Bachelor of Social Work

Field Manual

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Thanks go out to the past and present

Directors of Field Education for leaving their signatures

on some part of this field manual.

Their labors are not forgotten.

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Table of Contents

I. INTRODUCTION 1

Purpose of the BSW Field Manual ........................................................................................................... 1
History of the University of Southern Indiana ................................................................................................. 1
University Mission ........................................................................................................................................ 2
Social Work Department Mission .................................................................................................................... 2
BSW Program Mission ................................................................................................................................... 2

II. BSW LEARNING OBJECTIVES 3

Ten Core Competencies of Social Work Practice ......................................................................................... 3
Evaluation of Student Learning ....................................................................................................................... 8

III. THE FIELD EDUCATION PROGRAM: AN OVERVIEW 8

Philosophy and Purpose of Field Education ................................................................................................. 8
Structure of the Field Placement Curriculum ................................................................................................. 9
Administrative Organization of Field Education ............................................................................................... 9

IV. FIELD EDUCATION PERSONNEL AND STUDENT RESPONSIBILITIES 10

Roles and Responsibilities of the Director of Field ....................................................................................... 10
Roles and Responsibilities of the Coordinator of Undergraduate Field Education ......................................... 11
Selection of Field Instructors ........................................................................................................................... 14
Roles and Responsibilities of the Agency Based Field Instructors .................................................................. 15
Involvement of “Task” Supervisors .................................................................................................................. 16
Roles and Responsibilities of the Faculty Field Liaison .................................................................................. 16
Responsibilities of the Students in Field ........................................................................................................ 17
Policies regarding field placements in an organization in which the student is also employed ..................... 18

V. FIELD EDUCATION PROCESS 19

Student eligibility for Field Placement ........................................................................................................... 20
VI. PROBLEM SOLVING, CORRECTIVE ACTION AND TERMINATION PROCEDURES IN FIELD PLACEMENT  22

The Problem Solving Process ........................................................................................................ 23

Corrective Action Process Related to Student Performance in Field ........................................ 24

Assigning a grade of Incomplete .................................................................................................. 20

Transfer in Field Placement ......................................................................................................... 20

Options when a grade is Unsatisfactory ..................................................................................... 26

Termination of a Field Placement ............................................................................................... 27

Student Rights to Appeal ............................................................................................................. 29
APPENDICES-FORMS

STUDENT FORMS

APPENDIX A - Application for Field
APPENDIX B - Timeline
APPENDIX C - Statement of Record
APPENDIX D - Placement Preference Form
APPENDIX E - Request for Placement in Agency of Employment
APPENDIX F - Student Agreement
APPENDIX G - Time Sheets
APPENDIX H - Student Core Competency Self-Appraisal
APPENDIX I - Individualized Learning Plan
APPENDIX J - Student Evaluation of Field Experience

FIELD INSTRUCTOR FORMS

APPENDIX K - Field Instructor Guidelines
APPENDIX L - Student Performance Evaluation
APPENDIX M - Agency Field Instructor Evaluation of the University Faculty

AGENCY FORMS (Not required of Field Instructors)

APPENDIX N - Agency Affiliation Application Forms
   I. Affiliation Agreement
II. Field Agency Profile

III. Field Instructor Credentials
I. INTRODUCTION

Purpose of the BSW Field Manual

This manual serves as a guide to agencies, faculty, and students engaged in the Field program at USI. The table of contents provides a method for easy reference in regard to specific areas of interest in the field education program. The appendices provide copies of forms utilized in implementing the policies and procedures governing field education. While it is anticipated that the educational objectives, policies and procedures will be most often referenced, the manual also includes the mission statements of the university and BSW program and descriptions of the BSW curriculum to clarify the larger context within which field education occurs.

The BSW Field manual is available to students, field instructors, and faculty through http://www.usi.edu/socialwork/bswprog.asp. Printed copies of the field manual are available upon request to our field education supervisors. The printed field manual is in a loose-leaf format to accommodate revisions.

It is important to note that the field education program design, its policies, and procedures reflect consultation and input from faculty, students, and field instructors. We are always interested in your comments and recommendations in regard to the design, implementation, and maintenance of the field education program.

History of the University of Southern Indiana

Originally founded in 1965 as the Evansville campus of Indiana State University, the University of Southern Indiana was made a separate state university by an act of the 1985 Indiana General Assembly. The Governor appointed a board of trustees, and the establishment of the University of Southern Indiana became official on July 1, 1985.

The University of Southern Indiana is a broad-based institution offering instruction, research, and service. A liberal arts and science curriculum serves as the foundation of knowledge for all programs and complements undergraduate programs leading to careers in business, engineering, government, health professions, education, and related fields. Selected master’s degrees and the Doctor of Nursing Practice (DNP) degree serve persons in professional and technical studies. As a public institution, the University
of Southern Indiana counsels and assists business and industry as well as social, educational, governmental, and health agencies to higher levels of efficiency and improved services.

University Mission

American education assumes a link between the truth of an idea and the good it promotes for individuals and society. An educated person can be expected not only to be knowledgeable and more financially secure, but also a better citizen, among whose virtues are tolerance, judgment, and belief in freedom for self and others. These values develop in an atmosphere of open inquiry and pursuit of truth. Therefore, as the University of Southern Indiana seeks to support education, social and economic growth, and civic and cultural awareness in southwestern Indiana, it will be devoted primarily to preparing students to live wisely.

Social Work Department Mission

The Social Work Department prepares students for competency driven practice focused on evolving issues in the community.

BSW Program Mission

The BSW program prepares students with the knowledge, skills and values for generalist social work practice with diverse populations and emerging social issues.

**BSW PROGRAM GOALS**

1. Educate generalist practice students on the ten core competencies of social work practice.

   **Objectives**

   1. Integrate competency-driven learning throughout the BSW curriculum.
   2. Use technology to enhance course delivery.
   3. Use current scholarship and best practices in assignments in the BSW curriculum.
4. Use field trips, international programs, speakers, service learning and forums to enrich student learning about diversity.

