



**SocialWork@Simmons:
Field Education
Manual**

Updated 8.16.2017

SIMMONS
School of Social Work

SOCIALWORK@SIMMONS



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FORWARD

This manual has been prepared for students, field instructors, agency training directors, and faculty as a guide to field curriculum, policies and procedures. It is intended to give comprehensive information about the various roles and expectations of all parties in the School and agency partnership.

We encourage you to examine the contents of the manual. The Director of Field Education or your faculty field liaison will answer any questions you may have. We value the suggestions of our students and affiliated clinical instructors, and welcome any input you may have.

The administration and faculty appreciate the ongoing commitment and investment of our affiliated training centers. We are grateful to all who participate in the field practicum component of the curriculum, enabling and enhancing the integration of theory, social work practice, and professional development.



A handwritten signature in black ink, which appears to read "Castañeda".

Silvana Castañeda
Director of Field Education
SocialWork@Simmons

Updates to the Field Manual regarding policy and procedure changes are made biannually.
Interim changes will be posted in Foundations on the LMS.

MSW PROGRAM

The Simmons College School of Social Work Master's Degree program prepares women and men for practice in the profession of social work with particular competence in clinical social work practice. The curriculum emphasizes the profession's dual focus on the individual and the environment. Students are expected to learn theory and practice skills to serve clients in the context of the political, economic, and social systems that affect their lives and their access to resources.

Mission of the School of Social Work

The mission of the MSW program is to prepare masters level professional practitioners with skills for clinical social work practice in a multicultural world using knowledge based on scientific inquiry and field-informed practice. This educational experience, consistent with the history and philosophy of the social work profession, is grounded in a values perspective that emphasizes client strengths and diversities, actively opposes all forms of oppression and supports social and economic justice. The education is designed to help students develop competence, critical thinking and problem solving abilities as well as cultural sensitivity, and self-awareness.

Students learn multiple social work roles and skills necessary to be effective within evolving fields of practice. Graduates will be able to work with a variety of populations and social issues, using a broad and flexible array of interventions at an advanced level. They will have the ability to work with individuals, families, groups and communities to facilitate development and change in the service of social justice. Graduates will be prepared to practice with an appreciation for the dignity and worth of the person and the importance of human relationships, with a sense of integrity and a commitment to human rights.

The School of Social Work incorporates and builds on these key elements in developing its own mission by emphasizing professional development, critical thinking, integration of theory and practice, diversity, and leadership. In developing this statement, the faculty has insured that it reflects both who we are and who we want to become as a school of social work. We wanted the statement to be broad enough to capture the complexities and multiple demands of social work practice as we see it, and specific enough to clearly state the priorities which drive our curriculum. In the mission statement below, the concepts are reflected in the five program goals that follow.

MSW Program Goals

1. Provide education for generalist practice and a concentration in clinical social work in a learning environment that models respect for diversity.
2. Infuse all activities of the School including the implicit and explicit curricula, with the values and ethics of the social work profession.
3. Prepare students for competent ethical practice in a multicultural world.
4. Prepare students to practice in the context of a complex, rapidly changing global environment.
5. Promote the development of professional knowledge and skills and accountability through critical thinking, self-reflection and a commitment to lifelong learning.

Definition of Clinical Social Work Practice

A disciplined process for collaboration in service of social, emotional, and behavioral change for individuals, groups, families, organizations, and communities. Clinical social work draws on knowledge of human development, relational and group process, cultural learning, and social policies and practices. It employs evidence-informed methods that facilitate change through dialogue and collective action. It is grounded in a history of commitment to social justice and guided by a professional code of ethics.

Simmons College Policy on Valuing Diversity

Simmons College is first and foremost an academic community that prepares students to be well informed, open minded, and sensitive to values. We strive to foster an atmosphere within which students may develop the resources to become actively engaged members of society and to lead rich personal lives. We hope to achieve these goals through an active and continual exchange of ideas among students and faculty and the general college community. To ensure that these goals are attained, Simmons has committed itself to the following principles.

Simmons College supports the principle and spirit of equal employment opportunity for all persons, based on each individual's qualifications and fitness. It is the college's policy to administer its employment and personnel policies without regard to race, color, religion, national origin, gender, sexual orientation, legally recognized handicap, or veteran status.

In accordance with applicable law, admission to the college's undergraduate baccalaureate program is reserved to women. The college is committed to admitting students of any race, color, or national and ethnic origin to all programs and activities made generally available to students at the college, including scholarship and loan programs, athletic programs, and other college-administered social, educational, recreational programs, and student services.

Simmons College subscribes to the policies set forth in Section 504 of the Federal Rehabilitation Act of 1973, which mandates equal opportunity for qualified handicapped persons in educational programs and activities. Simmons College strives to ensure that all decisions concerning hiring and promotion of faculty and staff, or the educational progress of its students, are based on considerations appropriate to an academic institution and not on factors such as race, color, gender, sexual orientation, religion, age, national origin, handicap, or veteran status. Furthermore, Simmons College is committed to creating an atmosphere within which the diversity of its members' individual roles meets with understanding, respect, and encouragement, and where discrimination and harassment by any member of the faculty, staff, or student body against any other will be condemned and redressed. The college does not tolerate sexual harassment of employees or students.

Complaints of discrimination or harassment should be addressed to the applicable dean for appropriate action (see College Policy on Nondiscrimination)

CODE OF ETHICS

The School supports the National Association of Social Workers' code of ethics and expects students, faculty, and field instructors to abide by its provisions. A copy of the code is on reserve in the Simmons Social Work Library and on the NASW website: <http://www.naswdc.org/pubs/code/code.asp>.

Dual Relationships and Conflict of Interest

As noted in the revised NASW Code of Ethics, field instructors and field liaisons should not work with any student with whom they have a dual relationship. Dual relationships occur when the student and field instructor have or initiate an additional relationship, for example, a close social or intimate relationship, therapist-client relationship, or business involvement. Likewise, social work students should not work with clients with whom they have a dual relationship.

If in any aspect of field education, the potential of a dual relationship exists, the student or field instructor should notify the field liaison or the Director of Field Education. All involved parties will participate in efforts to resolve the issue or make other arrangements.

STANDARDS FOR PROFESSIONAL PRACTICE EDUCATION

Students are expected to have knowledge of and to adhere to the NASW Code of Ethics which outlines the behavior and responsibilities expected of professional social workers. Under the NASW Code of Ethics, students studying for their MSW degree are considered to be social work professionals and are subject to the NASW Code of Ethics.

Simmons students are also expected to adhere to the Simmons Honor Code (which can be found at: <http://www.simmons.edu/handbook/conduct/index.php>) and to uphold the SSW standards for professional practice education, which are set forth below. Every SSW student is obligated to be familiar with and abide by these internal and external standards that govern our school and our profession. Ignorance of these professional standards is not an excuse for non-compliance.

Self-Awareness, Self-Assessment and Self-Monitoring

Students are expected to make a commitment to learning about self-awareness and to use self-reflection consistently and genuinely. Accepting supervision and incorporating feedback are critical to this process. As students progress through the SSW program, they are expected to accurately assess their own strengths and limitations and to display a willingness to examine and change behaviors that interfere with their work at a field placement or in the classroom. Included in this is a willingness to diligently examine and address their own biases.

Openness and Willingness to Learn — Flexibility and Adaptability

SSW students are expected to demonstrate openness to and active engagement in learning new ideas and perspectives. They should actively seek to understand the worldview and values of others. As required by the demands of professional practice, students should be flexible and adaptable in new situations and as circumstances change.

Interpersonal Skills

Students are expected to demonstrate the interpersonal skills and capacities needed to relate to clients,

agency colleagues, fellow students, faculty, and staff. The capacity and skills to actively engage with others across difference and in situations of conflict should improve and deepen as students progress through the SSW program.

Communication Skills

In all oral, written and electronic communication students are expected to be respectful of others. In electronic communication they should adhere to professional boundaries. In the classroom, students are expected to take responsibility for their role in discussions. They should strive to use active listening skills and to express ideas clearly. Students are expected to self-monitor and not dominate a discussion. Increasingly, as students progress through the program, they should be able to communicate effectively in writing, both in classroom assignments and in the field placement. As it is SSW students' responsibility to utilize resources to improve academic and field performance when problems in communication have been identified and brought to their attention for remediation.

Critical Thinking Skills

As students progress through the SSW program, they are expected to be able to frame and address problems in a disciplined way and engage at greater levels of independence in problem-solving efforts. Increasingly, problem-solving efforts should be well reasoned, examine multiple perspectives and worldviews, integrate evidence and knowledge, and lead to well-supported decisions and conclusions.

Presentation of Self

Upon entry to the program, students are expected to commit to learning what is required for professional behavior. Professional behavior includes the ability to evaluate and respond to the demands and expectations of classroom and field placement environments, and the larger college community. Professional behavior also includes being punctual, dependable, and accountable and being able to prioritize responsibilities. Appearance, dress, and general demeanor can reflect professional behavior.

Self-Care

Students are expected to recognize their own current life stressors and to seek ways to mitigate the effect of these stressors on academic and field performance. In accordance with the NASW Code of Ethics (sec 4.05), social work students should not allow their own personal problems or issues to interfere with their judgment and performance or to jeopardize the best interests of people for whom they have professional responsibility. Social work students whose personal problems, psychosocial distress, legal problems, substance abuse, or mental health difficulties interfere with their judgment and responsibilities should immediately seek consultation with a field liaison, faculty member, or field instructor who will determine and assist in the necessary steps and actions related to field placement and course work.

Acknowledgements: *School of Social Work University of Texas, Austin, Hunter College School of Social Work*

FIELD EDUCATION

Field education is an integral part of the School of Social Work curriculum. In the field, students integrate and apply the theories they learn in class with actual practice with individuals, families, groups, and larger systems. It provides practice learning in a wide range of training agencies representing both traditional and evolving fields of practice. The goal is to produce professional social workers possessing the knowledge and skills to work with a range of clients and problem areas, to analyze and apply theory critically, and to utilize a variety of interventions according to client need. The field curriculum supports the mission and goals of the MSW program and the values of the social work profession, including social and economic justice and respect for diversity. It provides the opportunity to support and apply the School's definition of clinical social work which emphasizes training students to work with individuals, families, and groups, in order to help clients improve their psychological and social functioning, and gain access to social and economic resources.

- Field education at Simmons is designed as a concurrent course of study with classroom curriculum.
- The field education curriculum provides a foundation in *generalist social work practice* in the first placement, and an advanced second placement with a concentration in *clinical social work*.
- Students are in the field placement two days a week (16 hours) during the foundation placement, and three days a week (24 hours) during the advanced placement, in a different setting for each.
- Students in each of the SW@S program options begin fieldwork as follows:
 - Extended (8 terms): 4th term
 - Full-time (6 terms): 2nd term
 - Accelerated (4 terms): 1st term
 - Advanced Standing (4 terms): 2nd term
- The field education program carries a total of 17 credits.

Under social work supervision, students are to demonstrate skills in a range of roles:

- Direct clinical practice
- Accessing, coordinating and developing services
- Formulating bio-psycho-social assessments and treatment plans
- Collaborating with clients in making plans for intervention
- Collaborating with staff and community providers
- Care coordination & referrals (case management) and advocacy

Agencies are asked to teach students about the policies and organizational issues affecting service to clients, and to provide opportunities for students to learn about organizational dynamics and change. Students develop the ability to practice in a self-directed manner, and to use supervision to gain self-awareness. Finally, students are expected to critically evaluate their own practice learning and understanding of the change process.

