



SOCIAL WORK DEPARTMENT

BUFFALO STATE • The State University of New York

FIELD MANUAL

Field Manual

Field Education

The field education program ensures generalist practice opportunities for all students to demonstrate the nine social work competencies with all system levels: individuals, families, groups, organizations, and communities in field settings (CSWE, 2022).

Field education is the signature pedagogy for social work (CSWE, 2022). Signature pedagogies are elements of instruction and socialization that teach future practitioners the fundamental dimensions of professional work in their discipline: to think, to perform, and to act intentionally, ethically, and with integrity (CSWE, 2022). The field setting is where students apply human rights principles from global and national social work ethical codes to advance social, racial, economic, and environmental justice (CSWE, 2022). It fosters a learning environment where anti-racism, diversity, equity, and inclusion are valued (CSWE, 2022). Field education is designed to integrate the theoretical and conceptual contributions of the explicit curriculum in the field setting (CSWE, 2022).

Note: CSWE uses specific language to identify people involved in Field Practicum. The *Field Coordinator* is responsible for the overall coordination of the field program. The *Field Liaisons* are the faculty that teach the classroom Seminar portion of Field Practicum I (SWK493) and Field Practicum II (SWK494). The *Field Instructor* is the supervisor at the field setting. The Field Instructor is not the faculty member teaching you in the classroom; they are the person teaching you out in the field.

Field Site Requirements

Field Sites must provide opportunities for generalist practice. CSWE defines this as, Generalist practice is grounded in the liberal arts and the person-in-environment framework. To promote human and social well-being, generalist practitioners use a range of prevention and intervention methods in their practice with diverse individuals, families, groups, organizations, and communities, based on scientific inquiry and best practices. The generalist practitioner identifies with the social work profession and applies ethical principles and critical thinking in practice at the micro, mezzo, and macro levels. Generalist practitioners engage diversity in their practice and advocate for human rights and social, racial, economic, and environmental justice. They recognize, support, and build on the strengths and resiliency of all human beings. They engage in research-informed practice and are proactive in responding to the impact of context on professional practice. (CSWE EPAS, 2022)

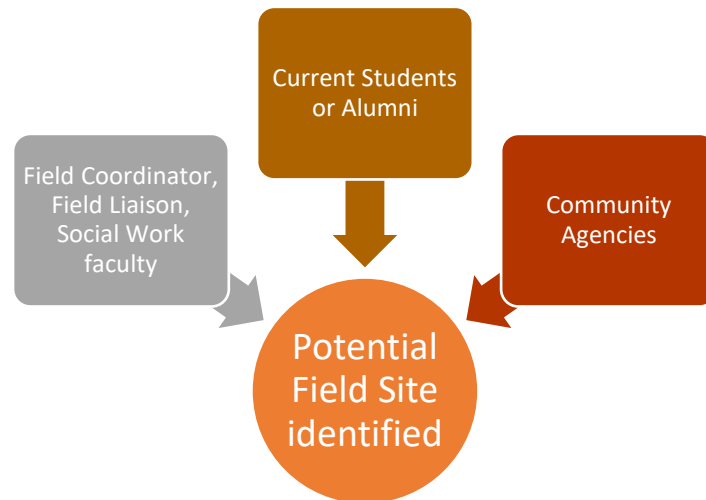
Students must be able to gain experience in all 9 identified competencies:

- Competency 1: Demonstrate Ethical and Professional Behavior
- Competency 2: Advance Human Rights and Social, Racial, Economic, and Environmental Justice
- Competency 3: Engage Anti-Racism, Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (ADEI) in Practice
- Competency 4: Engage in Practice-Informed Research and Research-Informed Practice
- Competency 5: Engage in Policy Practice

- Competency 6: Engage with Individuals, Families, Groups, Organizations, and Communities
- Competency 7: Assess Individuals, Families, Groups, Organizations, and Communities
- Competency 8: Intervene with Individuals, Families, Groups, Organizations, and Communities
- Competency 9: Evaluate Practice with Individuals, Families, Groups, Organizations, and Communities

These requirements are listed in the Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with Field agencies and are actualized by students developing and completing their Learning Contracts.

