

Berkeley Social Welfare



2019-20 MSW Student Guide to Field Education

School of Social Welfare
University of California, Berkeley

2019-20 MSW Student Guide to Field Education

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The Field Education Requirement and Curriculum

The Field Education Requirement

Field education is frequently one of the most challenging but memorable parts of graduate social work education. Successful completion of **25 field education units** is required for degree conferral, including:

- 20 field practicum/placement units, the equivalent of at least 140 days (1,120 hours) of agency placement. Students will generally be in field two days a week in the first year, and three days a week in the second year. Other configurations are possible for concurrent degree students, students with approved accommodations, and students who have an approved petition.
- Required Field Integration Seminars in both years: three (3) units total in the first year, and two (2) units total in the second year.

Field practicum is generally concurrent with field seminar/section and academic classes.

Field Education Objectives

The overall objectives of field education in the Berkeley Social Welfare curriculum are:

1. To provide students with opportunities apply knowledge and skills acquired in classes during simultaneously sequenced real life practicum experiences in social agencies;
2. To help students achieve mastery of professional competencies through progressively immersing them into the role of professional social worker while being provided with formative and summative evaluation from agency field instructors;
3. To facilitate the development of strong lifelong practice learning competencies in students, including using consultation, being self-reflective, considering multiple, often conflicting sources of knowledge, applying critical thinking and ethical decision-making skills, and demonstrating effective response to common agency-based dilemmas.

We accomplish these goals by selecting, arranging, and monitoring field placements, leading field integration seminars, and working collaboratively with students, practice professionals, and academic faculty members to promote professional competency and develop future leaders.

Practice Competencies for Field Education

The School has established a set of 9 practice competencies based upon the Educational Policies and Accreditation Standards of the Council on Social Work Education (CSWE), and interpreted for our program mission and context. These competencies guide task assignment, instruction, and evaluation. Because of their importance, these competencies should be periodically reviewed during the first year field practicum and in individual, group, and seminar meetings:

1. **Engagement with Individual, Families, Groups, Organizations, and/or Communities:**
Establishes contact, builds rapport, forms working relationships, and invites a diverse array of clients and/or constituents to participate in clinical services and/or administrative projects.
2. **Consultation, Coordination, and Collaboration:**
Obtains information from a variety of collaterals, stakeholders, and/or other formal or

informal sources; integrates collateral information into an effective and coordinated service and/or project plan.

3. **Assessment of Individuals, Families, Groups, Organizations, and/or Communities:** Collects, analyzes, and applies relevant information and develops relevant, well-formed goals to guide the effective delivery of clinical services and/or the effective execution of administrative and planning projects.
4. **Intervention Planning and Implementation:** Selects intervention methods to support goal acquisition based upon assessment, the best available evidence and/or knowledge, and client or constituent preferences. Evaluates and modifies implementation so as to maximize the likelihood of reaching the intended outcome(s).
5. **Systemic Intervention:** Demonstrates interest, understanding, and/or effective participation in the organizational, institutional, policy, and/or community contexts for the purpose of improving the delivery of social work services to vulnerable populations.
6. **Professional Communication:** Communicates verbally and in writing in an organized, complete, and timely manner. Delivers communication in an effective manner given its purpose and context.
7. **Professional Ethics:** Considers and applies the professional code of ethics for social workers so as to recognize ethical conflicts and arrive at principled decisions.
8. **Professional Conduct:** Demonstrates professional behavior, appearance, and communication in accordance with standards identified by the school, agency, community, and profession.
9. **Professional Growth and Development:** Takes responsibility for learning and demonstrates initiative. Receives, considers, and integrates feedback from instructors. Demonstrates commitment to continual professional development, life-long learning, and leadership development.

Structure of Field Practicum and Integration Seminars

Structure of First Year Foundation Field Practicum and Integration Seminar

The structure of foundation (first year) field education is the same for all students regardless of area of specialization. The first year is designed to introduce students to provide students with a range of learning opportunities across the intervention cycle (engagement, assessment, intervention, and evaluation) and across the levels of social ecology (individuals, families, groups, organizations, and communities) so that students may acquire and demonstrate identified generalist competencies.

First-year field practicum days are Wednesdays and Thursdays beginning in the fourth week of September and continuing until the end of the spring semester. Standard days are eight hours in length and do not include time for lunch or other breaks. Additionally, some placements require students to begin before the semester begins or to continue on after the semester ends. In these instances, the relationship between the student and agency is voluntary and not

subject to university requirements, policies, or protections although both parties are encouraged to continue to act ethically.

Students and their agency Field Instructors work together to finalize the student's schedule and to develop a learning agreement that specifies the tasks that will be assigned in the placement that are intended to help students develop and demonstrate identified competencies. The learning agreement provides the basis for periodic evaluations of student work. Field Consultants typically visit agencies in the fall or winter to review the learning agreements with students and Field Instructors.

Common modes of practice in these settings involve brief or supportive models of direct practice including clinical interviewing, intake assessment, case management, crisis intervention, and/or counseling with individuals and groups. Access is also available to a range of macro-practice activities such as meeting management, program planning, coordination, and evaluation, advocacy, policy analysis, and/or development functions. Training Coordinators and Field Instructors are encouraged to orient students to their agencies with a broad appreciation of the agency's place within the network of services. Practice tasks are organized, to the extent possible, to provide a wide range of practice experiences and continuity with a sufficient number of assignments for competency acquisition and reliable assessment.

Successful completion of the foundation field practicum is determined by completion of the minimum hours in SOC WEL 410A and 410B, and demonstration of identified competencies.

The Foundation Field Integration Seminar

Prior to beginning field placement, students prepare for entry to the field by beginning all of their foundation courses. In addition, the Foundation Field Integration Seminar (SOC WEL 290A and 290B) is specifically designed to prepare, enable, and support students as field learners. Seminars meet for at least two hours most weeks in the fall, and every other week in the spring. Facilitated by the field consultant, this seminar introduces students to a range of social work agencies, settings and topics, engages them in self-reflective assessment, and examines how best to approach "real world" learning so as to advance professional competencies. Students typically participate in the same section of the field seminar for both semesters and both academic years.

Upon completing the first year seminar, students will:

1. Engage in continuous self-reflection so as to develop an enduring sense of authentic professional identity and to consistently apply the ethics and values of social work;
2. Enhance their ability to form, collaborate with, and benefit from a professional consultation group comprised of diverse members;
3. Prepare to begin field placement duties and tasks with individuals, families, and groups by reviewing California laws and professional standards and advancing engagement and client-centered interpersonal skills;
4. Critically appraise organizational contexts and utilize field instruction, consultation, critical thinking, and self-reflection to identify problem-solving approaches to common dilemmas of agency-based practice;
5. Improve their utilization of the consultation process, giving and receiving thoughtful feedback on both general dilemmas and specific field-based cases or projects; and
6. Improve their ability to select professional opportunities, present themselves effectively in writing and at interview, negotiate offers, and re-set professional learning goals.

Successful completion of the foundation field seminars is determined by attendance, participation, and submission of the key assignment. Concurrent enrollment in SOC WEL

410A/410B-Field Practicum and SOC WEL 290A/290B-Foundation Field Integration Seminar is required.

Successful completion of both the foundation field practicum and the foundation field seminars are required for advancement into advanced (second year) field education and to progress normatively toward MSW degree conferral.

Structure of Second Year Advanced Field Practicum and Integration Seminar

The structure of advanced field education is differentiated by area of specialization (i.e. Advancing Health and Well-Being across the Adult Life Span; Strengthening Children, Youth, and Families; and Strengthening Organizations and Communities). The second year placement is designed to introduce students to advanced or specialized practice settings that focus on specific methods (direct practice or management and planning practice) and age-based populations (children and families or adults/older adults) that correspond to the school's identified areas of specializations. Consequently, access to a wider range of more complex practice opportunities is typically made available to advanced standing students.

In order to be eligible for advanced field education, students must have successfully completed all first year field education requirements, all required foundation courses, and must be in good academic standing. Prior successful completion of or concurrent enrollment in specialization area course requirements may also be necessitated.

Second year field practicum days are generally Wednesdays, Thursdays, and Fridays beginning in the first week of September and continuing until early May. Standard days are eight hours in length and do not include time for lunch or other breaks. In some instances, students may arrange to attend placement on other days and/or at other times as long as they can take all required courses and recommended electives. Additionally, some placements require students to begin before the semester begins or to continue on after the semester ends. In these instances, the relationship between the student and agency is voluntary and not subject to university requirements, policies, or protections although both parties are encouraged to continue to act ethically.

Students and their agency Field Instructors work together to finalize the student's schedule and to develop a learning agreement that specifies the tasks that will be assigned in the placement that are intended to help students develop and demonstrate the identified advanced competencies. The learning agreement provides the basis for periodic evaluations of student work. Field Consultants visit agencies in the fall or winter to review the learning agreements with students and Field Instructors.

Modes of practice can vary widely in these settings depending upon area of specialization. They generally involve, however, more in-depth and advanced tasks which can include advanced clinical interviewing and assessment, clinical case management and/or psychotherapy that is specialized, advanced documentation and/or report-writing, and/or significant responsibility for meeting management, program planning, coordination, and evaluation, advocacy, policy analysis, development, and/or other executive functions. Direct practice students are allowed to spend a portion of time engaged in management and planning practice, and management and planning students are allowed to spend a portion of time engaged in clinical practice depending upon approval of their Field Consultant and the agency's ability to accommodate their learning needs. Students may petition their Field Consultant for an exemption to expand the time that they may spend learning the other method. Decisions will be made based upon evidence that the student already possesses advanced experience in their area of specialization, the student's overall career goals, and the availability of field agency assignments.

