

**UNIVERSITY OF MARYLAND, BALTIMORE COUNTY**  
**Baccalaureate Social Work Program**  
**Office of Field Education**  
**Field Instruction I & II, 480/482**

The field manual is available online at <http://socialwork.umbc.edu/field-education/field-forms/> and all field forms are located at [www.runipt.com](http://www.runipt.com). The Intern Placement Tracking (IPT) system is online field education software for field placement documentation and communication; it will also hold the data used to demonstrate students' achievement of 2015 CSWE Educational Policy and Accreditation Standards (EPAS) core competencies, related behaviors, and integrated dimensions of knowledge, values, skills, and cognitive and affective processes.

### **FIELD PROGRAM RATIONALE**

The field placement experience provides the opportunity for students to realize the goals and objectives of the Program through concrete, practical, and community-based interactions with clients and practicing professionals. It is, therefore, regarded as an integral component in the process of the student's professional development. The field placement courses are designed to provide a unique opportunity for each social work student to develop and apply the skills, knowledge, and values acquired in the classroom to practice in a local social service agency. It is through the two field placement experiences (SOWK 480 and SOWK 482) that the student begins to integrate theory and its practical applications; sharpen awareness of personal values, attitudes, strengths and limitations; and develop and enhance skills which result in successful social work practice. Another central goal of field education is to assist students in learning to understand and respect diversity. For this reason, every attempt is made to provide field students with opportunities to practice with persons from diverse backgrounds in agencies that provide culturally relevant services. Direct interaction with individuals and groups from diverse backgrounds, reflective supervision, process recordings, and regular field seminars all aid the student in developing greater cultural awareness and sensitivity.

### **COURSE RATIONALE**

Field Instruction I & II (SOWK 480/482) are designed to provide the student with broad social work experience at the generalist level in a social service agency. Grounded in a liberal arts base, the placement enables the student to begin to integrate and apply, within a particular agency, concepts from courses in human growth and development, social policy, research, and social work practice. The experiences and assignments are based on systems theory, the strengths perspective, and the problem-solving process, and enable the student to demonstrate beginning proficiency in the self-reflective and accountable use of the knowledge, values, skills, and cognitive and affective processes of the generalist practitioner.

### **COURSE DESCRIPTION**

Field Instruction I & II (SOWK 480/482) consists of 16 hours per week of experience in a social service agency for a total of 240 hours for the entire academic year. Attendance in monthly field seminars is also required. Students are expected to engage in a wide range of social work experiences, including a comprehensive orientation to the basic structure and operation of the agency system, the community served by the agency, and the resource systems available to clients. In addition, experiences should include opportunities to observe and participate in the delivery of client services, become familiar with social policies which impact the agency and its client systems, attend staff development and other agency meetings, and participate in a variety of experiences designed to familiarize the student with the broad range of roles and responsibilities of the agency and social worker.

Students are expected to function in accordance with personnel policies and practices of their assigned agency, and to be present at the agency 16 hours each week. In some instances, students may be asked to be available for evening or weekend assignments.

Students will perform their placement activities under the instruction and supervision of their assigned field instructor. In addition to regular contact as needed throughout the week, students and field instructors are expected to meet formally for at least one hour per week for direct supervision.

### **COURSE PREREQUISITES**

Students will have completed the following social work courses prior to acceptance for field placement with a grade of a 'C' or better: Introduction to Social Work (SOWK 250), Social Welfare, Social Policy and Social Work (SOWK 260), Human Behavior in the Social Environment 1 (SOWK 388), and Social Work Methods I (SOWK 397).

In addition to the social work prerequisites, students will have completed liberal arts courses in related disciplines including: English Composition, Human Biology, an Economics or Political Science course, Introduction to Sociology, and Introduction to Psychology as well as Arts and Humanities, Language courses, and other Social Science courses. These courses are essential in providing students with a liberal arts perspective and the orienting theories on which to build and apply social work knowledge, values, and skills in the field placement.

Other prerequisites for registering for SOWK 480 include: an overall GPA of 2.5 or better; a GPA of 2.5 in all social work courses; and having been referred to and accepted by a placement site that has been approved by the Office of Field Education.