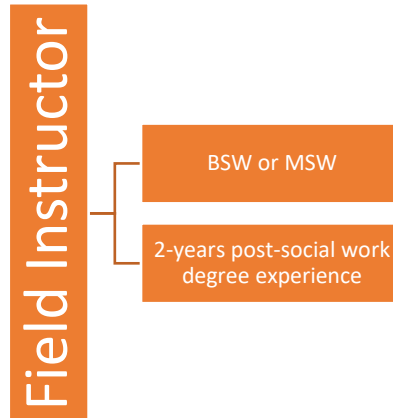
Field sites are identified in a myriad of ways. The Field Coordinator, another faculty member, a student (including alumni), or an agency themselves may suggest an agency as a field setting. Students are asked what populations or agencies they may be interested in working with during their junior year as part of the Field Application process. Interested agencies may complete the Community Partnership survey found on the department website.



If agencies meet the CSWE and BSU SWK department criteria the Field Coordinator will visit the agency in-person and meet with identified agency representatives that oversee internships and who would directly supervise our students; this may include Volunteer Coordinators, Human Resource employees, managers, and direct level staff. The Field Coordinator will work with approved agencies and their point person to complete an Affiliation Agreement and Memorandum of Understanding. The agency will be added as a potential field agency setting for the upcoming year. It is important to note that agencies may have some programs that are approved and others that are not approved, based on the requirements and process.

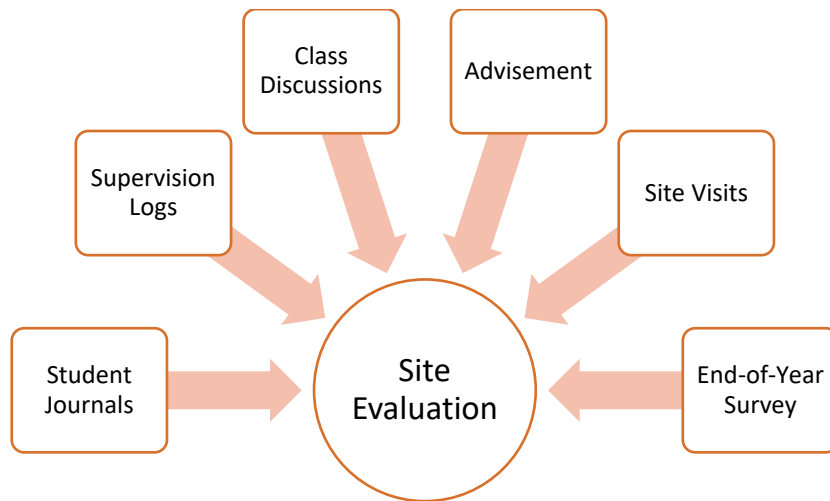


During this process, Field Instructors are identified. Field Instructors must: (1) have a baccalaureate or master’s degree from a CSWE-accredited program, and (2) 2-years post-social work degree practice experience in social work. Field Instructors resumes will be collected and kept on file by the Field Coordinator. The Field Coordinator will check-in with potential field settings annually to note any changes in Field Instructors and obtain resumes as necessary. Field agencies are required to notify the Field Coordinator of any changes in assigned Field Instructor during a Field Placement. While the Social Work Department acknowledges turn-over for various reasons (i.e., promotions, FMLA, resignations) occurs, it is the field agencies’ responsibility to ensure seamless social work supervision will occur at the agency.



