

FIELD INSTRUCTION MANUALS

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INFORMATION FOR AGENCIES

Criteria for the Selection of Field Instruction Agencies and Field Instructors

I. Field Instruction Agencies

- A. Discussion of the possible use of a social agency for field instruction may be initiated by the agency, a student or members of Field Instruction Department. Initial discussion explores the agency's interest and ability to provide the range of learning opportunities necessary to carry out the purposes of the field instruction courses.
- B. Following the initial discussion, a site visit is usually made to the agency by a representative of the Field Instruction Department. The purpose is to meet with agency representatives to discuss learning opportunities available, potential field instructors, and to review the nature of social work practice in the agency.
- C. As a result of these discussions the agency decides whether it wishes to accept students for field instruction and the school determines whether the required educational expectations and standards for field instruction can be met.
- D. When an agency becomes a field instruction site, a contract, in the form of a Memorandum of Agreement between the school and the agency, is executed and the agency becomes an affiliate of the school and its programs.

II. Field Instructors

- A. Field instructors are recommended by the agency and approved by the director of field instruction.
 1. A field instructor is expected to have, at minimum:
 - a. an earned master of social work degree from a school accredited by the Council on Social Work Education, and
 - b. completed two years of post-master's, supervised social work practice. It is preferable that at least one year has been in the agency where field instruction will be provided.
 2. The person recommended as a field instructor is required to complete a Curriculum Vita for Field Instructors form furnished by the School of Social Work.
- B. The person recommended as a field instructor will meet with a representative of the Field Instruction Department to review expectations This interview is usually conducted by the faculty field liaison who is or will be assigned to the agency. Particular emphasis is placed on:
 1. interest in teaching;
 2. potential for providing students with knowledge of social work concepts, principles and values; and capacity for stimulating and supporting students in the learning process.
- C. In special circumstances, exceptions to these criteria are made and, when appropriate, the faculty field liaison provides back-up supervision to ensure that educational expectations are met.
- D. New field instructors are required to attend a seminar series for new field instructors offered by the Field Instruction Department.

Memorandum of Agreement

between
Virginia Commonwealth University
School of Social Work
and

(Agency)

(Address)

(City) (State) (ZIP Code)

The School of Social Work of Virginia Commonwealth University (hereinafter "School"), by the signing of this agreement, designates

(hereinafter "Agency"), as an approved setting for Field Instruction in the School's programs of education for social work.

By signing this agreement, both the School and the Agency commit themselves to cooperative efforts, as described below, in the provision of Field Instruction to students of the School and agree to adhere to the policies and procedures delineated in the VCU-School of Social Work Field Manuals.

This agreement becomes effective on _____ (date), remains in (Date) force for a period of one year, and renews itself annually unless either the School or the Agency requests modification or termination. Amendments must be agreed to in writing and signed by both parties.

The VCU School of Social Work Agrees to:

1. Consider the Agency as a partner in the Field Instruction program and to work with relevant Agency staff in order to further the goals of the curriculum.
2. Take responsibility for decisions regarding appointment of Agency nominated staff members to the School's Field Instruction faculty.
3. Maintain responsibility for the administration of the Field Instruction program, including decisions which affect the progress of the student, such as grades, credits, and Field Instruction hours in the Agency.
4. Assume responsibility for the selection of students to be placed at the Agency.
5. Provide the Agency students' names and contact information of those who were selected for placement in the Agency.
6. Provide consultation to the Agency executive, Field Instructor(s), and other appropriate staff in the general development of its Field Instruction program.
7. Provide a designated member of the faculty to serve as Faculty Field Liaison to the Agency in matters pertaining to Field Instruction. This Faculty Field Liaison will:
 - a. Serve as principal liaison between the School and the Agency;
 - b. Make periodic visits to the Agency to review student progress and consult with the Field Instructor on ways to facilitate student learning or to handle problems;
 - c. Be available to the Field Instructor for immediate consultation when requested;
 - d. Share with the Field Instructor knowledge of the educational program of the School and pertinent information about student progress in other areas of the curriculum.

8. Provide opportunities for professional development of the Field Instructor(s) and other appropriate members of the Agency staff through provision of meetings, institutes, and seminars.

The Agency Agrees to:

1. Accept students for placement in the Agency, the exact number to be negotiated annually by the Agency and the Director of Field Instruction.
2. Accept students without regard to race, ethnic origin, gender, sexual orientation, age, religion, or disability.
3. Provide educationally sound Field Instruction placements consistent with the program and level of students accepted for placement.
4. Include the student as a participant in Agency programs and activities, as appropriate.
5. Help implement the School's objective that Field Instruction provide opportunities for students to gain new knowledge and understanding in all areas of the curriculum.
6. Provide qualified Field Instruction for student(s) by designating those persons who will serve as Field Instructors subject to the evaluation and approval of the School.
7. Assure that each Field Instructor will:
 - (a) Meet the educational needs of the student, through the following activities: orientation to the Agency and its services; development of learning opportunities appropriate to course learning objectives, which have depth and variety; preparation for conferences with the student; and regularly scheduled, weekly, individual conferences with the student;
 - (b) Meet with the Faculty Field Liaison at periodic intervals to discuss learning opportunities and student performance;
 - (c) Attend required Field Instruction training as well as appropriate School sponsored meetings, institutes and,
 - (d) Prepare reports and evaluations as required by the School and described in the Field Instruction Manual.
8. Prepare students in whatever way necessary to maximize their safety in the learning environment, including in the Agency, in the community and with the client population(s) served.
9. Permit the use of its facilities by students during the period of placement, including:
 - a. Appropriate space for students, including a desk for each student in an area sufficiently private for carrying on independent work and activity;
 - b. Space, on a regular or as needed basis, in which privacy for interviews and conferences can be assured;
 - c. Convenient access to a telephone;
 - d. Office supplies needed in the performance of responsibilities;
 - e. Clerical service for those records and reports which are produced for the Agency; and
 - f. Access to client and Agency records appropriate to the learning experience.
10. Allow students to share with the Faculty Field Liaison appropriately disguised case materials which are relevant to the student's learning.
11. Advise the Faculty Field Liaison of changes in Agency policy and/or service.
12. Cooperate with the School in the use of Agency materials for classroom discussions and assignments, based on the understanding that the School requires students to obtain permission of the Field Instructor for any outside use of Agency materials; that records must never be removed from the Agency; and, that all case material used for papers must be adequately disguised.
13. Provide for student travel **on behalf of clients** by (please check those which apply):
() Use of Agency cars;

- or
- () Reimbursement for use of his/her private car at the minimum rate of \$_____ per mile, the mileage rate to be adjusted to the prevailing Agency rate in case of its increase;
- or
- () Payment of an agreed amount, \$_____ per _____ (Period) to cover this expense;
- or
- () Other as described herein: _____

14. Provide for other educationally related student expenses, as indicated below:

- () Financial assistance to defray cost of travel to and from the Agency at \$_____ per _____ (Mile or Period)
- () Lodging, as described: _____

- () Meals, as described: _____

- () Other, as described: _____

- () No additional expenses

15. The parties understand and agree that no employment relationship is created or intended by Agency's compliance with items one (1) through fourteen (14) above.

16. Insurance coverages

The Commonwealth of Virginia, its Agency's institutions, and employees are covered by a self insured plan based on a comprehensive general liability manuscript form as authorized by the Code of Virginia, section 2.2-1837. Claims made against the Commonwealth of Virginia (not employees or agents) are subject to the Code of Virginia, section 8.01-195.1 et. seq. (Virginia Tort Claims Act). The School, its agents and employees are also insured for medical malpractice liability. Both coverages respond only to those activities directly related to employment or assigned classroom duties or instruction.

17. NOTICE: Any communications or correspondence pertaining to this Memorandum of Agreement should use the following form.

For VCU School of Social Work:	For: _____ Name of Agency
Signed: _____ Dean, School of Social Work Date: _____	Signed: _____ Name of Administrator* _____ Title of Administrator
Signed: _____ Director of Field Instruction School of Social Work P.O. Box 842027 Richmond, VA 23284-2027 (804) 828-0708	_____ Address _____ Telephone Number
_____ E-mail Address	_____ E-mail Address
Date: _____	Date: _____

* This contract must be signed by an agency administrator, e.g., Executive Director, Director of Training, etc.

Ideas for the First Three Weeks in the Agency

The success of the field instruction course assumes that students will be assigned responsibility for direct service to clients within the first three weeks of their arrival at the agency. The following are some ideas about how this expectation might be implemented, particularly at the Senior B.S.W. and Foundation M.S.W. levels. In addition, we offer ideas about other kinds of experiences available in most field placement agencies that would be good beginning assignments and/or learning opportunities for students:

1. Develop a list of questions for students to answer after a “windshield” survey of the community; or as a result of interviewing key staff members, or through contact with key referral agencies.
2. Invite students to “shadow” specific staff members in their work with clients (whether in the office or in home visits). Give the student specific guidance in what they are to be observing and analyzing. Monitor or facilitate a meeting in which “shadow and shadowee” give feedback to each other on their performance.
3. Design ways to orient the student(s) to the agency in which they are active: e.g., interviewing staff, informal interviews with agency clients about the agency itself, contacts with relevant referral and resource agencies. They also can process record some of these interviewing experiences.
4. Consider orienting students through a case. This is a way of “starting where the student is “.... with what they want to know about how to work with clients. This could be done by selecting a case which you could “walk-through” with the student beginning with what the agency has to offer the particular client(s), how help is offered through agency services, what other services might be available in the community, how to begin thinking about assessment, etc.
5. Invite students to be participant observers in team meetings/staffings/staff meetings. Students can use the group process recording guide to organize their learning from these experiences and at the same time get to know how the agency functions.
6. Begin student's client contact with an intake experience. This can provide a beginning profile of the clients who come to the agency, the range of problems presented, how decisions are made to “open a case” or how to refer to other resources in the community.
7. Students should be given responsibility for their “own work” as soon as the orientation to the agency has been completed. This work can be a case assignment but it also can be another task assignment which will put them in touch with clients and/or staff, e.g., informing clients of a new service, follow-up calls to clients as part of program evaluation, community outreach and/or needs assessment contacts.
8. When the student is given full responsibility for service delivery to client(s) from the beginning, the field instructor should allow sufficient time (with first case) to work with the student on how to approach the case. For example, discussion could focus on how to understand the request for service/help, how one might approach the first interview vis-a-vis information for initial assessment, what the student is “expecting”/anxious about in this first contact, etc.
9. If a student does not have the specific background to deal with the particular client population, or if the cases seem overwhelmingly difficult, it might be possible to begin with just one case and stay with it for the first few weeks of placement. This is preferable to delaying client contact. Most students will learn more quickly if the experience is tied to an immediate problem that needs solving, i.e., a real client.
10. In some instances it may be possible for a field instructor to “share” case/client situation with a student. For example, think of viable additions to the service being provided, e.g., meeting with client's children during client's individual or group time, designing case management functions for student to perform, etc.

11. Provide the student with the social study (or primary data collection) outline used by the agency, and have them organize and/or update case record information for selected clients.
12. Have the student sit in the agency waiting room to observe how clients are greeted and treated by “intake” agency staff. Encourage them to try to put themselves in the clients' place as they begin their “relationship” with the agency/service.
13. Have students handle the telephones for a few hours (after being well oriented to the agency). Answering questions that come in about agency services will give the student yet another view of agency purpose and function and will expand their beginning understanding of “asking for help.”

INFORMATION FOR STUDENTS

The Purpose and Use of Conference Agendas in Field Instruction

The Conference Agenda is a means of assuring that the student in field instruction carries responsibility for his/her own learning. While the Agenda implements the belief that the student is and must be the center of his/her own learning, the field instructor's role as teacher in the field placement agency indicates that the responsibility for learning is one that is shared by both the student and the field instructor. In social work, this shared responsibility is generally known as the teaching/learning process.