In both placements, the field education curriculum underscores social work values and ethics, including a commitment to social and economic justice, multicultural practice, promotion of diversity in organizations, the emancipation of oppressed people, and social action. Students learn skills in identifying and addressing oppression and injustice affecting client systems.

AGENCY AFFILIATION FOR FIELD PLACEMENTS

To meet the objectives of field education, the School is affiliated with a broad spectrum of human service agencies and programs. These include a full range of mental health programs, health care settings, integrated care settings, family services, home and community based systems, schools, college counseling centers, child welfare agencies, early intervention programs, prisons, court settings, elder services, substance abuse treatment services, violence treatment/prevention programs, HIV/AIDS prevention/treatment services, hospices, and more. Field faculty keep abreast of shifts in service needs and at-risk populations in order to keep the School's curriculum current with emerging trends and developments in social services and also to identify fields of practice that need professional social workers. Affiliated placement agencies must demonstrate a commitment to training social work students and have programs that reflect the values and ethics of the profession, as well as the School's mission, goals, and objectives. The agency and field instructors provide the opportunity for interns to develop a social work identity and to gain knowledge and skill in social work practice with particular emphasis on direct clinical practice.

Field Placement Site Criteria

In order to qualify as a placement site, agencies must have standards and philosophy acceptable to the School, the Council on Social Work Education (CSWE) and the professional community. The setting must adhere to the National Association of Social Workers (NASW) Code of Ethics, and provide needed services to the community. The agency must be willing to follow school expectations delineated in this *Field Education Manual*.

It is expected that agency staff will offer an orientation to the setting, its services, its safety procedures and its policies for their students. The agency should provide a spectrum of learning experiences with attention to the educational value for the particular trainee along with agency service needs. Client assignments should facilitate student development of knowledge and practice skills.

In making a commitment to participate in the training of MSW students, administrators are encouraged to adjust the workload of field instructors to allow adequate time for student teaching. Field instructors are required to provide orientation and training, individual supervision, ongoing consultation and evaluation of student work. (See "Criteria for Selection of Field Instructor," below, for a detailed description of the field instructor role.)

Expectations of agencies include:

- Field practicum training must be valued and supported in the agency.
- Field instructors should receive support and consultation on their supervision in the agency.
- In its commitment to overall quality of service to clients and training, it is expected that agencies will provide supervision, staff development and other learning opportunities for staff and involve students in relevant offerings.
- The agency will recommend highly qualified staff to serve as field instructors (see "Criteria for Selection of Field Instructor," below) and when possible a staff member will serve as overall liaison for the School, i.e., the training director.
- The agency will, to the best of its ability, provide an adequate amount of direct clinical service for learning.
- The agency will provide adequate office space and access to a telephone, and should reimburse

for travel and other expenses incurred in carrying out the social work role.

- The agency will orient the student to agency practices and procedures, documentation requirements, and safety issues, and provide needed specialized training for work with the agency's client population.

Advanced-placement agencies are selected based on their capacity to provide practice opportunities where students can learn and demonstrate advanced practice behaviors. It is expected that the core of the student's work will be direct practice, which can include individuals, dyads (parent-child, couples), families, groups and larger systems. Settings include: outpatient mental health clinics and programs, general hospitals, community health centers, integrated care settings, correctional facilities, courts, residential treatment centers and schools, hospices and child/family home based programs. Learning experiences should offer students the opportunity to broaden and deepen knowledge and skills in these areas: working with complex bio-psycho-social issues, managing effective multi-systems communication and interventions and working increasingly autonomously while working with a substantial number of clients. Agency selection criteria is based on a site's capacity to provide these learning experiences and to also facilitate the development of various skills, including:

- Integration and analysis of theory and practice
- Intentional, multi-faceted differential use of self
- Awareness of the complex nature of persons and systems
- Application of a variety of intervention approaches
- Application of critical thinking to practice
- Multilevel bio-psycho-social assessments
- Effective use of therapeutic relationships
- Interdisciplinary collaboration and teamwork
- Integration of larger systems perspectives
- Evaluation of practice outcomes
- Evaluation and differential application of knowledge, theory, practice skills, research and advocacy

Criteria for Selection of Field Instructor

It is essential that field instructors be fully identified with the social work profession and committed to its values and ethics. *All primary field instructors must have a Masters in Social Work degree from a CSWE-accredited program and two years of supervised post-masters experience. It is preferable that field instructors are licensed at the highest level for the state in which they practice.*

Interest and ability in supervising, conceptualizing various theoretical perspectives and stimulating students' critical thinking skills are all essential qualities for field instructors. The field instructor is expected to keep abreast of current content and trends in social work practice. The field instructor must be objective in evaluating the student's performance and be able to collaborate with the assigned faculty field liaison, particularly when difficulties arise.

Field instructors should be grounded in a broad social work perspective and sensitive to issues of diversity in regard to race, ethnicity, culture and sexual orientation. The School requests field instructors who have knowledge and skill in several methods or modalities such as family treatment, group work and advocacy. In addition, field instructors should be able to refer students to other professionals,

readings or consultants regarding modalities with which they are not familiar. Field instructors should be familiar with and able to teach the various roles utilized by clinical social workers. They should also be aware of the range of fields of social work practice to enhance the student's broader training and to help them develop skill in accessing other services for their clients.

Field instructors (and other agency staff as appropriate) are expected to teach direct (micro) service to individual clients, couples, families and groups, and to teach skills to intervene on their behalf with larger systems and organizations. Depending on setting and client needs, students are expected to learn several of the following skills: advocacy, outreach, negotiating and coordinating services, administration, consultation, small program planning and policy development.

The agency and field instructor are expected to provide an adequate and varied number of clients for the field placement. The instructor ensures that the student be incorporated into the agency system and helped to learn its philosophy, mission, place in the community, practices and procedures. The School relies on field instructors to keep the field liaison informed about their own or student absences or any other possible disruption in the learning process.

Other expectations for field instructors include the following:

- Foundation students are to receive one hour of individual supervision per week with their primary field instructor.
- Advanced students are required to receive one hour of individual supervision per week with their primary field instructor. In addition, students are encouraged to participate in additional group of supplemental supervision provided by another masters' level clinician.
- Field instructors should allot additional time to read and comment on process recordings and other reports, plan informal conferences and consult with the field liaison and other School representatives as needed.
- New field instructors who have not previously supervised an MSW intern are required to complete the *Virtual Guide to Field Education for Students and Field Instructors*. This course is located on 2SW, the Simmons Learning Management System (<https://2sw.socialwork.simmons.edu/local/login>). This is optional for field instructors with previous supervisory experience. Those who complete the course and obtain a score of at least 80% on the accompanying quiz will receive five free CEUs. Unit 2 (on process recordings) and unit 4 (on completing the learning plan and evaluation) of the *Virtual Guide* are recommended for **all** field instructors.
- The primary field instructor, in collaboration with the student, will complete a learning plan detailing learning goals and responsibilities.
- Field instructors must collaborate with students to complete one written evaluation of student performance for each placement term.
- Field instructors should assist interns in securing adequate office space and equipment to accommodate students, including privacy for interviewing clients.

MUTUAL RESPONSIBILITIES OF THE SCHOOL, AGENCY, AND STUDENT

Providing high quality education of students for social work practice is the responsibility of the School, the affiliated training site, the field instructor and the student. It is essential that each party collaborate fully in achieving the goal of preparing graduates for the profession. The following statements are intended to clarify these responsibilities and expectations and enhance our mutual efforts to achieve these goals.

Responsibilities of the School to the Agency

- The School will affiliate with the training site following a mutual exploration of the School and agency missions, expectations and commitment to work together in the field preparation of students.
- The School will assign a field liaison to the student and agency. The field liaison will assist in planning field curriculum, provide consultation to the field instructor and assign a grade for field education.
- The field liaison will maintain good communication with the agency and field instructor and will visit (virtually) the placement at least once each semester and more often if concerns arise.
- The Director of Field Education will be available to consult, plan, problem solve and discuss issues related to specific students or general training issues.
- The School will provide the student's resume prior to the interview for placement.
- Agency staff will interview the student as part of the selection process.
- The School, in consultation with the agency, will work together to problem solve students' difficulties. The School may consider whether a student should be transferred to another setting.
- The School will endeavor to keep the agency informed about its policies, aims, curriculum content and administrative changes.
- The School will provide the agency with a copy of its standard affiliation agreement signed by the associate provost. *It is the responsibility of the agency to sign the affiliation agreement and return it to the School.* If the agency provides their own affiliation agreement, before being signed it will be reviewed by the Director of Field Education, the General Counsel, and the Associate Provost.

Responsibilities of the Field Practicum Agency

Please refer to the section "*Field Placement Site Criteria*" (p. U18) and "*Criteria for Selection of Field Instructor/Supervisor*" (p. 9).

Responsibilities of Student to the Agency

The student's dual role of trainee and staff member carries special privileges and responsibilities. Students, as professional representatives of the agency, are expected to identify with the goals and values of the agency and to learn and carry out its policies and procedures. It is also the responsibility of the student to learn the community resources as well as the agency's function in the total service delivery. This School strongly supports the following position statement by the Massachusetts Chapter, National Association of Social Workers:

In accordance with the Patient's Bill of Rights (Chapter 214), NASW recommends that social work students identify themselves as trainees/ students/interns to patients/clients either verbally or through use of name tags except in emergency situations where it is clinically contraindicated as determined by student and instructor. Student status should be clearly designated in signing notes in the record.

Health Insurance Policy

All students are expected to have health insurance and are responsible for obtaining their own health insurance coverage. Many affiliated agencies in which Simmons students are assigned to complete field placements expect students to maintain health insurance coverage throughout their placement. At this time, Simmons College does not offer a student health insurance plan. For students who do not currently have health insurance coverage, see The Student Policy Handbook for a list of available options.

Background Checks

Background checks are required by many placement agencies. The School encourages agencies to initiate the process of requesting a background check as soon as possible. Students are urged to include anything that might be discovered in a background check on their intake form so that an appropriate placement plan can be made. Students may incur additional costs including background checks, immunizations or other agency requirements.

Supervision

Students are expected to prepare for and participate in supervisory conferences and to bring to the attention of the field instructor any obstacles they see as interfering with the learning process. Students and instructors are encouraged to consult with the field liaison as needed.

Record Keeping

In addition to completing required process recordings each week, students are responsible for meeting general agency documentation requirements (e.g., intake assessments, chart notes, periodic summaries, termination and transfer summaries). For agencies, documentation is crucial and mandatory part of the accountability process. Student documentation should be kept up-to-date so that appropriate service may be provided to clients when circumstances such as illness or vacations take students away from their placements temporarily.

Confidentiality

All social workers are required to adhere to HIPAA (Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act of 1996, Public Law 104-191) regulations regarding the privacy of client information outside the agency setting. Unless you have the client's written permission, confidentiality must be strictly maintained when disclosing, discussing or writing about clients in the classroom or in assignments or process recordings. **Care should be taken to disguise identifying information on process recordings and assessments seen by field liaisons or used in class assignments in accordance with HIPAA regulations.** Simmons recommends that a designated agency contact review agency confidentiality and informed consent policies with social work interns.

