BSW
Field Education Manual
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Introduction

The BSW Field Education Manual, written for UNC-Wilmington undergraduate social work students, field instructors, and faculty, articulates the mission, goals, and objectives for field education for the BSW Program. Designed to review the policies and procedures of field education, this manual identifies the criteria for selecting field sites and field instructors, the preparation of the student field application, the process for securing a field placement for generalist practice, and the procedure for evaluating student practice performance. By providing an overview of BSW field education, this manual is written to foster a common understanding of the field process, as well as field expectations, consistent with the mission and goals of the School of Social Work and the BSW Program. In addition, the manual articulates the dynamic and interactive learning environment that prepares students for BSW generalist practice, consistent with the core competencies articulated by the Council on Social Work Education.
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History of the UNCW 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. A strong undergraduate program emerged with a strengths-based, solution-focused orientation to generalist social work practice, housed within the College of Arts and Sciences.

As the Department flourished, it developed a reputation for the quality of its BSW Program. This reputation inspired the faculty to conduct a regional needs assessment and generate a proposal to establish a 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 develop a graduate social work program to award the MSW degree. The first class was admitted in fall, 2005 and graduated spring, 2007 with CSWE accreditation granted for this first MSW class.

A growing need for college studies for military personnel led to the creation of the UNCW Onslow Extension in Jacksonville, NC. The first Extension BSW cohort was admitted in Fall 2008 with the first BSW degree awarded to Extension students in May 2010. All social work courses are provided by UNCW faculty, but classrooms and administrative offices are housed at the John A. Lejeune Base Education Center at Camp Lejune.

Effective July 1, 2010, the School of Social Work was officially recognized, by the UNC Board of Governors. This transition provided further evidence of the commitment of the faculty and the administration, to provide quality education in strengths based clinical practice at the graduate level of social work. In addition, the School of Social Work joined the newly formed College of Health and Human Services (2010) with the School of Nursing and the School of Health and Applied Human Sciences. This new college fosters quality professional education as well as interdisciplinary collaboration for practice and research. This change in administrative structure affords greater opportunity to recruit faculty and secure resources to enhance the quality of education and preparation of the BSW and MSW graduates.
Mission of the School of Social Work

The mission statement of the School of Social Work at UNCW is designed to respond to the mission of the university as well as the standards and core competencies set forth by the Council on Social Work Education (CSWE). The mission of the School of Social Work is compatible with the mission and purpose of the College of Health and Human Services addressing the specific educational and service needs of the region. The School’s mission reads as follows:

The School 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-based approach to social work practice. Such an approach will teach 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 in social work practice. The BSW program of the School is primarily concerned with the preparation of entry level, generalist social work practitioners, while the MSW program prepares clinical practitioners with a firm foundation in generalist practice. (http://www.uncw.edu/swk/about.htm, Retrieved 6/10/11.)

Consistent with this mission and with the Council on Social Work Education (CSWE) Accreditation Standards, the baccalaureate social work curriculum at UNCW is based on a liberal arts perspective as articulated in the University Studies curriculum. A liberal arts education provides the student with a broad educational content that includes humanities, social sciences, natural sciences and the arts as well as the application of knowledge consistent with interdisciplinary approaches. This curriculum, as determined by University Studies, provides the foundation for the BSW major. BSW courses provide content on social work values and ethics, diversity, social and economic justice, populations-at-risk, human behavior and the social environment, social welfare policy and services, social work practice (including the field practicum), and research. This integrated approach, which combines liberal arts and social work, provides students with the professional knowledge base essential for beginning BSW generalist practice. (For a full review of the CSWE Educational Policy and Core Competencies, see http://www.CSWE.)

BSW Mission Statement

The CSWE competencies, consistent with the School of Social Work mission, shape the mission statement of the BSW Program which reads:

The mission of the BSW program is to educate students in generalist social work practice, engage students in scholarly inquiry and community service,
and instill the values of ethical practice, social justice, self-determination, and
empowerment while honoring diverse populations. Guided by a strengths
perspective of generalist practice, the BSW Program prepares students for
practice with individuals, families, groups and communities and advanced
study in social work and other related fields (http://www.uncw.edu/swk.html,
retrieved 6/1/12).

BSW Program Goals

The BSW social work curriculum at UNCW prepares graduates for beginning
generalist practice and seeks to provide the highest quality education for beginning level
practitioners. Consistent with generalist practice, the curriculum focuses on the establishment
of a helping partnership that addresses a set of competencies that can be utilized in a variety
of agency settings. With this in mind, the School of Social Work has identified the following
goals for undergraduate social work education in order to graduate students who are:

1. Prepared to critically analyze and apply the knowledge, values and skills of
generalist social work practice. (CSWE 2.1.1, 2.1.3, & 2.1.10)

2. Able to apply the values and ethics of the profession, and effectively communicate
these concepts in the context of professional practice. (CSWE 2.1.1, 2.1.2 & 2.1.10)

3. Committed to nondiscriminatory and respectful professional practice in a diverse
society, who advocate for economic and social justice, and who work to change the
structures that discriminate against, oppress or prevent all persons from living their best
quality of life. (CSWE 2.1.4, 2.1.5 & 2.1.10)

4. Able to critically analyze and integrate the theories related to understanding persons
in their environments with strength-based approaches that focus on empowerment and
building upon the assets of client systems at all levels of practice (individual, family,
group, organizational and community). (CSWE 2.1.3, 2.1.7 & 2.1.10)

5. Able to understand the connections between best practice and developing and
maintain professional growth and development by engaging in activities that increase
their commitment to and involvement in the social work profession. (CSWE 2.1.1)

6. Able to understand the importance of research-based knowledge through the
utilization of the social work literature, with appreciation for both qualitative and
quantitative research methods as tools for developing new knowledge, evaluating and
enhancing practice, and maintaining organizational and professional accountability.
(CSWEP 2.1.6)

7. Able to understand and interpret the history of the social work profession and its
contemporary structures and issues sufficiently to analyze and influence social policy in
a contemporary society. (CSWE 2.1.8 & 2.1.9)
8. Able to apply communication skills differentially when working with diverse client populations, colleagues, and communities, including skills in engagement, assessment, intervention and evaluation with various sized client systems. (CSWE 2.1.9 & 2.1.10)

9. Able to use supervision and consultation appropriate for social work practice. (CSWE 2.1.1, 2.1.3, 2.1.9)

10. Able to function within the structure of organizations and service delivery systems to obtain necessary organizational change, advocating for social and economic justice to enhance client conditions. (CSWE 2.1.8, 2.1.9 & 2.1.10)

(Numbers in parentheses above indicate the correlation to the CSWE Core Competencies.)

Philosophy of Field Education

The profession of social work, as an applied discipline of study, places considerable emphasis on the field education experience, and identifies it according to CSWE, as the “signature pedagogy” of social work education. Usually taken during the senior year, the student enters field education upon completion of coursework in basic interviewing and relationship skills, beginning practice with individuals and families, human behavior and the social environment, social welfare policy, and diversity. Utilizing a concurrent curriculum model for field education, the student continues coursework in practice with groups, practice within organizations and communities, and research methods I and II for beginning practitioners, while completing the practicum. This model fosters an interactive learning process that allows the student to continue coursework while actually working at the field site, drawing upon placement experiences to complete class assignments while taking class materials and ideas to the placement.

