



**THE OHIO STATE UNIVERSITY**

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COLLEGE OF SOCIAL WORK

# Field Agency Information Guide

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The Ohio State University  
College of Social Work- Office of Field Education  
1947 College Road, Suite 400  
Columbus, Ohio 43210-1162  
Phone: 614-292-7686/Fax: 614-292-1409



Greetings Potential Field Agency,

We welcome your interest in our field practicum program for social work students. Our students are placed in over 800 settings throughout Ohio, across the United States, and beyond under the instruction of experienced, trained social workers. The curriculum provides educationally focused goals and objectives to guide the development of the practicum experience in each setting. A field liaison is appointed to provide academic support to the agency based field instructor. Student placements are made through a formal referral and pre-placement interview process which allows negotiation of arrangements and expectations prior to placement confirmation.

In evaluating settings, there are two primary concerns quality social work supervision and appropriately structured learning experiences. A successful practicum requires both time and professional commitment. Please keep these issues in mind as you design the practicum in your agency. In order to become a field practicum site, agencies are asked to submit the Field Agency Application. The Field Agency Application packet includes:

- [Online Application](#): The application to become a field agency can be completed on our website. It asks you to provide specific information about your field agency such as fields of practice, learning opportunities, requirements for placement, schedule preferences, and other pertinent information.
- [Affiliation Agreement](#): This is a proposed agreement submitted for your approval. You may fill in the requested information and arrange for the appropriate authorizing signature or you may submit an addendum with your revisions for our review. Please follow the hyperlink "Affiliation Agreement" above to complete the Affiliation Agreement. There are [instructions here](#).

Should you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact our team at 614-292-7686 or [cswfield@osu.edu](mailto:cswfield@osu.edu). We look forward to our future partnership!

Sincerely,

Katie Klakos  
Director of Field Education

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## **SELECTION OF SETTINGS FOR FIELD PLACEMENT**

Human service settings throughout Ohio serve as field placement sites. Potential settings may be identified through the following process:

1. Office of Field Education may initiate contact with the agency soliciting affiliation;
2. Agencies may initiate contact directly with the Office of Field Education; or
3. Students may recommend potential settings to the field placement coordinator.

### **Criteria for Selection of Field Practicum Settings**

The following criteria must be met in order for an agency to qualify as a field placement setting:

- The setting's philosophy of service is compatible with the values and ethics of the social work profession.
- There is clarity in the setting regarding its programs and methods.
- The setting qualifies for membership in standard setting bodies, national and local, appropriate to its field or appropriate governmental agencies.
- The agency has a defined and active role in the community and participates in local and regional planning in its field.
- The administrator and staff demonstrate a conviction for professional education and accept the objectives and educational focus of the program of field instruction.
- The staff is large enough and so deployed that the basic program of the setting is maintained and developed without reliance on students. This does not preclude enhancement of the basic program through student activity.
- The social service department of an institution such as a hospital, court, or school, is an integral part of the program of the institution, both in philosophy and the structural organization of service.
- The volume and flow of the program offers students a fairly wide range of learning opportunities commensurate with the college objectives for field practicum. Where a setting is deficient, arrangements can be made with the practicum director and field liaison for complimentary learning experiences in another setting.
- The setting attempts to make available suitable desk space, telephones, word processing facilities, supplies, transportation costs, clerical services, and program space for the student. The availability of a qualified field instructor is essential. The relationship between this person (s) and the field liaison is established to maximize student learning.
- The agency is willing to risk involving students in appropriate responsibilities for practice through clearly defined tasks.
- Sound personnel policies and practices are evidenced.

**NOTE:** With some modification based on current directions at The Ohio State University, College of Social Work, these guidelines have been drawn from the Manual of Accreditation Standards, Council on Social Work Education.

## **PROCEDURE FOR ESTABLISHING NEW FIELD PRACTICUM SITES**

The following procedure will be used in the determination of a new field practicum site:

1. Office of Field Education receives Field Agency Application & Affiliation Agreement.
2. Office of Field Education contacts agency to schedule a site visit with agency personnel.
3. Site Visit
  - a. Review Information Packet
    1. Selection of settings for field placement
    2. Field education roles
    3. Responsibilities of field instructor
    4. Criteria for selection of field instructors
    5. Student activities in field
    6. Field placement hours and supervision
    7. Field policies
    8. Agency Perks
  - b. Determine potential student learning assignments and appropriate volume of assignments.
  - c. Review potential field instructor/task instructor.
  - d. Answer any outstanding questions.
  - e. Tour Agency and identify space/equipment for student.
4. Office of Field Education emails Approval or Denial Notification
  - a. If denied, the agency will be contacted with reasons for denial and steps that can be taken to get approved.
  - b. If approved, the agency and field instructors will be provided with log-in credentials for the Field Database.
5. Agency education coordinators, field instructors, and task instructors register for the Field Instruction Training.

