



Department of Social Work

APPALACHIAN STATE UNIVERSITY

BEAVER COLLEGE OF HEALTH SCIENCES

BSW Field Education Manual

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The Appalachian State University *BSW Field Education Manual* is intended for information purposes only and does not constitute a contract between the University and the student. While this handbook presents policies and programs as accurately as possible at the time of publication, the department reserves the right to revise any section or part without notice or obligation. Changes in degree requirements do not affect students already enrolled in a degree program, although adaptations may be needed. Degree requirements can be found in the Graduate Bulletin and Program of Study for the student's year of admission to the university. Changes in departmental and academic policies become effective for all students on the date approved for implementation, therefore all Social Work students are subject to those policies as posted herein. **Last revised July, 2016.**

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Overview of the BSW Program

The Department of Social Work is part of the Beaver College of Health Sciences at Appalachian State University. The department offers both the Bachelors of Social Work (BSW) and Masters of Social Work (MSW) degrees. These programs are each accredited by the Council on Social Work Education (CSWE). In addition the department also offers a minor in Social Work.

BSW Mission Statement

Guided by an overarching framework of human rights, and grounded in human relationships and scientific inquiry, the mission of the BSW Program at Appalachian State University is to promote the health and well-being of individuals, families and communities; prevent oppression, discrimination and economic injustice; and provide assistance to those in need. The BSW Program, informed by and engaged with regional, national and global community contexts, aspires to provide exemplary educational opportunities. The curriculum is designed to prepare students for generalist social work practice within the distinct Appalachian culture of the region, as well as across national and international contexts.

BSW Program Goals

- Provide educational opportunities to assist undergraduate students in gaining the competencies necessary for generalist social work practice.
- Extend learning opportunities to students on the main campus as well as to those living in the High Country and surrounding communities of western North Carolina.
- Provide classroom, community, and practice opportunities which reflect the needs of the High Country of North Carolina, and that facilitate knowledge and skills which are transferable to national and global contexts.
- Provide a learning environment which promotes personal development, scientific inquiry and the professional values of the social work profession.
- Provide a curriculum that is preparatory to graduate level social work education.

Field Education: Social Work's Signature Pedagogy

The BSW Field Education Program within the Department of Social Work provides an opportunity for students to integrate their curriculum knowledge with real-life experiences in a variety of field practice settings. Students are supervised by experienced social work Field Instructors at human services agencies where they refine their social work skills and begin their lives as social work professionals.

The field placement is a vital part of the professional development of the student. Through our collaborative efforts the Department of Social Work and human service organizations will continue to offer field education of the highest quality to enhance human well-being and meet the

basic human needs of people within this area of North Carolina. The BSW students complete one semester block placements in the last semester of their senior year. Our program covers two campus sites, Boone, and Morganton. Other sites are included based on need and availability.

The Council on Social Work Education (CSWE) has set 2008 standards for Field Education. This area of the curriculum is considered the "signature pedagogy" of the program. Field education is considered the central form of instruction and learning in which a profession socializes its students to perform the role of practitioner, connects the theoretical and conceptual contributions of the classroom with the practical world of the practice setting, and is systematically designed, supervised, coordinated, and evaluated based on criteria by which students demonstrate the achievement of program competencies.

Organization and Sequence

Senior social work majors enter field placement with a liberal arts background. Building on a strong general education program and a carefully designed set of cognate courses, social work students prepare for generalist practice by completing a set of five pre-professional courses. After successful completion of these, students apply for admission to the social work professional sequence. Once admitted, students then complete their remaining social work courses, including their practice courses.

The Social Work Practicum (S W 4650: Social Work Field Instruction) is initiated only after students have successfully completed all the required social work and cognate courses. Students must receive at least a C in every required social work course and cognate course, and maintain at least a **2.5 GPA** in social work and a **2.5 GPA** overall. All coursework (social work courses, cognates, General Education courses, electives, Departmental Honors coursework, University Honors coursework, remaining Associates Degree coursework for distance education students) must be completed before entering Field. Students are required to submit a request in writing to the Field Director to request an exception.

Students must complete the Field Application and the Field Placement Process during the semester prior to entering the field experience. The Field Director will communicate to the entire faculty the students who are requesting to enter field, giving faculty the opportunity to express any concerns about readiness for field. The Field Director will then present the list of students to the field committee to discuss concerns and approve students to enter field. In this way, the Department of Social Work attempts to assure that only students with the requisite level of professional knowledge, professional identity, and skills will begin their field education.

While in the field education course, students also complete the capstone course, SW 4690: Senior Seminar: Issues and Ethics for Field and Profession. This seminar is specifically designed to accompany the field placement experience and explicitly coordinates the integration of classroom theories and knowledge base with the practice component. As the name suggests, students also concentrate on refining their abilities to make ethical decisions even when ambiguity exists.

Course Requirements

Field education is an integral part of the educational experience of a social work major. The purpose of field instruction is to provide the student with a concentrated, supervised, practical experience that will afford the opportunity to apply, integrate and critique theories and skills acquired from the social work curriculum. As the student functions within a professional role and agency, course content is translated into professional competence. Field education also expands the students' knowledge of agencies, individuals, families and communities. After successfully completing the senior field experience, the student pursuing a baccalaureate social work major is prepared for entry-level social work practice.

It is important to reflect on the activities in which the student will engage during their field education course. In 2008, CSWE defined their Educational Policy and Accreditation Standards¹ based on ten competencies. These competencies form the overall student objectives for the BSW Program. And, while all aspects of the curriculum have been working towards assisting students to develop these competencies, we recognize that students must have actual practice experiences in order to consolidate, integrate and refine the knowledge and skills required for generalist practice. Providing these practice experiences is the role of the field education course.

Below, we outline the competencies for the BSW Program at ASU. These competencies also serve as the objectives for the field education course.

BSW Competencies and Practice Behaviors

1. Identify as a professional social worker and conduct oneself accordingly.
 - 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.
2. Apply social work ethical principles to guide professional practice.
 - 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 Ethics 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.
3. Apply critical thinking to inform and communicate professional judgments.

