Field education is a collaborative endeavor between NCSSS (the School), agency and agency social workers, and students. Key responsibilities of each are outlined below.

**The School and the Office of Field Education (OFE)**

1. The School, through the Office of Field Education (OFE) staff, is responsible for developing placements which will offer students social work learning experiences appropriate to the objectives set for their educational program level.

2. The School recognizes the agency’s primary responsibility to its clients.

3. The School maintains ongoing communication with the agency via the OFE. In turn, the OFE maintains ongoing communication with the agency primarily through the field liaison. This person also serves as the Integrative Seminar instructor, meeting with students weekly in the classroom.

4. The OFE makes available information regarding curriculum, including the field manual, access to course syllabi (via the Internet http://ncsss.cua.edu/courses/), and forms and guidelines for evaluation of student performance. Whenever possible, all information is made available via the internet.

5. The Director of Field Education consults with the agency’s internship coordinator in the placement process in an effort to provide an appropriate match of student and agency department or site.

6. The School, through the Seminar instructor/liaison, assigns the student’s final grade after review of the student’s evaluation and recommendation of the field instructor.

7. The Director of Field Education, aided by the liaison, provides prompt assistance in dealing with any concerns that the agency may have in relation to the field placement.

8. The OFE provides formal training for all field instructors prior to the beginning of the academic year. The OFE usually offers an end of the year “thank you” conference for field instructors, offering free CEUs for field instructors.

9. The OFE is responsible for ensuring that all students in field settings are covered by malpractice insurance. Certificates verifying this coverage are provided to agencies upon request.

10. The School’s Field Advisory Committee, composed of OFE staff, field instructors, BSW and MSW students, and NCSSS faculty, reviews and evaluates policies and procedures, and makes recommendations to the OFE on issues related to field education.

**Integrative Seminar Instructor/ Liaison**

1. The liaison carries out the School’s responsibility of monitoring the field placement, ensuring that NCSSS standards regarding field tasks and assignments, evaluation, supervisory conferences, etc. are met.

2. The liaison seeks to understand the unique structure and functions of the field agency as they pertain to student’s field experience.
3. The liaison assists in problem solving as necessary.

4. The liaison is supportive of the field instructor’s teaching role and the student’s learning role.

5. The liaison is responsible for collecting and reviewing field documents (e.g. Learning Plan, Early Assessment, End-of-Semester Evaluation) when due. When a student receives unsatisfactory scores, the liaison will contact the field instructor promptly.

6. Liaison collects and grades field-related assignments according to course syllabus.

7. The liaison maintains a communication link between the school and agency via contact with the field instructor. The liaison communicates with field instructors and students as follows:

   a. The liaison sees the student weekly in the classroom, and so should become aware of any student-identified issues as they arise. S/he will request that field instructors call when they have any questions or concerns.

   b. The liaison maintains contact with field instructors via occasional phone calls, emails and/or letters/memos which seminar students can bring to their field instructors.

   c. The liaison must make one agency visit, either in the fall semester or early in the spring semester, to meet with student and field instructor. The field instructor is welcome to contact the liaison if s/he would like an early visit.

   d. When scheduling the agency visit, the liaison is encouraged to ask whether student and/or field instructor would like to meet individually before meeting as a threesome.

   e. When a student changes placements, the liaison will contact the new field instructor and arrange for a field visit.

   f. When visit not made, liaison will make contact with the field instructor in any of several ways, e.g. phone call, email, memos or letters indicating what is being covered in the Seminar, etc. In addition, the liaison will discuss internship progress with students in the classroom and/or during office hours.

   g. When a student is moved to a new placement during the academic year OR when a student is assigned a new field instructor within the same setting, the liaison will contact the new field instructor promptly, and determine whether a visit is called for.

   h. When meeting with student and field instructor, the liaison will discuss student performance, review the Learning Plan, process recordings and other written materials, and, if requested, help identify additional learning opportunities.

   i. Sometimes the liaison may be asked to mediate a situation, e.g. when student and field instructor are having difficulty establishing a good working relationship.