5. Annually update curriculum and course content in response to evaluation feedback, changes in best practices, and community needs.

6. Sponsor annual events that facilitate dialogue and exchange between alumni and students.

7. Implement a comprehensive model of student advising that makes the best use of the Department’s student leaders, administrative staff, and faculty members.

8. Use course exercises and assignments to promote student awareness of self as an instrument of change.

1. Use research as the foundation for discovering best practices in education and community engagement.

Objectives:

1. Develop and carry out research focused on social justice in collaboration with the Center for Social Justice.
2. Conduct faculty-student research.
3. Use exit surveys, alumni surveys, employer surveys, student focus groups, and benchmarking rubrics to monitor BSW program processes and outcomes

4. Model and promote the ethic of service.

Objectives:

1. Serve on boards, committees, and as members of regional organizations that support and promote the values of professional social work.
2. Faculty members and students will seek and respond to organizational and community service needs in the region.
3. Sponsor student organizations that recognize academic excellence and promote student service

II. BSW LEARNING OBJECTIVES

The BSW learning objectives are framed by the ten core competencies in the Council on Social Work Education Educational Policy and Accreditation Standards 2008. They are listed below.

Ten Core Competencies of Social Work Practice
“Educational Policy 2.1—Core Competencies

Competency-based education is an outcome performance approach to curriculum design. Competencies
are measurable practice behaviors that are comprised of knowledge, values, and skills. The goal of the outcome approach is to demonstrate the integration and application of the competencies in practice with individuals, families, groups, organizations, and communities. The ten core competencies are listed below [EP 2.1.1–EP 2.1.10(d)], followed by a description of characteristic knowledge, values, skills, and the resulting practice behaviors that may be used to operationalize the curriculum and assessment methods. Programs may add competencies consistent with their missions and goals.

Educational Policy 2.1.1—Identify as a professional social worker and conduct oneself accordingly.

Social workers serve as representatives of the profession, its mission, and its core values. They know the profession’s history. Social workers commit themselves to the profession’s enhancement and to their own professional conduct and growth. Social workers

1. advocate for client access to the services of social work;
2. practice personal reflection and self-correction to assure continual professional development;
3. attend to professional roles and boundaries;
4. demonstrate professional demeanor in behavior, appearance, and communication;
5. engage in career-long learning; and
6. use supervision and consultation.

Educational Policy 2.1.2 – Apply social work ethical principles to guide professional practice.

Social workers have an obligation to conduct themselves ethically and to engage in ethical decision-making. Social workers are knowledgeable about the value base of the profession, its ethical standards, and relevant law. Social workers

a. recognize and manage personal values in a way that allows professional values to guide practice;
b. make ethical decisions by applying standards of the National Association of Social Workers Code of Ethics2 and, as applicable, of the International Federation of Social Workers/International Association of Schools of Social Work Ethics in Social Work, Statement of Principles;
c. tolerate ambiguity in resolving ethical conflicts; and
d. apply strategies of ethical reasoning to arrive at principled decisions.
Educational Policy 2.1.3—Apply critical thinking to inform and communicate professional judgments.

Social workers are knowledgeable about the principles of logic, scientific inquiry, and reasoned discernment. They use critical thinking augmented by creativity and curiosity. Critical thinking also requires the synthesis and communication of relevant information. Social workers

a. distinguish, appraise, and integrate multiple sources of knowledge, including research-based knowledge, and practice wisdom;

b. analyze models of assessment, prevention, intervention, and evaluation; and

c. demonstrate effective oral and written communication in working with individuals, families, groups, organizations, communities, and colleagues.

Educational Policy 2.1.4—Engage diversity and difference in practice.

Social workers understand how diversity characterizes and shapes the human experience and is critical to the formation of identity. The dimensions of diversity are understood as the intersectionality of multiple factors including age, class, color culture, disability, ethnicity, gender, gender identity and expression, immigration status, political ideology, race, religion, sex, and sexual orientation. Social workers appreciate that, 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

a. recognize extent to which a culture’s structures and values may oppress, marginalize, alienate, or create or enhance privilege and power;

b. gain sufficient self-awareness to eliminate the influence of personal biases and values in working with diverse groups;

c. recognize and communicate their understanding of the importance of difference in shaping life experiences; and

d. view themselves as learners and engage those with whom they work as informants.

Educational Policy 2.1.5—Advance human rights and social and economic justice.

Each person, regardless of position in society, has basic human rights, such as freedom, safety, privacy, an adequate standard of living, health care, and education. Social workers recognize the global interconnections of oppression and are knowledgeable about theories of justice and strategies to promote human and civil rights. Social work incorporates social justice practices in organizations,
institutions, and society to ensure that these basic human rights are distributed equitably and without prejudice. Social workers

a. understand the forms and mechanisms of oppression and discrimination;

b. advocate for human rights and social and economic justice; and

c. engage in practices that advance social and economic justice.

**Educational Policy 2.1.6—Engage in research-informed practice and practice-informed research.**

Social workers use practice experience to inform research, employ evidence-based interventions, evaluate their own practice, and use research findings to improve practice, policy, and social service delivery. Social workers comprehend quantitative and qualitative research and understand scientific and ethical approaches to building knowledge. Social workers

a. use practice experience to inform scientific inquiry and

b. use research evidence to inform practice.

**Educational Policy 2.1.7—Apply knowledge of human behavior and the social environment.**

Social workers are knowledgeable about human behavior across the life course; the range of social systems in which people live; and the ways social systems promote or deter people in maintaining or achieving health and well-being. Social workers apply theories and knowledge from the liberal arts to understand biological, social, cultural, psychological, and spiritual development. Social workers

a. utilize conceptual frameworks to guide the processes of assessment, intervention, and evaluation; and

b. critique and apply knowledge to understand person and environment.

**Educational Policy 2.1.8—Engage in policy practice to advance social and economic well-being and to deliver effective social work services.**

Social work practitioners understand that policy affects service delivery, and they actively engage in policy practice. Social workers know 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

a. analyze, formulate, and advocate for policies that advance social well-being; and
b. collaborate with colleagues and clients for effective policy action.