¹ CSWE (2008). Educational Policy and Accreditation Standards.

- 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.
- 4. Engage diversity and difference in practice.
 - a. recognize the extent to which a culture's structures and values may oppress, marginalize, alienate, or create/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 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.
- 5. Advance human rights and social and economic justice.
 - 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.
- 6. Engage in research-informed practice and practice-informed research.
 - a. use practice experience to inform scientific inquiry; and
 - b. use research evidence to inform practice.
- 7. Apply knowledge of human behavior and the social environment.
 - a. utilize conceptual frameworks to guide the processes of assessment, intervention, and evaluation; and
 - b. critique and apply knowledge to understand person and environment.
- 8. Engage in policy practice to advance social and economic well-being and to deliver effective social work services.
 - a. analyze, formulate, and advocate for policies that advance social well-being; and
 - b. collaborate with colleagues and clients for effective policy action.
- 9. Respond to contexts that shape practice.
 - 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.
- 10. Engage, assess, intervene, and evaluate with individuals, families, groups, organizations, and communities.
 - a. Engagement
 - i. substantively and affectively prepare for action with individuals, families, groups, organizations, and communities;
 - ii. use empathy and other interpersonal skills; and
 - iii. develop a mutually agreed-on focus of work and desired outcomes.
 - b. Assessment
 - i. collect, organize, and interpret client data;

- ii. assess client strengths and limitations;
 - iii. develop mutually agreed-on intervention goals and objectives; and
 - iv. select appropriate intervention strategies.
- c. Intervention
- i. initiate actions to achieve organizational goals;
 - ii. implement prevention interventions that enhance client capacities;
 - iii. help clients resolve problems;
 - iv. negotiate, mediate, and advocate for clients; and
 - v. facilitate transitions and endings.
- d. Evaluation
- i. critically analyze, monitor, and evaluate interventions.

The Department of Social Work Field Education Program provides a list of practice behaviors which have been developed to operationalize the generalist social work competencies. It is these practice behaviors which define the “doing” of generalist social work. It is important to note that students will be provided with opportunities to practice in ways that are most likely to achieve the outcome goals of promoting individual and community well-being, preventing social and economic injustice and resolving problems and providing services as needed. Generalist social work is characterized by this integration of services.

In accordance with the CSWE Educational Policy and Accreditation Standards (CSWE 2008), we expect that BSW students will engage in generalist social work practice activities. Students can expect to engage in a variety of agency activities which allow them to refine and extend their abilities in accordance with the practice behaviors outlined in the Learning Goals and Objectives Plan. While specific field activities vary according to agency, student, Field Instructor, and focus of the work, the following guidelines are applicable to all placements:

If possible students are to be assigned cases for which they have primary responsibility. In some agencies students must have an agency employee with them at all times. In such cases a student would still need opportunities to demonstrate competence by completion of tasks indicated on their Learning Goals and Objective Plans. The type and number of cases assigned should be consistent with the general objectives of the field experience, and with the specific learning needs of the student in mind;

- Students must have the opportunity to develop skills in strengths-based direct services as well as promotion of individual and community well-being;
- Cases should be assigned as soon as the field instructor and student determine student readiness, typically in the first few weeks of placement;
- Completion of process recordings for educational purposes is required of all students.
- Field activities are to include weekly conferences with the Field Instructor, staff conferences, attendance at selected meetings of the agency Board of Directors or Advisory Council if listed in LGOP, community contacts, and involvement with policy issues.

Development of the Learning Goals and Objectives Plan(LGOP)

The Learning Goals and Objectives Plan guides the student's work in their field experience. This document outlines specifically what the student will do throughout their field education. It is developed by the student in direct collaboration with the Field Instructor. The Field Instructor delineates the work that is conducted within the agency, puts it into context in terms of generalist practice and outlines a number of opportunities for student learning. The student works with the Field Instructor to outline a plan for developing practice behaviors that demonstrate the core competencies for generalist practice.

The Learning Goals and Objectives Plan is also designed to assist the student in progressing in skills across the time that they are in placement. For instance, students likely will start their field education by observing social workers, reviewing agency policies and developing the specific knowledge necessary for conducting the work of the agency. They will then progress to closely supervised assessments, interventions, evaluations and developing a macro project. The student will then move to a level of supervised independent practice reflective of their student status and their level of competence.

The Learning Goals and Objectives Plan is designed to provide the format for the student's midterm and final evaluation. It begins the process of an ongoing evaluation. As activities are completed or as the agency needs and plans change, there may need to be changes made in the Learning Goals and Objectives Plan.

Field Seminar

Students are required to take Senior Seminar: Issues and Ethics for Field and Profession (SW 4690) concurrently with the field. This seminar is designed to integrate classroom learning with field experiences and is the Social Work Capstone course. The Senior Seminar is conducted by a social work faculty member and meets for three hours per week. Specific seminar content accommodates input from students as well as standard program expectations relevant to the integration of the field experience, the core curriculum and the competencies. Seminar assignments may vary according to instructor; however, all assignments are designed to enhance the integration of classroom and field learning. Seminars elicit student reflections on their field experience and provide a forum for the exploration of field-based practice and policy issues. The seminar also focuses extensively on reinforcing social work values, practice frameworks, diversity and an understanding of the Appalachian culture and other cultures where services are provided. A commitment to human rights and social and economic justice are also emphasized.

Field Education Roles and Responsibilities

In order to facilitate understanding of the policies and procedures, it is useful to define key critical terms. Please refer to the definitions below.

Field Instructor - The Field Instructor is the agency employee who supervises the day-to-day activities of the BSW student. The Field Instructor meets with the student one hour weekly, assists in developing the Learning Goals and Objectives Plan (LGOP), reviews process recordings and completes the midterm and the final evaluation based on the LGOP. It is preferred

that the Field Instructor has a BSW or an MSW from an accredited program and at least one year of experience in the agency or an agency assigns a BSW/MSW supervisor within the agency. The Field Instructor should be the person that has the most direct knowledge of the student's demonstration of competencies and practice behaviors.