Other Student Responsibilities and Rights

Students and field liaisons are expected to be in contact at regular intervals during the two placement terms to discuss both field and academic course work. This includes:

- A virtual or phone introductory meeting.
- Discussions, as needed, about concerns or problems in field placement or academic course work as it pertains to field education.
- Assessing student learning needs for advanced placement (for foundation students).
- An optional meeting to review post-graduation plans (for advanced students).

SAFETY POLICIES AND PROCEDURES

The SW@Simmons Field Education Department has adopted the following policy and procedures regarding the safety of SW@Simmons student interns in the field. This policy has been created to recognize that violence in the lives of clients can create potential dangers to professional social workers and students engaged in the study of the profession. We believe issues of safety are relevant in all communities and settings. We urge SW@Simmons students to become familiar with this policy regardless of the location of their internship placement.

Policy

- The School of Social Work is responsible for providing all students and field liaisons with general written information about safety in field placement.
- SW@Simmons expects each agency to be responsible for orienting student interns to the safety policies and procedures of that agency and setting. Such orientation should include, but not be limited to, discussion of safety issues in the community, within the agency building(s), with particular clients prone to violent behavior, and about clients who may be sharing living quarters with persons prone to violent behavior, to the extent that such information is known. Security of personal belongings of the SW@Simmons intern while at the agency should also be covered. Procedures for the student(s) to follow in the event of a safety or security problem should be reviewed at the beginning of the placement with ample opportunity for questions and discussion as needed. SW@Simmons students should not be required to engage or to remain in assignments or at placements in which they feel physically at risk. SW@Simmons urges all agencies to make the same accommodations to ensure students' safety as they make for their own agency staff and in some situations the agency may need to make even greater accommodation for a student. If a student's concerns about safety interfere in whole or in part with the learning process, the field liaison should be contacted by the field instructor to facilitate prompt exploration of the concerns and to seek a mutually satisfying resolution.

Procedures

- If an incident occurs in which a student is personally threatened or hurt, it is the student's responsibility to notify the field instructor immediately. The field instructor, agency contact person, or agency director should then contact the Director of Field Education immediately to discuss what actions the agency and Simmons SSW should take to ensure the student's physical and emotional well-being in the wake of the incident and on a going-forward basis.
- The Director of Field Education will document the incident, the steps taken to address it, and will meet with the student and faculty field liaison to assess the student's readiness to return to the field and any other issues relevant to the situation. The Director of Field Education may alert the Dean or Associate Dean of the SSW about incidents and concerns on an as-needed basis.

Safety Guidelines for Students in the Field

- **Agency Protocol**
 - It is important for students to know the agency's safety and security protocol for office and home visits with clients at the start of the placement. If the agency does not have safety and security policies and/or procedures, the field instructor and student should review and discuss any issues related to safety and security in the setting.

SW@Simmons students are urged to bring their questions and concerns to the field instructor. Regular communication, particularly about safety concerns, is strongly encouraged.

- The following are guidelines and suggestions that may be helpful to students, field instructors and field liaisons as they consider the particular safety issues in their settings. Specific steps taken by students or agency personnel will obviously be determined by the individual situation, the nature of the setting, etc.

- **Security of Belongings**
 - All students in the field are expected to have a secure place to keep coats, handbags, cell phones, laptops and other belongings while at placement. It is preferable that the space be one that can be locked, and could be in a desk drawer or filing cabinet. Students should not leave handbags and other personal articles visible and unattended, even in an office with the door closed.
 - Valuables should not be brought to placement settings. Items of value should not be left in cars, and should not be placed out of view just prior to leaving a vehicle. Neither the agency nor Simmons can be responsible for lost, stolen or damaged personal items.

- **Safety Issues Related to Working with Clients**
 - When working with clients, it is important to remember that the treatment process often makes people feel vulnerable and may challenge their usual coping mechanisms. With some people, this can contribute to problems with behavioral control, and can raise issues of safety for the client, the social worker, the student intern and others. We urge all SW@Simmons students to consult with their agency field instructors to prepare adequately for handling of specific situations that are potentially difficult or threatening, such as medical emergencies, suicide or homicide risks, potential abuse of others and the presence of weapons.

- **Safety Guidelines for Office Meetings**
 - If a student will be meeting with a client with whom the student does not feel safe, it is important for the student to discuss the situation promptly and fully with the agency field instructor. Based on the outcome of this discussion, there may be a decision that a student will not see the client or will see the client under specific circumstances or controls. However, if it is decided that a student will see the client, several points should be considered. A client's mental status should be assessed. When considering location of the meeting, it might be helpful to think about what is in the room, whether there is more than one exit and where each person might sit. It may also be helpful to think about whether to include someone else in the meeting. When discussing the time of the appointment, it can be helpful to think about whether or not many people are around at the time being considered for the meeting. It is also important to discuss the plan for backup and assistance in the event that the client becomes agitated. A student should never see a potentially dangerous client alone without someone else in the agency knowing about the client, the appointment time and the location of the appointment. Students should keep field instructors informed about their schedules at the agencies at all times.

- **Safety Guidelines for Travel by Car**
 - When interns are traveling by car to an agency or to home visits, it is advisable for the agency to know the students' destination and the approximate time they will return to the office. Students should remain alert, lock doors, and close windows. Students should carry a fully charged cell phone in the event of an emergency.

- **Safety Guidelines for Travel by Foot or Public Transportation**
 - When traveling by foot or public transportation, students are encouraged not to carry valuables, to the extent possible. Money, license, keys and other essentials might be carried in a pocket. If a handbag carried under the arm is grabbed, it is best to let go of it. It is helpful to dress in comfortable clothes that are loose fitting, and to wear sturdy, flat walking shoes. It is also helpful to be alert, and to walk with a purpose, as if one has a clear destination. One should be aware of people in the immediate area.

- **Safety Guidelines for Home Visits**
 - It is important for students to familiarize themselves with the client's file prior to a home visit. If there is a question about safety concerns, plan accordingly with field instructors. It might be decided that meeting at a neutral place or going with another worker is the appropriate plan. Someone at the agency should always know the student's itinerary. It is helpful to stay alert and to think about what to wear, which room to meet in and where to sit. Students may ask clients to place pets in a separate room if there is a perceived safety risk. If a student feels threatened at any point during the interview, it is advised to err on the side of caution and terminate the visit. If a student is unwelcome in a client's home, the student should respond accordingly and leave the area. If a student hears an argument from inside the house or apartment, the student may decide to reschedule the visit or call to assess the situation before entering. A student should never see a potentially dangerous client alone. A cell phone is essential for students conducting home visits.

- **Health Safety**
 - Students should be alerted to the existence of biohazards. They should receive training and information about how to protect themselves from infectious diseases and other potential health hazards.

Post-Incident Protocol

- If an incident occurs in which a student is personally threatened or hurt, the field instructor, agency contact person, or agency director should contact the Director of Field Education immediately to discuss what actions the agency and School should take to ensure the student's physical and emotional well-being.
- The Director of Field Education will document the incident and the steps taken to address it, and will meet with the student and field liaison. Together, they will assess the student's readiness to return to the field and any other issues relevant to the situation.

Simmons SSW thanks Boston University School of Social Work for sharing their safety policy that was used in developing the SSW safety policy.

POLICY REGARDING INTERN USE OF VEHICLES FOR AGENCY BUSINESS

Field placement agencies occasionally require or request that student interns use vehicles in the performance of their internship activities, which may include transporting clients. This may involve student interns driving their own vehicles or agency vehicles; or student interns as passengers in an agency vehicle or vehicle owned by an agency staff member. The use of a vehicle for purposes of carrying out internship activities is acceptable in some internship situations, provided that adequate safeguards are in place to manage the potential risks. Documentation outlining each party's responsibilities should also be in place. This policy is intended to assist in identifying the safeguards that are minimally necessary; and to allocate responsibilities among the parties appropriately.

Responsibilities of the School of Social Work Field Education Department: Inform students that they should inquire prior to the placement about agency expectations regarding use of agency and/or personal vehicles for placement purposes. They should address vehicle use and related issues of safety, insurance coverage, and liability in the field education agreement.

Responsibilities of Field Placement Agencies

Have a vehicle safety policy which addresses the use of agency and student personal vehicles to conduct agency business (including transporting clients) with specific attention to:

- Driver eligibility (including driving record checks)
- Liability insurance coverage, including the type of insurance coverage students are expected to have on their own vehicles
- Evidence of agency insurance coverage for use of agency vehicles
- Safe driving tips
- Procedure for reporting to designated agency personnel any incidents including, but not limited to, accidents, moving violations, disruptive or concerning client behavior while being transported
- Procedures for assessing, always in consultation with an agency supervisor or other qualified staff person, appropriateness of clients to be transported (including an assessment procedure to determine if an additional staff person should be in the vehicle)
- Steps to take in the event that a client evidences concerning behavior during transport
- Provision of the agency vehicle safety policy and evidence of liability insurance to the Field Education Department
- Student interns should receive a copy of the agency's vehicle safety policy, availability of appropriate safety training, and supervision with regard to safely transporting clients

Responsibilities of Student:

- Have automobile insurance coverage for their personal vehicle as required by the agency and provide evidence of this to the agency
- Agree to a driving record check by agency or School if required by agency
- Report to designated agency personnel any incidents, including but not limited to accidents, moving violations, concerning client behavior, that occurred during transport

Simmons SSW thanks Boston University School of Social Work for sharing their vehicular safety policy that was used in developing this policy.

SOCIAL MEDIA GUIDELINES

Social media communities, such as Facebook, Twitter, LinkedIn, YouTube, Google +, Pinterest and various blog sites are just a few examples of exciting ways to connect with others and share information. However, the rapid growth of social media communication tools and their ease of accessibility can also have unintended and potentially damaging consequences to users if basic guidelines are ignored. Social Work professionals, including students, are expected to adhere to social work values, ethics and engage in professional conduct as outlined in the NASW Code of Ethics when using social media communication tools, whether they are using a personal site or an agency site. Common issues that social workers need to understand and manage when utilizing social media include, but are not limited to, privacy and confidentiality (Section 1.07), conflicts of interest and dual relationships (Section 1.06), and informed consent (Section 1.03) in our relationships with clients, colleagues and in our practice settings. Utilizing social media communication tools as a social work professional requires ongoing attention to these ethical challenges.

Professional vs. Personal Use of Social Media

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 versus using these sites to maintain contact with friends and family. We must be cognizant that the legal, ethical and clinical responsibilities we have as professionals does not cease when we leave the agency nor is it confined to the physical setting of an office. Our ethical obligations extend to the virtual world of the Internet and include the use of social media communication tools whether we use them professionally or personally.

Dual And Multiple Relationships

The NASW Code of Ethics states, “social workers should not engage in dual or multiple relationships...in which there is a risk of exploitation or potential harm to the client...and social workers...are responsible for setting clear, appropriate, and culturally sensitive boundaries” (1.06c) The Code goes on to note that “dual or multiple relationships can occur simultaneously or consecutively” (1.06c). Our ethical obligations to clients, colleagues and other professionals are no different when using Facebook, Twitter or other social media channels as well as communications via our cell phones such as texting or email.

