

2012-2013

**USC School of
Social Work**

**FIELD EDUCATION
MANUAL**

FIELD EDUCATION MANUAL USC SCHOOL OF SOCIAL WORK

Table of Contents

WELCOME – Associate Dean and Director of Field Education

MISSION STATEMENT OF THE USC SCHOOL OF SOCIAL WORK

I. FIELD EDUCATION.....	4
A. Objectives of Field Education.....	4
B. Program Overview.....	4
C. Campus Locations	6
D. Administration / Field Faculty / Staff.....	6
E. Field Agency Sites.....	11
F. Field Education Requirements	12
Practicum Hours & Evaluation.....	12
Field Instruction.....	13
Evidenced-Base Intervention Training	13
Integrative Learning Seminar.....	14
G. Student / Field Instructor / Field Faculty Roles	14
H. Field Placement Process	15
I. Field Calendar.....	16
II. FIELD INSTRUCTOR INFORMATION	17
A. Introduction	17
B. Field Instructor Qualifications	18
C. Field Instructor Responsibilities	18
D. Field Instruction.....	20
E. Challenges	20
F. Safety	21
G. Strike Policy.....	22
III. STUDENT / MSW CANDIDATE INFORMATION.....	22
A. Introduction	22
B. Field Placement	22
Foundation Year.....	23
Concentration Year.....	23
C. Student Responsibilities.....	23
D. Supervision.....	25
E. Challenges and Support	25
IV. APPENDIX (LIST OF RESOURCES)	27



WELCOME

As Associate Dean, Clinical Professor, and Director of Field Education, I welcome students and field instructors who are engaged in the process of teaching and learning about the practice of professional social work in the real world. Field Education is committed to providing opportunities for our students to develop skills in the most current practices, particularly in evidence based interventions, and to receive supervision by the finest field instructors in the country.

This Field Education Manual is designed to provide general information and guidance about Field Education and the Field Practicum to students and field instructors at all of our Academic Centers (AC) - the University Park Campus (UPC), Orange County Academic Center (OCAC), San Diego Academic Center (SDAC) , Skirball Academic Center (SAC) and the Virtual Academic Center (VAC) .

Individual and specific questions are encouraged and can be directed to those field faculty who are assigned to each student as academic advisors and field liaisons at each Academic Center. If there continues to be a concern, then the Associate Dean and Director of Field Education will be contacted by the advisor/liaison for further discussion. The role of the Dean and the Faculty is to provide our students as much support as possible in the process of integrating theory with practice.

Field Education is the Heart of Social Work, and we want to provide an experience for each student that represents the reality of professional social work practitioners and agencies today. The experiences in the Field Practicum can evoke a range of reactions and like the challenges in our communities, the process of learning in the Field is dynamic and complex. You may confront difficult situations and dilemmas in the first early months. With early and open communication and good collaborative problem solving, the learning during the academic year will be profound and life changing,

I extend my thanks and best regards to students and field instructors for beginning a life long journey of learning, self discovery and transformation.

Marleen Wong, Ph.D., L.C.S.W.
Associate Dean and Clinical Professor
Director of Field Education

MISSION STATEMENT OF THE USC SCHOOL OF SOCIAL WORK

The mission of the USC School of Social Work is to improve the well-being of vulnerable individuals and communities, advance social and economic justice, and eradicate pressing societal problems in complex and culturally diverse environments throughout Southern California, the nation and the world. Our mission is achieved through value-driven, scholarly and creative social work education, research, and professional leadership.

I. FIELD EDUCATION

Field Education is an independent and integral sequence of the MSW curriculum. Students are exposed to selected and organized opportunities guided by educational objectives. It seeks to validate, apply, and integrate the knowledge, theories, and concepts of social work practice learned throughout the curriculum. Field agencies are expected to provide "in vivo" experiences relevant to the academic content. The student on the other hand is expected to apply academic knowledge, social work skills, critical thinking, professional behavior, ethics and values learned in the classroom to direct practice work.

It is imperative for the agency and the school to collaborate, for integration of learning to occur concurrently in field sites and in the classroom. USC administrators, professors, and field liaisons partner with agency field instructors to foster comprehensive and high quality social work education and training. The collaboration teaches and guides students to practice with sensitivity to cultural and ethnic diversity and to abide by professional social work behavior, values, and code of ethics. This comprehensive approach helps prepare students to practice social work with adverse populations and to take on leadership roles within the profession.

A. Objectives of Field Education

Field education prepares students to enter the social work profession by meeting the following objectives:

- To integrate academic learning with direct practice work
- To increase proficiency in the required 10 core competencies for social work education as it relates to field work.

The 10 Competencies are as follows:

1. Identify as a professional social worker and conduct oneself accordingly.
 2. Apply social work ethical principles to guide professional practice.
 3. Apply critical thinking to inform and communicate professional judgments.
 4. Engage diversity and difference in practice.
 5. Advance human rights and economic justice.
 6. Engage in research-informed practice and practice-informed research.
 7. Apply knowledge of human behavior and the social environment.
 8. Engage in policy practice to advance social and economic well-being and to deliver effective social work services.
 9. Respond to contexts that shape practice.
 10. Engage, assess, intervene, and evaluate with individuals, families, and groups
- To develop the ability to understand and utilize a broad range of modalities and interventions in micro, mezzo, and macro practice with diverse populations
 - To focus on building the knowledge for generalist practice in the 1st year to establish a broad foundation for direct practice work
 - To develop a deeper knowledge and depth of skills needed for beginning professional practice in a designated area of concentration in the 2nd year

B. Program Overview

The USC, School of Social Work is a top ranked social work graduate program (U.S. News and World Report) in the country. It has the largest full-time Master of Social

Work (MSW) program in the country and it is ranked as a level one research school. We offer opportunities for students to select a two-year full-time and a three-year or four-year part-time option offering both day and evening classes. The MSW degree requires the completion of a minimum of 60 semester units, including 4 semesters of field internships. Field education in the part-time programs follows the same general design as the full-time program although part-time students might require flexibility in the days they are in placement. Students must be available for placement during regular hours when MSW supervision is available.

Highlights of the Program:

- Two-year, three-year or four-year options enabling students to finish on their timetable
- A choice of regional academic centers: UPC, Skirball, OCAC, or SDAC
- A choice of a Virtual Academic Program
- A choice, in the Concentration Year, of 10 concentrations and sub-concentrations, six dual-degree programs.
- A wide variety of electives allowing the students to gain insight into areas that interest them
- Field internships assigned in the Foundation Year and matching the student's interests, educational goals and practice goals in the Concentration Year.
- Some classes available in the summer or on weekends to accommodate a busy schedule.