Seminar Instructor - The Seminar Instructor is the faculty member who is responsible for integrating the field education experience with classroom learning and for reinforcing the social work perspective as applicable to all field settings. The Seminar Instructor also performs the role of the Field Liaison, acting as the link between the university and the agency. Seminar Instructors will hold an MSW degree.

In some agencies, a student's Field Instructor may not hold a social work degree. Although the social work perspective is reinforced by the Seminar Instructor and field education seminar, the Seminar Instructor who holds an MSW degree may determine that a student needs additional supervision. Upon recommendation from the Field Director, Seminar Instructor, agency, or by student request, the Seminar Instructor or other faculty member will meet with the students, individually or in small groups.

Field Director - The Field Director is the full time faculty member who is responsible for oversight of all aspects of the field education program.

Quality field instruction requires the close collaboration of the agency, Field Instructor, student, and Social Work Program. Each has a distinct role and specific responsibilities in field instruction. To enhance the coordination and execution of those roles, the responsibilities of each are identified below.

Responsibilities of the BSW Field Director

The ASU Department of Social Work Field Education Program recognizes the critical role of field instruction in the educational experience of our majors. The Program values the significant contributions that field agencies and Field Instructors make to the development of the generalist practitioners who successfully complete our curriculum. It is the responsibility and intent of the Program to provide the support and information field placements require to effectively meet their obligations to students and professional social work education.

The Field Director is administratively responsible for the design, coordination, and guidance of the field instruction component of the social work curriculum. In collaboration with agencies, Field Instructors, students, and members of the social work faculty, the Field Director is responsible for:

- Developing policies and procedures according to the goals of the Department of Social Work and the educational policies and accreditation standards of CSWE;
- Chairing the Field Education Committee at Appalachian State University;
- Developing and maintaining the *BSW Field Education Manual* which provides context and guidance for field instruction;

- Selecting agencies appropriate for field placements and approving agency staff members as Field Instructors;
- Assigning a Field Instructor for supervision of all students.
- Assigning a Field Supervisor to students if needed;
- Coordinating and finalizing assignment of students to field agencies;
- Orienting Field Instructors and Field Supervisors to the design and objectives of field education and the overall social work curriculum;
- Disseminating updated information related to changes in the social work program or accreditation standards to Field Instructors and Field Supervisors;
- Providing consultation to agencies on the development of their field instruction programs;
- Assuring that field education policies and procedures are correctly implemented, and that the educational objectives of field instruction are not compromised;
- Working with the Chair of the Department of Social Work to select faculty members to serve as Seminar Instructors and Field Liaisons to field agencies; and
- Assessing and evaluating the quality of the field education program along with the BSW Coordinator and the Field Committee.
- Serving on an administrative team comprised of the Chair the BSW Program Director and the MSW program Director.
- Assigning a grade for the field placement course upon recommendation from the Seminar Instructor.
- Being available as a consultant to faculty teaching field education seminar.
- Serve on departmental committees to represent the impact of all other aspects of the program on field education.
- Oversee child welfare collaborative program and subsequently scholar and waiver students.
- Oversee graduate assistants.
- Oversee the internship inventory.
- Participate in university wide and state wide forums for internships.

Responsibilities of the Field Education Committee

The Field Education Committee is composed of social work faculty members and is chaired by the Field Director. The purpose of the Field Education Committee is to assist in developing the curriculum and policies of the Field Program. The Field Education Committee also makes recommendations for field agencies and Field Instructors. Additional roles for this committee are the review of students' employment based application for the field, recommendation as to the readiness of all students to enter field and administrative review when issues or concerns arise in the field. In addition, the field committee will review policy changes which will be incorporated into the BSW Field Manual and communicated to the Social Work Department faculty and students. The Field Education Committee members act as a departmental advisory committee for the Field Education Program.

Responsibilities of the BSW Seminar Instructors

Seminar Instructors assume an important role in the quality of the field experience. The seminar instructor is responsible for:

- Making contact with the student and the field instructor twice during each semester with at least one of these visits occurring face to face to: (1) identify appropriate learning opportunities for the student; (2) consult with the student and Field Instructor on the progress of a placement; and (3) review student records; integrating field education experiences with classroom learning via the field seminar course;
- Consulting with Field Instructors and students regarding field related issues when they are not being resolved between the FI and the student, and developing procedures for resolution;
- Reinforcing the social work perspective as applicable to each student's field site;
- Ensuring that the social work perspective is sufficiently emphasized for those students whose Field Instructor does not hold a social work degree;
- Consulting as needed with the Field Supervisor, if assigned;
- Evaluating the student's performance and assigning a grade for field instruction seminar; and
- Providing evaluative information on the quality of agency field instruction to the Field Director, and recommending revisions in the field education program;
- Providing additional supervision to students as needed.
- Communicating with the Field Director on any issues of concern about student interns and, agencies and field instructors.

Responsibilities of the Agency

An agency's decision to provide a placement for a BSW student includes obligations to invest agency resources and time necessary for quality field instruction. Field agencies are responsible for:

- Structuring the work load of Field Instructors so that sufficient time is available for supervision of students;
- Developing assignments and adhering to expectations that are appropriate to the educational objectives of social work field education;
- Providing students with necessary space, resources, and support services;
- Accepting students for placement without regard to race, ethnicity, sex, age, sexual orientation, religion, political beliefs, or disability status;
- Allowing students to explore and experience all aspects of agency structure, policy, and program relevant to student learning objectives;
- Orienting students to agency policies, procedures, and programs, and informing students of significant revisions in each;
- Encouraging Field Instructors to attend orientations sponsored by the ASU Social Work Program;
- Honoring the Field Instruction Agreement which stipulates policies and procedures for field instruction and is reviewed and signed by an agency representative;
- Providing clear procedures to ensure the safety of the student, and implementing a process to support the student if safety issues arise; and

- Assist in providing students with resources to contact to complete background checks and drug screens if required by the agency.

