Master of Social Work II (Advanced)

Field Manual

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I. INTRODUCTION

Purpose of the MSW Field Instruction Manual
This manual serves as a guide to agencies, faculty, and students engaged in the field instruction 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 MSW program and descriptions of the MSW curriculum to clarify the larger context within which field education occurs.

The MSW Field Instruction manual is available to students, field instructors, and faculty through the University Web Site. 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.

Mission 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. A board of trustees was appointed by the Governor, and the establishment of the University of Southern Indiana became official on July 1, 1985.

The University is a general, multi-purpose, public supported, co-educational institution of higher education offering programs of instruction, research, and service. A liberal arts and science curriculum serves as the foundation for all majors and complements the more than 60 undergraduate programs offered through the University's five schools. Opportunities for study are available in the Schools of Business, Education and Human Services, Liberal Arts, Nursing and Health Professions, and Science and Engineering Technology. Master's degrees are conferred in Business Administration, Education, Industrial Management, Liberal Studies, Nursing, and Public Administration, as well as Social Work. Non-credit courses and special programs are offered by the Office of Extended Services. Through its programs, the University seeks to serve the academic, cultural, and career needs of the student body. As a public institution, it counsels and assists both business and industry as well as social, educational, governmental, and health agencies.
Social Work Department Mission
The Social Work Department prepares students for competency driven practice focused on evolving issues in the community.

MSW Program Mission & Program Goals
The MSW program prepares students with the knowledge, skills and values for advanced clinical social work practice with diverse populations and emerging social issues.

MSW PROGRAM GOALS
1. Educate generalist and advanced clinical practice students on the ten core competencies of social work practice.
   **Objectives:**
   a. Integrate competency-driven learning throughout the MSW curriculum.
   b. Use technology to enhance course delivery and provide students with alternative curriculum options.
   c. Use current scholarship and best practices in assignments in the MSW curriculum.
   d. Use field trips, international programs, speakers, service learning, and forums to enrich student learning about diversity.
   e. Annually update curriculum and course content in response to evaluation feedback, changes in best practices, and community needs.
   f. Provide continuing education for alumni and the regional social work community.
   g. Use course exercises and assignments to promote student awareness of self as an instrument of change.

2. Use research as the foundation for discovering best practices in education and community engagement.
   **Objectives:**
   a. Develop and carry out research focused on social justice in collaboration with the Center for Social Justice.
   b. Conduct regional needs assessments and program evaluations studies
   c. Engage in and encourage multidisciplinary research with community partners.
   d. Partner with the College of Nursing and Health Profession’s Center for Healthy Aging to enhance USI’s position in gerontological education and research.
   e. Use exit surveys, alumni surveys, employer surveys, student focus groups, and benchmarking rubrics to monitor MSW program processes and outcomes.
3. Model and promote the ethic of service.
   Objectives:
   a. Serve on boards, committees, and as members of regional organizations that support and promote the values of professional social work.
   b. Seek and respond to organizational and community service needs in the region.
   c. Sponsor student organizations that recognize academic excellence and promote student service.

Advanced Clinical Social Work Practice
Clinical social work shares with all social work practice the goal of enhancement and maintenance of psychosocial functioning of individuals, families, and small groups. Clinical social work practice is the professional application of social work theory and methods to the treatment and prevention of psychosocial dysfunction, disability, or impairment, including emotional and mental disorders. It is based on knowledge of one or more theories of human development within a psychosocial context.

The perspective of person-in-situation is central to clinical social work practice. Clinical social work includes interventions directed to interpersonal interactions, intrapsychic dynamics, and life-support and management issues. Clinical social work services consist of assessment; diagnosis; treatment, including psychotherapy and counseling; client-centered advocacy; consultation; and evaluation. The process of clinical social work is undertaken within the objectives of social work and the principles and values contained in the NASW Code of Ethics.

II. MSW I Field Competencies
MSW II (advanced) field practicum experiences are designed to promote competency-based education built on the Ten Core Competencies and help students master the following competencies of advanced clinical social work practice.