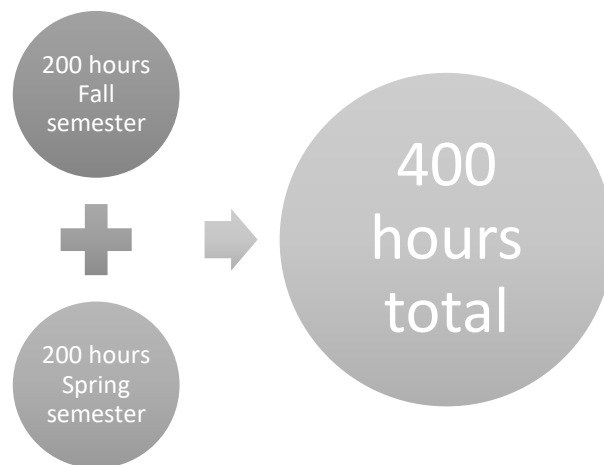
Once students have been placed (typically Spring semester, junior year) their identified Field Instructors will be invited to the annual Field Orientation (typically in August), facilitated by the Field Coordinator, with assistance from the Field Liaisons and Department Chair. This is held virtually and is synchronous. However, Field Instructors not able to attend live, will be able to attend asynchronously, viewing recordings of the Orientation. Field Instructors will also receive a Field Instructor Manual, updated annually, as a reference guide for the academic year. Field Liaisons and the Field Coordinator are available for on-going, individualized Field Instructor training and assistance throughout the year. If a Field Instructor is unsure about something, they should be directed to the Field Liaison or Field Coordinator. Field Instructors can also gain additional support during Site Visits, scheduled mid-semester, in both the Fall and Spring.

Student feedback is valued and often guides the addition of new agencies or the suspension of other agencies as field settings. This feedback is sought out on an on-going basis through various mechanisms, including students’ weekly journals, supervision logs, and discussions during Field Seminar, student advisement with social work faculty, including Field Liaisons, and more formally through an end-of-year Field Placement Satisfaction Survey which asks about both the agency and the Field Instructor.



Field Hours

The field education program requires completion of a minimum of **400 hours** of field education, or 200 hours **completed by end of the Fall semester** and 200 hours completed **by the end of the Spring semester** of your Senior year. This works out to approximately 2 days per week during the 15-week semesters.



Buffalo State requires that these 400 hours be in-person. Field supervisors may require students to attend a virtual/ remote training or a virtual/ remote meeting that is directly related to the student’s field placement and identified Learning Contract tasks. These should be limited, as we believe one of the benefits of Field is that students learn by *doing*. Student participation in simulated experiences at their field agency does count towards the total number of hours.

Students are responsible for completing a bi-weekly timesheet and obtaining their supervisor’s signature to verify the hours completed. Mid-term grades in Field Practicum will be based on if the student is making appropriate progress on required field hours.

Academic credit for life experience and previous work experience **will not be given in whole or in part in lieu of the field practicum.**

Field Orientation

Field Orientation is an on-going process. Students learn about field practicum and have an opportunity to ask questions when they apply to be a Social Work Major, during social work courses, and at Advisement each semester.

During the Spring semester of Junior year, students will have the opportunity to meet individually with the Field Coordinator to review field placement options and discuss expectations.

The first Field Seminar class, during Senior year, is set aside for a formal orientation to field where expectations of the student, the agencies, and the Social Work department, are reviewed.

Field Placements

Field Placements are determined based on numerous factors, including student interests (populations, issues, etc.), student availability (schedule, transportation, etc.), agency needs, and available field placements for the upcoming academic year. During Junior year, students will be asked to complete a brief survey to assist the Field Coordinator in finding an appropriate field placement.

The potential placement will be discussed during a meeting with the Field Coordinator during the Spring semester in Junior year (referenced above). If students have a specific agency in mind, including their place of employment (see *Employment-based Field Practicum* below), they are encouraged to share that information with the Field Coordinator. While we value your suggestions for field settings, we cannot guarantee that the agency will meet the criteria to become a field setting.

The final decision for where a student will be placed for internship rests with the Coordinator of Field Education.