8. In the event that a Field Meeting or Student Review is convened, the liaison will participate in problem solving and in problem resolution.

**The Agency and the Internship Coordinator**

1. The agency, under the direction of the Internship Coordinator, provides the setting, staff and instruction that enable the student to have learning experiences appropriate to the objectives set for their educational program level.

2. The agency director or designee (Internship Coordinator) has overall responsibility for the development of the agency’s participation in professional education and for liaison with the School.
3. The agency agrees to offer students comprehensive learning experiences that reflect the NCSSS educational requirements, including, as much as possible, exposure to work with individuals, groups, communities, and families. In some instances this may require the assistance of the field liaison in arranging inter-departmental and/or cross agency assignments.

4. The agency provides the physical facilities necessary to accommodate the student(s), including interviewing rooms, desks, and telephones, when needed. Though space is limited in many of the agencies that we work with, we ask agency staff to do whatever possible to ensure client confidentiality and privacy.

5. The agency must have sufficient staff to maintain its basic programs without reliance upon students, since the purpose of the student internship is primarily educational.

6. The agency identifies the potential field instructor in compliance with School criteria. The agency ensures that the field instructor has adequate time to fulfill supervisory requirements, including time to attend mandatory NCSSS Training.

7. Prior to final acceptance of an agency as a field site, the following documents must be submitted to NCSSS: (a) Agency Information form, (b) Field Instructor Profile form(s), and (c) CUA-Agency Statement of Agreement (Affiliation Agreement).

8. Agencies and students arrange field learning experiences so that they are in consonance with the academic calendar and accommodate the CUA class schedule.

9. The agency recognizes that NCSSS policy prohibits students from using their own vehicles to transport clients. If an agency requires the student to use his/her car for transporting clients, this must be discussed and agreed upon at the pre-internship interview.

10. The agency incorporates students into its milieu and, as much as possible, helps them feel a part of the professional staff.

11. The Internship Coordinator will notify the School when there are any changes affecting the student field experience, e.g. re-assignment of field instructor to different department, or new field instructor assigned to student.

Field Instructor

1. The field instructor will have demonstrated a positive commitment to social work and an interest in serving as a field instructor.

2. The field instructor is knowledgeable about the agency, the community and the profession.

3. The field instructor attempts to create a climate for the acceptance of feelings and conflicting views; development of awareness of people and situations; and the use of self in the helping process.

4. The field instructor strives to be fair, honest, candid, as well as supportive and patient.

5. The field instructor works to help the student learn to apply theory to his/her practice.

6. The field instructor provides the student with a thorough orientation to the agency, including discussion of its purpose, structure, policies, procedures, and ethical standards. As part of the
orientation, the field instructor will explain what is expected of the student during the internship, including clarifying the role of social work practice and the social worker in the agency.

7. The field instructor guides the supervisory process so that both student and field instructor become aware of differences and similarities between field instructor’s teaching style and student’s learning style. As necessary, the two will work together to achieve a better ‘fit’ of styles. As part of this process, the field instructor will acknowledge the impossibility of either one knowing everything!

8. The field instructor provides a minimum of 1 hour of individual (i.e. face-to-face) weekly supervision. Ideally, the field instructor is able to meet with the student for an uninterrupted hour of supervision. When this is not feasible, the field instructor meets with the student in blocks of time to meet our supervisory requirements. The field instructor keeps documentation of supervision with student. Weekly group supervision may be provided to supplement (but not replace) individual supervision.

9. After an initial orientation period, the field instructor assigns cases/tasks and responsibilities that are appropriate to the student’s learning needs and that are increasingly difficult and challenging.

10. The field instructor seeks out a variety of learning experiences for the student as appropriate. If necessary, the field instructor shares this role with another worker in the agency in order to provide suitable experiences.

11. Field instructors are encouraged to share reference materials with students. Some field instructors find it helpful to assign reading for the intern to complete before beginning the internship.

12. The field instructor works with student on developing and implementing the Learning Plan, which helps clarify expected practice behaviors, possible learning experiences, and evaluation criteria.