Advanced MSW students continue to attend to the 9 foundation competencies previously enumerated. Behavioral anchors for the competency scale, however, are adjusted to reflect specific knowledge and skills that are to be demonstrated for the student's area of specialization. These modified competencies continue to guide task assignment, field instruction, and evaluation in the second year of field education. The specific language can be found on the Final Evaluation forms for each advanced concentration area that are publicly available on the School's [website](#).

The Advanced Field Integration Seminar

In the advanced year, students are encouraged to take advanced electives both in the School of Social Welfare and in other university departments that inform their approach to field placement duties, tasks, and identified competencies. They are also frequently provided with more extensive on-site learning opportunities and supports including seminars, group supervision, and/or extra individual supervision, training and/or consultation.

In recognition of these factors, we have reduced the attendance requirement to 2-3 days per semester with attendance occurring at half or full-day increments. These advanced field integration seminars are typically comprised of the same members as the first year foundation field seminar, and as such, working group norms and cohesion are already established and can be effectively harnessed to continue professional development.

Students in the second year advanced field integration seminar will:

1. Assume effective learning approaches for more advanced settings, specific populations, and/or complex skills;
2. Increasingly be responsible for the structure, content, and process of the professional consultation group;
3. Identify and discuss ethical dilemmas and advanced clinical and administrative topics so as to provide one another with feedback, support, and challenges;
4. Prepare to assume of the full role of social work professional and/or to transition from the role of student to employee; and
5. Develop future educational plans and goals so as to commit to continual professional development and acquisition of progressively higher levels of mastery over a wide range of skills.

The Advanced Field Integration Seminar can be configured in any number of ways as meets the needs and availability of the Field Consultant and students but usually involves at least one meeting before placement formally begins and one after it formally ends. Meetings sometimes may occur online, on-campus, at private residences, and/or agency or community sites, depending upon the needs and preferences of the cohort.

Successful completion of advanced field practicum, required for MSW degree conferral, is determined by completion of the minimum hours (720), and satisfactory demonstration of meeting advanced competencies as specified on the final evaluation forms.

Administrative Structure and Roles

Overall management of the field program is provided by the Director of Field Education and supported administratively by the Administrative Director of Field Education. Field Faculty members are actively involved in establishing and implementing policies and procedures.

Additional input on program issues and changes is also sought periodically from participating agencies and students. The field program curriculum is overseen by the School's faculty through the MSW Curriculum Committee and by the dean, as the School's chief academic officer.

Field Faculty Roles

The Field Faculty is comprised of the Director of Field Education and several Field Consultants who are members of the School of Social Welfare Departmental Teaching Staff. These specialists have primary responsibility for field education, development of, matching to, and monitoring of field placements, facilitating student acquisition of identified practice competencies, supporting Field Instructors, and determining field education grades.

Each Field Consultant is a specialist in one or more of the specialization areas represented in the advanced curriculum. They also teach practice courses and serve on departmental committees, conduct admissions reviews, and help to link the curriculum with current practice trends and concerns. The deep, ongoing involvement of our Field Faculty in public agencies helps to keep the School current on policy, program development, and practice issues.

Field Consultants are the direct liaisons between the agencies and the School. They support all parties involved in each field placement, ensuring that the student's educational needs are met, that the placement experience is mutually beneficial to both agency and student, and that student competencies develop maximally in all identified areas.

The responsibilities of the Field Faculty include:

1. Maintaining knowledge of changes in policy, practice, and institutions in their assigned field of practice in order to enhance the relevancy of school curricula;
2. Recruiting, screening, and orienting desirable new placement settings;
3. Maintaining and improving existing placement settings;
4. Guiding the placement process of assigned students by conducting assessments, determining student eligibility for field education, considering all available placements, and facilitating or recommending matches whenever possible;
5. Orienting, training, supporting, and evaluating agency Field Instructors and other involved agency personnel;
6. Leading integration field seminars;
7. Assisting with the development of Learning Agreements and reviewing all evaluations;
8. Maintaining regular contacts with Field Instructors and students to support the field instructional process and to solve any problems that might arise regarding a placement or student's performance;
9. Participating in the evaluation of students, Field Instructors, and agency settings;
10. Offering individual educational or professional advising, mentoring, and/or coaching to students and Field Instructors; and
11. Determining and assigning student grades.

Agency Personnel Roles

Agency Managers

Effective field education requires a significant commitment on the part of agency management. The development of an agency field education program, even if for only one student per year, requires careful planning. Therefore, responsible agency manager(s) should be involved in the initial development of the placement plan and in periodically reviewing, with Field Consultants and agency staff or Field Instructors, the effectiveness of the field placement program within the agency.

Field Instructors

The Field Instructor is the student's teacher in the agency, providing administrative and educational supervision to the student. The relationship between students and their Field Instructors is central to students' learning and preparation for social work practice. Field Instructors serve as teachers, supervisors, mentors, and gatekeepers for the profession. Satisfactory student progress in field instruction depends on agency support, student readiness for placement, school-based preparation, and the skill of the Field Instructor in managing the field instruction process.

Field Instructors must have sufficient training and experience in the required practice modalities to supervise student's work. These practice domains include but are not limited to case management, counseling, group work, advocacy, referral, resource development, family work, needs assessment, evaluation, policy and program development and implementation, personnel and fiscal management, development, and/or other clinical or administrative services. All Field Instructors are required to complete a workshop orienting them to the role of field instructor, and are offered annual opportunities to update and advance their field instruction skills.

Training Coordinators

Many agencies designate a particular staff member as Training Coordinator. Training Coordinators play a key role in the design of agency placement arrangements and often manage the placement process, including selection of participating program units and Field Instructors. They provide orientation, facilitation, and additional support services for both Field Instructors and students. When an agency Training Coordinator is designated, the Field Consultant establishes a close working relationship with that person to facilitate mutual planning and effective response to any problems that might arise.

The Student Role

Social work students are adult learners, capable of being--and expected to be--active participants in the field instruction process. Students are expected to assess their baseline practice competencies, to clarify their professional learning needs and objectives, and to play an active role in determining the appropriate setting for both of their placements.

Because Social work students are assigned duties in public agencies that serve vulnerable populations and will, upon graduation, be eligible to perform the full range of entry-level social work services, students in placement are expected to behave in a professional manner at all times. Students are guided by the Code of Ethics of the National Association of Social Workers, by agency codes of conduct, by the Berkeley Code of Student Conduct, and by the "Academic and Professional Standards for the MSW Program" articulated in this program manual.

Throughout the placement period, the student should play an active role in defining the agenda for field instruction meetings, including identifying issues that should be discussed. While Field Instructors are encouraged to provide proactive instruction when possible, students are also expected to learn how to identify and resolve dilemmas independently by using critical thinking and applying professional judgment. Finally, students are also expected to demonstrate engaged and receptive approaches to learning which include initiating activities and responding to feedback and direction.

Students must introduce themselves as students or interns to clients and colleagues and should not convey the impression that they are regular staff or already possess their MSW degree.

Selection and Approval of Field Placements and Instructors

Selection and Approval of Field Agencies

The San Francisco Bay Area is richly endowed with public and private social service and community agencies, collectively reflecting a spectrum of health and welfare service organizations and diverse communities. This diversity makes it possible for the School to select field education settings that provide learning experiences consistent with the mission of social work, the mission of Berkeley Social Welfare, related accreditation guidelines, and in addition, to meet the learning goals and needs of our MSW students.

The criteria for approval as a Berkeley Social Welfare field agency are as follows:

1. The agency must be committed to offering ongoing, educationally sound training which fits well with the professional frame of reference and ethics of social work;
2. A substantial part of the agency's clientele and the majority of the students' client systems must represent vulnerable, at risk, and/or diverse individuals, families, groups, organizations, and/or communities;
3. The services offered must be relevant to, effective with, and responsive to these various systems;
4. The funding auspices of the agency should be largely public; if the agency is a private non-profit, it should receive substantial funding from public funds or have referral relationships with government agencies;
5. A Field Instructor meeting the School's requirements must be provided;
6. A minimum of one hour per week of formal on-site field instruction is expected, as well as regular on-site administrative supervision; in addition, the agency must grant field instructors release time to work with students and to attend training activities offered by the School;
7. The agency must be willing and able to provide a range of learning opportunities across the intervention cycle (engagement, assessment, intervention, and evaluation) and across all of the levels of social ecology (individuals, families, groups, organizations, and communities) commensurate with graduate student learning so that students may practice and meet generalist and/or specialist competencies;
8. The agency must provide a safe workspace and other necessary supports (such as clerical assistance, access to a desk, computer, phone, and reimbursement for placement-related expenses) and schedule field placement in accordance with the school's academic and field calendar;
9. The agency must be willing to work with a diverse range of students and to work with the university and school to offer reasonable accommodations to eligible students;
10. The agency must have appropriate safety and risk reduction policies in place, and must orient students to these policies;
11. The agency must be able to provide the student with formative and summative bases related to identified competencies;
12. The agency must be willing to collaborate extensively with assigned Field Faculty, to communicate needs and concerns, and to respond to communication and feedback in a timely, professional manner; and

13. The agency must ensure that required forms are completed and returned in accordance with school guidelines and deadlines including but not limited to competency-based learning agreements and evaluations of students.

The School seeks to develop and maintain ongoing relationships with the highest quality agencies and field instructors in our region. To that end, we initiate communication with agencies of interest, respond to requests, clearly post information and application materials on the school's website, hold webinars to discuss school requirements and expectations, and review external applications twice annually.

Agencies where students are placed are also reviewed annually to determine if they have been able to or appear able to continue to meet the school's criteria. Available data reviewed include the student's formal and informal feedback, review of the key documents submitted (learning agreement, first semester progress review, and final evaluation), and observations during in-person site visits and phone consultations with the agency and/or field instructor.

Students are required to submit to the School an end-of-year placement evaluation where they provide feedback on their agency experience which is used for purposes of quality assurance and improvement. We provide field agencies and instructors with both affirmation of their assets and with recommendations for continued improvement.

