

Master of Social Work Field Education Manual

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Introduction

The MSW Field Education Manual, written for UNC-Wilmington social work students, field instructors and faculty, articulates the mission, goals, and objectives for field education in the MSW Program. Designed to review the policies and procedures of field education, this manual identifies the criteria for selecting field sites and field instructors, the student field application, the process for securing a field placement for clinical training and the procedure for evaluating student performance. This manual is written to foster a common understanding of the field process, as well as field expectations, in order to create a dynamic and interactive learning environment that prepares students for MSW clinical practice while adhering to the standards as set forth by the Council on Social Work Education and the policies of UNC-Wilmington.

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History of the School of Social Work

In 1972, UNCW initiated its first course in social work under the Department of Sociology and Anthropology. As student interest and university support grew, this single course offering expanded into a BSW degree (initially conferred in 1990) with full accreditation granted by the Council on Social Work Education effective with the graduating class of 1996. By 1998, the program became a separate Department, recognizing that the professional degree could best be served through greater autonomy, professional integrity, and budgetary security. This decision provided evidence of the University's administrative support for social work education to address the needs and services of eastern North Carolina.

As the Department flourished, it developed a reputation for the quality of its BSW graduates. This reputation inspired the faculty to conduct a regional needs assessment and generate a proposal to establish the Master of Social Work Degree. With continued administrative support, the Department of Social Work, applied to the Board of Governors of the University of North Carolina and, received permission in 2003 to create a graduate social work program and award the MSW degree. The first class was admitted in fall, 2005 and graduated spring, 2007 with accreditation granted for the first MSW class of 2007.

Then, effective July 1, 2010, the Department of Social Work was officially recognized by UNC Board of Governors as a School of Social Work. This transition provides further evidence of the commitment of both the faculty and the administration, to provide quality education at the graduate level in social work. In addition, the School of Social Work joined the newly formed College of Health and Human Services (2010) to foster quality professional education as well as interdisciplinary collaboration for practice and research. This change in administrative structure will afford greater opportunity to recruit faculty and locate resources that will enhance the clinical education and preparation of the MSW graduates which in turn will enhance professional practice in the eastern region of North Carolina. In addition to the full time cohort, the MSW program has evolved to now offer a Part Time MSW program established in 2014 and an Advanced Standing program in the summer of 2018.

Overview of the MSW Program

Standards and core competencies for MSW social work education are set forth by the Council on Social Work Education (CSWE), requiring a Foundation Year and an Advanced Year of course preparation with relevant practice courses and field practice at both levels. The ***foundation year*** provides preparation in social work values and ethics, the history of the profession, social and economic justice, and human behavior in the social environment, diversity, psychopathology, social welfare policy, and field education. This foundation year is structured to provide an integrated approach to generalist social work practice, while the ***advanced year*** affords an opportunity to focus on a single concentration, clinical practice, with exploration of specific practice models. Designing research and program evaluations, exploring alternative models of clinical practice, understanding organizational dynamics and expanding responsibilities in field practice contribute to the advanced year of study. Within this clinical focus, students are able to specialize in substance abuse, family and children, school social work, military practice, death and dying, etc.

While these content areas are consistent with CSWE educational policy, UNCW brings a unique approach to the educational process with a focus on a strengths-based clinical practice curriculum. Students will have sufficient preparation in solution-focused, motivational, and cognitive-behavioral models to develop practice competencies at the MSW level. In addition, students will have opportunities to explore individual interests in social work through the focus of their research projects, and preparations of poster presentations at the annual field luncheon. Directed independent studies (DIS) are encouraged to foster concentrations in additional practice areas to reflect specific student interest while exploring the therapeutic needs of specific populations.

Mission for the School of Social Work:

The MSW Program, as it strives to create an innovative clinical degree, is consistent with the CSWE Standards and Educational Policies, the UNCW Mission and the mission of the new College of Health and Human Services. Examination of the UNCW Mission identifies congruency between the MSW Program's mission and the UNCW mission. The 2013 *UNCW* Catalogue reveals a University mission that reads:

The University of North Carolina Wilmington, the state's coastal university, is dedicated to learning through the integration of teaching and mentoring with research and service... We are committed to diversity and inclusion, affordable access, global perspectives, and enriching the quality of life

through scholarly community engagement in such areas as health, education the economy, the environment, marine and coastal issues, and the arts.

(<http://www.uncw.edu/aboutuncw/>, retrieved 9/23/13)

Likewise, the *College of Health and Human Services'* mission states:

The College of Health and Human Services (CHHS) is to enhance health and quality of life across the lifespan for individuals, families and communities within southeastern North Carolina and beyond through innovation and excellence in workforce development, scholarship, research, professional service and community engagement. We are committed to the development of health professionals who will practice in a sound, intellectually and ethically accountable fashion and who will commit their practice to the health and well-being of the people of our region.

(<http://www.uncw.edu/chhs/about.html>, retrieved 9/24/13)

Together these mission statements support the development of quality professional education that fosters close partnerships between the professions and the community to serve the public. This mission is achieved through the integration of teaching and mentoring with a commitment to diversity and inclusion. Hence the University's focus creates a supportive environment for the School of Social Work, fostering a mission statement to enhance quality professional social work education. To this end, the mission for the *School of Social Work* reads:

The School of Social Work is dedicated to a course of study and professional preparation that educates students, pursues scholarly inquiry and performs community services in order to promote a strengths approach to social work practice. Such an approach teaches students practice skills that advance the empowerment and well-being of individuals, families, groups, organizations, and communities as they explore policies and programs to ensure social welfare and quality social work practice.

(<http://www.uncw.edu/aboutuncw/>, retrieved 2/27/19)

And finally the mission for graduate social work education focuses the mission of the *MSW Program* to read as follows:

The MSW Program is committed to the preparation of graduates for a career in clinical practice dedicated to assisting individuals, groups, families, and communities. While promoting equality and social and economic justice, faculty will prepare graduates for practice in a culturally diverse society, upholding the values and ethics of the profession and teaching critical thinking skills designed to enhance the quality of life for all persons.

(<http://www.uncw.edu/aboutuncw/>, retrieved 2/27/19)

Thus the MSW Program, within the School of Social Work, articulates a commitment to scholarly inquiry, with dedication to community services, while pursuing skills in clinical practice. Such a commitment necessitates an educational focus congruent with the Council

on Social Work (CSWE) Standards and Educational Policies (see <http://CSWE.org/Accreditation/2008EPASDescription>)core competencies for professional education.

MSW Program Goals:

The MSW Program emphasis on quality professional education is reflected in the core competencies articulated by CSWE which guide the MSW curriculum. The goals of the MSW Program articulate the desired practice competencies, striving to prepare students to:

1. Demonstrate ethical and professional behavior
2. Engage in diversity and difference of practice
3. Advance human rights and social, economic and environmental justice
4. Engage in practice-informed research and research informed practice
5. Engage in policy practice
6. Engage with individuals, families, groups, organizations and communities
7. Assess individuals, families, groups, organizations and communities
8. Intervene with individuals, families, groups, organizations and communities
9. Evaluate practice with individuals, families, groups, organizations and communities

In addition to embracing these CSWE core competencies, the School adheres to the values and ethics set forth by the National Association of Social Workers (NASW) *Code of Ethics* (see <http://socialworkers.org>) and is committed to social justice, client self-determination, and celebration of diversity, validating the uniqueness of individuals, families, and communities. With these combined perspectives, the School embraces strengths-based practice as the guiding theme for its mission while preparing graduates to critically examine practice modalities, policies, and service delivery systems. Hence, the MSW Program at UNCW has a commitment to graduate education that directly and explicitly enhances the connection of theory and practice to the needs of clients and the demands of everyday practice in the professional market. To this end, the field faculty developed learning contracts that specify learning objectives/practice behaviors to guide performance outcomes for MSW students at both the Foundation level and the Advanced level of graduate study.

These field objectives articulate desired knowledge, practice skills and values for both the foundation and advanced years of study.

MSW Curriculum:

There are several prevailing themes reflected in the curriculum that directly and explicitly enhance the connection of theory, practice skill development, the needs of clients and the demands of the practice community.

Strengths and Resiliency:

The strengths perspective arises from the social work commitment to social justice, the dignity of every human being, and the need to build on human strengths and resiliency. As an orientation to practice, emphasis is placed on uncovering, reaffirming, and enhancing the abilities, knowledge, resources, aspirations and hopes of individuals, families, groups, and communities. This approach builds on the concept that the articulation and extension of strengths and resources increases the likelihood that people will reach their goals and realize the possibilities they have set for themselves through ownership of the change process. Theories and orientations toward practice, with research to support these approaches, are included in resiliency studies, including solution-focused, motivational, and cognitive-behavioral models of practice, as taught at the UNCW School of Social Work.

Diversity and Uniqueness:

Understanding, valuing and engaging the broad range of human differences, commonalities and idiosyncrasies are fundamental values of social work. Culture, ethnicity, race, geography, gender, social class, sexual orientation, physical abilities, mental abilities, spiritual and emotional wellness all contribute to the unique configuration of human need and development. Drawing from a social construction approach, skills that engage and work with clients are emphasized in order to respect the perspectives of persons, families or communities in terms of their unique understanding of their particular context. Consideration is given to stereotypes, labeling, and classification of persons and/or populations, recognizing how they are detrimental to the core value of respect and dignity for the individual. Enhancing student sensitivity to celebrate diversity is encouraged.

Social Justice:

A commitment to greater equality, based on a complex understanding of the impact of economic, political, and social structures and their impact on the human condition is essential for proficient clinical practice. Students will be encouraged to practice from a perspective that embraces the right to self-determination, recognizing the capacities and strengths of individuals, families, and communities. Students will be encouraged to attend to the oppression of the human condition, often found in the very social structures and delivery systems designed to enhance client social functioning.

Critical Reflection:

Finally, the capacity to engage in deliberate and continuous examination of the assumptions underlying theories, methods, and approaches used in social work is essential for proficient practice. Both historical and current developments of practice within social work will be explored, with critical awareness and contextual understanding of consequences. Students will engage in critical analysis of theory and practice to determine whether the values of self-determination, empowerment, respect, and equality in social work relationships with client systems of all sizes are enhanced or restricted. This approach also necessitates careful consideration when using pathology labels, commonly used in clinical settings to facilitate payment for service. Remaining respectful of the uniqueness and worth of the individual is an important consideration when engaged in the business practice of service delivery.

With these four themes imbedded in the teaching philosophy of the School of Social Work, the MSW faculty seeks to develop leadership skills that foster the development of professional service grounded in professional values and ethics, to address practice realities of contemporary society. The faculty is also committed to building and supporting mentoring/teaching relationships that will begin life-long professional connections essential for continued professional growth and development. And finally, graduates will also have opportunity to explore international concerns and be prepared to utilize technology suitable for professional data gathering and distribution of social work information within a global context.

