

BOSTON UNIVERSITY SCHOOL OF SOCIAL WORK

GUIDE TO FIELD EDUCATION

2021–2022



Boston University School of Social Work

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BOSTON UNIVERSITY SCHOOL OF SOCIAL WORK

VISION, MISSION & VALUES

Our vision is to advance a just and compassionate society that promotes health and well-being and the empowerment of all oppressed groups, especially those affected by racial, social, and economic inequities.

Our mission is to develop dynamic and diverse social work practitioners, leaders, and scholars through rigorous teaching, innovative research, and transformative community engagement.

Our values are to:

- Develop visionary social work practitioners who use effective clinical, community, and policy methods to enhance strengths in urban and other contexts.
- Promote equity, especially in the area of health, through high-impact prevention and intervention research and scholarship, characterized by trans-disciplinary and inter-professional collaborations.
- Advance graduate social work education through innovative instructional methods and promotion of life-long learning.
- Further social justice through local, national, and global partnerships and service that value community capacities and expertise.

Bending the arc toward social justice.*

**Adapted from Martin Luther King, Jr., PhD, BU alumnus, 1955*

EQUAL OPPORTUNITY/ANTI-DISCRIMINATION POLICY

Boston University prohibits discrimination against any individual on the basis of race, color, religion, sex, age, national origin, physical or mental disability, sexual orientation, gender identity, genetic information, military service, or because of marital, parental, or veteran status. This policy extends to all rights, privileges, programs, and activities, including admissions,



financial assistance, educational and athletic programs, housing, employment, compensation, employee benefits, and the providing of, or access to, University services or facilities.

THE MSW PROGRAM

The School is committed to graduating social workers who have successfully developed the nine CSWE competencies and who practice within an ecological framework and social change context. Boston University School of Social Work alumni are professionals who are open to and ready for innovation and change, and who possess the knowledge and skills required to meet the needs of individuals, groups, families, communities, and organizations.

A GUIDE TO “THE GUIDE”

The ***Guide to Field Education*** is designed to:

1. Articulate the Vision, Mission and Values of the School of Social Work
2. Present an overview of field education
3. Identify the roles and responsibilities of the School, the agency, the field instructor, and the student in the field education experience
4. Define the educational components of the field experience(s), including foundation and advanced social work competencies students are expected to demonstrate
5. Define Field Education policies and procedures.

AN OVERVIEW OF FIELD EDUCATION

Through Field Education, students have the opportunity to apply knowledge, skills, values and cognitive and affective processes to work with individuals, groups, families, communities and organizations. Field Education enables students to develop a professional social work identity in the context of providing services and receiving intensive individualized field instruction from MSW supervisors. Student assignments are developed to build on and complement students' goals, interests and previous internship and work experiences. The nine competencies developed by the Council on Social Work Education form the curriculum and assessment framework for student learning in both their classroom courses and their field internship(s).

Students entering the foundation placement are assigned to settings that enable them to acquire a broad understanding of the field of social work, to recognize and use generalist principles and concepts, and to select intervention methods to meet individual, group, family, and community needs based on a careful and comprehensive assessment. While students in



foundation placements will focus primarily in either clinical or macro practice, they should have exposure to all methods of practice within the parameters of the agency's services. Advanced Year, Advanced Standing and Human Service Experience students are assigned to field agencies that foster development of advanced competence in the student's social work method concentration (clinical or macro practice).

THE SCHOOL ROLE IN FIELD EDUCATION

The following sections describe the role of the School of Social Work, through its Field Education Department, in creating and implementing the Field Education Program.

Field Education Team and Roles

[Denita Johnson](#) – Assistant Dean for Field Education

[Terese Romano](#) – Assistant Director of Field Education for Charles River Campus (CRC) & Off-Campus Program (OCP)

[Kristina Whiton-O'Brien](#) – Assistant Director for Online Program

[Thahisha Delma](#) – Field Education Senior Program Coordinator for CRC & OCP

[Eva Asllani](#) – Field Education Senior Program Coordinator for OLP & Worcester Hybrid

CRC Field Education Coordinators:

- [Sheila Gomes](#)
- [Kerlyne Pacombe](#)
- [Andrew Spooner](#)

OLP Field Education Coordinators:

- [Meredith Block](#)
- [Robbie Sanders](#)

OCP Program Directors:

- [Bedford Campus – Susan Brostrup-Jensen](#)
- [Cape Cod Blended Program – Debra Berglin](#)



- [Fall River Campus – Diane Crowley](#)
- [Worcester Hybrid Program – Susan Brostrup-Jensen](#)

AGENCY SELECTION

The Field Education Department is affiliated with many nonprofit and public agencies in Massachusetts, New England, and throughout the country. In keeping with the School's historical commitment to urban issues and to the range of communities where our students live and work, agencies are located in cities, suburban towns and rural communities. Agency availability for student internships is constantly changing in response to a number of factors, including funding, community needs and priorities, and staffing. As a result, some placements may not be available for internships in a given semester.

- The Field Education Department develops new placements to match student interest and need, new curriculum priorities and new areas of practice in the field. Agencies are approved for placements by the Field Education Department based on the agency's ability to meet the School's requirements and other considerations.
- Recommendations from students for new field placement sites are always welcome. Students who are interested in field placements in agencies with which the School is not currently affiliated should discuss their interest with the Field Education staff member with whom they have been working before contacting the agency.

THE PLACEMENT PROCESS

The Field Education Department is responsible for arranging and approving the field placements of all students. Students should not contact an agency directly without approval from the Field Education Department. Similarly, agencies interested in requesting the placement of a particular student should contact the Field Education Department. Such requests from agencies are given careful consideration and are met whenever feasible.

Placement Process for Charles River Campus Students

Incoming Full-Time Foundation and Advanced Standing Students:



The placement process for incoming full-time Foundation and Advanced Standing students occurs during the spring and summer months prior to enrollment in the program. Placement assignments are made based on a review of the following information by the Field Education staff:

1. Student Placement Form — A form completed by the student indicating field interests and career goals.
2. Student Résumé and Bio Statement
3. Agency Profiles in Field Education Database — Information from each agency indicating the number and year of students the agency can accommodate, specific characteristics of students who would benefit most within that setting, programs and clients/consumers served, required previous student experience or skills, and potential student assignments, location, and transportation accessibility.

Each student has an in-person small group or individual, telephone or virtual interview with a member of the Field Education staff before an assignment to a specific agency is made.

Students are encouraged to share with the Field Education Department any information which might be important in making a field placement assignment. The Field Education Department assumes that this information may be shared with prospective agencies unless the student indicates otherwise. Routinely, the Field Education Department sends a copy of the student's resume to prospective field placements.

Placement assignment is confirmed only after the student has interviewed with the prospective agency. In most cases, this occurs during the spring and summer before school begins in September. Having access to a car increases the placement opportunities for all students. Some types of agencies including hospitals, college counseling centers and some outpatient mental health centers may not be available for Advanced Standing students if those agencies have already taken their quota of interns.

Charles River (Boston) Campus Continuing Students:

Continuing part-time students entering the foundation placement complete a placement form and submit a resume in late winter prior to beginning the placement in September. This typically happens at a Placement Process orientation meeting with the Field Education Department staff. They then meet individually with a field education staff member to identify a specific placement.



For continuing students entering the advanced (second) placement, the process begins in the late October or early November session of the Integrative Field Seminar with a description of the placement process and discussion of professional goals and agency settings.

Simultaneously, students consult with their advisors to complete a placement form which includes an educational assessment, agency profile, and other preferences. Students also submit an updated resume and bio statement. They then meet individually with a member of the Field Education Department staff to identify possible agency options.

Continuing students will interview for an advanced internship with agency personnel after the Field Education Department has referred them to an agency. The assignment will be confirmed after the student receives and accepts an offer from the agency.

Some advanced placement agencies conduct their own placement process through which students are invited to submit applications directly to the agency. Since these agencies tend to be quite competitive, students are asked to inform the Field Education Department about the agencies to which they have applied. Additionally, students also work with the Field Education staff to identify a back-up placement option in the event that they are not selected by any of the agencies to which they have applied on their own. If a student rejects or is not offered a placement at three or more agencies, the student will be required to meet with the field education team.

Placement Process for Students in the Off-Campus and Worcester Hybrid Program:

Traditional Track students in at the off-campus sites begin their foundation (first) placement in September of their second year in the program and their advanced (second) placement in either May or September of the following year. Similarly, Human Service Experience Track students begin their single field placement in September of their second year in the program. Advanced Standing students (this option is not offered through the Worcester Hybrid program) begin their single field placement in January or May of their first year in the program.

The placement process for students is similar across all program tracks and begins in the Professional Development Seminar.

- During the second half of the first fall semester in the program, students in all tracks attend a seminar session which provides an overview of the placement process and discusses professional goals and agency settings.
- Traditional Track students entering their foundation placement attend a seminar in the fall of their first year, in which the placement process is described.



- Traditional Track Advanced and HSE placement students attend a seminar session in the Fall semester of their second year which prepares them for the increased responsibilities and expectations of an advanced placement.
- Advanced standing students attend a seminar session in the fall of their first semester.

After attending the respective seminars:

1. Students complete the Foundation Placement Form (Foundation Traditional Track students) or Advanced Placement Form (Advanced Standing, HSE, Advanced Traditional Track students) and submit their resume, then meet individually with their advisor to review the materials which includes an educational assessment and identifying a list of possible field placement options..
2. The Program Director reviews the forms and resumes and meets with the students' advisors to formulate suggestions for placement options.
3. The Program Director then meets with the students individually to discuss interests and suggested placements. Potential placements are identified and ranked through this process. Student's prior experience, interests and learning goals, and agency requirements and preferences are taken into account when determining potential placement sites.
4. The Program Director sends each student's résumé to their first-choice agency for review. If the agency is interested and has a slot available, an interview is set up. If the student is offered the placement and accepts it, the Program Director confirms the placement.
5. If either the agency or the student do not think the placement is a good fit, the student's résumé is sent to the second placement choice. The expectation is that students will accept an offer from an agency unless there is a sound reason to decline.

In situations where students are applying to placements that interview multiple students in a competitive process, students are offered an opportunity to interview at an additional placement to ensure that they will have a placement option.

Some agencies have developed an on-line application process for potential interns. When this is the case, the student is advised to follow the agency's preferred process. The Program Director follows up, as needed, with the student and agency internship coordinator.