Quick Facts:

Degree Programs

- Master of Social Work (on-ground)
- Master of Social Work (VAC)
- Doctor of Philosophy
- MSW to PhD Direct
- Minor in Children and Families in Urban America

Dual Degree Programs

- Master of Social Work/Master of Business Administration
- Master of Social Work/Master of Science in Gerontology
- Master of Social Work/Master of Arts in Jewish Communal Service
- Master of Social Work/Juris Doctor
- Master of Social Work/Master of Planning
- Master of Social Work/Master of Public Administration







Concentrations

- Community Organization Planning and Administration (COPA)
- Families and Children
- Health
- Mental Health
- Social Work & Business in a Global Society



Sub-concentrations






- Military Social Work and Veteran Services (MVS)
- Older Adults
- Public Child Welfare
- School Settings (Pupil Personnel Services)
- Systems of Mental Illness Recovery (MI)






C. Campus Locations






	<u>University Park Campus</u> Montgomery Ross Fisher Building 669 W. 34 th Street Los Angeles, CA 90089-0411 213.740.2711
	<u>Orange County Academic Center</u> 2300 Michelson Drive Irvine, CA 92612-1351 949.437.0043
	<u>Skirball Academic Center</u> 2701 North Sepulveda Boulevard Los Angeles, CA 90049 310.440.4621
	<u>City Center</u> 1149 South Hill Street Los Angeles, CA 90015 213.743.2063
	<u>San Diego Academic Center</u> 16870 West Bernardo Drive San Diego, CA 92127 858.675.0167
	<u>Virtual Academic Center</u> 877.700.4MSW (4679)



D. Administration / Field Faculty / Staff

University Park Campus	
	Marleen Wong Associate Dean, Clinical Professor and Director of Field Education 213.740.0840 marleenw@usc.edu
UPC Support Staff	
	Carolina Peralta-Ventura Administrative Services Coordinator Field Education 213.740.2005 carolinp@usc.edu
	Kimberly Ross Administrative Assistant II Field Education

	213.740.9416 kross@usc.edu
	Lorena Garcia Contracts Coordinator 213.821.0971 garc919@usc.edu
Field Faculty	
	Rafael Angulo Clinical Associate Professor Foundation Year / Families and Children Concentration / Public Child Welfare 213.821.1397 angulo@usc.edu
	Margarita Artavia Clinical Associate Professor Mental Health Concentration / SW & Business in a Global Society 213.740.9465 artavia@usc.edu
	Rita Bright-Davis Adjunct Clinical Associate Professor Foundation Year 562.212.4455 ritadavi@usc.edu
	Nikki Cavalier Part-Time Lecturer and Field Liaison Foundation Year 626.840.2874 nikki.cavalier@usc.edu
	Tory Cox Clinical Assistant Professor Foundation Year / COPA 213.740.5832 torycox@usc.edu
	Pamela Davis Visiting Clinical Associate Professor Foundation / Health 231.821.0970 pamelada@usc.edu
	Nancy Flax-Plaza Adjunct Professor – Field Education Faculty CalSWEC / IUC 818.621.4909 flaxplaz@usc.edu

	<p>Kim Goodman Clinical Associate Professor Foundation Year / Health 213.740.0283 kwgoodma@usc.edu</p>
	<p>Micki Gress Senior Fellow and Clinical Professor of Field Education CalSWEC MH & Child Welfare Project Coordinator 213.740.0294 gress@usc.edu</p>
	<p>Heather E. Halperin Adjunct Clinical Associate Professor Advisor to Part-Time Students / Foundation Year / VAC 213.821.1359; 818.425.4471 hhalper@usc.edu</p>
	<p>Suh Chen Hsiao Clinical Assistant Professor Foundation 213.740.3444 shuhsiao@usc.edu</p>
	<p>Stephen Hydon Clinical Associate Professor and Director, School Social Work PPSC Program / MH / F & C / CalSWEC 213.740.0282 hydon@usc.edu</p>
	<p>Michael Johnson Field Placement Consultant Military Sub-Concentration mjohnso2@usc.edu</p>
	<p>Elizabeth Phillips Clinical Associate Professor Evidence-Based Interventions 213.740.0695 eslade@usc.edu</p>
	<p>Russana Rowles Visiting Clinical Associate Professor Military Sub-Concentration 213.740.1424 rrowles@usc.edu</p>
	<p>Jolene Swain Clinical Professor and CalSWEC Project Coordinator CalSWEC Child Welfare 213.740.5726</p>

	jswain@usc.edu
	Deborah Winters Clinical Associate Professor Foundation Year / CalSWEC Mental Health / GSWEC 213.740.0284 dwinters@usc.edu
	Darlene Woo Clinical Associate Professor Foundation Year 213.740.2019 darlenew@usc.edu
Skirball Academic Center	
	Judy Axonovitz Director, Skirball Academic Center and Clinical Associate Professor Foundation Year 310.440.4621 axonovit@usc.edu
SAC Support Staff	
	Janae Middleton Program Assistant, Skirball AC 310.440.4621 jlmiddle@usc.edu
Orange County Academic Center	
	Rosemary Alamo Visiting Clinical Assistant Professor Foundation Year / Health / EFI 949.437.0009 ralamo@usc.edu
	Conrad Fuentes Clinical Assistant Professor Foundation Year / Families and Children / CalSWEC Liaison / Military 949.437.0006 cdfuentes@usc.edu
	Vivien Villaverde Clinical Assistant Professor Foundation Year / MH / COPA / PPS 949.437.0007 villaver@usc.edu
OCAC Support Staff	
	Pancy Holtsberg Office Manager 949.437.0005 holtsher@usc.edu

	Gina Fu Office Assistant 949.437.0004 h.gina.fu@usc.edu
San Diego Academic Center	
	Pam Franzwa Clinical Assistant Professor Foundation / Mental Health / Military 858.675.0167, ext. 230 franzwa@usc.edu
	Omar Lopez Clinical Assistant Professor Foundation Year / COPA 858.675.0167, ext. 229 omarl@usc.edu
	Ruth Supranovich Clinical Assistant Professor Mental Health / COPA 858.675.0167 x231 supranov@usc.edu
SDAC Support Staff	
	Meryl Livingston Administrative Assistant 858.675.0167 ext.200 mjliving@usc.edu
Virtual Academic Center (VAC)	
	Elizabeth Pringle-Hornsby Senior Field Education Coordinator VAC 213.821.0902 pringleh@usc.edu
VAC Support Staff	
	John Paul (JP) Alferos II Project Specialist 213.821.0914 alferos@usc.edu
VAC Regional Coordinators	
	Sheri Arnold Clinical Assistant Professor Field Placement Advisor 213.821.0300; 760.803.0988 slarnold@usc.edu
	Ruth Cislowski Clinical Associate Professor Field Education Regional Coordinator Southern California