This concurrent approach to field education allows the student to work at her/his field placement approximately 16-18 hours a week, usually with a Monday, Wednesday, and Friday placement schedule, while enrolled in social work courses on campus on Tuesday and Thursday. (Since some significant learning experiences may occur on Tuesday and/or Thursday, students are encouraged to negotiate with the field instructor for the best individual schedule that enhances learning.) Each student is expected to complete two sequential semesters of field placement at the same agency. This entails 225 hours each semester for a total of 450 hours. In addition to the practicum, the student is required to attend a weekly academic field seminar that facilitates the integration of coursework with practice, drawing upon discussion, mutual aid, and practice activities.

The undergraduate social work curriculum at UNCW is designed to prepare students for beginning BSW generalist professional practice. Adhering to the standards of education set forth by CSWE to assure the highest level of practice, the undergraduate student must be prepared to work with a broad spectrum of client systems, demonstrating a range of competencies that can be utilized in a variety of agency settings. Such a strengths-based generalist approach recognizes that behavior is influenced by biological, psychological,
social, spiritual, and economic factors, creating a social construction within the context of an evolving social environment. This approach values the person-in-environment configuration and emphasizes the interplay among individuals, and between individuals and the social environment, when engaging clients successfully in the change process.

Likewise, the beginning practitioner needs to recognize the importance of building a trusting partnership with the client. Utilizing strengths-based, solution oriented techniques, under the guidance of a knowledgeable field instructor, the student will seek to meet client needs and alleviate stresses in ways that identify and enhance client strengths. This empowering process enhances client participation in the problem solving and/or decision-making process when addressing identified issues and injustices. In addition, the social work intern will advocate for changes in the social, physical, and political environments, to enhance client functioning, as part of the helping process. In this way, the beginning social worker is able to use methods that work with client systems at all levels suitable to address the needs of a variety of client populations. This approach requires sensitivity to, and appreciation for, the diversity of client populations served, as well as recognition of diverse staff needs and agency practices.

Such an approach to social work practice encourages collaboration with the client to address client needs, goals and considerations. Through this collaborative approach, the client's strengths are identified and utilized to assist the client in goal attainment, thus empowering the client's ability to find solutions and gain confidence in directing her/his life. In a similar manner, the field program at UNCW is designed to empower the BSW student to engage in the planning of her/his learning goals and experiences. This statement is not intended to imply that the student unilaterally identifies his own course of study, rather that the student will be empowered to actively participate in designing the learning process. This empowerment is reflected in student participation in the selection of a placement, collaboration with the field instructor to design the learning contract, participation in the evaluation of her/his practice, participation in planning the contents of the BSW curriculum by serving on the BSW Committee, and active participation in the Student Social Work Organization. In this manner, through active participation and empowerment, the student has multiple opportunities to gain insight into the importance of empowerment to prepare her/him in creating an empowering, collaborative professional relationship with her/his clients and colleagues.

Objectives of Field Education

Consistent with CSWE standards, graduates of the undergraduate social work curriculum will receive the BSW degree, prepared to practice strengths-based generalist social work with client systems of all sizes. While field education is a specific component of the curriculum, it requires the integration and application of knowledge, skills and values taught throughout the curriculum, culminating in an ability to demonstrate the ten (10) core practice competencies set forth by CSWE. Likewise, field education reinforces a strengths perspective, assisting students in building skills in solution oriented practice suitable for BSW practitioners. The
following field education objectives reflect the objectives of the BSW Program, seeking to provide: 

- A strengths-based, generalist professional practice foundation that prepares students to work collaboratively with a wide variety of client systems, including populations of rural areas, especially those found in eastern North Carolina.
- Awareness of the values and ethics of the profession of social work and the ability to apply them in practice.
- Students for practice with culturally diverse, oppressed, vulnerable populations.
- Beginning practitioners who recognize and utilize professional supervision and consultation.
- Beginning practitioners who are able to relate social research and social policy to generalist practice and contribute to the knowledge base of the profession.
- Graduates who value the learning process, the use of professional supervision, and the importance of continuing education.

Students find this approach to a comprehensive field experience to be challenging and exciting, where classroom learning “comes alive,” increasing skills and confidence in using the techniques of beginning generalist practice. Hence these objectives are interwoven throughout the BSW Learning Contract and Evaluation Form, reflecting the BSW Program Goals and field objectives, while incorporating the student’s learning experiences and criteria for evaluation of practice competencies.

Roles and Responsibilities for Field Education

Consistent with CSWE core competencies as articulated in the accreditation standards, the faculty strives to identify quality field instructors and supportive agencies that will provide meaningful learning opportunities for students preparing for beginning generalist practice. Many collaborate to provide quality field education experience, including: the Coordinator of Field Education, the Assistant Coordinator of Field Education, the faculty liaisons, the field instructors, the students, the clients, and the School's Advisory Committee.

Recognizing the importance of establishing safe, trusting relationships for successful social work practice, the faculty strives to foster positive relationships to facilitate the learning process. The faculty takes pride in collaborating with students, field instructors, and the general practice community. Hence, the School of Social Work sponsors an annual field luncheon to celebrate the importance of field practice where BSW interns, their field instructors, and the social work faculty come together to build rapport, network, and foster community.
In addition, a series of seminars are offered to BSW field instructors to assist them in guiding their respective interns through the learning process. In the spirit of collaboration, the interns are included in some of these training seminars to facilitate interactive learning between students and their respective field instructors.

**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 10 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 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 Committee (including Admissions), Assessment Committee, and Leadership Committee for the School of Social Work;
- serving on the Field and Practice 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 panels 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 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.

**BSW Faculty Liaison**

The faculty liaisons are responsible for facilitating the UNCW integrative field seminar with their respective field sections. While the Coordinator and Assistant Coordinator of Field serve in this capacity, the volume of students placed in field education exceeds the number of seminars that two individuals can teach. Consequently, liaison functions can be provided by full-time and part-time faculty with a minimum of five years practice experience and/or experience as field instructors. Each faculty liaison will meet with his/her students and field instructors, lead the assigned field seminar, and provide appropriate on-site consultation.
Faculty liaisons are accountable to the Coordinator of Field Education and have responsibility for the following duties:

- facilitating the integrative, strengths-based field seminar for each section of assigned students;
- providing a minimum of one field site visit each semester to evaluate student performance and assist in the identification of learning needs, with additional visits as needed;
- providing consultation to students in the development of an individualized learning contract that is consistent with student learning goals and agency policy while meeting the CSWE core competencies for beginning generalist practice;
- mediating with students and field instructors as needed when concerns arise in the placement;
- ensuring that students have purchased the required liability insurance;
- responding to student and field instructor phone calls or emails in a timely fashion;
- arranging the completion of an incident report (student injury, etc.) as needed;
- discussing recommendations, with the Coordinator of Field Education, when field placement assignments need to change or new field instructors need to be recruited during the semester;
- determining the final field grade for each student with input from the student and the field instructor and forwarding seminar grades to the Coordinator of Field Education;
- assisting in the evaluation of the field education program;
- recommending policy changes to enhance the field curriculum;
- participating in regular field meetings with the Coordinator and the Assistant Coordinator of Field Education to maintain consistent field education experiences for all BSW field students;
- attending and assisting in the facilitation of seminars for field instructors;
- assure the completion of student performance field evaluations for collection of field data to measure achievement of CSWE core competencies.