Placement Process for Students in the Online Program:

The process for both the foundation and the advanced year placement begins in the Professional Development seminar where students are given an overview of the placement process. This occurs approximately 3-9 months prior to the anticipated placement start date.



1. All students (foundation and advanced traditional track, advanced standing and Human Service Experience track) are required to complete the placement form detailing their learning goals, areas of interest and logistical needs, and submit a résumé.
2. Once the required forms are completed, OLP students review the information with their Regional Advisor and/or BUSSW Field Education Coordinator to determine next steps. These steps involve the student identifying specific placement agencies (with which they are familiar), discussion of student and advisor knowledge of the community, past agency experiences, and outreach to specific agencies by the Regional Advisor and/or BUSSW Field Education Coordinator.
3. As appropriate, the student, Regional Advisor or Field Education Coordinator will make an initial contact with the agency to determine if there is opportunity for placement.
4. Once an opportunity is identified, the Regional Advisor and/or BUSSW Field Education Coordinator will contact the agency to share information about the BUSSW program, discuss criteria for field placement and review the School's affiliation agreement.
5. The student then schedules an interview with the agency to determine if the assignments and learning opportunities meet their interest and goals. Similarly, the agency has an opportunity to assess the student's fit for the placement.
6. If both the agency and student agree to the match, the Field Education Coordinator is notified to review the placement for approval prior to final confirmation.

Online, Off-Campus and Worcester Hybrid Students Wishing to be Placed in Greater Boston or Other Areas of New England:

Since a number of online program students live in the Greater Boston area or other parts of New England, those students are placed by the Boston Field Education team or OCP program directors who cover those geographic areas. Similarly, off-campus students who want a placement in Boston are placed by the Boston Field Ed team and Charles River Campus students who live in the geographic areas covered by off-campus sites are placed by OCP directors. This system of placing by geography, rather than by program, ensures that students have equal access to agencies in their desired area and that the Field Education Department is not assigning more students to an agency than it has the capacity to accept. These students will follow the placement protocol that has been established for the particular campus.

Identifying Competencies

The School has the primary responsibility of identifying the nine competencies students are expected to demonstrate by the end of their MSW program. This is in keeping with educational standards set by the Council on Social Work Education, the accrediting body for schools of social work in the United States. These competencies are included in the Appendix to this guide, as well as, on the School of Social Work [website](#), the SSW learning contract form, and the SSW evaluation forms used to document students' progress in their field learning.



Advising

Advisors at the Boston University School of Social Work are either members of the full- or half-time faculty and administration, or, are hired to serve as adjunct advisors on a part-time basis. While all advisors have similar responsibilities regardless of the program (CRC, OCP, Hybrid, or OLP) in which they advise, there are some differences among the programs. The following section describes the common responsibilities and subsequent sections describe the additional responsibilities of advisors depending on their campus affiliation.

Common Advisor Responsibilities

1. Academic Advising

- Provides advice about course selection and sequencing, primary method choice, specializations and dual degree programs (classes offered at CRC campus only), and career options;
- Serves as a resource when a learning problem develops or is identified; schedules Strength-Based Resolution Process meetings when necessary, and gathers information on the student's performance in classes and field as part of that process; writes Strength-Based Resolution Process statement and meeting summary;
- Serves as a reference for students applying to dual degree programs (CRC only), other graduate programs, jobs, etc.

2. Field Liaison (for students in field placements)

- Serves as a liaison between the School and the agency; reaches out to field instructor within first month of the placement;
- Consults with the student and field instructor about assignments, learning contract, supervision, assignments, evaluation, etc.;
- Serves as the advocate for the student's education by ensuring that the School's expectations of the agency are being met and that the student is meeting the agency's requirements;
- Serves as a problem-solver and mediator in the event that a problem in the field placement is identified;



- Visits the agency at least once, each semester, to meet with the student and field instructor(s), to assess progress toward goals and developing competencies;
- Works with the student in planning for foundation placement (OCP, Hybrid and OLP) and advanced placement (all campuses);
- Recommends grade for Field Education course.

3. General Resource

- Can serve as sounding board, referral source, and general support regarding personal problems or life issues that arise while the student is in school, e.g. health, mental health, family, financial, housing, workload, etc.

OFF-CAMPUS, ONLINE AND HYBRID PROGRAM ADVISING

The Off-Campus, Online and Hybrid programs were designed to provide advisement to students in a way that is differential, equitable and responsive to their unique needs as remote students. The advising model for the Off-Campus, Online and Hybrid students is built on a three-pronged approach, which includes the following:

- Group and Individual Advising
- Academic Support and Program Planning
- The Professional Development Seminar

GROUP AND INDIVIDUAL ADVISING

ONLINE PROGRAM ADVISOR ROLE AND STRUCTURE:

- ***The First Semester Advisor:***
 - When students enter the program, they are assigned a **First Semester Advisor who is a member of the BUSSW Online Program Team**. The advisor meets with a group of students monthly to provide the opportunity for socialization with student colleagues while managing the transition to graduate social work education and learning about the social work profession. Advisors are available to meet with students individually, as needed.



- **The Regional Advisor:**
 - Students are transferred to a **Regional Advisor** when they begin the second semester of the program. Regional Advisors are located near the student's geographic area, if available, and students keep this advisor throughout the remainder of the program. Regional Advisors are hired to serve as adjunct advisors on a part-time basis.
 - Students meet with their Regional Advisor in their second semester of the program to assess how their program is progressing and to address questions or concerns. They continue to have regular contact, as scheduled and/or as needed either in person (if geographically accessible) or virtually.
 - In the second, or third semester, the student's advisor is an active partner in identifying field placement possibilities for the student, in some cases contacting the agency to determine opportunities, and helping the student prepare for agency interviews and the selection process.
- The exception to this role is advisors of OLP students in the New England area. These students work collaboratively with the Field Education or OCP staff responsible for the geographic area in which the student will be placed.

OFF-CAMPUS AND HYBRID PROGRAM ADVISOR ROLE AND STRUCTURE:

- The Off-Campus and Hybrid Program students are assigned an advisor when they enter the program, and students work with the same advisor throughout their enrollment in the program. Off-Campus and Hybrid Program advisors are hired as adjunct advisors on a part-time basis.
- In the first year of the program, OCP and Hybrid Advisors work with their advisees in a group through the Professional Development Seminar (described further below). This process offers the opportunity for socialization with student colleagues, while managing the transition to graduate social work education and learning about the social work profession.
- Advisors also meet individually with their advisees when they first enter the program and develop an advising plan that is appropriate for the student's needs. They continue to have regular, individual contact, throughout the program, as scheduled and/or as needed.
- OCP and Hybrid Advisors actively assist with the field placement process for all students:
 - Meeting individually with students to discuss interests and learning goals prior to placement searches
 - Assisting students with completing the placement forms and updating their résumés
 - Reviewing student needs, strengths, and interests with the Program Director and making recommendations for possible placements.



ACADEMIC ADVISING AND PROGRAM PLANNING

- In addition to the supports offered by the student's Advisor, the program administrators provide academic advising and program planning to students beginning with the initial orientation to the program and continuing throughout the student's enrollment in the program.
- Through the academic advising process students explore their academic interests and develop an educational program plan to meet their goals.
- This administrative team also assists with identifying additional resources for assistance with academic, personal, financial aid, and career planning needs, making referrals as appropriate.

THE PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT SEMINAR (IS 100) FOR OFF-CAMPUS, ONLINE AND HYBRID PROGRAM STUDENTS

- The Professional Development Seminar (IS 100) spans the three years that students are enrolled in the program. The seminar, which is offered each semester, serves as both an advising tool and an opportunity for professional development. The Seminar is offered through Blackboard and is taught by advisors, and the administrative teams.
- The Seminar content follows the professional development phases and learning tasks students encounter at different stages in the program.

CHARLES RIVER PROGRAM ADVISING

- Full-time incoming students and continuing part-time students are assigned to an advisor who is also the instructor of the Integrative Field Seminar section in which students enroll concurrent with their foundation placement. The advisor carries out all the above noted responsibilities and teaches the seminar which meets 11 times over the course of the academic year. These advisors are either members of the Field Education staff or adjunct advisors.
- Full-time advanced and advanced standing students are assigned to full- and half-time non-tenure track faculty or adjunct advisors who serve in the advising role while they are in their advanced placements.
- Advanced Standing Macro Students are required to enroll in MP 794, which is an additional seminar to support their field education and provides an enhanced and licensed MSW perspective. This seminar is facilitated by a licensed macro advisor.



- Advanced macro students are required to attend a monthly seminar that provides support to students in field placements with or without-MSW-supervision. This seminar is facilitated by a macro advisor.
- Part-time incoming students (not-in-field) are advised by staff from the Office of Student Services and Academic Planning.

THE FIELD INSTRUCTOR AND AGENCY ROLES IN FIELD EDUCATION

Both the field instructor(s) and agency play critical roles in the professional education of the student. The School chooses field placement agencies that support the mission of the social work profession and the Boston University School of Social Work through the work they do and the communities they serve. Similarly, field instructors demonstrate their commitment to the profession's knowledge, values and skills in their supervision and support of students and in their own competent and ethical practice.

Field Instructors

The field instructor plays a primary role in the professional education of the social work student. The field instructor has the closest and most continuous relationship with the student, serving as both a role model and a teacher.

Field instructors are qualified staff members selected by agency administrators and approved by the School. Students in two semester placements are required to have a minimum of two hours each week of supervision. One hour each week must be individual supervision provided by the primary MSW field instructor. The second hour may be provided by a secondary supervisor approved by the Field Education Department and/or may be provided in a group supervision format. Students in extended (3-4 semester) placements are required to have a minimum of 1.5 hours of supervision per week. At least one hour must be individual supervision provided by the primary MSW field instructor.

In addition to time spent with the students, field instructors are expected to complete the Learning Contract in collaboration with the student, read students' process recordings/analyses, complete the placement evaluations at the end of the first and final semesters, consult with the student's advisor and other school representatives, and approve student timesheets. Field instructors of students in three or four semester placements may be asked to complete interim progress reports. All field instructors are invited to participate in seminars and workshops offered by the School. See more about field instructor benefits below.