	310.848.3470; 310.848.3470 cislowsk@usc.edu
	Jill K. Davis Clinical Associate Professor Field Placement Advisor 213.821.0900; 407.580.7790 jill.k.davis@usc.edu
	Laurel Davis Clinical Associate Professor Field Education Regional Coordinator Southeast Region 213.821.0900; 407.862.0219 laurelda@usc.edu
	Renee Michelson Clinical Associate Professor Field Education Regional Coordinator Northeast Region 213.821.0900; 973.970.9156 michelse@usc.edu
	Candice Smith Clinical Associate Professor Field Education Regional Coordinator Northwest Region 213.821.0900; 562.212.6069 candacms@usc.edu

E. Field Agency Sites

The Field Practicum, also known as a student's placement or internship, takes place in approved agencies located throughout the country with a high concentration in Southern California. These agencies represent a wide range of social work services and practice. They are approved sites based on the quality of the professional practice, commitment to addressing social problems and an interest to participate in the professional education of MSW students. The agency is responsible for providing the learning opportunities representative of social work practice within the student's region and/or community. They must subscribe to the educational objectives of USC School of Social Work and treat the students as learners while providing the resources necessary to meet their learning objectives.

There are instances when an agency may not possess the resources to provide all the required learning experiences. In such cases, highly developed virtual field experiences or a secondary placement site may be identified and used for the purpose of meeting the student's learning objectives and accumulation of Field Practicum hours. A large multi-disciplinary placement agency site may also decide to broaden the student's experience by rotating to different departments to expand learning opportunities. In any of these options, the primary agency site carries the main responsibility for field instruction while the secondary site provides a preceptor for supplemental supervision.

The USC School of Social Work welcomes agencies interested in partnering as field placement sites. To qualify as a field placement site, an agency must meet the following criteria:

- Provide a sufficient number and variety of assignments to develop student knowledge and practice skills
- Provide an opportunity to work with individuals, groups, families, and community — at least two of these modalities must be available in some depth (50 percent of the student's time should be spent in direct contact with clients, except for the Community, Organization, Planning and Administration (COPA) and Work & Life concentrations)
- Provide ample time for weekly field instruction to permit both individual and group conferences with students
- Provide adequate office space, office supplies, telephone availability, and clerical support
- Provide opportunities for in-service training and access to agency consultants
- Have an interest in participating in the student's research
- Have an interest in aligning the agency's practice framework to theories taught in the classroom.

New agency sites must complete the [New Agency Information Packet](#) and a Memorandum of Agreement ([Field Education Forms](#)). An agency representative must also meet with a USC Field Faculty to evaluate the appropriateness of the site and for approval.

Note: The Virtual Academic Center has specific application and approval procedures that must be followed. ([MSW@USC](#))

F. Field Education Requirements

Practicum Hours & Evaluation:

All MSW students must complete four semesters of Field Practicum 586a/b and 686a/b as part of graduation requirements. Each Field Practicum is taken concurrently with the Practice course.

Students must earn a minimum of 1,000 Field Practicum hours. It is typically divided into two years of study, the Foundation and the Concentration year. The Foundation year requires the completion of a minimum of 450 hours and the Concentration year requires a minimum of 550 and a maximum of 600 hours (PPS students must have 600 hours). All MSW candidates, regardless of the type of program they are enrolled, must meet the minimum 1,000 Field Practicum hours to earn their degree.

The Foundation year and Concentration year placements are typically in different agencies. The criteria and objectives vary from a generalist experience in the Foundation year to a more focused experience in the Concentration year. Field placement days are typically Mondays, Wednesdays, and/or Fridays although the VAC program offers more flexibility in meeting the hours. Foundation and Concentration year field placements require at least one 8-hour day during regular business hours. There is no exception to this policy. Evening and weekend hours are very limited in most communities. MSW supervision must be available to the student during those hours.

Please note that placements are assigned to all Foundation Year students. Foundation Year students do not engage in the selection process. A student's refusal to begin the Field Practicum will delay satisfactory academic progress and may be the cause of a student's inability to complete and graduate from the MSW program.

Students are responsible for pre-placement contact with their agencies. Any delays in making initial agency contact or beginning the Field Practicum on time is also the student's responsibility. Students are also responsible for transportation to their placement site up to 30 miles in one direction from their place of residence.

Formal written evaluations are completed by the Field Instructor in collaboration with the student twice yearly, at the end of each semester. Informal evaluation is conducted throughout the year. Field placements are monitored by Field Liaisons through periodic agency or virtual visits, student-field instructor meetings, telephone calls, and other contacts. Successful completion of the Field Internship requires meeting the expected hours and obtaining satisfactory formal evaluations at the end of each semester while enrolled in the Field Practicum.

Field Instruction:

Field Instruction is taught by a Field Instructor who must possess an MSW and has at least two years of post MSW agency experience. He/she must be approved by the School of Social Work and certified to be a Field Instructor (see Section II.B). Field Instruction takes place between the student and the Field Instructor in designated agency settings which have been approved by the School of Social Work and the University.

There is a specific sequence of assignments, activities, and learning goals for the Foundation and Concentration year Field Practicum. The USC School of Social Work and the agency collaborate in assisting students to learn and increase their mastery of the 10 Core Competencies set forth by CSWE. The Field Instruction process is intentional, active, organized, sequential, and individualized. It is conducted within the framework of a particular social work agency. Over the course of two years of field placement, Field Instruction is expected to include but not be limited to the following:

- Direct practice interventions with individuals, families and non-related groups
- Indirect practice interventions focusing on community, organizational and/or institutional change
- A diversity of modalities, populations, and treatment delivered in the micro, mezzo, and macro practice settings.
- A range of theoretical and teaching methodologies and models.

Evidenced-Based Intervention Training

All Foundation and Concentration year MSW candidates are required to complete trainings in two Evidenced-Based Interventions. The Foundation year students must complete Motivational interviewing training while Concentration year students must complete the training in Problem Solving Therapy. Participation in the trainings count towards as Field Practicum hours. It is the student's responsibility to communicate with and inform their Field Instructors about the assigned date of their respective training if the training date requires an excused day from their placement. Should the Field

Instructor object to the student's absence, it is the student's responsibility to schedule another training date that is acceptable to the Field Instructor as soon as possible.