13. The field instructor monitors student’s work and progress and regularly provides feedback and constructive criticism. S/he assesses student’s performance and progress to facilitate individualization of planned learning experiences.

14. The field instructor completes and reviews with the student written evaluations of student learning and performance. It is expected that evaluation of student performance will be an ongoing, shared experience between student and field instructor.

15. The field instructor is knowledgeable about the NASW Code of Ethics (http://www.socialworkers.org/pubs/code/code.asp) and adheres to its tenets.

16. The field instructor helps the student learn about basic social work processes, encouraging the student to reflect on what he/she is doing. In field education, action and reflection are instrumental to the learning process.

17. An essential part of the teaching role is review, discussion and evaluation of process recordings, especially in the undergraduate senior and MSW foundation year. Reviewing process recordings ahead of time should be part of the field instructor’s preparation for conferences with students.

18. Field instructors actively collaborate with NCSSS. This entails early notification of any problem concerning student performance; availability for meetings with the field liaison at least once, usually
in the fall semester, and, if necessary in the spring semester; and attendance at the NCSSS fall semester field instructors’ orientation meeting.¹

19. In the event that a Field Meeting or Review Committee is convened, the field instructor participates in problem solving and problem resolution.

The Student

1. The student behaves in a professional manner, taking responsibility as an adult learner to understand and carry out assigned duties, seeking direction when needed.

2. The student becomes knowledgeable about agency structure, policy and programs. The student carries out agency-related responsibilities in a manner consistent with agency policy and procedures.

3. The student complies with agency policies and procedures, including, for example, medical exams, drug screenings, HIV testing, TB testing, fingerprinting, criminal background checks, and dress code.

4. The student takes responsibility for meeting agency and NCSSS deadlines for submission of all documents related to the internship. Student shares deadlines and due dates with field instructor (e.g. regarding Final Evaluation) well ahead of time.

5. Student reviews Field Calendar with field instructor at the beginning of each semester, discussing NCSSS holidays and vacation periods, and ensuring client or project coverage during times the student is away from the internship.

6. The student must register with the CUA Office of Disability Support Services (202-319-5211) before any accommodations can be set in place with the agency.

7. Social work students are bound by the NASW Code of Ethics, and should, therefore, become thoroughly familiar with the Code. They should also become familiar with the NCSSS scholastic and behavioral requirements related to grading and use both as guides to their professional conduct.

8. The student maintains a log of hours spent at the field site, reviewing it regularly with the field instructor. Student submits a signed copy with the Field Evaluation at the end of each semester. The student is responsible for ensuring that s/he meets the required number of field hours over the course of the academic year.

9. The student devotes the required number of hours to the internship, reporting regularly and on time according to the agreed upon schedule. If unable to report to field, the student will speak directly with the field instructor in a timely fashion and arrange to make up any missed hours.

10. The student prepares an agenda in preparation for weekly supervisory conferences. It is recommended that the student submit the agenda to the field instructor ahead of the supervisory meeting each week.

11. The student shares with clients his/her student internship role at the agency, after having discussed with the field instructor how best to share this information.

¹ Some of the above field instructor responsibilities are taken from Clinical social work supervision, Third Edition © 2000, by Carlton E. Munson and The Haworth Press, Inc. Reprinted with the permission of Carlton E. Munson and The Haworth Press, Inc.
12. The student completes agency records and reports in accord with agency policy, procedures, and format in a timely fashion.

13. The student pays for malpractice insurance when registered for Field Education.

14. The student will not change field instructor, field site, or field hours without the knowledge and approval of the field liaison.

**Evaluation of the NCSSS Field Program**

At the end of the spring semester, students and field instructors are asked to provide feedback regarding the field education experience via an on-line *Evaluation of Practicum* survey. Survey results are tabulated and made available to agency internship coordinators, field instructors, and field liaisons. Selected comments about internship opportunities in different internship settings are entered into the *Field Education Search Engine*. Results are considered in revising field documents, in planning the following year’s training for field instructors, and in making placement decisions.

In addition to the end-of-year evaluation of the field program, field liaisons submit summary reports following their visits to field agencies.