Selection and Approval of Field Instructors

The following selection criteria are used to evaluate and approve field instructors:

1. A Master's degree from an accredited school of social work.
2. A minimum of two years of postgraduate work experience in the area in which they are instructing. An exception to this may be made for an experienced worker who has acquired a Master's degree after significant prior experience, and may, therefore, be ready to supervise.
3. An ongoing commitment to professional social work education.
4. Knowledge of the agency, its policies and procedures, and its relation to the community. In general, this includes secure employment by the agency for a period of 12 months and success at their assigned tasks.
5. A commitment to participate in annual trainings and related professional development activities and to work with the Field Faculty throughout the field education process.
6. A commitment to abide by the NASW Code of Ethics, especially as it pertains to field education roles.
7. A commitment to spend at least one dedicated hour -- and often more -- to help the student develop professional competencies.

To establish their eligibility, prospective field instructors submit an online application and attach a copy of their professional resume. In addition, we typically interview new field instructors during an initial visit or phone consultation to confirm they meet the full criteria and that they understand the responsibilities they are undertaking and our key policies and procedures.

In some situations, an approved field agency does not have a member of their staff who meets the above criteria (particularly, holding an MSW from a CSWE-accredited program) but is otherwise believed to be able to offer an excellent learning experience for MSW students. In this instance, we first consider whether a comparable agency-based placement who can assign a qualified field instructor is available for the intended student.

When this is not the case, we then consider whether the agency is able to hire a qualified consultant or enlist a qualified volunteer who meets the above criteria, and when possible, we

help them identify and engage qualified persons. In this scenario, we designate an on-site field instructor who orients the student, assigns tasks, reviews task completion, and provides feedback to the student and an off-site field instructor who provides additional consultation, reinforcing the social work perspective on all learning assignments and experiences. Typically, in this arrangement, the off-site field instructor provides no less than individual consultation for one hour or group consultation for two hours at a frequency of every two weeks. Both the on-site and off-site field instructors collaboratively complete field documents and participate in training, site visits, and monitoring conducted by the Field Faculty.

On a limited basis, our Field Faculty may serve as off-site field instructors for select students where no other qualified individual can be enlisted and we believe the placement otherwise substantially meets the student's career goals.

Field Placement in an Employing Agency

Students are permitted to be placed in an agency where they are or have been employed for one of their two placement years and only under certain circumstances usually related to the agency being able to provide substantial new learning related to identified competencies.

If a student would like to complete one of their field placements in a setting where they are employed or have been employed, they must petition their assigned Field Faculty member in writing indicating:

1. why they believe such an arrangement would educationally be comparable to or better than placement in a new environment;
2. the proposed tasks and unit assignment that are different from the student's current or former employment-based responsibilities and/or unit;
3. what specific new competencies they believe would be obtained; and
4. the qualifications and contact information of the identified field instructor who must be a different person from their past or current employment-based supervisor and program manager.

After reviewing the written proposal, we generally sit down to discuss it with the student so as to make certain they understand the educational costs and benefits of this arrangement vis-à-vis other available field placement opportunities.

Before approving the request, we always confer with the intended agency-based field instructor and program manager to ensure that all educational requirements can be met throughout the intended duration. We offer strategies to protect the students learning and to separate out educational goals from their employer-based needs. Specifically, we discuss "time walls" between their educational time and their employment time so that there will be an accurate accounting of each and a separate reporting and evaluation relationship for each. Finally, we enlist their commitment to continue the student's educational internship for the entire length of the intended duration even if employment should cease for whatever reason. With these processes and protections in place, it has been our experience that employment-based field placements can be viable and advantageous in some situations.

We often ask students to interview for other types of field placements concurrently so that they have fully considered the comparable educational benefits they are foregoing.

If we become aware that field learning tasks are not distinct from regular work assignments as agreed and that field instruction and employment-based supervision are being comingled, we

reserve the right to terminate the placement and to ask the student to complete another educational placement of full length.

In exceptional circumstances, the Director of Field Education may approve a student to complete both of their placements in one agency where they also been employed. This generally involves consideration of the student's career goals, the type of agency, the variation and quality of learning assignments available for both placements, and a comparative analysis of the benefits of other available placements that may enrich and broaden the student's graduate learning.

Agencies of Interest Not Formally Approved As Field Placements

In some instances where an agency or program is not approved as a field placement site but is highly desirable to a student and appears to meet the School's criteria, proactive efforts may be made to recruit, screen, and approve the site. It should be noted, however, that this can take up to three months to occur and is not always possible.

Students may make their interest known verbally during individual field advising meetings or in writing and may supply the Field Consultant with whatever information they have that leads them to believe the agency would be interested in serving and qualified to serve as a field instruction site.

Students may also refer potential field instructors, training coordinators, or agency managers to the School of Social Welfare website where they may download information, participate in informational webinars, and submit an online application to become an approved agency. If agencies do not return our phone or email contact or fail to complete and submit forms by stated deadlines, we are unable to consider them.

Once applications are submitted by the agency, we will arrange for a phone or in-person visit and will make our determination as to whether they are an approved field placement agency based on the previously described criteria. The opening Field Consultant makes a recommendation to the Director of Field Education who makes the final decision about approval. Any newly opened placements may be less predictable in quality than placements that have previously established a strong track record.

Eligibility for Field Placement

Field Faculty members play a key role in the School's admissions processes. In addition to reviewing applicants' academic qualifications, we examine statements, resumes, and letters of reference to determine the likelihood that they will have the requisite skills, motivation, and experience to succeed in the required field education portion of our curriculum.

Admission to the MSW program does not, however, automatically guarantee a field education placement. After being admitted to the MSW program, students are more carefully assessed for their eligibility for field education by participating in a comprehensive, interactive process with their assigned Field Consultant. This assessment typically involves completing a pre-placement questionnaire, disclosing all relevant ethical violations or legal convictions, and meeting for an interview with their assigned Field Faculty member. In addition, observations of the student's behavior made during all educational contacts and in field seminar may be utilized to determine eligibility for field placement. Field Consultants express their concerns about observable student capacities in a direct and respectful manner with the goal of resolution so that learning may proceed.

Eligibility for field education is determined by assigned Field Consultants initially, is reevaluated continuously throughout the course of study, and may be suspended at any time concerns arise or persist.

Eligibility Criteria for Field Placement

In order to be eligible for field placement, MSW students must be willing and able to demonstrate the following abilities (with or without accommodation):

1. Attend reliably and punctually. Because clients and colleagues rely on essential tasks being performed in a time-sensitive manner, students must show up and perform at the placement site consistently on scheduled days without a pattern of excessive absences (defined as a maximum of 1 absence within a 30-day period) or tardiness (defined as 1 or more arrivals later than 15 minutes within a 30-day period);
2. Possess sufficient stamina, strength, sensory perception, mobility, and/or dexterity to perform essential tasks;
3. Remain focused on and attentive to tasks so as to ensure quality and timely completion of service and projects;
4. Remember and follow complex instructions with minimal repetition;
5. Analyze, organize, and communicate large amounts of data sufficient to complete related records and reports;
6. Simultaneously organize, prioritize, track, and complete a wide variety of tasks for multiple clients and/or projects in a timely manner;
7. Display good judgment with respect to safety, ethics, and higher order priorities;
8. Appropriately manage intense emotions, cognitions, and reactions that may occur in response to clients or agency events in order to remain in professional role;
9. Listen to and implement feedback given by clinical instructors and colleagues without becoming overwhelmed, reactive, argumentative, or defensive;
10. Self-monitor and accordingly adjust their own behaviors so as to be in accordance with professional roles, standards, and contexts;
11. Communicate and respond to communication in a timely, diplomatic, and effective manner;
12. Respect the rights of clients and stakeholders to hold differing values and to refrain from imposing personal values on others;
13. Possess sufficient skills in spoken and written English to understand and communicate relevant information; and
14. Display good judgment in communication, interpersonal behaviors, and personal and professional boundaries.

Failure or unwillingness to demonstrate any of the above behavioral prerequisites may lead to ineligibility for or suspension from field education. If the Field Faculty member holds a significant concern about the student's willingness or ability to meet the above-described eligibility criteria, they will discuss them directly with the student to see if it may be resolved informally before initiating the formal resolution process later described. Field Consultants refer to the criteria and apply their professional judgment in deciding whether or not a student may be forwarded to agencies for consideration and in making the determination of eligibility for field education.

Agency Assessment of Student Acceptability and Suitability

The ability to obtain an approved field placement through an interactive interview process with our approved agency partners is also required for placement into field education.

In the instance that a student has been forwarded for three successive field placement interviews and has not been accepted, the assigned Field Faculty member will collect and analyze related agency feedback, will review the eligibility criteria for field education, will review identified competencies applicable to the student, and will directly discuss behavioral feedback and concerns with the student. In some cases, students may be coached to success on how to present themselves more effectively.

When other factors are determined to be primary reasons for the student to be found unacceptable by multiple agencies, every effort will be made to communicate those factors to the student and to collaborate about how to improve them. In other cases, students may not be accepted for placement due to the recent nature or severity of their criminal history. Failure to succeed at obtaining an agency-based placement may be viewed as evidence of unsuitability for the degree and profession at this time. Students unable to ascertain a field placement for themselves after three interviews may be assigned an unsatisfactory grade in field education. They may also be placed on academic probation and are at risk for eventual dismissal if the concerns cannot be resolved within a semester.

Other Concurrent Requirements for Placement into Field Education

Students placed into field education are expected to be concurrently enrolled in the required foundation and/or specialization-based courses in the expected sequence unless they have a preapproved, modified academic plan. Students must be eligible for field placement to be eligible to participate in concurrent field seminars.

Should a student's grade point average fall below a 3.0, should a student fail a required foundation or specialization-based course, or should a student receive two or more Incomplete (I) grades in any one semester, field placement may either be not initiated or suspended until all academic concerns are resolved. If a student is suspended from placement, we cannot guarantee that they will be able to return to that same placement. Suspended students may or may not be eligible for partial credit depending upon the circumstances.