Integrative Learning Seminar (Foundation Year Only):

All Foundation year students enrolled in the Field Practicum must attend an Integrative Learning for Social Work Practice course. It is a two unit course that meets weekly throughout the academic year. It is assigned a Credit or No Credit grade.

Concentration students are offered workshops throughout the academic year and are highly encouraged to participate. Workshops and Brown Bags are offered to supplement and support field internship.

G. Student / Field Instructor / Field Faculty Roles

Field education is a collaborative effort to provide a real life social work learning experience to students placed in a designated agency. The collaboration consists of multiple professionals with distinct roles. The roles within field education are as follows:

- Associate Dean and Director for Field Education:
The Associate Dean, Clinical Professor, and Director of Field Education is a university administrator responsible for the innovation, development, and continuity of the programs and policies of Field Education. Field Faculty report directly to her on all operational aspects of Field Education activities. She serves as an arbiter for issues that cannot be resolved between students, field instructors and/or field faculty serving in their advisor/liaison roles at all Academic Centers
- Field Liaison:
This individual is a field faculty member who coordinates, monitors, and evaluates the student's field experience to insure optimal learning and professional development. He/she also provides consultation, assistance and evaluation to the student/intern and Field Instructor.
- Academic Advisor:
This individual is a clinical field faculty member who meets with students to discuss educational and professional goals and plans. He/she supports and assists with issues affecting academic performance and professional development. This individual may or may not be the same person as the Field Liaison.
- Seminar Instructor/Professor:
This individual is a clinical field faculty member or adjunct who facilitates the Integrative Learning Seminar course for Foundation year students. At times, this may be the student's Academic Advisor and/or Field Liaison.
- MSW Student/Intern:
The designation of "intern" is often used to refer to the MSW student when they are placed in an agency and enrolled in the Field Practicum while completing courses to earn a Master in Social Work degree.
- Field Instructor:
This individual is a professional social worker and an agency representative assigned to provide weekly supervision and instruction to MSW interns in a placement site. The Field Instructor may work collaboratively with a preceptor or daily task supervisor in an agency, but he/she has the primary and overall responsibility for the student's learning, evaluation and linkage with the University.

- External Field Instructor
This individual is contracted to supervise MSW Interns and perform all the tasks of a traditional Field Instructor. The EFI may be hired by the agency or the University. An EFI is utilized when an agency does not traditionally employ MSWs. They are to collaborate with the preceptor in supervising and evaluating the performance of the MSW Intern.
- Preceptor:
An individual affiliated with the agency, under the direction of the Field Instructor, who is responsible for a piece of the student's learning. He/she is a supplementary instructional figure who may or may not be a social worker by training. The preceptor may also be the daily task supervisor during the time when the Field Instructor is not on site. Changes in agency sites or having an External Field Instructor (EFI) may necessitate the use of a preceptor.

H. Field Placement Process

Foundation Year

Field Faculty assigns Foundation year students to the placement site on an individual basis. The objective of the Foundation year placement is to build a generalist social work skill set in different areas of practice. Assignment is based on a number of factors: the student's learning goals, work and volunteer experience, educational background, and career aspirations. Other factors taken into account are available learning opportunities at each agency, geographic location, region or community, financial aid, and other special need or circumstance. The placement process takes place prior to or at the start of the first semester of the Foundation year. Students are notified of their assignment to a Foundation year placement via e-mail. The agency must be contacted by the student to arrange a pre-placement visit and to complete any agency specific Human Resources processing prior to the start of the internship. The start date for field internship varies by program (on-ground versus the VAC). Please refer to the Field Education Calendar of the respective academic centers.

Note: Students can expect to have a slow build-up of client caseload in the first semester. Please see Appendix for the Foundation Curriculum Objective & Outline.

Concentration Year

The goal of the Concentration year field placement is to build on the Foundation year experience to help students develop advanced and more focused social work skills in a specific area of practice. In the Concentration year, the academic courses and the field experience are organized around a particular field of practice or method. Students are required to actively participate in choosing their Concentration year field placement. This process is initiated in the second semester of the Foundation year. Students interview with up to three agencies they have chosen from a list of approved placement sites. The availability of agencies may be limited to one option in some programs due to geographical constraints, students' availability or community resources. The interviews take place towards the end of the student's Foundation year.

Concentration year students and agency interviewers are required to complete a feedback form. The Concentration Field Faculty Coordinator reviews the feedback and matches students to a placement site that best fits student educational goals and the agencies' needs. Students are then notified of their placement assignment.

Once the match is made, it is the student's responsibility to contact the Field Instructor as soon as possible to complete any agency specific Human Resources requirements prior to the start of the internship. The School is not responsible for students' delay in making contact with or beginning Field Practicum at an identified agency.

Note: There may be additional costs incurred by the student to meet the HR requirements of the agency. These may include special training, security and health clearances (See Appendix k).

Dual Degree

The USC School of Social Work conducts dual degree programs with several other schools within the University. Students in these programs must meet the basic requirements of both schools in order to earn both degrees. The Foundation year field placement is administered primarily by the School of Social Work in collaboration with the dual degree school. The first year field placement follows the same process as described above. The administrative responsibility for the Concentration year placement varies depending on the dual degree program. In most cases, the collaborating school assumes primary responsibility for the assignment and monitoring of the Concentration year field placement. This is completed in consultation with the School of Social Work.

Mal-Practice Insurance

Each student must pay a required malpractice insurance fee prior to placement in a field agency (See Appendix j). Once the fee is paid, the student will be enrolled in and covered by the School's malpractice liability insurance policy. Students who have not paid the malpractice fee will not be permitted to begin their placement/Field Practicum and will have to make up missed hours. The School is not responsible for delays caused by the student's failure to pay malpractice insurance fees.

I. Field Calendar

The school of Social Work schedules specific events that require **MANDATORY ATTENDANCE**.

Student attendance and participation is required at the following events:

- Community Immersion
- Field Placement Orientation
- Concentration Placement Orientation
- Concentration Immersion
- All School Day
- Evidence-Base Intervention Training

To the fullest extent possible, students are expected to observe the agency attendance and time schedule policies. The Field Practicum is a class and students must adhere to the [field calendar](#) which identifies the beginning and ending dates of the Practicum as well as important Field Education activities and events. If the agency is closed on a "non-University" holiday, the student is expected to make up this time.

