

SocialWork@Simmons

Field Education Manual

2014-2015



Simmons School of Social Work

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SocialWork@Simmons
FIELD EDUCATION MANUAL

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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.



Kim Kelly Harriman, MSW, LICSW
Director, Field Education
Simmons School of Social Work



Silvana Castañeda
Director of Field Education
SocialWork@Simmons

MSW PROGRAM

The Simmons College School of Social Work Masters 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 life-long 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.

All students are given equal access to the college's programs and resources. 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 should not serve as a supervisor of 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

Introduction

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 using 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 supervisor who will determine and assist in the necessary steps and actions related to field placement and course work.

*Acknowledgements: School of Social Work
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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 excellent 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 throughout the year.
- 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 must complete 1120 hours of fieldwork over the course of the program — 448 in the foundation placement and 672 in the advanced placement.
- 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 skill in a range of roles:

- direct clinical practice
- accessing, coordinating and developing services
- formulating bio-psycho-social assessments and treatment plans
- assisting clients in making plans for intervention
- collaboration with staff and community providers
- 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 effecting client systems.

FIELD PLACEMENT ABSENCE POLICY

Students will adhere to the holiday schedule of the agency in which they are placed. For example, if Simmons is closed on Veterans' Day and the agency is not, the student is expected to report to their field placement. Students also follow agency protocol in the event of inclement weather. Students will not be required to make up the first

five absences per placement due to agency closings, holidays, illnesses or inclement weather. Any days beyond the five days will need to be made up.

AGENCY AFFILIATION FOR FIELD PLACEMENTS

Introduction

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, 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 demonstrated a social work program with 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. Case 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/Supervisor," 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 caseload 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, 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 managing a substantial direct service case load. 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 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/Supervisor

It is essential that field instructors be fully identified with the social work profession and committed to its values and ethics. *All primary supervisors 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 supervisors 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 supervisors, 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 caseload 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 upon 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 supervisor. Additionally, students should receive an additional half-hour of informal consultation as needed. This consultation can occur with either the primary supervisor or other relevant staff members.
- Advanced students are required to receive one hour of individual supervision per week with their primary supervisor. In addition, advanced students should receive an additional hour of supervision by participating in group supervision or supplemental individual supervision provided by another masters-level clinician.
- Field instructors should allot additional time to read process recordings and other reports, plan informal conferences, and consult with the field liaison and other school representatives as needed.
- New supervisors 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 Simmons Learning Management System (<https://2sw.socialwork.simmons.edu/local/login>). This is optional for supervisors with previous supervising 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.

Each year field instructors submit the agency qualification form along with a copy of their resume for our review and our files.

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 may 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 sections *Field Placement Site Criteria* and *Criteria for Selection of Field Instructor/Supervisor*.

Safety Policy and Procedures

The Simmons School of Social Work field education department has adopted the following policy and procedures regarding the safety of SSW 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. While social workers and interns may be more aware of these issues in urban areas, we believe issues of safety are relevant in all communities and settings. We urge SSW students to become familiar with this policy regardless of the location of your internship placement.

I. Policy

- a) The School of Social Work is responsible for providing all students and field liaisons with general written information about safety in field placement.
- b) The SSW 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 SSW 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. SSW students should not be required to engage or to remain in assignments or at placements in which they feel physically at risk. SSW 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.

II. Procedures

- a) 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 the school should take to ensure the student's physical and emotional well-being in the wake of the incident and on an ongoing basis.
- b) 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 to assess the student's readiness to return to the field and any other issues relevant to the situation. As needed, the director of field education may alert the dean or associate dean of the SSW about incidents and concerns.

III. Safety Guidelines for Students in the Field

- a) **Agency Protocol**
It is important for students to know the agency's safety and security protocol for office and home visits with clients prior to 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. SSW 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.

b) 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.

c) 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 impulse control, and can raise issues of safety for the client, the social worker, the student intern and others.

