integration of the knowledge, skills and values derived from all classroom and field-based learning. Students engage in autonomous, supervised practice. Students are working towards and should be nearing employment readiness and moving to more peer like relationships with their colleagues at the field site. As the conclusion of their third semester nears, students are working towards termination with supervisor, clients, and colleagues.

## H. Timeline of Activities

<b>For Winter Placement</b> <b>(For students seeking placement in a school setting only)</b>	
<b>Fall Semester:</b>	
<u>Activity</u>	<u>Due Date</u>
Complete Field Orientation	Fall semester
Submit Web-based Field Application	1st of October
Field Education Office review applications	October
Field Education Office contacts Field Education Supervisors regarding potential placements	Mid-October-December
Students receive pre-placement interview e-mail from the Field Education Coordinator	Mid-October – December
Students schedule interview with potential placement site	Mid-October – December
Field Education Supervisors inform the Field Education Coordinator of acceptance or rejection of student within 5 (five) working days of interview	Mid-October – December
Students enroll in SW 650 & SW 651 for Winter semester	November - December
Students receive confirmation of placement and time/date of first field seminar	December
<b>Winter Semester:</b>	
Students begin placement	1 <sup>st</sup> week of Winter Semester
Students meet with Faculty Liaison	1 <sup>st</sup> -2 <sup>nd</sup> week of semester
Students complete written student Learning Contract	Within 4 weeks of beginning placement

<b>For Spring/Summer Placement: (For students seeking placement in agency settings)</b>	
<b>Fall Semester:</b>	
<u>Activity</u>	<u>Due Date</u>
Complete Field Orientation	Fall semester
Submit Web-based Field Application	1st of November
Field Education Office reviews applications	November – December
<b>Winter Semester:</b>	
Field Education Office contacts Field Education Supervisors regarding potential placements	December - April
Students receive pre-placement interview e-mail from the Field Education Coordinator	December – April
Students schedule interview with potential placement site	December – April
Field Education Supervisors inform Field Education Coordinator of acceptance or rejection of student within 5 (five) working days of interview	December – April
Students enroll in SW 650 and SW 651 for Spring/Summer semester (Students will receive an email/letter identifying their seminar section and Faculty Liaison)	March-April
Students receive confirmation of placement and time/date of first field seminar	April
<b>Spring/Summer Semester:</b>	
Students begin placement	1st week of S/S semester
Students meet with Faculty Liaison	1st-2nd week of semester
Students complete written student Learning Contract	Within 4 weeks of beginning placement

<b>For Advanced Standing Placement:</b>	
<b>Winter Semester:</b>	
<u>Activity</u>	<u>Due Date</u>
Complete Field Orientation	Winter Semester
Submit Web-based Field Application	April 1
Field Education Office reviews applications	April/May
<b>Spring/Summer Semester:</b>	
Field Education Office contacts Field Education Supervisors regarding potential placements	April -August
Students receive pre-placement e-mail from the Field Education Coordinator	April- August
Students schedule interview with potential placement site	April – August
Field Education Supervisors inform Field Education Coordinator of acceptance or rejection of student within 5 (five) working days of interview	Mid-April- August
Students enroll in SW 652 and SW 653 for fall semester (Students will receive an email/letter informing them of their seminar section and Faculty Field Liaison)	July/August
Students receive confirmation of placement and time/date of first field seminar	July/August
<b>Fall Semester:</b>	
Students begin placement	1st week of fall semester
Students meet with Faculty Liaison	1st-2nd week of semester
Students complete written student Learning Contract	Within 4 weeks of beginning placement

## I. Options for Master of Social Work Study

### 1. Full-time Regular Status Program

When Field Education placement begins: (See Table 1 below)

- a. All Agencies other than Schools (Spring/Summer Entry)
  - The structure of the program requires students placed in agencies other than schools to enter field education in the Spring/Summer semester for three consecutive semesters.
- b. School Social Work (Winter Entry)
  - If students elect to do their placement in a school setting, they must begin field education in the winter semester. Instead of three consecutive semesters, these students begin in the winter semester and then continue in the same field education setting the following fall and winter semesters.

**Table 1: Typical Full-Time Plan for Field Education by Placement Type**

Type of Placement	Attend Field Orientation	When to apply	Winter Semester	Spring/Summer Semester	Fall Semester	Winter Semester
<b>School Social Work</b>	Fall Semester before Field Education Placement	1st of October	Field Education I Field Education Seminar I		Field Education II Field Education Seminar II	Field Education III Field Education Seminar III
<b>All Agencies (other than schools)</b>	Fall Semester before Field Education Placement	1st of November		Field Education I Field Education Seminar I	Field Education II Field Education Seminar II	Field Education III Field Education Seminar III

### 2. Part-Time Regular Status Program

The part-time or extended degree program typically encompasses eight semesters of study (three academic years). The structured nature of the multiple-entry part-time program ensures that students who follow the plan under which they have entered will have access to all of the courses necessary to complete the requirements for graduation.

When Field Education placement begins:

- a. School Social Work (Winter Entry)
  - As mentioned in the above section, students requesting a placement in a school setting begin field education during the winter semester. For part-time students, this would typically be the fifth semester or second year of the program.

### **3. Advanced Standing: Full-Time and Part-Time Programs**

The School of Social Work recognizes students who have graduated from a Council on Social Work Education (CSWE) accredited undergraduate Social Work program. Students may qualify for Advanced Standing with the following requirements:

- a. A minimum grade point average in Social Work courses from a CSWE-accredited baccalaureate program.
- b. Advanced standing students are exempted from 19 hours of first-year core or foundation courses and may therefore accelerate their graduate study by completing only the remaining 41 hours of degree requirements. The courses exempted are SW 600, SW 601, SW 603, SW 610, SW 620, SW 650 and SW 651.
- c. In the presence of lack of mastery, comprehension, or performance the School of Social Work may, in certain circumstances, prescribe additional coursework in areas of particular weakness or need.
- d. A minimum grade point average of 3.0 must be maintained by students in order to remain in field education. If the G.P.A falls below 3.0 field placement discontinues until the required G.P.A is attained.

#### **Full-time Advanced Standing Students (2 semesters)**

Students admitted to the full-time Advanced Standing program begin coursework Spring/Summer semester only and must begin field education during the fall semester. See Table 2 below.

#### **Part-time Advanced Standing Students**

Students admitted as part-time Advanced Standing students must begin their studies fall semester and continue part-time during the subsequent two years. Part-time students with Advanced Standing status begin field education in the fall semester of their second year and continue during the following winter semester. See Table 2 below.

**Table 2: Advanced Standing Field Education Plan**

Type of Placement	Attend Mandatory Field Orientation	When to apply	Fall Semester	Winter Semester
Full-time and Part-Time Advanced Standing	Winter Semester before Field Education Placement	April	Field Education II  Field Education Seminar II	Field Education III  Field Education Seminar III

## **J. Field Practice Roles**

### **1. Field Education Director**

The Field Education Director reports to the Unit Head of the School of Social Work and holds an Executive/Administrative Professional (EAP) designation at the University. The Field Education Director has overall administrative responsibility for planning, organizing, implementing, coordinating, and evaluating the BSW and MSW field education component of the Social Work curriculum. The Director works in tandem with the Field Education Coordinator to carry out essential functions.

The Field Education Director understands and implements CSWE, University, College, and School of Social Work policies, procedures, and requirements that relate to field education and applies them in a manner sensitive to students' educational needs and the needs of community field education organizations. The Field Education Director follows the CSWE standards for a Field Director to dedicate 50% of time to the MSW program and 25% of time to the BSW program. Implicit with the substantial responsibility is the Director's appropriate accountability for and authority to carry out the following functions:

- a. Oversee approximately 250-300 BSW and MSW student field placements per year;
- b. Provide consultation and mediation, as necessary, to students, field education supervisors, and faculty field liaisons;
- c. If/when informal methods to address concerns in field education are unsuccessful, will implement policies related to disrupted placements through the practicum review process;
- d. Develop, maintain, assist, monitor, and evaluate field placement sites;
- e. Recruit, screen, and develop quality, new, and expanded field placement locations, including those for specialized and underserved populations;
- f. Work with the GVSU Health Compliance Office in negotiating Affiliation Agreements, and uphold student health compliance standards;
- g. Evaluate student learning experiences, progress and outcomes through the use of the student learning contract;
- h. Develop, evaluate, update, and implement policies and procedures for field education; including reviewing and revising the field education manual;
- i. Maintain regular collaboration and communication with department directors, faculty, staff, students, and the community;

- j. Serve as Lead Instructor for all BSW & MSW Field Education courses
- k. Collaborate with other university departments that intersect with field education (Padnos International Center, Health Compliance, Legal, Clinical Placement Council, etc.);
- l. Maintain relationships with community partners and existing field education sites;
- m. Conduct an annual evaluation of field education through the use of surveys, identifying, planning, and addressing trends in field education;
- n. Collect and/or analyze field outcome data;
- o. Select, orient, and develop work of the Faculty Field Liaisons and ensure compliance of the role;
- p. Convene Practicum Review Committee, Field Advisory Board, Faculty Field Liaison meetings, and Field Education Practice Committee;
- q. Plan, organize and conduct field education orientation and kick-offs for students and field supervisors;
- r. Collaborate with field education directors/coordinators at other colleges and universities on the enhancement of field education;
- s. Collaborate with the University Registrar office to submit grade change forms and ensure smooth registration process for Field Education courses;
- t. Oversee the BSW Child Welfare Certificate program including recruitment of students, placing students, ensuring Certificate requirements are met, and working with other Michigan universities who also offer the Child Welfare Certificate program;
- u. Participate in initiatives that may enhance the Field Education experience for students; and,
- v. Assist with the placement of MSW and BSW students as needed.

## **2. Field Education Coordinator**

The Field Education Coordinator reports to the Unit Head of the School of Social Work and holds an Executive/Administrative Professional (EAP) designation at the University. The Field Education Coordinator understands and implements CSWE, University, College, and School of Social Work policies, procedures, and requirements that relate to field education.

The Field Education Coordinator carries out the following responsibilities:

- a. Review student field education applications, evaluate student interest and educational needs, and make placement decisions;
- b. Coordinate student placements with field sites;
- c. Assist with field education orientation and kick-offs for students and field supervisors;
- d. Coordinate and assign students to faculty field liaisons and seminar groups;
- e. Work with the GVSU Health Compliance Office to uphold student health compliance standards;
- f. Assist with developing new field placement sites for students
- g. Maintain regular collaboration and communication with department directors, faculty, staff, students, and the community;
- h. Re-place students as necessary;
- i. Collect data from field education partners about their ability to host social work student interns;



- j. Maintain database of student secured field placements; and,
- k. Consult with Field Education Director on a regular basis.

### **3. Faculty Field Liaison**

The Faculty Field Liaison is a member of the GVSU Social Work Faculty who, through education and professional experience, is prepared to fulfill the duties serving as a consultant and advocate for both students and Field Education Supervisors. Faculty Field Liaisons represent the School of Social Work in interactions with internship host agencies, and serve as a primary link between the agency, Field Education Supervisors, and students. Faculty Field Liaisons ensure field education learning experiences, facilitate field education seminar, and support and encourage students.