Facebook

Managing friend requests and maintaining privacy settings is critical regardless of whether you use social media for personal and/or professional reasons. Allowing clients, former clients, or others, such as supervisors (and field instructors) in your professional circle to cross into your personal life may complicate and blur your professional boundaries. This is particularly tricky when managing Facebook accounts. As a professional, you must fully consider the extent of your privacy settings, how you will manage friend requests, your level of self-disclosure and how you will monitor wall posts or other interactions on your site. Be aware that if you do not employ any privacy settings on your social media site, your profile is public and anyone can see what is on your page. Additionally, people can see when you are tagged in photos, view comments made by others, note your status updates and see who you’ve friended.

All professionals must evaluate the scope of their social media connections. Since this is still an emerging professional topic, some professionals may be cautious and guarded in their use of social media while

others may be more open and exposed. It is your responsibility as a professional social worker to abide by the Code of Ethics, including your virtual communications and use social work values and principles to guide your interactions.

Text, Email and Twitter

With the proliferation of handheld devices such as smart phones, iPhones and Blackberries, accessing the Internet and connecting with others is literally in the palm of our hands. Text, 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. For example, if you text a client, is the text considered protected information under HIPAA? Are you ethically, legally and/or clinically bound to respond to a client who texts you after hours? How will you maintain the privacy and confidentiality of these digital communications? Should texts be included in the clinical record? If you maintain a public Twitter profile, anyone can read or reply to what you post. Are you prepared to monitor and respond to questions and comments from clients who follow your Tweets?

These and many other issues are emerging as professionals learn to navigate new and evolving technologies. As such, it is important to consider the security, privacy and confidentiality of all communication methods; adhere to agency policies, and when in doubt, seek consultation and supervision before embarking into unfamiliar or uncertain areas. Below are some general guidelines for the use of social media communication tools.

Maintaining Confidentiality and Privacy

There is a huge potential for unintentionally sharing protected information when using social media so always use good ethical judgment. Be cautious when you post information about your agency (field placement and classroom work, if you are a student) or agency staff. Do not post confidential or private information about clients or colleagues. Be aware of agency policies regarding the use of social media and scrupulously follow agency policies. Do not discuss a client, patient or situation on a social media site even if you are disguising the information. In general, do not post anything about yourself that you would not want on the front page of a newspaper. It is incredibly difficult to remove anything from the Internet so be sure that you are certain about what you post, tag, tweet or follow.

Respect Time and Property

Before using social media communication tools on behalf of your agency, be sure to seek approval of any messages or posts. Be careful not to endorse or promote a product, cause or position without prior approval. If you have personal sites, maintain them on your own time using your own computer. (If you are a student, your time in field and the resources provided to you in your field placement are to be used for field related matters.)

Be Accurate and Authentic

Do not pretend to be someone else or hide your identity when using social media. Be clear if you are sharing personal views and use good judgment regarding sensitive issues. Verify information before you post it, correct mistakes in a timely manner and be aware of legal liability issues such as copyright infringement, defamation and posting proprietary information.

Protect Your Identity

Understand how privacy settings work and review them regularly. Refrain from providing too much personal information such as your home address or full birth date. Don't post in advance when you plan

to be on vacation or away from home for an extended period of time

- Activate privacy settings on all social media (i.e., Google Hangouts, Google+, Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, Pinterest, Snapchat, Tumblr, LinkedIn etc.
- Do not interact with or allow clients to create, share or exchange information, ideas and pictures/videos in virtual communities and networks (i.e., “friending,”).

Think Before You Post

There is no such thing as privacy on a social media site or the Internet. Comments can be forwarded or copied, posts and pictures can be found on search engines years after the initial publication and archival systems save information even after you delete it. Consider the image you are portraying by the photos and comments you post. Are you projecting the image you want future employers (and faculty members), advisors and friends to know you by? What you write or post is ultimately your responsibility so be thoughtful about your online communication. Be certain that what you post today will not come back to haunt you a few years from now.

Do No Harm

Social media channels provide an excellent means to build our community, however, as you navigate these channels, do no harm to yourself, your field site, your clients, the School of Social Work or to the social work profession in the process.

Failure of students to adhere to these standards, or failure to maintain a client’s confidentiality in any form, including the use of social media, will result in a disciplinary process, which may include dismissal from the MSW program. Please refer to the MSW Policy Manual for more information on this topic.

Simmons SSW thanks UNC-CH School of Social Work for sharing their Guidelines for the Use of Social Media that was used in developing the SSW social media guidelines.

FIELD PLACEMENT HOURS

The MSW degree requirements cannot be met without the successful completion of two internships. During the two terms of the foundation placement, students complete a minimum of 448 hours in the field. During the two advanced placement terms, students complete a minimum of 672 hours in their field placements. MSW program students are required to complete, in total, a minimum of 1120 hours of field education in their internships. Regular attendance of two days a week (or 16 hours per week) in the field is required of students during the two foundation terms, and three days a week (24 hours per week) during the two advanced placement terms. There is some flexibility in planning the structure of field placements (starting and ending dates, hours per day) based on student and/or agency needs as long as the time requirement is met. Students are expected to adhere to the same workday hours as professional staff unless individual arrangements have been made and approved by the agency and SW@Simmons Field Education Department. The School does not consider occasional overtime work as deductible from overall field hours, nor can overtime be accrued or taken as vacation days. However, if an agency has evening appointments or regular early morning hours that the student attends, the schedule should be adjusted accordingly. When students work extra days, holidays, or school vacation days, it is expected that they be granted compensatory time. Arrangements for compensatory time should be made with the field instructor.

Scheduling

Students must be available to complete 16 hours a week for the foundation placement and 24 hours a week for the advanced placement to successfully complete field practicum. Students may need to add hours to their weekly schedule to make up for missed time due to late start or absences. Foundation year students can do no more than 24 hours per week; advanced year students can be in placement up to 32 hours per week. Students are required to adjust their schedule to be in accordance with the field instructor's schedule in order to complete these field practicum hours. Additionally, students must be available for placement Monday through Friday 8 am to 8 pm to align with agency activities. If a student wants to adjust their schedule after the start of the placement, they must complete a change in hours form and gain approval from their field instructor and field liaison. Students who are absent for 20% of the total required hours without approval may fail the course.

Students Placed in Schools and Child-Focused Settings

Placement schedules in schools and child-focused settings often differ from the standard placement calendar. Students placed in schools should plan to modify their schedules to accommodate agency hours and vacations. This may require students to remain in placement beyond the end of the term in order to accommodate the school calendar.

Absences

Foundation and advanced year students may use up to five excused absences (40 hours) due to agency closings, holidays, illnesses or inclement weather without being required to make up this time. Any days beyond the permitted five days must be made up. If an emergency arises necessitating absence from the field, the student is responsible for immediately notifying the field instructor and taking responsibility for postponing appointments or scheduled meetings. Students are to record their absences on the field log. In case of prolonged absence, the student and field instructor should notify the field liaison so that a plan can be made to meet the needs of the agency, the student's situation and the School's educational requirements.

Students are generally expected to attend each of their field placements for 28 weeks so there is an opportunity to integrate learning from their clinical practice course throughout the placement experience. In rare circumstances where students are required to be out of field for more than the allowed five days, students must receive approval from the Field Education Department and their placement agency and make plans to make up the time missed. Students are not permitted to be absent for more than six weeks as this compromises the educational value of the course. In such cases students will need to adjust their plan of study and may be required to withdraw from the field education course and corresponding clinical practice class. In some cases, this may necessitate taking a leave of absence from the program.

Conferences

Students are permitted to attend training events and conferences if the faculty and agency agree that attendance is directly related to or will enhance learning or client service. Such requests should be limited to 3 days per year.

Religious Holidays

Students who are unable, because of their religious beliefs, to attend classes or to participate in an examination, class or work requirement on a particular day shall be excused from the class, study or work requirement and shall be provided with an opportunity to make up the examination, study or work they may have missed. It has been the policy of the Simmons School of Social Work to respect the right of all students, faculty and staff to celebrate those religious holidays that they deem important. This is in keeping with our commitment to the development of a diverse community. Plans to observe religious holidays not observed by the field placement agency should be discussed with the field instructor. Students will be expected to make up the missed time at a later date.

A student who plans to miss field placement as a consequence of religious observances must make arrangements for the absence from field placement, prior to the absence, with the agency and field instructor. Students may use an excused absence day to cover a day missed for religious observance as long as these days have not been used up.

STUDENT LEARNING IN FIELD EDUCATION

The Council on Social Work Education (CSWE) has delineated 9 core competencies for all social work students. Observable behaviors provide opportunities to demonstrate ability with each competency. Evaluation of field performance will be based on students' ability to achieve the observable behaviors. At the completion of the MSW program students are expected to achieve competence through their field education and coursework in the following areas.

Foundation Year Competencies and Observable Behaviors

Competency 1: Demonstrate Ethical and Professional Behavior

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

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

Competency 2: Engage Diversity and Difference in Practice

Social workers understand how diversity and difference characterize and shape the human experience and are critical to the formation of identity. The dimensions of diversity are understood as the intersectionality of multiple factors including but not limited to age, class, color, culture, disability and ability, ethnicity, gender, gender identity and expression, immigration status, marital status, political ideology, race, religion/spirituality, sex, sexual orientation, and tribal sovereign status. Social workers understand that, as a consequence of difference, a person's life experiences may include oppression, poverty, marginalization, and alienation as well as privilege, power, and acclaim. Social workers also understand the forms and mechanisms of oppression and discrimination and recognize the extent to which a culture's structures and values, including social, economic, political, and cultural exclusions, may oppress, marginalize, alienate, or create privilege and power. Social workers:

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Competency 5: Engage in Policy Practice

Social workers understand that human rights and social justice, as well as social welfare and services, are mediated by policy and its implementation at the federal, state, and local levels. Social workers understand the history and current structures of social policies and services, the role of policy in service delivery, and the role of practice in policy development. Social workers understand their role in policy development and implementation within their practice settings at the micro, mezzo, and macro levels and they actively engage in policy practice to effect change within those settings. Social workers

recognize and understand the historical, social, cultural, economic, organizational, environmental, and global influences that affect social policy. They are also knowledgeable about policy formulation, analysis, implementation, and evaluation. Social workers:

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

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

Social workers understand that engagement is an ongoing component of the dynamic and interactive process of social work practice with, and on behalf of, diverse individuals, families, groups, organizations, and communities. Social workers value the importance of human relationships. Social workers understand theories of human behavior and the social environment, and critically evaluate and apply this knowledge to facilitate engagement with clients and constituencies, including individuals, families, groups, organizations, and communities. Social workers understand strategies to engage diverse clients and constituencies to advance practice effectiveness. Social workers understand how their personal experiences and affective reactions may impact their ability to effectively engage with diverse clients and constituencies. Social workers value principles of relationship-building and inter-professional collaboration to facilitate engagement with clients, constituencies, and other professionals as appropriate. Social workers:

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

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

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

- Collect and organize data, and apply critical thinking to interpret information from clients and constituencies
- Apply knowledge of human behavior and the social environment, person-in-environment, and

other multidisciplinary theoretical frameworks in the analysis of assessment data from clients and constituencies