There may be times when students work with individuals who have difficulty with

reality testing, dealing with overwhelming emotions, and controlling their anger. Some of them may be prone to violence and may possess a weapon. Other clients may be intoxicated, high on drugs, in withdrawal, or may have other medical or neurological disorders. Again, we urge all SSW students to consult with your 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.

d) **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 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, and what to wear. 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

supervisors informed about their schedules at the agencies at all times.

e) **Safety Guidelines for Travel by Car**

When a student is traveling by car to an agency or to home visits, it is advisable to know where he or she is going, and to look at a map before driving to unfamiliar areas. In general, remember to be alert, and to lock doors and close windows. The student should tell someone where he or she is going and the expected amount of time she/he will be away from the office. The agency should have your cell phone number or other information on how to contact you in the event of an emergency.

f) **Safety Guidelines for Travel by Foot or Public Transportation**

When traveling by foot or public transportation, it is advisable that students know where they are going and the route by which they will travel. Students are encouraged to carry the least amount of valuables with them as 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.

g) **Safety Guidelines for Home Visits**

It is important for students to familiarize themselves with the clients' file prior to the home visit. If there is a question of safety, 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. If a student ever feels threatened at any point during the interview, they are encouraged to err on the side of caution and appropriately terminate the visit. If clients seem to feel threatened by the student entering their dwelling, the student should desist and not force the issue. If a student hears a heated argument from inside the house or apartment, the student may decide to reschedule the visit or call to assess the situation before entering the dwelling. A student should never see a potentially dangerous client alone without someone else in the agency knowing about it. In general, a cell phone is very useful for students doing home visits.

h) **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.

IV. 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, which was used in developing the SSW safety policy.

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.

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 let field liaisons and the placement team know of anything that might be discovered in a background check so that an appropriate placement plan can be made.

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 completed 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). It must be remembered that, for agencies, recording is part of the accountability process. Student recordings should be kept up-to-date so that appropriate service may be provided to students' clients during absences because of vacation, illness, or school attendance.

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.

Other Student Responsibilities and Rights

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

- An introductory meeting
- An in-depth conversation prior to each virtual field visit
- A discussion about concerns or problems in field placement or academic course work
- A planning meeting for the advanced placement (for foundation students)
- An optional meeting to review post-graduation plans (for advanced students).

Confidential Communication

Simmons recommends that training directors review agency confidentiality and informed consent policies with social work staff and interns.

FIELD WORK HOURS

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 SSW. 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 supervisor.

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 during regular business hours (Monday-Friday, 8 am-8 pm) to align with agency activities.

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.

Absences: 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. 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.

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 agencies should be discussed with the supervisor. 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

The Council on Social Work Education (CSWE) has delineated 10 core competencies for all social work students. Practice behaviors provide opportunities to demonstrate ability with each competency. Evaluation of field performance will be based on students' ability to achieve the

practice 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 Competencies and Practice Behaviors

Competency I: Identify as a professional social worker and conduct oneself accordingly

Social workers are representatives of the profession, and are identified with its mission and core values. They understand the history of the social work profession. Social workers commit themselves to the profession's enhancement and to their own professional conduct and growth. They are able to act with self-awareness and an understanding of their ongoing professional development needs. Social workers:

- Advocate for client access to the services of social work
- Practice personal reflection and self-correction to assure continual professional development
- Attend to professional roles and boundaries
- Demonstrate professional demeanor in behavior, appearance, and communication
- Understand the importance of career-long learning
- Use supervision and consultation

Competency II: Apply social work ethical principles to guide professional practice

Social workers have an obligation to adhere to the value base of the profession and its ethical standards in all professional interactions, and to accomplish the shift from lay to professional values and identity. Social workers are aware that their own actions and attitudes are influenced by personal history, biases, and assumptions. Social workers have the ability to analyze and respond appropriately to ethical issues as they emerge in practice contexts, utilizing supervision and consultation.