Accordingly, the Faculty Field Liaison is responsible to:

- a. Provide direction for field education students assigned to them;
- b. Verify that students have met the requirement of 300 hours of agency-based field education each semester;
- c. Conduct the field education seminar for 15 hours each semester;
- d. Assist with the integration of coursework and internship experiences;
- e. Assure that the curriculum objectives for each field education course are met during the semester;
- f. Assure that each student develops and is working toward reaching the goals and objectives of an individualized Learning Contract, which specifies educational objectives and learning experiences for the semester;
- g. Visit each field education placement agency. For each semester of field education, the liaison is required to conduct two contacts each semester with the field placement site, one of which is in person and one which may be conducted via phone, email, or in person depending upon the needs of the student and the field site. Exception: More than the minimum number of required agency visits may be indicated on an as needed basis should a student intern need additional support, or the Field Education Supervisor/Field placement is new to GVSU field education;
- h. Maintain open communication with the Field Education Supervisor during the field placement, and aid the Field Education Supervisor and agency in planning and implementing field instruction structure as needed;
- i. Become familiar with the policies, procedures, programs and services of agencies in which students are placed and ensure that these policies, procedures, and services comply with the Generalist orientation of practice;
- j. Assess with the student and the agency-based Field Education Supervisor continued appropriateness of the practice site;
- k. Monitor the level of supervision/instruction provided to students and the appropriateness of assignments and tasks;
- l. Conduct an evaluation of each student's performance in the placement and assign a credit/no credit grade for each placement course;
- m. Problem-solve and/or mediate conflicts that may occur during a student's practice experience, document pertinent information and submit/forward documentation to the Coordinator of Field Education;
- n. Serve on the School of Social Work's Field Education Practice Committee;

- o. Assist the Field Education Office in the identification, development and evaluation of practice sites;
- p. Participate in Field Education Supervisor meetings and conferences;
- q. Bring to the Field Education Practice Committee issues/concerns that need to be clarified, addressed and/or resolved;
- r. Following consultation with the Field Education Supervisor and agency administrator, describe the educational opportunities within the agency;
- s. Provide written documentation to Field Education Coordinator of face-to-face semester contact with placement agency;
- t. Provide bi-monthly supervision of students at field placement practice sites utilizing Task Coordinator Supervision; and
- u. Abide by the NASW *Code of Ethics*.

#### **4. Field Education Supervisor**

The Field Education Supervisor is an experienced professional, usually a Licensed Master Social Worker in good standing in the community and their profession. The Field Education Supervisor has primary responsibility for the student's learning in the field placement to reinforce the student's identification with the purposes, values, and ethics of the profession of social work; to foster the integration of empirical and practice-based knowledge; and to promote the development of professional competence (Council on Social Work Education). The Field Education Supervisor will:

- a. Attend the Field Education Supervisor Orientation and training opportunities;
- b. Abide by the ethical responsibilities pertaining to education and training in practice settings, as outlined in section 3.02 of the NASW *Code of Ethics*;
- c. Orient students about the agency's service delivery system, target populations served, and the agency's philosophy and mission;
- d. Develop learning opportunities in relation to the curriculum and make specific assignments in consultation with the student and, in some cases, the Faculty Field Liaison;
- e. Collaborate with the student in creating Learning Contract objectives at the beginning of each semester;
- f. Discuss any problems in meeting Learning Contract objectives with the student first and then the Faculty Field Liaison, if necessary;
- g. Document any plans to assist students in bringing their performance to an acceptable standard;
- h. Meet/Confer with the Faculty Field Liaison at least two times during each semester in field;
- i. Confer/Collaborate with the Task Coordinator regarding student's performance, if applicable;
- j. Provide at least one hour of weekly supervision and give clear feedback to the student on an ongoing basis regarding their performance;

- k. Evaluate the student's performance at the end of each semester using the student learning contract and evaluation tool;
- l. Monitor the student's time sheets; and,
- m. Advocate for students within the host agency to ensure that students gain access to learning experiences and an educational climate that challenges the student to expand professional skills, values, knowledge and competencies.

#### **4. Task Coordinator**

The Task Coordinator may be designated to assume specific responsibilities for a student's learning on a particular assigned task, project or experience. The Task Coordinator does not replace the Field Education Supervisor and must work in collaboration with the Field Education Supervisor to ensure that the student's learning goals are being met and regular feedback is provided. While a master's degree in Social Work is not required for Task Coordinators, (s)he must work in a related discipline and understand the social work perspective. The Task Coordinator will:

- a. Be responsible for the day-to-day, on-site guidance for assigned student tasks or projects;
- b. Collaborate with the Field Education Supervisor in integrating assignments provided into the student's overall learning experience;
- c. Provide constructive feedback to student on an ongoing basis;
- d. Keep the Field Education Supervisor informed of the student's progress on tasks or projects undertaken with the Task Coordinator;
- e. Provide input to the semester evaluation of the student in collaboration with the Field Education Supervisor; and,
- f. Meet with Field Education Supervisor, Faculty Field Liaison and student as needed.

#### **5. The Social Work Student/Intern**

It is expected that students accepting a field education placement take seriously their commitment to their clients/constituents, their Field Education Supervisor, the agency, and the Grand Valley State University School of Social Work program. It is expected that students will conduct themselves in a professional and ethical manner in their interactions with staff, faculty, and clients. All students are expected to develop professional discipline, identification with the role of the social worker, and competence in assuming this role. Students should refer to the NASW *Code of Ethics* for clarification and guidance taking special note of the Preamble of the *Code of Ethics* which states that "the code is relevant to all Social Workers and Social Work students, regardless of their professional functions, the settings in which they work, or the populations they serve."

Accordingly, the student should:

- a. Prepare in advance to meet requirements for field education including sufficient time and energy to devote at least 20+ hours per week;
- b. Attend a mandatory field education orientation session within prescribed time frames prior to entry into the field;
- c. Turn in all application materials in a timely manner meeting deadlines;

- d. Meet with the Field Education Supervisor on a regular basis (at least weekly);
- e. Prepare for all meetings with the Field Education Supervisor, including suggesting agenda items to be discussed;
- f. Meet/Confer with the Field Education Supervisor and the Faculty Field Liaison together at least two times during each semester in field education;
- g. Attend field education on days and at times agreed upon with the Field Education Supervisor or notify the Field Education Supervisor following agency protocol for absences/lateness;
- h. Conduct oneself in a professional manner, including taking responsibility as an adult learner to understand and carry out assigned duties, meet all deadlines, and seek direction as needed;
- i. Prepare a Learning Contract with specific learning objectives and activities by week four of the semester that are acceptable to the Field Education Supervisor and Faculty Field Liaison;
- j. Complete and submit all field education written documentation and reports required by the agency and school (e.g., time sheets, evaluation of student performance, student evaluation of field education experience);
- k. Respect the privacy of clients/constituents and hold in confidence all information obtained in the course of professional service;
- l. Discuss with Field Education Supervisor, Faculty Field Liaison, or Field Education Director any areas of significant disagreement, dissatisfaction, or confusion related to the field education experience;
- m. Discuss any difficulties that arise in the placement with the Field Education Supervisor first. If the situation is not resolved, inform the Faculty Field Liaison. If the problem persists, contact the Field Education Director;
- n. Attend all field education seminars, complete all assignments and maintain confidentiality of fellow students regarding discussions held during these seminars; and,
- o. Complete the number of hours required for field education while gaining the observable behaviors/competencies required by the social work profession. Field hours should be spread evenly over the course of the semester.

## **6. Practicum Review Committee**

The Practicum Review Committee (PRC) is composed of the Field Education Director, the student's faculty mentor, and the student's Faculty Field Liaison. An additional social work faculty member, if selected by the student, may also be part of the Committee. The PRC is convened when a student's placement is disrupted or there are significant concerns regarding the student's performance, professionalism, conduct, or if there is a NASW *Code of Ethics* violation at the field education placement.

## **K. Selection of Field Education Sites**

Agencies selected for affiliation with the School of Social Work as field education sites must meet a number of specific criteria. Field sites must demonstrate respect of diversity, and the absence of discrimination based on race, culture, gender, religion, sexual identity or differently abled individuals. Evaluation of potential sites requires a meeting, review of site documentation, and assessment of potential learning opportunities. The scope and activities of the potential site should be sufficiently diverse to provide students with a range of learning experiences commensurate with the expectations of the Advanced Generalist curriculum. In addition to these criteria, the potential site must:

- a. Have a clear mission with specifically defined programs and methods to achieve its purpose or mission;
- b. Be interested in the education and training of new social workers and demonstrate an awareness of and respect for the educational focus of field education;
- c. Be willing to assume the responsibilities associated with participating in an educationally focused experience, including the provision of supports which enable Field Education Supervisors to maintain an educational focus while teaching and training social work students;
- d. Be adequately staffed so that its mission can be achieved without relying upon the contributions of students;
- e. Demonstrate a commitment to provide learning experiences consistent with the educational needs of social work students;
- f. Make available suitable technology, space, equipment, furniture, supplies and support services to ensure that the student can achieve the goals and objectives of the field education experience;
- g. Be willing to uphold and support Field Education Supervisors as they assist students toward the completion of their field education experience. Common Field Education Supervisor tasks include attending Field Education Supervisor Orientation sessions; observation of student activities; weekly formal supervision meetings; site visit meetings and student evaluation activities;
- h. Be willing to demonstrate the capacity to provide supervision and observation of a student's field education experience that is systematically designed and coordinated in a manner that supports student's achievement of program competencies (EPAS 2.2);
- i. Agree to reimburse student interns for travel/mileage required for the internship or inform the student prior to accepting the field placement that mileage is not reimbursed, identifying alternatives. (Students are responsible for their own transportation to and from an internship site);
- j. Be supportive of the Advanced Generalist Perspective as it applies to the provision of Social Work services and educational experiences for students enrolled in field education; and,
- k. Agree to abide by the School of Social Work policies and procedures related to placement, maintenance, or termination of students in placement settings.

## **L. Selection of Agency-Based Field Education Supervisors**

The criteria for selecting agency-based Field Education Supervisors consists of the following requirements. The agency-based Field Education Supervisor is expected to:

1. Possess a Master of Social Work degree earned from a CSWE-accredited Graduate program. In unusual circumstances where the Faculty Field Liaison assumes responsibility for the regular, ongoing supervision of the student's field experiences, an agency staff person who does not possess the MSW degree may serve as the agency's Task Coordinator.
2. Have at least two years of successful Social Work practice following the completion of their MSW degree, with a preference for full social work licensure before serving as a Field Education Supervisor.
3. Commit to providing social work supervision meetings to student interns on a weekly basis;
4. Have, at minimum:
  - a. An interest in teaching;
  - b. Sufficient time and ability to assist students in developing learning objectives and structuring learning experiences to meet such objectives; and,
  - c. The skills to help students integrate the knowledge, skills, and values of foundation and advanced coursework with the demands of practice.
5. Be knowledgeable about the community in which the agency is located, the client system(s) which the agency serves, and the resources within the community most appropriate to meet the needs of client system(s).
6. Demonstrate an ability to participate in the creation and maintenance of a positive working relationship with the Grand Valley State University School of Social Work. This relationship typically involves an understanding of the School's role, mission and goals, including acceptance of the Advanced Generalist's perspective, and structuring and evaluating student accomplishments in field education.
7. Attend GVSU School of Social Work Field Supervisor orientation/trainings
8. Serve as a professional role model for Social Work students.
9. Follow and abide by the NASW *Code of Ethics*.

## **M. International Placement Opportunities**

International Field Placements for Social Work are not recommended due to various complexities in ensuring the international field placement site/supervisor meets CSWE's standards. Social Work students are encouraged to participate in Study Abroad trips offered by GVSU and Social Work Faculty Members.

However, the Field Education office will be supportive to students who wish to pursue an international field placement. There are two ways in which a social work student may seek an international field placement:

## **1. Independent Placement Organization**

The Field Education Office works in tandem with the GVSU Padnos International Center (PIC) to provide interested social work students with an international field placement for one semester through the services of an independent placement organization.

Students must apply through the GVSU PIC website by February 1 to be considered for an international field placement. Once accepted, the student will work with the PIC and the independent placement organization to secure an internship. The student must also work closely with the Field Education Coordinator to ensure the internship experience abroad will meet Field Education requirements and expectations.