Many agencies assign a contact person who is responsible for coordinating student placements with the School and for transmitting information between the School and the agency. The contact person may also be a field instructor, although this is not always the case.

The following are criteria for the selection of field instructors:

1. Master's degree from a CSWE accredited school of social work (not required for field instructors of advanced macro students). Field instructors for Traditional Track advanced macro students are expected to have an advanced degree in a relevant field (e.g. Public Policy, Public Health, Management). Field instructors of advanced standing and HSE macro students are required to have an MSW, minimum of two years, relevant full-time, supervised post-MSW experience.
2. Minimum of two years, relevant full-time, supervised post-MSW experience. Field instructors for Traditional Track advanced macro students who do not have an MSW should have two years of post-master's experience
3. Licensure at the LICSW or state equivalent is required for field instructors in advanced clinical placements (Traditional Track, HSE and Advanced Standing). Field instructors who supervise clinical students in foundation placements should have an LCSW or equivalent state license. Exceptions may apply in some agencies.
4. Sufficient term of employment at or affiliation with the agency to ensure familiarity with agency policies and procedures and availability to plan the student's internship and provide the required supervision.
5. Commitment to act as a field instructor on a continuing basis during the full placement period.
6. Commitment to:
 - Provide appropriate assignments for the student at the start of placement.
 - Ensure that the required hours of weekly supervision are provided (see above). **It is the responsibility of the primary field instructor to ensure both the quality and quantity of supervision.**
 - Develop a written learning contract with the student.



- Read student process recordings/analyses and other documentation, meet with the student's advisor during site visits, and consult with the advisor as necessary.
 - Use recordings/analyses as a teaching tool in supervisory conferences. See Process Recording/Analysis Handbook.
 - Review and sign off on students Timesheet. (It is the responsibility of the field instructor to monitor the students required placement hours and to report any concerns to the students' advisor or BUSSW Field Education Department)
7. Field instructors who are acting as primary supervisors to MSW students for the first time are required to participate in the Seminar for new field instructors which examines the content and process of field instruction. Prospective primary field instructors who are unable to participate in the seminar may not be considered even though they may meet all other criteria listed above. Social workers who have served as a primary field instructor for MSW students from another school are not required to take the seminar but may do so if they wish.
 8. If the field instructor and the student have had a pre-existing professional or social relationship, this information should be shared with the Field Education Department in order to determine appropriateness of the placement.
 9. The field instructor is expected to evaluate the student's practice on a continuing basis and provide written evaluations consistent with the School's calendar and deadlines.

Field Instructor Benefits:

- Field instructors are eligible for one free day-long workshop per academic year in which they supervise a student. Workshops are available on a first-come, first-served basis, can be taken in-person or online, provided there is space. Please email the BUSSW Professional Education Program (PEP) office at pepssw@bu.edu or call (617-353-3756) for availability. This discount does not apply to certificate programs.
- Participation in free continuing education seminars and workshops offered by the Field Education Department and the New England Consortium of Field Education Directors (NECON).



Expectations of Agencies

Agencies are expected to support the mission, goals, and values of the social work profession and the educational objectives of Boston University School of Social Work. To ensure the student's learning in the field, the agency is expected to provide the student with the following:

1. A sufficient number and variety of assignments to support the progression of learning. Students are expected to become involved in practice activities within two to three weeks of the start of the placement, in keeping with agency needs and student readiness.
2. An orientation to the agency's missions, programs, and communities served.
3. An orientation to the **agency's safety policies and procedures** and ongoing support to maximize safety in the field.
4. An orientation to legal and ethical issues and documentation requirements specific to the agency's mission and programs.
5. Adequate workspace and access to telephone, computer, agency email, databases, telehealth platforms, records, etc., to fulfill the requirements of the agency and School.
6. Reimbursement for expenses involved in rendering agency services, e.g., home visit travel costs.
7. Adequate insurance coverage for students who are expected to use agency vehicles for agency purposes.
8. Access to staff, committee, and seminar meetings when appropriate.
9. Use of selected agency records (appropriately disguised to ensure client and agency confidentiality) for class assignments.
10. Access to agency consultation resources when appropriate, including access to legal counsel, when needed.
11. Adequate time for the field instructor to meet the School's criteria for supervising a student.



THE STUDENT IN THE AGENCY

Hours and Sick Leave

The School recognizes that policies and procedures vary from agency to agency. Students are expected to adhere to their assigned agency's personnel practices, policies, and procedures. They are expected to adhere to the same workday hours as the professional social work staff in their assigned agency. Students are expected to make up time missed for illness, lateness, or other personal reasons. Protracted absences of more than two consecutive weeks will be reviewed on an individual basis by the field instructor and the advisor. If student learning and/or services to clients are disrupted due to repeated or protracted absences, a decision regarding the student's continuation in the field placement will be made in accordance with the Strength-Based Resolution and/or Status Review process.

Requests for time off for religious observance and professional conferences should be assessed on an individual basis with the field instructor. Arrangements to make up such time should be made in accordance with clients' service needs and the student's learning needs.

In all cases, students should ensure that they meet the required number of hours for the field placement (480 for foundation placement; 720 for advanced placement; 1000 for Advanced Standing and Human Service Experience placements).

Vacations

Student vacations should be taken according to the **School of Social Work calendar** unless otherwise negotiated with the field instructor and documented in the student's learning contract. In some cases, an agency may be closed for religious and local holidays, and in those settings, students may take those days off. In some school placements, students will be required to adapt their vacations to the placement school's calendar. **In all cases, students should arrange their schedules to ensure that they meet the required number of hours for the field placement (480 for foundation placement; 720 for advanced placement; 1000 for Advanced Standing and Human Service Experience placements).**

Disclosure of Student or Trainee Status

The School of Social Work requires social work interns to disclose to clients and consumers their status as trainees in accordance with state regulations and, in keeping with the professional responsibility to ensure informed consent. Students should check their state Patients' Bill of



Rights and/or the state's social work licensing law. In some instances, in which disclosure is not indicated based on client/constituent need or capacity, the student and field instructor can make this determination.

Background Check Policy

Most agencies require a **criminal background check** of social work interns prior to the start of the placement. Some agencies conduct the background check through their Human Resources Department and will discuss the process and results with the social work student. In some cases, agencies require the School of Social Work to conduct the background check. Boston University contracts with an outside vendor to conduct these and will provide students with the necessary information.

If a background check reveals a felony history, the agency will make the final decision about whether the student will be offered an internship. Students who have a record of a felony conviction may have difficulty being accepted for any internship. In that case, the student will not be able to complete the requirements for the MSW program and will not be eligible for a refund of tuition and other fees paid to the University. In addition, agencies may require that students undergo drug screening or fingerprinting, and any costs related to these requirements will be the responsibility of the student.

Students who have any concerns about undergoing a background check should discuss their concerns with their advisor or a member of the Field Education Department. Many employers and state licensing boards also have policies regarding criminal histories, which may limit employment and licensure options. We recommend that students check their state licensing regulations with regard to this issue. Additional information is available on the BU [Master of Social Work Licensing Disclosure](#) site.

Health Information

In some settings (e.g., hospitals, clinics, schools) interns may be required to show evidence of immunizations or other health records. Students will be responsible for obtaining these records and for any costs associated with meeting this requirement. Students may also be required to undergo health (e.g. COVID-19) or substance use screening during the internship based on the policies of the agency.



EDUCATIONAL ELEMENTS OF THE FIELD PLACEMENT

An early focus of field instruction with the student is the educational assessment, which incorporates the student's knowledge, skills, strengths, and areas for growth into a formulation of learning goals and a learning plan. The educational assessment is based on: a review of previous education and work history; an evaluation of learning style and developmental stages of learning; an understanding of the student's professional goals; an understanding of cultural factors which influence both the student's approach to learning and the agency context; and identification of the strengths and challenges with which the student approaches the identified learning tasks.

The overarching framework of the nine CSWE social work competencies supports the content and focus of each student's assignments. Competencies for foundation, advanced clinical (including HSE and advanced standing) and advanced macro (including HSE and advanced standing) placements are included in the Appendix to this Guide. They are also included in the Learning Contract form and the student evaluation forms.

It is important for field instructors to be aware of their personal teaching style, knowledge, skills, strengths and limitations, and cultural perspective, as these will influence their relationship and interactions with the student. Field instructors may be called upon to develop new approaches to the teaching tasks to meet the learning needs of individual students.

Supervision

Field instruction is an essential part of a student's experience at the internship and development of knowledge, skills, values and affective and cognitive processes. While administrative issues are a component of supervision, the educational and supportive aspects of supervision should be the primary focus of the individual supervision hour. The student is practicing under the auspices of the agency and the field instructor's license, so it is important that there be enough time to discuss the student's work. This individual hour of supervision can include:

- role plays
- discussion of process recordings/analyses
- attention to ethical dilemmas and agency related policies and practices
- application of relevant theories and research that are raised through the work that the student is doing
- other activities that help the student develop and achieve competence.



Observation of the student's professional activities and immediate **feedback** from the field instructor should also be incorporated into supervision.

The additional required weekly supervision can be provided more flexibly in the context of the agency culture and an assessment of the student's learning needs. The second hour can be provided by someone with an MSW, another related master's degree, a PhD., or by another staff person with significant expertise and program responsibility. All secondary supervisors must be approved by the BUSSW Field Education Department. Possible formats include:

- Individual supervision provided by the primary MSW field instructor
- Several shorter interactions with the primary field instructor (e.g., after client contacts, on the way to home or other site visits)
- Individual supervision provided by the secondary supervisor
- Group or dyad supervision
- internship training program, a weekly clinical case conference, or other team meeting which focuses on the student's practice and learning rather than on administrative issues.

Supervision should be described in the student's learning contract and should include the format, who will provide the supervision, responsibilities of both the student and field instructor/secondary supervisor (if relevant), and days and times that supervision will take place.

The Learning Contract between Field Instructor and Student

The School expects each field instructor and student to develop a written learning contract that outlines the student's educational and professional goals and the role of the field placement in helping the student achieve required social work competencies. The School uses a standard Learning Contract, which is available on the School's SONIA database site. The form should be completed collaboratively, by the field instructor and the student, within the first four weeks of the placement. When complete, it is reviewed by the student's advisor. The Learning Contract should be reviewed regularly by the student and field instructor and revised to accommodate changes in learning goals, circumstances in the agency, or logistical considerations, such as schedule changes.