Elements in a Field Conference Agenda

The Field Conference Agenda, as an educational tool, is for the student's learning. Its purpose is preparation for the learning that will take place during the conference. It helps the student to pull together his/her thinking about his/her learning needs and to plan for the efficient use of conference time. It also helps the field instructor to know in advance the areas in which the student needs assistance in order to attain learning objectives and to be prepared to provide focused teaching and to offer suggestions to the student for further learning.

Thus, the Conference Agenda informs the field instructor of the ideas, topics, problems and learning needs that the student wishes to discuss during the conference. It also informs the field instructor of the student's own thinking about these matters. The content and source of learning needs the student presents on the Conference Agenda may vary. These may include, for example: (a) specific questions about the agency, its policies and procedures; (b) specific problems stemming from particular cases or a particular project or task; (c) apparent contradictions in content covered in classes and what the student is experiencing in the field agency; (d) new ideas or thoughts generated by reading assignments. The overarching variable, however, remains the formulation of the Agenda item in terms of a learning need that furthers the overall teaching/learning process in field instruction.

Submission of Conference Agendas

The timing of the preparation and submission of the Agenda must be specified by the field instructor and understood by the student at the outset of the field instruction course. It is suggested that agendas be due on the field instructor's desk one full day prior to the regularly scheduled conference. If the conference is scheduled for the first day of field instruction each week, the agenda should be submitted by the student on the last day of field instruction in the previous week.

Examples of Conference Agenda Items

All Field Instruction Conference Agendas should include:

- The student's name
- The placement agency's name, and unit or service if appropriate
- The date of the conference

Examples of agenda items follow:

- I am concerned about the difference between the need for family interviewing and prying. I feel I am prying when I request an interview that the family has not asked for. Can you help me define the line between unrequested interviewing and prying?
- I am finding it difficult not to move too fast for the client. I am feeling unsure of interviewing techniques and how to deal with the client's refusal to say more than "yes" or "no." I also am wondering if this is a normal problem or am I being too impulsive.

- In working with children, I seem to have a tendency to assume the role of friend or big brother. I wonder if I can be effective if the relationship goes in this direction. I feel that some children feel more comfortable in this type of relationship. Maybe I do too. Can you help me sort this out?

Individualized Learning Plan

I. What is a Learning Plan?

A document developed by a student and a field instructor that specifies what the student will learn and how the learning will take place in a given period of time. It describes the structure of the learning experiences with respect to individual goals and objectives, as well as the goals and objectives set by the field instruction course outline.

II. Type of Plans

It may be helpful to consider two very different kinds of plans, one which may be drawn up at the beginning of the practicum, and the second, which involves time and process and cannot be drawn up until the practicum is underway.

A. The first kind of plan is a working plan. For example, the field instruction manual enumerates expectations and responsibilities of both field instructor and student which can form the basis of the working contract. A working plan reflects the actual circumstances of the practicum.

EXAMPLE: Specific agreement about time commitments, physical arrangements and requirements, clear statement of roles and responsibilities.

B. The second type is a learning plan. It provides a clear focus for the practicum and should be flexible to allow for changes as objectives are met and new ones developed. This plan consists of three parts:

- Learning objectives.
- Learning activities.
- Strategies and evaluation means.

III. Why Use a Learning Plan?

- Good tool for supervision.
- It specifies purpose, target issues, and clarifies goals and objectives.
- It can define expectations in behavioral terms.
- Enables students to participate more actively in the evaluation of their own learning.
- It can formalize in explicit terms what the student needs to work toward.

IV. Why Set Goals?

- They involve the student and field instructor in providing direction for the learning process.
- They provide criteria against which to measure progress and performance.

V. Guide Questions

The following questions may be useful as the student and field instructor work together to develop a learning plan:

- What do we expect from each other?
- What can we give each other?
- Are our goals the same?
- Can we achieve them?
- How can we achieve them?
- What constraints exist?
- How will we know when we have achieved the goals?

VI. Optimum Use of Goal Setting Occurs When Goals are:

- Specific.

- Explicit.
- Feasible in regard to capacity, opportunity and resources.
- Realistic and attainable.
- Seen in light of constraints.
- Related to the task formulated.
- Modifiable over time.
- Measurable.
- Ordered in priority.

References

Bogo, M., & Vayda, E. (1987). *The practice of field instruction in social work. Theory and process with an annotated bibliography.* Toronto: University of Toronto Press.

Fox, R. (1983). Contracting in supervision: A goal oriented process. *The Clinical Supervisor*, 1, 37-49.

Creating an Individualized Learning Plan

Purpose: To individualize the practicum learning experience.

Process: The field instructor and student are to begin by reviewing the field evaluation form (i.e., B.S.W., Foundation M.S.W. or Concentration M.S.W.) to learn what needs to be accomplished over the course of the practicum. The next step is to identify the individual learning needs and experiences of the student and the unique learning opportunities available in the setting. Based on this process, you are to develop learning objectives that reflect both the universality of the field expectations and the individuality of the student. For each learning objective specified, indicate the learning activities planned that will allow the student to acquire the knowledge or skill needed to meet the objective, the criteria by which the student's efforts to attain the objective will be assessed, and the date by which the objective is to be attained.

Exemplar

Learning Objective	Learning Activities	Assessment Process and Criteria	Completion Date
Demonstrate the ability to apply specific elements of the Code of Ethics in my practice with homeless clients.	1. Identify an ethical dilemma in one of my cases.	1. Reflects understanding of an area of the Code of Ethics as it applies to specific client situations.	5th week of the semester
	2. Present an analysis of the issue/dilemma to my field instructor.	2. Demonstrates ability to talk about values and ethics and applies them to an individual client and situation.	
	3. Consider this dilemma in terms of the values of the profession as well as the ethical guidelines in the code.	3. Demonstrates ability to analyze complex and/or competing values and ethical positions.	

	4. Present a written analysis of what action can be taken from the perspective of the Code of Ethics, and specify how this behavior and/or solution is consistent or inconsistent with my personal values/perspectives.	4. Field instructor will read and evaluate my written report for clarity of the elements in the dilemma identified and appropriateness of my analysis and suggested action.	8th week of the semester
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Student's signature: _____

Field Instructor's signature: _____

Date: _____

Process Recording Guidelines and Outlines

Purpose: To enhance students' ability to recall the details of their interactive work with clients and/or colleagues; to write clearly and coherently about the complex thoughts, actions and feelings that comprise their social work practice; to reflect on their work, integrating theoretical concepts, skills and values that are being taught in the curriculum.

Process: Several formats are presented in this Manual for use by the student and field instructor. Each process recording should begin with IDENTIFYING INFORMATION, PURPOSE OF THE INTERVIEW OR CONTACT and the student's INITIAL OBSERVATIONS. This information sets the objective and subjective aspects of the interaction into context for the field instructor and field liaison as well as demonstrating the student's growing understanding of the biopsychosocial realities and uniquenesses of each practice situation. In addition, regardless of whether the student uses the Exemplar format below, those that follow, it is critical that a section on ASSESSMENT or ANALYSIS and PLANNING be included in the process recording.

Exemplar: The following format can be used to help students differentiate and integrate the cognitive and affective components of their interactions with clients (Wilson, 1980).

Supervisor's Comments	Content Dialogue	Gut-Level Feeling/Response	Student's Analysis/Assessment
The field instructor can make comments and give feedback right opposite the interaction or feelings/reactions the student records.	Student uses this space to record interaction word-for-word. This is to include verbal and non-verbal components. Include all others present, communications such as silence, interruptions, and other interactions which may not be part of the planned intervention or interview.	Record how you were feeling as the dialogue, activity, or interaction was taking place. Be as open and honest as you can. Use this to look at your feelings and not to analyze the client's reactions.	Analyze your interventions; identify skills you are using; assess your work.

Selected References

- Neuman, K.M. & Friedman, B.D. (1997). Process recordings: Fine-tuning an old instrument. *Journal of Social Work Education*, 33(2). 237-243.
- Urdang, E.(1979). In defense of process recording. *Smith College Studies in Social Work*, 50(1), 1-15.
- Wilson, S.J. (1980). *Recordings: Guidelines for social workers*. New York: Free Press.

Process Recording Outline for Social Work Practice with Individuals, Couples or Families

A. Identifying Information

- Write a clear, concise statement about the client(s) and why they are seeking help.
- Include a brief statement about the age, sex, role, and other pertinent information for each person present in the session.

- If relevant, include a brief statement about other people involved in the situation, who are not present, and how they influence the situation.

B. Purpose of the Session

- In a clear, concise statement, discuss the purpose of the session.
- Indicate what the client or family considers the purpose of the session to be.
- Indicate what you, as student social worker, consider the purpose of the session to be.
- Indicate how these perceptions of purpose are similar or different. If different, briefly discuss the implications of this difference.
- Discuss the relationship between this session and the previous one(s).

C. Initial Observations of the Client(s)

Describe briefly, in general terms, the physical and emotional climate at the beginning of the session.

Describe your initial impressions of the attitudes and feelings of the client(s) at the beginning of the session.

Describe the feelings and attitudes you brought to the session.

Describe any significant changes in the client(s)' appearance and surroundings that occurred since the previous session.

D. Content of the Session

Describe how the session began.

Describe the actual interaction between the client(s) and you, during the session. The content should be selective and focus on what is significant and pertinent.

Specify pertinent information (content) communicated by the client(s) during the session.

Describe how the client(s) and how you responded to this information (content).

Describe the “feeling” content of the session, as it occurred, both on your part and the part of the client(s).

Describe how the session ended.

E. Assessment

What is your current assessment of this client(s)? Include client(s)' strengths and weaknesses.

How is your current assessment the same as or different from your original assessment?

Indicate the theory or other knowledge, learned in your other courses, that helps you to understand the process and content of this session, e.g., what knowledge of human behavior or the human condition applies in this practice situation?

F. Plan for the Next Session

Write a brief statement of the plan for the next session.

Explain how you and the client(s) engaged in a mutual process to formulate the plan.

Explain how the plan relates to the problem for which the client(s) sought help.

If relevant, specify what the client(s) are to do between the end of the current interview or session and the next time you meet.

G. Analysis of the Student Social Worker's Practice

1. Discuss your use of social work practice knowledge and skill during the interview or family session.

What specific social work skills and/or techniques, learned in your practice courses, did you use during the session?

What specific social work skills and/or techniques, learned in your practice courses, could you have used during the session?

What were the strengths and weaknesses in your practice during the session?

2. Was the purpose of the session accomplished?

NOTE: We request that full names not be used in recordings, only initials, in order to protect confidentiality. Student recordings do not become the property of the student. They should be destroyed at the end of the year or retained by the agency, as the material is confidential.

Process Recording Outline for Social Work Practice with Small Client Groups

A. Information about the Group

- Group Name or Type
- Meeting Number Date
- Group Members Present

B. Purpose of the Group or Meeting

- Write a brief statement on the overall purpose of the group.a. This statement is included only in the first process recording, or if there is an agreed upon change in the group's overall purpose.
- Write a concise statement about the goals of the meeting of the group being recorded.
- How were these goals perceived by the group?
- How did you perceive these goals?
- What are the similarities or differences between the group's perception of these goals and yours?

C. Group Process at the Meeting

1. Initial Observations

Describe briefly, in general terms, the physical and emotional climate at the beginning of the group meeting.

Describe briefly your initial impressions of the attitudes and feelings of the group members at the beginning of the meeting.

Describe any significant changes in the appearance or feelings or attitudes of the group members since the last meeting.