Responsibilities of the Field Instructor

The primary role of the agency Field Instructor is that of educator. This is both a demanding and rewarding role that involves the following varied responsibilities:

- Identifying and creating opportunities for students to obtain and demonstrate competencies for generalist practice;
- Selecting activities that support the student's learning needs, including but not limited to: (a) appropriate types and number of cases; (b) inter- and intra-agency meetings and community task groups; (c) assigned readings, including grant proposals and agency policy documents; (d) agency projects; (e) group and community interventions; and (f) educational conferences;
- Assuring that the student is properly oriented to agency policies, procedures, norms, and organizational structure;
- Interpreting the objectives of the field instruction program to other agency personnel, and eliciting support for those objectives and acceptance of the student as a beginning level professional social worker;
- Providing an hour of weekly supervisory conferences and as-needed consultation for students focused on identified learning needs and objectives;
- Assessing student performance relative to beginning level generalist knowledge and skills, and providing structured, constructive evaluative feedback to the student and Faculty Liaison, including completion of the Student Evaluation forms for SW 4650;
- Attending orientation sessions and field instruction seminars, institutes, and workshops sponsored by the ASU Social Work Program; and
- Providing information to the student regarding safety and agency policies regarding safety. If safety issues arise, providing the student with supervision and support.
- Reviewing and signing all necessary forms including but not limited to the Learning Goals and Objectives Plan (LGOP), mid-year and final evaluations, supervision log and time log, process recordings.
- Consulting with other staff or supervisors involved in student learning to complete the mid-year and final evaluation.

Responsibilities of the Student

A productive field experience requires that the student actively participate in the design and implementation of field education. Students assuming a passive approach to the experience risk poor evaluations and lack of competence upon completion of the placement. To maximize the opportunity presented by field education, the student should fulfill the following responsibilities:

- Collaborating with the Field Instructor and Seminar Instructor in identifying learning needs and specifying learning objectives;
- Actively exploring learning opportunities within the agency, and participate with the Field Instructor in the selection of appropriate learning materials and activities;
- Complying with agency and field placement policies, procedures, and standards. This includes background checks, if the agency requires them;

- Using supervision and supervisory conferences appropriately, including participating in selecting content for conferences and using supervision to openly address needs, concerns, and issues;
- Attending and participating in agency staff meetings and professional meetings or conferences recommended by the Field Instructor;
- Attending and participating in supervisory conferences recommended by the BSW/MSW supervisor if applicable;
- Integrating field and classroom learning by applying theory and concepts to field assignments and thoughtfully participating in the senior seminar; and
- Continually assessing the quality of the field experience and field instruction, and keep the Field Instructor, BSW/MSW supervisor and Seminar Instructor informed of concerns regarding the placement as soon as they occur.

Policies and Procedures

Criteria for the Selection of Field Agencies and Instructors

The availability of quality field agencies and Instructors is crucial to the success of the field education program and the effectiveness of the social work curriculum. In effect, the agency serves as the laboratory in which the student may ultimately develop and test their knowledge and skills under the guidance of the Field Instructor. Because field agencies and Instructors do hold vital roles the social work program maintains certain standards for agencies and Field Instructors. Criteria for the selection of each are specified below.

Selection of Field Agencies

A field agency and/or the Field Director may initiate the discussion of developing a field placement for students. Prior to approval the Field Director and agency representatives explore the feasibility in detail. The Field Director will schedule a site visit prior to approval as a field placement agency. Based on the program's commitment to the High Country and surrounding region, field agencies are located within approximately 150 miles of Boone, NC. Selection of agencies as placement sites is based on the following criteria:

- Functions of the agency include those considered to be within the purview of the social work profession.
- Social work is identified as a discrete profession by the agency, and members of the social work staff are given professional status.
- Generalist practice opportunities are available for the student.
- Policies and procedures governing the delivery of agency services are clearly defined;
- Agency policies adhere to non-discriminatory service delivery;
- Professional climate is conducive to learning and to student identification with the profession;
- A qualified staff member is available to serve as the Field Instructor
- The Field Instructor is provided with adequate time to provide supervision;
- Adequate support services and facilities are provided for students;
- The agency demonstrates a willingness to allow students to participate in agency programs and activities that are relevant to student learning needs,

- The agency is willing to assign substantive cases to students; and
- There are written policies to address work situations that may entail risk and risk management policies and a process for supervision and support, if safety is compromised.
- Opportunity exists for a student to demonstrate completion of expectations noted in the Learning Goals and Objectives Plan of all 10 competencies and practice behaviors.

When an agency wishes to accept Appalachian students for field placement and it is determined that the agency satisfies the above criteria, a letter of confirmation is sent to the Field Instructor which also serves as an invitation to the field orientation. Prior to the start of the semester that the student is in field placement the student obtains the necessary signatures on two agreements, the Internship Contract and the Confidentiality Agreement. If the agency requires other contracts or affiliation agreements the Field Director will assist in facilitating communication between the university and the agency to obtain the document.

Selection of Field Instructors

Primary considerations in the selection of field agencies include the qualifications of the Instructor and the willingness to serve as Field Instructors. It is difficult to overestimate the significant role Field Instructors assume in the educational experience of the BSW student.

All Field Instructors must have either a BSW or MSW degree or a degree in an allied service profession. It is strongly preferred that Field Instructors have a social work degree from a CSWE accredited program, but in some instances it may be necessary to consider an on-site Field Instructor with a degree from a related discipline. It is also preferred that all Field Instructors have a minimum of two years of practice experience with at least one year in the agency in which a student is placed.

Selection of Field Instructors is based on the following criteria:

- Familiarity with the competencies required of the generalist social work practitioner;
- Experience with the populations served by the agency;
- Identification with the social work profession;
- Adherence to the values and ethics of social work;
- Ability to conceptualize and illustrate principles for generalist social work practice;
- Ability to assist students in incorporating professional values and ethics in their practice activities;
- Ability to present material clearly and to design learning experiences appropriate to a student's educational needs and interests;
- Familiarity with agency policies and procedures and their implications for service delivery;
- Ability to provide structured, planned supervision, including weekly conferences with students and consistent evaluative feedback to students; and
- Ability to provide supervision and support to students regarding safety issues.