Resolution Processes

The determination that a student may not adequately possess or demonstrate eligibility criteria for placement into field education is a serious matter which requires professional judgment and careful, rigorous consideration. When concerns arise about a student's eligibility, all attempts at informal resolution are made. This usually involves direct discussion with the student about the relevant prerequisites that may be impaired, lacking, or inconsistently demonstrated. In most cases, particularly when the student is amenable and responsive to feedback, concerns can be resolved at an informal level.

When informal resolution is not possible, the Field Faculty member will convene a conference during which the student, the concerned Field Faculty member, the Director of Field Education, and/or relevant academic advisors from the staff, faculty, and/or campus will discuss the criteria for eligibility for field education and review the concerns together. During these reviews and discussions, students, Field Faculty, staff, and administration consult all relevant codes of conduct, and frequently confer and collaborate with the Disabled Students Program (DSP), Graduate Division, and other campus departments and supports.

Several possible determinations may be made on the basis of that meeting:

1. The concerns have been resolved before or during the formal meeting. In this case, the student shall be eligible for either agency interview and/or admission to field education and will be monitored accordingly.
2. Although concerns remain, they are not serious enough to prevent placement. In this case, the field consultant may discuss the concerns with the student and the intended agency field instructor, identify field competencies that may be impacted, and require these concerns to be addressed in the learning agreement. In addition, the field consultant will then closely monitor the placement and arrange an early visit to review progress.
3. Concerns are sufficient that the student is deemed ineligible for placement into field education for up to an entire semester. In the instance that a student has been deemed ineligible for field education, they are typically provided with a recommended pathway to address the concerns which may include participation in an informal tutorial or formal independent study, outside evaluation and/or intervention from a qualified professional, outside training or educational event, or other relevant assessment or remedy. Students are eligible for re-assessment no later than one semester from the time they are determined to be ineligible for field education, although eligibility remains subject to the previously stated criteria and is never guaranteed.

Following this meeting, the student will be notified in writing by the Director of Field Education about their eligibility for field education and any related restrictions, mandates, recommendations, rights, privileges, or next steps.

Students who are unable to be placed into field practicum are usually not allowed to participate in the concurrent field seminar.

Students ineligible for field practicum are instructed not to represent themselves as being eligible for school-affiliated internships to community agencies. If they should assume volunteer or paid positions during this period, they must explicitly disclose that these are not School-affiliated and are never retroactively given academic credit for them.

A student who has been determined to be ineligible for field education may also be subject to a letter of warning, or more commonly, academic probation, and eventually, dismissal on the basis of failure to make expected academic progress outlined earlier. If ineligibility persists for more than one semester, the student may be subject to dismissal from the MSW program.

Students who disagree with the school's determination in this area have the right to file an appeal according to the policies and procedures outlined in the MSW Program Manual.

The Field Placement Process

First Year Placement Process

Incoming graduate students are typically oriented to field education in the summer before they begin studies by watching an online video, reviewing written materials, completing online pre-placement questionnaire and liability insurance questionnaires, revising their resume, and then meeting individually with their Field Consultant in-person, by videoconference, or by telephone. They discuss their past experience, future plans, needs, and learning goals for first year placement. Based on this information, the student, the Field Consultant, Field Faculty

colleagues and the Director of Field Education determine eligibility for field education (previously described) and identify an appropriate agency for placement.

Since the first year of the MSW program is designed to provide a broad introduction to social work and social welfare, field agencies are selected by Field Consultants for their ability to familiarize students with key approaches, institutions and multiple levels of practice. After being assigned to a placement interview, the student then meets with the agency Field Instructor and they assess together the suitability of the proposed placement. In the instance that this process does not result in a mutually satisfactory arrangement, another placement interview may be offered. As described in Eligibility for Field Placement, failure to obtain placement after three interviews requires a review of the student's eligibility for field education and suitability for the degree and profession.

Second Year Placement Process

The second year placement process is complex, involving approximately 100 students and over 350 agencies. Therefore, a clear standard placement process is established to assure fairness and to minimize confusion. In December, eligible agencies wanting to offer a second year placement in the next academic year receive a placement timetable and a request for updated placement information. In January, a mandatory orientation to the second year placement process is provided by the Director of Field Education. At this time, the information about all available placements is made available through a password-protected, web-based data base accessible to all eligible students which provides contact information, the concentration(s) for which the placement is approved, the identified Field Faculty member, descriptions of placement requirements and opportunities, and a link to the agency's website. Past student review of field placements are made available.

After meeting with their Field Consultant and searching the data, students may meet with other Field Faculty to refine their choices. Many second year placements are cross-listed for multiple specializations. Workshops are offered to assist students including an orientation to all available workforce development stipend programs, their eligibility criteria and terms, and workshops on revising resumes, writing cover letters, and interviewing effectively.

In February, students are permitted to self-apply for two to four placements that are preapproved for their concentration area by emailing a cover letter and resume to the agency contact person. In some instances, additional application materials such as essays and letters of reference are required. Depending upon the volume of applications received, some agencies do conduct a "paper screen" where they only interview the students who appear most qualified; other agencies interview all applicants. When offered, the intent of the interview is to permit mutual exploration concerning the fit between the students' interests and learning goals and placement opportunities and demands. Students have about five to six weeks in which to complete their interviews. Students must complete all assigned interviews within the School's interview timetable, without exception.

Students are not allowed to accept offers of placement until they have complete all interviews so as to protect their exploration of a wide array of options. Upon completing their interviews, students are then allowed to receive offers of placement directly from agencies where they interviewed and may accept, pause, or decline offers. Once an offer is accepted, the student must complete an online link; a corollary link is then sent to the intended field instructor to confirm acceptances and commitments on both sides. During this time, students may receive consultation from their identified Field Consultant. Once a student accepts an agency offer of placement, they are expected to honor that commitment and demonstrate professional integrity.

The placement time table, process, and/or available options may be different or restricted for students accepted into specialized programs such as the Title IVE stipend program, the integrated behavioral health stipend program, the Pupil Personnel Services Credential (PPSC) program, and/or other stipend or special programs. Students always have the option of withdrawing from these specialized programs but may be subject to consequences such as stipend repayment.

Attendance Policies and Time Requirements

General Service Time Expectations

Unless otherwise arranged, **first year MSW students** are expected to be at internship for two, eight-hour business days, not including lunch or other break periods, on Wednesday and Thursday. Placement on other days and times is usually not possible due to foundation academic requirements. First year placements usually begin the fourth week of September and end the last week of April or first week of May. Students must complete no less than 50 days or 400 hours.

Unless otherwise arranged, **second year MSW students** are expected to be at internship for three eight-hour business days, not including lunch or other break periods, typically on Wednesday, Thursday, and Friday. Because second year students are eligible for a variety of electives, they may be able to alter their field schedule as long as this is advantageous to their field placement and as long as they are able to complete academic requirements and recommended or preferred electives. Since academic schedules vary by semester, a modified field schedule may not be possible for both semesters.

Second year placements usually begin the first week of September and end the last week of April. Second year students are excused from placement for the equivalent of two eight-hour days to attend mandatory field section meetings with their Field Consultant and do not need to make up this time. Students must communicate this in advance to their Field Instructor and make appropriate coverage arrangements. Second year MSW students must complete no less than 90 days or 720 hours.

The School of Social Welfare deliberately schedules academic and field days separately to avoid conflicts. Students are generally not allowed to miss academic classes because of field placement obligations. Students are allowed to petition for an alternate field schedule as long as it does not affect their ability to enroll in or attend regularly required and desired elective courses and is approved by their field agency and field consultant as part of the Learning Agreement. Schedule adjustments are only approved on a semester-by-semester basis as academic schedules change each semester.

Allowable Absences, Notification Policy, and Coverage Arrangements

Students are allowed four (4) absences due to illness or personal emergency per academic year that do not need to be made-up. We also ask that flexible scheduling be permitted during the last few weeks of each semester (for final examinations and assignments) and during interview periods for the second year placement process (occurring for first year students, mostly in February and March). As mentioned above, second year students are also excused for the equivalent of two eight-hour days to attend mandatory field section meetings with their Field Consultant and do not need to make up this time.

If a student must be absent from placement due to illness or some other emergency reason, the student must call the agency to make sure that their duties are covered before their scheduled

shift begins. Email communication or communication after the beginning of the shift is not considered sufficient. Compelling reasons do not include social conflicts, the student's failure to plan to complete one's routine academic work appropriately, or other work or personal obligations that are not related to illness or emergency.

Students who observe religious holidays or practices that conflict with their field placement schedule are encouraged to identify those dates and/or times at the beginning of placement and to discuss proactively with their Field Instructor and Field Consultant. In general, we ask that field agencies accommodate the religious needs of our students by altering the student's schedule of service.

Student commitment to field education generally supersedes other obligations they may hold including graduate student researcher or instructor positions, fellowship programs, and employment. Students with approved disability accommodations, enrolled in concurrent or dual degree programs, with significant parenting or caregiving responsibilities, or unusual personal circumstances may, however, request and be formally approved for schedule modifications.

During designated break periods (usually two weeks from mid-December to early January and a week in late March), students are expected to arrange for continuity of coverage for their cases and administrative projects. They are not, however, generally expected to be present or to respond to clients or collaborators. Students are also not responsible for clients or administrative projects at days and times when they are not scheduled to be in field placement. Appropriate coverage must be provided or arranged by the Field Instructor or another identified agency staff member.

Attendance Policies in Times of Labor-Management Disputes

In the event that a field agency is experiencing a severe dispute between labor and management such as in the event of a strike, student attendance at field education may not be possible. In general, the student should confer with his or her Field Instructor, the Agency Training Coordinator, and Field Consultant to determine the most appropriate course of action. If labor action is likely to disrupt the student's access to learning activities and appropriate educational supervision and instruction, then students are not allowed to be at placement until such time as access to learning activities and instruction can be reinstated.