Group Member Interaction (Group Process)

Describe what went on within the group during its meeting. For example:

- (1) Describe the means of interaction, e.g., program activity, discussion, debate, tasks, etc.
- (2) Describe the feeling reactions of the members to this interaction.
- (3) Describe your feeling reactions to this interaction.

Describe the effectiveness, vitality, and responsibility of the group's members during the interaction.

Describe your role in the group's interaction.

Describe the ways the group moved toward attainment of its goals.

Describe how the group's members dealt with obstacles to attainment of the meeting's goals.

D. Analysis of the Group Meeting

Describe your understanding of the nature of the interaction of the group members, including you, at this group meeting.

Indicate the theoretical or other knowledge, learned in your other courses, that helps you to understand the process and content of this group meeting.

On the basis of your analysis, what is your current assessment of:

- the stage of the group's development;
- the commitment of the group members to the group's purpose;

the climate and tone of the group;
if relevant, discuss specific roles played by individual group members and how they impact the group process.

E. Plan for the Group's Next Meeting

Write a brief statement of the plan for the next meeting of the group.
Explain how the members of the group, including you, arrived at this plan.
Explain how the plan relates to the purpose of the group.
Describe what you and the other group members are to do prior to, and in preparation for, the next group meeting.

F. Analysis of the Student Social Worker's Practice

1. Discuss your use of social work practice knowledge and skills during the group meeting.
What specific social work skills and/or techniques, learned in your practice courses, did you use during the group meeting?
What were the strengths and weaknesses in your practice during the group meeting?

Process Recording Outline for Social Work Practice with Community and Organizational Groups

A. Identifying Information

Name of the Group (Committee, Task Force, Board, etc.)
Overall purpose of the group (committee, task force, board, etc.)
Date of the meeting or activity being process recorded.
Types of persons present and absent at the meeting or activity.
Name of the person who called the meeting or activity.
Indicate this person's position.
Indicate the method of notification for the meeting or activity.
Indicate how much time was allowed between notification and the date of the meeting or activity.

B. Pre-Meeting or Pre-Activity Goals and Perceptions

Describe briefly the goals stated for the meeting or activity.
Attach an agenda, if there is one.
Include a discussion of the task and process goals specified for the meeting or activity in your description.
Describe briefly your own goal expectations, as a student social worker, for this meeting or activity. Include a brief statement of your own task and process goals in your description.

C. Meeting or Activity Process

Describe the role played by the chairman or leader.
Indicate how he or she played this role(s).
Indicate the impact/influence of the chairman or leader on the actions of the others present, including you.
Summarize the overall interaction of those present.
Indicate the interactional roles played by different group members.
Describe any cliques, leadership patterns, or other factors that develop during the interaction.
Describe the atmosphere of the meeting or activity.

Describe any decisions made or actions taken during the meeting or activity: how they were introduced and how the decisions were made.

Describe plans for the next meeting or activity of this group, e.g., future agenda items. Include a brief discussion of how the group decided on this plan(s).

D. Analysis of the Meeting or Activity

Analyze the actions, decisions, conclusions or other interactions that occurred in the group and indicate why you think they occurred.

Include a brief discussion of roles that members played that were significant to the interaction.

Include a consideration of the cliques, leadership patterns, or other significant variables that influenced the interaction in your analysis.

Consider the personal motivations of members in regard to the roles, cliques, patterns and other behavior that emerged in the meeting or during the activity and how these personal motivations might be influencing the interaction.

On the basis of your analysis, what is your current assessment of:

the commitment of the people involved in this committee, task force, board, etc. to the group's purpose;

the motivation of the community or agency people involved to achieve this purpose;

evaluate the growth of leadership in this committee or activity, including the group's capacity to solve the problems or tasks facing it.

E. Analysis of the Student Social Worker's Practice

Identify and analyze your feelings during the meeting or activity.

Describe briefly, and analyze your feelings about specific people during the meeting or activity.

Describe briefly and analyze your feelings about the content of the meeting or activity, e.g., apprehension, elation, anger, fear, frustration, etc.

Analyze how your feelings influenced the actions and course of the meeting or activity, including your own action or non-action.

Were your goals for the meeting or activity attained? Explain how you attained them or why they were not attained.

What specific social work skills and/or techniques, learned in your practice courses, did you use during the meeting or activity?

What specific social work skills and/or techniques, learned in your practice courses, do you think you could have used during the meeting or activity?

What were the strengths and weaknesses in your practice during the meeting or activity?

Your Personal Safety

Guidelines for General Personal Risk Reduction

- Walk with a sense of purpose. Be aware of your body language.
- Be alert! Don't walk "in a daze." For example, be aware of strangers who approach and speak to you. Keep a safe distance and keep moving.
- Walk on the outside of the sidewalk so you are away from possible hiding places.
- Do not walk on the side of the street where you see a group of people loitering.
- Be aware of safe places where you are walking or visiting, such as stores, library, schools and community centers which you might use as a refuge.
- Do not carry a purse or bag. If you must carry one, conceal it or use a shoulder bag or backpack.
- Wear sensible and appropriate clothing, low heeled shoes, and avoid wearing jewelry which could be snatched off, used to grab you or wrapped around you in some way.
- Do not give money to people who ask for it.
- Assess multistory buildings for safety. If you need to take an elevator, check-out the interior before entering. If it appears unsafe, wait for the next elevator. If a suspicious person enters the elevator after you are there, exit before the door closes. If you can't exit, stand next to the control panel and, if you are accosted, press all the buttons.
- If you need to take stairs in a multistory building, be aware of who is in the stairwell and how far apart the exits are.

Risk Reduction Strategies in the Field

- Learn to appreciate realistic limitations. Be reasonable about what is and is not possible. Know when to stay and when to leave.
- Keep your own work area as safe as possible: keep it clear of items that could become harmful to anyone involved in a physical intervention. For example, keep objects which could be used as weapons (e.g., ashtrays, sharp objects, a cup of hot coffee) away from potentially aggressive clients.
- Avoid seeing clients with reputations for unprovoked assaults or those in acute paranoid psychotic distress in an empty office without back-up staff or security available. Where possible, alert available staff members that assistance might be needed before you enter a crisis situation.
- Act calmly. Keep the "scream" out of your voice. An emotional or aggressive response to a distraught individual is likely to reinforce and escalate the aggression. Remember, clients and others who are violent are often reacting to feelings of helplessness and/or loss of control. Therefore, you need to be in control of the situation.
- Take a non-threatening posture to avoid appearing confrontational, but take a protected posture as well, e.g., standing slightly sideways to the individual, at a safe distance away from sudden lunges, punches and kicks, with your arms and hands held near the upper body for possible quick self-protection. Avoid a stare down by periodically breaking eye contact.
- Don't walk away from the individual who is escalating. Acknowledge the person's feelings and try to talk them down. Encouraging the person to sit down may sufficiently delay or divert the possibility of an attack. Usually, an appropriate staff member to be with the individual is the one who has the best rapport with them, not necessarily the staff with the most authority.
- Observe the process as you interact with a client who is being aggressive. Identify which of your actions serve to calm and those which seem to inflame the individual, and act accordingly.

- Avoid sudden movements or issuing ultimatums or strident commands. Whenever possible, allow the person to make behavioral choices. Directives or alternatives should be stated calmly, concretely, and in action terms.
- Do not touch the individual you are trying to calm down unless you are willing to restrain them (and you have been trained to do so), and only when there is sufficient staff to do so in a manner consistent with the agency's containment policies.
- If you are threatened or injured while in field placement, or involved in an incident where your safety is or could be compromised, the incident should be reported immediately to your faculty field liaison, to the agency, and to the Field Instruction Office (804) 828-0708.

BACHELOR OF SOCIAL WORK

B.S.W. Field Instruction Objectives

The objectives of the field instruction courses reflect the objectives of the Bachelor's in Social Work Program and parallel the learning objectives of the three corequisite, practice courses.

Upon completion of field instruction, students are expected to utilize knowledge, values and skills essential for entry-level generalist practice in such a way as to demonstrate:

- an understanding of the social work profession and commitment to its goals and ethics;
- the ability to assess professional strengths and weaknesses and to set goals for continued development of self awareness;
- skills in problem solving with client systems. This includes the ability to identify and assess problems, select, implement and evaluate a plan of intervention;
- the ability to use theory and research to guide practice;
- skill in understanding, developing, and effectively using and terminating professional relationships;
- the ability to recognize the impact of diversity, on client systems and professional relationships;
- the ability to understand the impact of oppression on all people and basic strategies to alleviate the impact;
- the ability to assess and understand agency policy and procedures, to identify problem areas within the agency and to suggest appropriate changes for the improvement of service delivery;
- skill in determining community resources and in making effective referrals;
- the ability to use field instruction effectively to develop knowledge, values and skills;
- the ability to communicate effectively and appropriately in both oral and written form;
- the ability to set appropriate priorities, organize work and manage time; and
- the capacity to critically evaluate ones own practice and to assume responsibility for continued professional development.

The Field Sequence

Field Instruction in the B.S.W. Program consists of three sequential courses. They are SLWK 393 (Junior Field Instruction), and SLWK 494 and 495 (Senior Field Instruction I and II). SLWK 393 is open only to social work majors with Junior standing (54 credits) who have a minimum of 2.0 GPA and have earned a B or above in SLWK 201 and SLWK 230 and a C or above in all social work courses taken. SLWK 393 must be taken with SLWK 332 (Social Work Practice: Fundamentals). SLWK 313 (Person in Society) is a prerequisite for both SLWK 393 and 332. The SLWK 393 field course can only be taken in the spring semester (14 hours per week for the entire semester), or in the summer (20 hours per week for 10 weeks concurrently with SLWK 332).

SLWK 494 and 495 are continuous courses open only to social work majors of senior standing who have earned a C or above in attempted 300-level social work courses. These field courses must be taken with the corequisite practice courses SLWK 441(Social Work Practice I) and SLWK 442 (Social Work Practice II). SLWK 494 can only be taken in the fall semester (14 hours per week) and SLWK 495 in the subsequent spring semester (14 hours per week). Continuation into SLWK 495 requires a grade of C or above in SLWK 494 and SLWK 441.

Students will have the opportunity to be placed in two different agency settings during the field instruction sequence. Students will spend their first semester (SLWK 393) in one agency and will be placed in a second agency to complete the SLWK 494 and 495 requirements.

Policies Governing B.S.W. Program Field Instruction

Application for Field Instruction

Application for field instruction must be made using the online system designed by the School of Social Work Field Department office and must be received by the deadline set in the fall or spring semester prior to the one in which field placement is to begin. Application must be made separately for SLWK 393 Junior Field Instruction and for SLWK 494–495 Senior Field Instruction. Advisers have an active role in this process. They must verify with the student that course and grade requirements for the field practicum have been met, and they should review the application once completed.

All placements are arranged by the school's field instruction department. If a student is aware of an agency not yet used by the School as a field placement site, the student may initiate a call to that agency to inquire about the agency's interest. If the agency may be interested in a student intern, the student or agency should call the Field Department Office for further exploration. Students are not to call existing agencies asking for placements as this creates duplication and confusion for all parties involved. It is the Field Department's responsibility and prerogative to decide on the placement of students in existing agencies.

Placement Interviews

At the beginning of the placement semester, each student who has applied for field will be tentatively assigned to an agency, pending the placement interview. It is the students' responsibility to schedule this interview. No placement is considered final until after the interview when the agency indicates its acceptance or rejection of the student in writing. If two consecutive agency interviews result in the student not being accepted for placement due to performance or behavior concerns, no further placement will be attempted until the student and her/his academic adviser meet with the director or assistant director of field instruction to determine appropriate alternatives.

Hours and Days of Field Instruction

Students are to be present and engaged in the work of the field agency for 14 hours a week for each semester of fieldwork for which they are registered. During the summer semester, students are in the agency 20 hours per week for 10 weeks. Regular attendance in placement is expected for the entire scheduled field instruction period.