- Recognize and manage personal values in a way that allows professional values to guide practice
- Make ethical decisions by applying standards of the NASW Code of Ethics and, as applicable, of the IFSW/IASSW Ethics in Social Work, Statement of Principles
- Tolerate ambiguity in resolving ethical conflicts
- Apply strategies of ethical reasoning to arrive at principled decisions

Competency III: Apply critical thinking to inform and communicate professional judgments

Social workers are able to engage in an intellectually disciplined process of actively and skillfully conceptualizing, analyzing, synthesizing, evaluating and communicating information generated by observation, experience, and reflection. Social workers think open-mindedly within alternative systems of thought, recognizing and assessing their assumptions, practice implications, and practical consequences. Social workers:

- Distinguish, appraise and integrate multiple sources of knowledge, including research-based knowledge and practice wisdom
- Analyze models of assessment, prevention, intervention, and evaluation
- Demonstrate effective oral and written communication in working with individuals, families, groups, organizations, communities, and colleagues

Competency IV: Engage diversity and difference in practice

Social workers understand how diversity characterizes and shapes the human experience and is critical to the formation of identity. They recognize the multiple dimensions of diversity, including age, class, color, culture, disability, ethnicity, gender, gender identity and expression,

immigration status, political ideology, race, religion, sex, and sexual orientation. Social workers appreciate that, as a consequence of difference, a person's life experiences may include oppression, poverty, marginalization, and alienation as well as privilege, power, and status.

Social workers:

- Recognize the extent to which a culture's structures and values may oppress, marginalize, alienate or create or enhance privilege and power
- Gain sufficient self-awareness to eliminate the influence of personal biases and values in working with diverse groups
- Recognize and communicate their understanding of the importance of difference in shaping life experiences
- View themselves as learners and engage those with whom they work as informants

Competency V: Advance human rights and social and economic justice

Social workers are aware of and can identify the larger social structures and processes that can negatively impact the well-being of communities and individuals. They are able to develop systematic critical analyses that lead to identifying ways that social workers can intervene and oppose oppression professionally and personally. Social workers recognize the global interconnections of oppression and are knowledgeable about theories of social justice and social action strategies to promote human and civil rights. Social workers incorporate social justice practices in organizations, institutions, and society to ensure that basic human rights are distributed equitably and without prejudice. Social workers:

- Understand the forms and mechanisms of oppression and discrimination
- Advocate for human rights and economic justice
- Engage in practices that advance social and economic justice

Competency VI: Engage in research-informed practice and practice-informed research

Social workers understand the fundamental principles and processes of social work research, including ethical considerations. Social workers are critical consumers of research and the professional literature, with a focus on the specialized interests and needs of individuals, families, and communities. They understand the virtuous circle that links practice-informed research and research informed-practice. They understand the importance of practice and program evaluation. They are familiar with quantitative and qualitative approaches, and use research to inform practice with cultural sensitivity and competence. Social workers:

- Use practice experience to inform scientific inquiry
- Use research evidence to inform practice

Competency VII: Apply knowledge of human behavior and the social environment

Social workers are knowledgeable about current theoretical frameworks used to understand the bio-psycho-social-cultural processes that shape human behavior and personality across the life course. They understand the multiple contexts in which people live, and appreciate both regularities and diversity in human development and behavior. They are able to draw reasonable inferences from observational data and justify these with reference to theory and research. They are able to think critically about multiple frameworks and consider practice implications. Social workers:

- Utilize conceptual frameworks to guide the process of assessment, intervention, and evaluation
- Critique and apply knowledge to understand person and environment

Competency VIII: Engage in policy practice to advance social and economic well-being and to deliver effective social work services

Social workers have the ability to apply knowledge about policy to client situations and specific social issues. They understand the historical, economic, political, value and attitudinal factors that shape policies and the effects on service to clients. They actively engage in policy practice. Social workers understand the profession's contribution to social welfare policy development, design, and implementation. Social workers:

- Analyze, formulate and advocate for policies that advance social well-being
- Collaborate with colleagues and clients for effective policy action

Competency IX: Respond to contexts that shape practice

Social workers understand that the contexts that shape practice are fluid and evolving. They are informed, resourceful, and proactive in responding to shifts in organizational, community, and societal contexts at all levels of practice. Social workers recognize that the context of practice is dynamic and use knowledge and skill to respond proactively. Social workers:

- Continuously discover, appraise and attend to changing locales, populations, scientific and technological developments, and emerging societal trends to provide relevant services
- Provide leadership in promoting sustainable changes in service delivery and practice to improve the quality of social services

Competency X: Engage, assess, intervene and evaluate with individuals, families, groups, organizations and communities.