Students registered for Field Instruction I & II (SOWK 480/482) must be concurrently enrolled in the respective companion practice methods courses, Social Work Methods I & II (SOWK 481/483). In addition, students must pass Field Instruction I and earn a 'C' or better in Social Work Methods I in order to register for SOWK 482 and SOWK 483.

### **COURSE COMPETENCIES & IDENTIFIED BEHAVIORS**

The objectives of the undergraduate field placement flow from the mission, goals, and objectives of the program and reflect the standards of the 2015 Council on Social Work Education (CSWE) - Educational Policy and Accreditation Standards (EPAS). In field, the course competencies place an emphasis on critical thinking, professional and ethical behavior, client interactions, and respect for human diversity. The placement activities, seminar, and field assignments will allow students the opportunity to achieve competence in the following core competencies, related behaviors, and integrated dimensions. Social work students:

#### **Competency 1 – Demonstrate Ethical and Professional Behavior**

- 1.1 make ethical decisions by applying the standards of the NASW Code of Ethics, relevant laws and regulations, models for ethical decision-making, ethical conduct of research, and additional codes of ethics as appropriate to context;
- 1.2 use reflection and self-regulation to manage personal values and maintain professionalism in practice situations;
- 1.3 demonstrate professional demeanor in behavior; appearance; and oral, written, and electronic communication;
- 1.4 use technology ethically and appropriately to facilitate practice outcomes; and

1.5 use supervision and consultation to guide professional judgment and behavior.

### **Competency 2 – Engage Diversity and Difference in Practice**

- 2.1 apply and communicate understanding of the importance of diversity and difference in shaping life experiences in practice at the micro, mezzo, and macro levels;
- 2.2 present themselves as learners and engage clients and constituencies as experts of their own experiences; and
- 2.3 apply self-awareness and self-regulation to manage the influence of personal biases and values in working with diverse clients and constituencies.

### **Competency 3 – Advance Human Rights and Social, Economic, and Environmental Justice**

- 3.1 apply their understanding of social, economic, and environmental justice to advocate for human rights at the individual and system levels; and
- 3.2 engage in practices that advance social, economic, and environmental justice.

### **Competency 4 – Engage in Practice-informed Research and Research-informed Practice**

- 4.1 use practice experience and theory to inform scientific inquiry and research;
- 4.2 apply critical thinking to engage in analysis of quantitative and qualitative research methods and research findings; and
- 4.3 use and translate research evidence to inform and improve practice, policy, and service delivery.

### **Competency 5 – Engage in Policy Practice**

- 5.1 identify social policy at the local, state, and federal level that impacts well-being, service delivery, and access to social services;
- 5.2 assess how social welfare and economic policies impact the delivery of and access to social services; and
- 5.3 apply critical thinking to analyze, formulate, and advocate for policies that advance human rights and social, economic, and environmental justice.

### **Competency 6 – Engage with Individuals, Families, Groups, Organizations, and Communities**

- 6.1 apply knowledge of human behavior and the social environment, person-in-environment, and other multidisciplinary theoretical frameworks to engage with clients and constituencies; and
- 6.2 use empathy, reflection, and interpersonal skills to effectively engage diverse clients and constituencies.

### **Competency 7 – Assess Individuals, Families, Groups, Organizations, and Communities**

- 7.1 collect and organize data, and apply critical thinking to interpret information from clients and constituencies;
- 7.2 apply knowledge of human behavior and the social environment, person-in-environment, and other multidisciplinary theoretical frameworks in the analysis of assessment data from clients and constituencies;

- 7.3 develop mutually agreed-on intervention goals and objectives based on the critical assessment of strengths, needs, and challenges within clients and constituencies; and
- 7.4 select appropriate intervention strategies based on the assessment, research knowledge, and values and preferences of clients and constituencies.