Process Recordings and Analyses as Learning/Teaching Tools

The Field Education Department has developed a **Process Recording/Analysis Handbook** [Process Recording/Analysis Handbook](#) that can serve as an important resource for students, field instructors and advisors.



1. Recording Policies

- The School requires that students in two semester placements write at least **12 process recordings (for clinical students) or process analyses (for macro students) per semester**, with the intent that these will be written over the course of the semester, approximately one per week. Students in extended (more than two semester) field placements are required to write **at least twenty-four (24)** process recordings (for clinical students) or process analyses (for macro students) over the course of the placement. Process recordings/analyses should be used flexibly to support the student's learning goals and level of knowledge and skill. **Field instructors may require more than these minimum numbers of recordings/analyses, and this expectation should be clarified in the interview process and documented in the student's Learning Contract.**
- Field instructors should provide timely written feedback on all process recordings/analyses, and they should be discussed during supervision as well.
- Recordings/analyses are in addition to the documentation required by the agency for its own records or files.
- Time may be allotted in the student's schedule at the agency to work on recordings/analyses, although students may need outside time to complete them.
- **Students should be informed of and adhere to the agency's policies regarding removal of case records and recordings/analyses from the agency premises.**
- **Recordings/analyses should be sufficiently disguised to protect the confidentiality of clients or consumers** in accordance with HIPAA requirements (see below Section 2).
- Recordings/analyses should be destroyed at a point in the student's internship when they no longer serve their educational or service usefulness (end of contact, end of semester, end of placement). This should be done in compliance with state law and agency policy.
- Other forms of recording—e.g., audiotape, videotape, log—can be very useful learning tools, but do not serve the same educational or supervisory



functions as written recordings/analyses. At the discretion of the field instructor, these forms of recordings may be used in limited numbers in place of written ones.

- Direct observation of the student's work by the field instructor is also recommended when feasible as this provides an opportunity for immediate feedback on what the field instructor observes. Again, this does not take the place of written recordings.
 - **A student's failure to adhere to the policies and procedures regarding recordings/analyses may lead to the convening of a Strength-Based Resolution Process meeting and/or may be reflected in the student's grade in Field Education**
 - In addition, please note that teaching recording skills is primarily the responsibility of the field instructor, although this learning is supported and reinforced in field and professional development seminars at the School.
2. **Guide for Disguise of Confidential Practice Material** (e.g., Process Recordings, Case Records, Meeting Minutes, Group Recordings).

Students and field instructors should ensure that agency documents and recordings are de-identified in accordance with HIPAA regulations. Agencies are expected to provide students with the same training provided to employees regarding HIPAA regulations related to the specific setting. In settings which are not covered by HIPAA, students are expected to protect client, constituent and agency confidentiality in accordance with professional practice standards, including but not necessarily limited to the following:

- Delete any reference to the agency name and/or staff names.
- Change client/community member names (first and last) and initials.
- Delete any reference to address or any information specifying geographical area, such as street names, businesses, or hospitals.
- Delete any information that would enable identification of clients, community members, agencies, or agency personnel.



Field Placement Assignments

The Field Education Department expects students to become involved in supervised independent practice activities within the first few weeks of field placement. Early work with clients, groups, committees, or projects allows students to begin integrating learning from class and field, and it enables field instructors to begin the educational assessment of the student.

Foundation placement students are expected to spend **half** of their placement time in independent practice activities—e.g., face-to-face contacts with clients, preparation for practice activities, family meetings, team meetings and case conferences about their clients, participation in committee or community group meetings, resource development, policy analysis, event organizing, telephone contacts, and recruitment for groups. Advanced placement (advanced, advanced standing and Human Service Experience) students should spend **two-thirds** of their time in these activities. The remaining hours for all students include time for supervision, in-service trainings, administrative meetings, team meetings, documentation, and recordings/analyses. Any questions regarding sufficiency of assignment load should be addressed with the advisor.

Assignments are based on consideration of service needs, the student's skill development and learning goals, and, in some cases, recognition of the student's personal and professional experiences that may influence the learning process.

Additional Field Education Assignments:

- Students are required to attend the Integrative Field Seminar (CRC) or the Professional Development Seminar (OCP, Hybrid and OLP).
- Reflection Assignments: At the end of each placement, students will write a 2-3 page reflection on the development of their knowledge, skills, values, critical thinking and self-awareness related to specific competencies. Detailed guidelines for these reflections are on Blackboard. Reflection assignments are submitted to the student's advisor for comments.
- Policy Activity: Advanced placement students (including HSE and Advanced Standing) are required to complete a policy practice activity related to federal, state or local social welfare policy that impacts the agency's clients, services, funding, access, etc. Detailed guidelines for this assignment are on Blackboard and students are required to submit the report of their activity to their advisor.
- Students whose placement is disrupted or delayed for any reason may be required to complete assignments in the BUSSW Field Readiness Training Program. The training is



designed to enable students whose placement has been disrupted in some fashion to accrue knowledge and field hours while they are waiting to resume their placement. Although the readiness program does not replace individual field placements, it will help students achieve competencies and gain knowledge related to specific practice arenas and issues.

- Completion of timesheets.

Field Education Portfolio

All students are encouraged to create a Professional Portfolio, either digital or hard copy, in which they keep material related to their learning in the field and courses.

1. The purposes of the portfolio are:

- To provide organized evidence of social work learning
- To document progress of learning
- To ensure that the student has copies of the learning contract and evaluations from their field placements
- To ensure that the student is meeting process recording or process analysis requirements.

2. The portfolio includes:

- Syllabus for the Seminar - Integrative Field Seminar (for CRC foundation students) and the Professional Development Seminar (for OCP, OLP and Hybrid students).
- A copy of the learning contract for each of the student's placement.
- Agency material (e.g., orientation, workshop, or seminar outlines) that describes learning experiences in the setting
- Process recordings or process analyses, appropriately disguised
- Field instructor evaluations
- Any other evidence of projects or activities in which the student played a role and which demonstrates their learning. Examples include group curriculum



used by student in leading a group, outline and handouts from a workshop designed and run by student, material developed for a community education project, grant proposal, press release, etc.

- Assignments from classroom courses that demonstrate the development of students' knowledge and skills.

The Portfolio may be reviewed during the placement process by advisors or members of the Field Education team. Students may also bring their portfolio to interviews for advanced placements and post-graduate social work jobs.

Note: OCP, Hybrid and OLP students are expected to add additional items to their portfolio as described in the Professional Development Seminar.

Evaluation and Feedback

Field instructors are responsible for evaluating the student's performance at the end of the first and final semesters of the placement using the School's assessment/evaluation tool which is located in the SONIA field education database. Students are expected to achieve a rating of "competence" in each of the 9 competency areas of social work practice at the end of the foundation and advanced placement. If a student does not receive a rating of competence in a particular competency area, an explanation should be included.

Assessment of the student's learning should be an ongoing process, and the student and field instructor should regularly give feedback to each other regarding the field education experience. Feedback in the written evaluation should **not** be new to the student or the field instructor. Students and field instructors should discuss any concerns as they emerge, and not just at the formal evaluation time. Student participation in the evaluation process is required and should be discussed early in the placement. If a student believes they have been evaluated unfairly or incorrectly, even after discussing this with the field instructor, the advisor should be contacted for help in resolving the differences. If the student continues to believe that the evaluation is not accurate, the student is encouraged to write an addendum to the evaluation describing the differences in assessment and including any other relevant information. If these differences are representative of significant problems in the supervisory relationship or the field placement experience, a Strength-Based Resolution meeting will be convened.

Field evaluation results are also used by the school's program assessment committee for the purposes of determining how the school is meeting its education goals.



At the end of the placement, students have the opportunity to complete an assessment of their internship experience. This information is reviewed by the Field Education Department and is one tool used to monitor the field experience. In addition, students and field instructors have the opportunity to provide feedback to the Field Education Department about their experience working with their advisors, field instructors and placement agencies.

Grade for Field Education

Field Education is a credit-bearing course which spans 2, 3 or 4 semesters. Students need to complete the entire field placement and Integrative Field Seminar (for CRC students) or the Professional Development Seminar (for OCP, OLP and Hybrid students) in order to earn the number of credits for the particular Field Education course in which they are enrolled. The final Field Education grade of Pass or Fail is given upon successful completion of the field education requirements (placement time at the agency, completion of agency/ placement assignments, process recordings/ analyses, attending supervision, attending seminars, completion of required field readiness trainings, policy and reflection assignments, attending the Integrative or Professional Development Seminar, and submission of timesheets). For each semester prior to the end of the placement, students who have met the requirements for the placement are given a “J” grade. The “J” grade signifies that the student is progressing satisfactorily. In addition, students who receive a “J” grade are covered by the University’s liability insurance for any time they are at their internships during the semester breaks.

In situations in which there has been a delayed start to a placement, unanticipated absences, or unsatisfactory progress in achieving the nine competencies, a student would be given an “Incomplete (I)” grade until the missed time is made up and/or satisfactory progress has been made in competency development. Students who receive an incomplete for Field Education will continue to be covered by the University’s liability insurance while completing their internships.

If a student receives a failing grade for field education (e.g. for unethical practice, inability to demonstrate development of competence, inappropriate behavior at the agency, and/or failure to attend placement) the student will be referred to the Status Review Committee.

Values and Ethics

Professional social work practice is guided by social work values and ethics. Students are expected to understand their personal values as well as those of the profession and to examine the application of these values in their work with clients, consumers, agencies, and colleagues. In addition, students should be helped to identify and sort out, in an open atmosphere, value and ethical dilemmas that emerge in their work and in the larger agency context, and to make thoughtful decisions with appropriate supervision regarding their practice in these situations. The advisor is also available to consult with the field instructor about ethical and value issues



that emerge in the student's experience at the agency. Field instructors should refer to the NASW and other relevant codes of ethics and to state licensing laws in their discussions with students about ethical behavior.

Legal Issues

Students should be informed of the relevant legal aspects of practice within the particular agency setting. Examples include, but are not limited to, confidentiality and its exceptions, duty to warn, mandated reporting, informed consent, definitions of malpractice, and record-keeping. In situations where legal issues are involved, students should be given appropriate supervision, administrative sanction, and access to and support from legal expertise.

