



# TCU Department of Social Work

## BSW Field Policies

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## **ADHERENCE TO AGENCY POLICIES AND PROCEDURES**

Students are required to adhere to all agency policies and procedures as well as all TCU student policies. Being an effective social worker entails more than knowledge of and skillful practice of social work practice skills and the code of ethics. Students are also “employees” of their practicum sites. Violation of agency policy and procedures may result in the student being removed from the agency and failing the course.

## **ADMISSION TO FIELD EDUCATION**

BSW students entering field must meet the following requirements:

- Have a 2.25 or higher overall GPA
- Complete a minimum of 12 hours of Social Work (SOWO) courses including 10833, 20813, 30843, 30863, and be currently enrolled in 30833, 30853, and 30883
- Have a 2.5 GPA or higher in Social Work and a “C” or better in all SOWO courses

Additionally, students must make written application to be admitted into field education. Students must receive faculty approval based on the written application as well as a student-faculty conference (Junior Evaluation) to evaluate readiness for field education. Field Education may be postponed or denied if the faculty finds the student insufficiently prepared or lacking required knowledge, skills or values.

## **CHANGE OF PLACEMENT**

There may be times that changing a placement is needed for a student in Field but it is discouraged because there are many complications that arise in doing so. Students are urged to use the interview process to be sure that they understand the nature of the placement and that they ask any questions to try and avoid any problems that could be cleared up prior to starting the placement.

The following are situations and policies regarding changing placements of students from an agency.

- If the student views the agency match as unworkable:
  - The student must first attempt to address their concerns with their field instructor.
  - If concerns are not addressed to the student’s satisfaction, the student must talk with the Director of Field Education about their concerns. The Director of Field Education, student and field instructor will then discuss the issues involved. If the concerns can be resolved to everyone’s satisfaction and the student decides to stay in the agency, the only follow up action is to check in with the student and field instructor to monitor the status of the field placement.
  - Should the student still desire a change, they will need to communicate that to the Director of Field Education to discuss with the BSW Program Director so that a decision can be made regarding further action.
  - If the decision to move the student is made, a suitable agency must be contacted and arrangements made for the student to begin work there. Although this must be a thoughtful decision, the sooner it can be finalized, the better.
  - If this change is within the first two weeks of the semester, and the student has been engaged in appropriate activities, the student can transfer hours to the new agency.

After two weeks into the semester the student may be required to start hours over or negotiate hours. This is done to provide the student with a placement that is long enough and has continuity for satisfactory completion of required assignments and attainment of field objectives.

- If the agency requests the removal of a student, for any reason:
  - The field instructor should contact the Director of Field Education at the earliest indication of a problem.
  - If the agency simply wishes to explore whether a student should be removed, the Director of Field Education will immediately respond with a conference.
  - If it is possible for the student to remain in the placement until the end of the semester, with special attention from the University, it may be better for the student.
  - The school will remove the student within a time frame that is agreeable to the agency.
  - The Director of Field Education will discuss the situation that led to the agency request with the field instructor and/or student in a manner respectful of the needs of the agency and the student's education.
  - If the decision to move the student is made, a suitable agency must be contacted and arrangements made for the student to begin work there. Although this must be a thoughtful decision, the sooner it can be finalized, the better.
  - If this change is within the first two weeks of the semester, and the student has been engaged in appropriate activities, the student can transfer hours to the new agency. After two weeks into the semester the student may be required to start hours over or negotiate hours. This is done to provide the student with a placement that is long enough and has continuity for satisfactory completion of required assignments and attainment of field objectives.
  
- Should the Department find it necessary to remove a student from their field placement:
  - The request should originate from the Director of Field Education.
  - This concern will be discussed with the student and the field instructor.
  - If the decision to move the student is made, a suitable agency must be contacted and arrangements made for the student to begin work there. Although this must be a thoughtful decision, the sooner it can be finalized, the better.
  - If this change is within the first two weeks of the semester, and the student has been engaged in appropriate activities, the student can transfer hours to the new agency. After two weeks into the semester the student may be required to start hours over or negotiate hours. This is done to provide the student with a placement that is long enough and has continuity for satisfactory completion of required assignments and attainment of field objectives.

### **COMPETENCIES WITHIN FIELD PLACEMENT**

The purpose of the behavioral field objectives is twofold. The first is to serve as a guide to learning and teaching throughout the semester for which they are applicable. In this role they serve as focal points for educational supervision. The second purpose is to provide the guidelines

for the evaluation of the student's performance. The mid-semester and final evaluations are particularly focused on the field competencies. These are final competencies; a student is expected to have attained them by the end of the semester and placement. The individual field instructor is responsible for providing opportunities for those practice experiences or assignments that will enable the student to demonstrate attainment of these competencies. The student is responsible for demonstrating through written work, client interaction, supervisory discussions and other means his/her attainment of the competencies.

The BSW Program uses the core competencies identified in EP 2.1 as the basis for curriculum development and outcome assessment:

1. Identify as professional generalist social workers and conduct themselves accordingly
2. Apply social work ethical principles to guide professional practice using the National Association of Social Workers Code of Ethics
3. Apply critical thinking to inform and communicate professional judgments
4. Engage diversity and difference in practice
5. Advance human rights and social and economic justice
6. Engage in research-informed practice and practice-informed research evaluating program outcomes and practice effectiveness at all levels
7. Apply knowledge of human behavior and the social environment including theories of human behavior and social systems
8. Engage in policy practice to advance social and economic well-being and to deliver effective generalist social work services
9. Respond to contexts that shape practice including emerging social needs, service delivery trends and social systems that comprise practice contexts
10. Engage, assess, intervene, and evaluate with individuals, families, groups, organizations, and communities at the generalist level

### **CONTINUING EDUCATION OPPORTUNITIES**

With the permission of the field instructor and as part of the learning contract, students may attend conferences, workshops, and engage in cross training opportunities in other agencies as part of the practicum. However, students should not expend more than 5% (about 20 hours) of the field placement in such activities.

### **CRIMINAL BACKGROUND CHECK**

A criminal background check of social work students is required by many of the organizations providing field internships prior to the time the student would have contact with the organization's clients or employees. Thus it is important for the Director of Field Education to know ahead of time if a student has had an arrest or conviction so that students may be assisted in addressing any criminal background concerns with potential field placements. The Social Work program will provide to each student a website where the student can arrange (by a deadline provided to them by the Field Director) to complete the application and make payment for a criminal background check to be completed. This organization will then share the results with the Director of Field Education.

### A. Timing of Background Check

Harris College-Social Work students enrolled in their field internship for the first time or a student who has had a break in enrollment in clinical courses is required to complete the criminal background check at the time designated by Harris College-Social Work prior to the first internship day in the agency. A break in enrollment is defined as non-enrollment for one full semester or more in coursework.

### B. Criminal Background Check Procedure/Requirements

Each student who will be the subject of the criminal background check is required to cooperate with the company conducting the check so that it can be completed at the time required by Harris College-Social Work prior to the student contacting clients or employees at the agency. Each student is required to provide the screening company accurate identifying information requested so that the company can carry out the screen upon the student. Each student is required to sign any and all consents/releases, in the form(s) designated by Harris College-Social Work, including consent to the criminal background check and permission for it to be provided by the company to TCU and Harris College-Social Work. It is intended that the background check include all cities and counties of known residence for the 7-year period prior to the check.

### C. Results

Once the results of the criminal background check are received, this knowledge helps the Field Director make an informed placement and helps students address and criminal background concerns with potential field placements. Results of the background check may be shared with the BSW Program Director but otherwise, all information will be held confidential.

Students are also encouraged to visit the Texas State Board of Social Work Examiners to learn about any potential obstacles they may face in obtaining their licensure, as related to any criminal background concerns. In alignment with the Profession, the Department sees background checks as one of many ways we work to protect all clients with which field students may come into contact. The Field Director is responsible for storing this information and ensuring all related student information is protected and only shared if needed.