Most field agencies require that students complete an in-person interview. These interviews will take place Spring semester of Junior year. Students should dress professionally for these interviews and bring an updated resume that includes a list of personal and professional references. Successful completion of the interview and any other agency requirements (i.e., drug testing, background check, additional paperwork, training) will culminate in determining the schedule for the year. Students are responsible for completing the Field Practicum Placement form prior to the end of the Spring semester and submitting this to the Field Coordinator.

Preparing for Field Practicum: Spring Semester, Junior Year



Employment-based Field Practicum

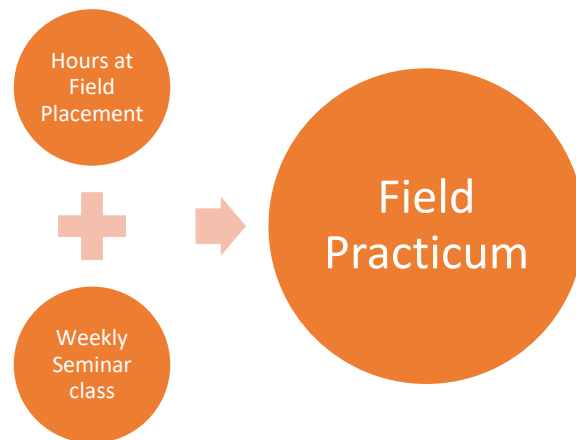
Employment-based field practicums may occur on a case-by-case basis. Several factors must be considered before an employment-based practicum can be approved. This includes determining

if the agency meets CSWE requirements for field practicums if there are opportunities to complete tasks in all nine social work competencies and prepare students for generalist practice. A plan must be in-place to ensure continuous field practicum during the academic year even if a student chooses to leave their employment to ensure student's academic success. This plan is developed by the Field Coordinator and the student prior to an employment-based field practicum being approved.

Students engaged within work-based placements will be required to meet with the field coordinator to discuss facilitations, supervision, competencies, and potential contingencies. The Field Coordinator will contact individuals who identified interest in work-based placements. Please note that if a student in a work-based placement stops working at their agency during the academic year for any reason (lay off or program closure, resignation, fired, etc.) Buffalo State cannot guarantee a new Field Placement. Students should only request work-based placements after careful consideration.”

Field Practicum Courses: Monitoring and Supporting Student Learning

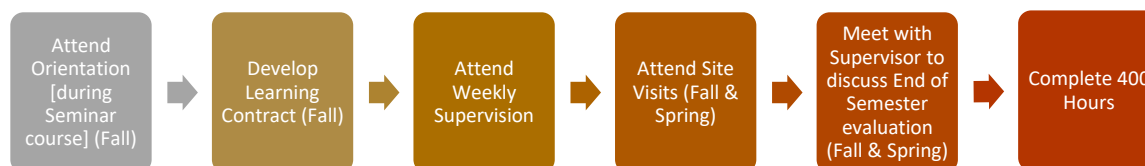
Field Practicum courses Senior year have 2 components: (1) field hours at the field agency, and (2) field seminar that meets weekly on campus. Field Seminar is an opportunity to discuss the application of your knowledge, values, skills, and cognitive and affective processes at your field practicum, including what is going well and any challenges that occur. This is complementary to Supervision that occurs weekly at the field agency with the Field Instructor.



Assignments in Seminar are designed to encourage monitoring and support. These include a weekly reflective journal, a weekly supervision log, a bi-weekly time sheet, and the development of your Learning Contract. Additionally, Site Visits are conducted at least once per semester at mid-term on-site at the agency with the student and their Field Instructor. Field Instructors complete Evaluations at the end of each semester, providing additional feedback for the student.

Note: Any student who is terminated from their field Practicum will fail the Field Practicum course (SWK 493 or SWK 494). For example, if a student is enrolled in SWK 493 (fall) and fails SWK 493 they will not be able to move forward in the social work program. If the student is enrolled in SWK 494 (spring) and fails SWK 494 they will not be able to graduate from the social work program.