## **2. Student-initiated International Placement**

Students may approach the Field Education Coordinator with alternative ways of structuring an international field placement based on location of potential field sites or specific learning needs. Requests received by the Field Education Office will be reviewed by the Field Education Practice Committee to determine merit and feasibility. Factors considered by the Field Education Practice Committee include, but are not limited to:

1. The existence of a previous relationship with the site or potential Field Supervisor;
2. The site's ability to provide a learning experience commensurate with the School of Social Work's requirements for field placements;
3. The feasibility of the Field Education Office developing the site;
4. The student's demonstration of successful performance in Grand Valley State University MSW program;
5. The presence/availability of resources needed to facilitate and support the student's experience; and,
6. Collaborate/coordinate with the Padnos International Center and meet/fulfill all criteria designated by the Padnos International Center and University procedures.

No matter the method in which a student chooses to explore the potential of an International field placement (i.e. independent placement organization or student initiated) initiation begins with discussion and exploration of possibilities and feasibility with the Field Education Coordinator and the student's Academic Advisor. Students are advised to begin this process as early as possible in their GVSU career. To facilitate these experiences, students need to convey to the Field Education Practice Committee the type and scope of experience they seek. Completion of a Proposal Outline (described below) will provide the Committee with information needed to recommend support or denial of the experience.

Proposals (submitted to the Field Education Coordinator) will be accepted for review no later than the date required for all field applications. The Field Education Practice Committee will review the proposal and decide whether to support or deny the proposal. Within ten business days of the decision, the Field Education Coordinator will notify the student of the Committee's decision. The Field Education Office will define parameters regarding placement hours, supervision, and other issues with consultation from the MSW Program Director and the Director of the School of Social Work.

If a student-initiated international field placement proposal is accepted, the Field Education Office will make contact with the potential site either in person, by phone, by email, and/or interactive video. The Field Education Office will determine the site's capacity to provide the student(s) with the requisite supervision and explore the types of duties, tasks, and responsibilities required at the site. In addition, the School's Advanced Generalist perspective and requirements for supervised direct practice will be discussed. Once the feasibility of the site is ascertained, an Affiliation Agreement between the GVSU School of Social Work and the potential site will be signed.

If a student is accepted for international field placement with an independent placement organization, the student will work with the placement organization to secure a placement. Once secured, the Field Education Coordinator will make contact with the field site to ensure the placement will meet Field Education requirements.

A memorandum of agreement whether the placement is through an independent placement organization or is student-initiated will be developed and signed by the Field Education Coordinator and the student. Involvement in an international field placement is considered equivalent to a local, traditional placement. Students are expected to define learning objectives and methodologies in their student Learning Contract. Oversight of these goals, objectives, and methodologies and of the overall experience will be the responsibility of the designated Field Education Supervisor and Faculty Field Liaison.

While some of the mechanics of the placement may vary due to distance, the expectation is that the structure and substance will be equivalent to any domestic placement. All policies delineated in the Field Education Manual will apply to international placements. All required documentation will be provided to the GVSU Padnos International Center.

### **Requested Proposal Outline Format**

Students are to address the following areas:

- A. Personal statement relative to their interest in International Social Work
- B. Previous travel experience
- C. International proposed placement site, if student-initiated
- D. Reason(s) for this specific destination
- E. How will this proposed experience further your Social Work education?
- F. Proposed time frame for this experience (eight weeks, one semester)
- G. Resources required for this experience (school, personal, or financial)
- H. Plan for continuing course work by semester



## **Faculty Field Liaison Responsibility Related to International Placements**

School responsibilities relative to international placements include ensuring the same level of involvement and supervision as with placements in close proximity to the Grand Valley State University School of Social Work.

Students will be assigned to a Faculty Field Liaison who will be responsible for ensuring the integration of content and activity. While face-to-face conferences may be precluded, alternative forms of communication will be utilized. These forms of communication may include, but are not limited to:

- Students may be required to complete journal entries and may share those entries with their Faculty Field Liaison via email, or other available technology.
- Faculty Field Liaisons will be expected to review the journals and engage in discussion with the student via the appropriate agreed upon technology.
- Faculty Field Liaisons will be expected to assign students to projects such as: papers on the scope of the agency, case presentation from a specified treatment modality, etc., as is currently expected of students enrolled in the traditional seminar.
- Faculty Field Liaisons will also be expected to arrange a minimum of three contacts per semester with the Field Education Supervisor and the student to review the student Learning Contract and discuss the student's progress.

## **Peer Interaction**

Peer interaction concerning the field learning experience can be facilitated in a number of ways:

- Field Education Seminar may be convened prior to the beginning of the international learning experience to cover issues of anticipation of the placement.
- When the student returns from an international placement, they will continue participation in Field Education Seminar.
- During the international learning experience when available, the Faculty Field Liaison will facilitate peer communication through the use of course discussion boards, email, and/or other available communication methods.
- Students will be encouraged to share their experiences with the broader GVSU and School of Social Work community both during and following their experience.

## **N. Distance Field Education and Out of State Placements**

GVSU's School of Social Work MSW program is not an online Master's program. However, some students may elect to reside and request field education placements outside of the greater West Michigan area. Students who are beyond a 2-hour radius from the Grand Rapids campus will be asked to suggest placement sites to the Field Education Coordinator. Flexibility is required when placing a student outside of Grand Valley's geographic region as the program does not have the same number of affiliations with agencies and organizations. An Affiliation Agreement must be in place prior to the student beginning the placement.

## **Out of State Licensing**

GVSU's field education placements meet standards as set forth by the Council on Social Work Education and Grand Valley State University. Generally, out of state field placements are not permitted. If a student requests a placement that is outside the state of Michigan, it is the student's responsibility to research and understand the licensing requirements for the state in which they are requesting placement. GVSU Field Education Program requirements may not satisfy other state's licensing requirements.

## **O. School Social Worker Certification**

Students who intend to seek certification as a School Social Worker in the State of Michigan must complete a field placement either in a school setting or in an agency that serves school aged children/adolescents. Given the requirement for 500 hours of direct practice with children/adolescents or within a school setting, Advanced Standing students are required to complete a placement within a school while Regular Status students have either option. In addition, there are three courses required for the school certification:

- SW 661 School Social Work in the Education Setting (Macro)
- SW 663 Child and Adolescent Development/Practice (Elective)
- SW 664 Social Work Practice in Schools (taken over and above the required credits for the MSW program)

If students are interested in pursuing this certification, they must submit an application and those students who have applied are given preference for school placements: [https://www.gvsu.edu/cms4/asset/4C26ED2F-EDCC-C778-A32EC772CB89C2EC/2020\\_school\\_social\\_work\\_certification\\_application.pdf](https://www.gvsu.edu/cms4/asset/4C26ED2F-EDCC-C778-A32EC772CB89C2EC/2020_school_social_work_certification_application.pdf).

School social work field placement begins in the winter semester for regular status students and fall semester for advanced standing students.

### **III. Student Responsibilities Regarding Field Practice**

#### **A. Student Requirements Before and During Field Education**

##### **1. Field Education Placement**

- a. Attend field orientation – All students must attend a mandatory Field Education Orientation held prior to their acceptance into field education.
- b. Completion of required field education prerequisite courses (these courses are waived if admitted as an advanced standing student):
  - SW 600 Cultural Competency in Social Work
  - SW 601 Foundations of Social Work Practice
  - SW 603 Integrated Methods
  - SW 620 Human Behavior and the Social Environment

\*It is highly recommended that students take SW 622 – Psychopathology and Social Deviance during their first semester of field education or prior to entering field education.

- c. Have and maintain a minimum G.P.A. of 3.0 on a 4.0 scale to enter and/or continue field education.
- d. Have no more than one grade of incomplete.
- e. Make application for field education within the following prescribed timelines in order to be considered:
  - i. Advanced standing – April 1
  - ii. Winter Entry (School Social Work only) – October 1
  - iii. Spring/Summer Entry – November 1
  - iv. Late applications will be considered after all the applications submitted on time have been addressed. This could result in the student not receiving a placement in one of their preferred fields of practice.

#### **FAMILY EDUCATION RIGHTS AND PRIVACY ACT (FERPA):**

The Field Education Office may share all relevant information with appropriate persons who may include the Faculty Field Liaison, the agency Field Education Supervisor, the student's Academic Advisor, the MSW Director, the Director of the School of Social Work, or the Dean's office. Relevant information is defined as information that may involve the field placement selection, clients, agency Field Education Supervisors, staff, the student learning experience, or school policy. Such information will be shared to enable informed choice by Field Education Supervisors, protect clients, protect students, and facilitate the learning process. Agency Field Education Supervisors are also expected to share relevant information

with the Field Education Office. The student will be required to sign a release of information form as part of their field application. This release includes academic record, all contents of the field application, and previous evaluations from previous field education experiences. This release gives the field office permission to release the above information to agencies with whom the student may interview and/or be placed.

## **2. The Application Process**

- a. All students who have met the prerequisite coursework and other requirements should complete the field application and supporting documentation. Instructions for completing the application are provided during the orientation, on the School of Social Work MSW Field Education website, and in this manual.
- b. Applications are submitted electronically, and attachments must be typed. Access the application here: <https://www.gvsu.edu/ssw/msw-field-education-and-forms-124.htm>
- c. The completed application is to be submitted via the web-based application system.
- d. Faculty and Academic Advisor observations, concerns and suggestions/recommendations regarding each applicant are solicited by the Field Education Office. The eligibility of each field candidate is determined and referred to the Field Education Office for placement.
- e. The Field Education Office integrates the information from the student applications and Academic Advisors and takes into consideration students' educational growth needs, past experience(s), strengths, areas for growth, interests, etc., in order to match students with the appropriate practice setting.
- f. Field Education Supervisors are advised of potential candidates for field education by the Field Education Office and given the option to interview the student.
- g. Potential candidates will be informed via email by the Field Education Coordinator to schedule a pre-placement interview with a Field Education Supervisor. Interviews should be arranged promptly. If a prompt interview cannot be scheduled, the Field Education Office should be contacted immediately.
- h. Field Education Supervisors inform the Field Education Office of the acceptance or rejection of a student within five working days following the pre-placement interview. The Field Education Office is notified of a student's acceptance through the completion of the Certification of Field Placement form.
- i. Students must purchase an online health compliance portal to upload GVSU required health-related documents prior to starting their Field Education.

## **3. Field Education Placement and Referral**

- a. Every effort will be made to refer students to one of the three fields of practice indicated in their application for field education.

- b. Students may **not** develop field placements on their own and are **not** to initiate or to negotiate with agency personnel for purposes of arranging a placement.
- c. Students who are not offered a field placement after two agency interviews for reasons related to their appropriateness or readiness for field education may be referred to the Practicum Review Committee for evaluation and problem-solving. Recommendations from the Practicum Review Committee can include referrals to career services, counseling, additional coursework, resubmission of the field application the following year, or that the student be terminated from the School of Social Work program.
- d. Students are expected to remain in the field education placement for the full duration of the semester, commencing on the **first day of classes and ending on the final day of classes**.
- e. Many students have full or part-time employment while enrolled in the MSW program, and request field work schedules to accommodate employment. These requests can be challenging to fulfill due to the lack of agencies/field supervisors operating and available during evenings and weekends. **Students need to accommodate the schedules of field placement sites in order to participate as fully as possible in the life and learning experiences offered by the field education placement agency.**
- f. Students are not expected to decline a field placement if it is in a field of practice they have selected unless there are exceptional circumstances.
- g. The Field Education office is not inclined to change student placements unless there are extenuating circumstances. See page 56 for more information about changing Field Placements.