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:

a. advocate for client access to the services of social work;
b. practice personal reflection and self-correction to assure continual professional development;
c. attend to professional roles and boundaries;
d. demonstrate professional demeanor in behavior, appearance, and communication;
e. engage in career-long learning; and
f. 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

III. THE FIELD EDUCATION PROGRAM: AN OVERVIEW

Philosophy and Purpose of Field Education
The field instruction sequence in the Master of Social Work curriculum is designed to give MSW students generalist and advanced clinical field experiences within an agency or community setting under supervision of experienced practitioners. Through this experiential model, students can learn to use themselves and their professional generalist and advanced clinical knowledge, skills, and values in working with individuals, families, groups, organizations and communities. Learning activities and work assignments are planned to enable students to gain understanding of human beings, their problems, and needs, to develop skill in the practice of generalist and advanced clinical social work engagement, assessment, intervention, and evaluation and to practice the Ten Core Competencies. The MSW field education model is a “concurrent” model; that is, students take classroom seminars concurrently with their field placements.

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Each MSW student is required to take a field seminar course concurrently with their field placement. The primary purpose of the seminar courses is to integrate classroom course content from across the curriculum with the practice experience in field. Specific seminar assignments are designed to meet that goal. Additionally, discussion of field experiences in the seminar inevitably raises policy and ethical issues, 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 and clinical experience further enhances the learning process.

Field education is 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
MSW II (advanced) field students are required to complete 525 hours of supervised field placement experience in 22 weeks. MSW II (advanced) field students who also are taking courses to meet state licensure standards for School Social Work, are required to complete 600 hours in a school setting, from fall through spring over 30 weeks.

Administrative Organization of Field Education
The administration of all field education is primarily the responsibility of the Director of Field Education. Faculty members who teach the field seminar courses taken concurrently with field placement also serve as the liaisons to the field placement agencies in which their students are placed. This model provides a designated faculty member with whom each field agency will interact to ensure consistency in the relationship between the program and the practice community.

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 Dept. of Social Work, an individualized student-learning plan, consultation with the faculty liaison and policies and procedures as outlined in the MSW Field Manual.

The duties of each of the above mentioned field education staff is described in Section III 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 MSW Program in which their feedback is sought. Formal evaluation instruments are also utilized in evaluating field education. Those include a “Student Evaluation of the Field Experience” and an “Evaluation of USI Field Faculty” completed by the agency field instructors. [See Appendices E and G] Additionally, the MSW 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 are 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. While field education activities may be delegated to other faculty directly involved with field education, chief responsibility for program development and assessment of field education remains with the Director of Field Education. The Faculty Field Committee provides primary consultation to the Director of Field Education.

The Director of Field Education provides orientation, field instructor training, and continuing dialogue with field education settings and field instructors (CSWE Accreditation Standard 2.1.7 for Field Education).

Responsibilities of the Director of Field Education include coordination of placement activities with faculty field liaisons, field instructors and other agency representatives. The Director of Field will work closely with the faculty field liaisons who have the most direct personal contact with field agency personnel, providing support through technical assistance and mutual consultation. The Director shall ensure that 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. (Information about practicum students considered “pertinent” in this context would be limited to confirmation of the student’s academic eligibility to enter the field placement and information in regard to prior academic performance if relevant to field placement. Such information is to be shared only for the purpose of acquiring and implementing educational field experiences and supervision designed to address the individualized professional development needs of the student. This information would be shared on condition of a signed formal authorization of release by the student.) [See Appendix A]

The Director shall ensure that support is provided to field practicum students by selection of field placements based upon the objectives of the educational program and the learning needs of each student, maintaining seminar courses concurrent with field placement which provide structured learning opportunities that enable students to compare their practice experiences, integrate knowledge acquired in the classroom and expand knowledge beyond the scope of their practicum setting. As part of the advising process related to the selection of field placement, students will be provided access to descriptive field agency files and content of the field manual for review.
Additional duties 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 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 with field education settings; and evaluating student learning and field setting effectiveness congruent with the MSW program’s competencies (CSWE Accreditation Standard 2.1.5 for Field Education)**

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 MSW program, provide educationally directed field instruction and 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 MSW Field Manual.