- Develop mutually agreed-on intervention goals and objectives based on the critical assessment of strengths, needs, and challenges within clients and constituencies
- Select appropriate intervention strategies based on the assessment, research knowledge, and values and preferences of clients and constituencies

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

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

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

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

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

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

Advanced Year Competencies and Observable Behaviors

Competency 1: Demonstrate Ethical and Professional Behavior

Clinical social workers consistently demonstrate the key values of the social work profession; they have knowledge of, and critically apply to practice, the laws, policies, and regulations that are pertinent to clinical practice. Clinical social workers recognize ethical dilemmas and apply ethical decision-making frameworks to reach reasoned and principled decisions. They manage their emotional reactions, communication, behavior, and boundaries in all professional interactions. Clinical social workers understand the importance of interprofessional practice and are able to establish effective collaboration with others. They apply ethical and legal frameworks to evaluate the effective use of social media and emerging technology in clinical practice. Social workers:

- Seek and utilize feedback in supervision to identify and deepen areas of growth and guide professional development in clinical practice (including the use of technology)
- Anticipate, identify, and attend to ethical tensions and apply a framework rooted in the NASW Code of Ethics to guide decisions in clinical practice
- Understand and manage one's own emotional responses in the best interest of the client system
- Consistently demonstrate integrity and professional behavior in: appearance, communication (oral and written), and reliability in accordance with standards identified by the SSW, field agency, and professional codes
- Use values and frameworks of the profession to effectively engage in interprofessional partnerships and collaborations

Competency 2: Engage Diversity and Difference in Practice

Clinical social workers apply knowledge of the dimensions of diversity, difference, discrimination, marginalization, social and economic exclusion, and oppression to the engagement, assessment, intervention and evaluation phases of clinical practice. Clinical social workers understand the link between social factors and well-being and how pervasive inequities associated with gender, sexual orientation, disability, race, ethnicity, immigration status, poverty, exposure to violence, inadequate housing, and transportation impact overall well-being and access to effective services. Clinical social workers utilize intersectional analysis across multiple practice settings, paying particular attention to racism and its historical context in this country. They initiate and engage in professional interactions with cultural humility, and address oppression at the individual, community, and policy levels. Clinical social workers use and apply research knowledge of diverse populations to enhance client well-being and to work effectively with diverse populations. Social workers:

- Consistently identify the impact of inequities, diversity, difference, and oppression upon life Experiences and the provision of services
- Apply the skills associated with cultural humility, and the knowledge of social inequality to engagement, assessment, intervention, and evaluation at all levels of clinical practice
- Use process recordings and supervision to examine and enhance self-awareness of one's own attitudes and beliefs regarding stereotyping, bias and power-imbalances in practice client systems

- Commit to raising their social consciousness in the interest of challenging the structures of racism and other forms of oppression

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

Using knowledge and frameworks of the dynamics of institutional racism, oppression, and discrimination, and their intersections, clinical social workers develop and design strategies to promote human rights, and social, economic, and environmental justice. Clinical social workers understand the critical use of theories and evidence in designing and developing social action strategies. Utilizing the National Association of Social Workers Code of Ethics and the United Nations Universal Declaration of Human Rights, students analyze how these dynamics manifest on the local, state, national, and global level and violate basic human rights of fairness, equity, equality, and social justice. Clinical social workers take action to advance human rights and social, economic, and environmental justice individually, collaboratively, and in coalitions. They develop their capacities to move into political arenas in a way that develops their own self-empowerment as change agents and allies of client systems. Of significant importance is the development of capacities to help others to empower themselves. Their practice is bolstered by mastery of advocacy and social action strategies that can then be incorporated into practice behaviors and skills, and applied at the micro, mezzo, and/or macro level of practice to effect change. Social workers:

- Identify and analyze social justice issues impacting the provision of client services
- Participate in agency or community level policy practice or social action strategies to promote human rights and social, economic, and environmental justice policies and services
- Consistently identify and practice targeted advocacy strategies and serve to improve client outcomes at applicable levels

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

Clinical social workers integrate research into practice and consider how to evaluate issues drawn from their current practice. They critically review the empirical evidence for clinical interventions. They acquire skills to perform evidence-informed interventions. Clinical social workers assess ethical implications of practicing and implementing evidence-informed practices. They critically assess, identify, and work to address gaps in evidence-informed practice, policy and service delivery to improve client outcomes, the service delivery process, and program outcomes. Social workers:

- Locate, identify, and select evidence-informed practices
- Demonstrate evidence-informed practice in one's own direct clinical practice and system of service delivery
- Critically consider practice and organizational context to identify priority for process, outcome evaluation and/or needs assessment in supervision and discussion with field agency staff
- Formulate an evaluation plan designed to improve client outcomes, and/or programmatic efforts, with attention to potential areas for social action

Competency 5: Engage in Policy Practice

Clinical social workers develop specialized knowledge about social welfare and economic policies at the agency, organizational, community, local, state, national, or international levels that have impacts on the clients they serve, and on the larger society or global community in terms of availability of resources, service delivery, legal protections, and income supports. They understand the steps of policy practice necessary to improve the delivery of and access to social welfare services and benefits for individuals and families. They analyze the effects of policies on marginalized and oppressed groups within a social, economic, and environmental justice context. They understand and utilize research to inform and evaluate social policy. They articulate outcomes they would like to achieve that would be congruent with developing and implementing new policies, blocking harmful policies, modifying existing policies, to do so, they must draw from specific strategies for policy change, such as advocating, educating, testifying, mobilizing, monitoring, collaborating, and becoming active in coalitions. These activities can have an impact on the client, agency, organization, community, larger society, and/or the global community. Social workers:

- Evaluate social welfare or economic policies that are relevant to clinical social work practice and assess the impact on individuals or families
- Analyze advocacy needs within a clinical setting and propose a plan for implementation.
- Articulate a deeper understanding of how social welfare policies can either improve or negatively impact client well-being
- Develop a plan to apply skills in policy practice with aim of achieving policy change

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

Clinical social workers have the ability to demonstrate genuineness, empathy, and respect in order to form trustworthy and collaborative alliances with client systems, as the helping relationship evolves over time. Furthermore, clinical social workers use these skills to engage with client systems that have been disenfranchised and marginalized as a result of racism, sexism, heterosexism, ableism, classism, homophobia, poverty, and other forms of structural and institutional oppression. Clinical social workers develop an awareness of professional use of self and an ability to critically self-reflect in order to form more client-centered relationships. They demonstrate an appreciation for the unique roles, cultures, and interpersonal dynamics of individual's families and groups and use this awareness to inform the creation of client-centered relationships. They use psychodynamic, behavioral, social constructionist, and trans-theoretical theories to inform the engagement process over the course of the helping relationship with diverse client systems. This approach is commensurate the core values of the profession. Social workers:

- Consistently demonstrate active listening, attending, and reflecting skills
- Consistently demonstrate the patience that is required to build trust
- Create a collaborative working alliance before moving into problem solving
- Identify and utilize one's own social identity to enhance the engagement process
- Seek supervision and mentorship to enhance effective use of self in practice
- Use the six core values (social justice, importance of human relationships, dignity and worth of the person, integrity, competence and service) of the social work profession to guide decision-making regarding approaches to engagement

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

Clinical social workers use genuineness, empathy, and respect throughout the assessment process. They demonstrate attention to matters of safety and the immediate well-being of client systems. They use an ecologically informed approach to consider the impact of disenfranchisement and marginalization on client systems and their current functioning. They demonstrate an awareness of the ways in which personal bias and social identities may influence the assessment process. They demonstrate a commitment to social work ethics and values when examining the nature of problems. Clinical social workers demonstrate an enhanced ability to use psychodynamic, behavioral, social constructionist and reciprocal interactionist theories to inform the assessment process over the course of the helping relationship with diverse client systems. This approach is commensurate with the core values of the profession. Social workers:

- Demonstrate the effective use of a mental status exam in the appropriate context
- Demonstrate the use of evidence-based assessment tools to assess for safety and well-being
- Demonstrate confidence in the ability to explore all domains of client systems' life and functioning
- Demonstrate the capacity to develop an evidence-informed hypothesis of client functioning based on social work paradigms
- Consistently practice the skills of empathy, attending, and affective exploration to elicit a client-centered picture of the strengths and challenges with which the client system interacts
- Demonstrate an ability to identify the ways in which their own biases and social identities impact the assessment process
- Assess client systems from a client-centered perspective, which honors life experiences, personal beliefs, current functioning, strengths and challenges, and barriers related to oppression and marginalization
- Demonstrate knowledge of distinct practice approaches in formulations
- Write a clear and concise assessment that reflects multi-dimensional understanding of the client/client system

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

Clinical social workers use empathy, genuineness, and respect throughout the intervention process. They have the ability to attend to matters of safety and immediate well-being among client systems throughout the intervention process. They use an ecologically informed approach that considers the impact of disenfranchisement and marginalization on client systems and their current functioning when co-creating interventions with client systems. They demonstrate an awareness of the impact of personal bias and social identities and the ways they influence the intervention process. They demonstrate a commitment to social work ethics and values by considering the ever-changing nature of assessment of client risks and protective factors throughout the intervention process. They demonstrate an enhanced ability to use distinct, client-centered interventions from various practice approaches that are consistent with the values of the profession. They understand the theoretical perspectives, empirical foundations, and treatment strategies associated with intervention methods they employ and can describe the strengths and limitations of those methods. Social workers:

- Demonstrate the effective use of a mental status exam in the appropriate context throughout the intervention process

- Demonstrate the skills necessary to effectively manage and attend to crises
- Use evidence-informed practices for interventions that are consistent with client systems' needs, strengths, and challenges
- Use information established during the engagement phase, and learned in the assessment phase, to inform interventions
- Determine ongoing treatment needs, access resources, and facilitate referrals as needed
- Remain attentive to eco-systemic factors that influence the treatment planning process
- Consistently re-evaluate engagement, assessment, and treatment planning over the course of treatment
- Engage client systems in a process that honors their thoughts, values, and beliefs with regard to developing mutually agreed upon approaches to treatment
- Collaboratively create treatment plans with client systems that accurately reflect needs, challenges, strengths and eco-system factors
- Demonstrate awareness of the ways in which use of self, biases, and one's own social identities create a lens through which client systems are interpreted
- Demonstrate an understanding of the ways in which oppression, structural and systemic challenges pose barriers to treatment planning
- Use supervision to explore challenges in the intervention and treatment planning process

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

Clinical social workers understand that evaluation practice is an essential and ongoing component of all social work practice with, and on behalf of diverse individuals, groups, families, and organizations. Clinical social workers recognize the importance of critically evaluating evidence-informed clinical practice and programs while considering research evidence, practice wisdom and client values and preferences. Clinical social workers apply qualitative and quantitative methods of evaluation to understand clinical needs, clients' experience of service, outcomes and practice effectiveness. Clinical social workers critically analyze the effectiveness and limitations of outcome measures, including standardized assessments and client feedback. Social workers:

- Create client-driven service plans that include evidence-informed, measurable outcomes
- Use the evaluation process to enhance practice in the agency setting
- Use evaluation findings to modify client interventions or improve program level effectiveness

FIELD EDUCATION CURRICULUM

Curriculum Expectations of the Field Placement

At SW@Simmons the field education courses and clinical practice classes were designed to be completed concurrently so that students have the opportunity to draw from their direct practice experience in the practice course and integrate practice course material in direct practice. The School expects that the student assignments will be as varied as the agency's service requirements permit. The selection of clients and other assignments will be determined primarily by their educational value for the student. At the beginning of the internship the student and field instructor identify goals and objectives and formulate a mutually agreed upon learning plan based on the CSWE competencies. Students will be contacted by their field liaison periodically throughout the placement. This helps the student and field liaison to review clinical work and supervision requirements, and to identify potential problem areas. Students should not wait for their liaison to initiate contact if they have a concern.