Field liaisons are expected to report any and all concerns about a student or their field placements, including a change in assigned field instructor, to the Coordinator of Field Education as quickly as possible.

**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 student’s educational experience, assigning clients for service, and supervising the student’s learning progress. This individual should be a social work practitioner with a minimum of two years practice experience who supports strengths-based, solution focused practice and supervision. (If the designated practitioner does not hold the social work degree, the
field faculty will work closely with the field instructor to provide consultation as needed with a minimum of monthly contact maintained) In order to be recognized as a UNCW social work field instructor, the designated professional must be willing to:

- attend field instruction 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 supervision each week, for regular student reflection on the learning process which includes techniques of practice and reflection for self-awareness;
- collaborate with the student to assist in the identification of learning tasks and create a learning contract that will assist in the focus of work assignments and learning opportunities consistent with field education goals and CSWE core competencies;
- attend the annual field luncheon with her/his BSW student intern(s);
- serve as a role model for the student for professional practice;
- structure assignments to assure that the student learns a broad range of social work intervention skills consistent with beginning strengths-based generalist practice;
- encourage strengths-based 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 each semester;
- communicate regularly with the faculty liaison, keeping the faculty liaison appraised of student progress, including strengths and concerns in completing assignments (as soon as they become evident) to facilitate early supportive or corrective interventions;
- provide appropriate work space for the student, including access to a telephone and a place to keep personal items and field materials;
- complete and submit required documentation such as resumes, signed agency agreements, student mid-term and end-of-semester performance evaluations, etc.
- coordinate the involvement of additional agency staff as needed to enhance student learning.

**Students in Field Practice**

When embarking on this first phase of professional field 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 service to clients. The student must design, in collaboration with her/his field instructor, a learning contract that will guide the placement
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 as identified in the pre-field seminar (SWK 396) with a GPA of 2.5 or better;
- complete the pre-field social work seminar assignments, to secure an approved field placement;
- determine required agency procedures to secure the placement, such as criminal background check, drug screen, etc.;
- join NASW and purchase student liability insurance (coverage is required for both semesters of field practice so purchase during the summer is recommended);
- become familiar with 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 to request advice and/or consultation from the field instructor and/or the faculty liaison;
- engage in the educational, supervisory relationship with the field instructor to integrate theory and practice, increase knowledge, and enhance self-awareness;
- discuss with the field instructor, and the faculty liaison, areas of strength as well as areas of concern regarding any portion of the learning experience;
- collaborate with the field instructor to prepare a learning contract that articulates learning goals, learning strategies, and evaluation criteria;
- become familiar with and adhere to the NASW Code of Ethics in student practice (see the NASW Code of Ethics http://socialworkers.org);
- notify the field instructor of unavoidable absences and tardiness due to illness, weather conditions, car problems, etc., as expected in professional employment;
- identify a schedule, with the field instructor, that ensures a regular schedule of attendance and a commitment to assigned student responsibilities;
- maintain a timesheet for review by the field instructor;
- notify the faculty liaison of concerns about questionable or unethical practice at the agency BEFORE taking action at the agency;
- attend a weekly strengths based integrative field seminar with timely completion of all course assignments and evaluations according to specified requirements;
- assess the effectiveness of the field education experience.
Clients

Successful completion of field education requires *direct practice with client systems of all levels of practice*, not just observation of staff services. Suitable clients will be identified by the agency-based field instructor and assigned to the student to enhance student learning and skill development. Clients will be assigned to provide students with diverse learning opportunities with consideration for diverse cultural, ethnic, age, social and behavioral needs, mandated and voluntary concerns, 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, clients often prefer student workers since students often have more time to spend with the client and listen attentively. Clients must also be advised that the student will respect and protect client confidentiality as defined in the standards of the NASW *Code of Ethics* (http://socialworkers.org).

Field instructors need to give careful attention to assigning the intern to work directly with individuals and families, plan for and co-facilitate services to client groups, participate in planning service delivery and policy development with staff groups, and facilitate the building of network opportunities within the larger community. The student must learn to assess the needs of client systems of all sizes, recognizing that client systems range from individuals to organizations and ultimately the society at large.

BSW Integrative Field Seminar

The weekly integrative seminar provides a forum for group discussion that promotes collaboration and mutual aid through the analysis of alternative techniques of practice, the importance of professional boundaries, the practice implications of ethical dilemmas encountered in the placement setting, and participation in 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 be explored to enhance student awareness of social work practice alternatives in multiple settings.

The integrative strengths based field seminar meets weekly for two hours. Attendance is required in order to enhance learning while developing a safe environment for the students to engage in reflection and analysis of practice techniques, agency policies, etc. Students engage in peer consultation as they discuss different agency policies, styles of supervision, and techniques of intervention with diverse clients, etc. Students are expected to
sign a confidentiality form to maintain the confidentiality of the seminar discussions, including student personal disclosures intended to enhance self-awareness (see Confidentiality Form, Appendix A). Successful field performance is dependent upon completion of all the required seminar assignments (see samples of seminar syllabi, SWK 496 BSW Field Seminar I and SWK 497 BSW Field Seminar II, APPENDICES G-1 and G-2) in combination with a positive 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 (see section on Student Evaluations for further discussion on the evaluative process).

In order to maximize the learning process for each student, students who have the same agency for placement are encouraged to enroll in different field seminar sections. In this way, each student is able to process her/his individual perceptions and/or concerns with respect for confidentiality. Likewise, if two students are married, engaged, or involved in a significant relationship, these students are also expected to enroll in separate field seminar sections in order to maximize the learning for each student.

**School of Social Work Advisory Committee**

Field Instructors and other professionals in the practice community are invited to sit on the School's Advisory Committee with the Director of the School and the Coordinator of Field Education. Field instructors will be chosen on the basis of interest and commitment, representing a broad range of agency placements and diverse training methods, e.g., different client populations, public and private agencies, MSW/BSW/other disciplines, etc. This advisory group will convene at least once per semester to assist the field faculty in the evaluation of the field education curriculum, recruitment of suitable placements and review field outcome measures, as well as other assessment data, to insure a quality social work education program.