Participating in Field Practicum: Senior Year



Student Safety

Student safety is the utmost priority in the field education program. Every Field setting should provide students with on-site safety training; this will look different at each agency but should include reviewing policies on incident reporting, mandated reporting, reporting criminal activity, and managing client crises. Limited liability insurance coverage is provided by Buffalo State University for each student during their field placement when they are engaged in activities related to their placement.

During Field Instructor Orientation, supervisors are provided with an electronic copy of [*Guidelines for Workplace Safety*](#) (NASW, 2013). During Field Orientation for students, these guidelines are reviewed. Students are provided with an electronic copy of the guidelines as an assigned reading for the course.

Students must alert their Field Instructor immediately of any safety concerns that they have. Students must share these concerns and the Field Instructor response with their Field Liaison by email for immediate concerns or at the next field seminar class for non-immediate or resolved concerns. This may be discussed with the whole class or after class, more privately, with the Field Liaison.

Field Instructors are required to notify the Field Liaison and/or Field Coordinator of any safety concerns as they arise at the agency, regardless of the nature of the concern, within 24-business hours of the incident. This includes concerns about a student violating agency policy in regard to safety.

Students should also use Field Practicum assignments as tools to explore safety. This includes the weekly journal and weekly supervision logs. Learning Contracts are reviewed by the Field Instructor and the Field Liaison to ensure no assigned tasks have safety concerns and are appropriate for a student intern to complete.

The following policies are in-place to ensure safety at field agencies:

1. Students must not share personal information with clients including social media accounts or personal cell phone numbers. All phone calls to clients should be done on an agency phone. Any email communication with clients should be done through an

assigned agency email, students may not use a personal or school email account to communicate with clients.

2. Students are not allowed to provide rides to clients in their personal vehicles. This requires additional insurance (liability and automobile) and is not appropriate for student interns. Students may ride in the car of an agency employee if it is related to an assigned task as part of the internship. This could include shadowing home visits, attending community meetings, etc.
3. Students must communicate areas of concern, violation of safety, and other features deemed necessary to the Field Coordinator.

Seminar classes include discussion on trauma, vicarious and secondary trauma, compassion fatigue, burnout, transference, and other topics related to health and safety in the field. Seminar discussions include encouraging students to practice self-care and seek additional supports as needed.

SUNY Buffalo State Safety Policies and Resources SUNY Buffalo State is an institution that supports the emotional, mental, and physical safety of students, faculty, professionals, campus, our collaborators, and the outer community. Information about policies and resources are provided by the following offices on campus:

- [Dean of Students](#)
- [Counseling Center](#)
- [Weigel Health Center](#)
- [Campus Safety](#)
- [Environmental Health and Safety](#)
- [Transportation and Safety Services](#)
- [Equity and Diversity Policies](#)

Additionally, all field agencies are required to follow federal and state labor laws. (See NYS DOL [fact sheet for for-profit businesses](#) and [fact sheet for non-profit agencies](#).) SUNY offers some guidance on [unpaid internships](#), which the Field Coordinator reviews on an on-going basis.

Evaluation of Student Learning

Evaluation is an on-going conversation with formal checkpoints. These include:

- Site visits by Field Liaisons mid-semester in Fall & Spring, and as needed
- End of semester evaluation by Field Instructor
- Successful completion of learning contract tasks demonstrating application of social work competencies

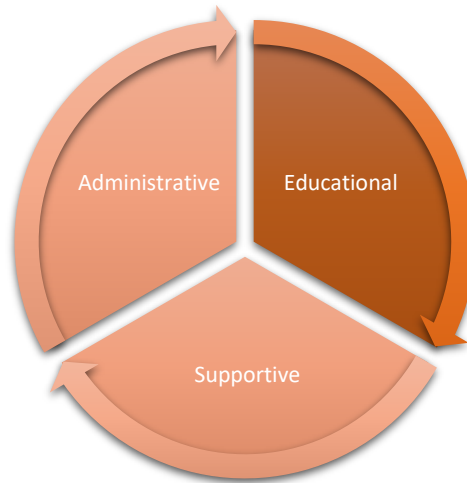
Supervision

Students are required to receive **weekly** social work supervision at the field agency. Supervision is an opportunity to get support, learn more about the agency, including agency policies, learn more about the populations that the agency serves, discuss any challenges students are facing, and review expectations. Additionally, supervision includes connecting field tasks to the Social

Work Competencies. Students are required to prepare for supervision each week and complete a weekly Supervision Log.