Hence the curriculum is designed to prepare matriculating MSW graduates for practice as competent, effective, MSW social work professionals with comprehensive training and experience in clinical practice. For this reason, students will have a single field placement which will afford the opportunity to gain skill in the use of a minimum of three models of practice. The MSW Program will prepare graduates for clinical practice in a wide array of practice settings which include military services, public schools, child development services, substance abuse recovery programs, mental health services (for adults and children), gerontology services, and community outreach. In addition to the acquisition of knowledge-based practice, the graduate will gain experience in program development and management skills appropriate for service delivery.

Consistent with CSWE standards, the curriculum is broken into two levels of educational preparation. Students in the Full and Part Time MSW program, partake in courses that draw upon a foundational, generalist approach that is grounded in the strengths based, solution-focused model of practice. These courses address fundamentals of human behavior in the social environment (including issues of diversity, cultural sensitivity, and advocacy for the needs of vulnerable populations), social welfare policy development and analysis, formation of productive working relationships (with client systems and colleagues) that emphasize strengths and resiliency, solution-focused practice, fundamentals of research, and ethics and values of the profession that permeate practice. In addition, the student will gain a beginning knowledge of the *Diagnostic and Statistical Manual (both IV-TR and V)* and gain skills in diagnosing mental health concerns, while respecting the strengths of all client populations. In addition, students will begin field practice, after identifying personal learning and conflict styles as well as areas of interest for field practice. Finally, a beginning

knowledge of diversity will assist students in successfully engaging clients, who represent diverse cultures and values.

As the student moves through the program, s/he will continue to enhance skills in solution-focused practice, while developing new practice skills in motivational interviewing, cognitive-behavioral practice, and other models of special practice interest to the student. Students in each of the cohorts partake in advanced clinical opportunities that are guided by the advanced competencies in the students' learning contracts. Students are under the supervision of a clinical practitioner. A Capstone Project is required of each student graduating from the MSW Program, with each student developing a case study presentation that demonstrates one's practice proficiency (this presentation will be shared with a panel of three faculty during the student's final semester of the MSW program.) Finally, students will explore electives in at least one clinical specialization, with opportunity for the study of practice theory and practice application within that clinical area of interest. (See the MSW Curriculum, Course Sequence, and MSW Student handbook).

Admission to the MSW Program:

While students may enter the MSW Program with an undergraduate degree in social work, this is not a requirement for entrance into graduate social work education. Applicants may apply for admission to the MSW Program with a degree earned in a variety of undergraduate disciplines, as long as they meet the admission criteria for the program. The admission criteria include:

- Graduation from an accredited college or university with an undergraduate degree and a minimum of a 3.0 GPA; with a minimum of 20 hours in humanities, social, and/or behavioral studies;
- Positive references that address academic and employment/service learning performance (minimum of three required);
- GRE scores, including the analytical writing assessment;
- Completion of the graduate school application;
- Completion of a narrative statement that addresses motivation for graduate studies in social work.

Students applying to the MSW Program are expected to have an undergraduate foundation, grounded in the liberal arts, with basic conceptual and knowledge skills essential for critical reflection at the graduate level of study. Skills in assimilation and integration, as applied to diverse theories and concepts, will be essential for successful graduate study and MSW field practice. Should a student hold the BSW degree, s/he is eligible to sit for proficiency exams in human behavior, policy and research. Passing any of these exams entitles the student to replace these course requirements with electives at the graduate level of study. These courses can be applied to graduate certificates for specialized study if desired (see the MSW Student Handbook for further discussion).

Roles and Responsibilities for MSW Field Education

The MSW Program prepares graduates for beginning clinical practice placing special emphasis on the importance of the field education experience. Consistent with CSWE accreditation standards, the field faculty strives to identify supportive field instructors and quality agencies that will provide meaningful learning opportunities representing a variety of client populations. Many collaborate to provide this quality practice experience, including: the Coordinator of Field Education, the Assistant Coordinator of Field Education, faculty liaisons, field instructors, students, clients, and the members of the Field and Practice Advisory Committee.

Coordinator of Field Education

The Coordinator of Field Education has responsibility for field education for social work students in the School of Social Work. This person is accountable to the Director of the School of Social Work while working with the BSW and MSW Program Coordinators and the social work faculty to develop an integrated learning experience for students. This individual also works collaboratively with the Assistant Coordinator of Field Education and the faculty liaisons to coordinate their preparation and participation in field education. Specifically, the duties of the Coordinator include:

- identifying field curricula consistent with the nine core competencies of CSWE;
- administering the social work field education program;
- establishing criteria for the selection of qualified field agencies and instructors in compliance with CSWE standards;
- developing the objectives, policies, procedures of the field program;
- evaluating the field education program, recommending changes in policy and procedure as needed;
- coordinating the placement process for BSW and MSW social work students;
- collaborating with the Assistant Coordinator of Field Education to plan, schedule, and coordinate orientation for field instructors;
- guiding and consulting with the Assistant Coordinator of Field Education to enhance teaching and networking with community based field instructors;
- facilitating integrative field seminars as needed;
- participating in the orientation of BSW and MSW students;

- arranging educational preparation for field instructors to enhance the quality of field education and strengthen the educational performance of field instructors;
- maintaining collaborative relations with community practitioners to assure that field education reflects current practice issues and opportunities;
- keeping field instructors informed of changes in the policies and procedures that guide field education;
- organizing events that celebrate the importance of field education (luncheons, receptions, etc.) for field students and field instructors;
- serving on the MSW or BSW Committee, and Leadership Team for the School of Social Work
- facilitate the Field Advisory Committee to facilitate a collaborative development of the field curriculum and community partnerships;
- providing consultation and mediation, as needed, to facilitate communication between students, field instructors, and faculty liaisons;
- participating in the North Carolina Consortium of Field Educators;
- holding membership in the National Association of Social Workers and serving as the School liaison at regional meetings, as schedule permits.

Assistant Coordinator of Field Education

The Assistant Coordinator will collaborate with the Coordinator of Field Education to assist in planning and implementing the field education program at both campuses. The Assistant Coordinator has responsibility for the following duties:

- assisting in the planning and implementation of the policies and procedures that guide field education;
- participating in the planning of orientation and training for field instructors;
- teaching designated field seminars and fulfilling the roles and responsibilities of faculty liaison;
- providing collaboration and/or mediation with students and field instructors, as needed by her/his designated field students or as assigned by the Coordinator of Field Education;
- assisting the Coordinator of Field in communicating with field agencies and recruiting new BSW and MSW field education sites;
- organizing the annual BSW field fair available for field placement;
- assisting the Coordinator of Field in evaluation of field sites and the field education experience
- recommending changes in field policy and/or procedure as needed;
- serving as a member of the BSW or MSW Committee;
- securing the BSW Agency Agreement for each BSW placement;
- collecting student field performance data to generate a report that reviews the school's ability to graduate students who meet CSWE core competencies;
- maintaining collaborative relations with community practitioners to assure that field education reflects current practice issues and opportunities;

- participating on School and College Committees as time and interests indicate and as appointed by the Director of the School of Social Work.

MSW Faculty Field Liaison

The faculty liaison is the **university based faculty** responsible for **facilitating the pre-field and/or integrative field seminars** as assigned by the Coordinator of Field Education. While both the Coordinator and the Assistant Coordinator of Field Education typically serve in this capacity, the volume of students placed in field education exceeds the number of seminars that can be taught by these two individuals. Liaison functions can be fulfilled by tenure-track faculty with a minimum of five years practice experience and/or adjunct faculty who have similar practice experience, including training and experience as a field instructor; faculty from either category must hold a state license for practice. Each faculty liaison is expected to support a strengths-based approach to field education that fosters collaboration between students and field instructors to facilitate the mediation of field challenges.

In addition to teaching the integrative seminar, each field liaison will meet with the students and field instructors in their respective agencies (a minimum of once per semester) and provide appropriate on-site consultation. (Additional visits are indicated when a new field placement is developed, if the agency is unfamiliar to the faculty liaison, or if the student and/or field instructor need assistance with clarifying and mediating placement expectations. The field liaisons are accountable to the Coordinator of Field Education and have responsibility for the following duties:

- facilitating the integrative field seminar for each group of assigned students to integrate the application of practice and classroom theory;
- providing a **minimum of one field site visit each semester** to discuss student performance and assist in the identification of learning needs and opportunities (more visits are appropriate as deemed necessary to gain familiarity with field agencies, assess student learning, etc.);
- providing consultation to students in the development of an individualized learning contract that is consistent with student learning goals and agency policy, social work program goals, and CSWE standards, in preparation for clinical practice;
- ensuring that students have purchased the required liability insurance;
- mediating with students and field instructors when issues arise in the placement;
- making recommendations when field placement assignments need to be changed or new field instructors need to be recruited during the semester;

- making end-of-semester site visits to evaluate student practice and review the final evaluation;
- completing the necessary paperwork to record the performance evaluation assuring appropriate signatures and student comments have been secured.
- determining the final field grade for each seminar student with input from the field instructor and the student;
- participating in the field instructor training seminars for MSW field instructors;
- assisting in the evaluation of the field education program;
- recommending policy or practice changes to enhance the field curriculum;
- participating in field meetings with the Coordinator and the Assistant Coordinator of Field Education to maintain field consistency for all field education students in the MSW Program.

Agency Field Instructors

The field instructor is the **agency based practitioner** who has **daily responsibility for teaching the student** about agency policy and procedure, planning the educational experience with the student, assigning clients for service, and supervising the student's clinical learning progress. Preference is given to individuals who hold the LCSW, a licensed clinical practitioner, with a minimum of two years practice experience post-MSW, who demonstrates an interest in the learning process consistent with a strengths-based orientation to practice. In order to be recognized as a UNCW field instructor, the designated professional must be willing to:

- attend field instruction orientation, seminars, workshops, and other special activities arranged by the field education faculty to enhance instructional performance;
- provide the student with a full orientation to the agency;
- **provide a minimum of one hour of clinical supervision each week**, with regular opportunities for student reflection and review of the learning process;
- collaborate with the student to assist in the identification of learning goals and create a learning contract that will assist in the focus of work assignments and evaluation criteria consistent with field education goals;
- serve as a role model for the student in professional practice;
- structure assignments to assure that the student learns a broad range of social work intervention skills consistent with beginning strengths-based clinical practice;
- encourage innovative practice that is consistent with agency and School objectives as well as the ethics and values of social work;
- participate in evaluation conferences with the student and faculty liaison and complete a written student performance evaluation for each semester of field practice;
- communicate regularly with the faculty liaison, keeping the faculty liaison apprised of student progress, including strengths and concerns in completing

assignments (as soon as they become evident) to facilitate early supportive or corrective interventions;

- notify the Coordinator of Field Education if s/he is unable to fulfill the responsibilities of field instructor or leaves the agency employment;
- provide appropriate work space for the student, including access to a telephone and computer as well as a place to keep personal items and field materials;
- complete and submit required documentation such as resumes, signed agency agreements, student performance evaluations, etc.
- coordinate the involvement of additional agency staff as needed to enhance student learning.

