



RHODE ISLAND COLLEGE

SCHOOL OF SOCIAL WORK



BSW FIELD EDUCATION MANUAL

RHODE ISLAND COLLEGE
School of Social Work – BSW Program
FIELD EDUCATION POLICIES AND PROCEDURES

Contents

INTRODUCTION 3

Selection and Monitoring of Field Settings..... 4

Field Placement Process 4

Placement Pre-requisites 4

The Application Process 5

Accommodations for Disability 5

Field Readiness 5

Confirmation of Field Placements..... 6

Placement Policies and Procedures 6

BSW Junior Placements 6

BSW Senior Placements 6

Policy for Addressing Safety in Field 7

Policy on Professional Behavior 7

Ethical Obligations 8

Professional Commitment 8

Professional Behavior 8

Personal Behavior 9

Stress Management 9

Emotional Problems 9

Harassment 9

Statement of Non-Discrimination and Affirmative Action 10

Dual Relationships in Field..... 11

Confidentiality Policy 12

Social Media Policy 12

<u>Background Checks</u>	12
<u>Field Placement at Work Setting</u>	12
<u>Proposal for Field Placement at Work Setting</u>	13
<u>Timetable for Completion of Field Hours</u>	16
<u>Policy for Resolving Problems in Field</u>	16
<u>Mid-Semester Placement Changes</u>	17
<u>Grades in Field</u>	17
<u>Satisfactory</u>	17
<u>Incomplete</u>	17
<u>Unsatisfactory</u>	17
<u>Agency Requirements for Staff, Interns and Volunteers</u>	17
<u>Use of Personal Vehicles</u>	18
<u>Other Field Policies</u>	18
<u>Exceptions</u>	18
<u>RESPONSIBILITIES OF THE SCHOOL OF SOCIAL WORK TO ITS STUDENTS IN THE FIELD</u>	19
<u>RESPONSIBILITIES OF THE SCHOOL OF SOCIAL WORK TO AGENCIES & FIELD INSTRUCTORS</u>	21
<u>RESPONSIBILITIES OF FIELD WORK AGENCY</u>	22
<u>RESPONSIBILITIES OF FIELD INSTRUCTOR</u>	23
<u>RESPONSIBILITIES OF THE STUDENT</u>	24

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FIELD EDUCATION POLICIES AND PROCEDURES

INTRODUCTION

Welcome to field education at the Rhode Island College School of Social Work. This manual contains policies, procedures and information about the field experience in the BSW program. It contains the rules by which we play and attempts to answer your questions about the processes involved in managing and successfully completing your placement. Additional information and forms are located on our website at <http://www.ric.edu/socialwork/Pages/Field-Education.aspx>

Field experience is an integral part of social work education, where students begin to connect and integrate theory and practice. Field experiences reinforce student identification with the purposes, values and ethics of the social work profession. They assist students to integrate learning in the classroom with experiential learning. Thus, concurrent with field placement, students are enrolled in practice classes and field seminars that foster this integration of empirical and practice-based knowledge. We hope that, in your field experience, you will develop knowledge, increase your skill, and have opportunities to participate in real-life practice.

In planning the field instruction program for students, we place particular emphasis on the need for and right to individualization. Individualization takes time; making the right match of student, agency and field instructor is a complicated task. The field office, faculty and field instructors work diligently to include and involve students in choices about referral, placement, learning goals, and evaluation. All of us in this process want you to have a successful field learning experience.

The office of Field Education is committed to developing placement opportunities that promote the achievement of professional competence in social work's generalist foundation. Field sites offering a broad array of services to diverse populations in Rhode Island and Massachusetts (and even a few in Connecticut) reflect the mission, goals and the competencies of the BSW program.

FIELD EDUCATION PROGRAM POLICIES

Selection and Monitoring of Field Settings¹

The office of Field Education maintains responsibility for approving all field settings. It selects organizations as field sites and monitors them according to the following guidelines:

Selection

- ✦ Investment in social work education, including the importance of helping students integrate classroom and field learning
- ✦ Evidence of sufficient and appropriate learning opportunities
- ✦ Professionals qualified to provide field instruction, i.e., have an MSW degree from a CSWE-accredited program
- ✦ Commitment to provide two hours of field instruction per student each week, with one hour of one-on-one supervision by a primary field instructor and a second hour by the primary field instructor or a secondary instructor available in the setting
- ✦ Evidence of accreditation by appropriate certifying organizations if applicable

Monitoring

- ✦ The quality of the learning experience provided to students as reported by students and faculty liaisons
- ✦ The quality of communication between the organization, field instructor, and the school ✦
Program or personnel changes that would affect student learning
- ✦ The organization's ability to comply with curriculum changes that would affect student learning
- ✦ Field instructor attendance at training sessions/field office workshops

Monitoring the quality of field instruction is an ongoing process that is accomplished via individual e-mail, telephone contacts, and in-person meetings between the faculty field liaison, the student, and field instructor. In turn, field instructors monitor the program by their feedback to the faculty advisor and the office of Field Education.