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

The MSW II (advanced) field internship required of all MSW students must provide advanced practice opportunities for students to demonstrate mastery of core competencies. The MSW II (advanced) placement emphasizes a therapeutic style of practice within “specialized” program models. The field experience allows students to apply and integrate knowledge gained from the classroom in real life situations. Advanced practice opportunities within a variety of field agencies allow students to select from such specialized programs as mental health, substance abuse, aging, school settings, youth agencies, and children’s services.

Social work may 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 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 regard to ethical and professional standards. In those instances in which an agency does not meet that standard, (e.g. a small group practice not otherwise affiliated) particular attention will be given to the credentials of the individual professional staff, including licensure status and participation in continuing education activities, above and beyond the primary criteria noted for all field instructors. It is important that the learning environment sufficiently support the school’s learning objectives. Documentation in regard to that issue is provided 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 work assignments to permit
him or her adequate time to meet the responsibilities of a field instructor which 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 and for maintaining an agency file, which
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.

The Director of Field Education has responsibility for determining if agencies meet the eligibility
criteria for approval as a field placement agency and for maintaining an agency file, which
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.

Summary list of field agency responsibilities:

1. Complete the forms related to the application process.
2. Provide services representative of generalist social work for MSW Field Placement I and
   advanced clinical social work for MSW Field Placement II.
3. Preferably, have a MSW staff member with the recommended practice experience who can
   serve as the field instructor.
4. Insure regular ongoing supervision of the student, including pre-scheduled conferences
   equivalent to a minimum of one hour per week.
5. Be committed to the values and ethics of the profession 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 and for maintaining an agency file, which
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
Agency based field instructors approved to supervise graduate social work students in field are
ordinarily required to possess a master’s degree in social work. Other criteria taken into
consideration include length and level of their practice experience in generalist or clinical
practice and expertise in the student’s focus area or specialization. In all cases, the credentials
of a field instructor should be compatible with the MSW program goals.

Field instructors for MSW field students hold a master’s degree in social work from a CSWE-accredited program. In exceptional cases, a professional who holds a doctoral or masters degree in a related discipline may be approved as a field instructor. To be approved under this exemption the professional must (l) hold a masters or doctoral degree in a related field, (2) be employed in a program providing services and educational opportunities congruent with the educational objectives of the MSW program and the educational needs of the student, (3) evidence a high level of expertise, as reflected in their professional training and experience, (4) have a commitment to ethical practice, and (4) respect for social work as a peer discipline. Approval will be evaluated and decided on a case-by-case basis. Factors to be considered will include the school and the individual 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 an MSW.

In those exceptional cases where the field instructor does not hold a master’s in social work degree, the field liaison or Director of Field Education must take responsibility for assessing if there are specific areas that require additional faculty involvement to ensure that a social work focus and identification are sustained (CSWE Accreditation Standard 2.1.6 for Field Education).

In addition, it is important that field instructor’s have adequate practice experience.

It is preferred that field instructors have a minimum of two years post-MSW practice experience. That criteria may be waived when the following conditions are met: (l) The MSW social worker has extensive practice experience, five years or more prior to their MSW (2) their practice experience is assessed to be congruent with the skill level necessary for an educator at the graduate level, or (3) the social worker evidences 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 (role) and agency.

In most instances, the student’s enrollment in the required seminar course concurrent with field placement, and the faculty field liaison’s activities, which includes mandated 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 the discipline of social work 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 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 supervisory role of the agency-based supervisor. Agency field instructors from disciplines other than social work must be provided a copy of the NASW Code of Ethics.
Other factors valued by the school in assessing practitioners as perspective field instructors include: (1) prior experience in supervising MSW or other graduate students in a related field, and (2) 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, expanded practice experiences.