In planning student practice experience, consideration must be afforded the opportunity to work with and for client systems of all sizes. Hence field instructors need to give careful attention to the intern's assignments providing opportunities to work directly with individuals and families, developing and facilitating client groups, participating in planning service delivery and program development with staff groups, and facilitating networking opportunities within the larger community. In addition, opportunities to address social and economic injustice, and advocate for policy change, are necessary for comprehensive practice experience.

Field Students

Recognizing the importance of this phase of professional education, the student is expected to actively participate in planning and implementing the learning experience. In accepting an agency placement, the student makes a commitment to learn agency policy and procedure, select appropriate social work interventions, and demonstrate appropriate professional demeanor for the delivery of clinical services to clients. The student will design a learning contract, with her/his field instructor, for each year of field practice that will guide the learning experience and create the foundation for the performance evaluation. The student is expected to fulfill the following responsibilities while engaged in field education:

- follow established School of Social Work procedures when applying for admission to the field program;
- complete the pre-field social work seminar assignments to prepare for placement;
- join NASW and purchase student liability insurance, with \$1 million/\$5 million coverage, for each of the three semesters of field practice;
- provide proof of liability insurance before entering field practice;
- sign a confidentiality form to ensure that s/he will not share information about clients, agencies or students discussed in class (see Confidentiality Form APPENDIX A.)
- become familiar with field agency policies and procedures and abide by them;

- deliver services in a responsible professional manner, keeping commitments to the agency, to the field instructor, to the clients, and to the faculty liaison;
- take initiative in seeking advice and consultation from the field instructor and/or the faculty liaison;
- engage in an educational, supervisory relationship with the field instructor to integrate theory and practice, increase knowledge, and enhance self-awareness;
- collaborate with the field instructor to prepare a learning contract that will articulate learning steps/activities, learning strategies, and evaluation criteria;
- discuss with the field instructor, and the faculty liaison, any areas of disagreement, dissatisfaction, or confusion regarding any portion of the learning experience;
- become familiar with and adhere to the NASW Code of Ethics in student practice;
- notify the field instructor of unavoidable absences and tardiness due to illness, weather conditions, car problems, etc., as expected in a professional employment relationship;
- notify the faculty liaison of concerns about questions regarding the ethics of practice at the agency BEFORE taking action at the agency;
- attend a weekly integrative field seminar with timely completion of all course assignments and evaluations according to specified requirements;
- evaluate the effectiveness of the field education experience
- responsible for recording their field hours on a weekly basis.

Clients

Successful completion of field education requires direct practice with client systems, not just observation of clinical staff in the delivery of services. Suitable clients will be identified by the agency based field instructor and assigned to the student to enhance student learning and practice skill development. Clients will be assigned to provide students with diverse learning opportunities including a variety of cultural, ethnic, age, social, emotional, behavioral, mandated and voluntary options, etc. In addition, consistent with the NASW Code of Ethics, clients have the right to be informed when they are assigned a student worker and they have the right to refuse student services. However, most clients are very comfortable working with interns as students are often quite thorough and have more time to engage in active listening. Clients must also be advised that the student will respect and protect client confidentiality as articulated in the standards of the *NASW Code of Ethics*.

MSW Integrative Field Seminar

The School of Social Work requires student participation in an integrative seminar throughout the student's field experience. The seminar provides a forum for group discussion that promotes collaboration and mutual aid through analysis of alternative techniques of

practice, review of professional boundaries, consideration of practice implications, exploration of ethical dilemmas encountered in the placement setting, and participation in the self-reflection exercises. Designed to draw upon and enhance the field practicum, the seminar provides an opportunity to integrate practice and theory while exploring issues/concerns and sharing new insights. By listening respectfully, and reflecting upon the information and experiences shared, each student will have the opportunity to explore issues that impact personal growth and professional development. In addition, students will have the opportunity to benefit from peer consultation and consider alternative techniques to enhance their beginning practice. Drawing from the variety of student field placement settings represented in the seminar, diverse styles of supervision, management, and organizational culture will also be explored to enhance student awareness of social work practice alternatives. To ensure confidentiality of the material discussed in seminar, each student is required to sign a confidentiality form that advises that confidentiality is essential to professionalism and adhering to the NASW Code of Ethics (see Confidentiality Form, APPENDIX A).

For full time and Advanced Standing MSW students, the integrative field seminar meets weekly for two hours. For Part time MSW students, field seminar is conducted in a hybrid fashion meeting five times a semester in person. Attendance is expected, in order to enhance learning while developing a safe environment to facilitate student engagement in reflection and analysis. Successful field performance is dependent upon completion of all the required seminar assignments (see samples of MSW field seminar syllabi for SWK 509, 510, 511 512, 560, 561, 562, 563, 564 APPENDIX B-1, B-2, B-3, B-4, B-5, B-6, B-6, B-7, B-8, and B-9) in combination with a strengths-based field practice evaluation. This field evaluation process, based on a strengths perspective, draws upon a collaborative model that involves the student, the field instructor, and the faculty liaison.

Field and Practice Advisory Committee

The Coordinator of Field Education serves on the Field and Practice Advisory Committee along with representative field instructors and community professionals. Student representatives from the BSW and MSW programs, as well as alumni, will also be invited to participate. The field instructors will be chosen on the basis of interest and commitment, representing a broad range of agency placements and training methods-e.g., different client populations, public and private agencies, diverse practice techniques, etc. Community professionals will be selected on the same basis, demonstrating a commitment to graduate social work education.

This advisory group will convene at least once per semester to assist the field faculty in the evaluation of the field education curriculum. They will also be asked to recommend new agency placements and potential field instructors to enhance the quality of the field experience offered to the social work students. These participants will serve in an advisory capacity to assist with the establishment of policies and procedures that reflect professional education for social work students at both the BSW and MSW practice levels, enhancing faculty awareness of current practice methods and issues for service delivery. Participants will also be invited to identify the learning needs of field instructors in order to maintain

quality field education consistent with the standards of CSWE and the School of Social Work goals and objectives. Finally, these professionals will have the opportunity to recommend curriculum changes to enhance the quality of both the BSW and MSW curricula.

Selection of Field Placements

Selection of Agencies for MSW Field Placements

The UNCW social work faculty recognizes the importance of selecting qualified field agencies and placement sites that will enhance student learning and facilitate practice competency. The Coordinator of Field Education has primary responsibility for selecting agencies that can provide suitable practice experience for the MSW interns, at both the foundation and the advanced levels of practice. The Coordinator will work closely with the faculty and the professional community to identify professional service providers and qualified field instructors to address the practice standards of CSWE, NASW, and the UNCW School of Social Work while responding to the demands of the professional market.

A potential field placement can be identified through a variety of approaches. Agency representatives may apply for an intern (see Agency Application for MSW Intern, APPENDIX C) or social work students, alumni, faculty, and community professionals may recommend specific agencies. Once an agency has been identified as a potential placement site, an assessment will be completed by the Coordinator of Field Education, or her designee, to assure that the agency can provide a full range of learning opportunities that meet the criteria for clinical field education at the MSW level. This assessment will explore the mission and services of the agency, potential student assignments (including the full spectrum of services for individuals, families, groups, organizations, and communities), availability of resources for each student (including parking, work space, telephone, mileage reimbursement, etc.), qualifications of potential field instructors, and the availability of resources for students with special learning needs. Agencies will be selected by the ability to address the following educational criteria:

- respect for the values and ethics of social work as demonstrated by agency policy, procedure, program design, and service delivery.
- respect for, and endorsement of, the learning objectives for MSW clinical practice, recognizing the importance of professional education and how it differs from volunteer or service learning experiences.
- commitment to the provision of diverse learning opportunities to include practice experiences with individuals, families, groups (both

client therapeutic groups and staff task planning groups), and communities, as well as organizational planning, program development and evaluation.

- support to the field instructor in the delivery of field education, including the recognition of the time commitment needed to provide supervision and support as well as attend field instruction training seminars at UNCW.
- recognition that the student is not an additional staff person, but rather an intern engaged in the learning process, requiring work assignments that allow time for training, reflection, and evaluation of practice skills, in the context of clinical supervision.
- provision of work space, privacy for interviewing, telephone and computer access, parking space, and clerical assistance.
- reimbursement for mileage for home visits and community travel when conducting agency business, consistent with agency policy for staff.
- acceptance of interns representing differing values and backgrounds, including cultural, ethnic, racial, religious, and sexual orientation differences as well as physical challenges, special learning needs, etc.

Once an agency is identified as an appropriate field site, a qualified staff member will be identified to serve as field instructor. Appropriate agency personnel will be asked to sign an agency/university field contract (see University/Agency Contract for MSW Field Instruction, APPENDIX D) to formally secure placement for each student.

Criteria for MSW Field Instructors

Facilitating the field education of social work students is an exciting, yet demanding educational opportunity that requires commitment to the educational process. With this commitment comes the recognition of the importance of field instruction training and preparation. While guiding the student through the learning experience, the field instructor will encourage the student's active participation in shaping the learning process, will hold the student accountable to professional practice standards (including CSWE core competencies), and will foster independent decision-making as warranted by the student's growth and skill development.

Consistent with these expectations, and the recognition of the importance of this educational experience, field instructors will provide evidence of the following qualifications:

- the MSW degree from an accredited school of social work and a state clinical license.
- a professional resume reflecting a minimum of two years post-graduation experience.
- sufficient time to participate in field instruction educational seminars and the provision of weekly supervision.
- a commitment to an educational process that empowers students to

- actively engage in shaping the learning process.
- a variety of learning experiences that encompass diverse client populations as well as practice opportunities with client systems of all sizes.
- weekly supervision that explores clinical techniques of practice and facilitates student self-awareness
- a willingness to provide ongoing constructive feedback to the student with a formal written evaluation provided at the end of each semester of field education.
- a willingness to allow potential interns to shadow at the agency to assist students in making an informed placement match.

Diversity/Nondiscrimination

Consistent with university policy, the *NASW Code of Ethics*, and CSWE standards for graduate social work education, the selection of field faculty, field agencies, and field instructors is conducted in an ethical manner, based on the criteria previously stated, to assure quality and diversity in the field education experience. In addition, agencies are selected for their ability to provide nondiscriminatory services to their respective client populations.

All field education personnel are expected to make specific and continuous efforts to provide a learning context in which respect for all persons and understanding of diversity "including age, class, color, culture, disability, ethnicity, gender, gender identity and expression, immigration status, political ideology, race, religion, sex, and sexual orientation" are practiced (see CSWE Educational Policy and Accreditation Standards, see <http://CSWE.org/Accreditation/2008EPASDescription>) is demonstrated and supported. In addition, diversity in the placement setting must include nondiscriminatory relationships and acceptance of social work interns who represent a variety of learning styles, cultural backgrounds, physical challenges, etc. Agencies must also be willing to provide placement training and supervision to students with special learning challenges as they prepare to enter the profession of social work. Should there be reason to suspect discrimination by the Field Instructor and/or other agency personnel, students are expected to **report their concerns to the appropriate faculty liaison** and the Coordinator of Field Education. If the issues/concerns cannot be resolved to the satisfaction of the field faculty of the UNCW School of Social Work, a decision will be made to consider the suitability of continuing the placement or whether placement reassignment is necessary.

