FAQ about Field Placements
MSW Advance Standing
Full Time

1. I have just been accepted to the full time advance standing program and will begin my course work in the fall semester, when does this mean that I will do my field placement?

   **Answer:**
   Your clinical/specialization placement starts at the beginning of the fall semester (August 24th). Your placement will last through both the fall and spring semester.

2. How do I find a placement? Should I be asking now?

   **Answer:**
   You have received a Field Placement form to complete. On that form you were asked for a regional preference, a population preference and a specialization preference. You can be as specific as you wish about those answers-for instance it is ok to say the east side of Evansville.

   We do our best to match you with an agency that fits those parameters and with whom we have an affiliation agreement.

   You must also send in a current resume and a local and national background check.

   Upon receipt of your field placement form, resume, local, and nation background checks by the field office, we will begin the process. You will receive notification from the field office (socialworkfield.com) regarding contacting an agency for an interview.

   Typically you are asked to send a resume and cover letter to the contact person and establish an interview time.
Please DO NOT contact an agency until notified. Contact prior to field notification could result in dismal from field eligibility. Field dismissal stops forward progress of your master degree.

3. Is there a deadline for the packet to be submitted?

**Answer:**
We have set a deadline for all of the material to be sent to us by April 13\textsuperscript{th} 4:30 pm. After that deadline, we will start placing.

4. Am I required to accept the placement offered?

**Answer:**
As with a job interview, acceptance is a two way process. The agency is interviewing you to ascertain a good match and you are interviewing the agency for a good fit for your educational needs. At the end of the interview if you do not feel that this particular agency meets your educational needs, simply thank them for their time and consideration and state that after hearing about the agency, you find that what you would be doing does not match your educational goals at this time but that you hope that sometime in the future that might be different. If you were pleased and the agency indicated acceptance, give them the Instructor Guideline Letter to be signed and returned to the Department of Social Work.

5. Where do I find the Instructor Guideline Letter?

**Answer:**
We have placed a large number of them at the front desk for you to be able to come in and take. They are in the folder marked, “MSW”. If you live out of town, you can request that we mail it to you.
6. How many hours make up the practicum?

**Answer:**
The practicum stretches over both semesters for a total of 600 hours, typically 20 hours a week in the agency. The midterm happens at the end of first semester and the final at the end of the second semester. Simultaneously you will attend a weekly one hour seminar to help you integrate that which you have learned in class with that which you are experiencing in field. The person in the agency who supervises you is called the “Field Instructor” and the person who is a part of the Social Work Faculty that teaches your seminar is called the “Faculty Liaison”. In some agencies the Field Instructor may have you shadowing a separate person to experience different parts of the agency and that person is referred to as the “Task Supervisor.”

7. I would like a placement in the agency where I am employed, is that possible?

**Answer:**
If your agency meets our other requirements, such as we have an affiliation agreement with the agency and they have an LCSW who is not your current supervisor to supervise your placement, it can be explored.
You will need to email our Social Work Field office and request the Placement in Agency of Employment forms. You and your agency will then need to clearly delineate the job from the placement in terms of both responsibilities and supervisor.
An employee and a student have two different roles and obligations and expectations. As an employee, you are required to satisfy the work expectations of the employer. As a practicum student, you are in an academic course with requirements to satisfy the educational expectations in the syllabus and those of
your practicum faculty. As a student, you need time to reflect on your practice experiences, perhaps to use some different approaches in your practice than is the custom at the employment site, to challenge some of the accepted practices at your job, and to carry a learner’s size workload. Accreditation also requires that these two roles be clearly separated.

8. Is field a part of the curriculum for my master’s?

**Answer:**
The Council on Social Work Education policy 2.3 states that “In Social Work the signature pedagogy is field education” and as such field is an academic course, just as all of the other courses are classes that lead to a degree. Thus the practicum begins at the same time as other courses and matches the semester calendar.

9. Can I do my placement in the evenings or on weekends, so that I can continue working at my job?

**Answer:**
There are very few placements that would allow you to be in placement in the evening or on the weekends because in general, the LCSW clinicians work from 8-4 so that even if the facility is a twenty four hour facility, supervision is not available for you. You are better off rearranging your job hours to fit around field or if that is not an option, plan to save enough money to have the time away from work.

Hopefully we have answered your questions and helped you to understand the process by which you are being placed. If you still have questions, you can email Barb at bferguson@usi.edu or call her at 812-465-1004. Field is an exciting time of learning and I truly believe that wherever you are placed you will find opportunities to learn and grow.