**Process for Selecting Field Placements**

**Selection of Agencies**

The UNCW social work faculty recognizes the importance of selecting qualified field agencies that will enhance student learning in the practice environment. The Coordinator of Field Education, in collaboration with the Assistant Field Coordinator, has primary responsibility for selecting agencies that can provide suitable social work experience for the beginning generalist practitioner. The Coordinator will work closely with the Assistant Coordinator and the professional community to identify qualified field instructors suited to address the practice standards of CSWE, NASW, and the demands of the professional market.
A potential field placement can be identified through a variety of approaches. Agency representatives may request an intern, field faculty may identify a suitable placement, 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 appropriate field faculty to assure that the agency can provide a full range of generalist learning opportunities, suitable for the BSW intern, that meet the School’s criteria for field education. 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. Agency staff is requested to complete an information sheet that articulates student expectations, etc. (See Agency Application for BSW Intern, APPENDIX C). Agencies will be selected on their ability to meet 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 BSW generalist practice (as included in the BSW Learning Contract and Evaluation Form; see Learning Contract/Performance Evaluation, recognizing the importance of professional education and how it differs from volunteer or apprenticeship experiences.
- commitment to the provision of diverse learning opportunities, examining social constructs that contribute to oppression as well as the access to services (diversity includes race, sexual orientation, religion, age, gender, learning style, special behavioral concerns, etc.).
- support to the field instructor in the delivery of field education, including the recognition of the time commitment needed to provide training (for field instruction orientation, attendance at field instruction seminars, weekly supervision of students in placement, and meetings with liaison faculty). Recognition that the student is not an additional staff person and hence will require work assignments that allow time for training, reflection, and evaluation of practice in the context of qualified supervision.
- provision of work space, privacy for interviewing, telephone access, parking space, and clerical assistance.
- mileage reimbursement for home visits and agency required travel when independently conducting agency business, consistent with agency policy for staff.
- acceptance of interns representing differing values and backgrounds, including differences in cultural, ethnic, racial, religious, and sexual orientation, as well as physical challenges, special learning needs, etc.

Once an agency is identified as an appropriate field site, a qualified staff member must be identified to serve as field instructor. Appropriate agency personnel will be asked to
sign an agency/university field agreement (see BSW Agency/School of Social Work Agreement APPENDIX D) to formally secure placement for a specific student.

**Criteria for Selection of Field Instructors**

Facilitating the field education of social work students is an exciting, yet demanding educational opportunity that requires commitment to the educational process. 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, and will foster independent decision-making as warranted by the student’s growth and skill development.

With this educational commitment comes the recognition of the importance of field instruction training and preparation for the student experience. Every effort is made to secure experienced social work practitioners holding the BSW or MSW degree. However, in some agencies, there are qualified professionals from other disciplines who will be considered for BSW field instruction when there is evidence that the professional can provide an educational experience that includes appropriate supervision consistent with strengths-based generalist social work practice. If a field instructor does not hold the social work degree, s/he will receive consultation as needed (at least monthly) to ensure that the placement provides adequate social work training and support for generalist social work practice. In addition, field instructors are expected to attend the monthly training seminar to enhance supervisory skills in guiding the student learning experience. Consistent with these expectations and the recognition of the importance of this educational experience, selected field instructors will provide evidence of the following qualifications:

- graduation from an accredited school of social work, (if not a social worker, the individual providing supervision must demonstrate a willingness and an ability to support the strengths-based, generalist model of social work practice);
- a minimum of two years practice experience post BSW or MSW graduation;
- a commitment to social work values and ethics;
- the provision of *a minimum of one hour per week of professional supervision*;
- sufficient time to participate in training for field instructors;
- a commitment to an educational process that empowers students to actively engage in shaping the learning process;
- a willingness to provide ongoing constructive feedback to the student with periodic formal written evaluations;
- a willingness to interview students interested in an internship to determine the suitable selection of interns;
- a resume kept on file in the Office of Field Education.

**Diversity/Nondiscrimination**
Consistent with University policy, the NASW Code of Ethics (http://socialworkers.org), and the CSWE core competencies for undergraduate social work education, the selection of field faculty, field agencies, and field instructors must be conducted in an ethical manner to assure quality and diversity in the field education program. All efforts are made to recruit faculty and field instructors who represent and bring diversity to the field education experience. In addition, agencies are selected for their ability to provide professional, 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, color, disability, ethnicity, family structure, gender, marital status, national origin, race, religion, and sexual orientation) are practiced” (see the Nondiscrimination and Human Diversity standards in the CSWE Educational Policy and Accreditation Standards, (http://www.cswe.org/Accreditation/2008EPASDescription). Diversity in the placement setting must include acceptance of social work student interns who represent a variety of diverse perspectives and life styles, including age, race, learning styles, cultural backgrounds, physical challenges, etc. Agencies must also be willing to provide placement training and supervision to all students 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 faculty liaison. When such an incident occurs, the faculty liaison and the BSW field student are expected to inform the Coordinator of Field Education. Consultation to the agency, by the field faculty will be provided to establish an action plan to address the concern(s). If the agency is unwilling or unable to provide a satisfactory resolution to the situation, a student may be removed from the placement and reassigned to an alternative learning site that is consistent with the values and ethics of the profession. Such action will be determined in consultation with the Leadership Team, comprised of the Director of the School of Social Work, the Associate Director, the Coordinator of Field Education, the BSW Program Coordinator, and the MSW Program Coordinator.

**Admission to the Field**

Recognizing the importance of field education, each student entering the field program is screened to determine that s/he has fully met the eligibility criteria for admission to field. These criteria include:

- admission to the social work program as a social work major
- personal interview with the pre-field faculty liaison
- completion of field prerequisites, with at least a C in each course:
  - SWK 235: Introduction to the Social Welfare System
  - SWK 240: Basic Working Relationships, including a practice lab (SWK 240L)
  - SWK 320 & 321: Human Behavior and the Social Environment I & II
  - SWK 341: Generalist Practice with Individuals and Families
  - SWK 335: Social Welfare Policy
SWK 355: Diversity
SWK 396: Pre-field Seminar
• achievement of a minimum of a 2.5 overall GPA as well as a 2.5 social work GPA
• completion of a learning style profile and a conflict resolution style inventory
• interview with a minimum of two field placement options

Upon successful completion of all the pre-field assignments, as well as the first semester required social work courses, a student will be considered for a placement match. Final admission to the field is dependent on completion of all of the required coursework and attaining the required GPA.

**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 practice experience with diverse populations. The placement settings include, but are not limited to: elderly services, corrections, foster care, public schools, medical settings, drug/alcohol treatment, public policy, mental health, domestic violence, developmental disabilities, and community planning. Qualified agencies and field instructors are selected to ensure a comprehensive learning experience for each student. A list of the approved, qualifying agencies and field instructors is maintained to assist faculty liaisons in helping students identify placement alternatives for a suitable placement match based on student interests and learning style.

Recognizing that some students are interested in working with specific agencies, it is important to remember that placement decisions are based on the individual 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 generalist practitioner. Should students request an agency for placement that does not appear on the list of approved agencies, such requests will be reviewed as per UNCW field education policy (see Selection of Agencies, for a complete description); placement with that agency will be given careful consideration, but placement is not confirmed unless a qualified staff person is identified to provide field instruction, in compliance with CSWE core practice competencies and the UNCW School of Social Work field standards.