Students are to notify the field instructor when they must be absent because of illness or other reasons; if the absence is expected to last more than one week, they also must notify the faculty field liaison.

All absences, except for official university holidays and required meetings arranged for by the School, are to be made up in a manner mutually agreed to by the student, the field instructor, and the faculty field liaison.

Absences due to observance of religious holidays, attendance at professional meetings, or participation in professional conferences may be excused with the approval of the field instructor and the faculty field liaison.

Vacations. Prior to lengthy semester breaks (more than two weeks), students are expected to assess carefully their agency assignments with their field instructors to determine if, and how frequently, during their vacation time, they will need to be at the agency to meet ongoing professional responsibilities. This assessment, and the resultant schedule designed to meet these

responsibilities, will become part of their individualized learning plan and is to be shared with the faculty field liaison.

Some overtime in field instruction is to be expected. These hours may not be accumulated for use as leave time, vacation time, or to end the field placement early. The expectation of the school is that students not be involved in excessive overtime during their field practicum. If the overtime becomes excessive, students should discuss this with their field instructor and, with their faculty field liaison so that an adjustment can be made.

Required Field Assignments

The Field Department requires students to develop an individualized learning plan and working contract with their field instructor within the first few weeks of the semester. This plan will be modified as learning goals change during the field practicum. A copy of the plan and working contract is to be given to the faculty field liaison.

Students are required to complete a minimum of one process recording per week. The process recording outlines are to serve as guides and may be modified by the field instructor and/or field liaison.

Students are to present written agendas in preparation for their weekly field instruction conference.

Students will be expected to share some of this written work with their field liaison in preparation for each scheduled liaison visit.

Other written work may be required by the field instructor and/or the field liaison.

Grading

The faculty field liaison, in consultation with the field instructor, is responsible for assigning the student's grade for the field instruction course.

Grades for field instruction are based on:

- an evaluation form completed by the field instructor reflecting the student's attainment of field instruction learning objectives, including the student's demonstrated level of knowledge and skill in social work practice;
- faculty field liaison's assessment, from process recordings and other materials submitted by the student, of the student's progress and current level of social work practice knowledge and skill;
- conferences between the faculty field liaison, the field instructor and the student, which are to evaluate the student's current level of social work practice knowledge and skill, as well as the student's ability to engage in a discussion of his/her work and his/her professional development.

The following grades are used for B.S.W. field instruction courses:

A = EXCEPTIONAL – Student's performance consistently exceeds the usual expectations and is outstanding in a number of areas.

B = VERY GOOD – Student's performance is consistently above average in most areas.

C = SATISFACTORY – Student consistently performs at an acceptable level in all areas.

D = MARGINAL – Student's performance is below acceptable levels in specific areas. This is not a passing grade and the course must be repeated. Approval to repeat must be obtained from the student's adviser, the field department and the B.S.W. Program director.

F = FAILURE – Student has not demonstrated the level of social work practice knowledge, values and skills appropriate for the field instruction course. Students should discuss the advisability of their continuance in the program with their adviser. Approval to repeat the course must be obtained from the student's adviser the Field Department and the B.S.W. Program Director.

I = INCOMPLETE – The grade of Incomplete (I) presupposes that the student is doing passing work in the field instruction course, but because of illness or another emergency situation which is beyond the student's control, is unable to complete all course requirements by the end of the semester.

The grade of incomplete (I) may not be given to allow the student to do additional work in order to meet field instruction course requirements more adequately. The grade of Incomplete (I) requires an agreement in writing between the field instructor, the faculty field liaison, and the student about how the field instruction requirements will be met and in what time frame. An Incomplete Grade Form must be completed and filed with the associate dean. If all requirements necessary for removal of the grade of Incomplete (I) are not satisfactorily met by the last day of field instruction in the academic semester or summer session following the academic semester or summer session in which the Incomplete (I) was incurred, the Incomplete (I) will be changed automatically to a grade of Fail (F).

W = WITHDRAW – The grade of Withdrawn (W) indicates that the student has officially withdrawn from the field instruction course after the first week and before the end of the eighth week of the semester. No student who has officially withdrawn from the field instruction course may continue in the field instruction placement.

NOTE: UNIVERSITY POLICIES (see the **Undergraduate Bulletin**) REGARDING ADMINISTRATIVE WITHDRAWAL WITHOUT PENALTY (W), INCOMPLETE (I), OR GRADE APPEAL APPLY TO THE FIELD INSTRUCTION COURSES. (See G below for exception).

Withdrawal from Field Instruction

Students may not withdraw from a field instruction course even before the university “withdrawal date” without prior consultation with, and approval from their faculty field liaison and their adviser.

Consultation must include the development of an alternate plan for completion of the course which meets the requirements of the curriculum.

The reasons for withdrawal and the plan for completion of the course must be discussed at the time of withdrawal and in writing to the director of Field Instruction and the director of the B.S.W. Program.

A student who has withdrawn from field (prior to University Withdrawal date) for reasons related to documented poor performance will be replaced only one time. If he/she withdraws again for

reasons related to documented poor performance in the second placement he/she will not be placed again until the school, provides an opportunity for the student, the student's adviser, the B.S.W. program director, and an appropriate member of the Field Instruction Department to meet and review the student's program and performance. The purpose of this meeting is to make recommendations. These recommendations may include (but are not limited to): rearrangement of student's program to complete field instruction at a later time; having the student seek additional experiences outside of the university to address identified areas of weakness; providing one additional field placement opportunity or referral to the Academic Standards Committee.

Student Performance Problems

The field instruction course is quite different from other VCU courses. While a field placement in a community agency is organized around educational objectives determined by the B.S.W. curriculum, it also involves professional responsibilities to clients, agencies and the community. As a result of the involvement of these many stakeholders, it is imperative that we recognize early and respond quickly to students' performance problems. When problems occur, it is crucial that the field instructor, student and faculty field liaison attend to a number of issues: the right of clients to adequate professional service; the educational needs of the student (including access to corrective and supportive services, as appropriate); and, the "gatekeeping" function of the school and the social work professional community.

Procedures for Removal of a Student from the Field Agency

A request for the consideration of removal may be initiated by the field instructor, the agency executive, the faculty field liaison, or the student. In all cases, a written statement, which documents the issues and/or concerns, is to be prepared by the person initiating the action.

At the request of the agency, the field instructor or the faculty liaison, a student may be removed from the field placement agency for documented unprofessional conduct or for demonstrable lack of progress in attaining field instruction learning objectives.

The following steps are to be taken:

1. The student will be apprised, orally or in writing, of the specific nature of the concern(s) about her/his behavior, progress in learning, or performance.
2. The person initiating the request will communicate her/his concern regarding the student to the others involved (e.g. field instructor, and liaison, etc.). The faculty liaison will alert the Director of Field Instruction.
3. In an effort to arrive at a resolution of the situation, a meeting will be held with, at a minimum, the student, the field instructor, and the faculty liaison. The student's adviser and the Director of Field Instruction will be informed and may be included. The purpose of this meeting would be to ascertain the facts and give all parties involved an opportunity to raise their concerns and explore possibilities for resolution of the problem. The possibilities include, but are not limited to:
 - continuation in the agency with a specific plan (including time limits) for correction in the areas identified as deficient.
 - removal from the agency, without grade penalty, and replacement in another agency to complete the course requirements.
 - removal from the agency, for documented cause, resulting in a Failing (F) grade.
4. In the event the situation is not resolved as a result of this meeting, the matter will be referred to the Director of Field Instruction.

Steps 2 to 4 should be completed in a period not to exceed three weeks.

Serious obstacles to the student's learning in the agency may be addressed through a request for removal by the student. The following steps are to be taken:

1. The student will discuss the situation with the field instructor;
2. If the issue remains unresolved, the student will consult the faculty liaison to discuss the issues and the rationale for the request to be placed elsewhere. The Director of Field Instruction will be informed;
3. If, after such a discussion, the matter is not resolved, the faculty liaison will convene a meeting of the student, the field instructor, the Director of Field Instruction and the student's adviser. The purpose of such a meeting would be to ascertain the facts, to give all parties involved an opportunity to voice their concerns, and to serve as a basis for decisions;
4. The Director of Field Instruction, with the student and faculty liaison, will then proceed to make a decision in this matter. The possibilities include, but are not limited to:
 - continuation in the agency with a specific plan (including time limits) for correction in the areas identified as deficient;
 - removal from the agency, without grade penalty, and replacement in another agency to complete the course requirements;
 - removal from the agency, for documented cause, resulting in a Failing (F) grade.

Steps 2 to 4 should be completed in a period not to exceed three weeks.

If, as a result of these procedures, a student is removed from the field agency for documented unprofessional conduct or demonstrable failure to progress in attaining field instruction objectives, a grade of Fail (F) will be assigned for the course.

If a student is removed from an agency and then reassigned during the same semester, that student must make up the time missed from field in order to complete successfully. The method of making up the time should be agreed to by both the field agency and faculty liaison.

Evaluation of the Student's Performance

Evaluation of the student's performance in the placement agency should be an ongoing process. This means the student is to receive continual assessment of and feedback about her/his performance throughout the placement.

1. Performance expectations are detailed in the field evaluation forms for each course. These forms are given to the student and the field instructor at the time of placement by the Field Department.
2. These expectations are to serve as the basis for the Individualized Learning Plan which is developed by the student and the field instructor.

If a student's performance is evaluated by the field instructor as less than satisfactory at any point after mid-semester and prior to the end of the semester, the field instructor shall notify the faculty field liaison immediately

A final conference, between the field instructor and the student, is to be held prior to the end of the semester to evaluate the student's field instruction performance. The student is expected to participate actively in the evaluation conference.

A written evaluation (using forms provided by the School of Social Work) by the field instructor is required one week prior to the end of each semester of B.S.W. Field Instruction.

The student must read the written evaluation and must sign it to indicate that he or she has read it, prior to giving it to the faculty field liaison.

If the student disagrees with any part of the evaluation, he or she may attach a signed addendum noting the areas of disagreement. Undergraduate Grade Appeal Procedures apply to Field Instruction courses (see **Undergraduate Bulletin**).

The field instructor must also sign the evaluation prior to giving it to the faculty field liaison for review and grading.

Feedback on Placement Agencies, Field Instructors Faculty Field Liaisons and the Field Program

At the end of each placement, forms are distributed by the Field Instruction Department of the School of Social Work. Students give feedback on the placement agency, the field instructor, the faculty field liaison and the Field Program. Field instructors give feedback on his/her experience with the Field Program. Faculty field liaisons give feedback on the placement agency and the field instructor. All feedback forms are returned directly to the Director of Field Instruction and constitute the primary data used in subsequent planning and placement decisions.

B.S.W. Field Instruction Syllabi

SLWK 393 Junior Field Instruction

Course Description. First of three sequential courses. Semester course: 3 credits. Prerequisite SLWK 313. Corequisite: SLWK 332. Open only to majors with junior status. 14 hours per week in a community agency under the supervision of an agency based field instructor. Intended to facilitate student's understanding of agency structure and community context, ability to engage in professional relationships, to assess strengths, define problems, set goals and utilize beginning level practice skills with individuals, families, groups, organizations and communities. Promote identification as a professional social worker.

“Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 and the Americans with Disabilities act of 1990 require VCU to provide academic adjustment of accommodations for students with documented disabilities. Students seeking academic adjustments or accommodations must self-identify with the Coordinator of Services for Students with Disabilities on the appropriate campus. After meeting with the Coordinator, students are encouraged to meet with their field instructors to discuss their needs.”