### E. Estimated Cost of the Criminal Background Check

Approximately \$45.00. The cost of the criminal background check is the student's responsibility

## **CSWE FIELD STANDARDS**

### **Accreditation Standard 2.1- Field Education**

The program discusses how its field education program:

2.1.1 Connects the theoretical and conceptual contribution of the classroom with the practice setting, fostering the implementation of evidence-informed practice.

B2.1.2 Provides generalist practice opportunities for students to demonstrate core competencies.

M2.1.2 Provides advanced practice opportunities for students to demonstrate the program's competencies.

2.1.3 Provides a minimum of 400 hours of field education for baccalureate programs and 900 for master's programs.

2.1.4 Admits only those students who have met the program;s specified criteria for field education.

2.1.5 Specifies policies, criteria, and procedures for selecting field setting; placing and monitoring students; maintaining field contacts with field education settings; and evaluating student learning and field setting effectiveness congruent with the program's competencies.

2.1.6 Specifies the credentials and practice experience of its field instructors necessary to design field learning opportunities for field students to demonstrate program competencies. Field instructors for baccalaureate students hold a baccalaureate or master's degree in social work from a CSWE-accredited program. Field instructors for master's students hold a master's degree in social work from a CSWE-accredited program. For cases in which a field instructor does not hold a CSWE-accredited social work degree, the program assumes responsibility for reinforcing a social work perspective and describes how this is accomplished.

2.1.7 Provides orientation, field instruction training, and continuing dialog with field education settings and field instructors.

2.1.8 Develops policies regarding field placements in an organization in which the student is also employed. To ensure the role of a student as learned, student assignments and field education supervision are not the same as those of the student's employment.

### **Educational Policy 2.3- Signature Pedagogy: Field Education**

Signature pedagogy represents the central form of instruction and learning in which a profession socializes its students to perform the role of practitioner. Professionals have pedagogical norms in which they connect and integrate theory and practice. In social work, the signature pedagogy is field education. The intent of field education is to connect the theoretical and conceptual contribution of the classroom with the practical world of the practice setting. It is a basic precept of social work education that the two interrelated components of curriculum- classroom and field- are of equal importance within the curriculum, and each contributes to the development of the requisite competencies of professional practice. Field education is systematically designed, supervised, coordinated and evaluated based on criteria by which students demonstrate the achievement of program competencies.

### **DENIAL OF PLACEMENT BY FIELD AGENCY**

The Director of Field Education will make an effort to place all students who meet the academic requirements for placement. If agencies are not willing to interview a student based on their own criteria and a student cannot be matched for placement, the student will sit down with the Director of Field Education, the BSW Program Director, and the student's advisor to discuss further options for the student regarding their degree plan. Students cannot be guaranteed a placement as the university is not responsible for decisions made by community agencies.

Students will be provided three opportunities for interviews at community agencies and will receive assistance after the first two times that they are turned down for a placement.

### **DRUG TESTING**

Drug testing of social work students is required by many of the organizations providing field internships prior to the time the student would have contact with the organization's clients or employees. Thus it is important for the Director of Field Education to know ahead of time if a



student will need assistance in addressing any illicit drug use. The use of prescription medications may require verification of a physician's prescription to rule out any illicit use. This knowledge helps the Field Director make an informed placement and helps students address any criminal background concerns with potential field placements. Therefore, Harris College- Social Work program requires drug testing and criminal background checking of all students in its social work program as explained below.

#### A. Selection of Company to perform Drug Testing/Criminal Background Check

As part of Harris College, the Social Work department will utilize the same company designated by Harris College-Nursing to perform the drug testing and criminal background check for students. Harris College-Social Work will not accept drug test results from any company other than the one designated by Harris College e.g., Harris College-Social Work will not accept a drug test/criminal background check which a student has independently obtained from the company outside the procedure provided in this policy.

The company selected is independent and separate from both TCU and Harris College-Social Work. It is not and shall not be considered a partner, joint venturer, employee, or agent of TCU or Harris College-Social Work. TCU shall not be considered a partner, joint venturer, employee, or agent of the Company. There is no additional charge to the student for these tests outside of the course fees imposed by the University for the Field Seminar class.

#### B. Drug Screening Test

Social Work students enrolled in the Field practicum for the first time or a student who has had a break in enrollment in courses are required to complete a drug screening test at a time designated by Harris College-Social Work prior to the first internship day in the agency. A break in enrollment is defined as non-enrollment for one full semester or more in coursework. Refer to TCU's Student Handbook on Alcohol and Drug Abuse Policies and Penalties.

#### C. Drug Test Procedure/Requirements

The company Harris College selects to perform the urine drug tests will be scheduled to be on campus on a specified day prior to the beginning of coursework each semester to obtain and test urine samples from each student. Each student required to undergo the drug test shall cooperate in all aspects of the urine drug test and to complete the drug test on campus on the day specified by Harris College-Social Work. Each student is required to sign any and all consents/releases, in the form(s) designated by Harris College-Social Work, including consent to the drug test and permission for the results of the drug test to be provided to TCU and Harris College-Social Work. It is a violation of this policy for a student to adulterate or attempt to adulterate a specimen, to engage in any deceptive behavior during or in connection with the testing process, or take any other action which would falsify test results or tend to make test results inaccurate.

**IMPORTANT:** As part of the drug testing procedure, the student may be contacted by the Medical Review Officer ["MRO"] affiliated with the testing company. The student should cooperate with and accurately respond to inquiries of the Medical Review Officer. A positive drug screen for a student is defined under this policy to be one reported as such by the testing company selected by Harris College. Generally, this refers to the testing company indicating the student tested on both

the company's initial test and GC/MS confirm test as outside the acceptable range set by the testing company, and with the MRO not determining the test result should be a negative. A negative test for a student is defined under this policy a test result which is not a positive test result.

#### D. Reporting of Drug Test Results to Harris College-Social Work

The testing company will communicate the drug test results to the Field Director who may share the results with the BSW Program Director. It is the policy of TCU and Harris College-Social Work to maintain the confidentiality of these drug test results to the extent required by law.

#### E. Consequences

When a positive drug screen occurs, the following will occur:

- the student will be immediately suspended for a minimum of one year (12 continuous months from the date of the beginning of the suspension) from the social work program; and
- the positive drug screen will be shared by Harris College-Social Work with the TCU Dean of Campus Life for further action, including but not limited to referral for a drug abuse education program, referral to counseling, and/or referral to a drug treatment program, under TCU's institutional policies; and other appropriate action, if any.

Any social work student with a positive drug screen is encouraged to seek treatment. TCU Social Work encourages impaired students to seek assistance voluntarily and assume responsibility for their personal and professional conduct.

A student who has on one occasion had a positive drug screen under this policy, and who desires to reapply to TCU Social Work, may reapply only for a school semester beginning after the period of suspension (one year minimum). The student will, in addition to meeting all other requirements for similarly situated applicants, be required to provide documentation of successful treatment and the student will be required to consent to and undergo a retest, at a time and through a testing company selected by Harris College, with this retest resulting in a negative drug screen. This re-testing is at the student's expense. The decision on whether to readmit the student is not guaranteed, and will be made on a case-by-case basis.

#### **EARLY PLACEMENT OPPORTUNITIES**

The Social Work Department partners with several agencies that may initiate an early placement process from time to time due to a variety of agency-based reasons including, but not limited to competitive placement settings and/or the needs of the population (i.e. long-term counseling or school social work). Agencies must present compelling reasons of benefit to the students to be eligible for the early placement process. All decisions regarding early placement are made by the Director of Field Education.

#### **EVALUATION OF STUDENT**

Evaluation of student performance in field is an ongoing process throughout the placement. The purpose of the evaluation process is to help the student examine educational progress in meeting the objectives for each semester. As previously emphasized, these objectives and competencies represent the minimum expectations of performance at the completion of each course. It is the

ongoing responsibility of the field instructor to work with the student in addressing these goals and the final responsibility to evaluate how well the student has mastered the necessary material within a given agency setting.