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

The Director of Field Education will keep on file a resume or other credentials record 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 the professional education and development of the student. The primary role of the field instructor is that of teacher. The field instructor assesses the professional education and development 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 instruction responsibilities is the agency’s adjustment of the individual staff member’s work assignments 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, meeting with the faculty field liaison at mid-term and the end of the term to review the student’s progress or additionally as 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”]
Summary List of Responsibilities of the Agency Field Instructor

1. Attend the orientation workshop for new field instructors as appropriate.
2. Provide the student with an orientation to the agency.
3. Provide regular and consistent supervision, including pre-scheduled conferences equivalent to one hour per week.
4. Assist the student obtaining information needed to complete field related assignments, including seminar assignments, when appropriate.
5. Assist the student in the development of the individualized learning plan.
6. Assess the quality of the student’s performance in field and complete the mid-term and final evaluation instruments provided by the school (Appendix F), and review the evaluations in a meeting with the student and the faculty field liaison. While an evaluation in a narrative form is not required, they are highly valued, and as a qualitative assessment often more effectively individualizes the report. Including a narrative appraisal is optional.
7. Participate in conferences with the Faculty Field Liaison and the student in conjunction with your evaluation of the student’s performance, or otherwise as appropriate.
8. Consult with the faculty liaison whenever such contact might be of benefit to you or the student.
9. Contact the faculty liaison whenever concerns emerge in regard to the student’s performance in field.

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 who can take into consideration 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 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 review of the evaluations of the student’s performance at mid-term and end of term. Typically, the liaison is also the field seminar instructor, therefore having contact with the student bi-weekly. The school social work seminar course is spread over the whole school year; therefore, the liaison meets three hours monthly with that cohort of 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 relative to 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

A primary 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 provide assistance and guidance to students in the field education process include:

1. Practice competencies for MSW field education are identified in the MSW I (Generalist) Field Manual.
2. Students are required to work with their seminar/field liaison instructors and field agency instructors to write their Individualized Learning Plans (ILP) which is framed by the Ten Core Competencies (See Individualized Learning Plan, Appendix D.)
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. (MSW II practicum requires 525 hours. The field instructor will be asked to verify this requirement has been met.)

Other expectations and requirements of students in field placement include that students are to:
5. Conduct themselves in a professional manner in relation to clients, field instructor, and
other agency staff and community colleagues.

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

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

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

**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 instruction placement in an agency in which they are already employed if the following conditions are met:

1. The field instruction 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 C]
3. The field placement assignment must provide the appropriate level of educational opportunities, e.g. “generalist” activities for MSW I students or clinical/specialization activities for MSW II advanced practice 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 Director of Field Education will provide students an outline for this proposal. [See Appendix C]

**Employment Concurrent with and Separate from Field Placement**

MSW Field II requires 525 hours and is typically completed in 22 weeks during the spring and summer necessitating a weekly schedule of 23 hours per week in field. Therefore, 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 beyond field practicum to 25 hours or less per week during the semester in which they are completing their field practicum.

**Requests for Agency Field Placement during Non-traditional Hours**

Part-time students are often employed full-time and want 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 what accommodations they can to meet the demands of field placement. That recommendation is made out of concern for students and clients as stated above and because the availability of non-traditional hours is limited. Many agencies are not open during non-traditional hours. Agencies, which are, may not be able to provide learning activities or supervision during those hours, which fulfill the educational objectives of the MSW 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

Eligibility for Field Placement
Students who have satisfactorily completed all prerequisite academic course work with a B average are eligible to register for field placement and concurrent field courses with the consent of the Director of Field in consultation with the MSW Program Director.