Course Objectives

- Upon completion of this course the student will be able to:
- Demonstrate understanding of the agency, its purpose, policies, procedures and population served.
- Demonstrate understanding of the role of social work in the agency.
- Demonstrate understanding of agency services in relation to community needs and attitudes and the community service network.
- Identify resources within the community and how to access these for clients.
- Understand and utilize problem solving in social work practice.
- Apply beginning skills in interviewing.
- Demonstrate beginning ability to apply social work practice theory and concepts to the field agency experience.
- Demonstrate beginning ability to develop professional relationships with field faculty, clients, agency staff and other community representatives.
- Demonstrate beginning self-awareness as it relates to professional social work practice.
- Seek and utilize feedback through field instruction using agendas and process recordings as learning tools.
- Demonstrate awareness of the impact of diversity and oppression on social work intervention and commitment to practice which is sensitive to differences among people.
- Demonstrate knowledge of the NASW Code of Ethics and efforts to incorporate it in practice.
- Collect and analyze information for assessment and evaluation as an ongoing process from initial contact through termination.
- Set priorities, complete tasks, organize work and manage time effectively.

Required Text

- Baccalaureate Social Work Program: Field Instruction Manual. Virginia Commonwealth University, School of Social Work, Field Instruction Department.

Written Work. Students are required to develop a learning plan and working contract. A weekly process recording(s) and agenda are to be submitted to the field instructor for each field instruction meeting.

Grading. The grade is given by the field liaison in consultation with the field instructor and student. A field evaluation form is used to assess the student's performance at mid-term and at the end of each semester in the field.

SLWK 494/495 Senior Field Instruction I and II

Course Description. Continuous course: 3 - 3 credits. Prerequisite: SLWK 332, 393. Corequisite: SLWK 441, 442. Open only to majors with senior status. Fourteen (14) hours per week in a community agency under the supervision of an agency based field instructor. Intended to develop knowledge, values, and social work practice skills appropriate to entry-level generalist practice in human service agencies.

“Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 and the Americans with Disabilities act of 1990 require Virginia commonwealth university to provide academic adjustment of accommodations for students with documented disabilities. Students seeking academic adjustments or accommodations must self-identify with the Coordinator of Services for Students with Disabilities on the appropriate campus. After meeting with the Coordinator, students are encouraged to meet with their field instructors to discuss their needs.”

SLWK 494 Course Objectives – First Semester

Upon completion of this course the student will be able to:

- Understand and articulate how ones own practice is affected by agency mission, organizational context, structure, service delivery system and agency definition of practice.
- Utilize knowledge of agency purpose, policies and procedures to appropriately deliver services.
- Demonstrate knowledge of social service resources, techniques to develop and enhance resources when there are gaps in service, and skills of referral.
- Utilize professional relationships with field faculty, agency staff, clients and other community representatives to further learning and to deliver services.
- Locate, select, analyze and utilize information for multi-level assessment and problem definition with field assignments (e.g., individuals, families, groups, organizations, communities.)
- Develop and carry out appropriate plans of action to achieve mutually developed goals with clients.
- Demonstrate a beginning ability to articulate how theory and research guide practice.
- Plan for monitoring and evaluating of practice.
- Demonstrate skills of practice with diverse populations (e.g., age, gender, and sexual orientation, disabilities, racial, ethnic and cultural differences.)
- Identify personal values, attitudes and behaviors and understand how these affect professional interactions.
- Practice within the NASW Code of Ethics.
- Seek and utilize feedback through field instruction and take responsibility for continued professional development.
- Set priorities, complete tasks, organize work and manage time effectively.

SLWK 495 Course Objectives – Second Semester

Because this is a continuous course with SLWK 494, students are expected to build on the learning from the previous semester and in addition will be able to:

- Select, implement, monitor and begin to evaluate intervention strategies for generalist practice with diverse populations.
- Recognize, develop and utilize strategies of managing resistance and overcome barriers to change.
- Examine ones own values and resolve personal value conflicts in relation to the values and ethics of the social work profession and those expressed in the policies and implementation of agency programs and services.
- Utilize theory and research to guide and evaluate practice.
- Understand the tasks and apply the skills involved in the termination process.
- Demonstrate ability for self evaluation and an understanding of the importance of continued professional development.

Required Text

- Baccalaureate Social Work Program: Field Instruction Manual. Virginia Commonwealth University, School of Social Work, Field Instruction Department.

Written Work. Students are required to develop a learning plan and working contract. A weekly process recording(s) and agenda are to be submitted to the field instructor for each field instruction meeting.

Grading. The grade is given by the field liaison in consultation with the field instructor and student. A field evaluation form is used to assess the student's performance at mid-term and at the end of each semester in the field.

Mid-semester Evaluation Guidelines

The mid-semester evaluation is a formal verbal conference, to be conducted during the week specified in the field instruction calendar.

This evaluation is to be verbal unless terms outlined in the learning agreement are not being met at a satisfactory level.

To assist with your planning, the following checklist is offered as a guide.

The Student and Field Instructor:

___ discuss each of the student's significant assignments to date.

___ review the learning agreement with regard to progress.

___ summarize the most significant areas of progress as well as areas of marginal or unsatisfactory progress.

___ evaluate the student/supervisor relationship with regard to teaching and learning styles, directness of feedback and other process issues.

If in the opinion of the field instructor or the student, concerns warrant significant negative feedback, a written evaluation is necessary. The written evaluation must be discussed with and submitted to the field liaison for review as soon as possible. Both the student and field instructor are required to sign and date any written evaluation.

MASTER OF SOCIAL WORK

Purpose of Program and of Social Work Program

The purpose of the Master of Social Work program is to prepare graduate-level social workers with mastery of the knowledge, values, and skills essential for advanced social work practice in a multicultural society. The School accomplishes this purpose through its full and part-time programs of study for the M.S.W. degree in its on- and off-campus locations. The objectives of the M.S.W. program are to:

- provide a foundation curriculum of the knowledge, skills, ethics and values essential for work with individuals, couples, families, groups, communities, and organizations;
- provide a concentration curriculum preparing students for advanced practice in either clinical social work practice or social work administration, planning and policy practice in a range of settings;
- offer classroom and field instruction experiences that promote students' adherence to the profession's values and their application;
- offer learning experiences which sensitize students to the implications of diversity by helping them to identify and counteract individual and institutional prejudice, oppression and discrimination;
- enable students to analyze and critically evaluate professional practice, programs and service delivery systems;
- provide a learning environment that instills in students a commitment to continued learning and self-critical practice.

Field Instruction Courses

A. Field Instruction consists of two Foundation and two Concentration courses which are integral components of the Master of Social Work Program of the School of Social Work.

1. The purpose of field instruction is to provide opportunities for students to apply and test social work knowledge, values, and skills in relation to identified client needs, agency purpose, and social sanction. As students learn from the professional demands of agency life, the knowledge, attitudes, and skills acquired from all areas of the curriculum are translated into accountable performance and professional competence.
2. Field instruction also provides opportunities for students to gain new knowledge and understanding in all areas of the curriculum through agency based practice, e.g., to experience differences and agreements between theoretical perspectives and the realities of daily practice and to integrate theory and practice.

B. Field Instruction courses are designed to enable students to learn:

1. the full range of the practice of social work with individuals, families, groups, communities, and in organizations;
2. to evaluate relevant policies and procedures that govern service delivery in an agency and to develop proposals for appropriate policy and procedural changes;
3. to incorporate social work values, ethics, knowledge, and practice principles in all professional interventions;
4. self-awareness and the ethical integrity required for competent professional performance with clients, within the social work profession, and in society;
5. to use scientifically grounded procedures and knowledge in their practice and in the evaluation of their professional work;
6. to recognize the contributions to society of human diversity and the implications of this diversity for social work practice;
7. to identify and propose strategies to counteract institutional and personal prejudice and discrimination based on race, ethnicity, gender, sexual orientation, age, and disability;
8. to accept responsibility for continued learning and for contributing to the development of the social work profession.

Policies Governing M.S.W. Program Field Instruction

Application for Field Instruction

1. All students in the Master of Social Work Program must apply for placement in a field agency by completing the online application provided by the Field Instruction Department.
2. All placements are arranged by the School's Field Instruction Department. If a student is aware of an agency not yet used by the School as a field placement site, the student may initiate a call to that agency to inquire about the agency's interest. If the agency may be interested in a student intern, the student or agency must call the Field Department Office for further exploration. The agency site must be able to provide the appropriate type and level of experience to students to be considered. Students are not to call existing agencies asking for placements as this creates duplication and confusion for all parties involved. It is the Field Department's responsibility and prerogative to decide on the placement of students in existing agencies.
3. Full-time students admitted to the Master of Social Work curriculum (15 credits for 4 semesters) on-campus, shall complete an application for Field Instruction during the Summer preceding enrollment.
4. Faculty advisers must review and approve the application for Field Instruction for part-time students to confirm that all prerequisites have been met.

Options for Completing Field Instruction Requirements

NOTE: All options for completing Field Instruction requirements meet or exceed the minimum 900 hours of field instruction specified by the Council on Social Work Education for graduate programs.

1. The Concurrent Option
 - a. Students enrolled in the full-time Master of Social Work Curriculum (15 credits per semester for 4 semesters) must complete Field Instruction requirements (3 credits per semester) concurrently with the four required academic courses per semester (12 credits). Exceptions to this policy may be granted for extenuating circumstances, with approval from the Field Department and the student's Faculty Adviser..
 - b. Foundation and Concentration Curriculum students are in Field Instruction in both the Fall and the following Spring semesters.
 - i. The concurrent option requires placement of the student in the same placement agency for both semesters;
 - ii. A student who withdraws from Field Instruction prior to successfully completing the two semester placement must submit a new field application to the Director of Field Instruction and must repeat the entire two semester requirement. Exceptions to this policy may be made on a case by case basis.
2. The Block Field Placement Option
 - a. This option is available to part-time M.S.W. students. Under certain circumstances, curriculum exception can be made for a full time student. Students may complete only one (Foundation or Concentration) of their two required field placements in a Block.
 - b. Part-time students wishing to do a Block field placement must apply to the Field Department as noted above. The student's adviser, and the Director of Field Instruction will be involved in deciding if a block placement will provide the best learning opportunities for the student. The availability of appropriate field agencies will also be considered in the decision.

- i. Students who withdraw from a block Field Instruction placement prior to completing it must reapply to begin that Field Instruction course again.
- 3. Proposal to do Field Instruction in Student's Agency of Employment
 - a. Full and part-time M.S.W. students may submit a proposal to complete one of their field placements (Foundation or Concentration) in the social service agency where they are employed.
 - i. The outline for the Proposal can be obtained from the Field Department office. The completed Proposal must be submitted to the Director of Field Instruction;
 - ii. The Proposal will be reviewed by members of the Field Department to determine if the placement will meet the learning objectives of the Field Instruction course, is suitable for meeting the individual student's learning needs, and is designed to avoid potential conflicts of interest and dual relationships;
 - b. Students in the Advanced Standing Program complete only one field placement in the M.S.W. Program and are not eligible to submit a proposal to complete this placement in their agency of employment.

Placement Interviews

At the beginning of the placement semester, each student who has applied for field will be tentatively assigned to an agency, pending the placement interview. It is the students' responsibility to schedule this interview. No placement is considered final until after the interview when the agency indicates its acceptance or rejection of the student in writing. If two consecutive agency interviews result in the student not being accepted for placement due to performance or behavior concerns, no further placement will be attempted until the student and her/his academic adviser meets with the Director of Field Instruction to determine appropriate alternatives. A student may be terminated from the program for lack of acceptance by three or more field agencies if, in the judgment of faculty and field staff, the placements can provide appropriate field experiences without overdue inconvenience to the student.