#### **4. Student Requirements for Continuation in Field Education**

- a. Maintenance of a minimum G.P.A. of 3.0 throughout the Field Education experience.
- b. Ability to integrate and conceptualize course content as evidenced by the Field Education Supervisor's evaluations and feedback to the Faculty Field Liaison.
- c. Performance in the field, including adherence to the *NASW Code of Ethics*.
- d. Accumulation of no more than one grade of Incomplete.
- e. May repeat field education/seminar only once. Two disrupted field education placements will result in termination from the MSW program.

## 5. Student Responsibilities During Field Practice

Student responsibility is a vital part of the learning process. Being in field education requires students to be an active participant in their learning experience and that each student:

- a. Abide by the rules and conditions of placement established by the Faculty Field Liaison and the Field Education Supervisor.
- b. Plan with the Faculty Field Liaison and Field Education Supervisor how to achieve the CSWE competencies and observable behaviors with the corresponding measurable learning tasks. The plan must be codified in the form provided by the student Learning Contract within four weeks after placement begins, or the date established by the Faculty Field Liaison.
- c. Submit all written reports/assignments as required by the Faculty Field Liaison and Field Supervisor.
- d. Participate with the Faculty Field Liaison and Field Education Supervisor in meetings and conferences designed to evaluate the student's progress and performance.
- e. Attend and participate in all Field Seminar sessions (15 hours per semester).
- f. Be responsible for becoming familiar with the agency milieu and abide by the informal and formal norms for conduct in the agency.
- g. Uphold the NASW *Code of Ethics*.
- h. Recognize student performance must be judged satisfactory by the Faculty Field Liaison in order to receive field education credit. Faculty Field Liaison judgment is based on the student's performance in relation to the CSWE competencies, observable behaviors and learning tasks arranged for the individual student, and the evaluation by the Field Education Supervisor.
- i. Demonstrate professional behaviors at the field education site and in seminar related to communication, attendance, time management, and appearance.
- j. Be an active learner in the educational process. This implies taking the initiative to develop relationships with the field site staff, Faculty Field Liaison and peers in seminar.
- k. **Secure availability for field hours during regular business hours, e.g. Monday – Friday, 8:00 a.m. – 5:00 p.m.**
- l. Be responsible for arranging transportation to and from the assigned field placement agency and meeting any costs involved. Be prepared to travel up to

**50 miles one way** to a field practice site. Time and travel to and from the placement agency does not count toward field hours.

- m. Be prepared to comply with health compliance requirements including background check reports as required by the field site and/or defined in the Affiliation Agreement. This may involve a cost for the student.
- n. All social work students are expected to meet routine health compliance requirements that include proof of immunizations/immunity for the following: Annual Tuberculosis (TB) screening, Measles (Rubeola), Mumps, and Rubella (MMR), Tetanus, Diphtheria and Pertussis (Tdap), Influenza (flu), varicella, and Hepatitis B. Students are also required, as part of routine health compliance, to complete online training modules and pass a quiz on each module by a score of 80%. Some sites expect additional requirements that may include fingerprinting, background check, drug screen, physical health examination, CPR, etc., at the expense to the student. All requirements need to be met prior to the first day of their internship. Additionally, organizations may have their own requirements such as orientations, etc. that students must complete.
- o. Students who experience personal, academic, psychological, legal, medical or other conditions that impact their ability to participate in field education as described in this Manual are responsible for **immediately** informing the Field Education Coordinator. The Field Education Coordinator will assist the student in determining the appropriate course of action in relation to the field placement and in accordance with university and department policy. Students who do not adhere to this policy may be asked to participate in a Practicum Review Committee meeting.

## **6. Evaluation of Student Performance in Field Education**

- a. **The student Learning Contract** – Evaluation of a student's performance in field education is accomplished by the use of an individualized student Learning Contract. Every student in field education develops a student Learning Contract for each semester of field education.

The student Learning Contract is created as a cooperative effort between the student, the agency-based Field Education Supervisor, and the Faculty Field Liaison. This Learning Contract operationalizes the educational competencies and observable behaviors of the student, relative to their semester of placement. It also specifies learning activities appropriate to the unique opportunities within each agency or organizational setting. The student Learning Contract for the final two semesters of field education reflects greater complexity as students' progress in their studies. This is exemplified by the utilization of multiple intervention strategies, the assumption of appropriate practitioner roles within the agency, and the implementation of practice-based evaluation and ethical problem-solving.

In each semester of field education, methodology and evidence of the attainment of student Learning Contract competencies and observable behaviors are subject to regular assessment by the student, the agency-based Field Education Supervisor, and

the Faculty Field Liaison. Field education is a developmental process of moving from observation and gaining knowledge about the organization and its mission/population served to moving towards independent practice and skill development.

Students are expected to successfully complete all sections of the student Learning Contract. Deficiencies may result in a performance improvement plan which defines the remediation required to bring competency to an acceptable level and may include additional hours and/or repeat of the course, to dismissal from the Master of Social Work program.

- b. Semester Field Evaluation** – Student performance is formally evaluated by the Field Education Supervisor at the end of each semester using the student learning contract and the tasks mutually agreed upon at the beginning of the semester. Students are expected to complete a self-evaluation as part of the evaluation process. This evaluation is documented in writing and conveyed both to the student and to the Faculty Field Liaison. The Faculty Field Liaison determines the student's grade (Credit or No Credit) in field education for the semester based upon this evaluation as well as the student's performance in the field education seminar.

If a student receives a score of "Unacceptable Competence" or "Minimal competence" on a behavior or competency within the Learning Contract, a written performance improvement plan is required to assist the student in defining the specific concerns and action steps to bring their performance to an acceptable standard.

The evaluation must be signed off by the Field Education Supervisor, the student, and the Faculty Field Liaison each semester. Students will review the evaluation report and there should be an opportunity for a face-to-face discussion of the progress made during the semester. The evaluation must be signed by the student to indicate they have read the contents. Students may comment in writing to the Field Education Supervisor regarding concerns of differing perspectives of their evaluation. If not satisfactorily resolved, the student may include the Faculty Field Liaison or Field Education Director/Coordinator in an attempt to create an agreement on the evaluation.

- c. Semester Grading** – The credit/no credit grading system is used by the School of Social Work to evaluate student performance in field education courses (both seminar and field education). If a recommended grade of "no credit" is anticipated, it is the responsibility of the Field Education Supervisor to call this to the attention of the Faculty Field Liaison or vice versa at the earliest possible date. It is the school's policy that a student **may repeat field education only once**. In the event the student does not achieve the objectives within the repeated field education, no credit is given, and the student is not permitted to continue in the MSW program.

Students may receive an "incomplete" grade in Field Education if the required number of hours has not been met at the time grades are due. When the student has met the hour requirement, completed the self-evaluation of the learning contract, and the field



supervisor has evaluated the student's learning contract, a request for a grade change will be submitted to the Registrar's office.

- d. Unsatisfactory Performance in the Field Placement** – The School of Social Work has the responsibility for evaluating and screening students for the social work profession. Although a student's classroom performance may be satisfactory, it may become necessary to recommend that a student reconsider their preference for the social work profession if the performance in the field placement is not satisfactory.

All reasonable and appropriate efforts will be expended to ensure that the field placement experiences are an appropriate measure of the student's abilities. Broken placements, failing field grades due to poor performance or professional incompetence, and violations of the NASW *Code of Ethics* could trigger a Practicum Review Committee meeting. These are explained below.

- e. Broken Placements: Interruption, Dismissal, or Request for Removal** – A student whose placement is broken may receive the grade of either incomplete or no credit for the semester/session in which they are enrolled depending on the outcome of the Practicum Review Committee's decision. If a placement is broken, the student will be referred to a Practicum Review Committee meeting for evaluation and review and could be dismissed from the social work program. The Field Education Supervisor and the Faculty Field Liaison will be requested to put the concerns in writing. If a student is re-placed into a new agency, the placement will be monitored closely by the Faculty Field Liaison to ensure that prior difficulties are not a continued issue. The Practicum Review Committee will recommend the number of hours a student must complete in the new field placement.

At any point in the field placement, the Field Education Supervisor can request immediate removal of the student from the field placement if the student's behavior or performance seriously places at risk the quality of services delivered to clients and/or the reputation of the agency. The Faculty Field Liaison and Field Education Director need to be contacted immediately whenever there is serious cause for concern. The Field Education Supervisor will be requested to put the concerns in writing. Information outlining the policies and procedures regarding termination of a field placement can be found on page 58.

In the event of a School of Social Work initiated relationship break with a field placement agency, the Field Education Director and Director of the School of Social Work will inform the College of Education and Community Innovation Dean's office. The decision arrived upon regarding the formal termination of the University/Agency affiliation will come from the Dean's Office.

## IV. MSW EMPLOYMENT-BASED FIELD 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.

### A. Overview of Policy:

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 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 graduate level 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. (For example, 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.

**Please note: MSW students who are employed in a school setting, pursuing school social work certification, and wish to pursue an employment-based placement may only be considered under Option #1.**

**Option #2:** Students who **are** employed in a position that requires a social work degree or related degree AND are engaged in job duties that align with the CSWE competencies and behaviors may request an employment-based field placement. In this scenario, students may count employment hours 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.

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](#) [Advanced-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.

### **B. 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 requires an undergraduate social work or related degree 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 and advanced 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 and advanced generalist competencies and behaviors.

#### **Requirements for Option #1 and Option #2:**

- The agency must provide a field education supervisor who has an MSW degree with at least two years post-master's 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. Our goal is to ensure the role of the student as 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 MSW 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 (300 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 and advanced 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.

### **C. 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 MSW 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.

**D. 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 application can be accessed here:

[https://www.gvsu.edu/cms4/asset/4C26ED2F-EDCC-C778-A32EC772CB89C2EC/gvsu\\_employment\\_based\\_app\\_fillable\\_2-25.pdf](https://www.gvsu.edu/cms4/asset/4C26ED2F-EDCC-C778-A32EC772CB89C2EC/gvsu_employment_based_app_fillable_2-25.pdf)

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).

**E. Employment at Field Site Offered During Placement**

In the event that employment is offered to a student from their field placement agency, then this placement becomes an employment-based field placement. The requirements for an employment-based field placement noted above must be met. The student will need to notify their Faculty Field Liaison as well as the Field Education Coordinator of the employment opportunity and have it approved before the student accepts the offer. Typically, students who request employment at their field placement site are in or closely approaching Field Education III.

## V. Policies and Procedures Regarding Field Education

This section provides general guidelines for Field Education. Other policies, practices and procedures are identified throughout the School of Social Work Student Handbook, available on the School of Social Work website at [www.gvsu.edu/ssw](http://www.gvsu.edu/ssw)

### A. General Policies and Practices

1. While in Field Education students generally follow the GVSU academic calendar. Scheduled breaks within the academic calendar are to be discussed and negotiated between the student and Field Education Supervisor. Students placed in school social work settings may be asked to follow the calendar of the school/field education placement site to which they have been assigned.
2. Students are expected to make initial contact and have regular meetings with the Academic Advisor to whom they have been assigned. Students are also assigned to a Faculty Mentor who provides advice and guidance for career and professional development, course registrations, has vital input in field practice placements and is an advocate for students.
3. Students are expected to accept responsibility for their own successes and shortcomings, be aware of all University, School of Social Work, and Field Education Agency policies, practices and procedures, as well as MSW degree requirements.
4. Students are expected to follow standards of professional and academic conduct specified in the *University Student Code of Conduct*, *School of Social Work Student Handbook*, *Field Education Manual*, the *NASW Code of Ethics*, and Field Practice Agency guidelines.
5. The student is expected to do their own work and to honor ethics related to academic honesty. Violations of the *Student Code of Conduct*, including those about plagiarism and the integrity of scholarship and grades, may result in the award of the "F" grade in a course, no credit in field education, and/or referral for disciplinary action or dismissal from the School or University.
6. Students enrolled in the MSW program are expected to manifest emotional maturity, stable mental and physical health, and conformity with the *NASW Code of Ethics* in classroom demeanor, in oral and written assignments, and in field practice settings.
7. Social Work courses are designed for the students' involvement in their own learning experiences. Lectures, guest speakers, audio visuals, discussions, and presentations may be instructional modes in classes. Additionally, faculty guide discussions, respond to questions, and are available for office hours.
8. Students do not report to their field placement or go near the assigned site in the event of a strike or work stoppage. The student contacts their Faculty Field Liaison

should there be any question(s) about their protection and/or safety.