### **Competency 8 – Intervene with Individuals, Families, Groups, Organizations, and Communities**

- 8.1 critically choose and implement interventions to achieve practice goals and enhance capacities of clients and constituencies;
- 8.2 apply knowledge of human behavior and the social environment, person-in-environment, and other multidisciplinary theoretical frameworks in interventions with clients and constituencies;
- 8.3 use inter-professional collaboration as appropriate to achieve beneficial practice outcomes;
- 8.4 negotiate, mediate, and advocate with and on behalf of diverse clients and constituencies; and
- 8.5 facilitate effective transitions and endings that advance mutually agreed-on goals.

### **Competency 9 – Evaluate Practice with Individuals, Families, Groups, Organizations, and Communities**

- 9.1 select and use appropriate methods for evaluation of outcomes;
- 9.2 apply knowledge of human behavior and the social environment, person-in-environment, and other multidisciplinary theoretical frameworks in the evaluation of outcomes;
- 9.3 critically analyze, monitor, and evaluate intervention and program processes and outcomes; and
- 9.4 apply evaluation findings to improve practice effectiveness at the micro, mezzo, and macro levels.

### **COURSE REQUIREMENTS AND ASSIGNMENTS**

Students must actively participate in 16 hours per week for a total of 240 hours per semester of field placement experience at a social service agency as a requirement for the course. Additional requirements for successful completion of the course include the following:

#### **1. Field Seminar**

An important component of field education is the field seminar, which is conducted monthly by the faculty field liaison. A faculty field liaison is assigned to each student, furnishing a link between the program, student, field instructor, and the agency. Faculty field liaisons are charged with supporting the placements that they oversee. As part of that support, faculty field liaisons meet with their students for a two hour seminar once every month, for a total of six seminars each academic year. Students will attend the seminars on one of their regularly scheduled field placement days. Attendance at and active participation in these seminars are mandatory and failure to attend and participate fully could result in a failing grade for the field placement.

The field seminars are small (6-12 students) and are designed to support student learning and problem-solving in the field by addressing topics common to all students (i.e., building relationships with clients, using supervision effectively) and by fostering mutual aid between students. In addition, faculty field liaisons have experience in the field and, as a result, can assist students in developing realistic expectations for the field placement. Other topics

introduced throughout the year may include: the NASW Code of Ethics, agency documentation, field-related paperwork (learning agreements and process recordings), professional behavior, supervision, field instructor and agency expectations, challenging or interesting client issues, diversity and cultural competence, evidenced-based interventions, group work, self-care, and termination with clients.

The concurrent methods courses (SOWK 481 & SOWK 483) differ from the field seminar in that the courses operate with a syllabus and a class agenda based on theories and content from the text book. Student cases and questions from field placements are only discussed if they are linked to the material being presented in class. Methods instructors will refer students to their faculty field liaison should specific questions arise about a field placement.

## **2. Learning Agreement and Evaluation**

The Learning Agreement is a formal document prepared early in the placement, identifying the specific learning activities that will be accomplished throughout the field placement experience. In developing the Learning Agreement, students and field instructors should include tasks specific to the agency and their needs. These tasks should be developed by the student and field instructor and should integrate the identified behaviors with agency activities and goals. The contract must be signed by the student and field instructor in IPT. The Learning Agreement can be accessed online at [www.runipt.com](http://www.runipt.com).

A student, field instructor, or faculty field liaison may initiate an **Addendum** to the original Learning Agreement. Addendums may be submitted at any time during the semester and can include changes or additions to the original Learning Agreement made after the due date. Addendums must also be signed by the student, field instructor, and faculty field liaison.

The Council on Social Work Education (CSWE) mandates specific educational competencies for all baccalaureate social work programs. These expected educational outcomes have been incorporated into the Social Work Program's field education Learning Agreement and Evaluation form (see Appendix B). Regardless of the field placement setting, it will reflect the kinds of generalist learning experiences the student will have in the agency in relationship to the core competencies, related behaviors, and integrated dimensions while working with individuals, families, groups, organizations, and communities. The learning goals, objectives, tasks, and/or assignments should be specific, measurable, and should be individualized to the specific student and agency.