When meeting with a potential field placement site, the Field Director discusses expectations, assignments and supervision needs. The Field Director assesses if the site and experiences that a student could receive there would satisfy a student being able to meet competencies. Potential Field Instructors are introduced to the competencies and practice behaviors through dialogue and written materials. They are also directed to the Social Work Department website to review the Manual and

other required forms. The Field Director also reviews the assignments that the students will be required to complete in seminar while the student is at the agency, which include process recordings, agency presentation, and self-assessment. The Field Director requests a resume and Field Instructor Information Sheet to be completed for each Field Instructor. Field Instructors are encouraged to attend the orientation and new Field Instructors are required to attend.

Diversity and Cultural Competence Factors for Placements

Appalachian State University's Department of Social Work promotes field placements in which students gain knowledge and understanding of diversity and practice cultural competence. Although many of the field placements are in the immediate region, which is largely white, there is still a very diverse learning context. Students will frequently engage with diverse groups, including single parents, individuals with varying socio-economic status, people who are homeless, children and older adults, persons with mental and physical health concerns, individuals affected by substance abuse, people affiliated with different religions and spiritual traditions, and people identifying as gay, lesbian, bisexual, and transgender.

Additionally, field placements extend into other parts of the region, some of which are much more diverse than the High Country, where the University is located. For example, some placements are in Charlotte, the state's largest city. Some of the agencies have very large numbers of African American, Latino, and Hmong clients and employees, including their social workers. Students also serve clients in urban areas such as Asheville, Greensboro, and Winston-Salem, for example, which are also quite diverse.

Students attend field seminars weekly and share their experiences as described in the curriculum sections. Therefore, those students in placements with minimal diversity benefit from the information provided by those who are in more diverse placements. The field instruction program is a major factor in providing students with a learning context that enhances respect for all persons and an understanding of diversity and the need for cultural competence.

The Placement Process

The semester prior to entering the field education course, an eligible student completes a *Request for Placement* form, providing background information and specifying areas of interests, placement preferences, educational objectives, goals for the field experience and confirmation of having completed all social work courses and cognates. Using information from the data form and feedback from social work faculty, the Field Director or field faculty member holds a pre-placement conference with the student, where they explore field education experiences which are appropriate to the student's needs and interests and which meet departmental requirements. Although the student has extensive input into this process and may provide information regarding potential agencies and Field Instructors, the Field Director has the responsibility for selecting agencies and Field Instructors and matching students with placement sites.

Upon approval from the Field Director or field faculty, the student will set up an interview with the prospective field placement agency and Supervisor. Note that the student does not make an

initial contact with the agency until they receive approval from the Field Director. Following the interview, the Field Director or field faculty assesses the appropriateness of the potential placement with feedback from both the agency and student. If agreeable to the agency and student, the Field Director or field faculty makes final arrangements for the placement. To provide continuity for the student and the agency and to allow for greater depth of experiences, the arranged placement is intended to remain constant over the duration of the field requirement. Students may be moved from one placement to another only in the case of extreme circumstances (i.e. the agency closes; there is no longer a social work component at the agency). Final approval of the field placement rests with the Field Director or field faculty.

Employment Based Field Placements

It is recommended that students be placed in agencies where they have not been employed. The familiarity of the students work often creates issues for students who are in a placement to learn new skills while trying to satisfy employers and work demands. Policies have been made to aid employment based placements. In those circumstances where it is decided that it is in the best interest of the student to do this, there are certain criteria that must be met.

- The student must have an assignment, in a unit or program of the agency that is different from his /her employment. This unit should be in a unit where the student has never worked.
- The Field Instructor must be a BSW or MSW with at least two years' experience in the agency and in their current position where they will be supervising.
- The Field Instructor must not have supervised the student prior to the field placement.
- The student must have been employed for at least one year prior to the field placement.
- The placement must have an educational focus. The role of learner and the role of employee must be kept separate. The student must complete the placement hours with the goal of education rather than work.
- The specifics outlining differing responsibilities as an employee and assignments as a student will be written within the application which suffices as a partial learning contract complete with signatures of Supervisors and Agency Directors. Students will be expected to complete the required hours for the placement separate from hours related to employment.
- An agency that is providing a field placement for an employee must meet the same criteria as other field agencies.
- The Employment Based Application will be submitted by the due date. The Field Director or field faculty will schedule a meeting with the student, the student's work supervisor and proposed Field Instructor. After reviewing the application and the agency, the Field Director or field faculty will make a recommendation to the field committee for approval.

Exceptions

If a student requests an exception to any of the above policies, the student is required to write a detailed letter to the Field Director and detail the rationale for the exception. The Field Director will then present the request to the Field Committee. Exceptions will not be granted if the learning experience of the student is in jeopardy.

Specialized Field Placements (DSS and School)

School Placements- The social work student who desires to receive North Carolina school social work licensure as a school social worker should complete the school social work elective (SW 4270) and complete a field placement in a public school system. In addition, two education courses also are recommended for completion and can be counted as general electives towards graduation. Following completion of these requirements, graduates may pursue licensure through the Regional Alternative Licensing Centers located throughout North Carolina, but they must first be employed with a North Carolina School System as a school social worker.

For additional information, please contact Dr. Kellie Reed Ashcraft, the Assistant Chair, at ashcraftkb@appstate.edu.

Department of Social Service Placements (DSS) in Child Protective Services or Foster

Care/Adoption- The NC Child Welfare Education Collaborative is the overall initiative working to strengthen public child welfare services by increasing the number and diversity of well-trained and highly-committed BSWs and MSWs in local departments of social services (DSSs).

Emphasizing public child welfare practice, the Collaborative provides educational opportunities and/or financial support to students who are interested in careers in child welfare.