Admission to the Field Program

Acceptance into the MSW field program is dependent on successful completion of the first semester of graduate social work studies. While placement planning and selection will begin during the first semester of MSW study, including preliminary placement matches, final placement decisions will not be confirmed until students have completed the first semester of graduate study with a 3.0 GPA, consistent with the policy of the UNCW Graduate School and the School of Social Work. Each student must receive a passing grade in all required courses leading up to and during field. The MSW Coordinator and Field Office must approve any exceptions to this. Should a student not qualify for admission into the field program, the MSW Coordinator will notify the student in writing.

Full Time MSW students accepted into the field program will complete three semesters of field practice for a total of 900 field hours. Part Time MSW students will complete five semesters of field for a total of 900 hours. Advanced Standing MSW students will complete two semesters of field with a total of 600 hours. This is consistent with CSWE requirements. With a focus on clinical practice, the successive field experiences will take place in one agency with emphasis placed on the development of practice proficiency in **solution-focused, cognitive-behavioral, motivational interviewing and family structural therapies**. Interns also have opportunity to explore additional modalities of practice that are of interest to them, either through graduate electives and/or independent study. In this way, each student will develop skills suitable for clinical practice upon graduation with sufficient practice opportunity to comfortably implement three or more models of practice.

Student Application to Field

In order to assist students with the selection of a suitable field placement, agency placements are recruited across a spectrum of social service settings to provide clinical practice experience with diverse populations. The placement settings include, but are not limited to elderly services, child welfare (both public and private), public schools, medical settings, hospice care, drug/alcohol treatment, inpatient and community based mental health, rape crisis/sexual assault and developmental disabilities. Qualified agencies and field instructors are selected by the field education faculty to ensure a comprehensive learning experience for each student; a list of the approved, qualifying agencies and field instructors is available for students to review when applying for a placement.

Recognizing that some students are interested in working with specific agencies, it is important to remember that placement decisions are based on a collaborative discussion between the field faculty and agency representatives after carefully considering the student's experience, practice readiness, and identified learning needs. In addition, if a student has considerable expertise working with a particular population, s/he will be encouraged to reach out to new learning opportunities to broaden her/his skill base and marketability as a beginning clinical practitioner. In addition, some students may request a placement that does not appear on the list of approved agencies; such requests must be reviewed as per UNCW field education policy (see Selection of Agencies). Placement with such agencies will be given thoughtful consideration, but placement at a student requested agency is not guaranteed.

Prior to entering the field, each student will enroll in a pre-field seminar to identify her/his preferred conflict and learning styles, practice strengths in working with the preferred client populations, and desired agency settings for an internship. Full and Part Time students enroll in SWK 509, while Advanced Standing students enroll in SWK 572. Seminar discussions will facilitate a deeper awareness of placement opportunities, an understanding of the field learning process, and a review of expected professional demeanor. The selection of a suitable placement is enhanced with the completion of the student application for field (see MSW Student Application to Field, APPENDIX E.) Having an open and honest discussion is essential in completing this application. Past or current concerns regarding health issues, sexual abuse, domestic violence, and substance abuse/dependency, conviction for misdemeanors or felonies are some of the concerns to be considered. Disclosure will not exclude a student from field practice, rather it affords her/him the opportunity to select a placement that facilitates learning without re-traumatizing students in a particular placement setting or compromising service to clients due to personal issues that impact practice competency. **Full disclosure is especially important in reporting legal convictions, including felonies, misdemeanors, etc. as revealed in criminal background check.** Failure to disclose will usually prevent placement at the desired agency as field instructors need transparency from interns to determine placement suitability; failure to disclose is usually viewed as a breach of ethics. Hence, failure to disclose could result in dismissal from the MSW Program, in adherence with the *NASW Code of Ethics*, depending on the nature of the offense.

Designated field faculty will review each field application to determine if students meet the admission criteria for placement. In addition, the personal interview will assist each student in the identification of personal learning needs to enhance the field education experience. Students are then expected to interview with selected field instructors. Students are encouraged to discuss placements with members of the second year class to discuss field questions, learning opportunities, etc. However, it is important to remember that each student has a different perspective of an agency setting depending on student interest, cultural background, etc.

Once suitable agencies are identified for the student, s/he is expected to arrange an interview with the designated field instructor. It is important to remember that these

interviews prepare the student for entrance into field and the student's employment journey. Every effort is made to provide a quality learning experience, respecting the diverse interests and learning needs that each student brings to the placement setting. Students are required to interview with a minimum of one agency, and a maximum of three agencies. If a student has not been accepted by an agency after completing three interviews, they may be dismissed from the program. It is the student's responsibility to present in the interview with professionalism in dress (business casual) and (a) be prepared to ask about ways that they could apply aspects of their education in clinical social work practice and (b) ask pertinent questions about the agency and its professional mission.

Once the student has met with their potential field instructor, and discussed potential learning opportunities, the student will complete an agency assessment. Placement matches are based on consensus with the student, the field instructor and the field faculty together determining the best match. Once a placement match has been determined, and confirmed by the Coordinator of Field Education, the student is expected to contact the assigned field instructor to accept the placement and negotiate a field start date based on the start of the semester, the needs of the agency, and the personal preference of the student and field instructor. Usually, the field start date is the first day of classes, but exceptions are made to accommodate schedules of field instructors, scheduling concerns for the agency, etc. If a student starts field prior to the first day of the semester, they must receive approval from the field office.

If a student is not accepted by an agency after completing a maximum of three interviews, then they may be dismissed from the program. It is the student's responsibility to present in the interview with professionalism in dress (business casual) and (a) be prepared to ask about ways that they could apply aspects of their education in generalist social work practice and (b) ask pertinent questions about the agency and its professional mission.

Special Agency Requirements

Some agencies have special requirements that students must adhere to in order to facilitate the student's eligibility for that particular placement. Most agencies require a **criminal background check** and may require a **safe driving check**. (Even though the student's personal automobile insurance is the primary coverage when transporting clients, agencies want reassurance that the intern is a reliable driver as agency insurance provides back-up coverage when expensive claims evolve; likewise, staff does not want to put clients in un-safe situations should an intern provide transportation.) These requirements are especially important when interns work with the justice system and/or vulnerable populations (such as the elderly, foster children, etc.). All of the agencies require students to possess a **current driver's license**, arrange their own transportation to and from the agency, and most require the use of a **personal vehicle for transportation** to conduct agency services. Required agency travel can include trips to and from court, visits to client homes, attendance at interagency meetings and participation in community services with clients. Some agencies reimburse interns for mileage accrued in the provision of agency service; however, each student must explore this matter individually with the field instructor at the placement site to

determine specific agency policy, as state budget cuts and other reductions in funding have impacted this protocol.

Many agencies also require a **drug screen, a physical examination, specific immunizations, testing for specific medical conditions (TB, hepatitis), etc.** before placement can officially begin. The cost of these tests will vary with some agencies absorbing the cost while other agencies require the student to assume these expenses; **it is essential for the student to inquire about these specific requirements and costs. These agency requirements must be met prior to beginning placement.**

North Carolina School Social Work Certification

Those social work students seeking to practice in the public schools will want to secure school social work certification, a requirement of the North Carolina Department of Public Instruction. In order to obtain certification, an intern must successfully complete the graduate elective in school social work, SWK 534: Advanced Social Work Practice in Schools, and successfully complete a field placement in a school setting or school related setting under a certified school social worker. Upon completion of the MSW, the student must forward an official UNCW transcript as well as copies of each semester's final Learning Contract and Performance Evaluation, to the Department of Public Instruction or process the certification application through the county office where s/he wishes to practice. While some counties will hire MSW graduates and provide them with a provisional school social work license, the candidate must complete the required coursework within a year of the hire date. For further information about certification, students should consult with the Assistant Coordinator of Field Education at UNCW and/or discuss certification with the school social work administrator of the respective county where one hopes to be employed as the certification process may vary from county to county.

Substance Use Disorders and Addictions Certificate

The School of Social Work at UNCW offers this certificate program that meets the educational requirements for the Licensed Clinical Addictions Specialist (LCAS) credential administered by the North Carolina Substance Abuse Professional Practice Board (NCSAPPB)*. The LCAS credential is quickly becoming the qualification of choice for managed care and insurance companies. Courses will be taught in the evening by credentialed faculty, using in person (seated), hybrid, and online formats. Courses are sequenced, offered one at a time in an intensive format of 7.5 weeks beginning Fall Semester. This four-course sequence is open to social work practitioners with the Master of Social Work degree in the Wilmington and Jacksonville areas. MSW students complete their practicum in an approved agency that focuses on treatment for people with substance use disorders and addictions. Students must complete a minimum of 300 hours under the supervision of credentialed clinical supervisor (CCS or CSI.) Students complete a separate timesheet that documents their field and supervision hours. **Important: All students are responsible for ensuring their supervisors have the proper credentials. If there is not a CSI or CCS on site, students must contact the field office who will then arrange for**

outside supervision. Completion of coursework in this certificate program does not waive other state board requirements for the LCAS credential. Students and practitioners pursuing the LCAS credential should contact the NCSAPPB. All students who plan to obtain this certificate must meet with Dr. Noell Rowan and confirm with Field Office.

North Carolina Child Welfare Education Collaborative

In an effort to strengthen public welfare services in the State of North Carolina, the UNCW School of Social Work has affiliated with the NC Child Welfare Collaborative. The Collaborative supports special educational opportunities that emphasize public welfare practice to ensure child safety, whether working in investigations or foster care treatment and case management. Students who wish to work in public child welfare to ensure safe, permanent, and nurturing families for children are encouraged to apply. Each student who wishes to participate is required to complete an application to the program. The State requires pre-service training before one can engage with clients at a Department of Social Service field placement; this training translates into completion of SWK 581: Child Abuse and Neglect (3) or SWK 595: Child and Adolescent Trauma (3) and SWK 582: Seminar on Working with Children, Youth, and Family Services (3) at UNCW. Those students selected will be placed with a county Department of Social Services for field placement. A Collaborative Scholar is deemed "fully qualified" by the Office of State Personnel which allows the graduate to enter DSS employment at the Social Worker III level.

Students interested in pursuing this focused child welfare education should discuss the program with the Coordinator of Field Education, who serves as the faculty liaison to the Collaborative.