Social workers understand that professional practice involves the dynamic and interactive processes of engagement, assessment, intervention, and evaluation at multiple levels. Social workers have the knowledge and skills to practice with individuals, families, groups, organizations, and communities. Practice knowledge includes identifying, analyzing, and

implementing evidence-based interventions designed to achieve client goals; using research and technological advances; evaluating program outcomes and practice effectiveness; developing, analyzing, advocating, and providing leadership for policies and services; and promoting social and economic justice.

Engagement

- Substantively and affectively prepare for action with individuals, families, groups, organizations and communities
- Use empathy and other interpersonal skills
- Develop a mutually agreed-on focus of work and desired outcomes

Assessment

- Collect, organize, and interpret client data
- Assess client strengths and limitations
- Develop mutually agreed-on intervention goals and objectives
- Select appropriate intervention strategies

Intervention

- Initiate actions to achieve organizational goals
- Implement prevention interventions that enhance client capacities
- Help clients resolve problems
- Negotiate, mediate, and advocate for clients
- Facilitate transitions and endings

Evaluation

- Critically analyze, monitor and evaluate interventions

Advanced Competencies and Practice Behaviors

In the advanced placement, students are expected to build on their knowledge and skills from their foundation placement, and demonstrate a skill level that reflects a more complex understanding and application of social work practice. With a concentration in clinical social work, advanced students are expected to broaden and deepen the assessment and intervention skills learned in the first year.

Students move towards greater integration and analysis of theory and practice, and a more conscious use of self and increased autonomy. The following Practice Behaviors are to be demonstrated in the advanced placement:

Competency I: Identify as a professional social worker and conduct oneself accordingly

Advanced practitioners in clinical social work recognize the importance of the cultivation of a certain “habit of mind,” one which involves the ability to move creatively back and forth between the theoretical and practical world of clinical social work. They understand the primacy of the therapeutic relationship, operate from person-in-environment and strengths perspectives, reflect on their own learning needs and commit to a process of ongoing professional development, demonstrate the professional use of self with clients, and adhere to ethical guidelines of professional behavior. Advanced practitioners in clinical social work:

- Demonstrate professional use of self with clients.
- Understand and identify professional strengths and make plans for professional development.
- Develop, manage, and maintain therapeutic relationships with clients within the person-in-environment and strengths perspectives.

Competency II: Apply social work ethical principles to guide professional practice

Advanced practitioners in clinical social work are knowledgeable about ethical and legal issues, have the ability to monitor their own values and biases and their potential impact on practice, and the capacity to build and maintain productive helping relationships taking into consideration appropriate boundaries and conscious use of self in the professional role. Advanced practitioners in clinical social work:

- Identify ethical tensions and apply ethical decision-making skills to issues specific to clinical practice.

- Use supervision and consultation to make ethical decisions applying the NASW Code of Ethics.

Competency III: Apply critical thinking to inform and communicate professional judgments

Advanced practitioners understand and can assess the relative strengths and limitations of multiple theoretical perspectives and practice approaches. They can articulate the theoretical perspectives that inform practice and the differential use of self. They use sound judgment and problem solving strategies under pressure. They monitor their own biases and values and their potential impact on practice. Advanced practitioners in clinical social work:

- Identify and articulate clients' strengths and vulnerabilities.
- Evaluate the strengths and weaknesses of multiple theoretical perspectives and differentially apply them to client situations.

Competency IV: Engage diversity and difference in practice

Advanced practitioners in clinical social work are knowledgeable about many forms of diversity and difference and how these influence the clients' presenting issues and the therapeutic relationship. Advanced practitioners are knowledgeable about the ways in which various dimensions of diversity affect (a) presentations of problems in living, (b) help-seeking behaviors, and (c) problem-solving and healing practices. Advanced practitioners understand how clinical practice is shaped by both convergences and divergences in social worker and client/colleague identities. Advanced practitioners in clinical social work:

- Research and apply knowledge of diverse populations to enhance client well-being.
- Work effectively with diverse populations.
- Demonstrate efforts to address issues of difference with clients and colleagues to enhance working relationships.