The Learning Agreement and Evaluation are combined into one document so that measuring the students' progress will be more efficient. Student progress and performance in the field placement experience will be evaluated at mid-term and semester end by the student and the field instructor, utilizing the Learning Agreement and Evaluation form. The student and field instructor are expected to review the evaluation jointly during a weekly supervision meeting, using this opportunity to identify goals for strengthening skills. Mid-term and final evaluations are to be submitted to the faculty field liaison by the specified due dates.

The mid-term evaluation provides an opportunity for the student and field instructor to assess the student's progress towards goals and objectives of the field placement as specified in the Learning Agreement. The results of the mid-term evaluation may also be used to determine if placement modifications need to be explored. The final evaluation

should reflect the student's progress toward achieving expertise of social work competencies at the level of a BSW student.

### **Types of Agency Assignments:**

The following is a guide for developing specific student assignments that are related to the CSWE EPAS and should serve as a guide in developing the Learning Agreement. It would be ideal if students could have all of the following experiences during the course of their two semesters:

1. Four to six cases that involve direct work with individuals and/or families. The exact number should be related to the complexity and duration of the assignments and may vary based on other agency requirements. (Competencies 1, 2, 6, 7, and 8)
2. One or more group assignments in which the student has some direct leadership responsibility. These groups must include mutual support but may also include an educational component. Please see Appendix P for more information related to group experience expectations. (Competencies 6, 7, 8, and 9)
3. An opportunity to participate in a macro social work experience within the agency or community. (Competencies 6, 7, 8, and 9)
4. Participation in staff meetings and case conferences, including appropriate presentations by the student. (Competency 1)
5. If approved by field instructor, student can attend agency-sponsored or community-based trainings, continuing education events, or in-services. (Competency 3)
6. Opportunities to participate in research as part of the practice experience. This might include: information gathering and presentation, case studies, literature reviews and/or needs assessments. (Competency 4)
7. Participation in activities related to the formulation and evaluation of agency policies, such as board meetings or staff committees. (Competency 5)
8. Resource mobilization using the community as well as the agency in serving the client. (Competencies 6 and 8)
9. Involvement in the network of social agencies serving the clientele of the field placement agency. (Competencies 6 and 8)
10. Collaboration and consultation with other staff. (Competency 1)
11. Documentation to meet agency and academic requirements. (Competency 1)

### **3. Timesheets & Monthly Reports**

Students are required to maintain an accurate daily record of field placement hours and Learning Agreement activities. Time sheets are to be submitted via IPT for review and signature from the field instructor each week during weekly supervision. Time sheets will be submitted via IPT for faculty field liaison review each month along with the monthly report forms/narrative (see Appendices K & I). Forms are available online at [www.runipt.com](http://www.runipt.com).

### **4. Process Recordings**

The use of process recordings is particularly emphasized and encouraged by the program

as a learning experience for students (see Appendix E). For this reason, students are required to complete at least 2 process recordings per semester. Process recordings are expected to be submitted via IPT to the faculty field liaison after they have been reviewed by the field instructor. Students may also be asked to prepare written material and/or audio- or videotapes to be used for instruction. The exact form of this material is to be determined with the Field instructor and may be a combination of process recording, tapes, progress reports, assessments, summary recordings, etc.

### **EVALUATION AND GRADING OF STUDENT PERFORMANCE**

Ongoing evaluation is a key element of the field instruction process. The Learning Agreement and Evaluation form provides the specified competencies, corresponding behaviors, and integrated dimensions (from CSWE 2015 standards) against which the student is evaluated. Weekly supervision allows for ongoing evaluation of the student's performance, progress, and learning needs.

The program stipulates formal reviews of the student's performance and identification of further learning needs and objectives. It is important that the evaluation be based on the student's actual performance in field work rather than on his or her potential for future practice. The field instructor should complete the mid-term assessment and final assessments of each semester on the same evaluation form so that the program will have a clear indication of the student's growth. The Baccalaureate Social Work Program uses a pass-fail grading system for field education in the belief that students will be freer, without the pressure of letter grades, to risk and test their interactions with both the client system and their field instructors. The field instructor is asked to evaluate the student's performance and to recommend a grade. The faculty field liaison, in consultation with the field instructor, will assign the grade as pass or fail. However, the Office of Field Education retains responsibility for assignment of the field education grades into the UMBC grading system. A passing grade is earned by completion of required hours, completion of assigned learning activities, attendance in all field seminars, and positive evaluations from field instructors. A failure to complete or submit any of the placement assignments or documentation will prevent the student's successful completion of the course.