9. Students are responsible to understand the technology and social media policies, practices, or expectations of the organization in which they are placed and adhere to the *NASW Code of Ethics* as it applies to social media.

## **B. Policies Governing School of Social Work/Agency Relationships**

1. The agency where students are to be placed enters into an Affiliation Agreement with the School of Social Work and Grand Valley State University for the specific learning experiences to be provided.
2. The student shall provide their own transportation to and from the agency. Students may need to travel up to 50 miles to a field placement agency. Expenses of travel assigned to the student by the agency regarding agency business other than a student's travel for internship placement to and from the agency may be covered by the agency.
3. Attendance at approved conferences may be included as field hours if mutually agreed upon by the Field Education Supervisor and the student with the support of the Faculty Field Liaison. Attendance at such conferences is assumed to be limited to a few days per academic year.
4. Students should not be expected to or allowed to spend more field hours each week than stated in the school agency agreement except in urgent situations. Compensatory time should be arranged following such an occurrence. It is the Field Education Supervisor's responsibility to note extra hours and plan with the student for compensatory release time.
5. The GVSU School of Social Work will provide the agency with appropriate information about the student (as per the student's written permission for such disclosure) including academic preparation, previous social work job experiences, and the student's career goals.
6. The agency will consider for field placement only those students referred by the GVSU School of Social Work Field Education Coordinator, and only for the specified period.
7. After the agency interview with the student, the agency will inform the Field Education Coordinator of the acceptance/denial of the student for a field placement in their agency. The agency's decision is final and therefore is not to be re-negotiated by any GVSU School of Social Work student.
8. GVSU School of Social Work will provide a Faculty Field Liaison throughout the placement period. A minimum of two agency contacts (pre-arranged for mutual convenience) per semester will be conducted.

9. An agency may choose to offer payment or a stipend to the student; however, it is not required to do so.

### **C. Change in Field Placement (not placement termination by agency)**

Student field placements are chosen after a thoughtful process that includes but is not limited to: the student's preferred three fields of social work practice, availability of a qualified field supervisor, availability of agencies to host a student, a student's background history, and physical location of the student/agency. Once a field placement has been confirmed by the agency, it is expected that the student will complete the entire academic year with that agency. Disruption of a field placement is not taken lightly. Students requesting a change in field placement may be considered only when serious circumstances that cannot be remedied merit the disruption of the student's experiential education. Any decision about a field placement change will be made jointly by the field education director, field education coordinator, and the student's faculty field liaison.

If it is determined that a field placement change is necessary, the student's faculty field liaison will be consulted for the appropriate process, and to guide this change. Students are not to initiate a search for another field placement as this is the field education coordinator's role. Students should expect the entire change process to take at least four to six weeks.

If a change in placements is to take place, the student should be thoughtful about termination with the organization and clients, if applicable. In some circumstances and depending on the timing, it may make sense to wait until the semester has concluded before changing placements. Students will be expected to begin a new learning contract with their new placement site.

Below is a list of the criteria for consideration of a field placement change. It is up to the student's field liaison and Field Education office to determine whether particular situations are serious enough to inhibit the student's learning to the degree that the competencies required to fulfill the internship cannot be met.

#### **Student-related criteria:**

- The student has moved to a new location that is more than a 50-mile drive from the field agency.
- The student has experienced a family/personal crisis (*e.g.*, death, divorce, serious illness) which makes working with the current client population or in the current setting unmanageable.
- The student, in consultation with the field liaison, identifies irreconcilable conflicts with the field supervisors, including those related to cultural responsiveness, which preclude a productive student-supervisor relationship.

#### **Agency-related criteria:**

- The agency is experiencing a period of reorganization that significantly disrupts the student's learning and ability to practice social work competencies.



- The agency has relocated, resulting in a substantial increase in the length of the student's commute.
- The agency has down-sized or otherwise lost the staff who has provided the student's field supervision, and the agency has no other staff qualified and/or with time available to serve in this role.
- The agency does not have enough internship-related work/learning experiences for the student to fulfill the learning contract competencies.
- The agency no longer supports the field supervisors in providing the amount of student supervision required.
- The agency cannot provide a safe environment for the student.
- The agency is not providing Master's level learning activities for the student despite student and field liaison efforts to improve this.

#### **Field Supervisor-related criteria:**

- The field supervisor experiences a personal crisis (*e.g.*, illness, death of a loved one, accident, etc.) which interferes with her or his ability to be available to supervise the student and a qualified replacement cannot be identified.
- The field supervisor, in consultation with the field liaison, identifies potentially irreconcilable conflicts with the student, including those related to cultural responsiveness, that preclude a productive student-supervisor relationship.
- The field supervisor is given a new job assignment within the agency that precludes fulfilling her/his field supervisor role, and a qualified replacement cannot be identified.

#### **D. Field Education Grading Policies**

Grades are based on adherence to requirements explicated in the syllabus and discussed in class. Students may be awarded the "I" grade only under specific conditions fully discussed with and approved by the Faculty Liaison, as defined in the GVSU catalog. Neither the "W" nor "I" grade is awarded in lieu of the "No Credit" grade.

1. Students register for Field Education concurrently with a Field Education Seminar. These two courses are registered separately but are inextricably related. Field Education and the Field Education Seminar are graded "credit" or "no credit". In order to receive credit, the student must earn the "credit" grade in both Field Education and Field Education Seminar. Grading is the responsibility of the Faculty Field Liaison.
2. Students are required to fulfill 300 hours per semester in the field education practice setting and 15 hours per semester in Field Education Seminar. Fulfilling the hours is one part of the grading. Equally important is the demonstration through the Learning Contract evaluation that the student is progressing adequately towards developing the 9 Social Work Competencies defined by CSWE.

3. The Faculty Field Liaison is responsible for monitoring each student's progress in field, leading seminar, enforcing attendance standards, grading seminar assignments and awarding the final grade. The evaluation by the Field Education Supervisor of the student's performance on their Learning Contract is a recommendation to the Faculty Field Liaison for the grade. Optimally, the Field Education Supervisor, the student, and the Faculty Field Liaison will communicate any performance concerns as they arise and opportunities for remedial plans implemented. Thus, should the student fail to satisfy requirements in either field and/or seminar, the Faculty Field Liaison will refer the student to the Field Education Director.
4. The Field Education Director assesses circumstances involved and may require the student to appear before the Practicum Review Committee to provide reasons for their inability to satisfy the requirement(s).
5. If the student wishes to appeal their grade in the field education courses, the appeal is submitted to the MSW Program Director. Throughout the appeal process, all student appeal requests must be in written form.
6. It is the student's responsibility to inform the Faculty Field Liaison of any extenuating circumstances which may interfere with their fulfillment of course requirements.
7. School of Social Work faculty members perform a "gatekeeping" role for the profession. Hence, faculty members are responsible for engaging a student in problem-solving when academic, ethical and/or other professional practice issues arise.
8. Students who violate the GVSU *Student Code of Conduct*, School of Social Work policies, NASW *Code of Ethics*, and/or Field Practice Agency procedures are subject to disciplinary action. Students' right to due process and appeal are respected.
9. School of Social Work actions for below standards academic work and/or ethical violations may range from reprimand and additional course work to probationary status to termination of enrollment in the MSW program.
10. In those instances when the policies and practices employed by the School or University have not been successful in resolving a student's academic, personal and/or professional issue(s) the student may be terminated from the MSW program.
11. Faculty actions may not be arbitrary or unfairly directed at a student or student group. Students' rights are respected in all matters pertaining to the school's educational mission and objectives for social work education.
12. All disciplinary decisions rendered by faculty committees and/or the Director of the School of Social Work are communicated to the student via email.
13. No academic credit for life experience and/or previous work experience is given, in whole or in part, in lieu of the field practice or courses in the GVSU MSW program in accordance with CSWE standards.

## **E. Policies and Procedures Concerning Conflict Resolution/Termination**

It is understood that problems can arise in field education between students and field education supervisors or other agency personnel. It is expected that any and all problems will be addressed explicitly, proactively, professionally, and in a timely manner.

If a student is experiencing major difficulties in the school and/or placement setting, every effort is made to use informal problem-solving methods to reach solutions. The formal grievance procedures are applied should informal techniques fall short. The placement setting, School of Social Work, or the student may initiate termination, keeping the Field Education Director informed of each step. This is an administrative procedure that must be followed in order for students to be afforded due process. It must be noted that students who do not adhere to the specific responsibilities or who do not follow the procedures identified below may be dismissed from the Social Work program. Initial efforts to reach a resolution include:

1. Student and Field Education Supervisor discuss the problem constructively and, in an issue, oriented fashion, in an effort to achieve a mutually agreeable resolution. If the problem is not resolved to the student's and/or Field Education Supervisor's satisfaction, the student should proceed to the next step. Written guidelines addressing the issues are developed in these discussions and provided to all parties (student, Field Education Supervisor and Faculty Field Liaison).  
**\*Note:** In rare circumstances, it may not be appropriate for problem solving to begin between the student and Field Education Supervisor, i.e. student is being sexually harassed by the Field Education Supervisor. In such circumstances, the student will begin step 2 of the problem- solving process.
2. Student immediately advises the Faculty Field Liaison of the problem. Individual and joint meetings between the Faculty Field Liaison, the student, and the Field Education Supervisor are arranged by the Faculty Field Liaison to facilitate problem resolution. Again, written guidelines are to be provided to all parties (student, Field Education Supervisor, and Faculty Field Liaison). If the solution is not amenable to the student, they should proceed to steps number 3 and/or 4.
3. The Faculty Field Liaison communicates/collaborates with the Field Education Director. The Field Education Coordinator may be brought into these meetings at the request of the Faculty Field Liaison.
4. If the problem is still not resolved, the student may request a meeting with the Field Education Director. The Field Education Director will review all appropriate information and will assess next steps.
5. In lieu of resolution, written notification of the intent and/or decision to terminate is to be sent from the initiator to the Field Education Director and the other parties in the contract. Reasons for termination are to be clearly specified by the initiator.

6. Upon receipt of the written request for termination, the Faculty Field Liaison will coordinate with both parties to arrange for the student's termination from the agency placement.
7. A student may be terminated from Field Education for reasons including, but not limited to:
  - a. The student's level of performance or professional conduct is far below the standards expected of an MSW student. Examples of this include lack of reasonable progress in meeting one or more of the competencies. It is expected that student responsibilities at the practice agency increase as the student becomes more experienced with agency policies and activities.
  - b. The student exhibits behaviors that are inconsistent or at odds with the NASW *Code of Ethics*. If there is an allegation of student professional misconduct, the Faculty Field Liaison will contact the Field Education Coordinator. A Practicum Review Committee meeting will be convened.
  - c. The student has unexcused and prolonged absences or tardiness from the practice setting.
  - d. The student experiences unexpected life events that impair their ability to make successful progress towards meeting the practice learning objectives.
  - e. The student's continued participation in the practice is judged by the Field Education Supervisor, Faculty Field Liaison, Field Education Director and/or the placement agency to adversely affect the agency, the clients or the University.
8. Within ten (10) working days of receipt of the letter requesting termination, the Field Education Director convenes a Practicum Review Committee Meeting. Written reports are provided by the Field Education Supervisor and the Faculty Field Liaison. The student is invited to attend the Practicum Review Committee meeting for the expressed purpose of presenting their material. The Practicum Review Committee renders a wide range of decisions, not limited to the following:
  - a. Award credit for Field Education;
  - b. Grant permission to withdraw without penalty;
  - c. Award Incomplete or No-Credit for Field Education;
  - d. Require the student to repeat the field experience and the seminar;
  - e. Determine the number of field education hours granted, if any, for the semester that the student completed during the semester of termination. The number of hours granted will be determined from the competencies gained and not just the hours accrued.
  - f. Provide a recommendation for the time frame to re-place the student in another field education placement. This could range from immediate re- placement to waiting until the next cycle of placements;
  - g. As applicable, provide a recommendation for additional activities/remedial assignments prior to being re-placed;
  - h. Termination from field education and termination from the MSW program.
  - i. Any time a recommendation includes dismissal from field education/the MSW program, the Field Education Director will have the Associate Dean review the recommendation before the decision is final and communicated to the student. A student may be suspended from field education activity while their case is reviewed. The decision is not final until

the review is complete. The review is to ensure that University's academic policies are being followed and that the student's rights are protected.