Students who miss field placement due to labor disputes must make up their absences during break periods so that they fulfill their full service time commitment. If the labor dispute persists for a protracted period of time and another comparable placement is available, the School reserves the right to re-place the student so that they may complete their education in normative time.

Time Commitments, Record Keeping, and Related Communication

Students and Field Instructors are expected to keep accurate time records of the student's service time as well as of field instruction time and to report them honestly to the Field Consultant on evaluation forms and during site visits. Students are expected to attend placement regularly, and field instructors are expected to provide them with no less than one hour dedicated instruction time per week in addition to appropriate administrative time. The School accepts time verifications when first semester progress reviews and final evaluations are due.

The Field Instructor should immediately discuss any significant problems with regard to attendance or punctuality with the student directly and notify the student's Field Consultant. Regular attendance and punctuality are considered prerequisites for eligibility for field

education, and consequently, a pattern of excessive absence or lateness will affect eligibility for field education and/or ability to complete the field placement.

If the Field Consultant has reason to believe that field instruction is not occurring regularly, meeting the minimum requirements of one hour per week, this will be addressed directly and privately with the Field Instructor. Because of the centrality of the educational supervision time, we insist that Field Instructors keep their agreed-upon time commitments to students even though we know they are exceptionally busy.

Even if students experience unexpected health or life events, we cannot exempt them from the total time requirements needed in field education to be eligible for degree conferral. We will, however, work with them to identify a range of possible strategies to enable degree completion in light of their personal circumstance.

Modified Beginning and End Dates for Placement

Agencies may request that students be available prior to the beginning of or after the ending of the academic year when this is necessary for purposes of effective orientation completion of field related clinical and administrative assignments. This additional requirement should be made clear to the Field Consultant and student in advance of the placement interview. The school and university only provide educational services and related benefits and assurances for the academic semesters and or year that govern the placement; relationships before and after these periods are entered into voluntarily by student and agency and are not subject to university evaluation, protection, or benefits including coverage under our group liability insurance policies.

Alternative Field Arrangements

Accommodations for Students with Disabilities

Students with disabilities enrich the social work classroom and profession, often sharing considerable life experience that builds empathy and awareness and improves service delivery to clients with disabilities. We are committed to and experienced at arranging field placements for students with disabilities.

Students who possess most of the identified eligibility criteria but may need reasonable accommodations in order to complete the field portion of their MSW education are encouraged to discuss those accommodation needs proactively with their Field Consultant. Generally, if accommodations are needed, we will ask students to undergo a formal evaluation with the Disabled Students Program ([DSP](#)) and to have an updated Letter of Accommodation on file. Because the field practicum experience occurs off-campus and involves responsibility for public agency clients and projects, an accommodation letter specifically customized for field practicum courses (SOC WEL 410A, 410B, 412A, 412B) is required. The School will proactively work with DSP and the student to identify all relevant and feasible accommodations for the unique context of the field practicum experience.

Students are never required to disclose personal health information to school faculty or staff and may limit the conversation to their accommodation needs. Similarly, when school faculty interacts with DSP and/or agency staff, the conversation shall be limited to the accommodation needs so as to protect the student's privacy.

In order to be eligible for field placement, all students must be determined to possess the eligibility criteria necessary to field learning. Essential capacities for particular types of

placements may vary, however, depending on the type of placement and the educational needs of the student. The School is dedicated to making reasonable accommodations available to assist students in completing the field education portion of the MSW curriculum whenever possible. We have access to a wide range of agency partners and can often find an agency that could serve as a suitable site for a particular student. Students with disabilities are welcome to include a support person or a DSP representative in conversations with their Field Consultant about accommodation needs.

Available Accommodations

We have successfully worked with DSP and our agency-based field agencies to accommodate students with disabilities in some of the following ways:

1. Reducing the number of hours of their shift from 8 hours down to 4-6;
2. Reducing the number of shifts per week from 3 (for second year students) down to a 2 (minimum);
3. Allowing the student to begin the placement sooner or to extend it later (if acceptable to the agency) so that total day/hour completion standards may be met;
4. Increasing the number of allowed absences to 2 per month (maximum) and/or tardy arrivals to 2 per month (maximum);
5. Allowing the students to take more frequent, brief breaks if needed;
6. Selecting a field placement near their home to reduce travel burden;
7. Selecting a field placement organization and/or field instructor able to implement the student's accommodation needs;
8. Facilitating the use of adaptive technology or equipment;
9. Allowing students to begin and end their placements earlier or later in the day than normal so that they can complete the number of required hours in a consistent schedule that supports their learning and protects their health;
10. Allowing students to begin or complete placements during winter, spring, and summer breaks;
11. Allowing students to pursue concurrent academic courses on a reduced basis or in a different sequence;
12. Approving students to complete all field education hours in one agency;
13. Requesting student be given a customized work space, when available;
14. Other accommodations not incompatible with the fundamental purposes of the clinical program, that do not compromise academic standards, and that do not pose significant health, safety, and/or privacy risks to the field placement organization and its clients.

Approved accommodations are normally maintained for the duration of the field placement but may be modified as needs and demands change so long as they continue to meet the criteria of reasonable.

In the instance that the university, school, and/or agency cannot provide a student with reasonable accommodations for a particular setting, extensive efforts will be made to identify an available alternative where reasonable accommodations may be applied. When the need for accommodation exceeds the limit of what is considered reasonable and/or no available placement appears to exist after a prudent search, the student will be directly advised of this and counseled as to their future educational options.

Although reasonable accommodations may be applied and learning conditions modified, total service time and competency-related standards of performance remain the same for all students irrespective of ability status.

To maximize their education and protect their health, students with disabilities are encouraged to talk through the scheduling of their academic and field practicum curriculum with their Academic Advisor and Field Consultant in advance and throughout their student career, particularly as their needs and capacities change. Since they will eventually negotiate their rights and needs directly with employers, this can be an exceptional learning opportunity for students to develop awareness of both their rights and needs and how to communicate and negotiate those professionally.

Accommodations for Students with Family or Medical Caregiving Responsibilities

Students who hold significant family caregiving responsibilities may also be eligible for alternative field arrangements for up to one academic year. Family caregiving responsibilities are generally defined as being primarily responsible for the care of an infant whether by birth, adoption, or foster care and/or of an immediate family member (spouse, parent, child, or other close relationship) with a serious health condition and/or similar or comparable situation. Students are encouraged to identify their caregiving needs, to discuss them proactively with their Field Consultant, and to plan their academic and field education accordingly.

Alternative field arrangements may include an adapted schedule, close travel proximity to placement, and different start and end dates for placement completion. **Total service time and competency-related standards of performance, however, remain the same for all students irrespective of family caregiving responsibilities.**

Learning Agreements, Learning Objectives and Field Tasks

Learning Agreements

While we prepare all students with basic knowledge about the field of social work, about social work values and perspectives, and with basic skills to approach learning and related tasks, we also recognize that in the real world of agency-based practice, chance often creates uncharted opportunities to learn and renders planned tasks unfeasible. Professional social workers need to be able to adapt quickly to changing contexts and demands while upholding the core values, knowledge, and approaches of the profession.

Instead of imposing a rigid framework, the field program offers several tools designed to facilitate an organized, yet flexible, field experience for students and to respect the organic nature of the real world classroom. These tools include the Learning Agreement process, a set of minimum competencies defining expected performance outcomes, and a set of field learning task guidelines.

The Learning Agreement is a written understanding between the student, the Field Instructor and the Field Consultant about the nature and content of the student's field experience. This written understanding provides a focus for mutual planning in the development of the placement and serves as a reference point for ongoing evaluation of the student's acquisition of expected competencies. The agreement is also a basis for the resolution of any disagreement that might later arise among the various parties involved.

Typically, several general types of assignments are developed each year. These assignments are selected by the Field Instructor in discussion with the student and should take into account the student's interests and readiness, the skills the student needs to acquire as well as the available activities in the agency. Discussions about these assignments should begin as soon as the student starts placement since the normal time line for completion of the Learning Agreement is one month. Please check the Field Education Calendar on the School's web site for exact dates.

For each of the 9 competencies around which this field education program is organized, tasks and duties should be identified that will advance student competency. All of the competencies should be addressed each year, although specific learning activities will differ for first and second year students. Learning activities for first-year students should reflect learning/performance at a beginning and foundation level, whereas second-year activities should approach performance levels appropriate for an entry-level practitioner in a specific area or method of practice. In addition, learning activities for the second year address the advanced competencies related to leadership for each program concentration.

The agency may also require the student to perform additional tasks which are viewed as necessary for competent, ethical service, even if these tasks are not directly related to the competencies outlined. These additional tasks should be discussed with the student and Field Consultant, and explicitly noted on the Learning Agreement to clarify expectations and prevent potential misunderstandings.

The intention is for the students to be assigned work that explicitly prepares them for MSW level work. Therefore, we ask field agencies to refrain from assigning students overly clerical duties, duties at which they already excel, or duties that are more commensurate with a paraprofessional. Similarly, we also request field agencies to refrain from assigning those duties that are well beyond their expected skill or competency level. Thoughtfully assigning duties located in the student's growth zone is essential. Note: we understand that most MSWs do a portion of clerical work but we respectfully request that students not be given clerical tasks beyond those related to projects or clients they are actively working on so as to protect their educational time and advance their competencies.

Each student and Field Instructor are also asked to identify at least two assignments per semester upon which feedback will be given based upon direct observation, audiovisual observation, or transcription/process recording review of the student's work. For direct practice students, this may involve the Field Instructor observing the student conducting an intake, a counseling or case management session, or group; for a macro practice student, this may involve the Field Instructor observing the student leading a meeting, giving a public presentation, or interviewing and/or conferring with a stakeholder.