Competency V: Advance human rights and social and economic justice

Advanced practitioners in clinical social work understand the potentially challenging effects of economic, social, and cultural factors in the lives of clients and client systems. Advanced practitioners understand the importance of power and the dynamics of domination and subordination, and the costs of multiple systemic oppressions to all individuals. They understand and employ strategies for advancing human rights and social and economic justice in domestic and global contexts. Advanced practitioners in clinical social work:

- Use knowledge of the effects of oppression, discrimination and historical trauma on client and client systems to guide treatment planning, intervention and advocacy.
- Acquire skills that enhance the capacity to advocate for individual or groups at the individual, organizational and political levels.

Competency VI: Engage in research-informed practice and practice-informed research

Advanced clinical practitioners are knowledgeable about evidence-based interventions, best practices, and the evidence-based research process. They have the ability to select practice interventions supported by an evidentiary base. They understand the rationale for, and acquire the tools needed to evaluate practice and program outcomes. Advanced practitioners in clinical social work:

- Use the evidence-based practice process in clinical assessment and intervention with clients.
- Demonstrate an understanding of research methodology for evaluation of clinical practice effectiveness and/or outcomes.

Competency VII: Apply knowledge of human behavior and the social environment

Advanced clinical practitioners understand that human behavior is produced, in part, by cultural and social forces, and that the theories we study are themselves products of particular cultural and organizational forces and always in flux. They know how to coordinate and differentially apply the theories of human behavior and the social environment (biological, developmental, psychological, social, cultural, and spiritual). They recognize the developmental and cultural meanings of mental health issues and problems. They have knowledge of descriptive diagnostics, and the ability to use these flexibly and sensitively with the diverse client and service delivery systems which demand their use. Advanced practitioners in clinical social work:

- Synthesize and differentially apply theories of human behavior and the social environment to guide clinical practice.
- Use bio-psycho-social-spiritual theories and multi-axial diagnostic classification systems in the formulation of comprehensive assessments.

Competency VIII: Engage in policy practice to advance social and economic well-being and to deliver effective social work services

Advanced practitioners in clinical social work incorporate into practice knowledge an understanding of how oppression, racism, and socio-economic injustice impacts client populations, policy, and service delivery. Advanced practitioners have knowledge about factors that influence the development of legislation, policies, program services, and funding at all system levels. They are able to apply policy analysis skills in recognizing and working to change social conditions and policies that contribute to discrimination and unequal access to services or resources. Advanced practitioners in clinical social work:

- Communicate to the stakeholders the implication of policies and policy change in the lives of clients.

- Use evidence-based practice and practice-based evidence in advocacy for policies that advance social and economic well-being.

Competency IX: Respond to contexts that shape practice

Advanced practitioners in clinical social work are knowledgeable about how relational, organizational, and community systems may impact clients. They anticipate and react to evolving cultural, technological, geographical, political, legal, economic, and environmental contexts. They work collaboratively, often including clients, to effect changes within these contexts. Advanced practitioners in clinical social work:

- Recognize that the context of practice is dynamic and have the knowledge and skills to respond proactively.
- Work collaboratively to influence and promote changes in service delivery.

Competency X: Engage, assess, intervene and evaluate with individuals, families, groups, organizations and communities.

Clinical social work practice involves the dynamic, interactive, and reciprocal processes of therapeutic engagement, multidimensional assessment, clinical intervention, and practice evaluation at multiple levels. Advanced practitioners have the ability to develop in-depth assessments and complex formulations of the client/system that include an analysis of the presenting problem, the socio-cultural context, and issues related to economic and social justice. They are able to identify, design, and implement clinically and culturally appropriate interventions that consider the client/client system's strengths, issues, resources, and needs, and address problems at a variety of system levels. They have theoretically informed knowledge of practice models, techniques, and approaches, and the skills required to evaluate treatment outcomes and practice effectiveness.

- **1 a) Engagement:** Develop a culturally informed therapeutic relationship.
- **1 b) Engagement:** Attend to the interpersonal and contextual factors affecting the therapeutic alliance.
- **2 a) Assessment:** Develop comprehensive assessments and formulations of clients and client systems.
- **2 b) Assessment:** Select and modify appropriate intervention strategies based on continuous clinical assessment.
- **2 c) Assessment:** Apply differential and (multiaxial) diagnoses.
- **3 a) Intervention:** Critically evaluate, select, and apply best practices and evidence-based interventions.
- **3 b) Intervention:** Collaborate with other professionals to coordinate treatment interventions.
- **4 a) Evaluation:** Use clinical evaluation of needs, process and/or outcomes to develop best practice interventions and refine intervention strategies.