**Educational Policy 2.1.9—Respond to contexts that shape practice.**

Social workers are informed, resourceful, and proactive in responding to evolving organizational, community, and societal contexts at all levels of practice. Social workers recognize that the context of practice is dynamic, and use knowledge and skill to respond proactively. Social workers

a. continuously discover, appraise, and attend to changing locales, populations, scientific and technological developments, and emerging societal trends to provide relevant services; and

b. provide leadership in promoting sustainable changes in service delivery and practice to improve the quality of social services.

**Educational Policy 2.1.10(a)–(d)—Engage, assess, intervene, and evaluate with individuals, families, groups, organizations, and communities.**

Professional practice involves the dynamic and interactive processes of engagement, assessment, intervention, and evaluation at multiple levels. Social workers have the knowledge and skills to practice with individuals, families, groups, organizations, and communities. Practice knowledge includes identifying, analyzing, and implementing evidence-based interventions designed to achieve client goals; using research and technological advances; evaluating program outcomes and practice effectiveness; developing, analyzing, advocating, and providing leadership for policies and services; and promoting social and economic justice.

**Educational Policy 2.1.10(a)—Engagement**

Social workers

a. substantively and affectively prepare for action with individuals, families, groups, organizations, and communities;

b. use empathy and other interpersonal skills; and

c. develop a mutually agreed-on focus of work and desired outcomes.

**Educational Policy 2.1.10(b)—Assessment**
Social workers

a. collect, organize, and interpret client data;

b. assess client strengths and limitations; c.) develop mutually agreed-on intervention goals and objectives; and

d. select appropriate intervention strategies.

**Educational Policy 2.1.10(c)—Intervention**

Social workers

a. initiate actions to achieve organizational goals;

b. implement prevention interventions that enhance client capacities;

c. help clients resolve problems;

d. negotiate, mediate, and advocate for clients; and

e. facilitate transitions and endings.

**Educational Policy 2.1.10(d)—Evaluation**


**Evaluation of Student Learning  (Accreditation Standard 2.1.5)**

BSW I and BSW II Student Performance Evaluation:

The field instructor is responsible for completing a mid-term and a final evaluation of the student’s field placement performance.

The placement performance evaluation to be used for BSW I or BSW II is located in Appendix L.

III. THE FIELD EDUCATION PROGRAM: AN OVERVIEW

Philosophy and Purpose of Field Education
The Field sequence in the Bachelor of Social Work curriculum is designed to connect the theoretical and conceptual contribution of the classroom with the practice setting, fostering the implementation of evidence-informed practice. (CSWE Accreditation Standard 2.1.1 for Field Education)

The field education experience occurs within an agency or community setting under supervision of an experienced Social Worker. Experiential in nature, the varied arenas afford practical experience where students can learn to use themselves and their skills working with individuals, families, groups, organizations and communities. The element of supervision from a seasoned social worker provides learning activities and work assignments that are individualized for the student. Individualized learning plans are important for numerous reasons. Most importantly they are able to focus on the specific educational needs of the student and create realistically attainable experiences. Students therefore gain an understanding of the problems and needs of the population with whom the agency works. This creates an environment that helps develop skills in the practice of social work interventions. Additionally during the process students acquire firsthand knowledge of the Agency functions, and resources, establishing networks of various community agencies. (CSWE Accreditation Standard B 2.1.2)

The field experiences allow students to apply and integrate knowledge gained from the classroom into real life situations. Thus, field education is a highly valued component of the BSW curriculum, as it is recognized that field placement provides a level of learning that cannot be duplicated in the classroom.

Approved potential field placements are established through a formalized arrangement between the University and a community based social service agency. The arrangement is formalized in a written affiliation agreement that is signed by appropriate administrative personnel from both facilities.

Structure of the Field Placement Curriculum

BSW I (generalist) field placement is a 150-hour field placement. BSW II field is a 300-hour field placement, which totals 450 hours of field throughout their senior year. Field I is only offered in the fall of the senior year and field II is offered in the spring of the senior year. (CSWE Accreditation Standard 2.1.3) The USI field education model is a “concurrent” model; that is, students take classroom courses concurrently with their field placement.

Administrative Organization of Field Education
The administration of all field education is primarily the responsibility of the Director of Field Education. The Coordinator of Undergraduate Field Education is responsible for academically advising potential BSW field applicants in the spring of their junior year. A thorough review of their academic history prepares them for their final year at the undergraduate level. If a student is going to be of senior status (94 hours) by the beginning of the following fall term and meet all pre-requisites, they will qualify to apply for field admission.

An agency based supervisor serves as the “field instructor” to the student in placement. The field instructor has primary responsibility for the assignment and oversight of the student’s educational activities in the agency. The design of the practicum is also guided by the educational objectives as defined by the Department of Social Work, an individualized student-learning plan, consultation with the faculty liaison and policies and procedures as outlined in the BSW Field Manual.

The duties of the field education staff are described in Section IV of this manual, “Field Education Personnel and Student Responsibilities.” Additionally, the faculty liaisons serve as the Faculty Field Committee, an advisory group to the Director of Field Education.

In addition to informal feedback from social service agency personnel and students, agency representatives serve on the Department of Social Work Advisory Board and/or interim ad hoc field advisory committees providing guidance in regard to the field education program. Students are also provided a formal meeting yearly with the Director of the BSW Program in which their feedback is sought. Formal evaluation instruments are also utilized in evaluating field education. Those surveys include a “Student Evaluation of the Field Experience” and an “Evaluation of USI Field Faculty” completed by the agency field instructors, which are located in Appendices, L and N. Additionally, the BSW Program Director compiles an itemized composite and analysis of the student performance evaluations as a quality improvement tool.

IV. FIELD EDUCATION PERSONNEL AND STUDENT RESPONSIBILITIES

Roles and Responsibilities of the Director of Field

Overall responsibility for the operation of the field program rests with the Director of Field Education. Field education policy and procedures shall be governed by the standards for field education established
by the Council on Social Work Education and the USI Department of Social Work administration and faculty.