In addition to the process outlined above, each of the three parties involved in the placement -- student, Field Instructor, and Field Consultant -- have additional responsibilities. The Field Instructor has lead responsibility for overseeing the development of the Learning Agreement. This means providing guidance throughout the process including initiating discussion about the agreement, selecting appropriate assignments with the student's input, and making sure that the document is completed in a timely manner. The student is responsible for producing the document including preparation of drafts for discussion and submitting a final draft of the document to the School on time. The Field Consultant is responsible for meeting with the student and Field Instructor to review the agreement and approve it when it is finalized.

Learning agreement forms can be accessed through the School's online database system, Sonia. Please note that there are several learning agreement forms depending on whether the student is a first or second year student; and for second year students, by area of specialization.

Field-Based Research

Berkeley MSW students are required to complete a two-semester sequence of coursework in research, culminating in a full-scale group research project in their second year. In some cases, at least one of the students assigned to an agency's group research project may also be a field learner in this setting. In general, the research is counted as part of their assignments for their research courses and is generally not considered field education time. Up to 4 hours per week, however, may be counted as field education learning if the following conditions are met:

1. The project must be directly relevant to the student's field education learning goals, and be planned and fully approved by the agency Field Instructor and the Field Consultant;
2. The project must be supervised by the Field Instructor or another member of agency staff such as a secondary Field Instructor;
3. The research project must be listed in the student's learning agreement and linked to competencies;
4. Participation in this research must not preempt other field learning assignments or competency development needs.

Whether research is considered part of field practicum or a separate assignment, the School expects that the agency will apply its own research policies and protocols as they are related to research done by interns. Research instructors often request that Field Instructors sign student research proposals to ensure that the agency is aware of the research plan. Students with questions about field-based research should consult with their Field Consultant, their Field Instructor, and their research instructor. These complex negotiations are a common part of the research process.

Registering for Additional Field Units

Students in enriched training programs that offer onsite seminars and/or enhanced supervision with readings and assignments where they serve an extra half-day or day of service per week may request 1-2 units of SW 401 per semester. The assigned field faculty member in collaboration with the Director of Field Education will decide if the training program meets the definition of "enriched" and may ask to review seminar syllabi, readings, and/or assignments. These activities should be clearly enumerated in the student learning agreement. SW 401 units count toward the minimum of 12 units needed to register each semester but do not count as academic units. The student's field faculty member usually serves as the instructor of record for the additional SW 401 unit or units.

Evaluation, Grading and Academic Standing in Field

Although evaluation of progress in field education should be ongoing, formal evaluation occurs twice each year at semester's end in a (1) First Semester Progress Review, and (2) Final Evaluation. In addition, site visits and consultations during which Field Faculty members discuss progress with the student and/or the field instructor also serve an evaluation function. Sometimes formal or informal consultations also occur privately with only one party present. When private meetings are held, Field Consultants use discretion about what information to share with the other affected party or parties. All evaluation forms are available electronically through our online data base, Sonia.

The evaluations are designed to facilitate a discussion between the student, the Field Instructor, and the Field Consultant on the student's progress toward identified competencies. The

Learning Agreement and target competencies both guide the evaluation of student performance. Many Field Instructors find it valuable to ask students to review these documents and prepare a self-evaluation to discuss. Interactive discussion between the Field Instructor and student should always precede the Field Instructor completing the written evaluation. Normally, we recommend the Field Instructor consider the student's self-evaluation, refer back to the learning agreement and identified competencies, consider their direct observations of the student, consider other relevant sources of evaluative input, and then finalize their written comments for the student. It is also recommended that this evaluation be discussed at a face-to-face meeting. The student may opt to write responsive comments, and the final document should be submitted to the Field Consultant in a timely manner.

First Semester Progress Review

Near the end of the first semester, the Field Instructor collaborates with the student to submit a First Semester Progress Review that is due the second week in December. The Progress Review form (see example on following page) emphasizes the student's progress toward becoming oriented to the agency setting and practice assignments, initially engaging with assigned clients and/or administrative projects, initiating assessments and intervention plans of and/or with clients and/or administrative projects, and demonstrating acceptable written and verbal communication, ethical and professional conduct, and commitment to professional growth and development. It also asks the Field Instructor and student to give preliminary competency ratings in these areas on a 5-point, behaviorally anchored scale. An example follows.

The Field Instructor will be asked to describe the student's observable strengths and improvements and to identify what behaviors would need to appear for the student to reach the next level of advancement for each area assessed. The First Year Progress Review will also ask the Field Instructor and student to reflect together on their instructional relationship and how to improve it.

Finally, the First Semester Progress Review will also outline the activities and competencies that will be addressed, observed, and evaluated in the next semester so that a complete final evaluation may be submitted. The Field Instructor will then enter an overall grade recommendation of "Satisfactory" or "Unsatisfactory."

After receiving the final version of The First Semester Progress Review, students have the option of submitting a response in writing to be considered by their Field Instructor and Field Consultant. Although the field practicum is not graded until the end of it, the first semester progress review provides important appraisal to the student as to whether they are progressing normatively or not.

Sample Field Education Progress Review Form

For all nine competency areas, the final evaluation form will include a grid that includes an overview of that competency and several key variables that are behaviorally anchored along a 3-point competency rating. The sample shown on the following page is related to competency nine, professional growth and development competency.

Professional Growth and Development:

Takes responsibility for learning and demonstrates initiative. Receives, considers, and integrates feedback from instructors. Demonstrates commitment to continual professional development, life-long learning, and leadership development.

	1 Not Competent	2 Competent	3 Exceptional Mastery
a.	○ Approaches learning in an overly anxious or overly confident manner	○ Demonstrates an appropriate level of initiative and independence	○ Challenges self with diverse assignments that are within reach
b.	○ Unprepared for the instructional hour; participates passively	○ Prepares for the instructional hour most of the time; actively participates	○ Prepares thoughtful questions for the instruction; links conceptual and practical aspects of social work
c.	○ Fails to sufficiently review own work; lacks insight	○ Able to reflect on thoughts, feelings, values, strengths, and challenges related to performance	○ Consistently demonstrates rigorous self-reflection and high levels of accurate insight
d.	○ Appears personally wounded by feedback and responds defensively or with helplessness	○ Receptive to suggestions and accepts constructive feedback when offered	○ Consistently invites feedback from others and demonstrates high levels of emotional maturity and responsiveness
e.	○ Unwilling or unable to correct performance at expected rate	○ Demonstrates observable improvements at expected rate	○ Consistently integrates feedback and improves performance at a faster than expected rate
f.	○ Strives only to meet the minimum standards	○ As mastery advances, seeks out additional learning activities	○ Always approaches challenges and consistently pursues leadership opportunities

Final Field Evaluation

Toward the end of the second semester, the Field Instructor collaborates with the student to submit a Final Evaluation that is due on or around the second week in April. The Final Evaluation is designed to assess the student's progress on all nine specified practice competencies (foundation competencies for first year students; advanced, elaborated specialization area competencies for second year students). The Final Field Evaluation requires both the student and Field Instructor to assess all applicable competency-related areas using an anchored scale as shown in "first semester progress review" above.

The Field Instructor will be asked to describe the student's observable strengths and improvements and to identify what behaviors would need to appear for the student to reach the next level of advancement for each area assessed. Finally, the Field Instructor will enter in an overall grade recommendation of "Satisfactory" or "Unsatisfactory." After receiving the final version of Final Evaluation, students have the option of submitting a response in writing to be considered by their Field Instructor and Field Consultant.

Grade Recommendations Offered by Field Instructors

Field Instructors are asked to recommend grades for their students on the First Semester Progress Review and on Final Evaluations. The options for their grade recommendations are as follows:

- **Satisfactory:** This recommendation indicates that the student's learning and performance are proceeding at an appropriate rate and the student is demonstrating proficiency of all required competencies with a satisfactory level of skill. Some competencies, however, may not be assessable because the associated tasks have not yet been performed or observed.
- **Unsatisfactory:** This recommendation indicates that the student's learning and/or performance is not proceeding at an appropriate rate and is highly deficient in one or more areas of competence. If this is the case, the Field Instructor must write a narrative which describes the problem(s) as well as what the student would need to do to bring their performance up to proficiency standards. If a student is seriously deficient in one or more of the competencies or is consistently performing below proficiency, the Field Instructor should ordinarily recommend a grade of Unsatisfactory.

Grade Determinations Made by Field Consultants

Although field instructors recommend a grade to the assigned Field Consultant, the Field Consultant is the university's instructor of record and has final responsibility and authority to determine the student's grade. The field instructor's grade recommendation, completed evaluation form, and all accompanying comments are reviewed by the assigned Field Consultant. In addition, when the Field Consultant does not concur with the field instructor's grade recommendation, a consultation process is initiated usually involving the Director of Field Educator, the Field Instructor, other agency personnel such as the Training Coordinator or Program Manager, the student, and/or other School or university faculty or staff.

Although grades are entered at the end of each semester, SW 410A/SW 410B and SW 412A/SW 412B are considered cumulative, year-long courses. As such, students must receive a satisfactory grade for two consecutive semesters at the same field placement in order to meet the field education portion of their degree requirements for each year of the MSW program. Generally speaking, students are not allowed to switch placements between semesters.