Opportunity must be provided for each student to meet each objective. The objectives serve as the ultimate basis for course planning and evaluation of student performance. The progress made by each student is assessed in the following ways throughout the semester:

1. Verbal presentation of material
2. Discussion of agency tasks with the field instructor
3. Agency documentation
4. Interaction with the student's peer group
5. Interaction with other personnel in the setting
6. Direct observation of the student at work on a particular task or working with clients
7. Discussion during faculty liaison visits

The student, the Department, and the agency interact within a systems context, giving and receiving feedback in the ongoing educational process. Recognizing the interdependence of these elements, the Department conducts ongoing evaluation on a multitude of levels, with all participants in the field program responsible for feedback and maintenance.

Field instructors are asked to evaluate their field student once per semester but are also asked to evaluate the Field Program in general at the Field Instructor workshops and through their regular communication with the department. Additionally, Field Instructors are asked to engage in a productive working relationship with the field program and to provide timely, transparent, consistent and professional feedback regarding concerns affecting their students, field instruction, agency and/or clients.

Students are expected to actively participate in the midterm and final field evaluation process. Students and field instructors are encouraged to work together during the evaluation process. The student is expected not only to participate in the process, but also to have an opportunity to review the evaluation. However, in the final analysis, the evaluation is the field instructor's assessment of student performance.

Neither the student nor the Director of Field can change the content; however, the Field Director has the responsibility to assign the final grade and also has the option of appending material. The field instructor, student and Director of Field electronically sign the evaluation. Copies of all components of the final evaluation will be furnished to the school, the agency and the student. The original will be kept in the student's electronic field file. Students will also submit their self-evaluation and/or other material with the final evaluation for inclusion in their permanent record.

### **FIELD INSTRUCTOR SELECTION**

As field education is the signature pedagogy of Social Work education, selection of quality field instructors is of utmost importance. Field instructors are selected based on their qualifications and desire to support social work students in their journey toward becoming professionals, must be employed at an approved field agency, must commit to the educational standards of the

Department, and agree to the roles and responsibilities described below. New field instructors must submit field instructor application forms along with a current resume to the field director to be kept on file with the Department. Additionally, new field instructors must attend field instructor orientation and will be offered additional training by the field director, if requested. New field instructors are also expected to have at least three months experience in their current employment position before being assigned field students.

### **FIELD INSTRUCTOR DUTIES**

Field instructors provide administrative and educational supervision for each student and are involved in the review of field assignments and coordination with the Director of Field Education. Field visits will be coordinated by the Field Director and scheduled in cooperation with both the student and instructor.

Field instructors should contact the field director immediately should any educational, performance, ethical, administrative, or supervisory issues arise with students. These issues should be identified as early as possible in the field experience. If the field instructor is unsure about concerns, discussion with the Field Director should occur as soon as possible.

Specific duties of all field instructors include, but are not limited to:

- Orient the student to the field setting including:
  - Relevant personnel policies and procedures
  - Required meetings
  - Agency dress code
  - Record keeping and agency documentation
  - Confidentiality and HIPPA regulations
  - Intake, referral, transfer and termination processes
- Establish the learning contract with the student
- Provide necessary experiences to meet outlined educational goals
- Teach the appropriate use of supervision, including when and how to use supervision and for which purposes
- Serve as a professional role model
- Help the student understand and appropriately use the network of human services available to the community, agency and client
- Evaluate progress of the student, with the faculty liaison, throughout the semester
- Provide regularly scheduled, uninterrupted supervisory conferences for the purpose of enhancing the student's educational learning and practice skills
- Train on and monitor student compliance with safety policies and procedures, which may involve conducting home visits, interacting with potentially difficult clients and handling emergencies.
- Notify the faculty liaison as soon as possible should any problems regarding the student arise in the field setting
- Participate with the Department in a mutual effort to continue enhancing the field program
- Share expertise with the Department
- Communicate to the field director if any planned or unexpected changes that would impact supervision of students

## **FIELD INSTRUCTOR QUALIFICATIONS**

Field instructor qualifications vary based on the education level of the student being supervised. Social work licensure is required for all field instructors. Field instructors for BSW students must have a Bachelor's or a Master's degree from an accredited School of Social Work and be licensed. They must have at least two years of work experience which may be two years beyond their combined BSW & MSW degree.

## **GRADES**

The final responsibility for assigning the field practicum grade resides with the course professor. Refer to the syllabus for exact grading formula. Grades in field practicum range from A through F. A grade of B is considered to be the normative grade, reflecting good solid professional social work performance at the beginning level. A grade of A reflects superior, exceptional performance in all areas of practicum performance; a grade of C reflects a below average performance.

Students are expected to meet or exceed minimum program requirements to successfully complete the practicum. These minimum expectations include, but may not be limited to, working at least 480 hours; turning in required paper work on time; meeting regularly with the field instructor for supervision; completing the Integrative Project; and attending scheduled field seminars on the TCU campus. The final grade the student receives in the practicum class *is based on the quality* of the work performed.

Performance problems that result in termination from an internship vary greatly. In general they reflect the noncompliance with established policies and procedures, ethical/work performance issues, or a violation of the above stated expectations.

### **Performance problems will be addressed in the following manner**

1. Student performance will be reviewed in supervision. Performance problems will be clearly identified (orally or in writing) by the agency field instructor and/or field faculty member. Specific examples of problem area and recommendations for improvement will be made (if applicable), and consequences of failure to meet expectations will be communicated to the student in a timely manner.
2. At any time during the internship, if a single event or persistent problems occur, the field instructor will contact the Director of Field for a consultation. The student also must advise the field faculty liaison if he/ she have concerns about the internship and/or the field instructor. The student will also advise the Director of Field or seminar instructor if there are concerns about performance issues raised from feedback received from the agency field instructor.
3. The Director of Field will offer guidance to the student and/or agency field instructor by telephone or in person. If a visit to the agency is needed, this meeting may include separate time with the student and with the agency field instructor. This may include, but is not limited to sharing past academic and performance information.
4. Based on the discussion with the Director of Field, a written "Corrective Action Plan" and/or revised learning contract will be developed jointly by the student, field director and agency field instructor and signed by all parties, with copies distributed. Consequences for the noncompliance will be included.

5. Each criterion included on the student's evaluation form has importance. Therefore, students must receive ratings at Satisfactory or above in the field education course in order to receive a Satisfactory grade in the course. A final evaluation with areas rated "1" indicates the student must demonstrate improved performance to pass the course.
6. Example of poor performance or a single event, which may place clients at risk, include unprofessional or unethical will result in a termination, at any time from the internship. The agency field instructor and the field faculty make this decision jointly. As agencies supervise students voluntarily, it is the right of any agency to terminate an internship with no prior notice if they feel they can no longer work with the student.
7. If the student's performance does not meet minimum expectations by the due date of the final evaluation, the agency field instructor will complete the narrative portion of the evaluation specifying the reasons for the students' failure to meet expectations, and the quantitative portion would clearly indicate the inadequate or unsatisfactory areas of performance.

**The Social Work department will determine what grade to assign for the students' final grade.**

In some cases, it may not be appropriate for the student to remain in the same internship. The student would complete the internship in at a different agency to be determined by the Director of Field Education. A second internship would be contingent on disclosure of the student's performance problems and a copy of the last field evaluation form may be provided to the new potential field instructor. The Director of Field reserves the right to not offer a second internship based on student performance issues and/or the students refusal to allow the School representatives to share information about the termination with the new internship agency.

If the student is assigned to a new internship regardless if there was a failing grade or an "Incomplete" grade, the student will be required to complete the full number of hours required for the course. There are exceptional cases of illness where a physician has documented a reason for hours missed or in cases where there were extenuating circumstances at the internship, and the Director of Field may negotiate with the student "hours credited" from the first internship.

If the student is assigned an "Incomplete", the student would not need to re-register for the course. This is a decision that is based on the reasons for the termination of the placement. Generally, problems that are beyond the student's control will be considered for an "Incomplete" grade. The student may receive a failing grade, based upon the documentation of the agency field instructor and other factors taken into consideration by the faculty. This grade and the subsequent termination from the internship are based on the students' performance, which has violated policies of the agency, Social Work department, and/or any standards set by the NASW Code of Ethics. In these situations a student must complete a typed written request for another internship stating their reasons and responsibility for failure in the prior internship, along with how they plan to resolve problem area. (i.e., attend a workshop on confidentiality, etc.). This request is submitted to the Director of Field within 60 days from the date of the termination. The Director of Field reviews the letter and all pertinent information jointly with the BSW Program Director. If it is decided that the student will be offered another internship, there would **NOT** be a grade change of the original "Unsatisfactory" and the entire internship **MUST** be retaken, with no credit given

for previous hours in an internship. The student must re-register for the full credit hours of the course.