## **FIELD EDUCATION ROLES**

**Field Placement Coordinator:** A college-based staff member assigned to locate field placement opportunities for students. The field placement coordinator contacts the education coordinator and/or field instructors to determine if the specific agency is willing to accept social work students.

**Education Coordinator:** An agency-based individual designated by the agency executive who represents the agency as the central administrative contact and assumes the following responsibilities:

- Prepares, updates and processes all evaluations of setting documents including the affiliation agreement.
- Determines the number and rank of students to be requested.
- Facilitates the pre-placement screening process.
- Confirms the acceptance or rejection of referred students.
- Recommends potential field instructors.
- Channels communication from college to field instructors and actively participates in problem-solving and mediation between students and field instructors.
- Informs director of field education of all changes impacting students.
- Oversees the orientation of students to the entire agency.
- Updates relevant agency information in the Field Database

**Field Instructor:** A social work practitioner employed by an agency who serves as the student's field supervisor on a voluntary (unpaid) basis. This individual is responsible for the education of student(s) while the student(s) is at their agency.

**Task Instructor:** An agency-based individual who does not hold a practice degree in social work (BSSW or MSW) but may be responsible for social work related activities at the agency. This individual would fulfill a secondary role to be responsible for learning objectives, evaluations, and overseeing other activities related to student field experience.

**Co-Instructor:** An approved, experienced MSW degreed professional who co-instructs and serves as primary field instructor with the task instructor to ensure that the requirements for social work supervision are met. The use of co-instruction has historically been significant in the development of non-traditional field settings and allows for the use of the practicum site in the absence of an experienced BSSW or MSW degreed practitioner.

**Field Liaison:** A college-based faculty/staff member or contracted community professional assigned to assist students and field instructors in obtaining and maintaining quality learning experiences in field practicum.

## **CRITERIA FOR SELECTION OF FIELD INSTRUCTORS**

Potential field instructors in approved settings may be identified according to the following approaches:

1. The agency representative may recommend to the college the names of social workers who appear to meet the criteria for appointment as field instructors.
2. The college may suggest to the agency names of social workers who appear to meet the criteria.
3. An agency social worker who is interested in being a field instructor may request consideration through the education coordinator of the field agency.

### **Field Instructor Supervision Requirements**

The BSSW is the minimum degree for supervision of an undergraduate student. The MSW degree is the minimum degree for supervision of a graduate student

- LISW-S is needed for a field instructor only if the student is providing direct diagnosis and billable hours
- Field instructors must attend college-sponsored orientations and training including the Field Instruction Training (FIT).

In addition, the potential field instructor must have:

- At least two years, post-degree experience in social work;
- Sufficient experience within the setting to permit familiarity with program and opportunities for student learning.
- An interest and ability to teach, communicate knowledge, and stimulate student self-development
- Flexibility to allow unique individual development
- The development of learning experiences consistent with educational objectives.
- An orientation toward learning rather than task performance.
- Sound knowledge of at least one area of social work practice.
- Knowledge of community social welfare structure and the utilization of community resources as an adjunct to or alternative to program and service, as well as a means of influencing change in delivery of human services.
- Understanding, acceptance, and willingness to implement the philosophy and objectives of the college as well as assumption of responsibility for contributing ideas and thinking toward strengthening the educational experience in the classroom and the field.
- Sufficient time allocation by the setting, as well as management of time by the individual, to carry out instructional responsibilities including availability and accessibility to student, regularly planned conferences with student, written evaluative summaries of student's performance, planned conferences with the field liaison.
- Professional identification through organizational affiliation.
- Knowledge of current trends in social work and social welfare.