Students must pass both Field Instruction I (SOWK 480) and Social Work Methods II (SOWK 481) in the fall semester in order to be eligible to continue in both Field Instruction II (SOWK 482) and Social Work Methods III (SOWK 483) in the spring semester.

A successful academic education, a successful field education, and successful attainment of the CSWE core competencies are critical indicators of the student's readiness to assume professional responsibilities.

### **FIELD POLICIES AND PROCEDURES**

#### ***Absences - Scheduled and Unscheduled***

Students are expected to be in the field on a regular schedule. At the same time, students are asked to be flexible in the schedule of their hours when the demands of client service require it. In the case of unexpected absence or lateness, students must notify the field instructor within 20 minutes of the time the agency opens. It is requested that students call their field instructor personally and make a concerted attempt to speak directly with the field instructor. Students must make up any time they miss from field education within the same semester. In the role of social worker, students are important to their clients and the agency's dependable delivery of service. Unscheduled absences can be disruptive to clients, field instructors, and the operation of the agency. A pattern of missed time can seriously devalue the student's overall performance

no matter how effective he or she may be when present and could be grounds for dismissal from the field placement agency.

### ***Field Placement Expenses***

Students pay their own transportation costs to and from the agency. Agencies are asked to pay transportation costs required by field assignments and other petty cash expenses which students may incur in the course of carrying out field assignments. Students must follow agency procedures regarding reimbursement.

### ***Hours***

Students are placed with the expectation that they will remain in the same agency for the entire academic year. Field education starts in the fall and continues through the spring semester. There are no fees or registration required for the Winter Session, but students must continue their work with clients and their field placement assignments during January.

Students must complete 16 hours per week at their agency, for a total of 240 hours each semester, beginning the first day of field placement each semester. Students must be able to attend field 2 days per week, or at a minimum 4-6 hours per day, requiring an additional 1-2 days per week. Field days are dictated by agency needs. The specific hours of field instruction are also set by the field placement agency according to the hours that the agency's social work program is open for business. Students may choose to complete additional hours during the semester. However, additional hours may not be banked in order to end the field placement early. All students are required to stay at the agency until the last scheduled day of field each semester.

Students are expected to complete time sheets (see Field Manual Appendix K) and review them weekly with their field instructors during supervision.

### ***Policies Regarding the Granting of Incomplete Grades in Field Education***

A grade of "Incomplete" in Field Education may be given only in unusual circumstances and the majority of the hours need to have been completed prior to obtaining an "Incomplete" grade. The student must obtain permission for an "Incomplete" in Field Education from the field instructor, faculty field liaison, and either the Field Coordinator or the Assistant Dean of Field Education. The student, field instructor, and faculty field liaison must have a written contract, as well as a specific deadline for when all work must be completed. Under normal circumstances, the deadline is expected to be within two weeks of the end of the semester. If all work is not completed by the deadline, the student will receive a failing grade in the course.

### ***Resolution of Field Related Problems***

If difficulties arise in the placement, the student and field instructor should discuss directly. If the situation is not resolved, the student or field instructor should inform the faculty field liaison. If the problem persists, the faculty field liaison will contact the Field Coordinator or Assistant Dean for Field Education for follow up and problem resolution protocol. See page 30 of the Field Manual for further information.

### ***Safety Guidelines***

a) The UMBC Social Work Baccalaureate Program is responsible for providing all students and faculty field liaisons with general written information about safety in field placement (see Appendix G).



b) The Office of Field Education expects each agency to be responsible for orienting field placement students to the safety policies and procedures of that agency and setting. Such orientation should include, but not be limited to, discussion of safety issues in the community, within the agency building(s), with particular clients prone to violent behavior, and about clients who may be sharing living quarters with persons prone to violent behavior, to the extent that such information is known. Security of personal belongings of the field placement student while at the agency should be also covered. Procedures for the student(s) to follow in the event of a safety or security problem should be reviewed at the beginning of the placement with ample opportunity for questions and discussion as needed.

c) UMBC urges all agencies to make the same accommodations to ensure students' safety as they make for their own agency staff and in some situations the agency may need to make even greater accommodation for a student. If a student's concerns about safety interfere in whole or in part with the learning process, the faculty field liaison should be contacted by the field instructor to facilitate prompt exploration of the concerns.