Field Placement Process

Placement Prerequisites

Only those BSW students who are enrolled in SW 327 and who have completed the proper prerequisites will be allowed to enter field education instruction and receive a placement.

¹ Adapted with permission from Wood, Z.B. (2008). Field education manual: Mandel School of Applied Social Sciences, Case Western Reserve University.

The Application Process

Students will apply to the BSW program in the fall semester of their junior year. During this time, students will meet with the assigned Field Coordinator for a field interview. At the field interview individual learning needs will be determined through the placement process, which includes completion and submission of a written application and updated resume to the Office of Field Education. The knowledge and skills that students bring into the BSW program and the knowledge and skills that students hope to acquire in preparation for continuing their social work careers will be considered. Students are welcome and encouraged to discuss ideas and preferences with their Field Coordinator. However, students may not contact field agencies or schedule or participate in interviews without a referral from the office of Field Education.

Accommodations for Disability

Students requesting reasonable accommodations in field placement are required to also register with Disability Services Center on campus:

<http://www.ric.edu/disabilityservices/Pages/Accommodations.aspx> It is the student's responsibility to let the field office know of any needed reasonable accommodations.

Field Readiness

Students are required to show preparedness for field by demonstrating professionalism in all aspects of the educational process, including interactions with faculty, staff, field agency employees and peers. Students who are ready to begin field:

- ✦ Demonstrate the ability to work cooperatively with others;
- ✦ Show respect for diverse opinions;
- ✦ Model self-awareness and self-control;
- ✦ Demonstrate ability to form positive working relationships with clients, faculty, staff, field agency employees and peers;
- ✦ Show ability to work toward resolving their personal issues that may impair performance in field placement or in the profession;
- ✦ Comply with School of Social Work policies to bring forward any problems in field education.

Students will comply with the [RIC Student Handbook](#), the SSW Policy Concerning Professional Behavior (see below), the SSW Confidentiality Policy and/or the [NASW Code of Ethics](#).

The director of Field Education, the BSW department chair and the faculty of the BSW program reserve the right to recommend dismissal from the program for any student who gives

evidence of an inability to secure or maintain a field placement and carry out field responsibilities at the bachelor's level.

Confirmation of Field Placements

Students are responsible for filling out the mandatory online field confirmation form after the interview process is complete and a placement has been offered and accepted. The Field Confirmation must contain all requested contact information. Students' hours in the field may not begin until the placement process is completed. Once the confirmation form has been submitted via InPlace, a confirmation letter will be generated by the system and sent to the intern, field seminar instructor, MSW Supervisor. The office of Field Education staff will be able to view this information via their InPlace access.

All students in field placements will track field data through InPlace, an online software that will organize students' field data and evaluation information. An account must be opened once it is time to start the field placement process. The intern will receive information via RIC e-mail on opening an InPlace account.

Placement Policies and Procedures

BSW Senior Placements*PLEASE SEE ADDENDUM**

Senior-year field placements are generalist placements designed to provide students with opportunities to engage actively in professional tasks that complement as well as reinforce classroom learning. Students will implement theory-in-practice with individuals, families, groups, organizations, and communities. Students will complete 448 hours in field in their senior-year placement. This placement occurs under the supervision of a field instructor with an MSW degree from a CSWE accredited institution.

Policy for Addressing Safety in Field

The School of Social Work is committed to student safety during internship. Though incidents are rare, we recognize a predictable level of risks and challenges to safety in the field. In consideration of the variety of settings that are approved as field sites by the office of Field Education, we have adopted a 3-pronged approach to safety in field.

The School of Social Work will:

- Assess safety issues and protocols when approving field sites;
- Require that all field sites include its safety protocols in intern orientations;
- Include safety as a topic for Field Seminar which meets weekly while students are in field;
- Incorporate safety evaluation into the site visits with faculty liaisons;
- Refer all safety challenges and concerns to the director of Field Education.

The field site will:

- Provide all new interns with orientation that includes training in the site's safety protocol;
- Incorporate safety as a topic and a regular check-in during one-to-one supervision with interns;
- Permit interns to follow their instincts in matters of personal safety;
- Take appropriate actions where safety is a concern, including teaming workers, changing meeting locations, reassigning clients, or other supportive actions;
- Contact the director of field education to discuss all safety challenges and concerns. The

Student will:

- Attend seminar and bring up any concerns for safety;
- Schedule weekly supervision at field site and actively participate;
- Adhere to the School's transportation policy and not drive clients in their personal vehicles;
- Report immediately any incidents or concerns for safety to the faculty liaison and Field Education office.