To facilitate the placement match, each student will enroll in a pre-field seminar (see SWK 396: BSW Pre-field Seminar, APPENDIX E) to identify her/his learning interests, practice strengths in working with preferred client populations, and suitable agency settings for practice. This course is offered in the spring semester, usually in the student’s junior year. Seminar discussions will facilitate an awareness of placement opportunities and prepare students for a professional demeanor. The selection of a suitable placement is enhanced with the completion of the student application for field (see BSW Student Application for Field, APPENDIX F), and a personal interview bringing more focus to the field selection process. **Honesty and full disclosure**, essential when completing this application to ensure essential
professional growth and identification of a suitable field placement. Failure to do so is considered to be a violation of the NASW Code of Ethics (http://social workers.org) and could result in dismissal from the placement, as well as the BSW Program, depending on the nature of the infraction.

Upon completion of the field application, the field faculty will review each field application to determine if students meet the admission criteria for field. In addition, the personal interview, with a member of the field faculty, will assist each student in the identification of student learning needs to enhance the selection of an appropriate field education experience. Students are then expected to interview with selected field instructors and shadow/observe agency personnel in the delivery of services.

Once appropriate agencies are identified for each student, the student will arrange an interview with the designated field instructors to discuss practice interests, learning opportunities, and agency expectations. This allows the student to learn about the agency, and network with professionals working at social service agencies in the area. Through these experiences, students will aim to gain insight into the supervisory style and expectations as well as the agency’s mission, services, client population, and work climate. This information will assist in careful selection of a field education match. The field office will arrange for a student to interview with no more than three agencies. 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.

Once the student has met with potential field instructors, and discussed the learning opportunities, the student is expected to complete an agency assessment information sheet for each completed interview and turn these into the appropriate pre-field faculty. This assessment form will review placement expectations as well as the interview outcome. After the student determines an agency preference, a designated member of the field faculty will call the designated field instructor to discuss student suitability for the placement to assure that both student and field instructor find the learning match suitable. (REMEMBER: Placement decisions are made by the field faculty through collaboration with the student and the field instructor, based on the best match for student learning needs.) Final placement is not secured until the student has completed the spring semester of the junior year to determine if s/he meets the coursework and minimum 2.5 GPA requirements. Once these requirements are met, the Coordinator of Field or designee, will forward a written notification to the student and the field instructor to finalize the placement. In addition, an agency agreement form (see BSW Agency/School of Social Work Agreement, APPENDIX D) will be forwarded to the appropriate field instructor for signature. The field instructor will return this agency agreement form to the field office, officially confirming the placement match. This agreement is kept on file in the Office of Field Education.
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 fourth Tuesday of the month at Lower Cape Fear Hospice at 12:00; the Onslow chapter (Jacksonville) meets the 3rd Thursday of the month at 6:00PM at LeChris Behavioral Center.

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

Students are required to purchase their own professional liability (malpractice) insurance while engaged in field practice in the placement setting. Insurance is purchased through the National Association of Social Work (NASW) Insurance Trust after obtaining a student membership. The application for student membership is available on line through the NASW web site. Students are typically expected to purchase the $1 million/$5 million coverage. (Each student should check with her/his pre-field faculty instructor, the Coordinator of Field Education or the Assistant Coordinator of Field Education, about the insurance coverage as this may vary.) Purchase of this insurance is NOT optional and is a requirement of the School of Social Work as well as UNCW. Students are required to provide a copy of the certificate of insurance to the School of Social Work field office before placement can begin.

Special Agency Requirements

Some agencies have special requirements that students must adhere to in order to determine the student’s eligibility for that particular agency placement. Most agencies now require a criminal background check and a drug screen. This is especially true when students will be working in foster care, the criminal justice system, etc. Sometimes agencies also require a physical examination, specific immunizations, or a test for tuberculosis, before placement can begin. The cost of these tests will vary, but may require costs to be
passed on to the student, so **students should inquire about these expenses when discussing placement with the potential field instructor.** All of the agencies require that students 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. Agencies typically 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 have impacted this protocol. Increasingly, agencies are also requesting *safe driving checks* since interns do a considerable amount of transporting of clients. Although the student’s personal automobile liability insurance is the primary insurance coverage, agencies want reassurance that the student is a reliable driver, especially when driving agency vehicles. Finally, some agencies will require a *formal written application* for the internship; this is usually requested at the time the intern is offered the placement, but must be completed before final authorization can be secured for the placement.

**Child Welfare 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. Students selected for the program are eligible for a monetary service award. This amount may vary depending on the state budget. Also, there is not a guarantee that monetary stipends will be available to students each year. Please check with the Coordinator of Field Education regarding the status of CWEC funding. Each student who wishes to participate is required to make application to the program and undergo an interview with the selection committee to determine suitability for this work. 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 311: Child Abuse and Neglect (3) and SWK 312: 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; however, only those students identified as **Scholars** may receive the stipend for service. Upon graduation, the child welfare scholar must seek employment in a Department of Social Services (DSS) within North Carolina in payment for the BSW stipend received (if a student goes on to graduate school in social work, the employment expectation can be deferred). For each semester the student receives funding, the student must complete six months of post-graduation employment with a county Department of Social Services (DSS) in North Carolina. If the scholar is unable to pursue employment within the DSS system, s/he will be expected to repay the amount of the stipend received. In addition, 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. Again, please be sure to check with the Coordinator of Field Education regarding the status of stipends, as this depends on the state budget.

Should a student wish to complete the required training, but choose not to secure the stipend, s/he may seek the classification of Child Welfare Collaborative Waiver student. This status affords all the training opportunities and privileges of the scholar. However, s/he will not receive a stipend and will not be obligated to work in DSS upon graduation.

Students interested in pursuing this focused child welfare education should discuss the program with the Coordinator of Field Education, who serves as the UNCW liaison to the Chapel Hill office of the Collaborative. The Coordinator of Field Education is also available to answer questions and clarify expectations.

**North Carolina School Social Work Certification**

Those social work students aspiring to practice social work in the NC public schools will want to secure school social work certification. While this certification is not required to secure a school placement, it is required to secure school social work employment in North Carolina. In order to be eligible for this certification, the intern must successfully complete the elective in school social work, SWK 418: School Social Work Practice, and successfully complete two semesters of field placement in a school setting or related school setting under the supervision of a certified school social worker. In addition, the student is expected to complete a course in working with children and families, and an approved education course offered through the Watson School of Education at UNCW. However, students wanting to secure school certification should check specific county requirements as these may vary in different parts of the state. Upon completion of the BSW Degree, the new graduate can secure certification at the BSW level of practice by forwarding an official transcript of her/his academic work with a completed Learning Contract/Performance Evaluation Form to Linda Williams, BSW Program Director at North Carolina State University for processing with the North Carolina Department of Public Instruction. Another option for securing certification is to submit these same documents to the county office for public instruction. For further information about this certification, students should consult with the UNCW Assistant Coordinator of Field Education.