Fieldwork Credit and Agency Employment

Some students may be employed in a human service agency and want to continue working there while completing their graduate social work field education. While efforts will be made to try to accommodate these students, by creating a placement within the agency of employment, it is essential that the student understand that CSWE standards of field education receive first priority. Therefore, the agency must provide the appropriate learning opportunities essential for MSW field education, consistent with CSWE Standards and Core Competencies and UNCW Field Education Policy, to facilitate a quality internship. If the agency is unable or unwilling to provide work release time, the student must acknowledge that requirements for field education will need to be pursued in addition to the paid hours to meet the learning objectives of field education; working hours may be considered as field hours if they fulfill the MSW field learning objectives and **provide a new learning opportunity**. **Employment hours cannot be substituted for field hours if they do not meet the MSW learning requirements and constitute new learning.** In addition, the student must complete the Learning Contracts and Evaluation Forms and establish learning tasks and evaluation criteria consistent with the UNCW field expectations. The field faculty must also identify suitable supervisory personnel for field training as **the student's work supervisor cannot serve as the field instructor**. Finally, no student will be given field

credit for work completed prior to enrollment in the MSW field education program or work completed for volunteer or service learning experience.

Should a student be offered employment (either part-time or full-time) while serving as an intern, s/he must provide the Coordinator of Field Education with a **copy of the job description** to determine the job duties which are appropriate for field learning and suitable hours that meet placement requirements if the student wishes to earn field credit for the employment experiences.

Field Education Assignments

Assignments for Foundational Practice

Since CSWE mandates the importance of practice experience with client systems of all sizes, *the placement must provide opportunities to work with individuals and families, provide case management services, co-facilitate educational/support groups, participate in agency planning and program development, and participate in an agency sponsored community outreach project.* *Micro practice* assignments to consider could include, but certainly are not limited to, the following examples:

- assisting a single parent with parenting issues
- assisting a young mother in seeking shelter, for herself and her children to escape an abusive partner
- co-facilitating a group for high school students who are experiencing behavioral challenges in the classroom and/or have poor study habits
- mobilizing transportation resources for a disabled person who needs medical treatment
- locating transitional housing for an individual returning to home from residential treatment or prison discharge
- co-facilitating an educational/support group for individuals in rehabilitation
- assisting a pregnant teen in securing prenatal care while continuing her education
- finding shelter for an elderly homeless person

These examples identify some of the possibilities to consider when planning student learning contracts and assigning clients to an intern. Generally, students will carry a small caseload, under careful supervision, to provide case management services. In this way, student learning is fostered with *increasing independence as the placement progresses and student performance readiness warrants.* Gaining experience in these practice opportunities provides an exciting opportunity for students to transition from student observer to beginning strengths-based, generalist practitioner. In addition, student suggestions and questions often stimulate new creative ideas for programs and services for the placement site.

Through participation in such learning experiences, the student will require opportunities to engage individuals, families, and client groups, to ensure the ability to assess client strengths and collaboration to identify client goals. Such practice experience typically includes the delivery of case management services, co-facilitating psycho-educational support groups, advocacy to access community services, etc. However, in addition to micro practice, *mezzo and macro* aspects must also be addressed. Practice assignments related to these levels of practice could include, but certainly are not limited to, the following examples:

- participating in agency committee work to enhance service delivery or develop staff support resources
- planning and co-facilitating staff task groups
- conducting a training for staff development
- exploring and reporting on agency policies that affect client experience
- investigating state or federal policy or pending legislation that affects clients and practitioners
- organizing political action to raise community awareness of issues that address social justice
- recruiting and training parents for foster care
- lobbying for changes in policy to assist at-risk populations in accessing services at the agency and/or community level
- planning activities to raise community awareness for healthy relationships.
- participating in planning and organizing an agency fund-raiser, a community resource fair, etc.

Additionally, all students are required to identify, plan and implement a community outreach project. In this manner, the student will be prepared to practice with client systems of all sizes as required in generalist practice.

Assignments for Advanced Clinical Practice

All MSW internships culminate into a clinical experience. As previously described, the clinical curriculum provides an integrated approach to the study of theory and skill development while providing interns with extensive practice opportunities for engaging a variety of client populations. All interns are expected to work with individuals, families, and groups, engage in staff planning, assist in program development, staff training, educational outreach to the community, conduct program evaluation, etc., regardless of the placement setting, consistent with CSWE core competencies for practice. Each semester in field education should provide new opportunities for the intern, to expand learning experiences as well as increase practice proficiency. However, with the focus on clinical practice, field experience will emphasize therapeutic interventions, with opportunity to gain beginning competency in applying solution-focused, motivational and cognitive-behavioral models of practice.

Most students begin by shadowing staff members in order to gain familiarity with services at the same time that the agency is gaining awareness of student skills, comfort and readiness to engage clients. Often students begin by co-facilitating psycho-educational groups, assisting staff with intakes, ride-along with staff to make home visits, etc. As the student reveals readiness for direct practice, more initiative and autonomy in fulfilling assignments is expected, recognizing that students come to the MSW Program with different skills and maturity levels and hence will demonstrate readiness for practice at different times. In addition, some students enter the program with the BSW Degree while others may have limited or no social service experience and will need to move more slowly through the educational/practice process. As with practice, the field instructor must recognize that each

student demonstrates readiness for different aspects of practice at different times. In addition, each agency has a different composition of services to offer so students will gain different practice experiences at different times at the various placement settings. Should a field instructor desire feedback from the faculty liaison working with a particular student, this is available upon request. Also, faculty consultation is available to review the student's preferred learning style and/or conflict management styles to facilitate the learning process and collaboration between the student and the field instructor.

With an increasing emphasis on credentialing, billing and liability in the practice settings, students may find that agencies can no longer permit the intern to see clients alone. However, most agencies, after an initial shadowing opportunity, will slowly evolve the practice experience so that the intern may assume a leadership role in the delivery of therapeutic services, but may not be able to meet alone with clients. This arrangement is also designed to ensure student safety, especially when dealing with a client who might exhibit signs of aggression that could put the intern in a risky situation. Finally, in order to bill for services, a licensed clinical practitioner must be present.

Learning Contract and Performance Evaluation

MSW students, in collaboration with the assigned field instructor and the faculty liaison, will design a learning contract that focuses the learning experience. This contract identifies the learning activities and evaluation criteria of practice competencies (see MSW Learning Contract/Performance Evaluation, APPENDIX F and G). Each observable component requires the identification of the learning strategies and method of evaluation, which will determine if the student has successfully achieved the desired core practice competencies as defined by CSWE. The identified *learning activities*, with *specified evaluation method*, will be formulated by the student with the guidance of the field instructor and faculty liaison, necessitating the collaboration and approval of a three-way contract. Full and Part Time MSW students will develop two learning contracts: one to reflect practice behaviors set in the foundational year of social work education, and one to reflect advanced practice behaviors. Advanced Standing MSW students are required to create a learning contract based off the Advanced Competencies.

Working with each learning contract, the student must demonstrate her/his ability to work with a variety of client systems, working with individuals, families, client groups, organizational and professional task groups, and community outreach. Likewise, the intern must also demonstrate proficiency and sensitivity in working with diverse populations, addressing multiple forms of diversity that range across cultures, gender, socioeconomic factors, disabilities, etc. Finally, each student will have an opportunity to develop proficiency within a specific concentration of practice, focusing on school social work, substance abuse treatment, gerontology, etc. Some students may choose to complete optional certificates to augment the MSW. (See the MSW Student Handbook for further information.)

With the revision of the CSWE standards, CSWE determined nine overarching goals, or practice goal competencies, which determine the consistent practice outcomes for social work nationwide. These core competencies provide the overarching goals of both the Learning Contracts, and apply to each student's course of study regardless of the agency

placement setting. Likewise, the practice behaviors or objectives are stipulated by CSWE, with some additional recommendations by the faculty when practice behaviors are quite broad, to help each student focus his or her work in field. The intent of these learning contracts is to create a roadmap for the intern to follow, while engaged in field education, to hold the student, the field instructor and faculty liaison mutually accountable to the learning process as articulated by each student. The student, in collaboration with the field instructor, will establish specific learning steps or activities that guide the learning process and establish individual evaluation criteria that specify desired practice behavior outcomes. In this way, students are held accountable to CSWE standards while having the latitude to generate their own learning opportunities within the context of the profession. Once the respective learning contracts are drafted, they are submitted to the respective faculty liaisons (instructors of the weekly integrative field seminar) for review and feedback. Contracts must be signed by the student, the field instructor and the faculty liaison; this signed learning contract determines the educational plan for that specific student, holding the student, field instructor and faculty liaison accountable to the same learning process. This collaborative method also affords the opportunity for reinforcing the learning journey for each student in a respectful manner that allows the student to have knowledge of the evaluation criteria well in advance of the respective semester evaluations. With the articulation of clear and measurable learning steps and evaluative practice outcomes, the student is able to plan her/his work in a manner that fosters initiative, independence, and effective time management (see Learning Contract and Evaluation Forms, APPENDICIES F and G).

The learning objectives, consistent with the CSWE core competencies, read as follows:

Foundation Year
Full Time MSW Students: SWK 510
Part Time MSW Students: SWK 560 and 561

CSWE Core Competency#1: Demonstrate Ethical and Professional Behavior
(Dimensions of Learning: Knowledge and Values).

Observable Component Behavior 1.1: make ethical decisions by applying the standards of the NASW Code of Ethics, relevant laws and regulations, models for ethical decision-making, ethical conduct of research, and additional codes of ethics as appropriate to context;

Observable Component Behavior 1.2: Use reflection and self-regulation to manage personal values and maintain professionalism in practice situations

Observable Component Behavior 1.3: demonstrate professional demeanor in behavior; appearance; and oral, written, and electronic communication;

Observable Component Behavior 1.4: use technology ethically and appropriately to facilitate practice outcomes; and

Observable Component Behavior 1.5: use supervision and consultation to guide professional judgment and behavior.

Observable Component Behavior 1.6: demonstrate initiative in seeking learning opportunities while managing workload to accomplish assigned tasks within expected timeframes, including: documentation, attendance, dress, and other appropriate work habits

CSWE Core Competency#2: Engage in Diversity and Difference in Practice (Dimensions of learning: skills and values)

Observable Component Behavior 2.1: apply and communicate understanding of the importance of diversity and difference in shaping life experiences in practice at the micro, mezzo, and macro levels;

Observable Component Behavior 2.2: present themselves as learners and engage clients and constituencies as experts of their own experiences

Observable Component Behavior 2.3: apply self-awareness and self-regulation to manage the influence of personal biases and values in working with diverse clients and constituencies.

CSWE Core Competency#3: Advance Human Rights and Social, Economic, and Environmental Justice (Dimensions of learning: knowledge and values)

Observable Component Behavior 3.1: apply their understanding of social, economic, and environmental justice to advocate for human rights at the individual and system levels;

Observable Component Behavior 3.2: engage in practices that advance social, economic, and environmental justice.

CSWE Core Competency #4: Engage In Practice-informed Research and Research-informed Practice (Dimensions of Learning: Knowledge and Cognitive/Affective Processes)

Observable Component Behavior 1.1: use practice experience and theory to inform scientific inquiry and research

Observable Component Behavior 1.2: apply critical thinking to engage in analysis of quantitative and qualitative research methods and research finding

Observable Component Behavior 1.3: use and translate research evidence to inform and improve practice, policy, and service delivery.