At times the Social Work program may determine that it is in the best interest of the student not to immediately reenter another internship. In these cases it may be recommended by the Director of Field and BSW Program Director that the student completes certain tasks in order to document the appropriate resolution of difficulties which may have inhibited their performance in the internship. Examples of such actions are: taking a course in ethics, engaging in individual or group therapy for a specified period of time, etc. Any recommendation made will be in writing to the student with specified completions dates.

The Social Work program reserves the right to deny a student a second internship based on student performance issues and other pertinent information. The Social Work program **WILL NOT** offer a third internship for any single field education course.

The student has the right to appeal this grade. The grade appeal will be in accordance with University regulations and Harris College. Students will not be permitted to register for any social work courses until the grade appeal process for a field education course is complete.

### **GRIEVANCE AND APPEAL PROCEDURES**

Students who wish to appeal an adverse decision by the faculty or who wish to file a grievance against the program or any employee or representative of the program may do so by first submitting a written summary of the grievance or appeal to the BSW Program Director and/or to the Chair of the Department of Social Work within 30 days of the action which prompted the appeal. The Director or Chair must respond to the student in writing within fourteen days, indicating the course of action to be pursued in regard to the appeal or grievance, including time-frames, opportunities for the formal presentation of the grievance or appeal and the names of those individuals who will participate in the grievance process. If the grievance or appeal is not resolved at this level, it becomes subject to the formal university-wide grievance and appeal procedures. Copies of the university procedures are available at the Dean of Students office.

### **HOLIDAYS**

Schedule conflicts with state, agency, or University holidays must be negotiated between students and supervisors (this includes Fall and Spring Break). While students observe the same holidays and vacations as the University and field site, they may elect to work at the agency during these times if it is mutually agreed. The total clock hours required of students each semester does not vary regardless of holidays. If a holiday occurs and it is a regularly scheduled work day for the student, that time must be made up. All hours must be worked in order to count toward the total required.

### **HOURS COMPLETED**

Field placement is completed on a concurrent plan that provides field instruction activities approximately 16 hours per week during the last two semesters in the social work program, for a total of 240 hours each semester for a total of 480 hours upon completion of the program. In addition to completing hours at the agency, all students are enrolled in a field seminar which is attended weekly on campus.

Students should not plan their work hours to complete their internships prior to the end of the semester by accumulating compensatory time and then taking it all at the end. The placements are designed to afford the student the opportunity to experience a placement over a period of months as agency workloads and activities ebb and flow during this time period. The entire placement period must also coincide with the practicum course required in the semester.

### **IMMUNIZATIONS**

Before placement in a field agency, students must be able to provide evidence of completion of the following immunizations if requested by their placement site . Under the Family Educational Right to Privacy Act (FERPA or the Buckley Amendment) 20 USC S. 1232g, specific medical information may not be shared by the institution without the student’s consent.

- MMR vaccinations or report of titer
- Varicella or report of history of chicken pox
- Tetanus/Diphtheria booster within the past 10 years
- Hepatitis B (3-Immunization series)
- TB Tine Test or Chest X-Ray- completed in the past 12 months

### **INTERN PLACEMENT TRACKING (IPT) SYSTEM**

The IPT system is an online placement system the Department is using to track students, field instructors, and agency information. IPT is an online information system that manages student and agency placements. Additionally, students may use the system to research each of the approved agencies in order to choose field placements.

Students, field instructors, and agencies will be provided with training on use of the system and are expected to keep their information updated. Additionally, students and field instructors can access documents related to field in IPT.

### **INTERVIEW PROCESS**

Prior to the interview, the student will have submitted their field application and considered internship options. At the Junior Evaluation interviews, students will talk with the Director of Field Instruction and other faculty to explore learning and career goals, as well as potential internship sites. During this meeting information is obtained that will lead to a “match” between the student, the agency, and the University.

Once agencies have been identified by students as potential placement sites, the Director of Field Instruction will contact agencies to ensure that placements are a possibility. At that point, the student will be provided with the contact information to set up an appointment. Only one referral is given at a time. After meeting with the agency, if the student and/or the agency do not feel that the internship is appropriate, the student will return to the Director of Field Education to discuss the potential options (see next section for options when placement is denied.)

### **LEARNING CONTRACT**

Within field, students have various resources available for the development of their field experience. In most cases the field instructor is both the administrative and the educational



supervisor, although portions of the administrative component may be delegated to other agency personnel with whom the student addresses the various field assignments. Another key resource is the Director of Field Education or designee who is not only available during site visits, but can provide consultation or direct intervention as requested by the student and/or the field instructor.

Students are required, with input from his/her field instructor to complete and adhere to a learning contract and if needed, a corrective action plan or behavioral contract. The learning contract is an agreement that is negotiated between the student and the agency. The learning contract should contain information about the structure of the practicum (work hours, total hours, duration, supervision time, etc.) and goals and objectives for the practicum. The objectives should be concrete, measurable, and attainable. The learning contract should be signed by both the student and the field instructor and uploaded to the Intern Program Tracking (IPT) system for TCU. If, during the practicum, the student's responsibilities or assignments change significantly, or if it becomes clear that the goals and objectives cannot be met, the learning contract may be renegotiated and resubmitted. The student's evaluation and final grade will be based, in part, on adherence to the learning contract.

Students must be active participants in the development of their own field program, reflecting on past experiences, current demands of the semester objectives, and the nature of the field agency to determine where to focus learning. The field instructor and faculty liaison can reinforce the learning environment and help to sequence learning so as to make it manageable and appropriate to the contexts of the agency and classroom instruction.

In general, learning contracts include several types of goals:

1. Goals related to semester objectives in which the student predicts learning opportunities provided by the field setting. For example, the agency may not require the development of case assessments, yet there is an educational objective that calls for skill in this area of professional activity.
2. Goals related to the knowledge and skills required for service delivery in a particular agency. For example, although first semester BSW field objectives do not call for skill in the use of the DSM-IV, students placed in mental health agencies, which routinely use the DSM-IV, should promptly find out what it is and how to use it.
3. Goals related to the student's own career and/or personal goals. For example, students who want to supplement their practice experience with a special population group may develop relevant educational goals/objectives to broaden their field experience in relation to that clientele. Another example is one in which a student incorporates a personal goal to become more assertive in his/her interaction with others.

The educational objectives and competencies are statements of minimal expectations for all students. Students are expected to further individualize their field experience by developing relevant and feasible contracts that meet their unique needs.

### **LUNCH TIME**

How lunch is handled within your internship will vary from agency to agency. For instance, in residential programs, it is not uncommon for staff to eat while on the job and to continue to

“work” during their lunch period as they are required to supervise and conduct business with clients within the residential facility. In all likelihood, the agency will not require additional hours above the eight hours to account for the lunch period.

However, in other agencies, students may be required to be at the agency for a nine hour period, taking a one hour lunch which is not counted in their hours. This is something that is unique to each agency and you should check with your supervisor to see how it will be handled at your placement. Generally, it is expected that lunch time for an intern will be handled in the same manner that it is for an employee. If taking a lunch is required, often it is because employers feel that having a break during the day and/or getting out of the building can be therapeutic and helpful for people.

### **MALPRACTICE LIABILITY INSURANCE**

Field students must be covered by professional malpractice liability insurance to protect both the agency and the student against malpractice liability claims. All students meet this professional malpractice liability insurance requirement through a blanket policy held by TCU which covers each student for up to \$200,000.

Again, under this insurance policy students are not covered for any claims relating to the operation of motor vehicles, whether personal or agency vehicle. Since the University has ruled that students cannot provide services for which they are at risk without liability coverage, students may not transport clients as part of their field placement. Agencies should not ask or allow students to transport clients while in field.

