

## ADMINISTRATIVE POLICIES AND PROCEDURES

### Orientation Programs for Students and Field Instructors

1. Undergraduate seniors and foundation year MSW students attend an Orientation meeting held during the first week of the fall semester. Advanced standing MSW students participate in an all-day Orientation, which includes orientation to field. Students receive the *Field Manual* at their Orientation meeting or in their first Field Seminar class. Every attempt is made to provide information necessary for a successful internship experience. Continuing advanced year students receive the *Field Manual* in their first Field Seminar class. Any student who misses their Orientation meeting should stop by the Office of Field Education to pick up materials that were handed out, including the *Field Manual*.
2. All field instructors new to NCSST and/or to field education are asked to attend Field Education Training in the beginning of the fall semester. The purpose of the training is to share information about the educational programs at NCSST, to discuss internship-related issues of concern to those involved in field education; and to share knowledge about supervision of students through a series of workshops. All field instructors receive the *Field Manual* at that meeting. The manual is also available on-line at: [http://ncsss.cua.edu/degree\\_field/field/manual.cfm](http://ncsss.cua.edu/degree_field/field/manual.cfm). Two make-up trainings are scheduled, one on the CUA campus, and the second at the Southern Maryland Higher Education Center.

### Field Internship Hours

Professional social work practice requires responsible behavior regarding attendance and punctuality. Although we would not want students to routinely work 10-hour days when 8-hour days are scheduled, **we ask that students adhere to the *Field Calendar* and their field schedule**, even when this means they might accumulate some 'extra' hours by the end of the academic year. So, for example, we ask that students not request to end the internship once they have logged the required number of field hours.

1. Students must work a required number of hours over the course of the academic year (see below) in the agency on a regular schedule, as per CSWE requirements. The Director of Field Education must approve modifications to the field schedule. **Due to extra holidays, possible agency holidays, and CUA 'administrative days,' students who miss any field days beyond the allowable sick days may need to arrange make-up days in order to accumulate the required number of hours. This should be arranged in consultation with the field instructor.**
  - **Senior Undergraduate and Foundation MSW Students (1<sup>st</sup> year):** *Undergraduate seniors* are in the agency 16 hours per week, generally two days per week, usually Tuesdays and Thursdays. *Foundation Year MSW students*, also in the agency 16 hours per week, are usually in the agency on Wednesdays and Thursdays. See #5 below for an exception to the number of hours per week in the agency.  
Total number of hours over two semesters: 480
  - **Advanced MSW Students (2<sup>nd</sup> year):** Students in either the *Clinical* or the *SJSC Concentrations* are typically in the agency 20 hours per week. Students in the *Combined Concentration* may be required to spend up to 24 hours per week in the agency. Generally, field days are Tuesdays,

Wednesdays, and ½ days on Thursday mornings. Total number of hours required over two semesters: 600 for Clinical or Macro; up to 660 for Combined Concentrators.

2. **Due to holidays and date adjustments, some students may have difficulty in meeting the required number of field hours and will need to discuss making up hours with their field instructors. Students are urged to review the field calendar at the beginning of the year with their field instructors, so that field instructors know well in advance about holidays and calendar changes, and make-up hours can be planned for if necessary.**
  - ⌘ For example, when the CUA calendar includes an **Administrative Monday**, Monday classes meet instead of Tuesday classes – for seniors and advanced year MSW students, this may affect their ability to report to their agencies as usual.
  - ⌘ **If an agency has holidays *not* observed by NCSWS, the student should review the calendar to see whether she or he will need to make up the hours missed in order to accumulate the required number of field hours.**
  - ⌘ Some *school* placements will not offer student interns 8 hour days. In these situations, students should negotiate with their field instructor to (1) work past the end of the field calendar in the spring semester; (2) report to the school 3 days/week instead of 2; (3) or an alternate plan acceptable to both and to the Director of Field Education. When possible, interns in school placements should plan to take their school breaks when their clients have their school breaks so that they do not fall behind in earning field hours.
3. Agencies will have different policies regarding **interns and lunch breaks**. Students are asked to inquire about and follow the agency policy.
4. Those students who are on *flex-time schedules* must observe the following:
  - The foundation year placement must occur over 2 - 3 days per week, working at least 4 hours/day.
  - The advanced year field placement must occur over 3 - 4 days per week, working at least 4 hours/day. Exception: If student must return to campus on Thursdays for class, it is acceptable to work only 3 hours in the agency setting.
5. Sometimes, a **part-time student** may arrange to spend fewer than the required number of hours/week in the agency by extending the placement over a longer than typical period of time. For example, a student may contract (1) to begin the placement as early as August, and/or (2) to complete the placement after the end of the spring semester, in order to work fewer than the required number of hours per week. Generally, a foundation student may complete a minimum of 12 hours/week and an advanced student a minimum of 16 hours/week. **Any student wishing to request an alternate schedule must write up a brief proposal, discuss it with and obtain approval from the field instructor, and submit it to the Director of Field Education for final approval.**
6. Students must maintain a *Log of Field Hours* and submit it with the *Field Evaluation* at the end of each semester. Both student and field instructor must sign the log and the evaluation.