CSWE Core Competency #5: Engage in Policy Practice

(Dimensions of Learning: Knowledge and Skills)

Observable Component Behavior 5.1: Identify social policy at the local, state, and federal level that impacts well-being, service delivery, and access to social services;

Observable Component Behavior 5.2: assess how social welfare and economic policies impact the delivery of and access to social services;

Observable Component Behavior 5.3: apply critical thinking to analyze, formulate, and advocate for policies that advance human rights and social, economic, and environmental justice.

CSWE Core Competency #6: Engage with Individuals, Families, Groups, Organizations, and Communities (Dimensions of Learning: Skills and Cognitive/Affective Processes)

Observable Component Behavior 6.1: apply knowledge of human behavior and the social environment, person-in-environment, and other multidisciplinary theoretical frameworks to engage with clients and constituencies; and

Observable Component Behavior 6.2: use empathy, reflection, and interpersonal skills to effectively engage diverse clients and constituencies.

CSWE Core Competency #7: Assess Individuals, Families, Groups, Organizations, and Communities (Dimensions of Learning: Skills and Cognitive/Affective Processes)

Observable Component Behavior 7.1: collect and organize data, and apply critical thinking to interpret information from clients and constituencies;

Observable Component Behavior 7.2: apply knowledge of human behavior and the social environment, person-in-environment, and other multidisciplinary theoretical frameworks in the analysis of assessment data from clients and constituencies;

Observable Component Behavior 7.3: develop mutually agreed-on intervention goals and objectives based on the critical assessment of strengths, needs, and challenges within clients and constituencies; and

Observable Component Behavior 7.4: select appropriate intervention strategies based on the assessment, research knowledge, and values and preferences of clients and constituencies.

CSWE Core Competency #8: Intervene with Individuals, Families, Groups, Organizations, and Communities (Dimensions of Learning: Skills and Cognitive/Affective Processes)

Observable Component Behavior 8.1: critically choose and implement interventions to achieve practice goals and enhance capacities of clients and constituencies;

Observable Component Behavior 8.2: apply knowledge of human behavior and the social environment, person-in-environment, and other multidisciplinary theoretical frameworks in interventions with clients and constituencies;

Observable Component Behavior 8.3: use inter-professional collaboration as appropriate to achieve beneficial practice outcomes

Observable Component Behavior 8.4: negotiate, mediate, and advocate with and on behalf of diverse clients and constituencies; and

Observable Component Behavior 8.5: Facilitate effective transitions and endings that advance mutually agreed-on goals.

CSWE Core Competency #9: Evaluate Practice with Individuals, Families, Groups, Organizations, and Communities (Dimensions of Learning: Knowledge and Skills)

Observable Component Behavior: 9.1: select and use appropriate methods for evaluation of outcomes;

Observable Component Behavior: 9.2: apply knowledge of human behavior and the social environment, person-in-environment, and other multidisciplinary theoretical frameworks in the evaluation of outcomes;

Observable Component Behavior 9.3: critically analyze, monitor, and evaluate intervention and program processes and outcomes; and

Observable Component Behavior 9.4: apply evaluation findings to improve practice effectiveness at the micro, mezzo, and macro levels.

Advanced Year

Full Time Second Year and Advanced Standing MSW Students:

SWK 511 & SWK 512

Part Time MSW Students: SWK 562, 563, and 564

Competency 1: Demonstrate Ethical and Professional Behavior in Clinical Social Work Practice

Observable Component Behavior 1.1: Demonstrate the understanding of how personal values and experiences influence clinical practice effectiveness.

Observable Component Behavior 1.2: Demonstrate the ability to utilize clinical supervision to maximize clinical practice skills.

Observable Component Behavior 1.3: Demonstrate ability to set professional boundaries and facilitate self-care in a clinical setting. Make ethical decisions in clinical practice using NASW Code of Ethics, other professional social work codes, relevant laws and regulations, models for ethical decision-making, and consultation

Competency 2: Engage Diversity and Difference in Clinical Social Work Practice

Observable Component Behavior 2.1 Demonstrate the ability to research and integrate knowledge of diverse client populations to enhance clinical work.

Observable Component Behavior 2.2 Demonstrate compassion, helpful intent and respect for diverse perspectives.

Observable Component Behavior 2.3: Continuously demonstrate the capacity to work effectively with diverse populations

Observable Component Behavior 2.4: Demonstrate the ability to engage clients in respectful ways that demonstrate cultural, humility, sensitivity and acceptance.

Competency 3: Advance Human Rights and Social, Economic, and Environmental Justice in a Clinical Context

Observable Component Behavior 3.1: Demonstrate the ability to use knowledge related to the impact of oppression and discrimination relevant to client(s) and client systems to guide clinical engagement, intervention, assessment and evaluation.

Observable Component Behavior 3.2: Demonstrate the ability to identify a specific concern to address to enhance social, environmental, and/or economic justice as it relates to clients' clinical needs.

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

Observable Component Behavior 4.1: Explore professional literature to identify effectiveness of alternative models of practice in clinical social work.

Observable Component Behavior 4.2: Demonstrate the ability to evaluate one's own practice effectiveness in a clinical setting.

Competency 5: Engage in Clinical Social Work Policy Practice

Observable Component Behavior 5.1: Demonstrate the ability to assess how clients' interface with their social contexts and if needed advocate for systemic change

Observable Component Behavior 5.2: Demonstrate an ability to advocate for policy/protocol change to enhance social functioning of a client(s)

Competency 6: Clinical Engagement

Observable Component Behavior 6.1: Demonstrate an ability to engage clients using empathy, reflection, and interpersonal skills

Observable Component Behavior 6.2: Develop a culturally responsive therapeutic relationship

Observable Component Behavior 6.3: Demonstrate the ability to maintain a therapeutic relationship and continually monitors the interpersonal dynamics that impact the client therapeutic relationship

Competency 7: Clinical Assessment

Observable Component Behavior 7.1: Demonstrate the ability to assess clients' readiness for change

Observable Component Behavior 7.2: Demonstrate ability to use theoretical concepts and the multi-axial diagnostic classification systems during comprehensive assessment. If/when relevant, inter-professional collaboration should be used in order to complete a comprehensive clinical assessment

Observable Component Behavior 7.3: Demonstrate the ability to select appropriate clinical interventions, drawing upon solution focused, motivational interviewing, and cognitive behavioral modalities, based on mutually agreed upon goals

Competency 8: Clinical Intervention

Observable Component Behavior 8.1: Demonstrate the ability to use inter-professional collaboration as appropriate to achieve beneficial practice outcomes in a clinical setting

Observable Component Behavior 8.2: Demonstrate the ability to implement clinical intervention(s), drawing upon solution focused, motivational interviewing, and cognitive behavioral modalities, to enhance capacities of clients based on mutually agreed upon goals

Observable Component Behavior 8.3: Demonstrate the ability to effectively prepare for endings and transitions with clients in clinical practice (individuals, families, and/or groups)

Competency 9: Clinical Evaluation

Observable Component Behavior 9.1: Demonstrate ability to evaluate practice in a clinical setting

Observable Component Behavior 9.2: Demonstrate ability to use clinical evaluation results to inform future practice decisions in a clinical setting

Clinical Supervision

Clinical supervision is necessary, to facilitate professional growth in social work, focusing on review of knowledge, skill development, professional demeanor, and the acquisition of professional values for the provision of clinical services to clients. More than a review of agency procedures and practice techniques, supervision provides opportunities for **self-awareness and professional use of self in the therapeutic alliance with clients**. In addition, field instructors will work with students to facilitate the development of safe, trusting, supportive relationships as each field instructor must ensure sound **practice skill-building** according to professional standards, agency protocols, and federal and state statutes. Finally, clinical supervision, as provided by the field instructors, assists the faculty in assuring the gate-keeping responsibility identified by the Council on Social Work Education, ensuring that students are adequately prepared for professional practice and the provisional social work practice license (LCSW-A).

Recognizing that every supervisory relationship is unique, there are also specific standards to be found in supervision. Initially the field instructor should provide an orientation to the agency and provide the student with opportunities to meet the staff. The field instructor has primary responsibility to serve as a professional role model while fostering professional growth, supporting the learning process and assisting the student in **reflection on knowledge, skills, and feelings that arise in the learning process**. **Supervision should occur weekly for at least an hour** to assure that the student has designated time to review learning, identify suitable practice techniques, and reflect on emotions that may arise in practice. As mentioned, the field instructor will also have primary responsibility for collaborating with the student in the design of the learning contract for each year of field practice. The faculty liaison is available to assist with the development of this supervisory relationship at the invitation of either the student or the field instructor or may initiate consultation based on students' needs identified in the completion of field assignments and discussion in the field seminar.

Effective supervision should include frequent discussions about the learning contract, thus facilitating learning in a timely manner for each semester of field practice. Evaluation of student knowledge and skill is incorporated throughout the field experience. During the first semester of field practice, the student will participate in a collaborative evaluation of field performance to assure the student has acquired appropriate professional demeanor and work habits (see Mid-term Evaluation, APPENDIX H). At the end of each semester of field

(a minimum of 300 hours each semester), the learning contract converts to the student performance evaluation. In this manner, the student and the field instructor will confer and collaboratively rate the student's performance. Such an approach to performance evaluation affords the student the opportunity to self-evaluate as well as assertively discuss her/his performance with authority figures. Regular review of the progress being made with the learning contract will afford the student on-going feedback of her/his proficiency; **hence, the end of the semester performance evaluation should not generate any surprises in evaluative feedback for the student.**

Hybrid Field Placement

Occasionally a specific placement, while providing quality learning opportunities, may not be able to provide the full range of placement experience with client systems of all sizes. In addition, if the student is seeking a specific learning opportunity that is not available at her placement, a hybrid placement will be considered. A hybrid placement is arranged through the Coordinator of Field Education and is designed to **complement the primary field placement**. This means that a student will spend two days per week in a primary field setting and one day a week at the additional or hybrid placement to augment the learning experience of the primary placement site. In securing a hybrid placement, the protocols for securing field placements and field instructors are followed to secure a quality supplemental learning experience. For example, one student working in a substance abuse/mental health outpatient treatment program for women, wanted to work with adolescents to address these same issues of concern. Hence her primary placement was with the substance abuse/mental health agency and a hybrid was arranged with a local high school where the student could facilitate support groups that addressed prevention around these same practice issues. When a hybrid placement exists, the student must include learning **experience from both field settings in the learning contract. Both field instructors are requested to sign off on the learning contract** and participate in the end of the semester evaluation process. Both field instructors are asked to participate in the final site visit and discussion and sign the final evaluation.

