

Frequently Asked Questions

When does field placement begin and end?

Field placement begins at the start of classes and ends the last week of semester classes. Students are not permitted to end their placement early, even if they have completed their hours.

How many hours is the practicum?

Each practicum is a total of 520 hours, 260 each semester, which amounts to 16.25 hours/week. The student and agency determine the schedule (work hours).

How many practicums will I have?

Two. Each lasting an academic year. Students complete both a Foundation and a Concentration practicum. However, BSW Advanced Standing students only have a Concentration practicum.

Do I need to have two different practicum sites?

Yes

What is the difference between a Foundation & Concentration Practicum?

Foundation practicums offer opportunities for developing generalist social work practice skills.

Concentration practicums focus on the development of advanced social work skills. Both require the completion of 260 hours a semester, 520 for the academic year.

What is expected of me as a student in field?

In general, you should be open to learning and growing; willing to look at and grapple with your own biases and values; and willing to take responsibility for your own learning. In specific, you will be expected to meet the learning objectives for the practicum and demonstrate professionalism in all aspects of the practicum experience (as guided by your learning contract), including the completion and submission of all Field documents.

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What specific requirements must be completed prior to my starting the placement?

Many field placement agencies require fingerprinting, background check and TB testing. Some agencies require proof of car insurance, a good driving record, a physical and/or drug testing. You will need to enquire about these types of requirements during your initial interview.

How is my Field placement determined?

Students' preferences are strongly considered, as well as the students' interests, strengths, and educational needs. However, the final decisions on where students are placed rest with the Field Office.

Can I do my Practicum at my job?

Yes, it is a possibility. The student must complete the Work-Site Field Practicum Application *in addition to* the full Practicum Application. Students may only complete one work-site Practicum placement. The place of employment must meet the following criteria:

1. the practicum must involve work within a different population, department, role, etc. than current employment
2. the student must answer to a different supervisor than the work supervisor
3. the agency must support the student's obligations for academic coursework and assignments related to the integrative seminar and research project
4. the employment work hours and internship hours must be clearly different

I have worked in the field. Can my experience count toward the internship?

No. Our accrediting body, the Council on Social Work Education, CSWE, clearly prohibits this. Your experience will be valuable in applying new theories and practice skills.

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Can students interview at multiple sites before deciding on a field placement?

No. The individualized Field Office meeting and selection process reinforces successful interview and placement completion. Competition for sites among our students and those of other neighboring schools is high. Thus, should you decide not to accept a placement post interview, that opportunity will be forfeited.

Can I complete any of my practicum hours before classes start?

Yes. 32 hours can be completed prior to the start of each semester, if warranted by the agency.

How far will I have to travel for my field placement?

Every effort will be made to plan a reasonable commute. The commute depends on where you live and where the best placement opportunity can be found.

Can any of my class assignments/projects count towards practicum hours?

No. You are not allowed to count any hours spent in class or working on classroom assignments towards your practicum hours.

Are there any evening or weekend placements available?

Evening and/or weekend placements are limited, as many agencies are either closed or do not have available MSW supervision or suitable assignments during these hours. Typical placement days are Monday through Friday and take place during standard business hours.

Do I have to attend Field Day?

Yes. Field Day is required for all students who will be entering field placement. Field Day is an opportunity to meet your Field Instructor and get instruction on how to successfully complete field.

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**What if my agency is not what I expected?
Can I switch if the placement doesn't
work out for me?**

No. The placement is a commitment to the agency and to the learning process. Once you accept a placement, most agencies then turn down applicants that come after you. It is imperative that you discuss concerns with your Field Instructor/Preceptor, and use your Learning Contract as the guide to ensure your learning opportunities are appropriate.

**Who do I contact if I have
concerns?**

Concerns should immediately be addressed with your Field Instructor/Preceptor. We fully expect that you will work within the agency structure to resolve any conflicts. Should resolution not be achieved you should consult with your Faculty Field Liaison.

**How often am I required
to meet with my Field
Instructor?**

You must receive at least one hour of direct supervision per week.

**What if I drop the practicum after
the first semester?**

A practicum must never be dropped before discussing it with your Faculty Field Liaison, the Field Office, and your advisor. Often times solutions can be identified when situations are addressed in a timely manner.

**Do I get paid for my
Practicum?**

Most of our field placement agencies do not provide a stipend or salary for students.

**If I have circumstances that impede my
placement in certain agencies
(i.e. criminal record), will that affect my
admission status and field placement?**

Your admission will not be affected by such a situation. However, it is imperative that the Field Office be apprised of this as soon as possible to make appropriate placement assignments that will not jeopardize your confidentiality or the agency requirements. Should this information not be forthcoming, it can impede your successful progression through the program.

**Do field placement hours
count toward clinical
licensure?**

No. Hours that count toward licensure must be completed after receiving your MSW