## Leave Policy

In a nutshell, students must work for the number of hours listed above (#1) minus up to 16 hours of sick leave for the year.

1. **Sick Leave:** Students are allowed two days of sick leave over the academic year. Any time beyond that must be made up. For students suffering extended illnesses, make-up arrangements need to be negotiated with the student, the field instructor, and the field liaison. The Director of Field Education should then be notified about the make-up arrangements.
2. **Holidays:** If students take holidays other than those specified in the *Field Calendar*, make-up days should be negotiated with the agency. In general, students conform to the holiday schedules of their agencies. However, agency holidays do not count as worked field hours.
3. **Snow Days:** If it is safe to do so, students should plan on going to the field agency on snow days when the agency is open. If the agency is closed, the student should speak with the field instructor to see whether there are alternate assignments s/he might be able to complete from home (in order not to fall behind in field hours). If this is not possible, it is left to the discretion of the field instructor to develop a plan with the student.
4. **Other Absences:** Except for allowable holidays and the two days of sick leave over the year, absences from the field setting must be made up. This includes time lost due to tardiness. In any emergency situation, students are expected to notify the field instructor of their absence.
5. **Winter Break:** The field calendar has been developed assuming that students will take leave from their agency for only two weeks during the long winter break. During the rest of winter break, students are expected to report to field education agencies, so that they may maintain client contact during the critical holiday period, and keep up with agency assignments. In special situations, students may negotiate a longer winter break leave with their field instructors **early in the fall semester**. → If the field instructor grants approval of a longer leave from field, the student should carefully calculate field hours so that s/he can accrue the total number of required field hours by the end of the spring semester.

### **Exam Schedule Policy**

Sometimes the University schedules exams on NCSSS students' field days. When this occurs, **exams take priority**. Therefore, students may choose to see their clients during exam week on days other than their usual field days.

### **When Student Problems Develop in Field**

After an initial period of orientation, most students adapt well to their field agency setting. However, sometimes, it becomes clear that the match between student and agency, or student and field instructor, is not a good 'fit.' In those situations, steps 1 – 4 should be followed. If there is no improvement, the Director of Field Education should be contacted to discuss options. Other times, performance problems develop that are cause for concern. Outlined below are procedures for addressing such problems:

1. The primary responsibility for the resolution of problems rests with the student and the field instructor. The hope is that open communication during development of the *Learning Plan*, goal

setting, weekly supervisory conferences, and ongoing evaluation of performance will facilitate resolution of any problems that may arise.

2. When the student and field instructor cannot resolve problems, either one should contact the assigned liaison. If, the liaison is unavailable, the Director of Field Education should be contacted.
3. Field instructors are requested to contact their designated liaison (by phone or email) whenever they have questions or concerns about their student(s) or about any other field related-matters. If they cannot reach the liaison, they should call the Director of Field Education (202-319-5457; [saks@cua.edu](mailto:saks@cua.edu)).
4. The liaison is responsible for serving as mediator when contacted by either the student or the field instructor. Many situations are successfully resolved through mediation. The liaison will remain in contact with the Director of Field Education when dealing with problem situations in field settings, keeping the Director apprised as appropriate.
5. Problem resolution typically utilizes the following steps:
  - a. Student and field instructor make efforts to clarify and resolve the problem.
  - b. Either student or field instructor contacts the NCSSS liaison if they cannot resolve the problem on their own. The 3 of them may meet to try to resolve the problem.
  - c. Depending on the situation, the Director of Field Education may be consulted by the liaison, field instructor and/or student.
  - d. The agency's internship coordinator may be contacted by the Director of Field Education to assist in the problem solving.
  - e. If the problems cannot be resolved satisfactorily, (1) the field instructor may request that the student be removed from the agency, or (2) a student may request a change in placement. Depending on reasons for removal or request to change placements, the Director of Field Education, in consultation with the Program Chair and the liaison, will decide whether to move the student to another placement or to request that the Program Chair convene a Student Review. See below.
6. If problem cannot be resolved following the steps above, a Student Review may be convened by the program chairperson:
  - a. A Student Review may be convened by the Program Chair at the request of a student, faculty member, Director of Field Education or the field instructor for reasons including, but not limited to: a student is unable to perform within the agency's structure and rules, a student is performing unsatisfactorily in the internship, or the student has violated the *Code of Ethics*. Present at the Review shall be *only* the student, the student's academic adviser, faculty and instructors, Director of Field Education, and, if the student desires, either one representative from the NCSSS student government or another member of the NCSSS student body selected by the student. The Review Committee's role is to gather information in order to review the student's performance and make a decision, which may include identifying appropriate and realistic alternatives to the student's field placement. The review process seeks to recognize the value social work places on strengths and on people's ability to change and grow, while at the same time realistically evaluating a student's performance.