**Employment-Based Field Placement**

Some students may be employed in a human service agency and wish to continue working while completing their 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 students understand that the standards of BSW field education, as set forth by CSWE, must receive first priority over employment expectations. Therefore, the agency must consent to work release time to afford the appropriate learning opportunities, consistent with CSWE Standards and UNCW School of Social Work Field Policy. If the agency is unable or unwilling to provide work release time during paid hours, the student must
recognize that s/he will be required to complete specific hours that fulfill the learning objectives for field education, as this is the first priority for BSW degree. Worked hours may be counted as field hours if they fulfill the field learning objectives and provide a new learning opportunity. The student must complete the BSW Learning Contract and Evaluation Form and establish learning tasks consistent with UNCW field expectations. The field faculty must also identify a suitable field instructor for field training, separate from the student's work supervisor, to assure opportunities for educational reflection, discussion of practice techniques, and professional self-awareness which are separate from personnel issues; the student’s work supervisor cannot serve as the field instructor. Finally, in accordance with CSWE standards, no student will be given field credit for work completed prior to enrollment in field education or work completed for volunteer or service learning experience.

Ethical Dilemmas/Sexual Harassment

All agencies are selected with the understanding that they will provide quality educational experiences for students. However, occasionally there are situations that arise in the placement setting creating ethical dilemmas. These dilemmas can be especially challenging when the agency and/or staff is not accountable to the NASW Code of Ethics (non-social work prepared staff). However, regardless of professional orientation, concerns such as abuse and/or neglect of clients, oppression of staff and students, and sexual harassment by staff, clients or students will be examined. All of these behaviors are deemed to be professionally inappropriate, according to the NASW Code of Ethics (http://socialworkers.org). Should a student have a concern that such behaviors are occurring, the student is required to report her/his concerns to the designated faculty liaison and the Coordinator of Field Education; a student should not address these concerns independently without field faculty involvement and support. Likewise students experiencing discriminatory behavior from agency staff should inform the faculty liaison of her/his concerns in order to assess the appropriateness of the placement. Such discrimination can include discrimination toward, race, gender, age, physical challenge, etc.

In addition, sexual harassment of or by field students, a field instructor, an agency employee, or representative of the field agency will not be tolerated. The Coordinator of Field Education will work with the student, the field instructor, and the faculty liaison to determine an appropriate action plan to address identified concerns. If the discriminatory practices cannot be successfully resolved, with the intervention of the field faculty, the student will be removed from the placement in order to experience a suitable learning environment in another placement setting. (Student safety is paramount and the School of Social Work does not have the authority to determine the disciplinary action taken by the agency toward the employee.)

Should discriminatory or harassing behaviors be initiated by the student intern, the field instructor is encouraged to contact the Coordinator of Field Education. The situation will be reviewed by the Leadership Team of the School of Social Work, in consultation with the field instructor and the agency, to determine if remediation or dismissal from the program is
appropriate. The student will also be subject to the UNCW Code of Student Life and the University policies related to harassment.

**Special Learning Needs**

Students who have learning challenges or other areas of special concern, such as hearing impairment, visual impairment, 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 will be encouraged to utilize the campus resources at the UNCW 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 consults regularly with the UNCW Director of Disability Services to assure School compliance with University, state and federal policy. In addition, every effort is made to identify university and community based support services to assist the student in securing quality agency practice.

Those students who have experienced personal difficulties in their childhood or adult life are also requested to candidly share such information with the appropriate pre-field instructor, or the Coordinator of Field Education, to assure a safe field education placement. Should new self-awareness emerge, while in field practice, which could compromise the quality of the learning experience for the intern or the quality of service delivery for the clients, the student, faculty liaison (under the guidance of the Coordinator of Field Education), and the field instructor will determine a plan of action to assure student and client well-being. Such a plan could include a change in placement duties, change in placement, personal counseling to enhance student awareness and adjustment; such a plan will be determined on a student-by-student basis. Should past or current difficulties warrant professional counseling, the student will be referred to the UNCW Counseling Center or a community practitioner (depending on student preference, counseling needs, and financial resources) to assess student readiness for field or continued suitability for field practice. The plan will be determined by the student in collaboration with the faculty liaison and the Leadership Team of the School of Social Work to assure fairness of the plan to meet the student's emotional and learning needs.
Field Education Requirements

Assignments for Generalist 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 single parents 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 making student assignments. 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 in preparation for generalist practice.

**Hours for Field Education**

Each BSW student must complete 225 hours per semester in field practice. This workload is typically distributed over a three-day placement experience, usually with a Monday, Wednesday, Friday schedule. However, it is important to remember that additional agency functions, that contribute to student learning, may occur on other days or evenings. Students are encouraged to **demonstrate flexibility in scheduling to take advantage of some of these alternative opportunities.** (Examples of such opportunities might include support groups, staff meetings, etc.) When alternative hours are deemed appropriate, a regular schedule must be negotiated with the field instructor as one cannot show up for placement at random times; the field instructor and the agency must know when the student is present to ensure appropriate staffing for student learning assignments. Also should a student work alternative hours, a reduction in hours for regular workdays should also occur in order to keep students from over extending themselves at their field placements. In planning hours for the placement, it is important to remember that students must also prepare for classes which they attend on alternate days from field practice. (REMINDER: the 225 field hours are separate from the hours that students attend field seminar or other campus classes.)

In addition, there are special lectures and campus events that will enhance practice awareness that students are encouraged to attend for field credit. Such events include the Annual Field Luncheon, the Annual Hunger Banquet (fall semester), the NASW-NC Conference in Asheville, the NASW-NC Lobby Day in the spring, the UNCW lecture series, and other multicultural events. In addition, such experiences as SSW faculty-led service learning trips may be counted, upon review of learning experiences by the Coordinator of Field Education. Other experiential learning opportunities must have the approval of the Coordinator or Assistant Coordinator of Field Education for field hours.
Each student is required to maintain a weekly time sheet for the hours worked each semester (see sample BSW Time Sheet, APPENDIX G). These time sheets, provided by the faculty liaison, must be co-signed by the field instructor and turned in at the end of each semester to the faculty liaison. In the midst of busy schedules, getting behind in placement hours can quickly become problematic. For this reason, the student and the field instructor are requested to regularly record the hours worked in order to stay current and be certain that expectations are being met.

Weekly Supervision for Generalist Practice

Each field instructor is expected to meet weekly for a minimum of one hour with the assigned student. While many field instructors are readily available for consultation (open door), this should not be construed to take the place of regular supervision. Aspects of supervision include review of agency policies and protocols, techniques of practice, legal protocols and requirements, etc. However, in addition, each student needs to have the assurance that s/he will have a personal time with the field instructor to reflect on learning experiences and review case plans for client centered care. This time should also provide the student with an opportunity to process feelings about the field experience, especially where placement requires the student to practice in areas that are unfamiliar and emotionally challenging, possibly leading to secondary trauma, e.g. death of a client, physical violence, sexual assault, unsafe living conditions, etc. Supervision should also enhance knowledge of practice techniques, as well as enhance student self-awareness, while preparing the student for the mid-semester and end of semester evaluations. When conducted on a regular basis with trust and sensitivity, the student evaluation process is readily conducted in a collaborative manner and should produce no surprises for the student or the field instructor. Regular discussion of strengths and areas for growth about practice provides the student with multiple opportunities to shape professional identity over the course of the field experience.