- ✓ **Prior to field**, BSW students wishing to complete a field placement in a County Department of Social Services Child Welfare unit **must** have completed:
SW 4002: *Competencies for Child Welfare*
SW 4365: *Social Work Practice with Children and Families*
- ✓ SW 4002 will be offered in the fall on campus and in the summer off campus. SW 4365 will be offered in the spring on campus and off campus as needed. **Students should take these two courses in the regular semester just before, or the semester as close to, entering field to prepare for DSS placements.**

Students typically are notified of upcoming Collaborative and Field Application time frames through announcements in class and via student email lists. The windows for the Collaborative Applications are typically open once in the Spring and once in the Fall, for approximately 1-2 months.

Following submission of the field application for a DSS placement, students will be asked to meet with a member of the Field Faculty to review the application, discuss short and long term interests and specifics for the placement. **If approved to proceed in the Collaborative, the Field Faculty member will assist in locating the placement site. Students will need to complete all components of the Collaborative, including meeting all ASU requirements and Faculty approval to receive Pre-Certification.**

The term “Waiver” refers to the status of a student enrolled in the Collaborative, completing the expected courses and DSS placements. The term “Scholar” refers to the status of a student enrolled in the Collaborative who is receiving a stipend from the Collaborative. **The stipend is not**

currently available to students. However, if monies become available by the state, students will receive notification via email they are able to apply to be a scholar/trainee, and they can update their application if they choose. In addition to completing the application, students wishing to receive a stipend will also be required to complete an interview. Not all students who interview receive a stipend. **Students receiving a stipend and are getting financial aid are required to contact the Office of Student Financial Aid as soon as they are notified they are receiving the stipend.** Scholars are required to work 18 months in a state DSS following graduation. Scholars who do not complete the 18-month work requirement in a state DSS following graduation are required to pay the stipend back to the state. Waiver students are not required work in a state DSS following graduation.

All students completing the Collaborative program will be pre-certified to work in DSS, increasing their marketability and improving services to families and children.

Orientation to Field Placement

When meeting with a potential field placement site, the Field Director discusses expectations, assignments and supervision needs. The Field Director assesses if the site and experiences that a student could receive there would satisfy a student being able to meet competencies. Potential Field Instructors are introduced to the competencies and practice behaviors through dialogue and written materials. They are also directed to the Social Work Department website to review the manual and other required forms. The Field Director also reviews the assignments that the students will be required to complete in seminar while student is at the agency which include, process recordings, agency presentation and Capstone Final Project. The Field Director requests a resume and Field Instructor Information sheet to be completed for each Field Instructor.

Upon the decisions to place a student in a particular agency a letter of confirmation is sent to the Field Instructor which also serves as an invitation to the field orientation. Included in that letter is information related to student start and end dates, seminar instructor assignment and notification if orientation will cover changes in the program and curriculum such as the 2008 CSWE adoption of competencies. All BSW students are required to attend this orientation. New field instructors are strongly encouraged to attend. Continuing education credit is awarded to field instructors that attend. The orientation occurs just prior to or at the start of the semester. During the orientation, Field Instructors and students have the opportunity to socialize and to obtain information related to field placement policies outlined in the BSW Field Education Manual. In addition, the Competencies are discussed and a presentation/discussion ensues regarding the Learning Goals and Objectives Plan (LGOP). In addition, the students have the opportunity to meet with their Seminar Instructors and the Field Instructors have an opportunity to meet with the Field Director to review topics such as supervision, BSW generalist tasks to fulfill competencies outlined in LGOP and potential student issues.

If a Field Instructor is unable to attend orientation the seminar instructor is informed of the possible need to present and reinforce materials presented at the orientation. Field instructors are communicated with by email to receive general information, changes or instructions for student

evaluations. Field instructors are also given the opportunity to complete a survey at the end of the semester to evaluate the Seminar Instructor, the Field Director and the Field Education Program in general.

Field Schedules

The nature of the field experience varies according to the characteristics of the agency, the client population, the Field Instructor, and the student. However, field instruction is conducted within certain guidelines set by the ASU Department of Social Work. These guidelines are reflected in the field-related policies stipulated below. They are intended to maintain reasonable standards for field education, and to inform the actions of agencies, Field Instructors, and students while allowing for creative, individualized field experiences.

Successful completion of the BSW degree culminates with the student's field education instruction. This instruction is fulfilled by completing S W 4650: Social Work Field Instruction, which is a twelve credit-hour required course. The course must be taken concurrently with S W 4690: Senior Seminar: Issues & Ethics for Field & Profession. The field education instruction is completed during one semester in which a student is placed in a social work agency for approximately 32 hours each week, for a total of 440 hours per semester.

In order to understand the ways in which social work concepts and activities impact populations, students are expected to be in placement during regular agency business hours when professional social workers and administrators are most likely to be available for coordination, collaboration and supervision. Additionally, it is expected that all assignments and clock hours are completed at the practicum site (the defined practicum site may include multiple agencies and/or community home visits). Evening and weekend hours can be negotiated between the agency and the student but only with proper supervision on site.

Students are expected to be in the field according to the schedule developed with their Field Instructor. There is little flexibility within this time framework for sick leave, personal emergencies, etc. Students must make up all absences due to personal reasons. Students are expected to be in the field placement the entire semester. Students cannot "bank" hours to finish early. Students are not permitted to complete tasks with clients however prior to the start of the semester. Exceptions will be reviewed by the Seminar Instructor and the Field Director.

Students are entitled to take holidays in accordance with university and agency schedules. Students placed in the public school system will however take the holidays that the school system takes, in order to provide consistency with the children and adolescents that the BSW students are working with. Students may also be excused from their agency for the observance of religious holidays and for participation in professional meetings. Excused absences must be negotiated by the Field Instructor, student, and Faculty Liaison according to the needs of clients, agency, and student. NOTE: Even though these are considered excused absences, the number of hours spent in the field is not reduced. Students must complete 440 hours in the field regardless of excused absences.