9. Within ten (10) working days of the Field Practicum Committee's decision, the Field Education Director sends notification to the student of the Committee's decision, and it becomes a part of the student's record.  
**\*Note:** Students are not penalized when a change of placement is necessary because their field practice agency is unable to or fails to meet conditions of the Affiliation Agreement.
10. If after a Practicum Review Committee meeting, the Committee deems the student unsuited to the social work profession, the student's dismissal from the social work program will be recommended. The student will not be reinstated until they present evidence of having changed the behavior(s) at issue and can show that the new behavior(s) can be maintained.
11. In the event a student's academic performance or professional conduct falls outside of the acceptable range, the School of Social Work exercises its right to terminate the student's field education placement and enrollment in the school.
12. The School of Social Work exercises its right to terminate a student's field placement and/or enrollment in the MSW program for disregarding professional ethics/NASW *Code of Ethics* and academic norms, and/or displaying inappropriate conduct. Academic dishonesty or other violations of the *Student Code* are some of the grounds for automatic dismissal from the MSW program.

#### **F. Policies Concerning Field Education Grievances**

Should a student feel aggrieved after the completion of steps outlined above, or in any other matter pertaining to the field education experience, the student can appeal to the Director of the Social Work program who will consult with the MSW Program Director. It is the student's responsibility to establish grounds for the appeal. The Director will hear the appeal within 10 working days of the written appeal request. The student will be notified by email of the Director's decision within 10 working days of the appeal hearing. If the student wishes to appeal the decision of the Director of Social Work, the student may appeal in writing to the Dean's Office within the College of Education and Community Innovation.

It must be remembered that students are assigned to agencies based on the student's learning needs, career goals, and the agency's service delivery system. Hence, students are expected to handle field assignments in an appropriate manner, and with the understanding that legitimate and logical concerns may be discussed with the Faculty Field Liaison, Field Education Supervisor, Field Education Coordinator, and Field Education Director.

#### **G. Professional Practice Mandates**

Ethics, Values, and the National Association of Social Workers (NASW) *Code of Ethics*

All students, faculty, and Field Education Supervisors in the social work program have the responsibility to be familiar with the National Association of Social Workers (NASW) *Code of Ethics*. It is expected that all students, Field Education Supervisors, and faculty will abide by the Code. A copy of the current *Code of Ethics* can be downloaded from the NASW website located at [www.socialworkers.org](http://www.socialworkers.org). The development of ethical standards and framework for ethical decision making should be an integral piece of each student's Learning Contract and incorporated into supervision. Students are to learn the intrinsic principles of the *Code of Ethics* and have opportunities to apply these principles to practice in their field placement.

Knowledge to be gained with field education is paramount to developing the professional self, including cultural competence; helping people in need and addressing social problems; and taking action through appropriate channels when colleagues are impaired and/or incompetent. Learning to apply these commitments in social work practice is a very difficult and sensitive matter. We take with the utmost seriousness our obligation to teach and stand up for values and ethics for the social work profession as defined by the *Code of Ethics*. Field Education Supervisors are encouraged to utilize agency orientations as a means to identify and discuss procedures related to advocacy, professional responsibility and appropriate avenues for problem solving.

### Liability Issues

The University provides professional liability insurance for all students who are officially registered for the field education courses. Agencies/organizations shall maintain adequate general liability and professional liability insurance as well. Students may also purchase additional liability insurance. Students are covered through the end of the semester of courses in which they are enrolled. Field placements extended beyond this time must receive the prior approval of the Faculty Field Liaison.

Students are highly encouraged to maintain their own health coverage during field education. The student's individual medical insurance plan is responsible for all expenses incurred during the field placement. The University and the School of Social Work assume no responsibility or liability for any injury that may be sustained during field placement. In some agencies students may be required to use their personally owned vehicle for transportation purposes. Some field placements require students to have a valid driver's license, indicate that they can operate a motor vehicle without restriction (unless indicated on the application), carry current vehicle insurance, and agree to be in compliance with the laws of the State of Michigan.

If the student is involved in an automobile accident while on field placement business the student's personal vehicle insurance is the first tier for a claim. If a student is to utilize their personally owned vehicle for field placement activities (including the transportation of clients), it is the agency's responsibility to inform the student of these expectations prior to acceptance into the placement and also to evaluate the student's ability to perform the required tasks. This includes but is not limited to ensuring that the student's vehicle is in good, safe, working condition.

Students are encouraged to use an agency vehicle, when available, while transporting clients, consumers, or agency personnel on behalf of the agency. If a student elects to use a privately-

owned vehicle, as part of their field placement responsibilities, they are responsible for obtaining adequate insurance to cover their legal responsibility. It is advised that without such coverage, clients should not be transported in students' cars. The University does not carry physical damage insurance on privately-owned vehicles.

#### Criminal History, State of Michigan Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS) Central Registry History Clearance, Drug Testing Requirements, and Health Compliance

Students should be aware that many agencies require students to complete a criminal history check which may be state or national clearance. Some agencies require a central registry check through DHHS to determine if the student has ever been involved through Child or Adult Protective Services for abuse or neglect. Agencies, acting in accordance with their own policies, may also require drug testing, immunizations, a recent physical, etc. These may be required at a cost to the student. The University does not cover these costs.

#### Mandatory Reporting and Duty to Warn

State and federal laws cover the mandatory reporting of suspected abuse or neglect of children or vulnerable adults and the duty to warn if a client is considered harmful to her/himself or others. Field Education Supervisors are responsible for educating students with regard to these laws and agency policy. All incidents where it is suspected that there is abuse/neglect or duty to warn should be immediately reported to the Field Education Supervisor and consultation sought. The Field Education Supervisor is ultimately responsible for ensuring the reporting occurs according to applicable law, policies, and ethical obligations. The student may assist as is appropriate to the situation as determined by the Field Education Supervisor or designee.

#### Disability and Compliance with the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA)

The Americans with Disabilities Act as amended by the ADA Amendment Act (2008)

Philosophy Statement: Grand Valley State University (GVSU) is committed to providing access to programs and facilities for all students, faculty and staff. GVSU promotes the inclusion of individuals with disabilities as part of our commitment to creating a diverse, intercultural community. It is the policy of GVSU to comply with the Americans with Disabilities Act as amended by the ADA Amendment Act (2008), Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, and other applicable federal and state laws that prohibit discrimination on the basis of disability. GVSU will provide reasonable accommodations to qualified individuals with disabilities upon request.

Any student with a disability who needs to arrange reasonable accommodations must contact the Grand Valley State University Student Accessibility Resources office. Student Accessibility Resources will make a disability determination. Information from this evaluation should be shared with the Field Education Coordinator, and the agency Field Education Supervisor who must evaluate the agency's ability to provide the accommodation prior to accepting the student for field placement. <https://www.gvsu.edu/accessibility/>

#### Nondiscrimination and Human Diversity

*Every aspect of University life should be free from discrimination because of age, color,*

*disability, familial status, height, marital status, national origin, political affiliation, race, religion, sex/gender, sexual orientation, gender identity and expression, veteran status, or weight. Student housing, organizations, athletics, classes and University community facilities should be open to all who desire to participate. - Student Code Section 100.01*

The School of Social Work at Grand Valley State University is committed to anti-racism, diversity, inclusion, and equity. Faculty work collectively and continuously to define these terms as they relate to social work education. You can find these working definitions here: [ADEI Definitions](#). We infuse our commitment into explicit and implicit in classroom and field education. It is expected that students demonstrate respect for diversity, consistent with the NASW Code of Ethics, in their academic and professional performance.

### Sexual or Gender-Based Harassment in Field Placement

Sexual or gender-based harassment is prohibited conduct at the University. No employee, student or other person at the University shall engage in sexual or gender-based harassment. This applies to all University programs and activities, including those conducted off campus.

In order to maintain an environment in which the dignity and worth of all students is respected, and in compliance with university policy, it is the policy of the School of Social Work at GVSU that sexual or gender-based harassment of students in their field placements is unacceptable. All field education faculty and staff will follow the sexual or gender-based harassment (including retaliation) policy and follow all reporting protocols. <http://www.gvsu.edu/titleix/>

Sexual harassment of students can be destructive to the learning environment, demoralizing to the student and adversely affect her or his performance in the agency. Sexual harassment is defined as any unwelcome sexual advance, request for sexual favors, or other unwanted conduct of a sexual nature, whether verbal, non-verbal, graphic, physical, or otherwise, when the conditions create a hostile environment.

Forms of sexual harassment may include harassment from the Field Education Supervisor, an agency employee, or another intern. Sexual harassment, including same gender sexual harassment is any unwanted attention of a sexual nature from someone in the workplace or classroom that causes discomfort or interferes with work or academic performance. Sexual advances, requests for sexual favors, and other verbal or physical conduct of a sexual nature constitute sexual harassment when:

- Submission to such conduct is made (either explicitly or implicitly) a term or condition of an individual's employment, education, living environment or participation in any college activity;
- Submission to, or rejection of, such conduct is used as the basis for or factor in decisions affecting an individual's employment, education, living environment, or participation in any college activity;
- Such conduct has the purpose or effect of unreasonably interfering with an individual's employment or academic performance, or creating an intimidating, hostile, offensive, or abusive environment for that individual's employment, education, living environment, or participation in any college activity.



Some examples that may constitute sexual harassment are:

- Repeated requests or pressure for dates
- Unwanted offensive contacts outside the workplace
- Disparaging sexual remarks about one's gender or sexual orientation that unreasonably interfere with the individual's learning or working
- Physical contact such as pinching or patting
- Physical aggression
- Verbal sexual abuse disguised as fun
- Offensive sexual jokes

Gender-Based Harassment includes harassment based on gender, sexual orientation, transgender, gender non-conforming, transitioning, gender identity, or gender expression, which may include acts of aggression, intimidation, or hostility, whether verbal or non-verbal, graphic, physical, or otherwise, even if the acts do not involve conduct of a sexual nature.

If you believe you have been or are being sexually harassed or experiencing gender-based harassment at your field placement, please contact your Faculty Field Liaison and the Field Education Director at (616) 331-6550.

#### Anti-Harassment Policy

Harassment for any reason is never acceptable. If you have been made to feel uncomfortable, intimidated, or unwanted, you should speak with a member of faculty regarding your concern. You have the responsibility to report incidents promptly, as it is often difficult to trace the facts long after they occur. It is recommended that complaints be filed within sixty (60) calendar days of the alleged incident.

If you believe you have been or are being harassed at your placement, please contact the Field Education Director at the School of Social Work office (616) 331- 6550.