Students may participate in the following activities and receive field hour credits with the permission of their Field Instructors:

- Sacramento Legislative Days

- Social Work Job Fair

Students are allowed eight hours each semester to take time off for religious holidays which must be discussed in advance and arranged with the Field Instructor. Make-up hours for time missed must also be discussed with the Field Instructor. Students should approach their work at the agency as they would a place of employment, discussing any changes in schedule or promptly informing the Field Instructor of illness or absence. One such discussion is the University policy which prohibits students from working during Study Week. This typically falls on the week after the last day of field placement each semester.

Record keeping of required field hours including time spent in placement, optional activities noted above, and make-up hours is a joint responsibility of the student and the Field Instructor.

Should a problem arise due to conflicting commitments, these issues should be addressed and communicated by the student and the Field Instructor with the student's USC Field Liaison.

II. FIELD INSTRUCTOR INFORMATION

A. Introduction

Field Instructors play a crucial role in the USC School of Social Work Field Education experience. They provide the students the opportunity to merge previous life and work knowledge with the development of new professional competence. Field Instructors must teach the course following the objectives that are specific to the Foundation and Concentration year curriculum. The overarching objective of Field Instructors throughout both years and across all concentrations is to prepare students to enter the Social Work profession.

Field Instructors are given the mandate to teach the students. These are 3 basic teaching components for both years. First they must orient the students to the professional system of the agency, including but not limited to the purpose of the agency, the community it serves, its policies and procedures (particularly risk management/safety), and expectations for professional dress and comportment. The orientation should be geared to help the student take the first steps as a practitioner in the agency. The second crucial component is the development of the teacher-learner relationship between the student and the Field Instructor. This starts at the first contact wherein the Field Instructor clarifies and establishes the roles, expectations and the framework for the relationship.

The last and third component is the development of broad and rich case assignments. The student is expected to engage in a wide variety of Social Work activities from the beginning to the end of field placement. Field Instructors are responsible in providing direct practice experiences consisting of but not limited to the following:

- Multiple treatment modalities
- Assessment, diagnosis, treatment planning, and intervention
- Multi-cultural population

- Advocacy, resource referral, community needs assessment, evaluation, and documentation
- Termination

Field Internship is a time bound experience, and the field instructor carries the responsibility in planning, implementing, monitoring, and evaluating the student's educational experience.

B. Field Instructor Qualifications

MSW Interns are supervised by Field Instructors designated by the agency and the School of Social Work. They are committed to teaching and upholding the values and ethics of the Social Work profession. The Field Instructor must be identified and processed at the same time an agency site is approved. New or replacement Field Instructors may be processed at anytime. Field Instructors must have the following to qualify:

- An MSW degree from an accredited school of social work
- At least two years of post-master's social work experience
- A completion certificate of a new field instruction class from USC or any Southern California School of Social Work consortium partners accredited by the Council on Social Work Education (CSWE) or
- Plan to attend a semester-long course for new field instructors at USC or one of the CSWE accredited consortium partners. USC offers an on-ground and a hybrid (combination of on-ground & on-line) course while the VAC offers an on-line course only.

In addition, [Field Instructors](#) must meet the criteria required to teach and support MSW interns in field placement. They must also be committed to meet all documentation, supervision, and evaluation requirements of the program.

C. Field Instructor Responsibilities

Field Instructors are responsible for the following tasks to meet the course objectives:

- Meet student(s) prior to the start of the internship for a pre-placement meeting
- Facilitate and assist with any Human Resources process and/or requirements
- Provide an agency orientation at the start of internship
- Clearly define the student's role, tasks, responsibilities and scope of practice
- Provide training and support to students
- Assign and maintain a diverse caseload
- Provide meaningful opportunities to learn professional and direct practice skills.
 - At least 50% of field time must be in direct practice work
 - At least 10% of field time must be in indirect practice work
 - Exception: COPA – more emphasis on indirect practice work and a maximum of 20% direct practice work

NOTE: All [forms](#) referenced in the section below can be located on the Field Education website.

- Complete the **Learning Agreement** with the student in the beginning of the 1st semester:

- Use the appropriate form: Foundation, COPA, Families & Children, Health, Mental Health, or Social Work & Business
 - Complete the Field Instructor teaching plan
 - Review the student learning objectives
 - Collaborate with the student in developing learning activities for the 10 Competencies
 - Sign and turn in the form to the Field Liaison before grades are assigned on the last day of the Field Practicum/placement
- Identify and assign a preceptor as needed (include preceptor feedback in the evaluation)
- Provide Field Instruction
 - A minimum of 1 hour individual/group weekly supervision
 - Depending on the student's needs, weekly supervision could be a combination of individual or group supervision
 - Some group supervision may be facilitated by a non-social work professional
- Review and discuss the [Reflective Learning Tool](#) weekly (a minimum of 10/semester). The instructor must sign the **Reflective Learning Tool Log**. Note that COPA and Social Work & Business will not use the new Reflective Learning Tool but will continue to use the existing macro learning tool.
- Continuously monitor and evaluate the student's performance
- Communicate, consult, and problem solve with the Field Liaison for support, challenges, and as needed
- Participate in Field Liaison visit/contact
 - Contacts may vary: in person, virtual, e-mail or phone
 - 2x yearly for Foundation students
 - 2x yearly for Concentration students
 - More as needed or requested by student, Field Instructor, or Field Liaison
- Provide opportunity for and support of a macro project
- Complete the **Mid-year and the Final Evaluation Form** with the student at the end of each semester (1st/2nd):
 - Use the appropriate form: Foundation, COPA, Families & Children, Health, Mental Health, or Social Work & Business
 - Evaluate the student's skills in the 10 Competencies
 - Verify that the student has met the required placement hours for each semester
 - Verify that the student has met the school and the agency objectives and requirements
 - Verify the completion of at least 10 Reflective Learning Tool per semester
 - Sign and turn in the form to the Field Liaison by the last day of placement/Field Practicum each semester.
- Complete any additionally required Concentration year evaluation. Please consult with the Field Liaison for the appropriate form.
- Provide a grade recommendation on the evaluation form:
 - Recommend a grade of Credit, No Credit, or In-Progress
 - An In-Progress recommendation may be given in the 1st semester if the student's performance has not yet met the expectation. Both the Field Instructor and Field Liaison deem that with further work he/she will be able to meet the minimum standards
 - At the end of the 2nd semester, a Credit/No Credit recommendation should be made in consultation with the Field Liaison, documented, and

accompanied by a written learning contract (copies will be retained by the student, Field Instructor, Field Liaison, and Office of Student Affairs)