Roles and Responsibilities of the Coordinator of Undergraduate Field Education

The Coordinator of Undergraduate Field Education works within the established field education policy and procedures, under the supervision of the Director of Field Education. The Coordinator of Undergraduate Field Education is responsible for placement of all BSW field students for their Field I and Field II placements. Responsibilities include; assuring that the student has met all criteria for admission to field education; meeting with students to ascertain their areas of interest; maintaining field records; and communicating with seminar instructors, field liaisons, and community agencies. Activities may be delegated to other faculty directly involved with field education. The Coordinator and Director of Field Education are also responsible for BSW Field Education development. The Faculty Field Committee will provide consultation to the Director of Field Education and the Coordinator of Undergraduate Education pertaining to undergraduates.

The Coordinator of Undergraduate Field Education provides orientations for students coming into field, field instructor training at the beginning of each semester, and an ongoing dialogue with field education settings and field instructors. (CSWE Accreditation standard 2.1.7)

Responsibilities of the Coordinator of Undergraduate Field Education include coordination of placement activities with faculty field liaisons, field instructors, and other agency representatives. The Coordinator of Undergraduate Field Education will work with the faculty field liaisons to provide support through technical assistance and mutual consultation to students and field agency personnel. In collaboration with the Director of Field Education, support is provided to field practicum instructors in the following ways:

(1) offering orientation and training to newly active field instructors,
(2) offering periodic continuing education opportunities to all active field instructors,
(3) providing information about the curriculum,
(4) clear practice and evaluation goals for individual students,
(5) copies of the field manual, and
(6) sharing pertinent information about practicum students when congruent to prudent academic practice (see Appendix A).
The Coordinator shall ensure that support is provided to field practicum students. This will be done by selecting field placements based upon the educational program objectives and the learning needs of each student, and maintaining seminar courses concurrent with field placements which provide structured learning opportunities that enable students to integrate knowledge acquired in the classroom and in the field placement to expand their knowledge beyond the scope of their practicum setting. Students will be provided access to descriptive field agency files and the BSW Field Manual as part of the placement selection process.

Additional duties for the Coordinator of Undergraduate Field Education under the supervision of the Director of Field Education include; developing policy guidelines for the administration of field, maintaining appropriate files, and obtaining consultation or feedback from faculty, students, and field agency representatives in regard to field education. This will be done through survey instruments, personal contact, and formal meetings with the faculty field liaisons, Faculty Field Committee, Advisory Board, or other ad hoc groups.

Policies, criteria, and procedures for selecting field settings, placing and monitoring students, maintaining field liaison contacts, and evaluating student learning and field setting effectiveness are congruent with the BSW program’s competencies (CSWE Accreditation Standard 2.1.5)

Approval of community social service agencies is based upon the agency’s ability to provide learning experiences congruent with the mission, goals, and objectives of the BSW program and to provide educationally directed Field with a clear articulation of student learning opportunities within the agency. The school shall assist the agency in assessing and documenting their ability to meet these criteria through mutual discussion during the agency selection process and the use of such instruments as the Agency Profile Form, University/Agency Affiliation Agreement and references in the BSW Field Manual.

Agencies are also required to identify learning activities they can provide which are geared toward the generalist level of work in which students are engaged.

The BSW I practicum must provide the student “opportunities for development of self-awareness in the process of intervention, practice skills to enhance the well-being of people and work toward amelioration of environmental conditions that affect people adversely, professional supervision in the
application of knowledge, values and ethics, use of oral and written professional communications consistent with the setting and profession, and critical assessment and implementation of agency policy within ethical guidelines.” The Field I practicum is a “generalist” social work placement. Social worker roles typical of generalist practice include that of case manager, advocate, broker, educator, community organizer, group worker, and individual counselor. Activities often include preparing psychosocial histories, developing service plans and implementing broad based interventions congruent with multi-variant client needs. Generalist practice is broadly defined. The boundaries for practice are usually determined by the identified client need, the mission and function of the agency and levels of training and skill of the student.

Social work must be either the primary or the secondary discipline within the field placement agency. If it is a secondary discipline, it is expected that social work be sufficiently integrated in order to permit students to engage in meaningful assignments and activities reflecting a positive image of the profession.

It is preferred that field placement agencies operate under an accrediting or oversight body as evidence of their on-going review in regards to ethical and professional standards. In those instances in which an agency does not meet that standard, particular attention will be given to the credentials of the individual professional staff, including licensure status and participation in continuing education activities, expected to be above and beyond the primary criteria noted for field instructors. It is important that the learning environment sufficiently supports the school’s learning objectives. Documentation regarding credentialing and maintaining other standards are kept in the office of the Director of Field Education in the Agency Profile Form.

Agencies are required to demonstrate support for the professional education process by providing a qualified agency based field supervisor and adjusting his or her work assignments to permit adequate time to meet the responsibilities of a field instructor. This includes developing and implementing the student’s field practicum and providing the student regular access for supervision. Agencies are also expected to support the participation of field supervisors in orientation and training programs offered to field instructors through the Department of Social Work.

The Director of Field Education has responsibility for determining if agencies meet the eligibility criteria for approval as a field placement agency as well as maintaining an agency file. The agency file includes the Agency Profile, Affiliation Agreement, the field instructor’s credentials or other documentation.
supporting that eligibility. It is the responsibility of the agency to complete and update these
documents when requested in order to maintain eligibility as an approved field placement agency.

Selection of Field Instructors

Field instructors for BSW field students should hold a master’s or bachelor’s degree in social work from a
CSWE-accredited program. In exceptional cases, a professional who holds a doctoral or master’s degree
in a related discipline may be approved as a field instructor. To be approved under this exemption the
professional must hold a masters or doctoral degree in a related field, be employed in a program
providing services and educational opportunities congruent with the educational objectives of the BSW
program and the educational needs of the student, show a high level of expertise, as reflected in their
professional training and experience, have a commitment to ethical practice, and have respect for social
work as a peer discipline. Approval will be given on a case-by-case basis. Factors to be considered will
include the school’s and the student’s need for the specialization of the agency and expertise of the
prospective field instructor. These exceptions would most often be made when the valued
specialization is not otherwise available to the student under the direct supervision of a BSW or MSW.
In those cases where the field instructor does not hold a master’s or bachelor’s degree in social work,
the field liaison or Director of Field Education will take responsibility for assessing if there are specific
areas which require additional faculty involvement in order to ensure a social work focus is sustained.
(CSWE Accreditation Standard 2.1.6)

In addition, it is important that field instructors have adequate practice experience.