### ***Student Conduct***

Students accepting a field placement must take seriously their commitment to their clients, their field instructor, the agency, and the program. It is expected that students will conduct themselves in a professional manner in their interactions with staff and clients. Students should refer to the NASW Code of Ethics for clarification and guidance (Appendix A) and the Academic Standards in Field Education (see below).

## **ACADEMIC STANDARDS IN FIELD EDUCATION**

### ***Professional Competence***

In the field, students must demonstrate professional conduct, relationship skills, and behavior consistent with the values and ethics of the profession as stated in the NASW Code of Ethics as well as EPAS Competency 1. Issues related to conduct, relationship skills, and behavior may or may not be included in the student's learning agreement, but will be considered in field grading and continuation.

A student's inability to meet specified professional and ethical standards signifies that a student is not adequately or appropriately performing at the level expected of an undergraduate social work student. The following presents examples, but not a complete list, of behaviors that may constitute professional incompetence:

1. The inability to establish and maintain constructive and appropriate interpersonal relationships with clients and agency personnel.
2. The inability or failure to engage in tasks associated with field education, such as making referrals, engaging in phone calls, making home visits, etc.
3. The inability to accept constructive feedback from field instructors, faculty field liaisons and other faculty, and/or an inability to make changes recommended by this feedback.
4. Failing to adhere to the time schedule for the placement hours.
5. Persistent lateness in meeting deadlines to complete work.

6. Rejection by three agencies during the field placement process for reasons related to appropriateness or readiness for placement.

### ***Ethical Competence***

The NASW Code of Ethics is the cornerstone of determining and guiding ethical behavior for social workers and students. Adherence to these ethical standards is a requirement and standard for the program. At the mandatory student field orientation in late August, all students are provided with a copy of NASW Code of Ethics Overview (see Appendix A) as well as the web site for NASW ([www.naswdc.org](http://www.naswdc.org)) where the complete text may be found. Violation of the NASW Code of Ethics could result in dismissal from the field.

Ethical concerns in the field placement will be brought to the student's attention by the field instructor, faculty, or faculty field liaison as soon as it has been observed. In this situation, the student, with the assistance of the field instructor and other faculty, may have an opportunity to initiate timely corrective steps when appropriate.

### **DISCONTINUATION FROM FIELD EDUCATION**

If discontinuation in the field placement is the outcome of the meeting with the faculty field liaison, field instructor, and the student, the Assistant Dean of Field Education and other parties as appropriate (i.e., Field Coordinator, Shady Grove Program Director, and/or Associate Dean), will meet with the student to discuss the situation and create a plan toward graduation. The student may be offered an opportunity to repeat his/her field experience after demonstrating that he/she has addressed the concerns leading to the original field termination or failure. Under no circumstances is an undergraduate student allowed to retake any portion of the field sequence more than once.

If the conclusion is reached that the student is unable to meet academic and/or professional and ethical standards in the field, or is otherwise unsuited to the profession, the appropriate faculty member/s will advise the student that they need to withdraw from the methods and field courses, as well as the Social Work major. Other options may include: 1) selecting another major or 2) withdrawing from the university.

### **PROCEDURES FOR REVIEWING AND APPEALING GRADES**

The University of Maryland, Baltimore County has established procedures for reviewing and appealing grades. The grade appeal policy applies to field education grades as well as to classroom grades. Students should first attempt to resolve such grievances informally, normally by consulting first with the faculty field liaison who assigned the grade, then with the Assistant Dean of Field Education, the Associate Dean, and finally with the Provost's Office. See the Student Guide Appendix G for a complete description of the grade appeal procedures and time lines.

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