PLACEMENT HOURS, SCHEDULE AND OPTIONS

Required Hours

For students in the Traditional Track MSW program, the foundation placement is 480 hours (over two semesters) and the advanced placement is 720 hours (over two or three semesters). The placements for Advanced Standing and Human Service Experience (HSE) are 1,000 hours (over three or four semesters). Occasionally, students are able to do a block placement of 30-36 hours a week, depending on their individual circumstances, the appropriateness of the placement and concurrency of practice courses. Field Education is done concurrently with practice courses, so that the field experience can be integrated with classroom learning.

Charles River Program: Timetable for entering field education

- Traditional Track Full-Time Foundation placement - 1st semester and Advanced placement 3rd] semester
- Traditional Track Part-time Foundation placement - 3rd semester and Advanced placement 5th or 6th semester
- Advanced Standing Full-time placement - 1st semester
- Advanced Standing Part-time placement - 3rd or 4th semester

Off-Campus, Hybrid and Online students enter field education according to their track, campus, and program plan. Students who require a revised program plan may begin one or both of their placements at different times.



Off-Campus Program and Online Program

- Traditional Track Foundation placement – 4th semester
- Traditional Track Advanced placement – 6th or 7th semester
- Human Service Experience - 4th or 5th semester
- Advanced Standing – 2nd or 3rd semester

Worcester Hybrid Program

- Traditional Track Foundation placement – 4th semester
- Traditional Track Advanced placement – 6th or 7th semester
- Human Service Experience – 4th semester

Schedule

Charles River campus students can arrange their field placement schedule according to their availability and the field agency's requirements. Online, Off-Campus and Hybrid Program students arrange their field schedules according to mutually agreed upon days/times with the field instructor. While some agencies can accommodate evenings or shorter blocks of time spread out over the week, students should plan to be at the placement during regular agency hours to provide services and be able to participate in the "life of the agency." The agreed upon schedule should be included in the Learning Contract. Regardless of the student's schedule, an agency staff person in a position of authority should always be on site when the student is at the placement. Some agencies may require student attendance on specific days to accommodate agency needs, meetings, supervision, and so on. These should be specified in the student's learning contract as requirements. There is limited availability of placements with non-traditional hours, and students should expect to have at least 1 full business day available for field placement.

Placement Reassignment

If at any time after the student has started the placement, the agency or student raises questions about the viability of the placement, the situation is reviewed by the advisor in consultation with the Field Education staff and the parties involved. In some situations, a Strength-Based Resolution Process meeting may be convened to facilitate the decision-making process. A plan to resolve the issue may be developed or a decision may be made to replace the student in a different setting. **When a field placement is changed, the student may**



need to extend the placement beyond the normal ending date to accommodate the agency's need and/or to develop required field education competencies.

Employer Agency Placements

The Field Education Department recognizes that some students are employed in agencies which can provide them with excellent learning experiences while they continue their employment at the agency. The employer agency option enables students to do **one, and in some cases both, of their placements** at their place of employment as long as specified criteria are met. Students cannot be granted field education credits for prior work experience and can only be granted field education credits for a placement at their work site that meets the following criteria:

- the agency and field instructor meet the requirements for all field placements outlined in the “Criteria for Field Instructors and Agencies.”
- the field placement time at the agency (16 hours/week for foundation placements and 16 or 24 hours/week for advanced, advanced standing and HSE students) is spent in a different department, unit, or program of the agency from the one in which the student is employed.
- the field instructor is someone other than the student’s employment supervisor.
- the student’s placement assignment is substantively different from the work assignment in terms of client or community population served, interventions used, and skills developed.

Students who wish to have an employer agency placement need to complete an **Employer Agency Proposal Form** available in the SONIA field placement database. All employer agency proposals must be approved by the Field Education Department before the start of the placement.

In situations where a student does two placements at the employing agency, each placement must be substantially different and must meet the criteria outlined above.

FIELD EDUCATION POLICIES AND PROCEDURES

Boston University and the School of Social Work have policies and procedures that apply in all aspects of a student’s educational experience, including field education. Students and field



instructors are encouraged to review the following policies and procedures, which are described in detail in the [Master of Social Work Academic Policies & Procedures](#):

- School of Social Work Strength-Based Resolution Process (a formal problem-solving process)
- School of Social Work Status Review Process (a standing faculty committee that determines a student's status in the program)
- Boston University Sexual Harassment Policy and Procedures

The following describe policies and procedures from these sources that relate to students in their field placements:

Behavioral Standards for Social Work Students

Becoming a social worker involves acquiring knowledge and skills as well as demonstrating attitudes and values that are congruent with professional standards. Attention to these standards will be paid by faculty responsible for evaluating students' classroom performance, field instructors, advisors, and other agency personnel responsible for evaluating field performance, and administrators and others with whom the students interact within the School of Social Work community.

Social work students are expected to adhere to standards in the classroom, field, and within the larger Boston University School of Social Work community.

- **Behavior:** In interactions with faculty, administrators, staff, agency personnel, clients/consumers and other students, act in accordance with the mission of the Boston University School of Social Work and the goals and standards of social work as outlined in the NASW Code of Ethics, [e.g., commitment to social and economic justice, client self-determination, integrity, human dignity and human diversity] (www.socialworkers.org/pubs/code/code.asp), the Boston University Code of Student Responsibility (<http://www.bu.edu/dos/policies/student-responsibilities/>), the Boston University School of Social Work Academic Standards, and the Boston University School of Social Work Sexual Harassment Policy and Procedures
- **Self-awareness:** openness to new ideas, differing opinions and feedback from others, and integration of these into professional and student roles and performance; an understanding of the effect of one's statements and behaviors on others; the ability to modulate one's behavior to promote a productive professional environment and



appropriate relationships; a willingness to examine one's beliefs, values, and assumptions, and change one's behavior to ensure ethical professional practice.

- **Academic:** critical evaluation and application of knowledge and research findings to professional performance; classroom participation that promotes academic freedom, complies with guidelines for respectful classroom behavior, complies with instructor's directives, and allows for course instruction and participation of all students.
- **Interpersonal:** interpersonal skills needed to relate effectively to students, faculty, school personnel, agency staff, clients, and other professionals; these include compassion, empathy, integrity, respect and consideration, reliability, and responsibility for one's own behavior.
- **Self-care:** the ability to engage in appropriate self-care and seek resources and/or treatment for medical and emotional concerns that may interfere with academic and professional performance.
- **Appropriate use of existing channels of communication:** (e.g., advisor, classroom instructors, department chairs, Boston University School of Social Work administrators, field instructors) and procedures for addressing problems and concerns at the School of Social Work as outlined in the Master of Social Work Academic Policies & Procedures and this Guide.

Failure to act in accordance with these standards may result in suspension or termination from Boston University School of Social Work. In addition to any sanction imposed by the University's Associate Dean of Academic Affairs, a student who has been found guilty for a violation of the University Code of Student Responsibilities is subject to suspension or termination, following the procedures of the Boston University School of Social Work Status Review. If in the judgment of the Boston University School of Social Work's Associate Dean of Academic Affairs, interim steps are appropriate, pending the determination of a matter by Status Review, the Associate Dean of Academic Affairs, may impose such interim conditions, which may include an interim suspension from courses and/or field placement.

Sexual Harassment and Field Education

While field instructors and other agency personnel are not employees of Boston University, and, in most cases, students are not employees of the agency, the School of Social Work is committed to the protection of all parties in the field education process from sexual harassment. Accordingly, all agencies are expected to apprise



students of their policies regarding sexual harassment and to discuss agency procedures for reporting incidents of sexual harassment.

BUSSW Procedures for Sexual Harassment in Field Education

- A student who believes they have been sexually harassed by a field instructor, other agency employee, or client should contact the Assistant Dean for Field Education, the SSW Title IX officer or the University Equal Opportunity Office to discuss the situation and to determine what steps should be taken regarding their status at the agency. The Assistant Dean for Field Education, in consultation with the University's Equal Opportunity officer, will investigate the complaint. This investigation could involve discussions with the field instructor, other relevant agency personnel, and the person alleged to have committed the harassment. It should be noted that the investigation may be restricted by the jurisdiction the School has over the agency. In addition, the student may have the right to file a complaint with and investigated by the agency itself or appropriate government agencies. At the conclusion of the investigation(s), the Assistant Dean for Field Education and the student will make a judgment regarding the student's status at the agency:
 - The agency has satisfactorily addressed the complaint, and the student is willing to remain in the placement.
 - The agency has satisfactorily addressed the complaint, but the student should be placed in another setting.
 - The agency has not responded satisfactorily, and the student should be placed in another setting.
 - The complaint of sexual harassment is unfounded, and further investigation into the situation is not warranted.
- Where a complaint against an agency or its personnel is found to be justified, the agency's response and corrective action will also be taken into account by the School in determining whether that agency will be used for future placements.
- If a complaint of sexual harassment is made by a client or agency employee against a student, the School will invoke the above procedure and will cooperate with any additional steps taken by the agency. The School's goal in such a situation is to work collaboratively with the agency toward a mutually acceptable



outcome. The School recognizes the agency's right to terminate the placement of any student who has violated the law and/or agency policy. The School of Social Work may use the Strength-Based Resolution Process or Status Review process to address the situation further.

Drug and Alcohol Policy

The Boston University "Policy on Illegal Drugs and Alcohol" describes the University's position on alcohol and drug use on campus. In addition, social work students have a professional obligation articulated in the NASW Code of Ethics, to "not allow their own personal problems, psychosocial distress, legal problems, substance abuse, or mental health difficulties to interfere with their professional judgment and performance or to jeopardize the best interests of people for whom they have a professional responsibility." Accordingly, students are expected to abide by the University's policy and to refrain from drug or alcohol use while at their internships or engaged in activities on behalf of their internship assignments.

Safety Policy and Procedures

The Field Education Department oversees the students' experiences in their field placements and their safety in the field. The following guidelines, procedures, and tips were created in recognition of the fact that physical vulnerability of professional social workers and violence in the lives of clients/consumers/communities are current realities. This policy clarifies the respective roles of the School, the agency, and the student with the goal of collaboration to maximize safe practice. While social workers may be more aware of these issues in urban areas, we believe issues of safety are relevant in all communities and settings. **All students entering field are required to complete the online safety training which is available on Blackboard.**

1. Responsibilities and Roles

Boston University School of Social Work will:

- Provide students with an overview of safety in the field through the Integrative Field Seminar / Professional Development Seminar. Students are required to take this training when they begin a field placement.
- Provide students with a copy of the School's Safety Policy and Procedures.