### **ORIENTATION TO FIELD**

Prior to the start of the semester, all BSW students will attend a program orientation meeting that will also include information relevant to Field Education. The meeting will address all the necessary information in the field planning process and serves as the student’s orientation to field. In addition to providing important details on due dates and interviewing schedules, other significant information is covered as well. The content of the field orientation will vary slightly depending on if the students are in the foundation or concentration year. Material to be covered includes:

- Field eligibility requirements
- Role of the Field Director
- Field instructor and task supervision
- Hours required; leave time; holidays
- Agency requirements
- Evaluations and grading in field
- Dealing with problems in field
- Corrective action plans and termination from field
- The integrative seminar
- Other field policies and procedures

## **OUT-OF-AREA PLACEMENTS**

TCU does not have faculty available outside of the DFW area and so students may not complete their internship outside of the immediate metropolitan community. Students may ask for placements that are close to their home within the DFW area and efforts will be made to accommodate this, but the academic needs of the students and the guidelines required by CSWE in finding satisfactory placements will take precedent in placing students.

## **PLACEMENT PROCESS**

The BSW field placement occurs during the final two semesters of social work education. Field is taken on a concurrent plan that provides field instruction activities approximately 16 hours per week for a total of 480 hours upon completion of the program. In addition, students spend two hours per week in field seminar. In field seminar students reflect integration of academic content with performance in an agency setting. Field seminar provides a forum to examine issues, test principles and values, critically assess their field experiences, and give and receive support and criticism regarding handling of situations within the agency.

The placement process is a collaborative endeavor between the Director of Field Instruction (Field Director), the student and the agencies. **Under no circumstances can a student make arrangements for their own internship, which includes contacting any agency without the permission of the Field Director.** The Director of Field Instruction works to provide quality internships with agencies that contract with Texas Christian University. Agency Field Instructors must have their BSW or MSW degree, a minimum of two years' experience and be licensed by the State of Texas. Any student who pursues their own internship without coordination with the Field Director will not be allowed to enter an internship for the semester requested and/or will be delayed starting by one semester.

Students are also restricted from interning in any agency where a dual relationship exists between the student and supervisor and/or individual in a position of authority within the agency (i.e., agencies where a relative, friend, spouse, etc. is in a position of authority).

The BSW field placement is chosen with the following goals:

- The placement will support the generalist model of social work as a foundation from which to build upon
- The agency will provide the student with four basic requirements: individual cases, intake/assessments, a group experience opportunity, and a macro level experience focused on community practice
- The student will be in a practice setting that will expand, enhance, and/or introduce new elements into his/her previous work and educational experiences
- The setting will provide an educational experience for the student, rather than a work or observation experience

The BSW placement is determined through the following process:

1. During the spring semester of the junior year each student wishing to enter field education will complete the *Application for Field Education* and submit the completed document, along with all required attachments.

2. Each student will attend a student-faculty conference (Junior Evaluation) in which faculty assess student readiness for field education based on the student's knowledge, values, skills, ethics and life experiences. During the Junior Evaluation students also express interest in specific placements or populations they would like to experience, along with any limitations or challenges regarding participation in field (transportation, personal interest, etc.).
  - a. Entrance into field education may be denied or postponed if faculty determine that a student is not prepared and ready to enter field.
  - b. Denial into field education may result in postponing field education for one year, change of major, or participating in a follow up conference to determine if the student is ready.
3. Upon successful completion of the Junior Evaluation, the Director of Field Education matches each student with the agency that best seems to meet the individual student's learning needs. Together, the BSW Program Director and Director of Field Education review the matches to ensure the best match is made for both the student and the agency.
4. The Director of Field Education communicates the name of the proposed student as well as provides a brief summary of the student's educational background, including the application to field placement, to the field instructor. This contact will be done via email so the field instructor has written documentation about their student.
5. It is then student's responsibility to schedule an interview with the potential field instructor at a time convenient for both parties to determine if the match is a good fit for both the student and field instructor. The student will also inform the field instructor of the proposed start date for the following semester.
6. After the interview, the field instructor notifies the student and Director of Field Education of acceptance or denial into the field agency, along with any additional steps needed prior to starting at the agency (background check, TB test, etc.) by completing an agency confirmation form. This may be done at the time of the interview or at a later time depending on the ability of the field instructor to offer a placement.
7. Students are expected to begin field placement the second week of class in the fall semester.

### **PROGRAM EVALUTION BY STUDENTS**

All students are asked for feedback related to the field program and their placements in the "BSW/MSW Program Exit Surveys." Additionally, students are expected to and routinely use their regular communication with their faculty liaisons to evaluate their field experiences.

### **PURPOSE OF FIELD EDUCATION**

Field education in social work education provides a practice setting in which students have opportunities to apply theory and synthesize themes covered in classroom material. This practice experience, under the direction of a qualified Field Instructor, allows students to explore and develop their professional identity, professional use of self, and professional ethics and values. CSWE (2008) defines field education as the signature pedagogy for the professional development of new social workers.

Signature pedagogy represents the central form of instruction and learning in which a profession socializes its students to perform the role of practitioner.... The intent of field education is to connect the theoretical

and conceptual contribution of the classroom with the practical world of the practice setting. It is a basic precept of social work education that the two interrelated components of curriculum – classroom and field – are of equal importance within the curriculum, and each contributes to the development of the requisite competencies of professional practice. Field education is systematically designed, supervised, coordinated, and evaluated based on criteria by which students demonstrate the achievement of program competencies.

Field learning differs from classroom learning in many ways. There is more emphasis on *doing* and less on recall and information gathering in a testing sense. The field focus is on *application* of knowledge—in other words, providing service and provides greater immediacy and a personalized approach to learning. Student must address situations that arise on a day-by-day basis in their field placement.

Field instruction emphasizes the use of skills and techniques within the context of the client's situation, and offers the opportunity for application and integration of method theory through supervised experiential learning in a social agency setting.

### **RESEARCH WITHIN THE FIELD PLACEMENT**

BSW Research I examines research methods to help students understand how social workers conduct research and how they use and evaluate research findings. Applications to practice are made and focus is on evaluating practice and assessing the effectiveness of programs. Students are taught to conduct research and to be consumers of research, however, in contrast to past student placements, BSW students will no longer be conducting an active research project within their field placement.

### **RESPONSIBILITY OF FACULTY AND PROGRAM**

#### **Director of Field Education**

The Director of Field Education (Field Director) is a full-time faculty member of the Department and has responsibility for coordination of field placements in both the BSW and MSW programs. The Field Director oversees curriculum development and review; design and implementation of the placement process; development and evaluation of agency settings; organization of field instructor trainings; utilization of IPT database; representation of the field program on school committees, university functions and in the professional community; supervision of faculty liaisons; and evaluation of the field program for the Department.

#### **Field Liaisons**

Field Liasons are faculty members of the Department, either full-time or adjunct, who may be assigned to specific field students during their semesters in field to provide supervision and assistance. The field liasion is responsible for at least three contacts per semester to the field agency. This includes visiting the agency at least once per semester to evaluate the overall placement and participte in monitoring student progress. The field liaison serves as the link between the field placement and the Department and can be used to work through any difficulties that may arise from the student or field instructor. Students may or may not be assigned a field liasion as the Field Director may also serve in this role.

#### **Department Chair**

The Department Chair is responsible for oversight of the Department and is the link between the Department and the College. The Department Chair may become involved in field activities

through interaction with the Field Advisory Committee and will be informed when any significant issues arise in field placements.

### **BSW Program Director**

The BSW Program Director makes recommendations to the Department Chair regarding the undergraduate schedule of courses, curriculum changes, and faculty assignments to the program. Additionally, the Program Director ensures that preparation for field is interwoven into all program curriculum. The BSW Program Director is familiar with all BSW students enrolled in field education and will consult with the Field Director should any issues arise with BSW students in their field placement.

### **Field Advisory Committee**

The Field Advisory Committee (the Committee) is not separate from the Department Advisory committee for the program which serves to advise the Department on matters related to the program and to field education. Faculty members serve on the committee based on their position within the Department; students serve a one-year term while in the program; and community social workers and field instructors serve either two or three year terms. The Program Directors and Field Director serve as Co- Chairs of the Committee sharing all administrative responsibilities. In consideration of student confidentiality, concerns or situations regarding specific students will not be discussed by this Committee.