Policy on Professional Behavior (Adapted with permission from Wood, Z.B. (2008). *Field education manual: Mandel School of Applied Social Sciences, Case Western Reserve University*)

Any student whose performance in the field placement constitutes a breach of the *NASW Code of Ethics*, and/or the School of Social Work Professional Code of Conduct (see below) will be referred to the Academic Standing Committee by the director of Field Education.

The following framework guides the policy on professional conduct. Failure to meet generally accepted standards of professional conduct, personal integrity or emotional stability requisite for professional practice, inappropriate or disruptive behavior toward colleagues, faculty, or staff (at school or field placement) will be the basis for nonacademic termination policies (Council on Social Work Education, Commission on Accreditation, Supplement to the Handbook of Accreditation Standards and Procedures).

Ethical Obligations

Students are ethically and professionally bound to:

- ✦ adhere to the NASW (National Association of Social Workers) *Code of Ethics* ;
- ✦ appreciate the value of diversity by demonstrating effective and nonjudgmental relationships and working with others who are different from oneself; and
- ✦ adhere to issues of confidentiality as they relate to human services, classroom activities, and field placement.

Students are required to meet the following requirements to maintain good standing:

Professional Commitment

- ✦ A strong commitment to the goals of social work and to the ethical standards of the profession, as specified in the *NASW Code of Ethics*. Behavior judged to be in violation of the current NASW Code of Ethics may result in a consultative review and/or administrative action by the Academic Standing Committee.
- ✦ A demonstrated commitment to the essential values of social work, which include respect for the dignity and worth of every individual and his/her right to a just share of society's resources (social justice).

Professional Behavior

- ✦ Behaviors that are in compliance with program policies, institutional policies, professional ethics standards, and societal laws in classroom, field, and community.
- ✦ Appearance and personal demeanor that reflect a professional manner.
- ✦ Sound judgment in decision making.

- ✦ Potential for responsible and accountable behavior by knowing and practicing within the scope of social work, respecting others, being punctual and dependable, prioritizing responsibilities, attending class regularly, observing deadlines, completing assignments on time, keeping appointments or making appropriate arrangements, and accepting supervision and critique in a positive manner.
- ✦ Work and communication with others that is intended to resolve issues directly, professionally, and is geared toward problem resolution while avoiding triangulation.
- ✦ Advocacy for themselves undertaken in an appropriate and responsible manner using proper channels for conflict resolution.
- ✦ Willingness to receive and accept classroom feedback and field supervision in a positive manner to enhance professional development.

- ✦ Professional and respectful interpersonal behavior with colleagues, faculty, and staff in class and field.

Personal Behavior

Stress Management

- ✦ Ability to deal with current life stress through the use of appropriate coping mechanisms when stress interferes with scholastic and professional performance.
- ✦ Use of appropriate self-care and supportive relationships with colleagues, peers, and others when stress affects scholastic and professional performance.

Emotional Problems

- ✦ Use of help for problems that interfere with scholastic and professional performance.
- ✦ Recognition of need to engage in counseling or seek support and help if personal problems, psychosocial distress, substance abuse, or mental health difficulties result in any of the following:
 - compromising scholastic and other performance; ○ interfering with professional judgment and behavior;
 - jeopardizing the best interests of those to whom the social work student has a professional responsibility (as outlined in the *NASW Code of Ethics*).

Harassment

There will be zero tolerance for any form of harassment, which includes the following:

- ✦ Conduct that intimidates, threatens, or endangers the health or safety of any person.
- ✦ Behavior that intentionally or negligently causes physical, financial, or emotional harm to any person.
- ✦ Behavior that is construed as a nuisance, including prank phone calls or abusing or harassing another user through electronic means.

Statement of Non-Discrimination and Affirmative Action

Pursuant to the philosophy of the Board of Education and the Council on Postsecondary Education, Rhode Island College prohibits discrimination, including harassment and retaliation, on the basis of race, color, creed, national or ethnic origin, gender, gender identity or expression, religion, disability, age, sexual orientation, genetic information, marital status, citizenship status or status as a special disabled veteran, recently separated veteran, Vietnam era veteran, or any

other veteran who served on active duty during a war or in a campaign or expedition for which a campaign badge has been authorized. Rhode Island College also prohibits all forms of sexual harassment and sexual violence.