- Provide a workshop for students to teach knowledge and skills that promotes safe social work practice.
- Encourage faculty to incorporate content related to safety into lectures and discussions in the classroom.
- Provide training to advisors about student safety and orientation to the School's Safety Policy and Procedures. Advisors will discuss safety issues at the site visit.

Field Placement Agencies will:

- Orient students to the safety policies and procedures of the agency. Such orientation should include, but not be limited to, discussion of safety issues in the community, within the agency building(s), and with particular clients. Security of personal belongings should be included. Students should also be informed of and trained in health precautions and protocols appropriate for the setting. Procedures for the student(s) to follow in the event of a safety or security problem should be reviewed.
- Include in the learning contract information about the agency's orientation to safety and the training opportunities it provides to students to develop skills and knowledge that will maximize safe social work practice.
- Not require students to engage in assignments in which they feel at risk physically or in terms of their health.
- Make the same accommodations to ensure students' safety as they make for their staff.
- Contact the student's advisor if the student's concerns about safety interfere with the learning process. In consultation with the advisor (and in some instances with a member of the Field Education staff) develop a plan that addresses the student's educational needs and the agency's requirement to provide services.



Social Work Students should:

- Read and be familiar with the safety policy and procedures of the School and of the agency where they are placed and abide by health precautions and protocols related to safety in the specific agency setting.
- Attend orientation, workshops, and training programs related to safety and safe social work practice offered at the School and their agency.
- Read and be familiar with *Safety Tips for Students in the Field* (below).
- Not engage in assignments in which they feel at risk. If a student is concerned about their safety or health, the student should inform the field instructor. The advisor and field instructor should consult to determine the best course of action to support the student's education.

2. Procedures for Reporting an Incident

- If an incident occurs in which a student is threatened or hurt, the field instructor, agency contact person, or agency director should contact the Assistant Dean for Field Education immediately to discuss the actions the agency and school should take to ensure the student's physical and emotional well-being.
- The Assistant Dean for Field Education will document the incident and the steps taken to address it. The Assistant Dean for Field Education, or designee, will meet with the student and advisor to discuss the situation, assess the immediate and ongoing risk, and find a resolution that promotes the student's sense of well-being and the learning process.

3. Safety Tips for Students in the Field

- *Agency Protocol*
 - It is important for students to know the agency's protocol for safety and security. The following are guidelines and suggestions that may be helpful to students, field instructors, and advisors as they consider the particular safety issues in their settings. Specific



steps taken by students or agency personnel will be determined by the individual situation, the nature of the setting, etc. The agency should know the student's schedule and whereabouts at all times, especially when the student is working outside the building.

- *Security of Belongings*
 - The agency is responsible for providing students with a secure place to keep belongings while at placement. It is preferable that the space be one that can be locked (e.g., a desk drawer or filing cabinet). Students should not leave cell phones, laptops, backpacks, purses, and other personal articles visible and unattended, even in an office with the door closed. Valuables should not be brought to placement settings. Items of value should not be left in cars or be placed out of view just prior to leaving a vehicle.
- *Safety Issues Related to Working with Clients/Consumers*
 - Social work students work with clients/consumers in a range of settings and situations. Some of these include work with individuals dealing with overwhelming emotions and environmental stressors that result in behaviors that are, or appear to be, threatening. These behaviors may include (but are not limited to) swearing, yelling, insulting, throwing/slamming objects, and threatening or acting to cause physical harm.
 - Some individuals may be prone to violence and may possess a weapon. Others may be intoxicated, high on drugs, in withdrawal, or may have other medical, psychiatric, or neurological disorders.
 - Students should always consult with agency field instructors regarding preparation for and handling of specific situations that are potentially difficult or threatening, such as medical emergencies, suicide or homicide risks, potential abuse of others, and the presence of weapons.
 - Clothing that is provocative is never appropriate and, in some instances, may impede one's ability to act in an unsafe situation,



e.g., high heeled shoes, tight skirts, long scarves. Jewelry can also be used to injure the worker.

- *Safety Tips for Office Meetings*
 - When considering the location of an office meeting, it is important to consider what is in the room, whether there is more than one exit, and where each person will sit. When scheduling an appointment, it is helpful to think about whether other people should be around and available at the time of the meeting for help if needed. Also, it is important to have a plan for assistance in the event that a client/consumer becomes agitated. This may include having another staff person in the meeting.

- *Safety Tips for Travel*
 - When a student is traveling by car for field education activities, it is advisable to have clear directions and know where he or she is going. In general, it is important to be alert and attentive to one's surroundings and to lock doors and close windows. Valuables should be placed out of sight in one's vehicle prior to parking at the destination.

 - When traveling by foot or public transportation, it is advisable that students carry as little as possible. Money, license, keys, and other essentials should be carried in a pocket if possible. If a bag or briefcase is grabbed, it is best to let go of it. It is advisable to dress in comfortable clothes that are loose fitting, and to wear sturdy, flat walking shoes. It is also helpful to be alert and to walk with a purpose, as if one has a clear destination. One should be aware of people in the immediate area, without staring or maintaining eye contact.

- *Safety Tips for Home Visits*
 - Prior to making a home visit, the student should discuss any issues related to safety with their field instructor. On an initial home visit, it is often advisable to go with another worker. Most agencies will



want to know the location and scheduling of the home visits. Some agencies require a confirming telephone call upon arrival and departure from the home visit. If the student feels unsafe upon arrival or at any time during the visit, they should not proceed with the meeting. It might be preferable to meet at a neutral location.

Students and Field Instructors can access helpful information and resources related to the safety of social workers in the field on the national NASW website: <https://www.socialworkers.org/Practice/Practice-Standards-Guidelines>

Students with Disabilities

Students with disabilities who may need accommodation in the field placement are strongly encouraged to talk with their advisor and/or a member of the Field Education staff (CRC and Online students) or their advisor and/or their program director (OCP and Hybrid students). The Field Education staff will work with prospective agencies and field instructors to help students receive the supports they need to function well within the agency setting. Students may also apply for accommodations at Boston University Disability and Access Services at <https://www.bu.edu/disability/>.

Professional Liability Coverage for Students

Students in the field are covered by the University's liability insurance **only** for the semesters in which they are registered for a Field Education course, or if they are completing field education hours due to having received an Incomplete grade in a field education course. If a student begins placement prior to the first day of the semester or continues beyond the last day, the student is considered a volunteer or, if paid, an employee of the agency and should be covered under the agency's liability policy. A certificate of insurance is available from the Field Education Department (sswfed@bu.edu or sswolpfe@bu.edu).

Intern Use of Vehicles for Agency Business

Field placement agencies occasionally require or request that student interns use vehicles in the performance of their internship activities, which may include transporting clients/consumers. The possible scenarios include the student intern as the driver of their own vehicle or an agency vehicle or the student intern as the passenger in an agency or agency staff vehicle. The use of a vehicle for purposes of carrying out internship activities is acceptable in some situations, provided that adequate safeguards are in place to manage the potential risks and each party's responsibilities are clearly outlined and documented. The policy outlined



below is intended to assist in identifying the safeguards that are **minimally** necessary and allocating responsibilities among the parties appropriately.

Responsibilities of the School of Social Work Field Education Department:

- Inform students that they should inquire prior to the placement about agency expectations regarding use of agency and/or personal vehicle for placement assignment
- Ask agencies about vehicle use expectations on agency placement form
- Give students the option to limit their internship opportunities to those placements which will not require them to use their vehicles or drive/ride in agency vehicles for placement-related tasks
- Address vehicle use and related issues of safety, insurance coverage, and liability in the field education agreement or other document signed by School and agency
- Document understandings with students as necessary.

Responsibilities of Field Placement Agencies:

- Have a vehicle safety policy which addresses the use of agency and students' personal vehicles to conduct agency business (including transporting clients) with specific attention to:
 - Driver eligibility including driving record checks
 - Liability insurance coverage including the type of insurance coverage students are expected to have on their own vehicles, evidence students need to provide of their coverage, agency insurance coverage for use of agency vehicles
 - Safe driving tips
 - Procedure for reporting to designated agency personnel any incidents including, but not limited to, accidents, moving violations, and disruptive or concerning client behavior while being transported
 - Procedures for assessing, always in consultation with an agency supervisor or other qualified staff person, appropriateness of clients to be transported including whether an additional staff person should be in the vehicle
 - Steps to take in the event that a client displays concerning behavior during transport
 - Ensuring that the School of Social Work Field Education Department receives a copy of the vehicle safety policy and evidence of liability insurance
 - Ensuring that interns receive a copy of the agency's vehicle safety policy and appropriate safety training and supervision, especially in regard to transporting clients.



Responsibilities of Students:

- Agree to use agency or personal vehicle according to the agency's policies and procedures, or inform the Field Education Department and agency that they are not willing to do so (which may require a change of placement)
- Have automobile insurance coverage for their personal vehicle as required by the agency and provide evidence of this to the agency
- Agree to a driving record check by agency or School if required by agency
- Report to designated agency personnel any incidents, including but not limited to accidents, moving violations, and concerning client behavior, that occurred during transport



APPENDIX: SOCIAL WORK COMPETENCIES

Foundation/Generalist Competencies

Social work competence is the ability to integrate and apply social work knowledge, values, and skills to practice situations in a purposeful, intentional, and professional manner to promote human and community well-being. This framework for teaching and for assessing students' performance takes a holistic view of competence; that is, the demonstration of competence is informed by knowledge, values, skills, and cognitive and affective processes that include the student's critical thinking, affective reactions, and exercise of judgment in regard to specific practice situations. Overall professional competence is multi-dimensional and composed of interrelated competencies. The student's progress in mastering holistic competence is developmental and dynamic, changing over time in relation to continuous learning.

Each of the nine competencies describes the knowledge, values, skills, and cognitive and affective processes that comprise the competency, followed by a set of behaviors that integrate these components. These behaviors represent observable components of the competencies, while the preceding statements represent the underlying content and processes that inform the behaviors.