- The Field Liaison will approve and assign the final grade
- Facilitate the scheduled and/or unscheduled termination from the agency
- Consult with the Field Liaison regarding the supervision of dual degree students

D. Field Instruction

Field instruction takes many forms and methodologies. It ranges from the didactic method to experiential. It also varies in structure and technique. It is influenced by multiple factors such as the agency's focus, resources available, and the skills, interest, and the personality of both the instructor and the student. Although field instruction is a highly individualized process, the required components mentioned in the previous section are non-negotiable. The following are some general Field Instructor guidelines for teaching and supervising students and are meant to help establish a supportive learning and working environment:

- Adhere to regularly scheduled field instruction conferences with your student.
- Create a supportive environment and a positive teaching relationship taking into account your teaching style and the student's learning style.
- Be aware that you are the role model for client and peer relationships and interactions.
- Acknowledge authority-dependency conflicts and use as teaching opportunities.
- Establish your role as both supervisor and teacher early in the relationship.
- Make assignments meaningful and utilize process recordings early in the relationship.
- Focus on the process and not just the content.
- Balance performance monitoring with positive supportive feedback and genuine praise. Feedback needs to be relevant, clear, balanced, and timely. Encourage the student to reciprocate.
- Use case and project analysis in helping students examine their work, meet their learning objectives, process their reactions, and foster self-awareness.
- Assist the student to identify feelings, attitudes, biases, and reactions that affect their work.
- Discuss with the Field Liaison if personal therapy seems indicated.
- Introduce the use of audio taped, video recordings, and/or role-playing as a way to enrich the student's learning.
- Guide students in navigating the Developmental Stages of Internship based on the work of Sweitzer & King, 2004 (see appendix q).

E. Challenges

Field Education is inherently filled with positive and negative experiences and challenges. It is the job of the Field Instructor to create a stable learning environment in order to address these experiences and challenges and to facilitate the student's educational progress. It is the responsibility of the Field Liaison, the school representative, to provide support and guidance in order for the field instructor and the

student to succeed in this endeavor. As part of the process, Field Instructors are asked to balance opposing and/or complimentary forces such as the following in order to foster learning:

- Challenge vs. Support
- Autonomy vs. Dependence
- Learning Objectives vs. Agency Objectives
- Authority vs. Mutuality
- Education vs. Training

In most instances, the balancing act is enough to prevent any major problems in the field experience. Sometimes it is not sufficient and challenges in the learning process may occur. Some examples are:

- Persistent unprofessional and/or unethical conduct including disruptive behavior
- Conflicts in teaching and learning styles
- Not meeting agency and field requirements (charting, documentation, inconsistent or insufficient hours, etc.)
- Insufficient skill or inability to meet learning objectives

When this arises, Field Instructors are required to pursue the following steps:

- Identify and attempt to discuss and resolve the issue directly with the student.
- Document the issue and efforts to resolve it.
- Notify / consult / contact the assigned Field Liaison of the issue.
If you are not certain of the name of the Field Liaison, you may email kross@usc.edu, carolinp@usc.edu (UPC), alferos@usc.edu (VAC), mjliving@usc.edu (SDAC) or holttsber@usc.edu (OCAC) to identify the student's Liaison
- Invite the Field Liaison to mediate if unable to resolve it.
- If it persists, collaborate with the Field Liaison in formulating a formal learning contract to identify the conflict and steps to redress the situation.
- If the issue persists, the Field Liaison may re-place the student.

It is the philosophy of the school to exert all efforts to prevent a re-placement. It is disruptive to the agency and to the learning process of the student.

F. Safety

The school recognizes that students cannot be insulated from the risks in providing services to people, institutions, and communities in crisis. Students frequently lack the experience and skills to assess risk and take appropriate precautions. Basic safety measures are thoroughly discussed in the seminar class to help prevent any problems but it is still not enough. Field Instructors are expected to orient students in basic and agency related policies and procedures that can maximize their personal safety. It should include but not be limited to the following:

- Building/office security policy
- Fire, earthquake, and other emergency procedures

- Transportation policies and insurance requirements
- Sexual harassment/discrimination procedure
- Home /school / community visit safety policy and procedure
- Crisis intervention
- Emergency and support contacts

Periodic review of these safety measures is strongly recommended. Field Instructors are also required to contact the University Field Liaison to inform of any safety or human resources incidents or concerns.

G. Strike Policy

The Field Education Department's policy regarding agency strikes/work actions is based on the principles of educational integrity. It focuses on how educational expectations, goals and objectives can be met and maintained. The primary consideration is the student's educational experience rather than the merits of any given strike or work action. It is the Department's belief that a strike bound agency is not able to provide a climate conducive to a sound educational experience. The Field Education Department will make the assessment and decide on a course of action depending on the situation. Please see Appendix h for possible course of action.

III. STUDENT / MSW CANDIDATE: INFORMATION ON STUDENT ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES IN FIELD EDUCATION

A. Introduction

The MSW student/candidate has a unique challenge of learning the principles of the Social Work profession in the classroom and in placement. They are required to learn and simultaneously apply the knowledge in their field practicum work. Field Education provides the student this opportunity and helps increase his/her competency as a future Social Work professional. This requires strong commitment, dedication, and active participation from the MSW student/candidate. The School of Social Work and the agency are both committed in guiding the student through this process.

B. Field Placement

Field Faculty assigns Foundation year students in their placement. Concentration year students engage in a selection process. The school is responsible in placing the student with the appropriate field internship. The matching is based on the student's objectives, background, and circumstance. During each year, Foundation and Concentration students must follow their prospective procedures.

Foundation Year:

- Complete and submit the campus specific field placement form
- Pay the malpractice insurance fee

- Once the school notifies the student of the assigned placement via e-mail, the student must contact the agency as soon as possible to schedule a pre-placement visit
- Complete all pre-placement requirements as specified by the agency.
- Attend the student field orientation meeting at the beginning of the 1st semester of the Foundation year
- Attend and complete the Evidenced Based Intervention training prior to the beginning of field.

Concentration Year:

- Attend the Concentration Selection Information Meeting during Foundation year.
- Declare a Concentration
- Attend the Concentration Orientation to start the placement process
- Follow each concentration's specific placement process including selecting agencies, interviewing, and ranking the agencies. The agencies will engage in selecting and ranking the students who have interviewed as well.
- Pay the malpractice insurance fee
- Follow specified timelines
- Once the school notifies you of your placement, complete all pre-placement requirements*
- Attend the specific Concentration Immersion

Note: Students may incur non-refundable costs for additional security clearance, specialized training, and/or other human resources processing specifically required by the agency. The School cannot be responsible for delays caused by a student's lack of prompt attention to these tasks.