Internship Hours Requirements and Student Responsibilities

Each student is required to **maintain a timesheet** to record hours for each semester (see sample Timesheet, APPENDIX I). These time sheets, provided by the field office, must be co-signed by the field instructor and turned in at the completion of each semester. In the midst of busy schedules, falling behind in placement hours can quickly become problematic. For this reason, each intern is asked to regularly record her/his hours, to remain current, submitting the completed timesheet with the final journal at the end of each semester of field practice. In order to eliminate any discrepancies or confusion around documented hours, students are required to have their timesheets initialed weekly by their field instructor/task supervisor. Failure to submit a signed final timesheet to the faculty liaison by the end of the semester may result in the student receiving an incomplete or failing grade in the field.

In addition, there are special lectures, community activities, and campus events (that will enhance practice awareness and appreciation for diversity) that interns are encouraged to

attend for field credit. Examples of these events include cultural events and lecture series, conferences sponsored by the School of Social Work, NASW regional meetings, etc. However, multicultural events on campus, that fulfill field expectations, should be cleared with the student's faculty liaison to determine appropriateness for field credit. Students should also make sure their field instructor/task supervisor is made aware of any outside hours. This can be done by discussing outside learning opportunities, journaling, sharing of resources, etc. Students may earn up to a maximum of 20 hours outside of their internship. Any additional hours must be approved by the field office. If a student is concerned about not meeting their hour requirements, they must notify their faculty liaison as soon as possible.

Hours for Full Time MSW Field Education

As mentioned, each Full Time MSW student must complete a minimum of 900 hours of field education, 300 hours per semester for three contiguous semesters, excluding the weekly field seminar. This workload is distributed over a three-day placement experience, usually with a Wednesday, Thursday, Friday field placement during the **Foundation Year** and a Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday schedule during the **Advanced Year**. It is important to remember that some agency functions that contribute to student learning may occur on other days or evenings. Students are encouraged to demonstrate flexibility in scheduling in order to take advantage of these educational opportunities. However, when that occurs, a reduction in the hours for regular fieldwork days should take place so that students avoid overextending themselves at their placements; it is important to remember that interns also have an academic schedule to maintain with assignments integrated with the field responsibilities to enhance the learning experience.

Part Time MSW Hours for Field Education

Part Time MSW students will average 14 hours weekly at their field placement to complete 190 hours of field education per semester, and 140 hours during summer field practicum . It is important to remember that some agency functions that contribute to student learning may occur on other days or evenings. Students are encouraged to demonstrate flexibility in scheduling in order to take advantage of these educational opportunities. However, when that occurs, a reduction in the hours for regular fieldwork days should take place so that students avoid overextending themselves at their placements; it is important to remember that interns also have an academic schedule to maintain with assignments integrated with the field responsibilities to enhance the learning experience.

Advanced Standing MSW Hours for Field Education

Advanced Standing students are required to complete 600 hours each semester they are in field. This averages to 20-24 hours a week. Field days are typically Monday, Tuesday, and Wednesday.

Professional Affiliation

The National Association of Social Work (NASW) is the national organization for the profession. Membership in this organization is required in order to purchase professional liability insurance. As members, students will receive the national newsletter and have access to the state newsletter as well as the Journal of Social Work, available on the NASW web site (<http://www.socialworkers.org>). National membership automatically enrolls a student in the North Carolina chapter of NASW which entitles her/him to the state newsletter, access to the ethical dilemma of the month, etc. which is also available on line. In addition, students are encouraged to attend monthly regional NASW meetings to begin professional development and networking; credit toward field hours is offered for attendance of regional NASW meetings and can be included in the Learning Contract and Evaluation Form to address professional development. The coastal chapter (Wilmington) meets the first Monday of the month at UNCW McNeill Hall at 5:30pm;

NASW also offers professional certifications and students are encouraged to explore the certification requirements. Such certifications include school, case management, gerontology, health care, youth and families, substance abuse, etc. Joining this professional organization, while a student, affords membership benefits while enjoying a discounted student membership price.

Professional Liability Insurance

Each intern is required to purchase malpractice liability insurance while engaged in field practice in the placement setting. As stated previously, each student is expected to join NASW and purchase liability insurance through the professional trust. Graduate students are expected to purchase the graduate student insurance for **\$1 million/\$5 million coverage (students placed in an acute medical facility are typically required to purchase a higher rate of malpractice coverage)**. Purchase of malpractice liability insurance is NOT optional and is required by the university as well as the School of Social Work. Each student must **present a copy of the certificate of insurance before s/he is permitted to begin field placement**. Each student must submit a copy of the insurance certificate to the Office of Field Education, prior to the start of placement.

Mileage Reimbursement

All agencies require that interns possess a current driver's license as well as personal responsibility for transportation to and from the placement site. Many agencies expect interns to make home visits and some will require the transporting of clients to community service providers, medical appointments, visits with biological parents, etc. When these agency based expenses are necessary, agencies are expected to provide reimbursement for mileage incurred consistent with staff reimbursement. Each intern is expected to **individually explore the transportation requirements with the potential field instructor** to determine agency protocol as agency practice in this regard often changes. Students receiving financial

assistance may want to explore the option for additional loan amounts, through the UNCW Office of Financial Aid, to assist them with expenses incurred; increased loan amounts are available to assist with travel expenses involving longer commutes since the internship is required for successful completion of the MSW degree.

Student Evaluation of the Field Experience

Finally, at the end of the field experience, each MSW student is expected to complete an evaluation of the field experience. This evaluation reviews student perceptions of the placement's effectiveness as well as the variety of learning experiences, appropriateness and timeliness of supervision, and recommendations for future placement usage. (See the Student Evaluation of Field Placement, APPENDIX J) Student evaluations are treated with confidentiality; specific information is only shared with the appropriate field instructor with student written consent. Data shared with field instructors and members of the Field's Advisory Committee is done in the aggregate rather than individual student comments. These data assist the field faculty in selecting suitable placements for forthcoming student cohorts.

Challenges in Field Education

Safety Policy and Procedures/Incident Reports

The University of North Carolina Wilmington (UNCW) School of Social Work Field Education Office provides the following policy and procedures to maximize the safety of social work student interns in their field practice/field agency settings. This policy recognizes that both professional social workers and students engaged in social work internships face inherent physical/emotional risks that can be minimized by increased awareness and taking appropriate precautions. All social work interns/students shall become familiar with this policy regardless of their agency settings.

Responsibilities and Roles

UNCW School of Social Work will:

- Provide students with an overview of risks and safety considerations and procedures in the field setting through the field seminar.
- Provide students with a copy of the School's Safety Policy and Procedures.
- Encourage faculty to incorporate content related to safety into lectures and discussions in the classroom.
- Faculty liaisons will discuss/assess safety issues during site visits or as, needed.
- Offer workshops that address social worker safety to field placement agencies, field instructors and the community.

Field Placement Agencies will:

- Orient students to the established safety policies and procedures of the agency. These orientations should include, but not be limited to discussions of social

worker/intern safety issues in the community, within the field agency setting/building(s), and with particular clients.

- Provide a secure place for the personal belongings of students.
- Inform and train students in universal health precautions and related protocols appropriate to the agency setting/nature of the services provided.
- Train student(s) on all established safety procedures and protocols to guide them in the event of an emergency/high risk situation.
- Not require students to engage in assignments in which they feel physically at risk.
- Make the same accommodations to ensure students' safety as they make for staff.
- Contact the student's faculty liaison if the student's concerns about safety interfere with the learning process. In consultation with the faculty liaison, and in some instances with a member of the Field Education Office, develop a plan that addresses the student's educational needs and the agency's requirements to provide services.

Social Work Students are Responsible to:

- Read and be familiar with the safety policies and procedures of the School of Social Work and the agency in which they are placed,
- Abide by all health precautions and protocols related to the field agency setting.
- Attend orientations, workshops and training programs related to safety and safe social work practice offered at the School and their field agency.
- Not engage in assignments in which they feel physically at risk. If a student is concerned about his/her safety, s/he should inform his/her field instructor. The faculty liaison and field instructor will consult to determine the best course of action to support the student's education.

Procedures for Reporting an Incident

If an incident occurs that results in a student being threatened or hurt while s/he is fulfilling agency duties, an **incident report** must be completed by the student within 48 hours of the incident to document the event. (See **Field Manual for Incident Report, APPENDIX L**).

- This form must be signed by the field instructor and the student.
- A copy of each incident report must be provided to the agency as well as the Office of Field Education within 48 hours of the incident.
- Each student is expected to **check with the field instructor to determine if workman's compensation insurance, purchased by the agency, is available to cover student injury or whether the student's personal insurance is required for coverage.**

Safety Guidelines for Social Work Students in the Field

a) Agency Protocol: It is important for students to know their agency's protocol for safety and security. The following guidelines and suggestions may be helpful to students, field instructors, and faculty liaisons as they consider the particular safety issues in their respective settings. Specific steps taken by students or agency personnel will be determined by each individual situation, the nature of the setting, etc. To increase safety, the agency should know the student's schedule and whereabouts at all times, especially when the student is working outside the building.

b) Security of Belongings: The agency is responsible for providing students with a secure place to keep their belongings while at the agency. The space should be one that can be locked; this could be in a desk drawer or filing cabinet. Students should not leave cell phones, laptops, backpacks, purses, 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 be placed out of view or in the trunk just prior to leaving a vehicle.

c) Safety Issues Related to Working with Clients: Social work students work with clients/consumers in a range of settings and situations. Some of these include work with individuals dealing with overwhelming emotions and environmental stressors that result in behaviors that are threatening or appear to be threatening to the student. These behaviors may include (but are not limited to) swearing, yelling, insulting, threatening or acting to cause physical harm, and other out-of-control behaviors.

Some individuals who may be prone to violence may possess a weapon. Others may be intoxicated, in withdrawal, or may have other medical, psychiatric or neurological disorders. We want to emphasize that students should always consult with agency field instructors regarding preparation for and 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 Tips for Office Meetings: When considering the location of office meetings, it is important to consider what furniture/objects are in the room, whether there is more than one exit and where it is, and where each person will sit. Students and workers often choose to sit nearest the exit during office visits that involve difficult conversations or actions that may raise risk to the workers. When scheduling the appointment, it is important to think about whether other people will be around and available at the time of the meeting for help if needed. Also, it is important to have a plan for assistance in the event that the client/consumer becomes agitated. This may include having another staff person in the meeting.

e) Safety Tips for Home Visits: Prior to making a home visit, students should discuss any issues related to safety with their field instructor. On an initial home visit it is often advisable to go with another worker. Most agencies will want to know the location and scheduling of home visits. Some agencies require a confirming telephone call upon arrival and departure from the home visit. If the student feels unsafe upon arrival or at any time during the visit

s/he should not proceed with the meeting. It might be preferable to reschedule the meeting at a neutral location.

f) Health Safety: Students should be alerted and informed of hazardous materials that might be encountered at the placement site and receive training and/or information about how to protect themselves from infectious diseases.