1. Demonstrate Ethical and Professional Behavior

Social workers understand the value base of the profession and its ethical standards, as well as relevant laws and regulations that may impact practice. Social workers apply critical thinking to frameworks of ethical decision-making in practice. Social workers understand how their personal experiences and affective reactions influence their professional judgment and behavior. Social Workers understand the role of other professions in inter-professional settings. Social workers also understand emerging forms of technology and the ethical use of technology in social work practice.

Social work interns:

- demonstrate professional demeanor in behavior and appearance
- participate in ethical decision making in consultation with their field instructor using the standards of the NASW Code of Ethics and relevant laws and regulations
- use reflection to manage personal values and maintain professionalism in practice situations;
- use technology ethically and appropriately to facilitate practice outcomes;
- use supervision and consultation to guide professional judgment and behavior;
- communicate clearly and professionally in a timely manner in writing and verbally



2. Engage Diversity and Difference in Practice

Social workers understand how diversity and difference characterize and shape the human experience and are critical to the formation of identity. As a consequence, a person's life experiences may include oppression, poverty, marginalization, and alienation as well as privilege, power, and acclaim. Social workers also understand the forms and mechanisms of oppression and discrimination and recognize the extent to which a culture's structures and values, including social, economic, political, and cultural exclusions, may oppress, marginalize, alienate, or create privilege and power.

Social work interns:

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

3. Advance Human Rights and Social, Economic and Environmental Justice

Social workers understand that every person has fundamental human rights such as freedom, safety, privacy, an adequate standard of living, health care, and education. Social workers understand the global interconnections of oppression and human rights violations, and are knowledgeable about theories of human need and social justice and strategies to promote social and economic justice and human rights. Social workers utilize strategies designed to eliminate oppressive structural barriers to ensure that social goods, rights, and responsibilities are distributed equitably, and that civil, political, environmental, economic, social, and cultural human rights are protected.

Social work interns:

- apply their understanding of social, economic, and environmental justice to advocate for human rights;
- engage in practices that advance social, economic and environmental justice within the social work intern role.

4. Engage in Practice-informed Research and Research-informed Practice

Social workers understand quantitative and qualitative research methods and their roles in advancing a science of social work and in evaluating their practice. Social workers know the principles of logic, scientific inquiry, and culturally informed and ethical approaches to building knowledge. Social workers understand that evidence that informs practice derives from multi-disciplinary sources and multiple ways of knowing. They also understand the processes for translating research findings into effective practice.



Social work interns:

- critically analyze quantitative and qualitative research findings;
- use research to inform and improve practice, policy, and service delivery.

5. Engage in Policy Practice

Social workers understand that human rights and social justice, as well as social welfare and services, are mediated by policy and its implementation at the federal, state, and local levels. Social workers understand the history and current structures of social policies and services, the role of policy in service delivery, and the role of practice in policy development. Social workers understand their role in policy development and implementation within their practice settings and engage in policy practice to effect change within those settings.

Social work interns:

- are familiar with social policies at the local, state, and federal levels that impact well-being, service delivery, and access to social services;
- assess how social welfare and economic policies impact the delivery of and access to social services;
- analyze, formulate, and advocate, where appropriate, for policies that advance human rights and social, economic, and environmental justice.

There are several shared principles related to engagement, assessment, intervention and evaluation of practice that apply to the competencies 6 – 9. These include:

- value the importance of human relationships which are the basis of all social work practice.
- critically evaluate and apply theories of human behavior and the social environment to facilitate practice with clients and constituents.
- value the importance of inter-professional collaboration and communication recognizing that beneficial outcomes may require interdisciplinary and inter-organizational participation.
- understand how their personal experiences and affective reactions may impact their social work practice.
- apply knowledge about human diversity that characterizes and shapes human experience and relationships.

6. Engage with Individuals, Families, Groups, Organizations and Communities

Social workers understand and use strategies to engage clients and constituencies.



Social work interns:

- use empathy, reflection, and interpersonal skills to effectively engage clients and constituencies.

7. Assess Individuals, Families, Groups, Organizations and Communities

Social workers utilize a range of methods to ensure comprehensive assessment and recognize the implications of the larger practice context in the assessment process.

Social work interns:

- collect and organize data, and apply critical thinking to interpret information from clients, constituents and other relevant sources
- select appropriate intervention strategies based on the assessment, research knowledge, values and preferences of clients and constituents in keeping with available resources and agency mission.

8. Intervene with Individuals, Families, Groups, Organizations and Communities

Social workers utilize methods of identifying, analyzing and implementing evidence-informed interventions to achieve client and constituent goals.

Social work interns:

- critically choose and implement interventions to achieve practice goals and enhance capacities of clients and constituents
- negotiate, mediate, and advocate with and on behalf of clients and constituents
- facilitate effective transitions and endings that advance mutually agreed-on goals.

9. Evaluate Practice with Individuals, Families, Groups, Organizations and Communities

Social workers recognize the importance of evaluating processes and outcomes to advance practice, policy, and service delivery effectiveness. Social workers utilize qualitative and quantitative methods for evaluating outcomes and practice effectiveness.

Social work interns:

- select and use appropriate methods for evaluation of outcomes
- apply evaluation findings to improve practice effectiveness at the micro, mezzo, and macro levels
- document practice outcomes.



ADVANCED/SPECIALIZED COMPETENCIES

Students in the advanced field placement concentrate in either Clinical or Macro Practice and a majority of their assignments should reflect their area of concentration. In addition to mastering new skills, advanced students are expected to demonstrate increased independence and initiative in their assignments and in supervision.

Some students may concentrate in Clinical Practice with a Macro sub-specialization. Students in the CRC may also choose to focus their studies in one of the MSW certificate or specialization programs (Behavioral Health, Children Youth and Families, Lowy Specialization in Aging Practice, Policy, and Social Justice, Trauma and Violence).

Field education guidelines for method specializations:

- Clinical Practice with a Macro sub-specialization: 15-20% of the student's assignment should include a substantive macro practice project with field instruction that incorporates a macro practice framework.
- Gerontological Social Work: the student's assignments should focus on services and programs for older adults and their families.

ADVANCED/SPECIALIZED CLINICAL COMPETENCIES

Social work competence is the intentional integration and application of social work knowledge, values, and skills to promote human and community well-being in practice. A holistic view of competence is multidimensional and involves:

- knowledge
- values
- skills
- critical thinking
- affective reaction
- exercise of judgment.

The nine competencies below represent the essential components of social work practice. Mastery of these competencies is demonstrated in an interrelated fashion. The process of learning is both developmental and dynamic and may involve focus on individual competencies. The goal of social work education is the integration of the competencies into holistic practice.

Each of the nine advanced clinical competencies describes the knowledge, values, skills, and cognitive and affective processes that comprise the competency, followed by a set of behaviors that integrate these components. These behaviors represent observable components of the



competencies, while the preceding statements represent the underlying content and processes that inform the behaviors.

1. Demonstrate Ethical and Professional Behavior

Social workers understand the value base of the profession and its ethical standards, as well as relevant laws and regulations that may impact practice. Social workers apply principles of critical thinking to frameworks of ethical decision-making in practice. Social workers understand how their personal experiences and affective reactions influence their professional judgment and behavior. Social Workers also understand the role of other professions in inter-professional settings. Social workers also understand emerging forms of technology and the ethical use of technology in social work practice.

Social work interns:

- Demonstrate professional demeanor in behavior and appearance;
- Demonstrate self-reflection and self-regulation in clinical practice;
- Actively engage in supervision, collaboratively setting an agenda and demonstrating openness to feedback regarding professional strengths and challenges;
- Use technology ethically and appropriately to facilitate practice outcomes;
- Make ethical decisions in clinical practice using NASW Code of Ethics, other professional social work codes, relevant laws and regulations, models for ethical decision-making, and consultation;
- Communicate clearly and professionally in a timely manner in writing and verbally

2. Engage Diversity and Difference in Practice

Social workers understand how diversity and difference characterize and shape the human experience and are critical to the formation of identity. As a consequence of difference, a person's life experiences may include oppression, poverty, marginalization, and alienation as well as privilege, power, and acclaim. Social workers also understand the forms and mechanisms of oppression and discrimination and recognize the extent to which a culture's structures and values, including social, economic, political, and cultural exclusions, may oppress, marginalize, alienate, or create privilege and power.

Social work interns:

- Integrate knowledge of how diversity and difference shape the intern-client relationship, assessment, goals and intervention in clinical practice;
- Employ cultural humility in clinical practice, integrating cultural self-awareness with knowledge of and openness to learning from clients about their own culture to guide interventions



3. Advance Human Rights and Social, Economic and Environmental Justice

Social workers understand that every person has fundamental human rights such as freedom, safety, privacy, an adequate standard of living, health care, and education. Social workers understand the global interconnections of oppression and human rights violations, and are knowledgeable about theories of human need and social justice and strategies to promote social and economic justice and human rights. Social workers understand strategies designed to eliminate oppressive structural barriers to ensure that social goods, rights, and responsibilities are distributed equitably, and that civil, political, environmental, economic, social, and cultural human rights are protected.

Social work interns:

- Use knowledge of the effects of oppression, discrimination and historical trauma on clients to promote human rights in clinical goals and interventions;
- Advocate for increased access to clinical and other social services to insure protection of human rights.

4. Engage in Practice-informed Research and Research-informed Practice

Social workers understand quantitative and qualitative research methods and their respective roles in advancing a science of social work and in evaluating their practice. Social workers know the principles of logic, scientific inquiry, and culturally informed and ethical approaches to building knowledge. Social workers understand that evidence that informs practice derives from multi-disciplinary sources and multiple ways of knowing. They also understand the processes for translating research findings into effective practice.

Social work interns:

- Use an evidence-based process to identify and apply effective clinical interventions for particular populations, problems and settings;
- Where possible, apply practice experience to the development of new knowledge through participation in research;
- Use research methodology from multi-disciplinary sources to evaluate clinical practice effectiveness and/or outcomes.

5. Engage in Policy Practice

Social workers understand that human rights and social justice, as well as social welfare and services, are mediated by policy and its implementation at the federal, state, and local levels. Social workers understand the history and current structures of social policies and services, the role of policy in service delivery, and the role of practice in policy development. Social workers understand their role in policy development and implementation within their practice settings and engage in policy practice to effect change within those settings. Social workers identify



social policies at the local, state and federal levels that impact client well-being and service delivery.