Field Seminar

The Virtual Guide for Students and Field Instructors is a practical, six-session seminar on field education that is designed for students entering their first semester of field placement and field instructors to take simultaneously, but not together. For students, asynchronous sessions are accompanied by live sessions led by the field liaison assigned to the students in the course section. This is the coursework for SWO 446a. For field instructors, the seminar is required only for those who are supervising interns for the first time; experienced field instructors are encouraged to take all or part of the seminar to become familiar with SocialWork@Simmons requirements and approach. Field instructors participate in the asynchronous sessions at their convenience; however, it is recommended that they view the first three sessions in the first month students are in field, because the content corresponds to the beginning phase of placement.

The course emphasizes mutual learning through the relationship between student and field instructor. It focuses on the nature and structure of supervision as well as teaching through direct instruction and modeling. Students and field instructors from the on-ground program are interviewed to bring real life experiences to each topic. Students are expected to attend and participate in all live sessions. If a student misses a session, they will be asked to review the asynchronous material and complete a related reflection assignment.

Field Instruction

Learning through supervision is central to the development of practice knowledge and skill. **The School expects one hour per week of individual supervision by a primary MSW field instructor.** The field instructor must hold an MSW degree. *If possible, the MSW should be licensed at the highest level for that state. At the minimum, the MSW must have practiced full-time for at least two years after graduating.*

The field instructor is expected to meet with the student in private, regularly scheduled, minimally interrupted conferences. Process recordings should be reviewed prior to the meeting. Supervision includes teaching content specific to the agency's field of practice, populations, and larger issues of social justice and oppression. Field instructors supervising their first MSW student are required to complete the *Virtual Guide to Field Education for Students and Field Instructors* (located at <https://2sw.socialwork.simmons.edu/local/login>).

The field instructor will ensure the student receives an orientation to agency programs, policies, procedures and social work role expectations. Additionally, an orientation to safety policies and procedures will be provided.

Clinical Experience and other Assignments

Respectful of the wide variation in service requirements in the spectrum of Simmons-affiliated placement agencies, the field liaison works with individual agencies to set expectations for the number and types of field assignments.

In general, the School expects that the students' education will address the broad needs of the agency's population with attention to diversity in race, ethnicity, age, gender, special needs and issues of social justice and oppression. The agency should provide an introduction to the agency system, its place in the larger system of services and the larger social context.

It is expected that two to three clients be available for assignment to students once they complete initial training. Clinical experience and other assignments should increase as the placement progresses. The School expects that student field work assignments will develop steadily to the point where 50 percent of the students' hours in the placement be devoted to direct contact with individuals, groups or families. Community projects and social action efforts reduce these numbers.

Case management and group work are major areas of learning in both placements. In the advanced placement, it is expected that the student will have a core of direct practice, which can include individuals, dyads (parent-child, couples), families, groups and larger systems.

The agency should include the student in staff meetings and in-service training. Appropriate space and materials should be provided. Students should be given time during placement hours to do required agency written work and, when possible, some time for process recordings.

Larger Systems Learning

Social work practice with individuals, families and groups is embedded in an organizational and community context, thus students are expected to have practice opportunities with organizations and communities through a wide array of agency-based experiences. Within the field placement agency these practice opportunities should include: accessing agency services and resources, making referrals, identifying gaps in services and collaboration with other workers and other agency units. Students should also have the opportunity to work on behalf of clients *across* agencies, that is, with other community agencies, institutions and organizations. Depending on a student's field placement this could include collaborative work with a school, court, public defender office, child welfare agency, nursing home, mental health clinic or health clinic.

As determined by each agency setting, students should be active participants on treatment teams, interprofessional teams, committees and task forces. In addition, students are expected to learn about their field placement agency's organizational structure, policies, documentation requirements and confidentiality practices. Students should also be provided opportunities to learn about the community served by the agency and/or the communities where clients reside.

Practice learning related to organizations and communities is reinforced in the learning plan, which delineates the student's learning activities regarding larger systems and interagency work and supervisory responsibility for orienting the student to the agency and community context. Practice learning related to organizations and communities is also amplified in the standard weekly process recording format and the special process recording format for larger systems interventions. In addition, all advanced students complete a required assignment on the organizational context of agency practice, due to the field liaison.

The Learning Plan

In order to plan the learning for each individual student, the School requests that the field instructor and student work together to design a learning plan in which direct client work and other assignments will be determined. The process for developing an educational plan should include a mutual assessment of the student's present level of knowledge and skill. The student's past experience, interests, learning needs and special talents should be taken into consideration. The plan will of course reflect the learning opportunities the agency can offer along with the School's expectations for field curriculum.

The written learning plan should be completed after six weeks of placement and turned into the field liaison on [ALCEA](#): The field liaison will review the plan and approve or suggest changes or additions.

Process Recordings and Portfolio

In addition to agency recordkeeping requirements, the School ***requires*** process recordings as a major learning and teaching tool in a student's field instruction. All students are expected to complete one process recording each week throughout both the foundation and the advanced placements, and to develop and maintain a method of self-reflection and evaluation of practice.

Process recordings enable the field instructor and field liaison to more effectively perform their teaching roles and to evaluate the student's learning needs and progress. Process recordings help the student rethink the interview in preparation for supervision. They help the student integrate theory and knowledge, develop interviewing skills, and the capacity for self-reflection. The interview content is the basis on which the field instructor teaches the elements of social work practice. Attention should be paid to content, process and technique, as well as self-reflection and developing self-awareness and a capacity for self-evaluation. Field liaisons examine some of the student's process recordings prior to each virtual field visit. This facilitates an in depth discussion of student progress and overall performance by field instructor, student, and field liaison.

All students are required to complete one process recording each week. Each process recording should include a segment of interactions with client(s) (verbal and nonverbal) that has a beginning, middle and end. It should be no fewer than five pages in length.

Once each semester, prior to the scheduled virtual field visit, students will submit two process recordings as well as a reflection paper, as outlined in the syllabus, to their field liaison that include the field instructor's feedback. During the field visit, students reflect on learning goals as outlined in each syllabus. A portfolio is due near the end of the term containing a specified number of process recordings. See the course syllabus for the due date and number of process recordings that should be submitted for each term. Failure to submit a complete portfolio by the due date will impact the student's grade in field.

Psychosocial Assessments

During the second term of the foundation placement, students are required to complete a psychosocial assessment assignment for their field course. The purpose of this assignment is to allow students to practice the essential skill of strengths-based assessment and to explore how using a strengths lens impacts their understanding of a client and their work with clients. Students are encouraged to engage in strengths-based assessments, in consultation with agency clinical staff, as a regular part of their practice. It is also expected that field instructors will discuss intervention plans for each client, family or group with their interns regardless of whether a formal plan is required by the agency.

Student Evaluation of Practice

Students' evaluation of their own practice is a critical component of their learning in field education. Each student is expected, in collaboration with the client, to establish clear goals to be achieved during the course of their work together. Students and field instructors will be encouraged by the faculty of the Field Education Department to establish observable goals, and to devise measures by which progress can be evaluated. Students are encouraged to review progress periodically with their clients. At the end of the client contract, the student should evaluate the effectiveness of their interventions integrating learning from supervision and course materials. Advanced students take a required course on *Evaluation in Social Work Practice*, and students are expected to apply concepts from that course to agency programs and outcome measurement policies. At the end of each placement students are also asked to provide the Field Education Department with an evaluation of their field learning experience.

Field Education Check-In

Students will be contacted by their field liaison to review their field activities periodically during their placements. This check-in helps the student and his/her liaison to discuss details related to field learning activities and use of supervision, and to identify potential problem areas. This meeting is intended to support student learning in field placement.

EVALUATION OF STUDENT PROGRESS IN FIELD

The School requires two student evaluations during each placement. Both evaluations are written, following the same format. The evaluations will be completed electronically and will be available on [ALCEA](#):

Evaluations are a collaborative effort of student and field instructor, with the field instructor taking responsibility for the final version submitted to the School after the student has read it and points of difference have been addressed. It is important that evaluations be balanced in presenting strengths, areas for growth and any challenges to enable the student, field instructor and field liaison to know which areas of learning need special attention. Ideally, the evaluation is an evolving process and nothing should appear in it that has not already been discussed with the student in regular supervisory conferences. The School recommends that prior to the completion of the evaluation, at least one supervisory conference be set aside for discussion of the student's overall performance. Field instructors may request that students write self-appraisals for this purpose.

Grades in Field Placement

Field education will be graded each semester with Pass, Marginal Pass or Fail; students who perform satisfactorily in field placement and complete all assignments will receive a grade of Pass.

- **Pass (P):** Satisfactory to excellent performance
- **Marginal Pass (MP):** Unsatisfactory to marginal performance
- **Fail (F):** Failing performance

Consequences of Marginal Pass or Fail in Field Placement

- Students who receive a marginal pass at the end of any semester of field will have a Level 2 Review and will be placed on academic probation. Students may be asked to do additional time in the field at their own expense.
- A student who is asked to complete extended time in the field for learning and performance needs may be required to register for an additional semester or year of placement at the student's expense. A passing grade will be required to move on in the program.
- Students who receive two marginal passes in field **will be dismissed** from the program.
- **Students will be given only one opportunity to extend a placement for performance reasons.**
- Advanced Year/Advanced Standing students should anticipate that a grade of marginal pass in field would impact their graduation date.
- A grade of F in any semester, or two Marginal Passes in field, will result in dismissal from the program.

The decision to grant the student an extended or repeated placement is predicated on the Field Education Department's 1) confidence in the student's ability to function in the professional role, and 2) a performance evaluation that demonstrates the student's ability to make progress towards the required competencies.

Continuation in classes after a student receives a marginal pass in field should be carefully considered and discussed with the field liaison (continuation in classes is not a guarantee that a student will graduate from the MSW program).

Examples of behaviors that may result in a marginal pass or fail include:

- A pattern of unprofessional/unethical behavior including excessive absences, tardiness, not informing appropriate agency personnel of absences, inadequate communication with field instructors about clinical work (including non-completion of process recordings as required), lateness with paperwork, inadequate documentation, etc.
- Insufficient progress toward learning goals
- Consistently problematic communication and interpersonal skills that negatively affect clinical work and/or relationships with other students, faculty and staff
- Consistent inability to make use of supervision, including repeated difficulty in following field instructor's directions and failure to seek supervisory guidance when necessary
- Non-adherence to the NASW Code of Ethics in regards to confidentiality, boundaries and appropriate workplace behavior
- Inability to demonstrate compassion, empathy, integrity and respect for others, or the inability to adhere to the Standards of Professional Practice
- A pattern of incomplete and/or late assignments or assignments of poor quality
- Insufficient field education hours

Withdrawal from Field

To withdraw from field after the add/drop period students should notify their field liaison. Withdrawal from field necessitates withdrawal from the accompanying practice class (SW 421A, SW 421B, SW 424, or SW 425) as it is required that they be taken simultaneously. Additionally, students who withdraw during the semester will be expected to repeat the entire semester when they return to the program. No withdrawals are permitted after week 10.