Should you encounter any type of discrimination and/or harassment, including at field sites, you are encouraged to contact a member of the social work faculty/staff, a responsible college employee or the Title IX Coordinator. (Click [here](#) for contact information and details on who is a responsible college employee). To access information on the Rhode Island College policies regarding Nondiscrimination and Affirmative Action, Click [here](#). Complaints of discrimination and/or harassment may be filed with the College's Title IX office. Click [here](#) to access the Title IX office. Allegations of violations of the Statement of Nondiscrimination and Affirmative Action are adjudicated through the Office of Institutional Equity. If a person is found to be responsible for violating the Statement of Nondiscrimination and Affirmative Action, they may be subject to additional sanctions according to this policy.

Dual Relationships in Field

When assigning field instructors to students, the School of Social Work adheres to pertinent standards in the *NASW Code of Ethics* concerning dual relationships and conflicts of interest. In the context of field instruction, dual relationships occur when a field instructor maintains a relationship with a student in more than one domain, whether professional social, or business. Dual or multiple relationships can occur simultaneously or consecutively.¹ According to the *NASW Code of Ethics*,

Social workers should be alert to and avoid conflicts of interest that interfere with the exercise of professional discretion and impartial judgment. . . . (standard 1.06[a])

Social workers should not engage in dual or multiple relationships with clients or former clients in which there is a risk of exploitation or potential harm to the client. . . . (standard 1.06[c])

Social workers who function as educators or field instructors for students should not engage in any dual or multiple relationships with students in which there is a risk of exploitation or potential harm to the student. Social work educators and field instructors are responsible for setting clear, appropriate, and culturally sensitive boundaries. (standard 3.02[d])

In order to prevent exploitation or potential harm to students, favoritism, and partiality – and to comply with [NASW Code of Ethics](#) standards – students and potential field instructors should disclose to the director of Field Education any dual relationship or conflict of interest. Examples include situations where the potential field instructor has provided clinical services to the

¹ See National Association of Social Workers. (2017). *NASW code of ethics*. Retrieved 08/4/2020, from <https://www.socialworkers.org/About/Ethics/Code-of-Ethics/Code-of-Ethics-English>.

student; friendships between the student and potential field instructor; and other professional and business relationships between the student and potential field instructor.

Confidentiality Policy

Students are required to follow the [NASW Code of Ethics](#) guidelines on privacy and confidentiality and adhere to agency policies regarding clients' rights in all direct service, documentation and case presentation of client information from the field placement.

Social Media Policy

Students are required to familiarize themselves and comply with the field site's policies on confidentiality with regard to digital and other electronic communications, information storage and record keeping. To protect confidentiality and maintain clear boundaries, students must block personal contact information such as cell phone numbers or e-mail addresses if using personal smart phones to call, text or e-mail clients. In addition, students may not use social media or social networking sites to 'friend' clients or discuss confidential matters related to field work. Students should prevent clients' and supervisors' access to social workers' personal social networking sites to avoid boundary confusion and inappropriate dual relationships. In addition, students shall not access clients' or supervisors' sites.

Background Checks

Every student entering field placement is required to complete a comprehensive background check. Students must open an account with [Castlebranch.com](#).

Field Placement at Work Setting *PLEASE SEE ADDENDUM**

BSW students may request to do their field placement at their place of employment. To be considered for a placement in an agency of employment a student must prepare and submit a "Proposal for Field Placement at Work Setting" for approval by the director of Field Education and chair and faculty of the BSW Department. Proposals can be downloaded from the field office website. They should be prepared using word processing software and will be considered complete when submitted with the proposed field instructor's resume and a letter of approval from the executive director of the agency. Deadlines for Proposals for Field Placements at Work Setting are posted outside the office of Field Education and on the School of Social Work field office webpage at <http://www.ric.edu/socialwork/Pages/Field-Education.aspx>

The field instructor for a student seeking a work-setting field placement must hold an MSW degree from a CSWE-accredited institution and cannot be his/her regular employment supervisor. If there is no one available in the agency, the services of an experienced MSW with

appropriate credentials who works off-site will be considered. Assignments of field instructors within the work setting must comply with the NASW policy on dual relationships. Field instructor availability must meet the requirements universally set for field instructors. The primary field instructor should be available at minimum for one hour a week and should assure that the student receives an additional hour of supervision from staff colleagues or other on-site supervisors, either individually or in a group setting. Under no circumstances will the student pay for the services of a field instructor.

The student must have assignments that are different from the work she or he usually completes. The assignments must be substantive and must meet the requirements of a field setting for a BSW senior-year field education contract.

Proposal for Field Placement at Work Setting

Students who wish to negotiate special arrangements for a field placement at their current place of employment must use the outline below to complete their proposal and submit it to the director of Field Education for approval.