FIELD EDUCATION CURRICULUM

Curriculum Expectations of the Field Placement

The school expects that the student assignments will be as varied as the agency's service requirements permit. However, a main criterion for the selection of cases and other assignments will be their educational value for the individual trainee. At the beginning of the internship an educational assessment of each student is the collaborative responsibility of the school (field liaison) and the field instructor, with the student. Through this process, goals for the year and learning objectives are formulated and a learning contract is mutually agreed upon.

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 supervisor.** The supervisor (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 supervisor 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.

Caseload 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 cases be available for immediate assignment to students on arrival at the agency. Cases and other assignments increase as the student and supervisor, in consultation with the field liaison, continue to plan the year. 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, inter-disciplinary 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 caseload 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 in to the field liaison on ALCEA:

<https://www.alceasoftware.com/web/login.php>.

The field liaison will review the contract and approve or suggest changes or additions.

Process Recordings

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, and develop interviewing skills and the capacity for self-reflection. The interview content is the basis on which the supervisor 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 the field instructor, student, and field liaison.

All students are required to complete one process recording each week. In the beginning, 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 six pages in length.

Summary recordings are useful for practice with larger systems. For example a student planning and implementing a preventive educational program in the community might keep a log of the steps taken, people contacted, and the student's reactions to and evaluation of the program.

Many instructors and students also find value in audiotaping interviews, with the client's permission, though it requires time to review the tapes. If agency resources allow, videotaping, or having interviews observed behind a one-way mirror, are also valuable learning tools.

Psychosocial Assessments

Psychosocial assessments and intervention plans are recommended on each case. Many agencies have a good format for doing assessments and students should use it. However, due to changing agency and practice demands some assessment outlines for permanent records are very brief. Students need to develop good skills in history taking, organizing both small and large amounts of data, and problem formulation as a basis for thoughtful interventions. Assessment material is often used to prepare for case conferences and as the basis for class assignments. It is required that students do at least one detailed, narrative assessment each semester even if the agency does not require formal assessments or uses abbreviated forms. It is also expected that supervisors will discuss intervention plans for each client, family or group with their interns regardless of whether a formal plan is required by the agency.

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:

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 of the agency setting. Unless you have the client's written permission, confidentiality must be strictly maintained when discussing or writing about clients in the classroom, in assignments and in process recordings.

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 department with an evaluation of their field learning experience.

Field Education Check-In

Students will be contacted by their field liaison to track their field activities periodically during the year. This check-in helps the student and his/her liaison track caseload and supervision issues, and to identify potential problem areas.

Field Assignments

Once each semester, prior to the scheduled virtual field visit, students will submit to their field liaison examples of recent process recordings that include the supervisor's feedback. The student will also be asked at the time of the field visit to reflect on other learning goals as outlined in each syllabus.

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:

<https://www.alceasoftware.com/web/login.php>.

Evaluations are a collaborative effort of student and instructor, with the instructor taking responsibility for the final version submitted to

the school after the student has read it and points of difference have been noted. It is important that evaluations be balanced in presenting strengths, areas for growth and any challenges or weaknesses 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 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 an Educational Planning Conference (EPC) 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 will have an EPC and **may be dismissed** from the program or may continue on probation and be asked complete additional time in field at their own expense.
- **Students will be given only one opportunity to extend a placement for performance reasons.**
- Advanced students should anticipate that a grade of marginal pass in field will affect their graduation date.
- A grade of F in any semester, or three MPs, will result in dismissal from the program.

The decision to grant the student an extended or repeated year of placement is predicated on: 1) the field department's 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 an implicit promise of satisfactory performance or graduation from the program.

Examples of behaviors resulting in a marginal pass or fail include:

- A pattern of unprofessional/unethical behavior including excessive absences, not informing appropriate agency personnel of absences, inadequate communication with supervisors 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 supervisory 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 etiquette
- Inability to demonstrate compassion, empathy, integrity, and respect for others.

Withdrawal from Field

To withdraw from field after the add/drop period the student must receive approval from her/his field liaison and the director of field education. Students who perform poorly and/or are not making sufficient progress and withdraw after the add/drop period may be given a grade that reflects their performance at the time of their withdrawal.