## **RESPONSIBILITIES OF FIELD & TASK INSTRUCTORS**

1. Confirm field start date and agency pre-placement requirements such as background information check and immunizations with student prior to the beginning of placement.
2. Become familiar with Field Practicum Course Syllabus and Learning Agreement Evaluation and review when developing the Learning Agreement with the student.
3. Assist student in designing, negotiating, and implementing a wide range of field learning experiences in line with:
  - a. Expectations of the College of Social Work and practicum setting.
  - b. Expectations of the Field Practicum Course Syllabus.
  - c. Student individual needs and objectives.
4. Help student become familiar with and utilize resources within the agency as well as the larger social welfare system.
5. Meet with the student for at least one hour weekly of planned supervision to engage in continuing mutual educational assessment.
6. Submit all required documentation:
  - a. **Learning Agreement/Evaluation:** The Learning Agreement details the educational goals for the student's learning within the field placement. Completed by the student and the field (and task) instructor.
  - b. **Supervision Log:** The Supervision Log allows the student to record what was discussed in weekly supervision. Completed by the student and signed by the field (and task) instructor.
  - c. **Time Sheet:** The Time Sheet allows the student to record hours in field. Completed by the student and signed by the field (and task) instructor.
7. Recommend an appropriate, well documented grade on the evaluation by deadlines set in the [Field Calendar](#).
8. Communicate on a continuing basis with field liaison regarding student's performance and meet with field liaison in agency at least once per semester.
9. Develop a relationship with student that will provide a climate of reciprocal learning.
10. Encourage maximum student activity and creativity within educationally sound limits.
11. Provide student with ready access to self or support staff.
12. Act as a primary role model of a professional practitioner.

## **STUDENT ACTIVITIES IN FIELD**

### **Generalist Placements: BSSW & First Year MSW**

- Advocacy
- Community work
- Case management
- Supportive counseling/problem solving
- Group facilitation
- Research
- Interviewing
- Psychosocial assessments to identify client needs (not a diagnostic assessment)
- Case planning
- Resource referral & development
- Use of supervision

### **Advanced Placements: ASAP & Second Year MSW**

#### **Advanced Micro Practice:**

- The field practicum focuses on intervention with individuals, couples, families, and groups.
- Students develop an understanding of human behavior and psychopathology, human diversity, interpersonal relationships and family dynamics, mental disorders, chemical dependency, interpersonal violence, consequences of illness and injury, and evaluation of practice.
- Interventions include assessment and diagnosis, crisis intervention, and brief and long term psychotherapies.

#### **Advanced Macro Practice:**

- The field practicum focuses on competency in social work administration with governmental bodies, private social welfare organizations, and/or communities.
- Students learn to analyze social problems, design programs, plan services, evaluate programs, and become familiar with resource acquisition and management strategies.

# **IMPORTANT FIELD POLICIES**

## **Field Hours Policy**

The College of Social Work at The Ohio State University requires all students complete field practicum hours. The field instructor and student are responsible to track field hours by utilizing the Time Sheet in the Field Placement Database. Students must inform field instructors of all absences, and any time missed must be made up to the satisfaction of the field instructor, field liaison, and College of Social Work requirements.

### **Hours Requirements**

The following table contains the requirements for hours in field agency placement at each student rank:

|                                      | <b>BSSW</b>                    | <b>MSWI</b>      | <b>MSWII/ASAP</b> |
|--------------------------------------|--------------------------------|------------------|-------------------|
| <b>Semesters in Field Placement</b>  | AU & SP                        | SP               | AU & SP           |
| <b>Total Hours in Agency</b>         | 420                            | 224              | 672               |
| <b>Hours per Semester (14 Weeks)</b> | 210                            | 224              | 336               |
| <b>Hours per Week</b>                | 15                             | 16               | 24                |
| <b>Credits per Semester</b>          | 5                              | 1 (AU)* & 2 (SP) | 4                 |
| <b>Grading System</b>                | Satisfactory or Unsatisfactory |                  |                   |

AU = Autumn Semester

SP = Spring Semester

\*\* MSWI Students are required to enroll in Preparing for Field Preparation course in AU Semester for 1 credit hours. MSWI students will not begin in agencies until SP semester.

### **Additional Information & Special Conditions**

#### **The University is closed and the agency is open on a scheduled field placement day:**

Students are not required to attend field on days the when the University is closed.

- If the student chooses to go into the field placement, the student will receive credit for the field hours worked. (i.e., if the student worked 4 hours on this day, the student will receive credit for 4 field hours only).
- If the student chooses NOT to go into the field placement, the student will not collect field hours.

#### **The University is closed and agency is closed on a scheduled field placement day:**

Students are not permitted to automatically collect field hours. A student will need to coordinate the make-up day(s) with his/her field instructor.

- This condition should be applied to holidays, when applicable.

**Holidays:** If the agency sends staff home early for a holiday, the student will receive credit for the remainder of the scheduled field hours for that day (i.e., if the student was scheduled to work 8 hours on this day but was sent home at the 6th hour, the student will receive credit for 8 field hours).

**Winter & Spring Break:** Students are not required to attend field during the winter and spring breaks.

- If the student chooses to go into the field placement, the student will receive credit for the field hours worked. (i.e., if the student worked 4 hours on this day, the student will receive credit for 4 field hours only).
- The additional hours may be banked for use on another day as determined between the student and the field instructor.