C. Student Responsibilities

MSW students are responsible for the following tasks to meet the course objectives for the Field Practicum class:

- Contact and meet with the Field Instructor as soon as you are notified of your placement for a pre-placement meeting and/or Human Resources processing
- Complete Assignment #1 for the 587a class using the pre-placement meeting (Foundation year students only)
- Participate in the agency orientation at the start of internship. If no orientation information is provided please inquire.
- Learn the different roles, tasks, responsibilities and scope of practice of the agency
- Be open to feedback and support
- Discuss field internship issues in the Foundation year seminar class for added feedback and support
- Maintain a diverse caseload
- Seek meaningful opportunities to learn professional and direct practice skills.
 - At least 50% of field time must be in direct practice work
 - At least 10% of field time must be in indirect practice work
 - Exception: COPA – more emphasis on indirect practice work and a maximum of 20% direct practice work

NOTE: All forms referenced in the section below can be found on the USC SSW website: [Field Forms](#)

- Complete the **Learning Agreement** with the Field Instructor in the first three weeks of the field placement in the 1st semester
 - Use the appropriate form: Foundation, COPA, Families & Children, Health, Mental Health, or Social Work & Business. Consult with your Field Liaison for accuracy
 - Complete all sections except for Section VII. Make sure the Orientation Checklist section is completed and signed
 - Review the student learning objectives with your Field Instructor
 - Collaborate with the Field Instructor in developing learning activities for the 10 Competencies
 - Sign and turn in to the Field Liaison mid-first semester
- Come prepared and actively participate in field supervision
 - A minimum of 1 hour individual weekly supervision can alternate with a minimum 1 hour group supervision (Total of 2 hours of individual and/ or 2 hours of group supervision monthly)
 - Group supervision may be facilitated by a non-social work professional
- Turn in a completed [Reflective Learning Tool](#) weekly (a minimum of 10/semester). The student is responsible in keeping track of the weekly submission and making sure the **Reflective Learning Toll Log is signed**. Note that COPA and Social Work & Business will not use the new Reflective Learning Tool but will continue to use the existing macro learning tool.
- Continuously review and evaluate your performance
- Communicate, consult, and problem solve with the Field Instructor, Field Liaison, and/or Preceptor for support, concerns/issues, and as needed
- Participate in Field Liaison contact
 - Contacts may vary: in person visit, virtual, e-mail or phone
 - 2x yearly for Foundation students
 - 2x yearly for Concentration students
 - More as needed
- Foundation students: complete a macro project by the end of the 2nd semester to meet the requirements for the 587b class
- Participate in completing **the Mid-year and the Final Comprehensive Skills and Evaluation Form** with the Field Instructor at the end of each semester (1st/2nd).
 - Use the appropriate form: Foundation, COPA, Families & Children, Health, Mental Health, or Social Work & Business (appendix p or link). Consult with the Field Liaison for accuracy.
 - Complete the required placement hours for each semester (Total minimum requirement of 1022 hours for 1st and 2nd year of internship)
 - Meet the school and the agency objectives and requirements
 - Earn the appropriate evaluation levels
 - Complete a minimum of 10 Reflective Learning Tool for each semester
 - Turn in a signed Reflective Learning Tool Log each semester
 - Sign and turn in the evaluation to the Field Liaison at the end of each semester
- All paperwork must be completed and turned in before a grade is given for each semester
- Consult with the Field Liaison if you are a dual degree student

D. Supervision

MSW candidates are expected to integrate the knowledge and skills learned in the classroom with their field practicum experience. The student gradually develops his/her identity as a Social Worker and learns the values and ethics of the profession. This is an individualized process and develops over a period of time. This growth is significantly facilitated by the Field Instructor through the process of supervision. The following are some guidelines to help students take full advantage of the field practicum experience and supervision:

- Follow the school guidelines for placement
- Be on time for placement, field instruction, and field seminars
- Behave and dress in a professional manner and abide by the NASW Code of Ethics
- Align learning goals with CSWE's 10 Core Competencies
- Maintain agency standards and practice guidelines
- Come prepared to supervision and complete all assignments on time
- Be open to constructive feedback and make the effort to try or implement the feedback
- Be pro-active in your role as a learner, articulate learning needs, and seek to meet them
- Complete and submit Reflective Learning Tool assignments on time to your field instructor
- Share concerns/issues/questions promptly with your Field Instructor and/or Field Liaison
- Be self-aware; take time to reflect upon and process feelings, thoughts, actions, and reactions

E. Challenges and Support

The student/candidate is expected to be an active learner in Field Education and accept the guidance, support, and the evaluation of the Field Instructor. When there is a mismatch between the student's needs and the available learning opportunities and supports, challenges and issues might occur. The following are some of the possible source of concerns or conflicts:

- Minimal or lack of learning opportunities
- Lack of supervision
- Scheduling issues
- Excessive absence
- Issues of harassment and discrimination
- Medical or personal issues

Students are encouraged to follow these procedures to resolve any concern:

- Articulate the problem. Discuss and resolve issues directly with the Field Instructor if appropriate
- Involve and communicate the issue with the Field Liaison as early as possible in the process
- If the issue persists, request the involvement of the Field Liaison for mediation/resolution

The student/candidate must always be cognizant that Field Education/Practicum is a class (SOWK 586A/B & 686A/B) and must meet the standards for satisfactory academic progress and performance in order to pass or move forward in the program. Students who “walk out” or fail to report regularly to a field placement do so at the risk of a grade of No Credit thus placing themselves in academic jeopardy.

All policies and procedures in regard to registration, withdrawal, attendance, grading, grades of in-progress or incomplete, disputing a grade, leave of absence, academic probation, FERPA (Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act), ADA (Accommodations for Students with Disabilities) and more apply. Failure to complete the Field Practicum on time may also jeopardize Financial Aid. The student/candidate must involve the Field Liaison/Advisor immediately regarding any problems related to Field Practicum. Please review the [“Current Student Website”](#) and the USC School of Social Work Handbook for complete information.