Field Placement Process
The process for placing students in field includes the following steps:

1. Application for Field Placement
   Soon after the beginning of each semester the Director of Field Education will provide students identified as eligible to enter field placement the following semester the appropriate (MSW I or MSW II) “application to field form” which includes a resume outline. In the case of students requesting a school social work field placement, this will be done in collaboration with the Coordinator of the School Social Work Certification Program. [See Appendix A]

2. Sign-up for Field Education Advisory Conference
   Upon submitting the completed application to the Director of Field, students will schedule an advising conference in which to plan for their field placement. Sign-up sheets will be posted in the Department of Social Work for that purpose. Conferences will not be held without a completed application and resume.

3. Conference and Choice of Field Placement Agency
   The purpose of the conference is to review the student’s application to field in order to assess the individual student’s field education needs. Past professional experience, education, student preferences, career goals, and program requirements are reviewed and correlated to the available field agencies. Lists of approved agencies and descriptive materials are made available to students for review. At the close of the advising conference, students are asked to complete a field agency preference form identifying their first and second choices for field placement and given directions as to how to proceed. The preference form includes an authorization of “release of information” statement to be signed by the student. [See Appendix B]

4. Field Agencies Informed of the Process
   A letter is sent from the Director of Field Education or the Coordinator of School Social Work Certification Program to the first choice prospective field placement agencies informing them of the process schedule letting them know when they can anticipate hearing from students who seek a placement in their agency. They are asked to inform the Director of Field immediately if it is not feasible for them to accommodate a student for the upcoming semester.
5. **Student contact with the Agency of First Choice**
   After all students eligible for field placement have completed the field advising conference most students will be advised to send their resume with a cover letter to the prospective field instructor in their first choice agency. The cover letter should inform the agency personnel of the student’s desire for a field placement, the reasons for that interest and intent to follow-up the next week with a phone call asking for an interview. Any exceptions to this process will be indicated to the student during the advising conference.

6. **Interview at the Field Agency and Report**
   The student will be interviewed in the prospective agency by the field instructor and/or other agency personnel. Upon completion of that interview, the student should contact the Director of Field Education or the Coordinator of the School Social Work Certification Program and advise him or her of the outcome of the interview.

7. **Confirmation of the Field Placement**
   Upon report of verbal acceptance by the student and agency personnel for the placement the Director of Field Education or School Social Work Coordinator will send a letter to the agency to confirm the placement. The letter will include the date of the orientation for new field instructors and other information relative to the field placement such as hours required and dates for the placement.
   **[Should the first choice placement not be available to the student for any reason the agency of second choice will be pursued by repeating steps 4 through 7 in reference to the second choice agency.]**

8. **Clarifying Starting Day and Negotiating a Schedule**
   Students are advised to contact their field instructor no later than the week preceding the beginning of the field placement to clarify when, where and with whom they will report for their first day of placement. Students will negotiate a weekly/hourly schedule with their field instructor by the end of the first week in placement that accommodates their class schedule and the agency’s needs or recommendations for their optimal educational experience in that setting.

9. **Orientation to Field**
   A student orientation to field education will be provided under the direction of the Director of Field Education and/or the Coordinator of School Social Work prior to the start of the semester in which the student will be in field.

10. **Submission of Criminal Background Checks to Director of Field Education.**
    All students are required to have the following criminal background checks completed and submitted to the Director of Field Education within the week prior to start date at field placement:
    
    a. National background check
    b. State of Indiana Background check
    
    Instructions for completion of both criminal background checks will be provided by The Director of Field Education at the Orientation to Field Meeting.
It is recognized 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 the Council on Social Work Education 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.

While in the above case the student has typically initiated 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 jeopardizing both the student’s and the school’s relationship with the agency as it violates the established procedure between the agency and the school.

Field Seminar
Students are required to take a field seminar course concurrently with their field placement. The primary purpose of the seminar courses is to integrate classroom course content from across the curriculum with the practice experience in field. Specific course assignments are designed to meet that goal. Additionally, discussion of field experiences in the seminar inevitably raises policy and ethical issues, 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 and clinical experience further enhances the learning process.