Social work interns:

- Assess how social policies impact the delivery of and client access to social services;
- Apply critical thinking to analyze, formulate and advocate for policy changes that advance human rights and social, economic and environmental justice.

Competencies 6 – 9

There are several shared principles related to engagement, assessment, intervention and evaluation of practice that apply to Competencies 6 – 9. These include:

- value the importance of human relationships which are the basis of all social work practice.
- critically evaluate and apply theories of human behavior and the social environment to facilitate clinical practice with clients.
- value the importance of inter- professional collaboration and communication recognizing that beneficial outcomes may require interdisciplinary and inter-organizational participation.
- understand how their personal experiences and affective reactions may impact their clinical practice with clients.
- apply knowledge about human diversity that characterizes and shapes human experience and relationships.

6. Engage with Individuals, Families, and Groups

Social workers utilize strategies to engage clients to advance practice effectiveness.

Social work interns:

- Effectively engage with clients as equal partners using empathy, self-reflection and other interpersonal skills;
- Develop relationships with clients that are professional, purposeful, and differential – characterized by clear boundaries.

7. Assess Individuals, Families, and Groups

Social workers utilize a range of methods to ensure comprehensive assessment and recognize the implications of the larger practice context in the assessment process.



Social work interns:

- clarify the client's request for help, readiness for change and presenting problem;
- gather and organize appropriate information to create a multidimensional biopsychosocial assessment in a written format;
- formulate an understanding of the client including precipitants to the presenting problem, interpersonal dynamics, historically relevant events, and cultural influences;
- when appropriate, utilize this formulation to aid in diagnosis.

8. Intervene with Individuals, Families and Groups

Social workers utilize methods of identifying, analyzing and implementing evidence-informed interventions to achieve client goals.

Social work interns:

- collaborate with the client to define goals within the context of the agency's mission and services;
- initiate and implement treatment plans and contracts with the client to meet goals, based on appropriate clinical and human behavior theory and research evidence;
- utilize clinical concepts such as transference/countertransference and differential use of self in clinical practice;
- collaborate with other professionals as appropriate to achieve beneficial outcomes;
- facilitate effective transitions and endings that promote mutually agreed-upon goals;
- document as required by agency.

9. Evaluate Practice with Individuals, Families, and Groups

Social workers recognize the importance of evaluating processes and outcomes to advance practice, policy, and service delivery effectiveness. Social workers understand qualitative and quantitative methods for evaluating outcomes and practice effectiveness.

Social work interns:

- select and use appropriate methods to monitor and evaluate outcomes;
- apply evaluation findings to improve practice effectiveness;
- document client progress in agency records as required by agency.

ADVANCED/SPECIALIZED MACRO COMPETENCIES

Social work competence is the intentional integration and application of social work knowledge, values, and skills to promote human and community well-being in practice. A holistic view of competence is multidimensional and involves:



- Knowledge
- Values
- Skills
- Critical thinking
- Affective reaction
- Exercise of judgment

The nine competencies below represent the essential components of social work practice. Mastery of these competencies is demonstrated in an interrelated fashion. The process of learning is both developmental and dynamic and may involve focus on individual competencies. The goal of social work education is the integration of the competencies into holistic practice.

Each of the nine advanced macro practice competencies describes the knowledge, values, skills, and cognitive and affective processes that comprise the competency, followed by a set of behaviors that integrate these components. These behaviors represent observable components of the competencies, while the preceding statements represent the underlying content and processes that inform the behaviors.

1. Demonstrate Ethical and Professional Behavior

Social workers understand the value base of the profession and its ethical standards, as well as relevant laws and regulations that may impact practice. Social workers apply principles of critical thinking to frameworks of ethical decision-making in practice. Social workers understand how their personal experiences and affective reactions influence their professional judgment and behavior. Social Workers also understand the role of other professions in inter-professional settings. Social workers also understand emerging forms of technology and the ethical use of technology in social work practice.

Social work interns:

- Demonstrate professional demeanor in behavior and appearance with awareness of differential norms across communities;
- Demonstrate self-reflection and self-regulation in macro practice;
- Actively engage in supervision, collaboratively setting an agenda and demonstrating openness to feedback and with increased initiative, independence, collaboration;
- Use technology ethically and appropriately to facilitate practice outcomes;
- Make ethical decisions in their practice using NASW Code of Ethics, other professional social work codes, relevant laws and regulations, models for ethical decision-making, and consultation;
- Communicate clearly and professionally in a timely manner in writing and verbally with sensitivity to the needs of differing audiences.



2. Engage Diversity and Difference in Practice

Social workers understand how diversity and difference characterize and shape the human experience and are critical in forming individual and group identity. As a consequence of difference, the experiences of individuals and communities may include oppression, poverty, marginalization, and alienation as well as privilege, power, and acclaim. Social workers also understand the forms and mechanisms of oppression and discrimination and recognize the extent to which a culture's structures and values, including social, economic, political, and cultural exclusions, may oppress, marginalize, alienate, or create privilege and power.

Social work interns:

- Integrate knowledge of how diversity and difference shape their professional relationships and interactions with others, as well as dynamics of power and privilege within organizations and communities;
- Employ cultural humility in practice, integrating cultural self-awareness with knowledge of and openness to learning from community members about their own culture in planning and implementing change in communities and organizations;
- Build professional relationships with diverse consumers, constituents, communities and organizations to provide culturally competent services and programs.

3. Advance Human Rights and Social, Economic and Environmental Justice

Social workers understand that every person has fundamental human rights such as freedom, safety, privacy, an adequate standard of living, health care, and education. Social workers understand the global interconnections of oppression and human rights violations, and are knowledgeable about theories of human need and social justice and strategies to promote social and economic justice and human rights. Social workers understand strategies designed to eliminate oppressive structural barriers to ensure that social goods, rights, and responsibilities are distributed equitably, and that civil, political, environmental, economic, social, and cultural human rights are protected.

Social work interns:

- Use knowledge of the effects of oppression, discrimination and historical trauma on individuals and communities in developing project plans;
- Advocate for increased access to resources and services to insure protection of human rights;
- Engage with, and support the empowerment of, community members who have the least power and are often the most vulnerable in terms of access to community resources, opportunities and decision-making forums;



- Advocate for inclusive change strategies that help all community members reach their full potential.

4. Engage in Practice-informed Research and Research-informed Practice

Social workers understand quantitative and qualitative research methods and their respective roles in advancing a science of social work and in evaluating their practice. Social workers know the principles of logic, scientific inquiry, and culturally informed and ethical approaches to building knowledge. Social workers understand that evidence that informs practice derives from multi-disciplinary sources and multiple ways of knowing. They also understand the processes for translating research findings into effective practice.

Social work interns:

- Utilize qualitative and quantitative research to understand the nature of communities and organizations and the best practices to improve well-being in these macro systems;
- Use research methodology from multi-disciplinary sources to evaluate the effectiveness of planning and implementing change strategies in communities and organizations;
- Where possible, apply practice experience to the development of new knowledge through participation in research.

5. Engage in Policy Practice

Social workers understand that human rights and social justice, as well as social welfare and services, are mediated by policy and its implementation at the federal, state, and local levels. Social workers understand the history and current structures of social policies and services, the role of policy in service delivery, and the role of practice in policy development. Social workers understand their role in policy development and implementation within their practice settings and engage in policy practice to effect change within those settings. Social workers identify social policies at the local, state and federal levels that impact the well-being of community members and the delivery of necessary services.

Social work interns:

- Apply critical thinking to analyze, formulate and advocate for policy changes that advance human rights and social, economic and environmental justice, especially for the most vulnerable;
- Actively engage in the policy arena on behalf of community and organizational interests, especially for the most vulnerable.

Competencies 6 – 9



There are several shared principles related to engagement, assessment, intervention and evaluation of practice that apply to Competencies 6 – 9. These include:

- value the importance of human relationships, the basis of all social work practice;
- critically evaluate and apply theories of human behavior and the social environment, as well as theories of community and organizational development, to facilitate practice with individuals, communities and organizations;
- value the importance of inter- professional collaboration and communication recognizing that beneficial outcomes may require interdisciplinary and inter-organizational participation;
- understand how their personal experiences, demeanor and affective reactions may impact their practice with and among individuals, communities and organizations;
- apply knowledge about human diversity that characterizes and shapes human experience and relationships.

6. Engage with Individuals, Groups, Organizations and Larger Systems

Social workers utilize strategies to engage the individuals that comprise communities, organizations and larger systems to advance practice effectiveness.

Social work interns:

- Effectively engage with constituents as equal partners using empathy, self-reflection and other interpersonal skills;
- Develop partnerships with and among constituents, organizations and communities that are based on participation, empowerment, collaboration, and indigenous leadership;
- Utilize a range of skills that facilitate engagement e.g., outreach and recruitment, collaboration, coalition building.

7. Assess Groups, Organizations and Larger Systems

Social workers utilize a range of methods to ensure comprehensive assessment and recognize the implications of the larger practice context in the assessment process.

Social work interns:

- Formulate an understanding of the environment including precipitants to the issues being addressed, interpersonal dynamics, historically relevant events, and cultural influences;
- Identify assets, resources and needs of the constituents, community or organization;
- Engage formal & informal (nontraditional) sectors of the community in the assessment process and in developing agreed-upon goals.



8. Intervene with Groups, Organizations and Larger Systems

Social workers utilize methods of identifying, analyzing and implementing evidence-informed approaches to achieve community and organizational goals.

Social work interns:

- Collaborate with individuals, communities and organizations to identify desired process and outcomes objectives, and time and project management;
- Plan with communities & organizations to apply change strategies through a variety of models appropriate to local contexts;
- Create necessary documents for projects or actions, (e.g., strategic plan, grant proposal, personnel manual, marketing materials, documentation);
- Complete necessary steps in activity or project and transfer responsibility for ongoing maintenance where appropriate.

9. Evaluate Practice with Groups, Organizations and Larger Systems

Social workers recognize the importance of evaluating processes and outcomes to advance practice, policy, and service delivery effectiveness. Social workers understand qualitative and quantitative methods for evaluating outcomes and practice effectiveness.

Social work interns:

- Utilize a variety of methods/tools to evaluate and document change strategies' outcomes and effectiveness (e.g., program evaluation, consumer satisfaction survey, external review);
- Utilize and demonstrate skill in a variety of process and output methods that stress participatory principles;