Unsatisfactory Grades in Field

If the student and Field Instructor are effectively engaged, a student will be aware of deficiencies in their performance well before the final evaluation is due. As soon as the Field Instructor identifies unacceptable or marginal performance, the Field Consultant should be contacted. Often, a conference with the Field Instructor and the student will be arranged to discuss the reason for the unsatisfactory performance and potential corrective actions. Several outcomes are possible:

1. The student may continue in the placement if this is acceptable to the student, the Field Instructor, and the Field Consultant. Identified deficits in the student's performance will be documented in a corrective action plan that outlines behavioral expectation and is added as an addendum to the student's Learning Agreement;
2. The student's placement may be terminated and the student may or may not be eligible to be placed in a new setting. If eligible for a new placement, the new placement may not begin until the following semester depending upon the timing of the termination and the circumstances;

3. The student may be allowed to request an incomplete, withdraw from the course, or withdraw from the MSW program if illness or conditions outside of the student's control are a significant factor in the student's performance;
4. If the student's evaluation reflects unsuitability for the degree and or profession and/or an inability to deliver social work services in a safe, competent and ethical manner, the Director of Field Education may request that the student be placed on academic probation and if unable to resolve the concerns by the following term, may be subject to dismissal;
5. If the student's evaluation indicates there is a level of unprofessional conduct where others may be inadvertently or intentionally harmed, the Director of Field Education may request immediate dismissal;
6. When an unsatisfactory grade is assigned by the Field Consultant for the second semester, even if performance in the first semester was satisfactory, the student will receive no credit for the field practicum undertaken, and another full placement must be successfully completed in full for the student to be eligible for MSW degree conferral.

Incomplete Grades in Field

A grade of Incomplete may only be entered if the following conditions are met:

1. The student is in "good standing," i.e., has been satisfactorily performing assigned field tasks.
2. The student experiences events beyond her/his control which prevent completion of required field practicum by the date grades are due, i.e., illness, accident, family emergencies, and unavoidable late start to placement.
3. The student has completed the majority of the total required field days for the semester and/or appears able to complete the remaining days in the foreseeable future.

The student has the responsibility to petition for the Incomplete from her/his Field Consultant using the approved form.

Break times and other non-field education days during the regular school calendar may be used to satisfy requirements to remove the Incomplete. Extension of field practicum beyond the end of the spring semester will necessitate that the student enroll in summer session and be responsible for paying additional summer fees.

The following procedures should be followed when the student requests an Incomplete:

1. The Field Consultant will obtain confirmation from the Field Instructor that the student is in good standing. If the Field Instructor cannot provide a detailed evaluation because the student was not in the field long enough to assess their work, the Field Consultant will complete the written summary and make the relevant determination; and
2. The Field Consultant summarizes the circumstances and requirements for resolution of the Incomplete in the Petition for Incomplete Form that is signed by the student and the Field Consultant and provided to the Graduate Programs Advisor.

Students with an incomplete grade in foundation field practicum may not begin their advanced practicum until they have successfully completed their foundation practicum. Students are further advised that to be considered in good academic standing, they may have no more than two Incomplete grades on be their academic record.

Students who do not petition for and/or are not eligible for an Incomplete and who do not meet the conditions of a satisfactory grade recommendation will be at risk for receiving an unsatisfactory grade.

Letters of Warning, Academic Probation, and Dismissal

Should a student fail to formally enroll in, withdraw from, or receive an Unsatisfactory grade for either SW 290A or SW 290B (Foundation Field Integration Seminar), SW 410A or SW 410B (Foundation Field Practicum), SW 292A or SW 292B (Advanced Field Integration Seminar), and/or SW 412A or 412B (Advanced Field Practicum), they may also be subject to academic probation on the basis of failure to make expected academic progress. Successful completion of all sequenced, concurrent components of field education are required for degree conferral.

Following an Unsatisfactory grade, students need to be reassessed for admissibility to field education. In general, we also require a period of time lasting from two to four weeks for the student to reflect on what they learned from the experience before we will consider initiating additional placement interviews. If the student's inadmissibility persists for more than one semester on probation, they may be subject to dismissal from the MSW program.

The Relationship between Field and Academic Standing

Failure to remain in good academic standing may compromise the right to continue in a field practicum even if the student is progressing normally in field education. Should a student's grade point average fall below a 3.0, should a student fail a required foundation or specialization-based course, or should a student receive two or more Incomplete (I) grades in any one semester, field placement may either be not initiated or suspended until all academic concerns are resolved. If a student is suspended from placement, we cannot guarantee that they will be able to return to that same placement.

Students must be in good academic standing to advance to second year advanced field practicum. Similarly, students must be in good field standing to advance to second year academic courses. Failure to progress normatively in either the field education or academic portion of the MSW program may lead to disciplinary action and/or probation and dismissal.

Appeals

During the sensitive nature of reviewing student performance, students, Field Faculty, staff, and administration frequently confer and collaborate with graduate division policies and officials, other campus departments and supports, and the relevant codes of conduct. Students who disagree with the school's determination have the right to file an appeal as specified in the [Graduate Appeal Procedure](#).

Field-related Conflicts, Concerns and Problem-solving

On occasion, issues arise in field placements that create learning problems for the student and/or teaching problems for the Field Instructor. These may be due to incompatibility of teaching and learning styles, personality conflict, communication breakdown, and/or incompatible expectations among other factors. Experience has shown that the sooner issues are identified and addressed, the more likely it is that the placement will continue successfully. Conversely, if problems are ignored or discussion of them is delayed, the problems are further exacerbated and the probability of successful resolution is decreased.

In many cases, students and Field Instructors are able to discuss and resolve these issues as part of the educational supervisory process. However, if problems interfere with the progress of the student/Field Instructor relationship and/or the student's performance, it is essential that the Field Consultant be contacted immediately. The Field Consultant has the overall responsibility for facilitating the successful completion of the placement for both the Field Instructor and the student, and can provide assistance with clarifying and addressing the issues. This may include site visits and/or individual conferences with the student and/or Field Instructor.

Resolution of difficult issues may require that a corrective plan of action be developed. The Field Consultant should be involved in developing this plan, and it should be signed by student and Field Instructor, attached to the learning agreement, and specifically commented on in the next written evaluation.

Immediate attention to problems is essential in order to prevent the early termination of the field placement whenever possible. Early placement termination can have many negative consequences for students including disruption of the learning process, their ability to complete course assignments that are often based on field experiences, and their ability to progress along normative timelines for degree conferral. This may result in students receiving an Incomplete grade, and also require them to make up the days during the summer, which could pose a hardship both in commitment of time and additional tuition costs.

Many students who have had difficulties in their field placement later report that they learned important professional lessons that strengthened their ethics, character, and integrity. Field Instructors also report this. In social work employment environments, conflicts are expected, and the ability to resolve and/or cope with them maturely is required.

Early Termination of Field Placement

Although every effort is made to ensure a successful field education experience, early termination of a field placement is sometimes necessary due to compelling circumstances. These may include a serious and irresolvable conflict between the student and the agency Field Instructor, serious breaches of ethical conduct on the part of the student, unsatisfactory performance by the student, the loss of a qualified Field Instructor, closure or reorganization of the agency, and/or the student's withdrawal from field education for personal or medical reasons. Short of these circumstances, termination of the placement should be considered as the option of last resort and only after every attempt has been made to complete the placement.

A request to terminate the placement early may be made at any time by the student, the Field Instructor, or the Field Consultant. The decision to terminate a placement should involve the student, the Field Instructor, the Field Consultant, and the Director of Field Education. Generally, this decision is made after a joint conference among the student, Field Instructor, and Field Consultant involving consultation with the Director of Field Education. Although the School generally requests that agencies not terminate a student before the above-described consultation process occurs, Field Instructors, agencies, and Field Consultants hold the right to terminate a placement. Students, however, are not allowed to terminate placements and must work with their assigned Field Consultant on their concerns. Students who refuse to continue in placement without approval of their Field Consultant are likely to receive an unsatisfactory grade and face additional consequences as the field practicum is a required course and cannot be dropped without advance approval of the instructor of record.

In some situations, students who are reluctant to continue in their field placement may be instructed to give the opportunity more time. Students who refuse to make consistent, good

faith efforts to resolve professional concerns or conflicts may be subject to academic consequences. Students are expected to maintain their composure and professionalism even if they have strong feelings about their situation.

If a decision is made to terminate a placement before its intended ending, the following steps are typically completed:

1. The Field Consultant requests and reviews a written evaluation from the Field Instructor of the student's performance up to that point, shares that evaluation with the student, and allows at least one week's time for the student to respond in writing, if desired.
2. If the student's performance is deemed deficient or problematic by the Field Instructor, the Field Consultant will initiate a consultation process usually involving the Director of Field Education, the Field Instructor, other Agency Personnel such as the Training Coordinator or Program Manager, the student, and/or other School of University faculty or staff. After gathering a variety of perspectives and available sources of information, final responsibility for determining the grade rests with the assigned Field Consultant.
3. The Field Consultant communicates in writing to the student his or her grade, the related rationale, and how much credit, if any, they shall receive for days served and what requirements remain to complete their field education experience.

If the Field Instructor's recommendation of an unsatisfactory grade is deemed valid by the Field Consultant, the student will receive an "Unsatisfactory" for that grading period, and no additional placement may be provided in that semester. An unsatisfactory grade in either field placement is likely to be grounds for the student being placed on academic probation and facing dismissal if the concerns are not resolved by the following semester. This would especially be the case if a student had performed in a manner inconsistent with the NASW Code of Ethics or the Berkeley Student Code of Conduct or in a manner that caused or could have caused harm to a client, colleague, to the agency or School.

Students who receive an unsatisfactory grade do not receive partial credit for their experience even if they were successful during parts of the experience. If and when students who receive an unsatisfactory grade are permitted to repeat field requirements, they will usually be assigned to a well-established placement with an experienced Field Instructor by their Field Consultant. In addition, insertions may be made to the learning agreement that addresses areas that were problematic in the original placement, they may be more closely monitored, and they may be assigned an independent study or other remedy.

Calculation of Make-Up Days Following Early Placement Termination

Although a substantial number of days may have been successfully completed before a placement is terminated, a minimum of forty (40) days of field placement is required for even partial credit to be given, irrespective of the circumstance. This 40-day period ensures sufficient time for the student to become oriented and to acquire and demonstrate a sufficient range of competencies. The student's Field Consultant will assess the number of days of credit for which a student may apply toward their next placement. In evaluating the number of days of credit to be authorized, the following factors will be taken into consideration:

1. Student must have performed satisfactorily in the placement on any day for which credit is given.
2. Credit is generally not given for orientation activities that are agency specific. Credit may be given, however, for orientation activities that are likely to be generalizable to the next field placement.
3. Circumstances that led to the termination of placement are considered.