The work proposal must be well articulated and will not be considered if the field placement work is the same as the student's employment. The student must have assignments and duties that are different from the work they usually complete as part of their employment and must not be with clients that the student works within their employment. The assignments must be substantive and must meet the requirements for a generalist field placement. BSW students may not use a current position of employment as a field placement regardless of the amount of time they have been employed in that position.

Instructions for a Proposal for Field Placement at Work Setting

Students who wish to negotiate special arrangements for a field placement at their current place of employment must use the outline below to complete their proposal and submit it to the Office of Field Education for approval. Work Proposals are reviewed and approved by the BSW department chair and the director of Field Education. Students will be informed of deadlines and when appropriate given an opportunity to revise and resubmit work proposals.

The proposal should be prepared using word processing software/uploaded to InPlace and include the following information:

- **Student Name**
- **Student Address**
- **Student Telephone**

- **Student RIC email**
 - **Resume**
 - **When student is asking to complete the field placement**
 - **Name and Address of agency including telephone phone number and website**
- ✦ **Description and mission of agency (only if no website is available)**
- ✦ **Student Employee Status, including:**
- **Job title and function**
 - **A brief job description**
 - **Client population served (who are the clients)**
 - **Current schedule (days and hours)**
 - **Length of time employed in this capacity**
 - **Name of immediate supervisor and contact information for supervisor**
- ✦ **Proposed field placement experience, including:**
- **Proposed placement title and function**
 - **A brief job description that includes description of proposed tasks to be completed as part of the internship; clearly describe how the clients and experiences are different**
 - **Client population served (who are the clients)**
 - **Setting/location**
 - **Proposed schedule including days and hours**
 - **List and describe potential social work practice involvement and/or projects that could be implemented at the agency that are *substantially different* from the tasks/assignments done under "employee status", or job function.**
 - **Name of MSW supervisor and resume:** Student must describe their relationship with the proposed field instructor. Students are required to disclose any prior relationships and to discuss potential conflicts.
- ✦ **Letter on agency letterhead from an administrator who oversees both departments (employment and proposed field placement) that states:**

- **Student's date of hire**
- **Student is an employee in good standing**
- **Administrator has reviewed the proposal and approves the student maintaining a dual role as employee and intern for the time period of the field placement**
- **Administrator approves the student being supervised by the proposed MSW supervisor**

Timetable for Completion of Field Hours

Field hours are to be scheduled by students with the approval of their agency and field instructor. Students must include in their learning contracts specific hours for field placement, including beginning and ending dates, days and times of scheduled field hours, and the contingency plans to make up any missed work. While every attempt is made to accommodate students' schedules, students are required to be available at least one day per week during daytime business hours for field placement. Students are ultimately responsible for being in placement a total of 448 hours in the senior-year field placement.

Policy for Resolving Problems in Field

Students and field instructors should discuss and attempt to resolve issues that occur in field placement as part of the supervisory process. Students are expected to bring issues to the supervision agenda.

Following discussions in supervision, the beginning step for students and field instructors toward resolution of an issue is to involve the faculty liaison at any point that an issue is not manageable. A conference will be held with the student, faculty liaison, and field instructor to discuss the nature and parameters of the problem, to consider alternatives, clarify expectations, and formulate a plan. At any point in this process, any party may also involve the director of Field Education.

A written record of the discussion and follow-up plan will be documented by the faculty liaison/advisor on a "Problem in Field" form and signed by all parties.

If the problem is not resolved as a result of the above procedure, the issue will be referred to the director of Field Education. It should be noted that no placement will be terminated or changed without consultation with the relevant parties, e.g., the director of Field Education, the student's field liaison/advisor, field instructor and the student. Any change in field placement must be approved by the director of Field Education.

Mid-Semester Placement Changes

Mid-semester placement changes may require the student to extend field hours to complete agency orientation, rewriting a learning contract and attending to individual learning needs and agency needs.

Grades in Field

Satisfactory

To receive a Satisfactory (“S”) grade in Field, students are required to complete the three components of field education: placement assignments, required supervision, and field seminar. Students’ grades are determined by their faculty liaison with input from the field instructor through the field evaluation completed at the end of the semester.

Incomplete

An Incomplete (“I”) grade in Field must be cleared in order to continue in field the next semester. Students must contract with their faculty liaison/advisor to complete all hours, placement assignments and supervision and must have a Satisfactory (“S”) grade by the beginning of the next semester.

Unsatisfactory

An Unsatisfactory (“U”) grade in field will result in termination from the program.