Individualized Learning Plan (ILP)
Quality learning experiences require thoughtful planning. The Individualized Learning Plan is a tool to facilitate such planning. [See Appendix D] The student’s learning plan should be individualized in regard to 1) the student’s present abilities, goals and professional development needs; 2) what learning opportunities the agency setting can provide; 3) Competencies established by CSWE as measures of effective social work practice; 4) the Department’s educational objectives for field education; and 5) application of the MSW curriculum. The ILP should identify learning objectives, the 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 of the educational objectives for field or 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 may be involuntarily terminated from the field placement. The problem solving process may be initiated by the student, the field instructor, or the faculty field liaison. 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 social work students at USI attend a field related seminar concurrently with field placement, it is not uncommon for students to first raise issues of concern with the seminar instructor, who is also the field liaison, in an effort to check out their own perspective or for advice as to how to best address the issue with the 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 will be initiated, the student must submit a formal written request for reassignment to the Director of Field Education specifying the reasons for the request with a copy 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. Consult the Faculty Field Liaison regarding the concerns
3. If the perceived problems are not resolved, meet with the student and faculty liaison together.
4. If the issue continues to be unresolved, consult with the Director of Field Education. The Director of Field Education may then involve any combination of the interested parties and other school personnel with a “need to know” in that, they have responsibilities related to field education or oversight of such.

It is not uncommon or inappropriate for the field instructor to consult with the faculty field liaison prior to the meeting with the student to check out his or her own perspective or share their thinking about how to best approach the student. However, it would be 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 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 with any potential consequences of failure to meet expectations specified to the student.
2. In either, a single event assessed to be of a serious nature, 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 (3) at mid-term will be expected to demonstrate improvement in those areas. In order to receive a “Satisfactory” grade for field placement, 75% 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 other 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 to satisfactory (S).

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 also the Student Handbook and University Bulletin also regarding Incomplete work and an “I” 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 (I) 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 through playing to the student’s strengths and mediating skill 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 grade of (U) unsatisfactory based upon the recommendation and documentation of the agency field instructor. The grade must be based on the student’s unsatisfactory performance due to failure to meet standards for competency, violations of policies of the agency or school, unprofessional conduct or unethical practice as defined by the NASW Code of Ethics. The receipt of an unsatisfactory grade for field automatically terminates the student from that internship and may result in suspension from the MSW program. [See also the “Range of Corrective Action Outcomes” in the Student Handbook.]

Students may request another internship. This request must be submitted to the Director of 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 assesses will avoid or resolve those factors in a future field placement. The Director of Field will review the request and take whatever steps deemed necessary to fairly assess the potential success of the student in a new field placement. In consultation with the Faculty Field Committee and Director of the MSW Program, a decision will be made 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 availability of an appropriate agency. The original grade of unsatisfactory 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 reenter school or field, that the student would present evidence, which supports the potential for success in a
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 instruction course.

**Termination of a Field Placement**

Student performance or conduct, which places clients at risk or is unprofessional or unethical, may result in termination from the placement at any time during the internship. A determination would ordinarily be 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 in writing of their termination of the student and the reason with a copy of the letter provided to the student. [See the Affiliation Agreement, No. 5, Removal of Student from Program.]

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 of 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, 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, which could result in removal from field and or the MSW Program, as cited in the Social Work Handbook, include:

A. Failing/Inadequate performance in Field.
B. Personal Problems, which interfere with student performance.
C. Unprofessional Behavior: including unethical or illegal behavior.
D. Negative Attitude: which impairs the student’s ability to actively participate in the learning experience.
E. Inability to function in the role of a student.
F. Inability to work within the framework of supervision.
G. 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 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 an “unsatisfactory” (U) grade will be given for the field practicum course. The receipt of that grade may result in dismissal from the MSW Program.

**Student Rights to Appeal**
A student who receives an “Unsatisfactory” 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 MSW Program Director to review the appeals process only after all steps in the problem solving process at lower organizational levels 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.]