IV. APPENDIX

- a. Field Education Website:
<http://sowkweb.usc.edu/master-of-social-work/msw-degree/field-education>
- b. Field Education Forms: Calendar, MOU, New Agency Information Packet, Reflective Learning Tool, Learning Agreement/Evaluation, etc.
<http://sowkweb.usc.edu/master-of-social-work/msw-degree/field-education/form>
- c. Curriculum Snapshot:
<http://sowkweb.usc.edu/document/1125>
- d. Current Student Website: Class Schedule, OASIS, Student Handbook, etc.
<http://sowkweb.usc.edu/currentstudents/index.html>
- e. Developmental Stages of Internship based on the work of Sweitzer & King (2004)
 1. Anticipation
 - Characterized by having mixed feelings of excitement, fear, doubts, and anxiety.
 - Tasks: provide orientation, clear expectation, and help the student adjust
 2. Disillusionment and Confrontation
 - Characterized by the conflict between the student's unrealistic expectation vs. the reality of the work
 - Task: be available, guide and support in reaching a compromise between expectation and reality
 3. Competence
 - Characterized by the increase in sense of confidence, proficiency, and a better understanding of the link between theory and practice
 - Tasks: encourage more sophisticated discussion of value dilemmas, support independence and initiatives, and promote self-care
 4. Culmination
 - Characterized by re-appearance of self doubt, sadness, relief, withdrawal, and/or detachment
 - Tasks: Model termination, encourage to start early, encourage students to open up and be vulnerable in supervision to process termination appropriately
- f. Foundation Year Objectives and Outline:
 1. Socialize to the role of social work in the agency setting, including the professional role with clients, agency staff and other professionals;
 2. Demonstrate professional competence and identity, including understanding, accepting and applying professional ethics, values, dress, and behavior;
 3. Demonstrate an active and self-evaluative learning role;
 4. Develop and sustain relationships and communication with clients;
 5. Obtain, organize and communicate accurate information;

6. Begin to apply theory to practice and to engage in orderly thinking, utilizing at least one theoretical framework;
7. Demonstrate assessment skills understanding and conducting a bio-psycho-social history;
8. Demonstrate treatment planning skills based on information, assessment, and resources;
9. Demonstrate a variety of interventions utilizing basic interviewing skills (such as clarifying, interpreting, problem solving, resource linkage, advocacy, etc.);
10. Perform accurate and concise case presentations from a theoretical perspective;
11. Demonstrate and understand professional use of self;
12. Demonstrate knowledge of field placement agency and utilization of community resources;
13. Begin to develop leadership skills in identifying problems/issues and suggest appropriate strategies for change in both practice and policy arenas.

g. NASW Code of Ethics: <http://www.socialworkers.org/pubs/code/code.asp>

h. Strike Policy Course of Action:

If an agency is in a bona fide strike situation prior to the beginning of the field work placement period, no students will be placed for field work in that agency for that academic year. If the agency reaches resolution of the strike situation at some point during the academic year, the agency may be used for a mid-year placement depending on re-assessment of the agency and its ability to meet the learning and educational expectations of the department. This assessment will be completed by one of the field faculty.

If a strike or work action situation occurs in an agency where students are in placement during the course of the academic year. These options may be considered:

1. The student may request not to remain in the placement agency during the period of the strike or work action. The student will be supported in this decision by the department, and will not suffer any academic consequences. The field hours missed during the strike period will need to be made up by the student during the regular semester, break periods, and/or in an extended placement through May/June of the academic year. A plan for missed hours make up will be developed by the student's field faculty liaison in consultation with the Associate Dean for Field Education, the student and the field instructor.
2. The student may request to remain in the placement setting during the period of strike or work action. This option will be available only when the Department can be sure that the educational integrity of the field work placement can be maintained. This means that the supervisory requirements, caseload requirements and other expectations of field work can be consistently met by the agency during the strike or work action period and that there is no danger to the student. Students wishing to remain in the

agency must discuss this plan with the Field Faculty Liaison who will verify the agency's ability to provide appropriate supervision and educational experiences. The student will be supported in this decision, and will not suffer any academic consequences.

If a strike or work action continues beyond a three week period, a reassessment of the ability of the agency to provide the appropriate supervision and educational experiences will be made by the Field Faculty Liaison. If the agency is found not able to meet the educational requirements of the field department, the student may be relocated to another agency site until the strike or work action have been resolved, and/or until the agency is able to provide the appropriate educational activities; or the student may be replaced.

It is expected that field seminars will devote some time and attention to issues around strikes, work actions, and the subsequent professional dilemmas surrounding these situations in order to assist the student in developing a clear understanding of the relevant issues in regard to the strike, and an understanding of the implications of the strike for the student's field education experience. Issues around responsibility to clients during strike situations may be discussed in field seminars or in special Field Liaison meetings with students.

- i. Virtual Academic Center: <http://sowkweb.usc.edu/academic/mswatusc-index.html>
- j. Malpractice Insurance:
All students entering field placement are required to participate in the USC School of Social Work's malpractice insurance coverage. This plan covers students while they are in their Foundation and Concentration year field placement. The cost is \$80 and was included in the commitment deposit.
- k. Notice of Possible Background Checks, Drugs Testing and/or Finger Printing:
The University of Southern California, School of Social Work does not require background checks, drug testing or finger printing for admission into the social work program. However, there is a national trend that an increasing number of facilities require social work students to provide a security clearance, background check and/or other additional information in order to participate in internships at their sites. The successful completion of internships is a prerequisite for earning a social work degree from USC.

The following are the areas of inquiry typically covered in a background check, although some clinical sites may require a more comprehensive background check:

- A sex offender database search;
- A seven year review of a student's criminal court history, including arrest records and records of misdemeanor and felony convictions
- Address verification;
- Two name verifications (e.g., current legal name and one other name[AKA]);
- Three county check of records;
- Search of the Department of Health and Human Services Office of the inspector General database of excluded persons; and

- Social Security number verification

Students are solely responsible for obtaining the documentation needed to satisfy the background check and additional testing requirements of a clinical site. Fees required to obtain the background checks and any additional tests are also the sole responsibility of the student.

Refusal to satisfy the background check and additional testing requirements for clinical placement, or failure to pass these checks and tests, may severely limit placement options and may cause a delay in advancing in the MSW program or prevent graduation due to the student's inability to complete Field Practicum requirements. In such an event, while USC will attempt to place the student at an alternative agency, USC cannot guarantee the availability of placement sites or the student's acceptance into those sites. In such cases, the student may not be able to earn the degree he or she is seeking at USC.

The results of the background checks and any additional testing should be reported directly to the agency site. USC does not require a copy of the results, but may request confirmation from the student or agency that all requirements for placement have been satisfied.

USC, and its trustees, agents and employees, are not responsible for any claims and liabilities arising out of or in any way related to the background check or additional testing requests or disclosures made to the internship sites.