PROBLEM RESOLUTION

There may be occasions when students have concerns about aspects of their placement (e.g. amount of supervision, agency policies or number of clients). Alternately, agencies at times may identify concerns about a student's functioning or performance in the agency. When problems arise, it is always important for the student and/or field instructor to contact the field liaison as early as possible. The field liaison is available to consult with the student and field instructor, helping to identify the issues and steps towards resolution.

Problems in the Field Placement Agency

If there are problems in the agency that affect student learning (e.g. inadequate clinical opportunities, field instructor availability), the field liaison should be notified. The field liaison should conduct a Level 1 Review. The field liaison will discuss the difficulties with involved parties, make an assessment, and collaboratively help to develop a plan. Plans to improve the situation are always the first step and the liaison will remain involved to monitor progress towards change. If these efforts are unsuccessful, a level 2 review will be convened.

Student Problems in the Field Placement

The School requests that the field instructor notify the field liaison promptly regarding any concerns about the student's performance in the agency. The field liaison should conduct a Level 1 Review. The field liaison will discuss the difficulties with involved parties, make an assessment and collaboratively help to develop a plan. Plans to improve the situation are always the first step and the liaison will remain involved to monitor progress towards change. If these efforts are unsuccessful, or the concerns are such that the agency is contemplating dismissal, a level 2 review will be convened immediately.

Level 2 Reviews for Problems in Field

If there are concerns related to student performance in the field or related to a placement agency's ability to meet Simmons requirements that cannot be resolved through a Level 1 Review, a Level 2 Review meeting will be convened. The Level 2 Review is facilitated by a Field Department contact and attended by the student, field instructor, and field liaison. The purpose of the meeting is to gain a clear understanding of the concerns in order to develop a corrective action plan. The corrective action plan is approved and made final by the Field Department contact who facilitates the meeting. The following are possible outcomes:

- The student may remain in their current placement and the field liaison will monitor their experience to ensure the corrective action plan is being followed.
- When an internship site is determined to be unable to meet Simmons program requirements, efforts to replace the student will be initiated immediately.
 - Please note, the ability to secure an alternate placement is impacted by many factors, most importantly the availability of an appropriate site for the student. Therefore, this process may take some time and in some situations may necessitate a leave from field or the program.
 - During the replacement process, students will be permitted to remain in their clinical practice course as long as they are in good standing in the course. Their academic standing will be assessed through their current grade, which includes the quality and

- timeliness of their async completion, live session participation, and grades on required written assignments.
- Students should expect to complete a minimum of 3 additional weeks in the field to account for time needed to orient to a new placement setting, develop a new learning plan and engage new clients. This is in addition to time owed to complete the total number of field hours (see **Field Work Hours**). There may be circumstances that necessitate a student add more time, either to address the student’s learning needs or to meet agency needs.
 - Students who are terminated from their placement due to a violation of the Standards for Professional Practice Education, field placement agency policy, Simmons policy, or the NASW Code of Ethics will participate in a Level 2 Review meeting with the following possible outcomes:
 - In the **field education course**:
 - The student will be required to immediately withdraw from the field education course
 - The student will receive a marginal pass or failing grade
 - In the **clinical practice course**:
 - If the student is required to withdraw from the field education course, they will also be required to withdraw from the clinical practice course if the termination occurs prior to the end of the tenth academic week.
 - If the termination occurs after the end of the tenth academic week, students will be permitted to remain in their clinical practice course as long as they are in good standing in the course. Their academic standing will be assessed through their current grade, which includes the quality and timeliness of their async completion, live session participation, and grades on required written assignments.
 - Additional actions for students who are terminated from field placement may include:
 - The student may be required to complete an additional semester of field and obtain a passing grade to continue (see **Grades in Field Placement**).
 - The student may be asked to take a leave of absence from field education or from the MSW program (see **Student Handbook for LOA Policy**).
 - If the nature of the concern necessitates a Level 3 Review, the Associate Dean will be consulted. Please consult the **Student Handbook** for further information about the review process.
 - If the student is eligible for replacement following termination, they will re-enter the placement process for the next available term start, no earlier than 14 weeks following their termination.
 - If the student is required to retake field education or practice course, this will be at the student’s expense.
 - In all circumstances that involve a disruption in placement (replacement and termination), students should consult academic advising as such changes may necessitate a change in their plan of study.

Please see the [SW@Simmons Policy Handbook](#) for additional information.

Student Guidelines for Change of Field Placement

On rare occasions, a student requests a change of placement. Such requests must be made to the field liaison who will then consult with the SW@Simmons Field Department. ***Students cannot leave an agency without first speaking with their field liaison and engaging in a problem resolution process, which would include a meeting with all relevant School and field placement agency representatives to develop a plan.***

The process below must be followed:

- Contact your field liaison
- The liaison will assess the situation and recommend a plan after conferring with the department contact with the goal of resolving the problem.
- If placement in a different setting is deemed necessary, it is expected that an appropriate termination process will be planned for all clients and that students will follow a professional process for bringing closure with the agency.

A student who prematurely ends a field placement, without approval of the Field Department, risks receiving a failing grade or being referred to the Academic Standards Committee (see Policy Handbook). All placement disruptions will be assessed to determine the extent to which the need for a replacement is due to agency or supervision issues and/or student performance issues.

Students should be aware that any placement disruption or replacement could have the effect of delaying their graduation date. Alternate degree conferral dates include January, March, May, July, August, and October.

Leave of Absence from Field Placement

Students who are on leave from the program are required to complete an intent to return form at least 14 weeks before the start of the term they plan to return to the program. This form can be obtained from student support or academic advising.

Please see the [SW@Simmons Policy Handbook](#) for additional information pertaining to leave of absence policies.

FIELD AND ACADEMIC ADVISING

SocialWork@Simmons is committed to maintaining a Field Education Department consisting of both full and part-time staff, as well as field liaisons dedicated to assisting online students. The Director of Field Education administers the Field Education Department, which comprises the field placement team and field liaisons.

Field Liaisons

The purpose of field education advising is to help the student integrate and optimize learning experiences in both class and field and to facilitate the mastery of social work practice. The field liaison is responsible for collaborating with Academic Advising and the field instructor in evaluating student progress and learning, and when necessary, serves as a mediator in problem situations.

The field liaison monitors and evaluates the educational process, supports and mentors students on their practice and professional development, and provides support to agencies in the form of consultation, mediation, advocacy, problem solving and negotiation.

The field liaison's role includes:

- Communicating regularly with students, including facilitating the field seminar
- Assuring adequate clinical activities and other learning experiences in the placement
- Collaborating with the field instructor in the development of an individualized learning plan
- Acting as a liaison between school and agency
- Consulting around field-related problems
- Determining the student's field grade
- Assisting students in preparing for advanced placements

Field Placement Team

The field placement team assigns each student a placement specialist who identifies and secures internship sites in students' home communities. The placement specialist's role includes:

- Completing an introductory meeting with students
- Conducting outreach to potential agencies and field instructors
- Gathering information about learning opportunities at placement
- Verifying agency documents
- Ensuring agency documents and Affiliation Agreements are complete
- Submitting placements to faculty for review
- Sending placement details and instructions to student and field instructor

Academic Advisors

The academic advisor provides guidance in regards to concerns or conflicts that might arise with course progression, plans of study and leave(s) of absence. In addition, the academic advisor might assist with clarification of learning styles and needs, along with guidance with materials found in any of the student handbooks.

The academic advisor serves as an advocate during the student's tenure in graduate school and helps connect the student with academic and other support. The academic advisor arranges individual and/or

group meetings throughout the year in response to student needs and interests.

The academic advising relationship is a two-way street. Students are expected to initiate contact with their advisor when they need assistance and to respond to outreach from their advisor in a timely fashion.

- Students should let their academic advisor know immediately if problems arise. Sharing as much as one can about her/his circumstances will enable the academic advisor to be more helpful.
- Students should respond promptly to emails and phone calls from the academic advisor.
- Students should prepare for and attend all scheduled advising meetings.

Students with Disabilities/Requests for Accommodations

Reasonable accommodations will be provided for students with documented physical, sensory, systemic, cognitive, learning, or psychiatric disabilities. If you have a disability and anticipate that you will need a reasonable accommodation in the field, it is important that you contact Tim Rogers in the Disability Services Office at 617-521-2470 or timothy.rogers@simmons.edu early in the semester. Students with disabilities receiving accommodations are also encouraged to contact their Simmons field liaison within the first two weeks of the semester to discuss their individual needs for accommodations.

FIELD PLACEMENT SELECTION AND POLICIES

In our commitment to provide the best possible learning arrangements for students, the School is committed to affiliations with a broad spectrum of training sites serving a diverse population of clients and representing various fields of practice, problem areas, geographical regions and communities. The placement team works with each student to secure an appropriate placement site with a qualified field instructor for both the foundation and the advanced placements. Students should expect to hear from their placement specialists 120 days before the start of their placement to engage them in the placement process. In order to inform the placement search, placement specialists will engage students in discussing their past work experiences and their educational goals during an initial welcome call with each student. Foundation year students are also encouraged to speak with their field liaisons about experiences they would like to have in their advanced year placement. Field liaisons will share this information with the placement team. Students are encouraged to use their field education experience to explore varied social work roles and settings, to gain an understanding of how social work approaches can be applied across the spectrum of services and service environments. Simmons faculty approves each placement that is secured and qualified by the placement team.

Placement Forms

Student support will email each student a link to their foundation placement form upon admission to the program. All students are **required** to complete this form within **five days** of receiving it. This form is for students to share their previous work experience, interests in the field and for the SW@Simmons Field Department to share important policies and procedures. **If a student does not complete this form or agree with the field placement policies at least 120 days before the start of the student's placement term, the placement team will not be able to begin the student's placement search. This may result in the student needing to take a leave of absence from the program or delay graduation.**

Travel Distance

The placement team values field placement as a core part of the MSW program and makes every attempt to place students as close to their preferred placement address as possible. Students may be placed up to 60 miles away if a closer approved placement is not available. It is expected that students will arrange their own transportation to and from their assigned field placement sites.

Interviews

Before a placement can be made final, an interview must occur between the student and the agency. Once a student is notified of a potential placement interview, the student must contact this agency within 48 hours of notification to set up an interview. After the interview, students are expected to notify their placement specialist regarding the outcome of the interview.

On-Time Placement

On-time placement is not guaranteed. Simmons School of Social Work will make every effort possible to obtain a field placement prior to the term start date; however, placement efforts may continue beyond the start date. Any delay in a student's placement start date will result in the need for being in field for additional hours each week, attending field during the term break and/or adding time at the end of the term. If a placement is not secured by academic week 5, the student will need to move to the next cohort and may be required to take a leave of absence. Students for whom placements have not been secured by academic week 5, and who have followed all placement policies, will be eligible to withdraw

from their courses with no financial penalty.

Placement Notification

Once students are notified of their secured placement site, they must contact the site within 48 hours of notification to set up a schedule, confirm their placement start date and confirm that all documents and/or extra requirements (e.g., extra immunizations, background check, etc.) are complete.