It is preferred that field instructors have a minimum of two years post-BSW practical experience. This
criteria may be waived when the following conditions are met; the BSW social worker has five years or
more practical experience prior to their BSW, their practical experience is assessed to be congruent with
the skill level necessary for an educator at the graduate level, or the social worker shows particular
expertise through their training and experience in a specialization congruent with the educational needs
of a student or students. It is also preferred that persons serving as agency field instructors have at least
one year’s experience in their current position and agency.

The student’s enrollment in the required seminar course for field placement, as well as the faculty field
liaison’s activities (including visits to the field agency to coordinate and monitor field learning
assignments and approval of the student’s individualized learning plan) should ensure the student is
practicing from the perspective of a social worker and that their identification with the profession and
its values are given adequate attention. However, in keeping with CSWE standards, the field liaison will
have a responsibility to assess if additional faculty involvement is needed. Other supports may be
designed and implemented by the field liaison, Coordinator of Undergraduate Field Education, or Director of Field as deemed appropriate. The faculty field liaison, in consultation with the field instructor, will determine the degree of his or her involvement and negotiate a plan by which that responsibility will be met without intruding upon the agency-based supervisor. Agency field instructors from disciplines other than social work will be provided a copy of the NASW Code of Ethics.

Other factors valued by the school in assessing practitioners as perspective field instructors include prior experience in supervising BSW or graduate students in a related field and evidence of activities for their own professional development (e.g. attendance in continuing education programs, including those offered to field instructors through the USI Department of Social Work, self-directed study, or expanded practice experiences).

Persons providing field education should highly value the field component of professional education, have an affinity for working with students, receive gratification from the professional development activities in supervision, make a personal choice to be an agency field instructor after reviewing the responsibilities as outlined in this manual, and affirm their own ability and willingness to meet those responsibilities.

The Director of Field Education will keep on file a resume or other credentials as evidence that the criteria for approval as a field instructor have been met.

Roles and Responsibilities of the Agency Based Field Instructors

The focus of the field education experience is a professional education and the student’s development. The primary role of the field instructor is that of a teacher. The field instructor assesses the professional education and developmental needs of the student, arranges learning experiences to meet those needs, and provides on-going supervision of the student.

A basic requirement for assuming field instructor responsibilities is an adjustment of the individual staff member’s work assignments in order to permit adequate time to develop and implement the student’s field practicum. The field practicum plan should give the student regular access to the field instructor. In addition to informal access, which might occur frequently, it is recommended that formal, pre-scheduled supervisory conferences be provided to facilitate the continuity of the educational process in
a context that is not confined to immediate problem solving. At a minimum, formal supervisory conference time should be equivalent to 1 hour per week.

Other specific responsibilities of the field instructor include providing consultation to the student in the development of an individualized learning plan, completion of a formal mid-term and final evaluation of the student’s performance, and meeting with the faculty field liaison at mid-term and the end of the term to review the student’s progress. Additional meetings can be requested by either the field liaison or field instructor. Field instructors are encouraged to participate in orientation or other continuing education programs offered by the Department of Social Work. [Refer to criteria for selection of field placement agencies and field instructors in the “Responsibilities of the Field Director”]

Involvement of “Task” Supervisors

The field instructor may arrange for other professional staff to provide learning experiences for the student in placement. This allows the field instructor to draw on the experience or expertise of colleagues in facilitating student learning. On those occasions when the field instructor delegates task supervision responsibilities to another professional, it is the field instructor’s responsibility to coordinate the learning experience and obtain input from the task supervisor when evaluating the student’s performance.

Compensating Students for Travel

Agencies are expected to compensate students for the use of their own personal vehicles for any travel directly related to agency work. Such compensation should be given at the same rate paid to full-time staff. Agencies are not required to compensate students for travel from or to their home.

Conference Attendance

Students may be permitted to attend professional conferences or workshops and count those hours toward field. While the Department of Social Work is supportive of student attendance in continuing education programs, approval of attendance in lieu of field is at the discretion of the field instructor and may be contingent on the needs of the agency.

Roles and Responsibilities of the Faculty Field Liaison
The faculty member serving as liaison to the field agency provides consultation and support to the field instructor and the student for the purpose of facilitating the educational process. Functions of the field liaison include linkage, mediation, and monitoring. These functions are carried out through meetings and other contacts with the field instructor and student.

The general expectation is that the field liaison will visit or utilize acceptable conferences with the agency a minimum of two times during the semester. Focus of the meetings might include review of the student’s individual learning objectives and a review of the student’s evaluations at mid-term and end of term. The University Field Liaison is also the field seminar instructor and has contact with the field student weekly. The social work seminar course is spread over the entire semester, during which the Field Liaison/Seminar Instructor meets weekly for three hour sessions with seminar students.

Other specific responsibilities of the faculty field liaison include:

1) providing feedback in regard to the individual learning plan developed by the student in consultation with the field instructor

2) attending meetings or workshops relative to the operation of the field program

3) providing first line mediation and consultation to the field instructor and student regarding field placement issues or problems

4) informing the Director of Field Education of field placement progress and

5) assigning the grade for the field placement.

Responsibilities of the Students in Field

An expectation of students in field placement is that they take the role of a learner actively involved in their own professional education and development. Specific requirements to assist and guide students in the field education process include:

1. Practice competency objectives for BSW field education, which are identified in the BSW Field Manual.

2. Students are required to develop an individualized learning plan from the practice competency objectives outlined in the field manual. (See Appendix I)
3. Students are required to attend a field seminar course, which includes additional assignments designed to assist them in integrating knowledge from their prior courses with their field experience and performance.