While students are expected to have a plan for completing the required hours, there are sometimes unexpected and unavoidable circumstances which prevent the completion within the semester. When this occurs, students may make a request to the Seminar Instructor to complete

hours in the time between the end of the semester and prior to grades being turned in. If a student is still unable to complete their hours an incomplete may be given if the situation meets university guidelines regarding incomplete grades. The student will be expected to obtain approval of the Seminar Instructor, agency and Field Director. The student will create and submit to the Field Director a written plan to complete the necessary hours.

Some agencies require an orientation or training prior to the start of the semester. The student is permitted to attend this orientation/training, however only the equivalent of one week or 32 hours may count toward the 440 hours. Students are not permitted to complete tasks with clients however prior to the start of the semester. All requests for these hours must be made in writing to the Field Director. Because the Field Education is primarily educational in focus and activity, students are not expected to put in additional hours to meet the needs or requests of the agency.

Safety

Students are responsible for becoming familiar with the safety policies and procedures of their field placement agencies. In addition, each student should have a conversation with their supervisor related to these policies and the method to reach your supervisor, including a plan for coverage if the supervisor is not available.

If a safety issue occurs with a student, the student or Field Instructor should contact the Seminar Instructor immediately using the contact information shared at the beginning of the semester. If the student or Field Instructor cannot reach the Seminar Instructor, then they should contact the Field Director (cell: 828-406-9686) or the Department Chair (cell: 828-964-0579).

Evaluations

BSW field students receive grades of “satisfactory” (S) or “unsatisfactory” (U) for the 12 credit hour course. However, students are evaluated on an ongoing basis, through their weekly supervision and their day-to-day interactions with the Field Instructor. Students receive constructive feedback to assist them in their professional development. The student is responsible for using this feedback and supervision for their own development.

The basis for evaluation is the Learning Goal and Objectives Plan, since this plan was purposely designed to designate the activities and opportunities for the student to demonstrate their competence in the 10 competencies and in each of the practice behaviors. A midterm evaluation conference is held by the Field Instructor, student, and Seminar Instructor. At this time, formal grades are not given but rather the student’s progress is closely examined in relation to each of the practice behaviors. If any inadequacies are noted a remediation plan is developed to assist the student in meeting all the course objectives.

Final grades of Satisfactory or Unsatisfactory are assigned by the Field Director for the SW4690 at the end of the semester. The Learning Goals and Objectives Plan sets out not only the activities that the student will complete during the semester, but also indicates how the student will demonstrate competence in each of the competencies.

The Field Instructor meets with the student to review the student's performance. Students are to actively participate in the completion of the formal evaluation report. Students must read and sign the report before it is submitted to the Seminar Instructor. Students who disagree with aspects of the report may file an addendum noting those areas in which there was disagreement.

The Field Instructor provides ratings of each of the practice behaviors which are associated with the competencies, using the following Likert scale: 1=Never demonstrates competency in practice behavior, 2=occasionally demonstrates competence in practice behavior, 3=sometimes demonstrates competence in practice behavior, 4=demonstrates competence in practice behavior most of the time, 5=demonstrates competence in practice behavior all of the time. Students receive scores for all practice behaviors and the average score for practice behaviors within each competence is calculated. While these scores do not directly equate with the course grade, they do receive considerable weight in determining the final grade of Satisfactory or Unsatisfactory.

The completed evaluations are submitted to the Seminar Instructor for review and comments. The Seminar Instructor makes a recommendation to the Field Director regarding grades (satisfactory or unsatisfactory) based on information gathered during field visits, midterm and final evaluations, input from Field Instructors and/or Supervisors, and observations from the seminar class. The Seminar Instructor or Field Director can ask for input or obtain consultation from the field committee if necessary. The Field Director assigns the final grade. In addition to the evaluation scores submitted by the Field Instructor, the final grade may take into account the Seminar Instructor's comments, the Field Instructor's comments and materials submitted by the student.

Students receive a letter grade of A to F in the Senior Seminar Class SW 4690. The seminar grade is assigned by the Seminar Instructor. Students must make a C or better to successfully pass the course. If a student receives a Unsatisfactory in SW4650 or lower than a C in SW4690, the student must take both of the corequisite courses to graduate.

Resolving Field Education Concerns

The Field Education Program is committed to assisting students to develop their Competencies for a generalist foundation and for advanced practice in the concentration curriculum. Care is taken to ensure that the student is ready for field education, that the field agency is a suitable environment for the educational experience, and that the Field Instructor is prepared to supervise a BSW student; issues and concerns may nonetheless arise. These issues must be identified and addressed in a professional and timely manner. Every effort is made to assure that the student's rights to due process are protected, as well as assuring the appropriate protections to client and agency interests.

While the majority of student placements do not result in concerns for students, seminar instructors or field instructors, issues do arise at times that need collaborative action to resolve. The following issues need to be addressed in order for students to have the best opportunity to demonstrate competencies: personal issues manifesting in behavior that negatively impacts the student's ability to perform adequately in a field placement (for example, mental health, substance abuse, health concerns, family matters, legal), supervision issues, attendance issues, issues of safety to student or clients, change in agency supervisor, students in danger of being dismissed by the field

placement agency, or insufficient progress towards completing the Learning Goals and Objectives Plan (LGOP) within a timely manner. Please note this list is illustrative not exhaustive.

The severity of the concern will influence the level of intervention and steps followed (LSU).

In extreme circumstances a student may be immediately suspended or terminated from the field agency. These may include but are not limited to a) danger of harm to clients, to students, to other professionals, b) breaches of client confidentiality, c) behavior which violates appropriate professional boundaries, d) impairment, or e) agency request. The Field Director will consult with Social Work Department administrators to determine the appropriate course of action. Engaging in conduct that results in dismissal from the field may also result in immediate dismissal from the program or an APR. Given the professional nature of the BSW program, such action may be taken even if the behavior occurs close in time to what would otherwise be the student's graduation.

When other concerns are identified, the following steps are strongly recommended.