Hours and Days of Field Instruction

1. **Two Semester** (Concurrent and Non-Concurrent) Options
 - a. **Foundation students** are placed in the field agency for 14 hours (normally 2 days/week, normally Tuesdays and Wednesdays but negotiable between the student and agency) for two consecutive semesters. We require a minimum 4 hour shift for field work.
 - i. If one of the two consecutive semesters is a summer semester, an additional half day of Field Instruction is required for each week of the summer semester, i.e., 2-1/2 days per week.
 - b. **Concentration students** are placed in the field agency for 21 hours (normally 3 days/week, normally Wednesdays – Fridays but negotiable between the student and agency) for two consecutive semesters. We require a minimum 4 hour shift for field work.
 - i. If one of the two consecutive semesters is a summer semester, an additional half day of field instruction is required for each week of the summer session, i.e., 3-1/2 days per week.
2. **Block Placement.** All **Foundation Block** field placements are five days per week, seven field instruction hours per day (or the hours which correspond to a full working day at the agency), for one full semester (Summer, Fall or Spring). See Field Calendar for starting/ending dates.

All **Concentration Block** field placements are five days per week, eight field instruction hours per day (or the hours which correspond to a full working day at the agency), for one full semester (Summer, Fall or Spring). See Field Calendar for starting/ending dates.

Student Absences from Field Instruction

1. Regular attendance in placement is expected for the entire scheduled field instruction period.
2. Students are to notify the field instructor when they must be absent because of illness or other reasons; if the absence is expected to last more than one week, they must also notify the faculty field liaison.
3. All absences, except for official University holidays and required meetings arranged for by the School, are to be made up in a manner mutually agreed to by the student, the field instructor, and the faculty field liaison.
4. Absences due to observance of religious holidays, attendance at professional meetings, or participation in professional conferences may be excused with the approval of the field instructor and the faculty field liaison.
5. Vacations: Prior to lengthy semester breaks (more than two weeks), students are expected to assess their agency assignments with their field instructor to determine if, and how frequently, during their vacation time, they will need to be at the agency to meet on-going professional responsibilities. This assessment, and the resultant schedule designed to meet these responsibilities, will become part of their individualized learning plan and is to be shared with their faculty field liaison.
6. Some overtime in field instruction is to be expected. These hours may not be accumulated for use as leave time, vacation time, or to end the field placement early. The expectation of the School is that students not be involved in excessive overtime during their field practicum. If the overtime becomes excessive, students should discuss this with their field instructor and with their faculty field liaison so that an adjustment can be made.

Required Field Assignments

1. The Field Department requires students to develop an individualized learning plan with their field instructor within the first few weeks of the semester. This plan will be modified as learning goals change during the field practicum. A copy of the Learning Plan is to be given to the faculty field liaison.
2. Students are required to complete a minimum of (1) one process recording per week. Process recording outlines are to serve as guides and may be modified by the field instructor and/or field liaison.
3. Students are to present written agendas in preparation for their weekly field instruction conference.
4. In the foundation field placement, students are to have one or more assignments which involve them in the community and in planning or organizational tasks within the agency. The purpose of these assignments and/or projects is to facilitate their understanding of the integration of micro and macro elements of social work practice and service delivery.
5. Students will be expected to share some of this written work with their faculty field liaison in preparation for each scheduled liaison visit, as determined by the liaison.
6. Other written work may be required by the field instructor and/or the field liaison.

Grading

1. The faculty field liaison, in consultation with the field instructor, is responsible for assigning the student's grade for the field instruction course.
2. Grades for field instruction are based on:

- a. an evaluation form completed by the field instructor which reflects the student's attainment of field instruction learning objectives and Individualized Learning Plan, including the student's demonstrated level of knowledge and skill in social work practice;
 - b. faculty field liaison's assessment, from process recordings and other materials submitted by the student, of the student's progress and current level of social work practice knowledge and skill;
 - c. conferences between the faculty field liaison, the field instructor, and the student, which are to evaluate the student's current level of social work practice knowledge and skill, as well as the student's ability to engage in a discussion of her/his work and her/his professional development.
3. The following grades are used for M.S.W. field instruction courses:

Progress (PR) — The grade of Progress (PR) indicates that the student has made adequate progress during the first semester of a two semester placement. Upon successful completion of the second semester, the PR grade converts to a grade of Pass (P).

Pass (P) — The grade of Pass (P) denotes satisfactory completion of the field instruction course requirements. It is given when the student has demonstrated the level of social work practice knowledge and skill appropriate for the field instruction course.

The student must receive a grade of Pass (P) to continue in the Master of Social Work Program.

Fail (F) — The grade of Fail (F) denotes unsatisfactory completion of field instruction course requirements. It is given when the student has not demonstrated the level of social work practice knowledge and skill appropriate for the field instruction course or for documented unprofessional behavior. A student may be removed from the field placement agency, at any time, by the field instructor, field agency, or field liaison for either of the reasons stated above. The student's academic adviser should have been notified and involved in the attempts at remediation leading up to the failing grade.

A grade of Fail (F) in a field instruction course results in the student being automatically and immediately dropped from the Master of Social Work Program without regard to overall grade-point average.

Incomplete (I) — The grade of Incomplete (I) presupposes that the student is doing passing work in the field instruction course, but because of illness or other emergency situation which is beyond the student's control, is unable to complete all course requirements by the end of the semester.

The grade of Incomplete (I) may not be given to allow the student to do additional work in order to meet field instruction course requirements more adequately.

The grade of Incomplete (I) requires an agreement in writing between the field instructor, the faculty field liaison, and the student about how the field instruction requirements will be met and in what time frame. An incomplete Grade Form must be completed and filed with the Associate Dean.

If all requirements necessary for removal of the grade of Incomplete (I) are not satisfactorily met by the last day of field instruction in the academic semester or summer session following the academic semester or summer session in which the Incomplete (I)

was incurred, the Incomplete (I) will be changed automatically to a grade of Fail (F).

Withdrawn (W) — The grade of Withdrawn (W) indicates that the student has officially withdrawn from the field instruction course after the first week and before the end of the eighth week of the semester. No student who has officially withdrawn from the field instruction course may continue in the field instruction placement.

NOTE: University policies (see the [Graduate and Professional Programs Bulletin](#)) regarding administrative withdrawal (W), incomplete (I), or grade appeal apply to the field instruction courses. (see I. 3 & 4) below for exception)

Withdrawal from Field Instruction

1. Students may not withdraw from a field instruction course, even before the University “withdrawal date” without prior consultation with and approval from their field liaison and their faculty adviser.
2. Consultation must include the development of an alternate plan for completion of the course which meets the requirements of the curriculum.
3. The reasons for withdrawal and the plan for completion of the course must be communicated at the time of withdrawal to the Director of Field Instruction and the, Director of the M.S.W. Program,
4. A student who has withdrawn from field (prior to the University Withdrawal date), for reasons related to documented poor performance, will be re-placed only one time. If he/she withdraws again for reasons related to documented poor performance in the second placement he/she will not be placed again until the School, through the Associate Dean's office, provides an opportunity for the student, the student's adviser, the M.S.W. Program Director, and an appropriate member of the Field Instruction Department to meet and review the student's program and performance. The purpose of this meeting is to make recommendations. These recommendations may include, but are not limited to: rearrangement of student's program to complete field instruction at a later time; having the student seek additional experiences outside of the University to address identified areas of weakness; providing one additional field placement opportunity; or, referral to the Academic Standards Committee.

Student Performance Problems

The field instruction course is quite different from other University courses. While a field placement in a community agency is organized around educational objectives determined by the M.S.W. curriculum, it also involves professional responsibilities to clients, agencies, and the community. As a result of the involvement of these many stakeholders, it is imperative that we recognize early and respond quickly to students performance problems. When problems occur, it is crucial that the field instructor, student and faculty field liaison attend to a number of issues: the rights of clients to adequate professional service; the educational needs of the student (including access to corrective and supportive services, as appropriate); and, the “gatekeeping” function of the School and the social work professional community.

Procedures for Removal of a Student from a Field Agency

1. A request for the consideration of removal may be initiated by the field instructor, the agency executive, the faculty field liaison, or the student. In all cases, a written statement, which documents the issues and/or concerns, is to be prepared by the person initiating the action.
 - a. At the request of the agency, the field instructor or the faculty liaison:

1. A student may be removed from the field placement agency for documented unprofessional conduct or for demonstrable lack of progress in attaining field instruction learning objectives.
2. The following steps are to be taken:
 - a. The student will be apprised, orally or in writing, of the specific nature of the concern(s) about her/his behavior, progress in learning, or performance.
 - b. The person initiating the request will communicate her/his concern regarding the student field instructor, and liaison The faculty liaison will alert the Director of Field Instruction.
 - c. In an effort to arrive at a resolution of the situation, a meeting will be held with, at a minimum, the student, the field instructor, and the faculty liaison. The student's adviser and the Director of Field Instruction will be informed and may be included. The purpose of this meeting would be to ascertain the facts and give all parties involved an opportunity to raise their concerns and explore possibilities for resolution of the problem. The possibilities include, but are not limited to:
 - i. continuation in the agency with a specific plan (including time limits) for correction in the areas identified as deficient;
 - ii. removal from the agency, without grade penalty, and replacement in another agency to complete the course requirements;
 - iii. removal from the agency, for documented cause, resulting in a Failing (F) grade;
 - d. In the event the situation is not resolved as a result of this meeting, the matter will be referred to the Director of Field Instruction.
 - e. Steps "b" to "d" should be completed in a period not to exceed three weeks.
- b. Serious obstacles to the student's learning in the agency may be addressed through a request for removal by the student. The following steps are to be taken:
 1. The student will discuss the situation with the field instructor;
 2. If the issue remains unresolved, the student will consult the faculty liaison to discuss the issues and the rationale for the request to be placed elsewhere. The Director of Field Instruction will be informed;
 3. If, after such a discussion, the matter is not resolved, the faculty liaison will convene a meeting of the student, the field instructor, the Director of Field Instruction and the student's adviser. The purpose of such a meeting would be to ascertain the facts, to give all parties involved an opportunity to voice their concerns, and to serve as a basis for decisions;
 4. The Director of Field Instruction, with the student and faculty liaison, will then proceed to make a decision in this matter. The possibilities include, but are not limited to:
 - a. continuation in the agency with a specific plan (including time limits) for correction in the areas identified as deficient;
 - b. removal from the agency, without grade penalty, and replacement in another agency to complete the course requirements;
 - c. removal from the agency, for documented cause, resulting in a Failing (F) grade.

5. Steps “b” to “d” should be completed in a period not to exceed three weeks.
- c. If, as a result of these procedures, a student is removed from the field agency for documented unprofessional conduct or demonstrable failure to progress in attaining field instruction objectives, a grade of Fail (F) will be assigned for the course.
- d. A student who is removed from the field placement agency under such circumstances, and for whom a grade of Fail (F) is assigned for the field instruction course, will be dropped automatically and immediately from the Master of Social Work Program without regard to grade-point average.
- e. If a student is removed from an agency and then reassigned during the same semester, that student must make up the time missed from field in order to complete successfully. The method of making up the time should be agreed to by both the field agency and faculty liaison.

Evaluation of the Student's Performance

1. Evaluation of the student's performance in the placement agency should be an on-going process. This means the student is to receive continual assessment of and feedback about her/his performance throughout the placement.
 - a. Performance expectations are detailed in the field evaluation forms for each course. The appropriate form is given to the student and the field instructor at the time of placement by the Field Department and is available on line.
 - b. These expectations are to serve as the basis for the Individualized Learning Plan which is developed by the student and the field instructor.
2. A final conference, between the field instructor and the student, is to be held prior to the end of the semester to evaluate the student's field instruction performance. The student is expected to participate actively in the evaluation conference.
3. A written evaluation (using forms provided by the School) by the field instructor is required at the end of the fourteenth week of each semester of concurrent Foundation or Concentration placement, or two weeks prior to the completion of a block Foundation or Concentration placement.
 - a. The student must read the written evaluation and must sign it, to indicate that she/he has read it, prior to giving it to the faculty field liaison.
 - b. If the student disagrees with any part of the evaluation, he or she may attach a signed addendum noting the areas of disagreement. Grade Appeal Procedures apply to Field Instruction courses (see Graduate Bulletin).
 - c. The field instructor must also sign the evaluation prior to transmitting it to the faculty field liaison.