4. Students are required to meet the specified number of field practicum hours. The BSW I field practicum requires 150 hours, and the BSW II field practicum requires 300 hours. The field instructor will be asked to verify this requirement has been met. (See Appendix G)

Students in field placement are also required to:

5. Conduct themselves in a professional manner in relation to clients, their field instructor, and other agency staff and community colleagues.

6. Abide by agency personnel and program policies as well as USI and Department of Social Work policies governing students.

7. Actively participate in his or her learning experience through self-assessment of learning needs, professional development, personal strengths, and professional potential.

8. Work within the framework of agency and faculty supervision.

[See the Individual Learning Plan (Appendix I) and Student Performance Evaluation Instruments (Appendix L) in this Field Manual and Corrective Action Procedures in the Student Handbook for additional information in regard to expectations for students.]

Policies regarding field placements in an organization in which the student is also employed

(CSWE Accreditation Standard 2.1.8)

Students may be approved to complete a Field placement in an agency in which they are already employed if the following conditions are met:

1. The Field activities must provide new learning experiences for the student.
2. The field practicum supervision must differ from that associated with the student’s employment. (See Appendix E)

3. The field placement assignment must provide the appropriate level of educational opportunities, e.g. “generalist” activities for BSW students.

4. The employing agency must agree to the field placement plan, which protects the learner role for the student-employee.

Students wishing to complete a field placement in their agency of employment must submit a formal request that clarifies how the above criteria will be met. The form for this request is included in this manual and is to be turned in to the Coordinator of Undergraduate Field Education. (See Appendix E)

Employment Concurrent with and Separate from Field Placement

BSW Field I requires 150 hours and is typically completed in 15 weeks during the fall. BSW Field II requires 20 hours per week. In order to protect the integrity of the learning process, protect the student from a hazardous overload, including an undue professional liability risk, and protect clients served by students, it is recommended that students limit the number of hours they are employed outside of field practicum to 25 hours or less per week during the time they are completing their field practicum.

Requests for Agency Field Placement during Non-traditional Hours

Part-time students are often employed full-time and wish to continue to be employed full-time during their field placement. It is our desire to accommodate the students who need to work. We will make reasonable efforts to do so, however, students are advised upon admission to plan for making accommodations so they can to meet the demands of field placement. The recommendation is made out of concern for students and clients as well as because the availability of non-traditional hours is limited. Agencies, which are open during these hours, may not be able to provide learning activities or supervision which fulfills the educational objectives of the BSW program. In some cases, we are able to accommodate students who need non-traditional field placement hours, but cannot guarantee the availability of a non-traditional field placement.

V. FIELD EDUCATION PROCESS
Student eligibility for Field Placement

**Academic requirements for BSW Field I**

To be approved to enter BSW Field Placement I, a student must have:

1. Officially been admitted to the Social Work Program and be in good standing.
2. Maintain a minimum 2.6 overall GPA and 2.75 GPA in the major. All major social work courses taken after admission into the BSW program must have a minimum grade of C+, except for statistics, in which a grade of C or higher is required.
4. Completed SOCW 325 (Intro. to Social Work Statistics) or equivalent.
5. Completed SOCW 326 (Research)
6. Completed a minimum of 94 hours toward graduation requirements.

Completion of all noted requirements must be achieved by the final summer session immediately preceding entering Field I

**Academic requirements for BSW Field II**

1. Successful completion of all required Social Work courses above the 300 level except for Social Work 411, 412, and 413 with a 2.6 overall GPA and 2.75 in the major. All social work courses taken after admission into the BSW program must have a C+ or better, except for statistics in which a grade of C or higher is required.
2. Completed a minimum of 100 credit hours toward graduation.
3. Maintained academic and professional standards as required in Field Placement I.

Field Placement Process

The Coordinator of Undergraduate Field Education will meet with all potential field students during the spring semester prior to their fall placement. Informational meetings are held to provide the details of the placement process; e.g. the actions they will need to take, such as completing the formal application to enter the field; the actions that will be taken by the field faculty; and the projected time-line (See Appendix B). The time-line will set deadlines for completion of the required Application for Field. Additionally an updated or new resume is required in the field application process.
The Coordinator of Undergraduate Field Education will then meet with each potential BSW I field student to assess the educational needs of the student and their eligibility status in regard to field. The student will be asked to complete a preference sheet designating a first and second choice agency for their field placement. Criteria considered in agency selections include the individual student’s interests and aptitude, professional education and experience, career goals and professional development needs, and availability of the setting. The application for field and the student resume are designed to provide information correlated to the above criteria and is supplemented by the mutual consultation of the Coordinator of Undergraduate Field Education and student during the advising conference (See Appendix A).

There may be exceptions to the process outlined above based on student or organizational needs. The process as outlined is not intended to rule out viable field placement options that meet CSWE standards. For example, it is not unusual for a student to identify a viable placement agency that has never applied for approval as a field agency and request a placement there. In such cases the agency must complete the application process, be evaluated, and approved as an eligible field agency. The agency will be provided consultation by a field faculty member during their application process (See Appendix N).

While in the above case the student typically initiates contact with the agency, students are asked to not initiate contact with any agency already listed as an approved agency. To do so can compromise the equal opportunity of all students interested in the agency. It also risks both the student’s and the school’s relationship with the agency as it violates the established procedure between the agency and the school.

All field placements must have the approval of the Coordinator of Undergraduate Education or the Director of Field Education.

Orientation to Field

A mandatory student orientation to field education will be provided under the direction of the Director of Field Education and the Coordinator of School Social Work, either at a special meeting of all students entering field placement or as separate groups of students. This meeting takes place no later than their first field seminar class. Typically this requires the student to be present the Saturday morning prior to the beginning of classes. Students will be advised of the date and time of this mandatory meeting in advance.
Field Seminar

Students are required to take a field seminar course concurrently with their field placement. The primary purpose of the seminar is to integrate classroom course content from across the curriculum with the practical experience in field. Specific course assignments are designed to meet the needs of entry-level social workers. Additionally, discussion of field experiences in the seminar raises policy and ethical issues, which aids analysis of case material in relation to understanding human behavior and evaluation of one’s own social work practice. The broad range of practice settings in which students gain generalist experience further enhances the learning process. This course allows the student to utilize Core Competencies within their Field experience.