Learning Contract

Each student, 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 for two semesters of strengths-based generalist practice (See BSW Learning Contract/Performance Evaluation, APPENDIX H). Each objective requires the identification of the learning strategies as well as the evaluation criteria which will determine if the student has successfully achieved the desired core practice competencies as defined by CSWE. The identified learning tasks, with specified evaluation criteria, 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. There are 10 goals that articulate generalist practice that are applicable for each student in placement, regardless of the agency setting. However, the learning contract is individualized as the student inserts the learning tasks and evaluation criteria that are of interest as well as appropriate for each specific
placement setting. In addition, the field instructor will guide the formulation of learning tasks to include the essential experiences for generalist practice readiness.

Each student will have the opportunity to articulate at least one personal goal for the placement experience. Personal goals vary considerably and include learning Spanish, acquiring knowledge about child sexual abuse treatment, acquiring self-nurturing practice habits, learning assertiveness and time management skills, etc. Each student is expected to articulate the specific objective that addresses the desired practice outcomes as this is left open in the learning contract. Detailed aspects of traditional generalist practice should be included in the 10 goals that specifically address those practice interests; the personal goal is intended to address a personal interest.

Further explanation for designing the learning contract will be provided to students in the fall semester of field seminar. In addition, a workshop which field instructors and students will attend together will be provided during fall semester to assist in the completion of this assignment. Both field instructors and students are encouraged to contact the designated faculty liaison for consultation. The learning contract serves as the basis for student evaluations which take place at the end of each semester. While students have often found this assignment to be challenging, they report that it has assisted them in gaining focus for the learning process, enhanced self-advocacy, and experience in writing measurable goals and evaluation criteria to prepare for beginning practice and the contemporary social work market.

**Evaluation of Student Performance by Field Instructor**

Evaluation, an essential aspect of effective practice, is a fundamental component of the field education experience. Hence, the measure of the student’s success in the implementation of planned interventions with individuals, families, groups, organizations, and communities is central to the learning process. Recognizing the importance of this evaluation process for empowering the student to evaluate her/his own work, the student needs to take responsibility for active participation in the evaluation process. In addition to evaluation of individual student performance, the aggregate data affords the faculty the opportunity to evaluate the effectiveness of the program based on student achievement of desired outcomes as defined by the BSW Program Goals and CSWE core competencies.

During the first semester, a mid-term evaluation is required to assess the student’s adjustment to the placement, evidence of professional work habits, and general suitability for practice (see BSW Mid-term Evaluation, APPENDIX I). At the end of each semester, a full evaluation is required that reviews the student’s learning progress in more depth and includes a site visit from the UNCW faculty liaison (see BSW Learning Contract/Performance Evaluation, APPENDIX H). Completion of these evaluations will provide constructive feedback regarding the student’s performance. Furthermore, students and field instructors alike affirm the working relationships that emerged during the internship. Honest constructive feedback provides clarity and facilitates the learning process, especially when learning needs for performance improvement are clearly articulated. Students deserve a
candid, respectful appraisal of their work in order to provide time to modify practice skills and adequately prepare them for the work environment. Consultation is available from the faculty liaisons to assist with this process.

Building on a model of empowerment, the evaluation is completed through a collaborative process that allows the student and field instructor to voice their respective perceptions of the student's work and reach consensus about its quality. Both the student and the field instructor are required to complete evaluation forms and discuss the evaluative data. This process, with its resulting discussion, has proven instrumental in encouraging students to actively engage in the evaluation of their own work, empowering them to discuss their work performance and gain experience in assertiveness with an identified authority figure. This process also helps students and field instructors clarify expectations and constructively address differences in perspective, rather than avoid potential areas of disagreement which could prevent growth. Upon completion of the student evaluation form, the assigned faculty liaison will visit the field site at the end of each semester to discuss evaluation findings with the student and the field instructor, identifying strengths and assisting in the identification of learning to enhance further professional growth and development. Should the field instructor or student desire more frequent visits, these are available upon request. The field liaison may also initiate visits if student learning needs warrant attention.

**Agency Travel Reimbursement**

Students are expected to provide their own transportation to and from the placement site. Hence a valid driver's license and registered automobile is generally an agency expectation. Carpooling is always an option and will be encouraged whenever possible.

Sometimes students are required to use their personal vehicle to engage in community travel to agencies, client homes, etc. or provide client transportation. The student should be reimbursed for agency travel consistent with agency practice for reimbursement to staff. Students will not be reimbursed for travel to and from the placement site or when traveling with agency personnel in staff or agency vehicles. Some agencies do have agency cars and vans and have established policies which determine whether interns are authorized to drive such vehicles. This matter should be discussed with the individual field instructor during the placement interview to determine agency policy. In many instances, agencies run a “safe driving” check when making placement decisions since they often depend on interns to assist with the transporting of clients. Hence, a reckless or unsafe driving record could prevent placement with some agencies.

**Parking Options**

On the main campus, UNCW policy stipulates that students living within a one-mile radius of campus must walk or bicycle to campus. However, those students who live within the one-mile boundary, who are actively engaged in an off-campus field placement, are eligible to purchase a parking decal, at the usual student rate. Should a student find that s/he needs a parking decal, in order to conveniently commute to and from the field placement site,
s/he should request a letter of authorization from the faculty liaison. The student is expected to present this letter to personnel in Auxiliary Services and thus be eligible to purchase a UNCW parking decal at the usual student cost.

Parking at the Onslow Extension campus is free for students. However, should a student from the extension campus attend any function on the main campus, s/he will be expected to comply with parking policy at the main campus. There are two lots available for campus visitors. The primary lot is located in the center of campus in Lot M. This lot is located on Riegel Rd. across from the baseball field, and is accessible to the University Union. The second lot is located behind DePaolo Hall, adjacent to the Randall Library. This lot is accessed through the parking lot adjacent to Alderman Hall located on Wagoner Dr. at the front of the campus.

In addition, there is a parking deck located across the street from McNeill Hall where the School of Social Work is housed. There is public parking available on the lower deck. However, there is a fee for parking ($.50/hour) which must be paid with exact change as there is not an attendant on duty. Finally there are parking meters available for short-term parking on Riegel Rd. as well as the lot adjacent to the Fisher Student Center.

Finally, BSW students who secure field placements at Camp Lejeune or Camp Geiger will need a base pass which is separate from a UNCW parking decal. If one is a veteran or active service or spouse of a service person, that pass is effective for base access for placement. However, if the student is a civilian working on base, s/he will need to request a base pass. The agency field instructor can assist with this procedure. If there are any questions, check with Heather Lange, the BSW Assistant Coordinator at the Extension site can offer direction for specific recommendations.