Functions of the Committee include:

- Making recommendations regarding the content and organization of the curriculum, including how competencies are determined
- Assuring educational integration of field throughout the BSW and MSW curriculum
- Advising the Department on educational and administrative policies governing the program
- Recommending and recruiting new field instructors and field placement agencies
- Assisting with training and continuing education of new and current field instructors

The Advisory Committee is composed of:

- Field Director
- MSW Program Director
- BSW Program Director
- 3 student representatives recommended by faculty members:
  - 1 BSW field student representative
  - 1 MSW foundation student representative
  - 1 MSW concentration student representative
- A minimum of 10 community social workers (5 of whom must also be field instructors)

### **SAFETY GUIDELINES**

The Social Work department wants to be sure that students are aware that there are certain inherent risks in any situation requiring contact with the public. While fulfilling the internship the students must also be attentive of the need for personal safety and act accordingly to minimize these risks. During the internship, students should discuss safety issues along with other issues of infection control, personal injury, and risk assessment. Students with any safety concerns or

questions should contact the Director of Field Education to discuss these issues and seek guidance. Below are some guidelines for personal safety. Be Aware!

## **SAFETY AND INFECTION CONTROL**

Safety is an area in which students are increasingly at risk. The Department has a growing number of placements where student interns work directly with potentially violent populations. Student interns also travel to various neighborhoods to conduct home visits as part of the learning process.

There are also potential situations in which student interns will be exposed to infectious diseases at their placement sites. This is an issue that primarily affect interns placed with agencies serving the homeless, persons with HIV/AIDS, and other high-risk populations. Students may potentially be exposed to Hepatitis, TB, HIV, and/or other infectious diseases. As partners in education, the agency, Department, and student share responsibility for making sure that the work environment is safe. In an effort to ensure the physical health and safety of student interns, the following is required for students, agencies and the Department:

### Students:

- Request training on infection control and safety, if not provided by the agency
- Follow guidelines for safety and infection control in place at the agency
- Report incidents of safety and infection exposure to the agency and Department

### Agencies:

- Inform students of potential safety risks
- Provide safety training. This includes training for student related to effective communication with clients and techniques for de-escalating hostility and conflict as it is appropriate to the placement.
- Notify the Field Director in the event that a student is involved in an incident of physical violence and/or aggression perpetrated by a client
- Take steps to improve the safety of the work environment, including providing safety guidelines for working with clients in the office and in the client's home
- Inform students of potential health risks that exist in the field setting
- Provide training and education on universal precautions designed to reduce the risk of infection
- Inform the Field Director immediately in the event of a safety related incident, including a student's known exposure to a communicable disease such as tuberculosis or hepatitis
- Refer students who are suspected to have contracted a communicable disease to the Tarrant County Health Department (or applicable City/County Health Department) for testing and treatment

### Department of Social Work

- Alert students to possible safety concerns during field orientation
- Monitor risk factors during agency visits, agency workshops, in seminars and logs
- Communicate safety related incidents to the Harris College Associate Dean for External Affairs

- Discuss issues related to health and safety with field instructors and students as they arise
- Track potentially high-risk placement settings

## **GUIDELINES FOR PERSONAL SAFETY**

It is very difficult to predict when dangerous behavior will occur. The factors most often considered, as predictors are history of violent and aggressive behaviors, abuse of drugs and/or alcohol. Aggressive behavior may be caused by such things as fear, anger, stress, chemical alteration, need for attention or power, and paranoia. The important variable is the intent or perceived intent of the individual who appears to be dangerous. It is important to determine whether the behavior is a personal characteristic or if it is reactive to a particular or current situation. However, the best protection in threatening situations or actual assault is to err on the side of protecting your personal safety.

The following problem-solving skills can be useful in risky situations

- Gather data.
- Evaluate the information.
- Decide on a course of action based on the evaluation.
- Implementation.
- Evaluate the outcome, and adjust accordingly.

This process may occur in an instant or over a longer period.

The goals of risk prevention and management strategies should be to

- Protect the safety of the client, staff, yourself and others in the environment.
- Help the individual gain control with the least amount of pain and guilt.
- Help the individual focus on the source of anger, fear, frustration, etc.
- Assist the individual to express these feelings verbally rather than in actions.

## **GENERAL PERSONAL RISK REDUCTION GUIDELINES**

- Walk with a sense of purpose. Be aware of body language.
- Be alert to people around you. Beware of strangers who approach and speak to you. Keep at a safe distance and keep moving.
- Be alert to nonverbal cues while conveying confidence in your actions. Look aware and unafraid. Have a strong, independent image, and a clear sense of purpose.
- Do not walk on streets where people are loitering. Walk on the outside of the sidewalk, away from possible hiding places.
- Be aware of places such as a store, library, school and community center that can be used for refuge.
- Do not carry a purse, bag, heavy notebooks, or briefcases. If you must carry these items, conceal them or use a shoulder bag or backpack to allow free use of hands.
- Wear sensible appropriate clothing, low-heeled shoes, and minimal jewelry that cannot be snatched off or wrapped around your neck.
- Do not give money to people who ask for it.
- Practice caution with persons who might be
  - Under the influence of chemicals.



- Engaging in illegal activities.
- Feeling threatened by your presence.
- Feeling threatened by the possibility of your reporting their behaviors to legal authorities.
- Prior to entering a building assess safety: sounds of violence (e.g., out-of control behavior), location of other people and their ability to respond to a call for help, possible escape routes.
- Assess multi-story buildings for safety. If you take the elevator, observe the elevator interior before entering. If the elevator appears unsafe, wait for the next elevator or consider taking the stairs; be aware of who is in the stairwell and how far apart the exits are. If a suspicious person enters the elevator after you have entered it exit before the door closes. Stand next to the control panel. If accosted, press all buttons.

### **RISK REDUCTION GUIDELINES IN FIELD WORK**

Students should receive a specific orientation to agency policies and procedures related to risk management. If the field instructor does not provide this orientation, students must ask for it. Students should also learn about the agency's informal methods for assessing and handling risky situations.

Each situation is different, but the guidelines that follow may generally apply to the management of potentially dangerous situations in the work area.

- Address your client by name.
- Keep your work area as safe as possible; keeping it clear of items that could be harmful to anyone involved in a physical intervention. For example, keep objects that can be used as weapons or missiles (ashtrays, scissors, mail openers, hot drinks, paperweights, vases, etc.) away from potentially aggressive clients.
- When possible, alert available staff members that assistance may be needed before entering the crisis situation and arrange a plan to signal for help. Use panic buttons, hand-held or mounted buzzers, cellular phones, intercoms, etc.
- Leave your office door ajar during an interview with a potentially dangerous client
- Avoid meeting with clients when you are alone in the office building.
- If possible, arrange your office space so that both you and the client have easy access to leave, preferably without entering each other's personal space.
- Maintain a positive, nonjudgmental attitude towards clients. Speak in a soft voice and move slowly. Act calmly. Keep the "scream" out of your voice. An emotional or aggressive response to a distraught individual is likely to reinforce that person's aggression. Remember people who are violent are often reacting to feelings of helplessness and loss of control. Therefore, remain calm and in control of yourself.
- Recognize signs of escalation, and irate response to phase of violence: triggering, escalation, crisis, recovery, or post crisis depression phase. Identify those actions on your part, which serve to calm and those that serve to inflame the individual, and act accordingly.
- Recognize situations that may lead to assault as well as warning signs of imminent attack such as rapid breathing, grinding teeth, dilated pupils, flaring nostrils, choppy speech, and clenched fists.