Feedback on Placement Agencies, Field Instructors, Faculty Field Liaisons, and the Field Program

1. At the end of each placement, forms are distributed by the Field Instruction Department of the School of Social Work.
 - a. Students give feedback on the placement agency, the field instructor, the faculty field liaison and the Field Program.
 - b. Field instructors give feedback on her/his experience with the Field Program.
 - c. Faculty field liaisons give feedback on the placement agency and the field instructor.
2. All feedback forms are returned directly to the Director of Field Instruction and constitute the primary data used in subsequent planning and placement decisions.

Request for Field Placement in an Agency of Employment

A student may propose to use the agency in which they are employed for one of their two field placements in the M.S.W. program. This may be done for only one of the required field instruction placements (foundation or concentration). Advanced standing students who complete only one placement in the M.S.W. program are not eligible for this option.

Evaluation and approval of the proposal is the responsibility of the School of Social Work and is governed by accreditation standards of the Council on Social Work Education and the policies of the VCU-School of Social Work.

General Instructions

The proposed field placement must be designed in such a way that its implementation will facilitate the student's development as a professional social worker by providing opportunities to pursue and achieve the specific objectives of the field instruction course for which the proposal is submitted.

The proposal may not include or in any way duplicate the roles, tasks, or responsibilities for which the student is employed by the agency.

The student is to review the options for completing the field practicum outlined in the Student Handbook and must consult with her/his adviser prior to developing the proposal.

Specific Instructions

Review the objectives of the field instruction course you are proposing to complete in the agency where you are employed. If your proposal is for completion of Foundation Field Instruction, keep in mind the foundation curriculum is generic and your proposal must ensure you have opportunities to apply the entire curriculum in the field placement including direct work with individuals and families, group experience, and involvement in a macro project.

Type your proposal on agency stationery and title it, "Proposal to Complete Foundation (or Concentration) Field Instruction in my Agency of Employment." Under this type:

Student's Name: _____

Agency Name: _____

Agency Address: City _____ State: _____ Zip Code: _____

Responsible Administrator: Name _____ Title _____ Phone

Proposed Field Instructor: Name _____ Title _____ Phone _____

Structural Arrangements

Describe your agency's function and staff composition.

Describe how your work load will be reduced to ensure that the time required for your field practicum is available each week of the placement.

Indicate how your practicum within the agency will be different from the status and responsibilities of your employed position.

Specify the days and times set aside for the field practicum each week.

Specify the days and time set aside for conferences with the proposed field instructor each week (a minimum of 1 hour per week during a 2 semester placement or a minimum of 2 hours per week during a BLOCK placement is required per student).

Learning Opportunities

Describe in detail the learning opportunities that will be available to you in the placement, how they relate to the field curriculum objectives, and how they differ from your present roles and functions as an agency employee.

Field Instructor

Approval of the proposed field instructor (M.S.W. and two years of post-M.S.W. practice experience are the minimum requirements) rests with the School of Social Work. The student's present supervisor may not be used as the field instructor. In addition, careful thought should be given to the nature of your relationship with the person you are proposing as a Field Instructor to avoid potential conflicts of interest and/or dual relationships. For example, a relative or close personal friend would not be appropriate.

The proposed field instructor must submit a resume along with your proposal request.

Approval

- The student's adviser must sign the proposal before it is submitted to the Field Department.
- The administrator of the agency where the student is employed must sign the proposal indicating his/her approval. This includes approval of the required time for the employee to be a student in the agency and for the person providing field instruction to serve as the student's instructor.
- The field instructor must sign the proposal indicating his/her approval of the plan, including willingness to serve as the field instructor and to be available for regular field instruction conferences.
- Students the Northern Virginia program must have the Northern Virginia Coordinator of Field Instruction review, make a recommendation and sign the proposal.
- The student must sign the proposal.
- The proposal must be submitted to the Director of Field Instruction for final approval.
- This proposal becomes the formal agreement among all parties who have signed the document and part of the student's field folder.

M.S.W. Field Instruction Syllabi

Foundation Field Instruction (First-year)

SLWK 693-694 Course Description. Continuous course: 14 hours per week. 3-3 credits. Pre- or co-requisites: SLWK 601, 602, 604, 605, 606, 610. Opportunities to master essential social work knowledge, values and skills through practice under the direction of an agency based field instructor, monitored by a faculty field liaison. Emphasis is on integration of content from all areas of the foundation curriculum. Grade of PR is required for continuation from SLWK 693 to SLWK 694. Final grade of P is required for continuation in the program.

SLWK 695 Course Description. Block field instruction (option for part-time students only) five days a week for one semester: 6 credits. Pre- or co-requisites: SLWK 601, 602, 603, 604, 605, 606, 609, 610. Opportunities to master essential social work knowledge, values and skills through practice under the direction of an agency based field instructor, monitored by a faculty field liaison. Emphasis is on the integration of content from all areas of the foundation curriculum. Grade of P is required to continue in the program.

Course Objectives. Upon completion of Foundation Field Instruction students are expected to have demonstrated the ability to:

- define the purpose, functions, service program(s) and overall objectives of the agency, including its role in the community's social service network.
- identify relevant social, economic and political factors that influence the agency's purpose, structure, service program(s) and clientele.
- understand the role of organizational dynamics, including formal and informal power, organizational politics, policy development and change, institutional racism and systemic gender related phenomena, in shaping the delivery of agency services.
- understand the philosophy, values, goals and ethics of the social work profession and use them to guide their practice with clients and in their collaborative work.
- engage clients (individuals, families, groups and components of the community) in a professional relationship which facilitates their active participation in the helping/change process.
- actively identify the impact their behavior, values, and attitudes have on relationships with clients, colleagues, and community representatives and to change or modify what is necessary to improve these relationships.
- collect and analyze data relevant to the problem to be solved, including critical information provided by clients, families and/or groups involved in the situation.
- apply pertinent theoretical and empirical knowledge of the human condition, including all aspects of human diversity, to understanding the biopsychosocial factors that influence the problem, the people and social structures involved in the problem, and its resolution.
- understand assessment, intervention and evaluation as ongoing activities from initial contact through termination.
- use their knowledge of human behavior and of practice effectiveness research in working with special sensitivity to the needs of women, minorities, and other disadvantaged groups.
- apply basic social work practice skills and intervention strategies in their work with individuals, families, groups and communities.
- apply identifiable social work practice models, studied in the classroom, to their practice in the agency.
- seek and utilize feedback through field instruction using agendas and process recordings as learning tools.
- evaluate their own practice.

- commit to ongoing professional development.

Required Texts

- Master of Social Work Program: Field Instruction Manual, Virginia Commonwealth University, School of Social Work, Field Instruction Department.
- Other readings may be required by the Field Department, field instructor and/or the faculty field liaison.

Student Evaluation. Written work: students are required to submit a learning plan, process recordings once per week and agendas for each field instruction meeting.

Grading. The grade is given by the faculty field liaison in consultation with the field instructor and student. A standard Field Evaluation Form is used to assess the students' performance at mid-term and at the end of each semester in the field.

Concentration Field Instruction (Second-year M.S.W.)

SLWK 793-794 Course Description. Continuous course: 21 hours per week. 3-3 credits. Prerequisite: second year M.S.W. standing; pre-or co-requisites: SLWK 703, 704-705, 706-707, 710 or SLWK 711, 712-13, 714-15, 710. Opportunities to master advanced social work knowledge, values and skills through practice under the direction of an agency based field instructor, monitored by a faculty field liaison. Emphasis is on integration of content from all areas of the concentration curriculum. Grade of PR required for continuation in second semester of the practicum. Grade of P required for graduation.

SLWK 795 Course Description. Block field instruction (option for part-time students only) five days a week for one semester: 6 credits. Prerequisite: second year M.S.W. standing; pre- or co-requisites: SLWKK 703, 704-705, 706-707, 710 and electives, or SLWKK 711, 712-13, 714-15, 710 and electives. Opportunities to master advanced social work knowledge, values and skills through practice under the direction of an agency based field instructor, monitored by a faculty field liaison. Emphasis is on integration of content from all areas of the concentration curriculum. Grade of P required for graduation.

Course Objectives. All concentration students are expected to demonstrate orally, in writing, in their practice and in their collaborative work with other professionals the:

1. ability to identify and use the common foundation of social work knowledge, values and skills and explain how these apply in their practice in the concentration field placement agency or department;
2. ability to identify and explain how human diversity influences advanced practice in their agency or department;
3. ability to identify and suggest measures for counteracting prejudicial or discriminatory practices based on race, ethnicity, gender, sexual orientation, age, or disability encountered in their concentration field placement setting;
4. ability to identify and apply current theory and research related to the knowledge of human behavior that is pertinent to the clients served in the concentration placement agency or department, or to the organization, administration and planning of those services;
5. ability to identify, analyze and apply knowledge of social policy governing an area of social work practice, including how it influences their own practice;
6. skill in the differential selection and use of methods appropriate to their advanced concentration in the specific field setting;

7. ability to apply scientifically grounded procedures and knowledge to evaluate practice in the concentration field placement setting, including evaluation of their own advanced clinical or advanced planning and administrative practice;
8. a commitment to their own learning, responsibility for contributing to the development of the profession within their concentration practice arena, and responsibility for on-going professional knowledge and skill development.

Required Texts

- Master of Social Work Program: Field Instruction Manual, Virginia Commonwealth University, School of Social Work, Field Instruction Department.
- Sweitzer, H.F. and King, M.A. (1999). *The Successful Internship*. Pacific Grove, CA: Brooks/Cole Pubs.

Student Evaluation. Written work: students are required to submit an individualized learning plan, process recordings once per week and agendas for each field instruction meeting. See the Field Manual for further details on each of these requirements.

Grading. The grade is given by the faculty field liaison in consultation with the field instructor and the student. A standard Field Evaluation Form is used to assess the students' performance at mid-term and at the end of each semester in the field.

Mid-semester Evaluation Guidelines

The mid-semester evaluation is a formal verbal conference, to be conducted during the week specified in the field instruction calendar.

This evaluation is to be verbal unless terms outlined in the learning agreement are not being met at a satisfactory level.

To assist with your planning, the following checklist is offered as a guide.

The Student and Field Instructor:

___ discuss each of the student's significant assignments to date.

___ review the learning agreement with regard to progress.

___ summarize the most significant areas of progress as well as areas of marginal or unsatisfactory progress.

___ evaluate the student/supervisor relationship with regard to teaching and learning styles, directness of feedback and other process issues.

If in the opinion of the field instructor or the student, concerns warrant significant negative feedback, a written evaluation is necessary. The written evaluation must be discussed with and submitted to the field liaison for review as soon as possible. Both the student and field instructor are required to sign and date any written evaluation.

STANDARDS OF FIELD INSTRUCTION PROGRAM

The VCU Social Work Program implements the curriculum policy statement established by the Council on Social Work Education by setting forth the division of responsibility between field agencies and the School regarding the administration of the field practicum, the establishment of criteria for the selection of field settings, and appointment of field instructors.