The Field Consultant will communicate in writing to the student the number of days for which they have received credit when a placement is prematurely terminated. In some cases, no days may be credited and an entirely new placement may be required with the normal service increment.

Conflicts with Peers

On occasions, students may also experience severe conflicts with peers who are also placed at the same agency and/or are enrolled in the same field integration seminar. When this is the case, the affected students should make every effort to address the conflicts directly, to demonstrate listening, to express perspectives in a non-blaming manner, and to see if differences can be understood, accepted, and/or resolved. In most cases, students will not be allowed to transfer to another field seminar section or change placements due to interpersonal conflicts. If good faith informal attempts at resolution have not been successful, the affected students may involve their assigned Field Consultant. The Field Consultant will help to assess the situation, provide mediation, if appropriate, and provide guidance and recommendations to the affected students. Students are expected to form and maintain working and professional relationships with one another as colleagues.

Conflicts with Field Consultant

On occasions, students may also experience severe conflicts with their assigned Field Consultant. When this is the case, the affected students and/or Field Consultant should make every effort to address the conflicts directly, to demonstrate listening, to express perspectives in a non-blaming manner, and to see if differences can be understood, accepted, and/or resolved. Generally, students are expected to be able to form and maintain a working and professional relationship with their assigned Field Consultant. If good faith informal attempts at resolution have not been successful, the affected students and/or Field Consultant may involve the Director of Field Education.

Emotionally Distressed Students in Field Placement

On occasion, a student may manifest signs of distress while in field practicum due to personal, health, and/or mental health problems either they or their family is experiencing. Any indication that a student may have difficulty in safely and effectively practicing social work in a field setting will be directly addressed and further assessed. These issues may be detected by agency personnel, by Field Faculty, by other students or colleagues, or by the student themselves. Our objective in addressing such situations is to preserve student confidentiality to the greatest extent possible, to offer the student referral to help, to make accommodations in the field where appropriate and possible, and most important of all, to ensure that agency clients and services are not adversely affected by student distress.

If the student indicates that the noted behavioral issues arise from an underlying disability, the Field Consultant will refer the student to the Disabled Students' Program ([DSP](#)) for evaluation. DSP may, in turn, request specific accommodations for the student's disability. The consultant may also refer the student for assistance to Counseling and Psychological Services ([CPS](#)) at the Tang Center ([University Health Services](#)). The field consultant will make clear that use of DSP and CPS services are voluntary. Under certain circumstances where there is concern about the student's safety or health, the Field Consultant may involve other campus resources such as the Students of Concern Committee.

Depending upon the student's circumstance and the degree to which they appear able to meet the eligibility requirements for field placement described in an earlier section, arrangements

may be made such as taking a temporary leave from field placement, requesting a reduction of hours or restriction of duties temporarily, continuing on with more applied supports, and/or other arrangements that balance protecting the student's health, his/her education, and his/her duties to the clients and agency.

Students experiencing prolonged distress for any reason may remain ineligible for field placement and may be encouraged to consider withdrawing from the program and reapplying at a later time. The student's personal and family health must be their priority; practicing social work when this is not the case can lead to adverse client or agency outcomes.

Safety and Privacy Policies

Criminal Backgrounds, Health Screenings, and Related Disclosures

The School of Social Welfare provides all MSW students with professional and general liability insurance which protects them legally if an act and/or omission occurs at field placement that inadvertently leads to harm. The School requires that students comply with professional liability insurance requirements. **Therefore, students must disclose any criminal convictions or other background circumstances that might compromise their ability to be insured, accepted for placement, or eventually employed and/or licensed as a social worker.** These include convictions prior to entry into the MSW program and offenses that occur while an MSW student that may lead to conviction.

Disclosure does not automatically disqualify the student from field placement. If, however, an appropriate field placement cannot be arranged for a student because of the recent nature and/or severity criminal history, the student may not be able to continue in the program. Failure to disclose relevant circumstances at the time of admission or subsequently can lead to students being dismissed.

In the instance that the student does have a criminal history, however remote, we do require that disclosure occur to the field placement site. Typically, we ask the student disclose at the time of their placement interview, and we confirm that the disclosure has happened before finalizing the placement. In addition to disclosure, many agencies are also legally mandated to perform their own criminal background checks and fingerprinting on prospective employees or interns. Students are responsible for obtaining any required checks and for all associated costs. Some field placement sites require additional health screening.

Tuberculosis screening and proof of immunization for measles, mumps, rubella, varicella, tetanus, diphtheria, pertussis, hepatitis, and/or influenza are also common requirements. Some placements also require a general physical examination and/or respiratory capacity screening, and some placements require a urine toxicology screen. As some placement sites expect students to pass health screens at their own expense, we suggest that students take advantage of any current health coverage prior to admission, or utilize University Health Services.

Agencies should notify Field Consultants of any changes to requirements and Field Consultants should advise interested students of known clearance requirements that may be extensive. If a student does not wish to submit to legal or health screening for whatever reason, they may request information about other available placement options.

Communication between Field Instructors, Training Coordinators, and Field Consultants

Field consultants often provide consultations to field instructors, training coordinators and other agency personnel related to concerns about student behavior and learning without the knowledge or participation of students. Discretion is used, however, to share the minimum amount of information necessary to achieve the purpose of the educational consultation. If a student has a concern about what information may have been shared or would like clarification of the Field Consultant's professional assessment, they may approach the Field Consultant directly to inquire.

Confidentiality of Client Information and Agency Data

NASW Code of Ethics requirements regarding confidentiality of client information extend to the use of confidential information from field placement in classes, seminars, and in student assignments. Students may not divulge client, collateral, or collegial information. Therefore, students are required to disguise all names, demographic information and any case details that might identify a client or co-worker. In addition, the following procedures must be adhered to:

1. Client files and records should never be removed from the agency.
2. Students should only review records of clients they are actively engaged with or are assigned to review for learning purposes.
3. Students should not use agency data, even if de-identified, for classroom assignments or public consumption without the explicit permission of the agency.

Use of Social Media and Technology

While at field practicum, students must refrain from checking their personal phones and devices for emails, phone calls, and text messages that are personal in nature and from conducting personal internet browsing from agency computers. Use of social media including text messaging, tweets, Instagram, and Facebook-type postings should never directly or indirectly reference information or events related to field placement. As students assume professional roles, they are encouraged to update their privacy settings and to use professional discretion about what they post online.

Work-related electronic documents that may be confidential in nature should not be downloaded or saved onto personal or home laptops, computers, smartphones, or other devices. Other precautions should be taken to protect the boundaries between personal and professional and to protect the safety and privacy of the client and agency.

Agency Safety Policies

In addition to providing a field preparation online module to all first year MSW students on safety, we also ask field agencies to communicate policies and procedures related to safety during the orientation period. These generally include information about:

- Building and office security;
- Emergency procedures, including when and how to summon security or police assistance and in the event of natural disaster, evacuation routes and procedures;
- Staff responsibilities and procedures governing the management of violent clients or other individuals;
- Safety on home community visits, including when, where, and under what conditions visits should or should not be made, when the student should be accompanied, and how back-up is provided; and

- Procedures for ensuring that the Field Instructor and/or other staff know (or can easily ascertain) the student location during field practicum hours.

Home Visits

Thorough preparation should be made for student home community visits with consideration given to the following elements:

1. Selection of clients and home environments that are not presumed to be dangerous to the student;
2. Provision of a safe means of transportation, whether by agency vehicle, the student's car, or public transportation where such can be judged normally safe;
3. Discussion of the neighborhood including any potentially dangerous areas;
4. Discussion of appropriate risk-reducing behaviors in the neighborhood and in the client's home;
5. Clarification of the purpose and development of a specific plan for the visit;
6. Discussion of what to do should the client or anyone else present a threat to the student;
7. Opportunity for the student to observe home visits before conducting them and/or to be partnered with another member of the agency; and
8. Provision of appropriate support and backup. Depending on the situation and the student's experience with home visits, this may range from accompaniment by another worker or security person, to immediate availability of telephone consultation. At minimum, the student's Field Instructor should know when and where a visit is to take place, and arrange for telephone consultation.

Prohibited Student Activities

Students in field education placements may not be assigned the following activities:

1. Physical restraint of clients;
2. Transportation of a client in the student's private car;
3. Transportation of a client with a recent history of violent behavior in an agency car;
4. Treatment of a client with a history of violence toward staff;
5. Work in the agency at times when and/or in areas where other staff, are not present;
6. Distribution or handling of medications;
7. Clinical responsibility for a client at high risk for suicide without reviewing if the student possesses the requisite time, skills, knowledge, and supports to manage the client
8. Clinical responsibility for other high risk clients without review; and
9. Other activities that go beyond the scope of social work practice or the capacity of an MSW intern or may place the intern or client at risk for harm.

Students are asked to disclose to their Field Consultant immediately if they have any concerns about their safety so that these can be reviewed and addressed prospectively.

Debriefing Critical Incidents

It is not unusual for students in field placement to directly witness, hear about, or be party to a critical incident including a patient death, an incident of violence, involuntary hospitalization, the arrest of a client, or other incidents that could be considered traumatic or highly distressing. Reactions to these incidents can vary widely. We encourage all Field Instructors to proactively inquire about student reactions to adverse events in the placement agency. We further encourage students to debrief incidents with their assigned Field Consultant. If a student would like to debrief an incident in field seminar, the Field Consultant should be consulted in advance to determine how to help the group receive the information and offer support.

Required Reporting to the School of Social Welfare

Students and agencies are required to immediately report any concerns or incidents related to student safety to the appropriate Field Consultant. If the Field Consultant is not available, the report should be made to the Director of Field Education.