



University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign

**SCHOOL OF SOCIAL WORK**

# ***Field Education Program***

## Field Instructor Training Module One

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## **Structure of the Placement**

The School of Social Work at the University of Illinois uses a “Modified Block Placement Model” which contains the following features:

- The School of Social Work at the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign uses a block model for the BSW program. This approach is distinguished by the fact that students are required to have most if not all of their social work program course work completed (except for seminar class) prior to entering the field.
- The internship length is for one semester.
- Students are at the internship site 4 days per week, typically Monday through Thursday.
- Students follow the agency’s hours (i.e. 8-4 or 9-5) and holiday schedule. Students are expected to work 30-32 hours a week.
- Typically students are in their internships Monday thru Thursday during the day. If your agency works outside of this time frame or students will be given the opportunity to complete some internship hours in the evening or on the weekends, this needs to be negotiated and agreed upon by both parties. If students stay late or put in extra time on the weekend, an accommodation to flex their time during the week needs to be made so that they are only serving their 32 hours. Please remember that a student cannot work extra hours with the goal of ending their internship early.
- Students reserve Fridays for a seminar class that is a hybrid of face-to-face and online interactions. The seminar class is taken concurrently with the internship.
- There is no vacation or sick time allocated in the internship hours. If a student is ill for up to 3 days, the field instructor determines how and if the time will be made up. However, if a student is ill for more than a work week, the Field Liaison needs to be notified so that arrangements can be made for how and when the internship will be completed and if the student’s graduation date will be impacted. If the time missed goes beyond a work week, there is a chance that the student will need to pull out of their internship until the next rotation of field is offered.
- The practicum is graded as “S” (satisfactory) or “U” (unsatisfactory). The field instructor suggests a grade at mid-term and the end of placement. The Field Liaison is responsible for assigning the grade to the student’s official record.

## **Student Eligibility for Field**

For students to be eligible to begin a field placement they must:

- Complete all the required social work courses except for the field seminar class.
- Have at least a “C” (2.0) or better cumulative grade point average.
- Be enrolled in the companion Field Seminar course (SOCW 471 Professional Practice Seminar II).
- Approval by the BSW Field Education Office.

## **Purpose of Field Education**

The primary focus of Field Education is to provide students with the opportunity to apply in practice the theories and concepts of generalist social work learned in the classroom. Both the University and the field agency play important roles in this integration process:

- The Field Instructor and field agency provide the activities, resources and supervision for the integration to occur.
- The School of Social Work provides an integrative seminar class which assists students in identifying the integrative process and provides a means for peer processing and support.

In addition, during the internship students:

- Develop as professionals by demonstrating the ability to:
  - Adhere to Social Work values and ethics
  - Adhere to Agency regulations and policies
  - Take responsibility for learning
  - Use supervision appropriately
  - Demonstrate self-awareness
  - Demonstrate poise and self-control
  - Take professional responsibility
  - Develop and maintain professional relationships
  - Be assertive
  - Use effective communication both verbal and written
  - Demonstrate effectiveness in providing services
- Are socialized to the profession of social work by:
  - Indoctrination into the culture, norms and values of social work.
  - Transition from passive learner to active professional

- Develop a professional self-concept consistent with social work values and ethics.
- Understand the role of generalist social work in various settings.
- Clarify career interests:
  - Provides an opportunity for students to decide if social work is the right career path.
  - Identify personal and professional strengths and limitations and where skills fit best.

### **Benefits for Field Instructor and Agency**

- Having a student intern provides stimulation for the agency and staff. Students tend to be energetic and idealistic. They bring fresh ideas which may help to relieve job fatigue. As part of the curriculum, students read current research and can share this information with staff. As more agencies focus on the use of evidenced based practice, students can share their research skills.
- Field Instructors are role models playing an important role in shaping future professionals.
- Students provide services for the agency. They are expected to “Do” practice. The internship provides a training ground for potential employees and increases the pool of social workers in the community that are familiar with the agency’s programs and services.

### **Agency Considerations**

- Having an intern is a commitment of time. The amount of time that a field instructor spends with the student is significant in the beginning of the internship. Providing an internship requires the agency to commit staff to supervision and **teaching** through the placement period.
- Agencies make a commitment to resources by providing an intern space to provide services or complete documentation. A student will need access to equipment if the agency documents on computer. Resources for the agency’s commitment can include material resources, personnel and training.
- The Agency must make a commitment to allocate staff time to provide supervision, coordinate the learning activities, complete University documents and evaluate performance.
- Interns are learners, not employees. Students **are not** expected to “know how to do”. They are not expected to carry a “full-caseload”. Caseloads should be

determined according to the student's maturity, intelligence, competency and prior work experience. As students attain confidence and independence, caseloads are generally increased.

### **Field Instructor Responsibilities**

- To the student:
  - Provide orientation to the agency and the agency's documentation
  - Assist in the development of the learning plan
  - Coordinate educational experiences
  - Provide regular supervision, at least one hour per week
  - Notify student of safety issues
  - Provide ongoing feedback
  
- To the School:
  - Participate in trainings offered on field education issues
  - Participate in the completion of performance evaluations
  - Consult Field Liaison with issues or concerns
  - Report changes that affect the placement
    - If field instructor is leaving the agency and supervisory responsibilities change
    - If the learning activities significantly change
  - Complete, sign and return all field related documents

### **Student Responsibilities**

- To the Field Instructor/Agency
  - Participate in development of the learning plan
  - Prepare for supervision and take responsibility for learning
  - Follow Rules and Policies of the setting
  - Adhere to the NASW Code of Ethics
  - Report safety issues to agency/school

### **School's Responsibilities**

- To the Field Instructor/Agency
  - Assign a Field Liaison
  - Provide consultation, mediation and problem solving when needed
  - Visit agency (at least twice)
  - Review and approve learning plans
  - Assign grade for University record—Field Instructors recommend grade

- **Benefits for Field Instructors**

- Receive a University Staff ID card which allows
  - Full use of the UIUC Library facilities (does not include online access).
  - Purchase of a membership with Campus Recreation
  - Purchase of athletic season tickets at the faculty rate (does not include individual tickets).
  
- Tuition waiver
  - For each semester you have an intern, you receive a waiver of tuition
  - The waiver must be used within one calendar year. For example, if you have a student in the Fall semester, you can use the tuition waiver for Spring, Summer Session 1 or 2, or the following Fall.
  - If the waiver is not used during that period, it is cancelled