Declining Placement Sites

The placement search takes into account many factors to ensure that sites are able to meet SW@Simmons program expectations and students learning needs. At times, this results in limited availability of suitable sites. For this reason, students are required to interview at assigned faculty approved placement agencies. If students have significant concerns about the placement experience after an interview, they should immediately contact their field placement specialist to discuss them. If a student declines a faculty approved placement, it is important to note that this may delay their placement start and graduation and may require a leave of absence. The placement team will not be able to continue a placement search for students who decline a site based on their inability to adhere to the placement policies.

Scheduling

Students must be available to complete 16 hours a week for the foundation placement and 24 hours a week for the advanced placement to successfully complete field practicum. Students are required to adjust their schedule to be in accordance with the field Instructor's schedule in order to complete these field practicum hours. Additionally, students must be available for placement Monday through Friday between 8am and 8pm to align with agency activities.

Relocation Policy

Students who wish to relocate during or before their placement terms must notify the placement team at least 14 weeks prior to the placement term start date. Students must complete a relocation form and provide a new preferred placement address. Students can obtain these forms from their placement specialist or student support specialist. Notifying the College in other ways is not sufficient. On-time Placement cannot be guaranteed for students who do not adhere to this policy.

Students who wish to relocate to Massachusetts in the following counties: Suffolk, Essex, Plymouth, Norfolk, Middlesex, Bristol and the following cities in Worcester County: *Berlin, Blackstone, Boylston, Clinton, Fitchburg, Grafton, Harvard, Hopedale, Lancaster, Lunenburg, Mendon, Milford, Millville, Northborough, Northbridge, Shrewsbury, Southborough, Sterling, Upton, Uxbridge, West Boylston, Westborough* are required to notify the placement team at least 20 weeks prior to the placement start date. Additional time is requested for students relocating to the Boston area in order to coordinate with the on campus placement team. Students must complete a relocation form and provide a new preferred placement address. Placement cannot be guaranteed for students who do not adhere to this policy.

Referral Policy

Students can submit placement referrals via a personal referral link provided by their student support specialist or placement specialist, up to six weeks prior to the start of the placement term. Referrals must include the name of a specific field instructor or an agency with an identified contact person who

has expressed interest in hosting the student. The placement team will update the student on the status of the referral within 5 business days. All referred agencies are subject to approval by the SW@Simmons Field Education Department.

Massachusetts Referral Policy

Students living in the following Massachusetts counties: Suffolk, Essex, Plymouth, Norfolk, Middlesex, Bristol and the following cities in Worcester County: *Berlin, Blackstone, Boylston, Clinton, Fitchburg, Grafton, Harvard, Hopedale, Lancaster, Lunenburg, Mendon, Milford, Millville, Northborough, Northbridge, Shrewsbury, Southborough, Sterling, Upton, Uxbridge, West Boylston, Westborough* are not permitted to submit referrals and should not contact sites and field instructors directly unless instructed by the Field Placement Team. Most sites in these locations that are referred by students are already in the Simmons network and Simmons field staff have established relationships with these agencies and field instructors. Placements at these sites must be arranged through the collaboration of the on-campus and online placement teams.

Some sites follow specific processes for interviewing and accepting students for placement. Many placement site coordinators will expect to hear from a Simmons College representative rather than from a student directly. Direct contacts by students can damage these long standing partnerships. If a connection is made through a cold call by a student, this may prohibit students from being placed at that agency. Place of employment referrals are accepted but are subject to faculty review by the Field Education Department.

International Policy

Students cannot complete field placement outside of the continental United States and Hawaii. Students will not be placed internationally, including U.S. military bases, or in U.S. territories. Students living abroad with an upcoming placement term will need to relocate to the continental United States or Hawaii in order to be assigned a placement. Students are required to provide written notice of a new address at least 14 weeks prior to the first placement term so the placement team can work to secure a placement site. Placement is not guaranteed for students who do not adhere to the foregoing requirements and not following the requirements may necessitate a leave of absence from the program.

Field Practicum in the Student's Place of Employment

The SW@Simmons Field Education Department permits students to complete one placement in an employer-based placement. **Generally, a student should not be in the same agency for two internships.**

Students who wish to use their place of paid employment as a field placement must complete a worksite-based field placement application which can be obtained from the student's placement specialist. Each application will be carefully reviewed by the Field Department and decided upon within the framework of Council on Social Work Education (CSWE) and School standards and expectations. To be approved, the agency and student must agree to adhere to the criteria for such placements, which include the following:

- In the weekly hours (16 or 24) designated to receive field education credit, it is expected that the student will be assigned to a different department or program area and have the

opportunity to gain knowledge and skill in new methods, modalities and interventions. The student should have the opportunity to work with different client populations and clinical needs in order to offer the student continued growth in the complexity in their educational experience.

- The agency must assign a new field instructor to supervise the School-related fieldwork, a person other than the student/employee's current job supervisor. The field instructor and agency must agree to collaborate with the School and follow educational expectations and objectives. The field instructor must hold an MSW degree. If possible, the MSW must be licensed at the highest level for that state. If not possible, the MSW must have practiced full-time for at least two years after graduation.
- The student/employee must be recognized as a social work student and thus be a part of the agency's social work training program for at least the portion of activity designated to receive field education credit. The agency must provide learning assignments that are different from the student's regular work.

Repeating Advanced Placement at the Foundation Site

The SW@Simmons Field Education permits students to repeat the advanced internship in the same setting provided the setting meets the required criteria. It is preferable for students not be in the same agency for two internships because of the educational benefit associated with broadening the learning experience. Students who wish to complete their advanced placement in the same setting as their first must complete the "Application to Repeat the Advanced Placement at the Foundation Placement Site" at least 6 weeks prior to the placement start. The setting cannot be or have been a place of employment. To be approved, the agency and student must agree to adhere to the criteria for such placements, which include the following:

I. Site requirements

The site must offer different learning opportunities that align with advanced learning goals in a different unit or program from the foundation placement. A different social work field instructor and task manager from the foundation placement must provide supervision. Repeating a field placement in the same setting as the foundation placement is the exception rather than the norm.

II. Approval process for repeated placements

Placements are approved following determination by faculty that advanced level knowledge and skills can be achieved at the site, and that the site meets the requirements indicated above. Arrangement and approval of repeated placement sites require the participation of the student/potential field instructor, agency administrator, and the field education department. Extra attention is necessary to assure that the planned placement meets all of the school's requirements and learning objectives.

III. Requirements of field instructor in repeated placements

The field instructor must have an LCSW with two years' full time employment as a clinical social worker. The proposed field instructor should not have served as the students' foundation placement field instructor.

Failure to Secure a Field Placement

Students who are not accepted after a placement interview will meet with a department administrator. The Field Department Administration will review the interview feedback with the student and develop a plan to help the student to incorporate feedback from their prior interview to prepare for future interviews. The department contact may refer the student to the career services for additional interview preparation. Students who fail to adhere to placement policies, which leads to failure to secure field placements may have their placement process interrupted.

In the event of three unsuccessful field placement interviews, the Field Education Department reassesses the student's appropriateness for a field placement. A Level 2 Review will be scheduled to discuss the feedback from each of the agencies, and offer the student an opportunity to respond to the feedback and share any relevant contextual information. Depending on the information gathered, a number of responses are possible:

- Recommendation that the student take a leave of absence for the purpose of gaining more experience in the field before further attempts at placement are made (the student would start anew with the process upon return);
- The offer of one more attempt at a placement with the understanding that consistent feedback would trigger a Level 3 Review with the Associate Dean and Director of Field Education. If circumstances warrant, and if it is the judgment of the Director of Field Education and the Associate Dean that an appropriate graduate level clinical social work internship does to appear to be obtainable, then a recommendation for dismissal from the program will be made on the basis that the MSW degree requirements cannot be met without the successful completion of two internships.

If a student does not accept a qualified placement following an interview and refuses subsequent agencies that meet their criteria, a Level 2 Review will be held. Based on the committee's review, one of the following outcomes will be stipulated:

- In consultation with the placement team, the student will be given one additional opportunity to secure a placement
- Student will postpone field placement

Failure to obtain a placement has implications for a student's progress toward completion of the MSW.

NOTICE OF NONDISCRIMINATION

Simmons College does not discriminate unlawfully on the basis of race, color, national origin, age, sex, sexual orientation or disability in admission or access to, or treatment, or employment in, its programs or activities.

Nondiscrimination Policy Concerning Disabled Persons

As part of the Graduate School of Social Work's general policy on discrimination, the School maintains a commitment to nondiscrimination concerning qualified disabled persons in employment, admissions and access to and participation in programs, internships and activities.

For students and other users of the School's services, the School's policy is to administer its programs and activities so that they are readily accessible to disabled persons. The School is flexible in making appropriate adjustments to class schedules and assignments. The following statement is included on all syllabi:

If you have a disability and anticipate that you will need a reasonable accommodation in this class, or merely have questions regarding any disability or related accommodations, please contact Tim Rogers in the Disability Services Office at 617-521-2470, timothy.rogers@simmons.edu, or by going to the Disability Services Office in person in MCB-E108. You can also learn more about the Disability Services Office and the process to receive accommodations by consulting your Student Handbook or by accessing the resources and forms available at <http://www.simmons.edu/student-life/student-services/disability-services>. Students receiving accommodations are also encouraged to contact their instructors within the first two weeks of the semester to discuss their individual needs for accommodations.

This Policy is intended to be interpreted and administered consistent with the obligations of the School and the college under the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 and the Rehabilitation Act of 1973.

Sexual Harassment Policy

Simmons College School of Social Work is committed to a policy that accords all members of the college community, including faculty, field instructors, students and staff, the right to be free from sex discrimination in the form of sexual harassment by any other member of the college community. "Sexual harassment" is defined as unwelcome sexual advances or other verbal or physical conduct of a sexual nature, when such behavior has the purpose or effect of creating an intimidating or offensive working or educational atmosphere.

In the educational context, such actions are prohibited when they have an impact on the educational process between students and academic or field faculty. Such actions, whether overt, implicit or misinterpreted, can cause great damage to those involved as well as to the college community as a whole. All members of the college community must be sensitive to the questions and difficulties that are inherent in any attempt to combine sexual relationships or sexual intimidation with professional and educational relationships.

The complete college sexual harassment policy can be found at the following web address:

www.simmons.edu/offices/thcs/titleIX/policy.php

It is unlawful and expressly against college policy to retaliate against a person for filing either an informal or formal complaint of sexual harassment, or other forms of discriminatory harassment, or for cooperating with an investigation of a complaint of such alleged harassment. Any student, faculty member or staff person who has a complaint or concern about sexual harassment should immediately bring the matter to the attention of the dean of the School of Social Work and/or the director of field education. The college will take appropriate corrective and preventive action, including disciplinary action, when its investigation discloses the occurrence of sexual harassment.

STUDENT PROFESSIONAL LIABILITY INSURANCE

The college carries a blanket insurance policy with the United Educators. The policy covers each student in field placement. The limits of liability are \$1,000,000 for each claim and \$3,000,000 aggregate. If you wish to receive a copy of our policy, please contact the Field Education Department at 617-521-3910 or sswonlinefielded@simmons.edu