- b. A Student Review may lead to any of several different outcomes. Possible outcomes include the following: a student may be asked to withdraw from field for a specified period of time, may be assigned a grade of F for field, may be terminated from NCSST, may be asked to acquire additional knowledge or skills before re-placement is considered, etc.
- c. A student may appeal the decision of the Review Committee to the dean.

### **Federal Work Study (FWS) Program**

The National Catholic School of Social Service awards *Community Service Federal Work Study* stipends annually through the federal work-study program. Federal and university regulations require that MSW students must be (1) placed in non-profit agencies, and (2) involved in duties other than lobbying or partisan political activities. The University has further determined that some sites, e.g. university counseling centers, shall be ineligible as work study sites.

Students must show financial need in information provided in their *Student Report (FAFSA)*, submitted each year of enrollment to the CUA Office of Financial Aid. **Agencies make absolutely no financial contribution to the student in this federal program.**

Awards for the current academic year are either \$4,000 or \$8,000, minus tax-related deductions. Students awarded \$8,000 are paid monthly over the entire year; students awarded \$4,000 are also paid monthly, but **over the fall semester only**. For a student to be approved for FWS, his/her field site must sign an addendum to the *Statement of Agreement* submitted by every agency approved by NCSST as a field site.

### **Internships Providing Stipends**

A few agencies offer stipends to MSW students for internship work. Usually, students may receive either (1) an agency stipend, **or** (2) if eligible, *Federal Work-Study* funding. Consult the Director of Field Education if you have questions about this.

### **Internship in Place of Employment**

Under special circumstances, an NCSST MSW student employed in a social service agency may arrange a program of study that allows him/her to meet one year of field work requirements at the employing agency by completing (1) an **Employment Based Internship**, or a (2) **Work Residency Internship**. These arrangements are possible under the following conditions:

1. Usually, the student is enrolled in the part-time MSW program.
2. The agency of employment is one in which the mandate from the community and the current agency program includes the direct practice of social work, and the agency itself has been approved by the NCSST Office of Field Education.
3. The student (1) must have been employed at the agency for a minimum of one year prior to placement for an Employment Based Internship, and a minimum of 2 years for a Work Residency Internship, and (2) must present a positive work evaluation or performance review prior to consideration for placement in the agency.
4. The student must submit to the Director of Field Education a completed and signed proposal (available on-line); this is submitted **in addition** to the regular field application materials. This document must include a summary of planned internship activities and identify a qualified social

worker (other than the student's regular work supervisor) who will serve as field instructor. The Director of Field Education must approve of this formal request in order for the placement to proceed; both the field instructor and field internship responsibilities must be approved. In addition, the field instructor must attend the Field Instructor Training, held in August.

5. A student cannot be an agency employee and also receive federal work study funding.
6. The agency of employment has a commitment to social work education, specifically expressed in:
  - a. Assignment of practice opportunities and identified learning experiences during the 16 or 20 hours of field education so that the student meets NCSSW field requirements (outlined elsewhere in this manual).
  - b. The identified field instructor is someone other than the student's work/employment supervisor.
  - c. Provision of agency release time for student to attend required courses, unless required courses are available in the evening.
7. As a rule, only one year of field placement in a given employment-based agency is permitted. This is consistent with the typical requirement that students have two different field placements during their master's program. Exception: The employment-based agency/organization is large and complex enough to offer two distinct settings and experiences. However, separate field instructors and separate settings are required for each year when the two year employment-based arrangement is approved within the agency.
8. Occasionally, a student intern will be offered a professional position in the field agency during the course of the internship year. The student may not accept this position without approval of the Director of Field Education; approval will not be granted until the student has submitted a document outlining the distinctions between the paid position and the internship (i.e. hours, duties, etc.). If this arrangement is approved and a student has been receiving federal work study funding, that funding will cease, effective the first month of employment.