Role of Supervisor

The Field Supervisor should identify services provided to respective populations, provide insight to policies procedures as designated by the agency, local entities, state, and federal governments. The Liaison should demonstrate professional tact, mastery of generalist practices, and provide appropriate supervision across areas and the relative competencies.



Department Expectations of Students

Faculty/Staff will respond to all emails within 48 hours. Students can expect longer response times on weekends, holidays, or college breaks. Instructors reserve the right to not respond to unprofessionally written emails.

Student Support

Several resources are available on-campus, free of charge to students. These services are covered through student fees and other funding. You can reach out directly. If you need assistance, please talk with your instructors, advisor, or the department chair. Click on the hyperlinks below for more information about how to access these resources.

Academic Support:

- [Writing Center](#)
- [Tutoring Services / STAR-NY Online Tutoring](#)
- [Accessibility Services](#)
- [Registrar's Office](#)
- [Admissions](#)
- [Barnes and Noble Bookstore](#)

- [Butler Library](#)
- [Computer/ IT Help](#)

Additional Support:

- [Weigel Health Center](#)
- [Counseling Center](#)
- [Care Team/ Dean of Students](#)
- [University Police Department](#)
- [Sexual Violence Prevention, Information, and Resources/ Title IX](#)
- [Equity & Diversity](#)
- [Career and Professional Education](#)
- [Financial Aid](#)
- [Student Accounts](#)
- [Milligan's Food Pantry](#)
- [Emergency Relief Program](#)
- [CRAM/NFTA Bus Pass](#)
- [Parking Permits](#)

Off-campus supports are also available. Please reach out to the Dean of Students or www.211wny.org for more information.

Student Grievance Procedure

The Social Work department follows Buffalo State University policies regarding complaints, grievances, and appeals. For information, please refer to the [Undergraduate Catalog](#).

Termination (due to professional performance misconduct)

Since social work is a professional degree granting program, are there specific professional behaviors or issues that would cause termination that are unique/specific to social work and not covered in the institution's policies and procedures (e.g., violating the NASW Code of Ethics, or policies set forth by the field agency) the sequence will of events will be as followed.

- Field Agency/ Supervisor will notify the Field Coordinator of event(s), reasoning and rational for termination.
- The Field Coordinator will notify the student, and Social Work Department Chair.
- The student will be required to meet with the Field Coordinator and present rational, personal narrative and account of the event(s), reasoning and/or supporting evidence in support of the student's potential re-placement and continuation within the program.

Field Reassignment

- The student meets with the Field Coordinator to discuss their learning contract, professional ethics, plan for ethical behavior and other variables related to successful completion of Field.
- The student will be assigned a new agency and will begin the process of scheduling an interview with the potential field supervisor.
- The Field Coordinator will inform the Chair of the department about the change in field placement.

- The student will be required to submit a new learning contract. Once the learning contract has been signed by the field supervisor the student **MUST** schedule an appointment with the Field Coordinator for review.
- The student **MUST** plan for make-up any “missed” field hours during the transition in consultation with the Field Coordinator.

Any student(s) who do not receive approval for reassignment, or who does not get accepted to an alternative placement will be asked to meet with members of the social work department in a committee fashion. The committee will determine if the student is to continue to participate in Field Education. If the committee deems that the student is not to continue the student(s) wishing to appeal this decision may do so by contacting the Chair of the Social Work Department.