Individualized Learning Plan (ILP)

Quality learning experiences require thoughtful planning. The individualized learning plan is a tool to facilitate such planning. (Appendix I) The student’s learning plan should be individualized with regards to;

1) the student’s present abilities, goals, and professional development needs

2) the learning opportunities the agency setting can provide,

3) the 10 Core Competencies established by CSWE,

4) the Department’s educational objectives for field education, and

5) application of the BSW curriculum. The individualized learning plan should identify learning objectives, as well as activities and assignments to meet those objectives, and methods for evaluating if the student has met the learning objectives. Developing the individualized learning plan delineates the expectations of both the student and the agency supervisor and provides data for evaluation of student performance.

VI. PROBLEM SOLVING, CORRECTIVE ACTION AND TERMINATION PROCEDURES IN FIELD PLACEMENT

As required by the Council on Social Work Education, it is the Department of Social Work’s responsibility to ensure that field placements are “educationally directed, coordinated, and monitored.” When problems occur, the school will take an active role in an effort to mediate and resolve the difficulties. The primary goals of the school will be the assessment and resolution of barriers to achievement for
field, related criteria for satisfactory completion of field placement, and to prevent the disruption of the placement. However, there may be circumstances in which a student is advised to discontinue field education or is involuntarily terminated from the field placement. The student, the field instructor, or the faculty field liaison may initiate the problem solving process. In all cases, an effort should be made to resolve problems as the lowest organizational level.

The Problem Solving Process:

**Student Initiated**

When a student perceives a problem during their field placement, they should first try to resolve it at the agency level. It is recommended that the student take the following steps in the order listed, only moving to the next step when unable to resolve the problem otherwise:

1. Meet with the agency field instructor to discuss and resolve the problem
2. Meet with the Faculty Liaison
3. Meet with the Field Instructor and the Faculty Liaison together
4. Meet with the Field Director

Given that the students attend a field related seminar concurrently with field placement, it is not uncommon for students to first raise issues of concern with the field liaison in an effort to check out their own perspective or for advice on how to best address the issue with their field instructor. However, even in those cases, the student should initially be directed back to the field instructor to resolve the issue at that level.

The student may request reassignment to a different field agency at any point in the process. However, reassignment will not be pursued by the field liaison or the field director without first consulting with the field instructor, and, in most cases, only after reasonable steps have been taken in an attempt to resolve the perceived problems in order for the student to continue in the current field agency. Before a transfer is initiated, the student must submit a formal written request for reassignment to the Director of Field Education specifying the reasons for the request with copies also sent to the agency field instructor and field liaison.

**Field Instructor Initiated**
When a field instructor or other agency personnel has a concern about a student’s performance in field, the following steps to resolve the difficulty are recommended:

1. The field instructor will meet with the student to address the issue.
2. They will also consult the Faculty Field Liaison regarding the concerns.
3. If the perceived problems are not resolved, they will meet with the student and faculty liaison together.
4. If the issue continues to be unresolved, consultation with the Coordinator of Undergraduate Field Education and/or the Director of Field Education may then involve any combination of the interested parties and other school personnel with a need to know.

It is not uncommon or inappropriate for the field instructor to consult with the faculty field liaison prior to meeting with the student to check his or her own perspective or to share their thinking about how to best approach the student. However, it is the field instructor’s responsibility to first work with the student to resolve the concerns before involving school personnel in any corrective action.

**Field Liaison Initiated**

In rare instances, the faculty field liaison may initiate the problem solving process as they become aware of concerns based on a student’s self-report regarding their conduct and performance in field or become aware of difficulties in the field agency which affect the educational experience of the student adversely.

As in the case of problem solving initiated by the student or the field instructor the field liaison should attempt to address their concerns at the lowest organizational level and directly with the key personnel, either student or field instructor as appropriate.

**Corrective Action Process Related to Student Performance in Field:**

1. The field instructor will routinely review the student’s work as a part of the supervision process. Concerns should be discussed with the student at the instructor’s first awareness. Explanations or examples of performance problems and recommendations for improvement will be made to the student along with any potential consequences of failure to meet expectations.
2. If either a single event assessed to be of a serious nature occurs or if problem behaviors persist, the field instructor will contact the faculty field liaison advising him or her of the problems and for consultation in regard to the matter. The student may also consult with the faculty liaison.

3. The faculty field liaison will offer guidance to the agency field instructor and/or the student by phone or in person. The faculty field liaison may also choose to meet with them together.

4. A written corrective action plan with a time line should be developed under the direction of the field instructor after consultation with the field liaison and the student. This might be accomplished with a revised individual learning plan, or with a separate document to be signed by all parties; student, field instructor, and field liaison.

5. Student performance evaluation instruments should reflect identified problems.

Students who receive items rated less than satisfactory at mid-term will be expected to demonstrate improvement in those areas. In order to receive a “Satisfactory” grade for field placement, 76% of the items on the student’s final evaluation must be rated at 3 or above.

6. The field liaison will determine the grade for the student, after consultation with the field instructor and review of existing student performance evaluation instruments.

7. [See also “Termination of a Field Placement” below.]

Assigning a grade of Incomplete:

A grade of incomplete may be assigned in the following situations:

1. The student is demonstrating significant progress in problem areas previously identified, but has not yet obtained a satisfactory level of performance and the assessment of the field faculty is that the student could meet required performance levels within a reasonable and feasible time period and the placement agency is willing and able to extend the placement.

2. The student has not completed the required hours for the field placement due to absences, which can reasonably be excused or are due to extenuating circumstances beyond the student’s control. The agency must agree to extend the placement and an agreement must be negotiated between the student, agency, and school about how and when the hours will be completed before the grade is changed.