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

Change in Field Instructors

Occasionally during placement, a change in field instructors may be necessary. Usually this occurs when a field instructor takes a medical leave of absence, reduces hours of employment, leaves the agency to seek employment elsewhere, or is reassigned to another unit with new responsibilities. Every effort will be made to find a suitable field instructor in the agency where the student is placed; however, some situations necessitate a change in field placement due to limited supervisory personnel. When this is necessary, the faculty liaison will work closely with the student, the out-going field instructor, and the new field instructor to make a smooth transition. If such a change is anticipated, the **field instructor is asked to inform the faculty liaison and the Coordinator of Field Education** immediately, to allow adequate planning for the transition.

Changes in Agency Placement

Each student is expected to complete three semesters of field education in one agency placement. However, on occasion, some students might require a change in field assignment. As mentioned, this could be necessary if a field instructor leaves the agency and a suitable replacement for continued supervision is not available. In addition, should the agency or student realize that adequate supervision and learning opportunities are not available, a change in placement could be considered. Also a student might determine that her/his learning style is incompatible with the supervision provided by the field instructor or the learning opportunities are limited and compromise a student's education. However, while these situations may appear insurmountable at first, they usually can be successfully resolved if **addressed early in the placement**. Hence **concerns should be reviewed with the faculty liaison and the Coordinator of Field Education as early as possible** to enhance the learning process and avoid disruption of the placement as disruption will delay learning opportunities. This is a critical part of the learning journey as it is important for the student to recognize that issues of concern are not handled by avoidant behavior. Rather social work is about the recognition of difficulties that occur in human relationships and the importance of working toward conflict resolution.

No student may independently change placements or terminate a placement; the student, field instructor and faculty liaison must collaborate to determine the best course of action. Both the faculty liaison and the Coordinator of Field Education are available to assist the student and the field instructor with problem management, resource mobilization, and mediation. After these options have been explored, if resolution of the

concerns are not possible, the student will be assisted in locating an alternative placement with as little disruption to the learning process as possible. In addition, a hybrid placement may prove a satisfactory alternative.

Nondiscrimination/Sexual Harassment

Should a student have concerns that discrimination toward staff or clients is occurring at the field site, the student is expected to report her/his concerns to the faculty liaison, and the Coordinator of Field Education, as soon as concerns arise. Likewise students experiencing **discriminatory behavior** at the placement site should inform the faculty liaison of her/his concerns in order to assess the appropriateness of the placement. Such discrimination could include discrimination toward race, gender, physical challenge, etc.

In addition, **sexual harassment** of field students by any field instructor, agency employee, or representative of the agency will not be tolerated. Should a student have a concern that s/he is being harassed, s/he should immediately report such a concern to his faculty liaison and the Coordinator of Field Education; field faculty will work with the student, the field instructor, and the faculty liaison to determine an appropriate action with the agency to address identified concerns.

Should an incident of discrimination and/or sexual harassment occur at the placement site, the student is expected to complete an **incident report** to document concerns (see Incident Report, APPENDIX J). While the faculty will make every effort to ensure student safety, it must be understood that UNCW faculty does not have any authority to discipline agency personnel due to the voluntary nature of the partnership between the agency and the School of Social Work. Hence, if the discriminatory practices cannot be successfully addressed to secure student safety, the student will be placed with another agency to ensure safety and provide a safe learning environment.

Students with Special Needs

Students who have learning challenges or other areas of special concern, such as hearing impairment, visual impairment, mobility restrictions, etc. are encouraged to articulate their learning needs in the field application and field interview in order to afford adequate placement arrangements. Students in need of writing assistance are encouraged to utilize the campus **resources at the learning center to enhance computer literacy, effective written communication, etc.** Should a student desire special accommodations for completion of field assignments, s/he must register **with the UNCW Office of Disability Services**. The Coordinator of Field Education will consult with the UNCW Director of Disability Services to identify resources in the university as well as the community that will assist the student. In addition, the School of Social Work will consult with the Director of Disability Services to determine that the MSW Program is compliant with university, state and federal policy. Every effort will be made to identify university and community based support services to assist the student with assignments.

Those students who have experienced personal difficulties in their childhood and/or adult life are requested to candidly share such information with the Coordinator of Field Education and the appropriate faculty liaison to assure a safe field education experience for the intern and her/his clients. Should past and/or current difficulties warrant professional counseling, the student will be referred to the UNCW Counseling Center or community practitioners, as the student prefers, to assure student readiness for field. These concerns can be identified by the student, a faculty member, a faculty liaison or a field instructor. A plan of action will be determined by the student in collaboration with the faculty liaison and the Coordinator of Field Education to assist the student in determining whether continued clinical practice is feasible or whether a leave of absence would be beneficial. If there is no agreement on such a plan, the concerns will be forwarded to the Leadership Team of the School of Social Work to determine continued placement readiness.

Personal and/or Medical Leave

Should a student experience **health or medical problems**, while engaged in field practice, s/he should consult with the assigned faculty liaison to determine if medical leave is appropriate. Students who are experiencing extensive health problems could be compromised in their learning process as they will fall behind in academic assignments as well as field practice experience. Should the student be in a position that requires extensive make-up hours, this could add stress which could further compromise one's health. In such situations, students will be encouraged to take a medical leave of absence, terminate field in good standing, and re-enter the field program when health permits.

Likewise, if a student experiences **personal or family difficulties** that necessitate an extended absence from the field placement, s/he will be encouraged to take a leave of absence to avoid jeopardizing the quality of the learning process. This leave time will provide the student with the opportunity to address family or personal concerns, resuming field when the situation permits the student to engage in a healthy, focused, practice relationship with her/his clients.

Students wishing to pursue either course of leave should discuss this plan with the appropriate faculty liaison, the Coordinator of Field Education and the MSW Coordinator. Students desiring a leave of absence will need to complete University paperwork, in compliance with UNCW procedures, which is available through the MSW Coordinator of the School of Social Work. When a student feels that s/he is ready to return to field practice, s/he will be required to provide documentation of readiness for clinical practice. A review of suitability to return to field practice will be determined by the field faculty, in collaboration with the Leadership Team of the School of Social Work. This is done in compliance with the *NASW Code of Ethics*, CSWE standards and UNCW policies to assure that the student can sustain the stress of clinical practice and ensure client/public safety.

Field Grades and Appeal

Should a student experience difficulty in field performance and earn lower than a grade of C in field, s/he will be removed from the field placement as well as the MSW Program. In addition, if the student earns more than two C grades in other graduate social work courses, s/he will be dismissed from the program. This practice is consistent with the policy of the UNCW Graduate School as well as the standards of the MSW Program. If a student is dissatisfied with her/his grade or other disciplinary plan of action, s/he should first discuss her/his concerns with the appropriate faculty member. If dissatisfied with the outcome from this discussion, the student can appeal to the Leadership Team of the School of Social Work. Should the members of the Leadership Team determine that a personal interview is appropriate to discuss the appeal, the student may request the presence of a support person (either a member of the social work faculty or a student of the school) to the Leadership Team review. After careful consideration to the standards set forth by CSWE, the *NASW Code of Ethics*, the UNCW Honor Code, agency policy, UNCW Graduate School policy, and state and/or federal law, the Leadership Team will then recommend a plan of action. Appropriate consultation with university personnel will take place as needed to determine clear understanding of policy, law, etc. pertaining to the individual student situation. Should a student wish to appeal beyond the Leadership Team of the School, s/he must follow university policy as set forth in the MSW Social Work Handbook and the UNCW Code of Student Life.

Disciplinary Action/Termination from Field Placement

Each student will have weekly supervision with her/his field instructor to discuss progress, practice techniques, etc., to keep the student apprised of field performance throughout the semester. Typically this relationship provides positive support to navigate the learning experience and concerns can be addressed early in the semester so that the student has sufficient opportunity to take corrective action. Concerns should be addressed as soon as identified as avoidant behavior on the part of the field instructor, the student or the faculty liaison does not afford opportunity for the student to address the targeted behaviors. The field instructor is asked to keep the faculty liaison and the student informed of any student performance concerns. Addressing these concerns in a timely manner is the most beneficial course of action and usually results in behavioral changes that can successfully resolve concerns. Should a student engage in professional misconduct, and neglect or disregard the recommendations of the field instructor and/or the faculty liaison, the student will be subject to disciplinary action depending on the severity of the infractions, as determined by the Leadership Team.

In addition, should there be an infraction of the *NASW Code of Ethics*, agency policy, etc. these concerns will be discussed with the student by both the field instructor and the faculty liaison, notifying the Coordinator of Field Education to determine appropriate disciplinary action. Should additional deliberation be deemed necessary to determine a professional course of action, the student's conduct will be reviewed by the Leadership Team of the School of Social Work; this discussion can serve as a consultation to the field faculty or an appeal process when initiated by the student in question. In this manner, the student is

assured of an ethical discussion of professional conduct which can be initiated by a student, a faculty member, or the Coordinator of Field Education to facilitate collaboration and determine a fair plan of action.

Should an ethical violation occur that warrants dismissal from MSW field education and/or the MSW Program, including but not limited to sexual misconduct with clients and/or co-workers, fraud, violation of client confidentiality, etc., the field instructor and the faculty liaison will seek consultation with the Coordinator of Field Education. When a student wishes to appeal a decision regarding professional misconduct, s/he must follow university policy as set forth in the MSW Social Work Handbook and the UNCW Code of Student Life. The Coordinator of Field Education will seek consultation with the Leadership Team before a plan of action is determined.

As previously mentioned, appropriate consultation with appropriate university personnel will take place as needed to determine a clear understanding of policy, law, etc. pertaining to the individual student situation in order to assure a fair and professional course of action. Students will be notified of disciplinary action in writing by the MSW Program Coordinator.

Graduation/Licensure

Upon completion of all required MSW coursework with a grade of B or better (a maximum of two courses with a grade of C will be accepted) and the satisfactory completion of all field assignments, the student will be a candidate for graduation to receive the Master of Social Work Degree! S/he will then be eligible to apply for a provisional social work license for clinical practice (LCSW-A). This application is accessed from the North Carolina State Licensing Board and requires three letters of reference to support readiness for practice.

Graduates wishing to pursue the LCSW-A must contact the North Carolina Social Work Certification and Licensure Board (swboard@asheboro.com) to secure an application. Typically this provisional license requires three (3) professional referees who can attest to the graduate's ethics and practice skills. There is a fee for this level of licensure. Once the graduate has secured the LCSW-A, s/he is expected to practice with appropriate LCSW supervision. Ideally supervision should be provided by the employing agency, but if it is not, the provisionally licensed practitioner must secure LCSW independently if s/he plans to meet the eligibility criteria to secure the LCSW.

The LCSW level of licensure requires 3000 hours of paid post MSW employment with appropriate supervision provided by the LCSW practitioner. These hours are accumulated in no less than two (2) years, nor more than six (6) years, assuming a maximum of 1500 practice hours in a 12 month period. Supervision must include 100 hours under the LCSW; one hour of supervision provided for every thirty (30) hours of clinical practice. A maximum of twenty-five hours (25) may be group supervision. The candidate must sit for the clinical level exam; this may be taken within the six (6) years of clinical practice preparation, but is usually taken shortly after graduation.