- Remember that increased structure and decreased stimuli can heighten calm and self-control.
- Take a non-threatening posture to avoid appearing confrontational, but take a protected posture as well. This usually means standing slightly sideways to the individual, at a safe distance away from sudden lunges, punches and kicks, with arms and hands held near the upper body for possible quick self- protection. Avoid a “stare down” by periodically breaking eye contact.
- Don’t walk away from the individual who is escalating. Acknowledge the individual’s feelings and attempt to talk to him/her calmly. Encouraging the individual to sit down may sufficiently delay or divert the possibility of attack. Usually a one-to-one situation with available staff at a distance works well. The most appropriate staff member to be with the individual is the one with the best rapport with him/her, not necessarily the staff with the most authority or rank.
- Avoid sudden movements or issuing aggressive commands, as these may only inflame the individual. Whenever possible allow the individual to make behavioral choices. Directives or alternatives should be stated concretely and in terms of actions that can be performed immediately. Depending on the cognitive abilities of the individual, limit setting may take two forms, **Direct** state clearly and specifically the required or prohibited behavior or **Indirect** allow the individual to choose between two acceptable behavioral alternatives. Do not touch the individual unless you are willing to restrain him/her, and only when there is sufficient staff power to do so in a manner consistent with the agency’s “take down” or containment policies.
- In the event of physical intervention where the individual is placed in a quiet room or in seclusion, the isolation should be as brief as possible. From these incidences, clients can process their experience, understand and perhaps predict their own violent impulses in the future.
- If possible, arrange for a security escort or a friend to accompany you to your car in evening or late hours.

#### **GUIDELINES FOR SCHEDULING A HOME VISIT**

- Contact families to set up an appointment for a home visit being sensitive to client’s schedules and who will be in the home at the time of your visit.
- Inquire about pets, and take precautions against vicious dogs that could be unchained or let loose.
- Ask client for directions, or look for directions on the Internet (<http://www.mapquest.com/>). Traveling on main roads is recommended.
- Remember that house numbers may be missing, and additional landmarks might be needed. If necessary, ask the client to meet you at a familiar location, and direct you to his/her home.
- Choose a time of day for the visit that is most safe in terms of daylight and persons at home.

#### **PREPARING FOR A HOME VISIT**

- Learn as much about the client prior to the visit as possible. Determine if the situation surrounding the home visit resembles previous precipitating events or triggers, or if something in the client’s circumstances that day might increase the probability of violent

behavior.

- If a situation could be dangerous (e.g., situations entailing continuing domestic violence, involuntary removal of a child, or previous threats or assaults to workers), consult first with your field instructor to formulate a plan to reduce the risk, if possible. The plan might include the use of two workers for the home visit, accompaniment by a police officer, or movement of the meeting place to the office or a public place.
- Inform the agency about your whereabouts, and your itinerary, and check in by phone or ask to be called on a prearranged schedule.
- If possible, carry a means of calling for help (e.g., cellular phone programmed with agency and emergency numbers, push button emergency signals, or radio).
- Keep your car in good working order and your gas tank filled.

### **DURING THE HOME VISIT (*Notify the client if you will be late*)**

- Park in a place that permits quick escape.
- If you believe you are being followed, drive to a public place (e.g., police or fire station, convenience or grocery store, gas station).
- When ringing the doorbell or knocking, stand to the side of the door. Clearly and promptly identify yourself when you arrive, showing identification if indicated.
- Postpone the visit if conditions are unsafe, or interview the client on the front porch or outside foyer.
- Balance distractions. Minimize distractions such as visitors or pets, but also permit distractions to increase the family's comfort level.
- Sit in a chair from which you could easily arise. Remember hard chairs can be used as a shield.
- Be aware that most guns are stored in the bedroom and knives are usually stored in the kitchen. Leave immediately if the client 'makes a move' toward a weapon.
- Remember that although the home setting might be more relaxed than the office, the purpose of the home visit is professional.
- Trust your instincts. If you feel threatened, take actions to protect yourself, removing yourself as quickly and coolly as possible.

### **What to do if Attacked or Seriously Threatened at an Internship Placement**

- Follow agency procedures to manage the immediate situation and to report the incident informally.
- Get any needed medical care. Notify and debrief with your field instructor.
- Notify the School (the seminar instructor or the Field Coordinator) as soon as possible
- Recognize that a physical attack or threatening behavior is frightening and that you may later respond emotionally to the stress. Seek professional help to address these feelings.
- Conduct a comprehensive post-incident evaluation with staff, outlining a plan to increase safety, if indicated.

### **SUPERVISION OF STUDENTS**

Students should not be left alone in the agency without professional staff. Leaving students alone on the agency premises or otherwise in charge during staff meetings, retreats, conferences, etc. is

not appropriate use of students. Students, regardless of how competent, should not take on these types of responsibilities.

Additionally, students are required to participate in a formal supervision meeting with their field instructor (this is different than the task supervisor), at least one hour per week to discuss the student's progress and performance in the agency. These weekly meetings must be documented and signed by the field instructor. If the student fails to meet with the field instructor three or more times during each of the long semesters or three times total during the summer the student could receive a failing grade in the course.

### **SELECTION OF FIELD AGENCIES**

Agencies used as field placement sites are selected on the basis of their commitment to service delivery and to providing learning opportunities for field students. The agencies encompass a wide variety of populations and reflect the spectrum of human needs and services. Examples of field placement agencies include hospitals, policy and legislative agencies, child welfare agencies, agencies serving refugees, legal and court settings, mental health and counseling agencies, and schools.

As a member of Harris College of Nursing and Health Sciences (the College), the Department of Social Work (the Department) uses the Educational Affiliation Agreement for Student Internships and Clinical Experiences, which encompasses all departments in the College. An agreement must be signed before students can be placed at an agency in the community. The agreement includes obligations of the facility, obligations of TCU, joint obligations, terms of the agreement and other information relevant to placement of students. Agreements must be renewed every three years; renewal is initiated by the College.

All agencies must meet the following requirements:

- Availability of necessary learning experiences
- Willingness of the agency executive and staff to support the educational goals of the Department
- Availability of appropriate supervision
- Primary purpose of the agency, or specific department within the agency, must be to address human needs
- Does not engage in discriminatory practices in hiring personnel, accepting students or serving clientele
- Support the placement and allow sufficient release time for the field instructor to provide educational supervision to the student
- Provide necessary administrative capacity to support student activities, including space, phones, privacy when needed, etc.
- Pay mileage reimbursement to students for any travel required during placement
- Take necessary measures to protect student safety; may minimally include training in policies and procedures, information on conducting home visits, interacting with difficult clients and handling emergencies
- Have a system of community accountability; this can be demonstrated in nonprofit agencies by a representative board of directors and fiscal accountability via the budget

review process. Regarding for-profit direct service organizations, they may be subject to periodic review by an accrediting agency or other body of accountability

- Communicate changes in supervision to the field director as soon as possible and make other necessary arrangements for student supervision

### **SICK TIME**

Students are expected to act responsibly in their internships. Any compensatory time accumulated (which should be minimal) can be taken only with permission and pre-approval of the agency field instructor. If an illness and/or a family emergency (death or illness) occurs, students must communicate directly with their field instructor immediately upon learning that they will be absent. If an absence exceeds two days, the student must also inform the Director of Field Education. Arrangements must be made with the field instructor to make up time and the Director of Field must be notified of the plan. Students reported for excessive absences in the internship may receive a failing grade in the course and will be required to make up the time deficiency. If time is needed for illness, death in the family, etc. this must be coordinated with the agency field instructor.

### **STUDENT CONDUCT EXPECTATIONS**

By their formal acceptance into the program students agree to abide by the Code of Ethics of the National Association of Social Workers (Appendix XX) and the Student Code of Conduct of Texas Christian University, found in the TCU Student Handbook (Appendix XX).

The NASW Code of Ethics provides guidelines for the professional conduct of social workers. Since the professional is directed by a commitment to core values, the code provides for conduct related to principles of service, social justice, dignity and worth of the individual, the importance of human relationships, integrity and competence. These values and the standards inherent in them provide a context for expected behavior during the period of enrollment in the educational programs of the Department, developing a foundation for lifelong professional standards

The Code of Student Conduct is the University's policy regarding non-academic discipline of students. The Code is set forth in writing in order to give students general notice of both academic and non-academic prohibited conduct. The primary purpose for the imposition of non-academic discipline in the University setting is to protect and preserve a quality educational environment in the campus community. The University is not designed or equipped to rehabilitate students who do not abide by the Code. It may be necessary to remove those students from the campus and to sever the institutional relationship with them, as provided in the Code. The University is concerned with the rights of individuals as well as the general welfare of the University community. The Code of Student Conduct provides the rules, regulations, and procedures for acceptable standards of behavior and for due process. The Code should be read broadly and is not designed to define non-academic misconduct in exhaustive terms. For further information about the Code of Student Conduct, please contact the Office of Student Affairs.