Student and Agency Arrangements

Agency Requirements for Staff, Interns and Volunteers

Students in field placement are expected to observe the same practices required by the agency for its employees, including (but not be limited to) criminal background checks (BCI), medicals tests (for example, TB), documentation of such tests or immunizations, fingerprinting or Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act (HIPAA) training.

Use of Personal Vehicles

Personal vehicles may not be used to transport clients in field placements. Students are cautioned that Rhode Island College does not provide insurance coverage for automobiles. At times students are able to use agency-owned vehicles. Students should be familiar with field agency policies related to students’ use of agency vehicles prior to using them.

Other Field Policies

Exceptions

Exceptions to the preceding policies may be considered only after consultation with student's faculty field advisor, the director of Field Education, BSW department chair, Academic Standing Committee (if applicable), and approval by the dean of the School of Social Work.

RESPONSIBILITIES OF THE SCHOOL OF SOCIAL WORK TO ITS STUDENTS IN THE FIELD

The overall responsibility of the school through the office of Field Education is to assure that students have field experiences that increase their knowledge and skill, offer opportunities for integration of classroom and hands-on learning, and assist them in pursuing their individual learning goals. The following include specific responsibilities of the school in relation to its students.

1. The BSW faculty and the director of Field Education will assure that students are prepared for field, that they understand the requirements and are able to meet them.
2. The field office will review applications for field and student résumés to determine students' experience, interests, and ability to meet the demands of field.
3. The field office will interview BSW students to match students to an appropriate agency and field instructor. While every attempt will be made to assure a match after the first interview, that is not always possible. Thus, the placement process may be longer than expected.
4. The SSW is responsible for assuring that your field experiences provide an introduction to professional social work and opportunities for you to achieve BSW competencies.
5. The SSW is responsible for assuring that the field seminar and your field liaison/advisor provide support, information, and assistance to you as you navigate the field experience.
6. Your field seminar instructor is your field liaison and is responsible assuring the educational integrity of your field placement.
7. Your seminar instructor/field liaison is responsible for assisting you to develop a clear, helpful, and challenging learning contract.
8. Your seminar instructor/field liaison is responsible for conferring with you and your field instructor in at least one in-person visit in the fall semester and a phone call in the spring semester, with other appointments as necessary.
9. Your seminar instructor/field liaison is responsible for assisting you to deal with problems in the field as outlined in the policy for resolving problems in the field.
10. As leader/facilitator of your field seminar, your liaison is responsible for reading and providing feedback on all written assignments. They are responsible also for assessing your personal and professional growth as indicated in your discussion in the field seminar.

11. As leader/facilitator of your field seminar, your liaison advisor is responsible for determining and assigning your academic grade for the seminar and your field experience with input from the field instructor through the field evaluation completed at the end of each semester.

RESPONSIBILITIES OF THE SCHOOL OF SOCIAL WORK TO AGENCIES AND FIELD INSTRUCTORS

The overall responsibility of the office of Field Education of the School of Social Work is to provide the most positive learning experience for students through establishing a collaborative working relationship with the field instruction agency and its designated field instructors. The following include specific responsibilities of the School of Social Work (SSW).

1. The SSW will assess student learning needs, apply curriculum requirements, and match students to an agency that most adequately meet those needs.
2. The SSW will offer orientation and training seminars each year to assure that field instructors are informed about recent trends in working with students in internships, adult learning, issues of diversity, ethics and values, applying academic content to the field, and changing classroom curriculum.
3. The SSW will plan formal and informal orientation sessions in order to prepare students for their field placement experience. Field orientation is provided by the office of Field Education and the school teaching faculty; specific orientation is provided through consultation with the faculty liaison/advisor and the field instructor.
4. The SSW will be responsible for assigning a student to a faculty member who will serve as liaison to the field instructor and as liaison/advisor to the student. The faculty liaison is required to confer with the student and the field instructor through a minimum of one phone contact and one site visit, with other communication as needed.
5. The SSW will confer with students and field instructors to establish a learning contract to be approved by the faculty liaison that is compatible with agency functioning, student learning needs, and the mission and curriculum of the School of Social Work.
6. The SSW will provide student evaluation guidelines in compliance with field instruction course objectives and curriculum.
7. The SSW will decide matters of grades (passing, failing, incomplete, and eligibility for graduation). This is done in part based upon review of the field instructor's written final evaluation of the student.
8. When applicable, the SSW will determine recommendation for placement termination or transfer (based upon consultation with the agency field instructor).

RESPONSIBILITIES OF FIELD WORK AGENCY

Field education is a vital part of the student's academic trajectory, and it is crucial for the agency to understand its role. The following are specific responsibilities of the agency to the student and the School of Social Work.