EDUCATIONAL PLANNING CONFERENCE

There may be occasions when students have concerns about aspects of their placement (e.g. amount of supervision, agency policies or number of cases). 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 early on. The field liaison is available to consult about the problem, help to identify the issues and suggest steps towards a resolution. If problems persist despite the efforts of the field instructor, student and field liaison to resolve them, a variety of more formal steps may be taken.

Problems in the Field Placement Agency

If there are problems in the agency that affect a student's learning—an inadequate caseload, for example—the field liaison should be notified. The field liaison discusses the difficulties with all involved parties, makes an assessment and

collaboratively helps to develop a plan. The agency training director and/or director of field education may join in this process.

Plans to improve the situation are always the first step and the field liaison will remain involved to monitor progress towards changes that are being initiated. If, for example, supervision time has not been adequate, the school would work with the agency to address this problem. If for any reason the agency is unable to provide a sufficient level of training, the student will be placed at a different agency.

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. If needed, a meeting of the field liaison, student, the field instructor and, at times, the agency director of training or director of field education will be held to assess and locate areas of difficulty. Generally plans are made to alleviate or resolve problems by carefully designed and monitored strategies. The outcome of a meeting will include a plan of action, written by the field liaison, with copies distributed to the student and field instructor. Goals set forth will be reviewed periodically. The field liaison and field instructor remain in close communication with each other and with the student throughout this process.

The field liaison and the director of field education may decide, in consultation with the associate dean, to hold an Educational Planning Conference (EPC). This may also occur when there are concurrent problems with academic courses. An EPC for field-related problems is led by the director of field education and includes the student's field liaison. The field instructor and academic instructor(s) are invited when appropriate. The field liaison develops a revised learning plan as described above.

Student Guidelines for Change of field Placement

On rare occasions, a student requests a change of placement, also known as replacement. Such

requests must be made to the field liaison, who will consult with the director of field education.

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 agency representatives to develop a workable plan. The process below must be followed:

- a) Contact your field liaison or, if necessary, the director of field education.
- b) The field liaison discusses, assesses, and evaluates the issues and recommends a plan after conferring with the director of field education and the placement team.
- c) The field liaison discusses issues with the field instructor and agency training administrators with the hope that the problem(s) can be resolved.
- d) 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 a professional way of bringing closure with the agency will be followed.

Termination of Field Placement

If attempts to resolve the problem fail, a student may be asked to leave the placement. In the case of this occurrence, at the discretion of the director of field education, there are several possible outcomes:

- a) The student may be placed in a different agency and be asked to extend the required hours.
- b) The student may receive a Marginal Pass at the end of the semester and be required to complete an additional semester of field and obtain a passing grade to continue (see *Grades in Field Placement*).
- c) The student may be asked to take a leave of absence from field education or from the MSW program (see the *Handbook of MSW Policies and Academic Guidelines* for the leave of absence policy).

- d) The student may receive a Fail and be dismissed from the program.

Any student who prematurely ends a field placement without approval of the field director risks receiving a failing grade or being referred to the Academic Standards Committee (see the *Handbook of MSW Policies and Academic Guidelines*).

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.

If it is determined that the student will return to field, the field department will do their best to locate an alternate placement as soon as possible. *Please note: the ability to secure an alternate placement is affected by many factors, most importantly the availability of an appropriate match for the student.* Therefore, this process may take some time and in some situations may necessitate a leave from field.

Should it be assessed that the placement disruption is all or in part due to the student's performance, the student must expect to complete a minimum of two to three additional weeks in placement to accommodate for the time to orient to a new placement setting and develop a new learning plan and caseload. This is in addition to time owed to complete the total number of field hours. There may be circumstances where a student will be required to add additional time, either to address the student's learning needs or to meet agency needs.

Students should be aware that any placement disruption might delay their graduation date.

Leave of Absence from Field Placement

See the *Handbook of MSW Policies and Academic Guidelines* for the leave of absence policy.

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 department, which comprises the field placement team and field liaisons.