### **STUDENT RIGHTS**

The university establishes the rights and responsibilities of students at TCU. These serve as general guidelines for the social work students. However, students in social work are also encouraged to work with the program to continually improve the quality of undergraduate social work education at TCU.

Students have the right to organize and to give input and to assist the program in developing and modifying curriculum and policies which impact students. These rights are supported by the faculty and students are encouraged to exercise their rights.

### **SUPERVISION MEETINGS**

Students are required to participate in a formal supervision meeting with their field instructor (this is different than the task supervisor), for a minimum of one hour every other week (although once weekly is preferred) to discuss the student's progress and performance in the agency. These meetings must be documented by the student on their weekly log. If the student fails to meet with the field instructor three or more times during the semester, the student could receive a failing grade in the course. Falsification of supervision records will result in referral to TCU's Office of Student Affairs for an inquiry of academic misconduct, and / or receiving an "F" in the course.

### **TASK SUPERVISOR**

There may be times at agencies in which there is not a licensed social worker to provide required supervision. In this case, the Department does not eliminate those agency placements, but will work with the agency to identify a task supervisor within the agency and a licensed social worker outside of the agency to provide the required supervision. The task supervisor will provide the student with orientation to the agency, direction regarding daily assignments, required meetings, networking opportunities, and monitoring compliance with agency and legal requirements. The assigned field instructor will provide weekly supervision specifically addressing social work knowledge, values, ethics, and skills and will ensure that all agency tasks align with the student's educational goals. Task supervisors may include unlicensed social workers at an agency or other personnel with an educational background in another social science or related discipline.

### **TERMINATION FROM FIELD PLACEMENT**

A student may be removed from their field placement under the following circumstances:

- Request of the student (must follow above, outlined process).
- Decision of the Director of Field Education. The following are grounds to remove the student from field (this list is not exhaustive):
  - Failure to maintain confidentiality about a client as mandated by agency policy and/or the NASW Code of Ethics and the Texas State Board Code of Conduct;
  - Failure to abide by the NASW Code of Ethics and the Texas State Board Code of Conduct;
  - An attempt to harm oneself;
  - An attempt to harm other person(s);
  - Repeated change in scheduled field hours without prior approval; and/or
  - Inappropriate behavior in field placement or field seminar.

The final decision regarding removal from field will be made by the BSW Program Director, with documentation from the Director of Field Education, agency, and field instructor. If a student chooses to appeal, they must follow the University appeal process which can be found in the TCU Student Handbook. Whether or not a student will be allowed to return to field in the same or different agency will depend on the seriousness of the incident and/or ability of the student to work through the problem. The Director of Field Education will have the responsibility to work with the student around the issues and may outline conditions for a return to field.

### **TRANSPORTATION OF CLIENTS**

Students must adhere to the TCU and agency policies relating to transportation of clients in personal cars. The TCU policy states that a student cannot transport an agency client in their personal car at any time. No exceptions will be made to this policy under any circumstances.

### **TRAVEL & MILEAGE**

It is the responsibility of students to arrange transportation to and from the agency and to provide their own transportation when travel is required in the course of their work activities. All students are required to have basic automobile insurance and students' cars must be fully legal to operate. The insurance that the program offers to students while in placement is for professional liability and will not in any way cover an accident should it occur while you are in your car at your internship or if you are conducting client business using your car.

Agencies should provide mileage reimbursement to students as they do professional staff. Agencies should orient the students to procedures for obtaining mileage reimbursement for home visits and other required travel. You should inquire with your agency during the course of your interview as to whether travel will be required and how it will be reimbursed. Travel to and from the agency at the beginning and end of the day, time spent traveling to and from the field seminar, or time spent on campus does not count toward the minimum number of field hours needed to complete the field practicum.

### **UNSATISFACTORY STUDENT PROGRESS IN FIELD**

When a student is not progressing at a satisfactory rate:

- The field instructor needs to notify the Director of Field Education as soon as a problem is suspected
- The Field Director will arrange a conference with the field instructor immediately
- The student, field instructor, and Field Director are involved in the analysis of the problem
- The student is given formal notification that their performance is substandard
- Guidelines are developed for the student to follow in bringing up the standard of their performance; these are given to the student in writing and will be monitored as the semester progresses
- If the student does not meet the requirements, a failing grade is earned

When it is possible that a student may not meet the objectives if given extra time:

- The student, field instructor, and Field Director will discuss the student's rate of progress. If the student can meet the field objectives given extra time and attention, then a plan can

be developed. This must be a joint decision, based on the student's work to date, the agency's willingness to commit extra time, and the student's commitment to the identified plan.

- A specific amount of extra time, usually four to six weeks, is allotted at the end of the semester for the student to continue in field. This is typically a target date for the student to complete field.
- If the student has not accomplished the objectives of field by the end of the extra time period, the following options exist:
  - The student may repeat the semester, providing the course is offered, or
  - The student may earn a failing grade.

If a student does not wish to spend the extra time necessary to complete field, the following options are available:

- Withdrawl from field, with the consent of the Field Director
- Be assigned to repeat the semester, either in the same agency or a different one
- Receive an incomplete and finish the semester at the next available opportunity
- Earn a failing grade

Documentation of student progress can be assessed using the following tools:

- Direct observation of skills
- Client records
- Agency assigned tasks
- Feedback from other agency staff and professionals
- Written work
- Use of supervision

### **WORK-BASED PLACEMENT OPPORTUNITIES**

The need to use the work setting as a field placement can be considered on an individual basis. CSWE's standards address the need to maintain the educational focus of the field experience, to differentiate between job and practicum activities, and to ensure the uniformity of administration and utilization of field placements throughout the Program. In addition, CSWE's standards stress that such agencies commit the necessary resources to facilitate the student's progress in the educational program even though the student is an employee. CSWE standards also require that coverage of educational objectives for field be the foundation of decisions around a student's practicum experience.

Students interested in this alternative should schedule a meeting with the Director of Field Education as soon as possible after field deadlines are announced each year. In preparation for discussion at this meeting, the student should prepare a written request containing the following information:

- Description and duration of current job responsibilities
- Beginning date of employment
- Description and duration of proposed internship responsibilities
- Proposed beginning and ending dates for internship
- How the student and agency will work together to differentiate and protect the student's role as a learner



- Present and potential job and internship supervisors as well as intended field instructor, and
- Plan for release time for coursework and field work, if appropriate

After review and revision, if needed, the student should submit a copy of the finalized request signed by the student, their current employment supervisor, proposed field instructor, and if applicable, proposed task supervisor. The Director of Field Education and the BSW Program Director will make a decision regarding the placement prior to the beginning of the semester.

### *Policy Statement*

The criteria for use of the regular work setting as a field placement has been established and includes the following:

- The proposed field activities must represent new and different experiences for the student; changing to a different population from the work duties and/or changing to a different department within the agency might accomplish this “change” in field assignments. Differing roles and responsibilities, which fulfill the educational objectives of field, must be a part of this change. The intent is to establish a new and unique assignment that would contribute to the student learning something new.
- The agency must be sufficiently large and/or flexible enough to place a student for the required number of field hours in a sufficiently different section/program other than the current employment; or
- If the student has been employed for less than three months, the employment/job duties may be considered as a practicum if they meet the educational objectives of field and all other criteria.
- The agency must provide a field instructor who is not the regular administrative/job supervisor. The field instructor must meet all required qualifications.
- The agency must facilitate activities that address the educational objectives of the practicum.
- The agency must assure the availability of release time for the student for course work and field activities.
- Agencies must meet all of the other criteria for agency practicum sites or be willing to meet those and go through the process to become an approved site.