**Weather Conditions or Other Reasons:**

- If the agency or university is closed due to weather conditions or other reasons, the student will receive credit for regularly scheduled hours.
- If the student is sent home due to inclement weather, the student will receive credit for the hours the student was scheduled to complete only (i.e., if the student was scheduled to work 8 hours on this day but was sent home at the 6th hour, the student will receive credit for 8 field hours).

**Statement on Jury Duty:** The College of Social Work at The Ohio State University requires all students to complete field practicum hours. Any hours not completed during a given semester, must be completed before the student can be assessed a field grade. It is important to note that field hours are not waived if the student is on jury duty. Because of this, students are encouraged to request an excuse or a postponement from jury duty, when possible. By request, the student's program office can provide a letter to the court confirming the student's full time or part time enrollment in the BSSW or MSW program. Students should request the letter, at minimum, two weeks prior to jury duty, to allow processing time.

### **Human Rights Activities Policy**

(Policy revised May 2015. This new policy takes effect autumn semester 2015.)

The College of Social Work at The Ohio State University requires all students to complete human rights activities (HRA) each semester they are enrolled in field education. The purpose of HRA is to engage the student in advocacy outside of the field placement, as well as to allow our students the opportunity to provide volunteer services to those most in need. When we talk about advocacy, we mean advocacy on a macro level addressing issues for entire populations. When we talk about volunteering, we mean working on a more individual level to help individuals in need.

Below are the criteria for these activities:

1. BSSW, MSWII and ASAP students are required to complete 16 hours of human rights activities by the end of their field experience.
2. MSWI students are required to complete 8 hours of human rights by the end of their field experience.

3. These activities must be outside of the field agency and not related to the day-to-day activities of the student's field placement. These hours count as part of the student's total required field hours and should be recorded on the field Time Sheet.
4. Students must get approval from their field instructor prior to the activity in which they wish to participate. The student should discuss the event in supervision, record it in the Supervision Log, and reflect on it in a weekly journal entry.
5. It is the student's responsibility to identify activities in which to participate. The College of Social Work Student Association (CSWSA) lists some activities on their website at <http://cswsa.org.ohio-state.edu/>
6. Sample human rights activities include, but are not limited to:

| <b>SAMPLE HUMAN RIGHTS ACTIVITIES</b>   |  |
|---|--|
| <b>ADVOCACY ACTIVITIES</b>  | <b>VOLUNTEER ACTIVITIES</b>  |
| Participating in an Advocacy Day  | Mentoring or tutoring a youth  |
| Organizing and participating in a letter-writing campaign to your legislators   | Community organization event, such as a neighborhood clean-up project                  |
| Participating on a human services levy campaign                                 | Volunteering at a food pantry or soup kitchen  |
| Researching and writing a letter to the editor                                  | Organizing a food drive  |
| Participating in non-profit organizations walks (e.g., Walk to End Alzheimer's) | Volunteering at a non-profit walk to check in walkers/runners, distribute flyers, etc. |

7. **Trainings and workshops DO NOT count toward human rights activities.** These activities are included in the Learning Agreement separate from HRA. Exception: If a student would like to participate in advocacy-based training they attended, the time spent only on the additional advocacy work will be counted as an HRA; not the training time.
  - a. From time to time the field office will send notification (via email) of those activities that can be used for field hours. This simply means that the student can receive credit for field hours which can be listed on the Time Sheet, but will not meet the requirement for human rights.
8. **Working on political campaigns or for partisan events DOES NOT count as human rights activities.** All activities, both volunteer and advocacy, must be consistent with educational policies as well as NASW policy and practice statements.

The Office of Field Education will provide additional information regarding human rights activities during orientation and other trainings. Should you have any questions about HRAs, please contact your field liaison.

## **AGENCY BENEFITS**

- Support for field instructors provided by an assigned field liaison who is available for consultation throughout the year
- Fee Waiver Payment Authorization Program for College of Social Work courses and continuing education trainings
- OSU in-person library privileges for any agency employee
  - Note: Please e-mail us at [cswfield@osu.edu](mailto:cswfield@osu.edu) if you're interested in using this benefit.
- Annual Awards Breakfast/Lunch as a demonstration of our gratitude for agency's supporting student field experiences.
- Field & Task Instruction Trainings (free CEUs)
- Posting of job and volunteer opportunities on OSU's career database for students, alumni, and others to view
- Development of qualified social workers for potential employee selection through hosting of field practicum students