Rights and Responsibilities of the School

1. Field Instruction Department:
 - a. administers the Field Instruction Program and makes all decisions affecting students' placement in and progress through all field instruction courses; e.g., agency selection, assigning students, field instruction hours, grades, etc.;
 - b. maintains an information system for the purpose of effective field education planning;
 - c. selects the students to be referred to agencies for field instruction placement;
 - d. provides pertinent information on students to the placement agency;
 - e. provides a faculty member to serve as liaison between the School and each agency;
 - f. prepares students for the field placement experience;
 - g. provides consultation to agencies (and staff) with regard to the general development of the agency's Field Instruction Program;
 - h. recruits and develops new field placement sites and appropriate field instructors within those agencies;
 - i. evaluates all components of the Field Instruction Program including field instructors, liaisons, agencies, and the Field Department itself;
 - j. is informed of and intervenes, as appropriate, in all field instruction situations which are problematic from the perspective of any of the following participants: student, field instructor, field liaison, other faculty, or agency staff;
 - k. studies issues in field education, including those problems and opportunities which emerge in our own program;
 - l. offers field instruction seminar series for new field instructors;
 - m. offers meetings and institutes for the professional development of field instructors and other agency staff;
 - n. acquaints agency directors and field instructors with the educational objectives of the total curriculum and the policies of the field department;
 - o. participates actively in curriculum work that contributes to the integration of classroom and field learning.
2. Faculty Field Liaisons:

Faculty field liaisons are full and part-time faculty of the School of Social Work who are members of the Field Instruction Department. They carry many responsibilities of the Field Department as they liaison from the School to the placement agency. Field liaisons are primarily responsible for facilitating field teaching and student learning, monitoring student progress and agency educational opportunities, fostering interchange between the School and the practice community, and evaluating student achievements and field instructor efforts. They carry out these responsibilities through the following activities:

 - a. making a minimum of three visits per concurrent placement year and a minimum of two visits per block placement to confer with the field instructor and the student;
 - b. providing students with written expectations at the beginning of placement;
 - c. reading process recording and other records or materials provided by the student to gain a firsthand impression of the student's progress in field instruction;

- d. providing feedback to students regarding their progress in field;
- e. being readily available to students during office hours or by telephone for consultation and problem solving;
- f. providing written feedback to students when there are difficulties, including a plan for remediation;
- g. assigning final grades based on the field instructor's evaluation, assessment of written materials, and information derived from liaison conferences;
- h. helping field instructors design meaningful learning experiences for student(s) placed in the agency;
- i. providing consultation to the field instructor regarding the student's progress in the field;
- j. sharing with the field instructor, and other appropriate agency staff, information about the M.S.W. and B.S.W. program;
- k. helping orient students to the field course by attending all required field orientation meetings;
- l. participation in the formal training of field instructors, as requested;
- m. informing the student's adviser if the student is experiencing difficulty in field instruction or is at risk of receiving an F;
- n. bringing current practice developments to the attention of M.S.W. and B.S.W. Program faculty to ensure that the School's curriculum is responsive to trends in professional social work practice;
- o. providing ongoing evaluation of the placement agency and field instructor's willingness and ability to provide learning opportunities and field instruction consistent with the learning objectives of the M.S.W. and B.S.W. curricula and with the curriculum standards set forth by the Council on Social Work Education.

Rights and Responsibilities of Field Placement Agency

1. The Agency has the right to:
 - a. a signed Memorandum of Agreement with the School of Social Work;
 - b. identify their setting as an approved VCU Field Practicum site;
 - c. receive a field application on each prospective student;
 - d. interview all prospective students and complete the Placement Decision Form, retaining the right to reject individual students who can not function in the agency's program;
 - e. regular contact with the Field Department through faculty field liaison visits and other consultations as requested;
 - f. send their field instructors to all Field Department educational offerings;
 - g. require students to meet health and safety standards of the agency;
 - h. ask that a student be removed from the agency for cause (see Removal from Agency Procedures).
2. The Agency accepts the following responsibilities to:
 - a. designate qualified agency personnel to serve as field instructors;
 - b. structure the workload of those field instructor(s) to make time available to provide field instruction, i.e., it takes approximately four hours per week to meet field instruction responsibilities for one student;
 - c. inform the School, using the Agency Placement Information form, about the number of students who can be interviewed for placement each year;
 - d. interview all assigned students regardless of race, ethnic origin, gender, age, religion, disability, sexual orientation, or political belief;
 - e. facilitate the development of a climate in the agency conducive to field instruction and student learning;

- f. provide appropriate work space, an accessible telephone, clerical assistance and reimbursement for expenses, if at all possible;
- g. provide student(s) with an orientation to the agency which includes policies, procedures and requirements related to health and safety and other policies relevant to the practicum;
- h. prepare students in whatever way is necessary to maximize their safety in the learning environment: in the agency, in the community and with the client population(s) served;
- i. provide students the opportunity to participate in the overall agency program, as appropriate to their educational needs, preparation and practice competency;
- j. balance service delivery needs with students' learning needs, i.e., it is important to avoid using students to fill staffing deficits.
- k. identify M.S.W. and B.S.W. students as “students” (to clients and the community) while they are engaged in a field instruction practicum at the agency.

Rights and Responsibilities of the Field Instructor

1. Field Instructors have the right to:
 - a. receive appropriate information from the Field Instruction Department on the student assigned to their agency;
 - b. participate in interviewing the prospective student;
 - c. at least three on-site conferences per concurrent placement or two on-site conferences per block placement with their assigned faculty field liaison and consultation with other Field Department staff;
 - d. participate in the educational offerings of the Field Department;
 - e. use of the VCU library and discounts at the University bookstore;
 - f. information about the M.S.W. or B.S.W. curriculum;
 - g. request removal of a student from the agency for cause, (see Removal from the Agency Procedures).
2. The Field Instructor is expected to:
 - a. attend Field Instruction Orientation, if the instructor is new to VCU;
 - b. select and assign tasks appropriate to the student's individual learning needs and competency, which are consistent with the defined objectives of field instruction;
 - c. plan appropriate orientation activities, to include: orientation to the agency, its policies and procedures related to clients and to agency professionals such as safety, risk management, sexual harassment, etc.;
 - d. hold an individual weekly conference with the student for a minimum of 1(one) hour to focus on reviewing her/his work and to provide feedback and instruction;
 - e. read and write feedback on the student's weekly process recording(s);
 - f. give on-going feedback to the students about their performance in the field instruction course and provide written documentation when the student is in difficulty and/or at risk of getting an F in the M.S.W. program or at risk of a D or F in the B.S.W. program;
 - g. complete a written evaluation of the student once a semester on a form provided by the School;
 - h. meet with the faculty liaison and attend other meetings as arranged by the school;
 - i. notify the liaison immediately if the student's performance is less than satisfactory;
 - j. complete an end of the year evaluation of her/his experience with the Field program;
 - k. adhere to the NASW Code of Ethics in her/his work with students.

Rights and Responsibilities of the Student

1. All Students are entitled to:
 - a. a general orientation to field instruction by the School and a specific orientation to the setting by the agency;
 - b. interview and be placed in an agency which will provide field instruction focused on their learning needs;
 - c. reasonable accommodations based on a documented disability under conditions of the Americans with Disabilities Act;
 - d. meet with their field instructors individually at least one hour a week during a concurrent placement or at least two hours a week during a block placement (M.S.W. only);
 - e. on-going feedback on their progress in the field placement;
 - f. written feedback on their process recording(s);
 - g. meet with their liaisons at least three times during a concurrent placement or twice during a block placement in the field agency or more frequently if needed;
 - h. access to the Director and/or Assistant Director of the Field Department for consultation at any time.
2. All Students are responsible for the following:
 - a. adherence to agency norms and standards governing professional practice, including professional presentation of self;
 - b. adherence to the NASW Code of Ethics in their practice at the placement agency;
 - c. identifying themselves as a “student” while they are engaged in a field instruction practicum at the agency;
 - d. adherence to the principles and rules of confidentiality:
 - (1) specifically, no identifying client information is to be shared with anyone except ones field instructor and other appropriate agency staff;
 - (2) when case material or agency material is used in class or in process recordings all identifying information must be disguised;
 - e. knowing about policies and procedures regarding field instruction and adhering to them;
 - f. active participation in their own learning in the field placement including identification of learning goals, turning in the required written work, e.g., Individualized Learning Plans, Agendas, weekly Process Recordings, and taking initiative in identifying and working through, with appropriate field personnel, any learning difficulties which may arise;
 - g. completing an evaluation of their field placement experience

OTHER INFORMATION REGARDING FIELD INTERNSHIPS

Liability Insurance

All students whose field placement is necessary in order to meet degree requirements are covered by liability insurance carried by the university as long as the student is performing within the course and scope of his /her responsibilities as authorized. Additional coverage is available to students through the NASW Student Professional Liability Insurance Program for a fee. Students are encouraged to purchase this coverage and may do so by contacting the NASW-Virginia Chapter office in Richmond to inquire about membership.

Safety Issues

Students need to be aware that the practice of social work involves an element of personal risk. When students are concerned for their safety or the safety of others, they should discuss this concern with their field instructor to determine the best course of action. This discussion also must be shared with their faculty field liaison. Students are not to take unnecessary risks in the course of their field work. Agencies have agreed (see Memorandum of Agreement) to prepare students in whatever way necessary to maximize their safety in the learning environment. If a student is threatened or injured while in the field practicum, or is involved in an incident when her/his safety could have been compromised, the student should report the event immediately to the following people: field instructor, and faculty field liaison or Field Department Office. At a minimum, someone from the agency and someone from the School of Social Work should know of the event.

Criminal Record Checks

Many of our field agencies now require a criminal record check prior to accepting a student for placement. As a result of this reality of current social work practice, it is imperative that students inform the director or assistant director of field instruction if there is personal background information that should be known and taken into consideration during the placement process.

Health Insurance

Health insurance is necessary for all students so they will be covered in the event of accidental injury or serious illness requiring hospitalization. The university is not responsible for accidents occurring to students in connection with class, laboratory, shop, fieldwork, athletics, student activities, travel or other activities. The University Student Health Services does not cover expenses for accidental injury or inpatient hospitalization (VCU **Resource Guide**). Students who are not covered under the health insurance policy of a parent or spouse should consider the student insurance policy sponsored by the university. The application for student insurance coverage and information concerning benefits are mailed to all students with their bills for tuition and fees. Information may also be obtained from the University Student Health Services offices on either campus.

Access to a Car

In conjunction with the movement of service delivery in health, mental health and family services toward community based models (which include outreach, home visits and community care), most placements require that students have a car to perform their field assignments. Not having a car limits field placement options.

Evening/Weekend Placements

The agencies in which students can complete placement hours only during evening and weekends are limited. Students need to be prepared to do their field instruction practicum hours in an

agency during normal business hours and during the time a field instructor is on duty and available to the student since the number of agencies providing fully staffed services on evenings and weekends is limited. These requirements make it extremely unlikely that students can do their entire field practicum during evenings or on weekends.

Nondiscrimination and Sexual Harassment

VCU does not discriminate on the basis of age, race, color, national origin, gender, religion, sexual orientation, veteran's status, political affiliation or disability. The university also has a sexual harassment policy to ensure nondiscrimination against any member of the university community because of gender (see VCU Resource Guide). Any incidents of discrimination and sexual harassment, as with all forms of abuse, should be brought promptly to the attention of the person responsible for the event during which the incident(s) occur. Those who choose not to mention the incidents to the persons having that responsibility (in the case of field placement, it would be the field instructor and/or the faculty field liaison) should discuss the incidents with the director or assistant director of field instruction, or the associate dean. The university has formal procedures to deal with problems that involve such violations of university policy.

Students with Disabilities

The university has a policy regarding students with disabilities, which can be found in the **University Bulletins**. This policy is followed in all field instruction courses. The Field Department usually contacts students who have identified a disability before field assignments are made to discuss appropriate accommodations. The Field Department works in collaboration with the Office of Student Services and the associate dean to assist students with disabilities in field related matters.