1. The agency and field instructor's philosophy will be compatible with the values and ethics of the profession and with the educational objectives of the School of Social Work.
2. The agency will accept students without regard to race, color, creed, national or ethnic origin, gender, religion, disability, age, sexual orientation, gender identity or expression, marital status or veteran's status (except in those special circumstances permitted or mandated by law).
3. The agency will provide students with an orientation to its programs, policies and procedures, including safety awareness and training within the context of the setting.
4. The agency will provide adequate physical office space, computer, telephone, and access to records to support the student's performance within the field.
5. The agency will allow the field instructor sufficient time to participate in regularly scheduled supervision with the social work intern, meetings and contacts with faculty liaisons from the School of Social Work, orientations and trainings for field instructors as well as sufficient time for critical analysis and evaluation of the student's written work and overall evaluation of student's performance in field.
6. The agency will encourage students to participate in staff meetings and other educational opportunities available in the agency.
7. The agency's staff will be of sufficient size to maintain and develop the basic program of the agency without heavy reliance on students.
8. The agency will be in good standing in the community and in the profession and should qualify for membership in those local, state, or national organizations appropriate to its field of service.
9. The agency will demonstrate an active interest in research through its willingness to provide opportunities for students to engage in research projects required by the school in accordance with Institutional Review Board (IRB) rules and regulations.

RESPONSIBILITIES OF MSW FIELD INSTRUCTORS

The field instructor is the agency's employee who will provide on-site supervision and instruction to the students. Below are the expectations of the Field Instructor in that role.

1. The field instructor will communicate the field placement program to other members of the agency staff in order to create a climate conducive to learning and to facilitate the use of agency resources which will help meet the student's learning needs.
2. In collaboration with the student(s), the field instructor will select appropriate learning assignments and develop a written learning contract that is consistent with the objectives of field instruction and the agency's goals and purposes.
3. The field instructor will provide continuous supervision to students throughout the duration of the field placement.
4. The field instructor will schedule two hours of planned and uninterrupted supervision each week with the student. A minimum of one-hour of face-to-face, uninterrupted supervision is required with the primary MSW supervisor. The second hour may be group or individual supervision with the same or a different assigned supervisor.
5. The field instructor will report to the director of Field Education any dual relationship or conflict of interest between the field instructor and student – in compliance with the *NASW Code of Ethics* standards – that could potentially result in exploitation or potential harm, favoritism and/or partiality with the student.
6. The field instructor will establish a plan for reviewing and evaluating student's progress through periodic review of students' recording, audio, or videotaping; direct observation; student's work with a co-worker or with a client system; written documents appropriate to tasks/assignments, a proposal or grant, policy, or minutes of a meeting. Usually a combination of these means of review and evaluation will be used.
7. The field instructor will provide an on-going evaluation of the student's performance, including a formal online evaluation at the end of each semester on the student's InPlace account. The student and field instructor are both required to participate in and sign the evaluation. The evaluation form must be returned electronically at the end of each semester.
8. The field instructor will submit updated resumes to the office of Field Education or other proof of an MSW degree from a CSWE-accredited school of social work.

RESPONSIBILITIES OF THE STUDENT

The School of Social Work views its students as adult learners with varying degrees of experience, knowledge and skills. It is expected that students will take an active role in planning and implementing their field instruction experience.

1. Students will actively participate in communications with the Field office by opening an account with InPlace, an online software that will organize students' field data and field evaluations. Students will receive instructions on the process of applying to field and should follow up by scheduling an interview and reporting back to the Field office in a timely and professional manner utilizing InPlace software.
2. Students will function as social work professionals in the field placement. Students will abide by the *NASW Code of Ethics*, the SSW Policy Concerning Professional Behavior, and the SSW Confidentiality Policy.
3. Students are expected to abide by the policies and regulations of the assigned agency. This includes functioning within the agency time schedule, maintaining records required by the agency, adherence to agency technology/social media policy, safety policies and dress code.
4. Students in field placement are expected to observe the same practices required by the agency for its employees, including (but not be limited to) criminal background checks (BCI), medicals tests (for example, TB), documentation of such tests or immunizations, fingerprinting or HIPAA (Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act) training.
5. Students will report to the director of Field Education any dual relationship or conflict of interest between the field instructor and student – in compliance with the NASW Code of Ethics standards – that could potentially result in exploitation or potential harm, favoritism and/or partiality with the student.
6. Students will conduct research in accordance with the *NASW Code of Ethics* and the agency or college's Institutional Review Board (IRB) rules and regulations.
7. Students will prepare for and actively participate in supervision with the field instructor in mutually determined ways delineated at the beginning of the semester through the Learning Contract. As part of their participation, students will share their class syllabi and enlist their field instructor's assistance in meeting the requirements for completion of classroom/academic assignments in the field.
8. Students will attend and participate in the mandatory field site visit in the fall semester with the field instructor and faculty liaison.