Issues in the seminar:

1. The Seminar Instructor and student should attempt to resolve concerns as soon as possible through open discussion of the issues. Possible solutions will be identified, implemented, and documented. Documentation may include e-mail summaries of meetings and/or the Academic Standards Concerns Form (BSW Manual) The Field Director may serve as a resource to assist the student and the Seminar Instructor in resolving concerns.
2. If a satisfactory solution is not reached and/or if another issue arises, the BSW Program Director and Field Director should be contacted. The Directors may consult with the Department Chair. The faculty member and Directors may use a variety of documented methods including joint and individual meetings to assist in resolving the problems. Documentation may include e-mail summaries of meetings and/or the Academic Standards Concern Form (BSW Manual).
3. If agreeable solutions are not found, the problem is not remedied, or a new problem occurs, the Field Director should be notified. The Field Director should consult with Social Work Department administrators to determine the appropriate course of action. The Department Chair will decide the course of action, in consultation with appropriate University and Department personnel. Possible actions may include but are not limited to the following:
 - a. Gather more information which may include contact with the student, faculty members, agency, or others
 - b. Conduct a meeting to resolve issues
 - c. Consult with Field Education Committee
 - d. Develop a written performance contract
 - e. Remove the student from the field agency
 - f. Conduct an Academic Performance Review (APR)
 - g. Suspend/dismiss the student without an APR

Issues in the field placement:

1. The Field Instructor and student should attempt to resolve concerns as soon as possible through open discussion of the issues. Possible solutions will be identified, implemented, and documented. Documentation may include e-mail summaries of meetings and/or the Academic Standards Concerns Form. The Seminar Instructor and the Field Director may serve as resources to assist the student and the Field Instructor in resolving concerns. Students who feel uncomfortable talking to the field instructor should consult with the seminar instructor.
2. If a satisfactory solution is not reached and/or if another issue arises, the seminar instructor should be contacted. The Seminar Instructor may consult with the Field Director and may use a variety of documented methods including joint and individual meetings to assist in resolving the problems. Documentation may include e-mail summaries of meetings and/or the Academic Standards Concerns Form
3. If agreeable solutions are not found, the problem is not remedied, or a new problem occurs, the Field Director should be notified. The Field Director should consult with Social Work Department Administrators to determine the appropriate course of action. Possible actions may include but are not limited to the following items. The Department Chair will decide the course of action, in consultation with appropriate University and Department personnel. Possible actions may include but are not limited to the following:
 - a. Gather more information which may include contact with the student, faculty members, agency, or others
 - b. Conduct a meeting to resolve issues
 - c. Consult with Field Education Committee
 - d. Develop a written performance contract
 - e. Remove the student from the field agency
 - f. Conduct an Academic Performance Review (APR) (see BSW Manual)
 - g. Suspend/dismiss the student without an APR

Grievance Procedures

Students who are dissatisfied with decisions regarding course concerns, final course grades, termination from graduate assistantships or from the BSW Program, and academic performance reviews are expected to follow university-wide and departmental grievance procedures. Please also consult the BSW Student Manual for grievance procedures.

Additional Information

Confidentiality

A salient issue for social work students is respecting the confidentiality of clients, client records, and activities that occur in field and in the classroom. These can include interactions with

agency staff, other students, professors, and the student's field instructor. It is expected that students adhere to the *Code of Ethics* regarding professional and ethical conduct. Students are to respect client and agency confidentiality in their course assignments by refraining from the use of client names or identifying information. While maintaining confidentiality is important, it is expected that students will be able to discuss issues and activities of concern regarding field and should seek the guidance of their seminar instructor and other professors in doing so appropriately.

Safety

Students are responsible for becoming familiar with the safety policies and procedures of their field placement agencies. In addition, each student should have a conversation with their supervisor related to these policies and the method to reach your supervisor, including a plan for coverage if the supervisor is not available.

If a safety issue occurs with a student, the student or Field Instructor should contact the Seminar Instructor immediately using the contact information shared at the beginning of the semester. If the student or Field Instructor cannot reach the Seminar Instructor, then they should contact the Field Director (cell: 828-406-9686) or the Department Chair (cell: 828-964-0579).

Insurance

Appalachian State University participates in a student insurance program with other constituent institutions of the University of North Carolina. Most, if not all, internship hosts require professional liability insurance prior to a student's participation in an internship or practicum. ASU requires coverage for all students enrolled in internship or practicum courses. The insurance policy is issued by Peerless Insurance Company. The premium for this coverage (\$17 per semester) is charged to each student's account along with other registration fees. A certificate of insurance will be furnished to each student or internship host upon request. Insurance only covers a student for the semester that they are in their field placement.

Release of Student Information

Appalachian State University complies with all provisions of the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act of 1974 (FERPA). Students complete a Request for Placement application the semester before they plan to enter the field. They have the opportunity to consent to the Field Director disclosing information contained in this Request for Placement, including the feedback from faculty members and contents from the Field Director's interview, with potential field agencies for purposes of placement. Agencies are encouraged to ask students for background information, as they would with a new employee.

Student Responsibilities in Addition to the BSW Program's Academic Standards for Retention

For policies and guidelines related to Code of Ethics and Confidentiality, University Information on Student Responsibilities, Non-Discrimination, Harassment, and Equal Opportunity, Academic Integrity and Student Conduct and the University Policy on Alcohol and Drugs can be found in the BSW Student Handbook

Appendix A. Website and Forms

The social work website can be found at www.socialwork.appstate.edu The BSW manual and the following forms can be found on the website under BSW then Field Education.

- BSW Field Manual
- BSW Request for Field Placement
- Employment Based Application
- Tips for Specialized Field Placements
- Confidentiality Form
- Field Instructor Info Sheet
- Field Hours and Supervision Hours Verification Form
- BSW Learning Goals and Objectives Plan
- BSW Mid Semester Evaluation
- BSW Final Evaluation
- Process Recording Example
- Process Recording Template
- Process Recording Blank Sheets
- Resource Guide