## **VI. Additional Information Regarding Field Education**

### **A. Faculty Field Liaison Site Visit Protocol**

Faculty Field Liaisons will have two contacts with the field education site per semester. On occasions with an established site/Field Education Supervisor and the student's performance is adequate, there is typically one face to face and one phone or email contact per semester. If the site or Field Education Supervisor is newly developed, the Faculty Field Liaison will conduct two face-to-face visits. If any concerns have been identified with the student or the placement, the Faculty Field Liaison will conduct both contacts in that semester face to face. The contacts are to incorporate communication and input between the student, Field Education Supervisor and Faculty Field Liaison. Communication between contacts is necessary any time there are remedial plans or in situations where informal problem solving is implemented to prevent a formal performance improvement plan, or in instances when the site, Field Education Supervisor, or student would benefit from the support.

### **Site Visit Discussion Guide**

#### Initial Site Visit:

- Introductions.
- Site information:
  - How each perceive it is going so far
  - What learning activities the student has been engaged in
  - Activities student will become involved with during the semester
  - Review of facility
  - If new site, gain information on site
- Faculty Field Liaison role.
- Orientation to organizational policies that apply to student's role (technology, confidentiality, social media, etc.).
- Safety orientation for students.
- How has the student and Field Education Supervisor structured supervision:
  - Review importance of communication and feedback, weekly supervision
- Overview of requirements- plan for hours, time sheets, learning contract:
  - Procedure for end of semester evaluation
  - Plan for GVSU break
- Student Learning Contract expectations:
  - Any areas that were difficult to identify a learning activity
  - Questions
  - Liaison suggestions
- Evaluation procedures for end of semester.
- Coordination of field experiences with classroom learning and assignments.
- Conferences/learning opportunities.
- Questions for students:
  - In your brief time here, what have you learned?
  - By the end of semester/placement what do you hope to have achieved?

- What do you anticipate will be most challenging for you?
- What skills would you like to concentrate on?
- Questions for Field Education Supervisor:
  - What goals do you have for student?
  - Is any support needed from Liaison/SSW?
- Any issues, concerns, questions, successes.

#### End of the semester site visit:

- Review Learning Contract evaluation including both Field Education Supervisor and student scores
  - Any discrepancies between student and Field Education Supervisor scores
  - Review of student progress on learning objective
  - What skills student has gained, what are student's strengths and areas for growth, how will these get carried forward into next semester?
  - How are you making connections between what you learned in the classroom to this practice setting?
- Develop informal or formal plan for addressing any areas of the Learning Contract requiring performance improvement plan with time frames and follow up.
- Review any hours and need for make-up time, how GVSU break is being managed.
- Identify the need of increased autonomy for next semester.
- Transition plan to move into next semester.
- Review of semester from student perspective:
  - Describe what you have accomplished or proud moment
  - What skills have you been able to transfer from previous experiences (work, volunteering, life)?
  - Are you able to make connections between what you learned in the classroom to this practice setting?
  - What surprised you about this placement?
  - How have you grown this semester? Personally? Professionally?
  - What areas need additional focus? What is your plan to improve upon these areas?
  - What are you looking forward to next semester?
- Review of semester from Field Education Supervisor perspective:
  - What has the student done well this semester?
  - What would you like to see the student improve on next semester?
  - How will next semester look different in terms of responsibilities/tasks, etc.?
  - What value has the student brought to your organization?
  - What support is needed, if any, from GVSU?
  - Other feedback

#### Final visit:

- Review of semester/placement from student perspective:
  - Overview of your accomplishments/proud moment or a challenge and how you worked through the challenge
  - Describe how you have grown from the beginning of the placement until now.
  - What has the termination process been like for you? (clients, co-workers, handing off projects, etc.)

- What was most difficult for you in this placement?
- When you are a supervisor someday, what will you take from your supervisor and make your own? What did you appreciate about their supervision style?
- What can you take from this placement and use in any social work job?
- What did you learn about yourself that you didn't know?
- What areas would you identify for your ongoing professional development?
- If you could change something about your experience, what would it be and why?
- Review of semester from Field Education Supervisor perspective:
  - What has the student done well this semester?
  - What areas of growth do you identify for the student to work on as they begin employment?
  - What words of wisdom do you have for the student as they embark upon a social work career?
- Hours – completed?
- Learning contract – evaluation completed?
- Questions/concerns?
- Gain feedback on the FI's experience with GVSU/Field Education, areas of strength and improvement, encourage them to complete the survey.
- Thank you to Field Education Supervisor!

## **B. Student Safety Guidelines**

The safety of social workers and social work interns is of primary importance. Field Education has a role in teaching/training social work students' safety related skills vital throughout their career. Each member of the field education team plays a role in promoting the safety of social work students:

1. Field Education Coordinators set and communicate the expectation to Field Education Supervisors through new site development and Field Education Supervisor orientations that field placement sites will orient, and train students interns on the safety related risks and organizational safety policies and procedures of the organization in which the student is placed. Safety is addressed in student and Field Education Supervisor orientations.
2. Faculty Field Liaisons will reinforce for Field Education Supervisors the need to provide safety training to students and monitor during site visits. Liaisons monitor student safety issues during site visits, seminar sessions as student discuss field experiences, and through reading student journals. Any safety concerns are addressed with the student and their Field Education Supervisor. The Faculty Liaison will bring to the attention of the Field Education Coordinator any safety issues of significant or ongoing concern.
3. Field Education Supervisors will orient students to potential safety risks and the organizational safety policies and procedures. Students are expected to be made aware of the field site's methods for assessing and handling at-risk safety situations. Field Education Supervisors will provide an environment in supervision for students to express any safety concerns and provide necessary consultation and safety planning. The student's supervision should reinforce safety guidelines and continually assess for any at risk situations. In the event a safety incident occurs, the Field Education

Supervisor will provide relevant debriefing, support, follow up on incident reporting, and engage the Faculty Field Liaison or Field Education Coordinator.

4. Students are expected to be aware of and follow agency protocols related to safety. Any time the student has concerns related to safety, that concern will be brought to the attention of the Field Education Supervisor, and as needed, the Faculty Field Liaison. Students will learn the organizational expectations for safety and reporting; ask and seek orientation if not provided, seek clarification and consultation through supervision for any situation in which safety or risk is present. If a safety incident occurs the student will notify their Field Education Supervisor immediately and, based upon the seriousness of the incident, also notify their Faculty Field Liaison. The student will follow all agency safety procedures in addressing the incident.

### 1. Field Education Placement Guidelines for Risk Reduction

Students should learn about the field site's formal and/or informal methods for assessing and handling risky situations. Each situation is different, but the guidelines that follow may generally apply in the management of potentially dangerous situations.

In the event an incident of risk or danger occurs during field placement:

- Follow the field education site procedures to manage the immediate situation and report the incident;
- Get any needed medical care, notify, and debrief with your Field Education Supervisor;
- IMMEDIATELY report the incident to your Field Education Supervisor, Faculty Field Liaison, and/or Field Education Director in the School of Social Work 616-331-6550; and,
- Recognize that a physical attack or threatening behavior is frightening and that you may respond emotionally to the stress. Seek help if needed.

Students are expected to comply with field site standards regarding:

- Personal safety;
- Safety protocols, including building and office security, emergency procedures, management of violent clients, and home visit safety procedures;
- Infectious disease control procedures and OSHA requirements;
- Working with high-risk clients; and
- Use of a personally owned vehicle and specifying that **the vehicle is insured** and in good working order when making community-based visits and/or transporting clients on field work business.

Placement sites are encouraged to have policies and procedures regarding employee and student safety. These policies should be reviewed, prioritized, and reinforced on a regular basis. Students need to be:

- Exposed to triaging client situations, peer review (where possible), and the importance of seeking consultation in potentially unsafe situations;

- Instructed and informed about cases that are “at-risk” and students should receive more intense supervision, consultation, and monitoring with these cases;
- Assisted in understanding individual and group differences when it comes to accurately interpreting behavior; and,
- Debriefed after any incident.

Orientation to the field education site should include:

- Information about the prevalence of, or potential for, violence while in the field placement assignments;
- Orientation to the surrounding community and neighborhoods, or areas where the student may work, and discuss concerns that students may have regarding their work in a community-based setting;
- Opportunities for students to observe and shadow their Field Education Supervisor on community-based visits;
- Allow Field Education Supervisors opportunities to observe and mentor students on community-based visits;
- Provide resources (such as safety training, pagers, cellular telephones, etc.) to students for community-based visits if available to staff; and,
- Carefully consider all assignments given to students and assess the assignments’ potential for risk, as well as the student’s ability to perform the assignment.

## **VII. Frequently Asked Questions**

Listed below are several questions students commonly ask regarding Field Education. The list is not exhaustive, and it may not capture the question(s) that you might consider the most important to you. However, the questions below may respond to concerns you have, and/or generate discussion of other issues/questions.

*1. Must all students complete a field education placement?*

All students who wish to obtain a Master's Degree in Social Work must successfully complete a field education internship from an accredited School of Social Work.

*2. Can I receive credit for work or life experience? Can I receive credit for current work or life experience that is directly related to the social work profession?*

The answer to both questions is "no." Credit for life/work experience is a violation of Council on Social Work Education Accreditation Standards.

*3. Can students complete a field education placement at their place of employment?*

A student can request a field placement in their place of employment; however, it must meet certain guidelines as outlined in the manual section "Employment Based Field Placement". The Field Education Coordinator will review a student's request to ensure the field placement remains educationally focused within an organization that has the capacity and willingness to provide the appropriate supervision and relevant learning activities that promote competency development at the generalist and advanced generalist levels. The application for an employment-based field education placement must be approved by the Field Education Coordinator.

*4. Do students have input in the selection of their field placement site?*

Students are asked to indicate three fields of practice they wish to be considered for potential placement sites. Competition from peers within the School of Social Work and from students from other universities is high. To ask students for only one area of interest severely limits the chances of securing a placement interview in an area a student might wish to pursue. Every effort is made to obtain an interview for students in one of the three areas they have selected.

*5. Do students arrange their own field education placements?*

Students are welcome to give suggestions for field placement development to the Field Education Coordinator. However, it is the field of practice, not a specific

agency that guides our efforts to secure a placement interview for students. Students may not contact, arrange, set-up, and/or interview for field placements on their own. **All field education placements are made by the School of Social Work.**

6. *Can students work while doing their field education placement?*

Many students work while enrolled in field education. Full-time employment is not encouraged. When students reach the point in their education where their field placement internship is the next order of business, they must prepare to make the adjustments necessary to engage in and commit to 20-25 hours per week of field placement internship.

7. *Do practice hours missed because of illness, personal circumstances, etc. have to be made up?*

Yes. Regular status students must successfully complete 945 hours of Field Education and Seminar over the course of three semesters in order to graduate with a Master of Social Work degree. Advanced standing students must complete 630 hours of Field Education and Seminar during two/three semesters.

8. *Are students assigned more than one field education placement?*

The field education structure is designed so that a student fulfills the requirements within **one organization**. Only in exceptional/unusual circumstances do students have more than one field placement.

9. *Is there a seminar that accompanies field education placements?*

Yes, and attendance is required. Your Field Education seminar hours are completed in your seminar class each semester. Seminar accounts for 15 clock hours of field education each semester a student is completing their internship.

10. *Are field education placements separate from field education seminars?*

Yes, the two are separate, but they are inextricably connected and therefore must be successfully completed simultaneously.

11. *Can students be paid by their field placement agency?*

Yes. Students are allowed to receive financial compensation from their field placement agency. The School of Social Work does not maintain a policy against paid placements.



## **Appendix A: Placement Interview and Resume Tips**

An interview is your chance to exchange information with the potential field education site. Not only is it time for the interviewer to evaluate your skills, but it is also your opportunity to listen and obtain information regarding the internship position, work environment and organization. Prospective interns experience a wide range of interviews from very formal to more casual in nature, one to one with a supervisor vs. a group interview, in person interview vs. virtual interviews. Each intern should be fully prepared regardless of the nature of the interview.