9. Students will participate in their field evaluations with the field instructor. Students are required to sign the written evaluations and may add comments in the space provided.
10. Full-time students generally spend 8 hours per week in the field during the junior year (ten weeks) and 16 hours per week during the senior year in the agency for fourteen weeks each semester. Any modification to the required field hours will require prior approval of the field agency, the director of Field Education, and the BSW department chair.
11. Students must follow the Policy for Resolving Problems in Field in the event they experience challenges with the process or content of the learning experiences at the field setting, or with the field instructor.

****ADDENDUM TO FIELD EDUCATION FOR ACADEMIC YEAR 2020-2021 IN RESPONSE TO COVID-19

In response to the global pandemic caused by the coronavirus and to prioritize the safety of our students, Rhode Island College School of Social Work adopted the following policies as outlined by the CSWE Commission on Accreditation Response to the NADD Subcommittee Report on Field Education, June 2020:

Option 1: Remote Internship

Students can opt to do a remote internship which would involve activities that will not include face-to-face meetings.

Option 2: Face to Face

If a student would prefer a face-to-face internship, an acknowledgement of risk form must be signed and returned to the field office before beginning the internship. In addition, students must comply with the agency's COVID mitigation plan which may include daily temperature checks, use of face masks, regular handwashing, social distancing, and avoiding handshakes and other physical contact with colleagues and clients.

Option 3: Employment Based Field Placement

Students can count their current employment towards field practice hours. Please note, this option requires approval from the field office, based on review of work proposal submitted by the student. Student field assignments and employment tasks may be the same and counted toward required field hours **as long as the tasks have clear linkages to the nine social work competencies**. The work proposal will describe opportunities for student to engage as a learner and for the student to fulfill field education requirements. Students are required to have 1 hour weekly of MSW supervision. If the current supervisor is not an MSW the agency must provide the required supervision. Employee agencies must comply with field education supervision of students either through a separate qualified supervisor or by the program assuming responsibility for reinforcing a social work perspective. In extenuating circumstances, students may have the same field instructor as employment supervisor with different supervision times. Student can discuss with field office if this placement will be face to face or remote after the approval of the proposal.

Option 4: Defer internship

If a student cannot participate in a face-to-face internship, and is also concerned about the remote internship not being a good fit for their learning style, the student can request a deferment. BSW students should submit this to Dr. Wendy Becker (wbecker@ric.edu)

**The field hour expectations for the Fall 2020-Spring 2021 year is as follows:
BSW seniors – total of 400 hours**

****ADDENDUM TO FIELD EDUCATION FOR ACADEMIC YEAR 2020-2021 IN RESPONSE TO COVID-19

Instructions for a Proposal for Field Placement at Work Setting

For academic year 2020-2021, students can count their current employment towards field practice hours. Students who wish to earn field hours at their current job must use the outline below to complete their proposal and submit it to the Office of Field Education for approval. Work Proposals are reviewed and approved by the Field Education Committee. When appropriate, students may be given an opportunity to revise and resubmit work proposals. The proposal should be uploaded to InPlace and include the following information:

- Student Name
- Student Address
- Student Telephone
- Student RIC email
- Resume
- Name and Address of agency including phone number and website
- Description and mission of agency (only if no website is available)
- Student Employee Status, including:
 - Job title and function
 - Job description **that includes detailed overview of proposed tasks to be completed as part of the internship; showing clear linkages to the nine social work competencies.** Please click on this link for the RIC SSW Field Education webpage <http://www.ric.edu/socialwork/Pages/Field-Education.aspx> to find your corresponding Learning Contract (BSW Senior Learning Contract, MSW I Contract, MSW II Learning Contract Clinical or Macro)
 - Client population served (who are the clients)
 - Current schedule (days and hours) ***student can only apply required weekly number of hours towards field placement***
 - Length of time employed in this capacity
 - Name, contact, and resume of proposed MSW supervisor (if different from immediate supervisor). MSW supervisor (field instructor) must hold an MSW degree from a CSWE accredited program; with 2 years post graduate experience to supervise an MSW intern. Post graduate experience not required for BSW intern supervision.
 - Letter from supervisor stating student is an employee in good standing

Please note: Employee agencies must comply with field education supervision of students, either through a separate qualified supervisor or by the program assuming responsibility for reinforcing a social work perspective. The School of Social Work will not be responsible for arranging MSW off-site supervisor for the work proposal option.