**Student Evaluation of the Field Experience**

Finally at the end of the field experience, each BSW 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 K) 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 School'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.
Field Education Concerns/Issues

Change in Field Instructors

Occasionally during placement, a change in field instructors may occur. While the selected field instructors are committed to the field education process, sometimes there are unanticipated events that require a new field instructor assignment. Usually this occurs when a field instructor must take a medical leave of absence, has reduced 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 assignments due to the limited availability of 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 student and/or field instructor should inform the faculty liaison and the Coordinator of Field Education immediately to allow adequate planning for the transition.

Change in Agency Placement

Each student is expected to complete two semesters of field education in one agency placement. However, on rare occasions, some students might require a change in field assignment. As mentioned above, this could be necessary if a field instructor leaves the agency and a suitable replacement for continued instruction is not available. In addition, should the agency or student realize that the learning experiences are inadequate to support preparation for beginning generalist social work practice, a change in placement will be considered.

Occasionally, a student might determine that her/his learning style is incompatible with the supervision provided by the field instructor. Often these situations, while appearing insurmountable at first, can be successfully resolved if addressed early in the placement. Hence, concerns should be discussed with the faculty liaison who will alert the Coordinator of Field Education. The faculty liaison will then arrange a meeting with the appropriate field instructor to mediate for adequate supervision and/or learning experiences. This is a critical part of the learning process as it is important for the student to recognize that issues of concern are not handled by ignoring them. Rather social work is about recognition of the difficulties that occur in human relationships and the importance of working toward conflict or problem resolution. Conversely, challenges to communication do not warrant an immediate change in placement.

No placement change will take place without consultation between the field instructor, faculty liaison and Coordinator of Field Education. No student may independently change placements or terminate placement. For these reasons, should concerns arise, it is important that they be addressed immediately before they are permitted to escalate and
necessitate a placement change. Both the faculty liaison and the Assistant Coordinator of Field Education are available to assist the student and the field instructor with problem identification, mobilization of resources, and mediation. When these means have been explored and resolution is not forthcoming, the student will be assisted in locating an alternative placement with as little disruption to the learning process as possible.

In addition, a change in placement can be time consuming as a new placement must be recruited, reviewed for compliance with UNCW School of Social Work field education standards. In addition, field faculty must secure a qualified field instructor, a field agreement and commitment to the field program. Despite such a disruption, the student is still held accountable to the CSWE field standards, including the required total of 225 hours for the semester or 450 hours for the total placement experience. Often students are able to make up missed field hours by working additional hours each week, UNCW semester breaks or given an extension at the end of the semester to complete hours as needed; the student will have input in determining which alternative is preferred.

**Personal/Medical Leave**

Should a student experience extensive health or medical problems, s/he should consult with the Coordinator of Field Education to determine if medical leave is appropriate. Students who are experiencing extensive health problems will be compromised in their learning process if they are in a position that requires extensive make-up hours which could further jeopardize their health. In such situations, the student will be encouraged to take a medical leave of absence, terminate field in good standing, and re-enter the field program when health permits. Such decisions will be made in collaboration with the Coordinator of Field Education and the BSW Coordinator.

Likewise if a student experiences significant family stress or personal crisis, that requires extended absence from the field placement, s/he will be encouraged to discuss with the Coordinator of Field Education whether s/he should take a personal leave of absence. This leave time will provide the student with the opportunity to address family or personal concerns and resume field when the situation permits the student to engage in a productive learning experience. Again, the Coordinator of Field Education and the BSW Coordinator will be involved in this determination.

Documentation for either condition will be completed in compliance with University policies.

**Appeal of Field Grade**

Consistent with School of Social Work policy, a student must maintain a grade of C or better in all field classes, both pre-field and field seminars. Should a student receive a grade that is less than s/he believes was earned (whether or not it is a failing grade), the student has a right to appeal such grade. The student should first discuss the grade with the
faculty liaison to determine whether the instructor is amenable to a grade change. However, should a faculty liaison not be open to a change of grade, the student has the right to appeal said grade by following the appropriate procedures designated in the BSW Student Handbook (See the BSW web page to access the BSW Handbook.)

**Termination from Field Placement**

Student termination from field placement rarely occurs, but it can happen; hence each student needs to recognize that acceptance into the field program does not automatically guarantee completion of field requirements for the BSW degree. There are two ways that a student can be terminated from a placement. They are as follows:

- A student earns less than a passing grade in field practicum (i.e., a grade of C- or below)
- The student violates an agency policy, performs an illegal act, or violates the NASW Code of Ethics.

Should a student have difficulty in performing her/his responsibilities in field and earn *less than a passing grade* in the field practicum, s/he will be removed from the field placement and required to repeat the appropriate field course(s) before continuing in the BSW curriculum. Should the student want to appeal this grade, the student must request an appeal with the appropriate faculty liaison and follow the protocol as stated above. Should this be unsuccessful, the student is expected to adhere to the grievance procedure as set forth in the BSW Student Handbook which is consistent with the academic grievance as set forth in the UNCW Undergraduate Catalogue.

In the event that a student is *dismissed from the placement due to a violation of agency policy, performance of an illegal act, or violation of one or more standards in the NASW Code of Ethics*, the field instructor is expected to notify the student and the Coordinator of Field Education immediately. All students are required to prepare a written account of the circumstances which resulted in field dismissal and must address how her/his behavior violated the standards set forth in the NASW Code of Ethic; the student is expected to include a recommendation for addressing the infraction. In addition, the Coordinator of Field Education, in collaboration with the faculty liaison, will review the student’s indiscretion to determine appropriate disciplinary action, including a possible appeal to the agency for reinstatement. When appropriate, the student will be offered the option to obtain counseling through the UNCW Counseling Center or community practitioners (names of community practitioners will be provided if this is the preferred resource). In addition, faculty will cooperate with legal and probationary officials, when deemed necessary, in accordance with university policy as stated in the UNCW Code of Student Life.

Once the circumstances of the infraction have been clearly reviewed by the faculty liaison and the Coordinator of Field Education, a determination will be made as to whether the situation warrants disciplinary action, reassignment to another field placement or dismissal from the program. In order to assure fair treatment, the circumstances will be
reviewed with the Leadership Team to determine suitable disciplinary action. The Leadership Team decision will then be forwarded to the student in writing.

Should a student be granted permission to continue in the BSW Program, the student is expected to develop a written contract of ethical practice that stipulates the conditions for continuation in field placement. Should termination be deemed appropriate, the student will be notified in writing of such a decision with copies of this notification distributed to the student, the field instructor, and the faculty liaison (to be placed in the student’s field folder and advising folder). In addition, the Leadership Team will determine whether the student is eligible for readmission to the BSW Program, and if so, the conditions for readmission. These conditions must be written into a contract to be signed by the student, the Coordinator of Field Education and the BSW Program Coordinator. Should a student wish to appeal the Leadership Team’s decision for dismissal and/or eligibility for readmission, the student is expected to submit a written request to the Coordinator of Field Education stating the reasons s/he does not believe the decision for disciplinary action is warranted. The student will then follow social work policy as defined in the BSW Handbook as well as University policy.

Field Safety Policy and Procedures

Introduction
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

The 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 J).
• 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.

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.