### **Structure of the Interview**

Most interviews are structured so that the greatest amount of information can be exchanged in a small amount of time. Communication must flow smoothly throughout the interview in order for it to be successful. There are usually three parts to every interview: the introduction/summary, the body, and the closing.

1. The introduction, or summary, is used to develop rapport between the interviewer and the candidate. The interviewer will "break the ice" and attempt to put you at ease. The interviewer's first impression of you will be set during this portion of the interview. General questions may be asked. Don't forget to:
  - Dress in business casual attire, no jeans
  - Offer a sincere handshake if in person
  - Smile
  - Remain standing until offered a seat
  - Maintain direct eye contact
  - Introduce yourself confidently
  - Sit with good posture
  - Address the interviewer by their last name and appropriate title (Ms., Dr., Mr., etc.) unless told otherwise
  - Adhere to good virtual etiquette if interviewing via video conferencing such as testing technology in advance, wearing professional attire, limit distractions, use of professional body language, build rapport
2. The body of the interview deals with specific information. Questions and answers are exchanged in order to determine your qualifications for the internship. The interviewer is monitoring how you handle yourself and if you appear to be motivated and engaged. Remember:
  - Be yourself
  - Be able to talk for two minutes about yourself
  - Be honest
  - Use professional language
  - Be able to describe your experience and skill set (assets and strengths)
  - Use examples to support statements

- If asked, be prepared to either offer an area of weakness that is positive, or to state the actions you are taking to correct and strengthen points of challenge
3. The interview generally ends when the interviewer asks you if you have any questions about the organization or internship, thanks you for coming, and may tell you when you will be contacted. Use this opportunity to make a final lasting impression on the interviewer by:
- Asking intelligent questions (prepare 2-3 questions prior to the interview)
  - Expressing your interest in the site
  - Initiating a final handshake
  - Thanking the interviewer for their time

### **Common Interview Questions**

- Tell me about yourself.
- What are your strengths and weaknesses?
- What are your long-range and short-range goals and objectives?
- What do you look for in a supervisor?
- What type of activities were you involved in during school?
- How do you deal with stress?
- How do you approach problem solving?
- Why did you choose your field of study?
- What contributions can you make to our agency/organization?
- Why are you interested in this organization/ this population?
- Do you prefer working with others or by yourself? Why?
- What are the two most important things you look for in an internship?
- What do you know about us?
- Describe a situation in which you were faced with a conflict and how you resolved it.
- Describe your most significant accomplishment.

### **What are the most common resume mistakes?**

- Focusing upon what you hope to gain, instead of how you can contribute
- Describing job duties instead of unique contributions and/or results; for example, “Helped organize fundraiser” vs. “Secured \$2,000 in donations for community fundraiser, using direct mail and public speaking skills.”
- Failing to proofread
- Using personal pronouns, such as I, me, or my

## **Appendix B: Social Media Guidelines for Responsible Use**

Social media offers opportunities to connect with others, share information, build connections and maintain relationships. Due to social work professional standards and the obligation to follow the National Association of Social Workers *Code of Ethics* social workers need to continually assess the ethical and practice implications of social media use. Privacy, confidentiality, and the establishment/maintenance of professional boundaries must be considered as well as the necessary precautions to protect the student/employees and clients.

As a social work professional, it is important to consider whether you are using social media channels for professional activities such as advancing social justice issues, advocating for vulnerable populations and promoting your professional identity or using these sites to maintain contact with family and friends. In either case, your professional image that you put forth is impacted by the content expressed through social media.

There are applications for social media within social work both within clinical and macro areas. Social media has a broad range of utility in clinical social work practice such as the use of online content for psychoeducation and education to reduce stigmas associated with vulnerable populations. It is the social worker's professional responsibility to maintain appropriate clinical boundaries online as much as possible to protect both their privacy and the privacy of their clients.

Within macro practice social work has many practical applications including education, advocacy, outreach, mobilization, fundraising, and evaluation. Macro social workers need to be careful about how they may be branding their agency or project.

As part of your orientation to the field education site, you should request the organization's policy on social media. If the organization does not have a written policy, seek guidance from your Field Education Supervisor on the practice guidelines of the organization.

The NASW *Code of Ethics* (2018) that are applicable to social media include:

- Social workers should obtain client consent before conducting an electronic search on the client. Exceptions may arise when the search is for purposes of protecting the client or other people from serious, foreseeable, and imminent harm, or for other compelling professional reasons (Section 1.03i).
- Social workers should avoid communication with clients using technology (such as social networking sites, online chat, e-mail, text messages, telephone, and video) for personal or non-work-related purposes (Section 1.06e).
- Social workers should be aware that posting personal information on professional Web sites or other media might cause boundary confusion, inappropriate dual relationships, or harm to clients (Section 1.06f).
- Social workers should be aware that personal affiliations may increase the likelihood that clients may discover the social worker's presence on Web sites, social media, and other forms of technology. Social workers should be aware that involvement in electronic communication with groups based on race, ethnicity, language, sexual orientation, gender identity or expression, mental or physical

ability, religion, immigration status, and other personal affiliations may affect their ability to work effectively with particular clients (Section 1.06g).

- Social workers should avoid accepting requests from or engaging in personal relationships with clients on social networking sites or other electronic media to prevent boundary confusion, inappropriate dual relationships, or harm to clients (Section 1.06h).
- Social workers should avoid posting any identifying or confidential information about clients on professional websites or other forms of social media (Section 1.07r).

Other important considerations include:

- Social media sites are public domains, and any information can be accessed by anyone. Once information is in cyber space, it never goes away.
- Maintain the highest level of privacy settings. Realize the safety related concerns with the information that you make available about yourself and your family online.
- Your time in field education and the resources provided to you in your field placement are to be used for field-related matters. Using these resources for personal use of social media is unprofessional conduct.
- Texting, email, and Twitter are quick and effective ways to communicate with others however, many ethical, legal, and clinical issues must be addressed when using these communication tools. The potential for unintentionally sharing protected information is significant and must be considered. In general, consider the security, privacy, and confidentiality of all communication methods and when in doubt seek consultation and supervision before embarking into unfamiliar or uncertain areas.
- Students should be expected to exercise great care in how they represent themselves and the social work profession as a whole in any online activities. It is very easy for an outsider to misinterpret statements or images out of context (misrepresentation).

## **Appendix C: Fields of Practice and Common Areas of Focus**

The following list of topics is provided to offer some idea of the many fields of practice in which Advanced Generalist Social Workers are employed.

### **Administration**

- Program development
- Evaluation
- Research
- Quality assurance
- Fundraising
- Grant-writing
- Budgeting

### **Aging /Gerontology**

- Access to services/entitlements
- Advanced care planning
- Advocacy
- Counseling
- Discrimination
- Education
- Elder Abuse
- End of life / grief and loss
- Health and mental health issues
- Housing

### **Child Welfare**

- Abuse and neglect
- Adoption
- Foster care
- Clinical and case management services
- Residential services
- Early childhood
- Intervention and actions in support of positive youth development
- Prevention
- School based mental health

### **Community Planning**

- Neighborhood assessment
- Evaluation
- Data collection
- Research analysis
- Community revitalization
- Community-based initiatives
- Outreach

### **Criminal Justice**

- Counseling
- Parole, probation
- Public Defense
- Rehabilitation
- Jail/Prison mental health and substance abuse treatment
- Youth services

### **Developmental Disabilities**

- Case management
- Advocacy
- Policy development
- Program planning and evaluation
- Research
- Service provision

### **Domestic Violence**

- Advocacy
- Outreach
- Counseling
- Case management
- Crisis intervention
- Victim assistance
- Prevention education

## **Family Services**

- Family preservation support services
- Parenting
- Poverty
- School based mental health
- Family treatment
- Grief/loss support

## **Group Services**

- Program planning
- Mental health, substance abuse disorders, trauma with treatment modality of group services
- Prevention services
- Grief loss support

## **Health**

- Advocacy
- Case management
- Chronic care
- Community-based
- Hospice and palliative care
- Pediatrics
- Public health issues

## **Housing**

- Poverty
- Access to services
- Case management
- Advocacy

## **International**

- Refugee resettlement
- Acculturation
- Access to services
- Case management

## **Mental Health**

- Access to services
- Advocacy
- Assessment and diagnosis
- Community mental health
- Coordination of care
- Counseling
- Direct services
- Crisis intervention

## **Program Evaluation**

- Research
- Evaluation tools

## **Public Assistance**

- Case management
- Needs assessment
- Service provision
- Access to services
- Job preparation and development

## **Rehabilitation**

- Case management
- Referrals
- Discharge planning

## **School Social Work**

- Collaboration with community agencies and organizations
- Crisis prevention and intervention
- Individual and group counseling
- Parent education and training
- Policy development
- Program coordination
- Special Education
- Social development assessments

**Social Policy**

- Advocacy
- Administration and planning
- Community development
- Conflict resolution
- Grassroots mobilization
- Lobbying
- Outreach
- Policy analysis and development
- Public awareness efforts
- Research

**Substance Abuse**

- Counseling
- Education
- Group/family treatment
- Referrals
- Research
- Screening and assessment

**Veterans**

- Counseling
- Assessment and diagnosis
- Family support
- Access to services

## **Appendix D: Sample Field Education Sites for the Grand Rapids, Holland, and Muskegon Areas**

**This is a sample listing for field practice settings, this list is not inclusive of all sites.  
Additional sites are added consistently.**

- 17th Circuit Court - Family Division
- ADHD Center of West Michigan
- Allendale Public Schools
- Alliance Counseling
- Area Agency on Aging
- Arbor Circle
- Arts in Motions Studio
- AYA Youth Collective
- Boy's & Girl's Club of GR
- Cherry Health
- Children's Advocacy Centers
- Corewell Health
- D.A. Blodgett- St. Johns
- DaVita Dialysis Inc.
- Disability Advocates
- Easterseals MORC
- Emmanuel Hospice
- Ele's Place
- Every Woman's Place Family Outreach Center
- Family Promise
- Forest View Hospital
- Genesis Non-Profit Housing
- Gilda's Club
- Goodwill Industries
- Grant Elementary School
- Grand Rapids Housing Commission
- Grand Rapids Public Schools
- Grandville Public Schools
- Grand Rapids Red Project
- Grand Valley State University
- Health Net of West Michigan
- HealthWest
- Holland Hospital
- Hope Network
- Hudsonville Public Schools
- Ionia County ISD
- Jenison Public Schools
- Jumpstart 2 Recovery
- Kalamazoo Psychiatric Hospital
- Life Journey Psych. Services
- Lighthouse Academy School
- Mary Free Bed
- Mel Trotter Ministries
- Mercy Health Partners
- Michigan Behavioral Consultants
- Michigan Coalition Against Homelessness (MCAH)
- Michigan DHHS
- Michigan Department of Corrections
- Montcalm Care Network
- Muskegon County Public Defender
- NASW
- Office of the Public Defender
- Our Hope
- Out Side In, Inc.
- Ottawa County Community Mental Health
- Ottawa County Family Court
- Pine Rest
- Porter Hills
- Puertas Abiertas
- Reach for Recovery
- Resilience: Advocates for Ending Violence



- Rockford Public Schools
- Safe Harbor Children's  
Advocacy Center
- Safe Haven Ministries
- Samaritas
- Second Story Counseling
- Skywood Recovery
- Southridge Hospital
- Tandem 365
- TBD Solutions
- The Right Door
- Treetops Collective
- Tri County Area Schools
- Trinity Health
- U. of M. Health-West
- Wedgwood
- Wellspring Lutheran
- West Grand  
Neighborhood  
Organization
- Wyoming Public  
Schools
- Veterans  
Administration
- Y.W.C.A.