Field Liaisons

The purpose of 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 classroom faculty, the field instructor and the agency training director 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 liaison's role includes:

- communicating regularly with students, including facilitating regular field seminar;
- assisting students in preparing for advanced placements;
- assuring an adequate caseload 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.

Field Placement Team

The field placement team assigns each student a placement specialist who provides one-on-one service to each student throughout his or her placement terms. The placement team works in conjunction with students and faculty to ensure students are having high-quality placement experiences and are meeting course competencies. The partnership between students, faculty and the placement team is essential to ensure timely field placement. The placement specialist's roles include:

- Serving as a liaison between faculty and field instructor/agency
- Sending the foundation and advanced placement forms to students
- Performing outreach to potential agencies and field instructors
- Following up with agency to ensure all placement requirements are met
- Verifying agency documents
- Ensuring agency documents and Affiliation Agreements are complete
- Submitting placements to faculty for review
- Sending placement details and instructions to student
- Sending placement details and instructions to field instructor
- Serving as liaison between agency and student

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 absences. 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

Students with disabilities who anticipate that they will need a reasonable accommodation in field education or in a field placement, should contact Timothy Rogers, Associate Director, Disability Services, Center for Academic Achievement, 617-521-2470 or timothy.rogers@simmons.edu. Reasonable accommodations will be provided for students with documented physical, sensory, systemic, cognitive, learning, and psychiatric disabilities. Students with disabilities receiving accommodations for field education must contact the director of field education to discuss implementation of any accommodations. Students are encouraged to speak with their field instructors within the first two weeks of the semester to discuss their individual needs for accommodations. The aforementioned process is required prior to making any request for accommodations of the agency or field instructor.

FIELD PLACEMENT SELECTION PROCESS 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. A comprehensive and collaborative placement process aims to assure a good match between the student and field setting. 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. Simmons faculty approves each placement that is secured and qualified by the placement team.

Foundation and Advanced Placement Forms: The placement team will email each student a link to their foundation and advanced placement forms. Students are required to complete these forms within five days of receiving the email. The placement team cannot begin the placement process until these documents are submitted.

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. The placement team aims to place students within an hour of their home, but may place students up to 60 miles away if an approved placement closer to home is not available.

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.

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 additional field hours per week during breaks or at the end of placement. If it is unreasonable to continue searching for a field placement during the current cohort schedule, the student will need to move into the next cohort.

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.

Refusing Placement Sites: Refusing a secured placement may delay a placement start and graduation date. The placement search is sometimes limited by the availability of agencies in areas where students live, scheduling limitations related to students' personal circumstances, or a mismatch of students' areas of interest and placement availability.

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 during regular business hours (Monday-Friday, 8 am-5 pm) to align with agency activities.

Relocation Policy: Students who wish to relocate during or before their placement terms must notify Academic Affairs and the placement team at least 14 weeks prior to the placement term start date and in between placement terms. 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.

Field Practicum in the Student's Place of Employment

In certain situations, usually due to the student's financial need, the school and field education department permit students to use a paid social work position to fulfill the field education requirement for one field placement. Generally this arrangement is made for the foundation placement but can also occur during the advanced placement if faculty deems the site appropriate.

Students who wish to use their place of paid employment as a field placement must complete a worksite-based field placement application using their personal referral form link. Each application will be carefully reviewed 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 problem areas.
- 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 graduating.

- 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.

Failure to Secure a Field Placement

In the event of three or more unsuccessful field placement interviews, the field department reassesses the student's appropriateness for the field placement. Planning for another placement may not begin until a meeting with the field department or other steps are taken as determined by the field department. It is at the discretion of the director of field education, in consultation with the assistant dean and the field placement team, to recommend dismissal from the program if an appropriate graduate-level clinical social work internship appears unobtainable.

If a student does not accept a qualified placement following an interview and refuses subsequent agencies that meet their criteria, one of the following outcomes will be stipulated:

1. In consultation with the placement team, the student will be given one additional opportunity to secure a placement;
2. Student will postpone field placement until the following year (re-entry review required).

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:

It is the school's policy to provide, on a flexible and individualized basis, reasonable accommodations to students who have disabilities that may affect their ability to participate in course activities or to meet course requirements. Students with disabilities are encouraged to contact their instructors 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 617-521-3943 or sswfielddeduction@simmons.edu.