3. The student may be transferred to another agency to complete the field placement if that is assessed to be appropriate and is feasible. (See Transfer in Field Placement)[See the Student Handbook and University Bulletin regarding incomplete work and an “IN” grade.]
Transfer in Field Placement

Students may be transferred from one field placement agency to another when it is not appropriate for them to remain in the originally chosen agency. However, it is recognized that such a disruption can compromise the educational process and create additional stress for the student. Therefore, the justifications for a transfer must be compelling. Occasions when a transfer might be considered include the following:

1. The field agency is no longer able to meet their responsibilities due to organizational or staff changes.
2. It is discovered early in the placement that the student/agency fit is not adequate to meet the professional education needs of the student.
3. The student has received an incomplete in the first agency and it is either not feasible or not advisable for the student to complete their placement there.

In any of the situations described above, maximum effort would be made to meet the deficiencies in order to allow continuation of the current placement before a transfer would be initiated. The Department of Social Work reserves the right to not offer a second internship based on student performance issues.

If a transfer is necessitated by problems with the student’s performance or receipt of an incomplete grade, a transfer would be contingent on the student’s authorization for disclosure of prior assessment, including both identified student strengths and performance problems to the potential new field instructor. The purpose of disclosure is to facilitate a field education plan designed to optimize the students’ potential for successful completion via adaptation to the student’s strengths and deficiencies.

If a grade of incomplete was received in the first internship, the student will be required to complete the full number of hours required for the course. In all cases, the first field instructor will be asked to clarify the number of hours completed in the first agency.

Options when a grade is Unsatisfactory
The Department of Social Work may assign a failing grade (below 76%), based upon the recommendation and documentation of the agency field instructor. The grade must be based on the student’s unsatisfactory performance because of failure to meet standards for competency, violations of policies of the agency or school, or unprofessional conduct and unethical practice as defined by the NASW Code of Ethics. The receipt of a failing grade for field automatically terminates the student from that internship and may result in suspension from the BSW program. [See “Range of Corrective Action Outcomes” in the Student Handbook.]

Students may request another internship. This request must be submitted to the Coordinator of Undergraduate Field Education in writing. The request must state the student’s understanding of the reasons for the failure in the first internship and what he or she will do to avoid or resolve those factors in a future field placement. The Coordinator, along with the Director of Field will review the request and take any steps deemed necessary to fairly assess the potential success of the student in a new field placement. In consultation with the Faculty Field Committee a decision will be made as to whether or not the student will be offered another field placement. As in the case of all field assignments, placement will also be dependent upon the availability of an appropriate agency. The original unsatisfactory grade will not be changed. Therefore the entire internship must be retaken and the student must reregister for the course.

In some cases, the Department of Social Work may assess it to be in the best interests of the student to not immediately reenter another internship, but would consider an application to reenter field in the future. It would be expected, should the student reapply to field that the student would present evidence that supports the potential for success in a repeat field placement.

The Department of Social Work reserves the right to deny a student a second internship based on student performance issues or other pertinent information. In no case will a third internship be offered for any single Field course.

Termination of a Field Placement

Student performance or conduct that places clients at risk, is unprofessional, or is unethical may result in termination from the placement at any time during the internship. A determination ordinarily is made jointly by the field agency personnel and the field faculty. However, agencies provide field placement for students on a voluntary basis and have the right to suspend a student without prior
notice. Termination may also result from the agency’s inability to fulfill their responsibilities, unrelated to the performance of the student. The agency is required to notify the Director of Field Education in writing of their termination of the student and the reason, with a copy of the letter provided to the student. (See Appendix N-I).

The Department of Social Work may also act to terminate a student from field placement. Students who are preparing for a career in the social work profession are expected to adhere to the standards for conduct of professional social workers as guided by the National Association of Social Workers (NASW) Code of Ethics. Behaviors that may result in the termination of a student from field placement include unethical conduct and/or failure to perform satisfactorily.

Unethical Conduct: Students who perform in an unprofessional manner within the field agency may be subject to immediate termination from placement. Behaviors that could result in immediate termination from field include sexual misconduct; violation of the university’s Alcohol and Drug Policy; physical or verbal assault of clients, faculty, or professional colleagues; or any violation of the NASW Code of Ethics.

Unsatisfactory Performance: Performance may be assessed as unsatisfactory for reasons including the following:

1) violating agency policies regarding record keeping, attendance, tardiness, confidentiality or practice

2) inability to cooperate in the learning process with field instructors and/or professional colleagues and

3) inability to meet learning expectations.

Additional factors which might prompt the initiation of corrective action, potentially resulting in removal from field and or the BSW Program, include:

1. Failing/Inadequate performance in field.

2. Personal problems which interfere with student performance.

3. Unprofessional behavior, including unethical or illegal behavior (see Appendix C).

4. Negative attitude which impairs the student’s ability to actively participate in the
learning experience.

5. Inability to function in the role of a student.

6. Inability to work within the framework of supervision.

7. Failure to comply with policies of the school or placement agency.

[See Corrective Action, Social Work Department Handbook for further explanation of the above standards.]

Students will be terminated from field for violations of the above standards by the Director of Field Education in consultation with the Coordinator of Undergraduate Field Education, Faculty Field Committee and/or Department administrative staff with a “need to know.” Consultation will not be sought if such consultation could compromise the student’s appeal process. If the student is withdrawn from field for such violations, a failing grade will be given for the field practicum course. The receipt of that grade may result in dismissal from the BSW Program.

Student Rights to Appeal

A student who receives a failing grade in field placement or is terminated from field has the option of appealing the decision through the grievance process. If a student wishes to appeal any decision, he or she should meet with the BSW Program Director to review the appeals process only after all steps in the problem solving process at (as outlined above) have been completed.

If a student believes that certain rights have been violated (i.e. discrimination based on age, gender, race, ethnicity, sexual orientation, social class or disability) the student may file a grievance.

For further clarification of the appeals and grievance conditions and processes, see the Social Work Department Handbook and the USI Bulletin.

[Note: All sections of the Corrective Action Procedures as outlined in the Student Handbook for Social Work and Grievance Procedures of the Department and the University apply to students in field.]