



THE OHIO STATE UNIVERSITY

COLLEGE OF SOCIAL WORK

Field Agency Information Guide

(Revised August 2023)

The Ohio State University
College of Social Work
Office of Field Education
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Greetings Potential Field Agency!

We welcome your interest in our field practicum program for social work students. We have over 1500 active agencies, and our students are placed in over 450 sites throughout Ohio, across the United States, and around the world 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.

There are two primary concerns regarding evaluating prospective settings: 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. To become a field practicum site, agencies are asked to submit a few affiliation documents. These include:

- [Agency Application](#): The application to become a field agency can be completed on our website. It asks you to provide general information about your field agency and should take no more than five minutes.
- [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. We look forward to our future partnership!

Sincerely,

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SELECTION OF SETTINGS FOR FIELD PLACEMENT

Human service settings 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.
3. Students may recommend potential settings to a staff member.

Criteria for Selection of Field Practicum Settings

The following criteria must be met 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 wide range of learning opportunities commensurate with the college objectives for field practicum. Where a setting is deficient, arrangements can be made with the Director of Field 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. The Office of Field Education receives the Field Agency Application and the Affiliation Agreement.
2. A staff member from the Office of Field Education contacts the agency to schedule a site visit with agency personnel.
3. The site visit takes place, either in-person or via a video call.
 - a. During that visit, the agency and staff member will review all forms and ask questions about the agency. Examples of question topics include field policies, agency perks, student activities in field, field education roles, selection of settings for field placement, criteria for selection of Field Instructors, supervision, field hours, Human Rights Activities, Responsibilities of Field Instructor, etc.
 - b. During the site visit, the staff member and agency will determine potential student learning assignments. The staff member will also answer any outstanding questions and review the potential Field and/or Task Instructor.
4. The Office of Field Education emails an 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. The agency's Education Coordinators, Field Instructors, and Task instructors register for the Field Instruction Training (either in-person or online) and complete it.

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 Instructor 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 (meaning a 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 or 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 and Task 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, etc.
- Professional identification through organizational affiliation
- Knowledge of current trends in social work and social welfare

RESPONSIBILITIES OF FIELD AND 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. Review these 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 the expectations of the College of Social Work and practicum setting, the expectations of the Field Practicum Course Syllabus, and the student's individual needs and objectives.
4. Help student become familiar with and utilize resources within the agency, as well as the larger social welfare system. Provide the student with ready access to self or support staff.
5. Meet with the student for at least one hour weekly of planned supervision to engage in continuing mutual educational assessment. For more information about supervision, please look at our [Supervision Requirements](#).
6. Submit all required documentation:
 - a. **Learning Agreement:** The Learning Agreement details the educational goals for the student's learning within the field placement. This form is completed by the student and the Field Instructor (or Co-Instructor). The Liaison, Student, and Field Instructor (or Co-Instructor) sign off on this. Task Instructors (if applicable) do not sign this form.
 - b. **Supervision Log:** The Supervision Log allows the student to record what was discussed in weekly supervision. This form is completed by the student. It is signed by the Field Instructor (or Co-Instructor) and Task Instructor (if applicable).
 - c. **Timesheet:** The Timesheet allows the student to record hours at their placement. This is completed by the student and signed by the Field Instructor or Task Instructor (if applicable).
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 and act as a primary role model of a professional practitioner.
10. Encourage maximum student activity and creativity within educationally sound limits.

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 and 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.

FIELD HOURS POLICY

The College of Social Work at The Ohio State University requires all students complete field hours. The Field Instructor and student are responsible to track field hours by utilizing the Timesheet in the Field Database. Students must inform field instructors of all absences, and any time missed must be made up to the satisfaction of the Field Liaison, Field Instructor (or Co-Instructor, if applicable), and College of Social Work requirements.

Hours Requirements

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

	BSSW	MSWI	MSWII and ASAP
Total Hours in Agency	400	224	672
Hours per Semester/Week	200/12-13	224/16	336/24
Grading System	Satisfactory or Unsatisfactory		

Additional Information and Special Conditions

- **The University is closed and the agency is open on a scheduled practicum 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 (for example, if the student worked four hours on this day, the student would receive credit for four 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 practicum day.**
 - Students are not permitted to automatically collect field hours. A student will need to coordinate the make-up day(s) with their Field Instructor or Task 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 (for example, if the student was scheduled to work eight hours on this day but was sent home at the sixth hour, the student will receive credit for eight field hours).

Winter and 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 (for example, if the student worked four hours on this day, the student would receive credit for four 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 (for example, if the student was scheduled to work eight hours on this day but was sent home at the sixth hour, the student will receive credit for eight 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 two weeks prior to jury duty (at minimum) to allow processing time.

HUMAN RIGHTS ACTIVITIES POLICY

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 HRA by the end of their field experience. MSWI students are required to complete 8 hours of HRA by the end of their field experience.
2. 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 Timesheet in the Field Database.

3. Students must get approval from their Field Instructor (or Co-Instructor, if applicable) prior to the activity in which they wish to participate. The student should discuss the event in their weekly supervision, record it in the Supervision Log, and reflect on it.
4. It is the student’s responsibility to identify activities in which to participate. The College of Social Work Office of Field Education lists some approved activities on their website [here](#).
5. Sample Human Rights Activities include, but are not limited to:

SAMPLE HUMAN RIGHTS ACTIVITIES	
ADVOCACY ACTIVITIES	VOLUNTEER ACTIVITIES
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.

6. **Trainings and workshops do not count toward Human Rights Activities hours.** These activities are included in the Learning Agreement separate from Human Rights Activities hours.
 - **Exception:** If a student would like to participate in an advocacy-based training they attended, the time spent only on the additional advocacy work will be counted towards the HRA hours, not the training time.
7. **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.
8. **Human Rights Activities must deal primarily with humans.** Working with animals (in most cases) cannot count towards this requirement.

The Office of Field Education will provide additional information regarding HRA hours during orientation and other trainings. If you have any questions about Human Rights Activities, please contact your Field Liaison or cswfield@osu.edu.

AGENCY BENEFITS

- Support for Field Instructors provided by an assigned Field Liaison who is available for consultation throughout the year
- Eligibility for the [Fee Waiver Payment Authorization Program](#) for College of Social Work courses and continuing education trainings
 - For any questions about this program, please e-mail cswfield@osu.edu.
- 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
- In-person library privileges for any agency employee
 - Note: Please e-mail us at cswfield@osu.edu if you are interested in using this benefit.
- Annual Field Education Awards event as a demonstration of our gratitude for agency's support of student field experiences
- Field Instruction Trainings, which provide free CEUs