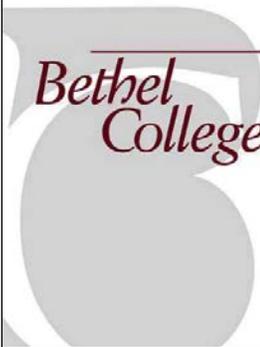




# **BETHEL COLLEGE SOCIAL WORK**

**Field Manual  
2018-2019**





*Bethel  
College*



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## ***Welcome to Social Work Field Instruction at Bethel College***

We are excited to collaborate with you (students, field instructors, and field liaisons) to prepare new social workers for exciting areas of practice. Field instruction is a vital part of the social work curriculum. It provides an opportunity for students to practice skills and to integrate knowledge and values through authentic work experiences. Students are excited to see social work come alive. Field instructors play a key role in social work education by mentoring students, assisting the Social Work Program at Bethel College, and expanding enthusiasm for our profession.

This Manual will give you an overview of the fieldwork process. It can be used as an orientation to fieldwork and as a written guide to supplement ongoing contacts with Bethel College faculty. We hope that the Manual will facilitate the process of field instruction and therefore enhance the unique partnership between the school and the practice community. We are also here to assist you through our trainings, field liaison visits, and on-going communication throughout this endeavor.

This field manual is divided into two sections:

- Part one is an introduction to fieldwork and its general requirements. It includes important information on Bethel's social work curriculum, criteria for selection of field instructors and agencies, and roles and responsibilities of all parties involved.
- Part two is a guide to the fieldwork process from beginning to end, covering all stages of work with the student including checklists and tips for helping students integrate their learning from the classroom and the field experience.

All field forms can be emailed to you and will be accessible online. Forms will need to be completed and submitted to the Social Work department.

The Social Work Code of Ethics and the Curriculum Policy Statement of the Council on Social Work Education can be accessed through the Field Instruction Materials website for Bethel College. (<https://www.bethelks.edu/academics/areas-study/social-work/field-instruction-materials/>) Students can also access these on Thresher Connect.

We are always excited to hear from you about your ideas for making Field Education at Bethel College better. Any questions or comments concerning Field Education or the Social Work Program at Bethel College should be addressed to:

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## **CONTEXT OF FIELD EDUCATION: THE COLLEGE AND THE PROGRAM**

Bethel College is a four-year church-related liberal arts college in North Newton, Kansas. The college, founded in 1887, is a private coeducational college affiliated with the Mennonite Church USA. Bethel College is known for its academic excellence, tradition of service, and concern for social justice and nonviolent management of conflicts.

As an outgrowth of its service tradition, Bethel College began the Social Work Program in 1972, with accreditation and the graduation of its first class in 1974. More than 300 students have earned their social work degree from Bethel College since the Program's inception. Graduates work in a wide variety of social work jobs, with a large percentage eventually completing a Masters in Social Work degree.

### **Program Mission:**

The Social Work Program at Bethel College seeks to prepare graduates who have values, knowledge, and skills necessary to be agents of change in today's world. The mission of the program is to prepare social workers whose practice embodies the following core values:

- An ethic of discipleship that calls the social worker to be a compassionate presence in solidarity with marginalized people;
- An ethic of service that calls the social worker to elevate service to others above self-interest and to address social problems while assisting those in need;
- An ethic of scholarship that calls the social worker to strive for continued excellence in social work practice through intellectual curiosity and scientific critical inquiry
- An ethic of integrity that is the foundation for holistic personal and professional relationships.
- An ethic of community that prizes social connectivity and inclusivity;
- An ethic of peace and social justice that calls social workers to work for human rights and global and societal peace through challenging social injustice and bringing empowerment in the face of oppression;
- An ethic of diversity that respects the inherent dignity and worth of every individual, keeping in mind the unique intersectionality of sex, gender, status, sexual orientation, culture, ethnicity, dis/ability, race, age, and other individual or group differences.

With the above values as a foundation, the Social Work Program seeks to prepare students for generalist practice within the context of the social work profession. All people, regardless of their status, are worthy of dignity, respect, and competent service. We believe that students must understand how individuals and groups come to be marginalized in their social transactions with oppressive social systems and then must commit to social change and advocacy. Through social work education, students should develop the commitment, knowledge, and skills needed to identify people's strengths and help them achieve social and economic justice. We believe that competent practice includes peacemaking, advocacy, and creative management of conflict in work with various sizes and types of human systems including individual, family, group, organization, and community.



## **Program Goals**

The prioritized goals of the Social Work Program are:

1. To prepare students for entry-level professional practice of social work in a variety of settings. Graduates of the program will be prepared to be "generalist" social work practitioners with sensitivity to diversity and competence to intervene with people and their environments for the purpose of enhancing the quality of life and building just systems for individuals, families, groups and organizations, and communities.
2. To prepare students for continued social work education on a graduate level through enhancement of critical thinking skills, development of research expertise, and use of technology to promote sustainable practice for the future.
3. To be responsive to the needs of the South Central Kansas community through providing social work educational opportunities and by addressing the social welfare needs of residents.
4. To contribute to the realization of the mission of Bethel College through fostering a greater understanding of diverse people in relation to their environment, encouraging service in a globally interdependent world, and through developing the skills necessary for leadership in the quest for peace and social and economic justice.

## **Program Outcomes:**

Students who satisfactorily complete the social work major will have demonstrated competence in nine areas, showing the ability to integrate and apply social work knowledge, values, and skills while utilizing professional cognitive and affective processes. The Program's Outcomes are consistent with the nine competencies articulated in the Educational Policy and Accreditation Standards (Council on Social Work Accreditation 2015).

A student who completes a Bethel College bachelor of social work degree will have demonstrated the following competencies necessary for beginning level professional practice:

1. The ability to demonstrate ethical and professional behavior.
2. The ability to engage diversity and difference in practice.
3. The ability to advance human rights and social, economic, and environmental justice.
4. The ability to engage in practice-informed research and research-informed practice.
5. The ability to engage in policy practice, demonstrating understanding that human rights and social justice, as well as social welfare services, are mediated by policy and its implementation.
6. The ability to engage with individuals, families, groups, organizations, and communities.
7. The ability to assess individuals, families, groups, organizations, and communities.
8. The ability to intervene with individuals, families, groups, organizations, and communities.
9. The ability to evaluate practice with individuals, families, groups, organizations, and communities.

The above Outcomes, expressed as expected competencies, contribute to fulfilling the mission of Bethel College and the mission and goals of the social work program. Each Outcome consists of skills, values, knowledge and cognitive and affective processes needed to demonstrate value-based and professionally competent service--an underlying theme embraced by both the college and the social work program. The Program Outcomes are interrelated and together focus attention on the requirements for beginning



generalist practice and continued professional development. Finally, the Outcomes support a commitment to compassion and social justice for victims of oppression.

### **Policy on Nondiscrimination:**

Students are admitted to the social work program without discrimination in regard to class, race, ethnicity, color, culture, national origin, creed, religion/spirituality, age, gender, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity and expression, marital status, veteran or military status, immigration or citizenship status, political affiliation, tribal sovereignty status, ability/disability, or other individual or group difference.

### **Safety Standards:**

All Social Work students are required to follow the safety protocol and standards set by their host agency. Expectations and standards for safety are reviewed with students in class and in field visits.

All field placements should have clear guidelines regarding safety in the workplace. Students should receive orientation regarding these guidelines in the beginning of their placements. They should also have directions about where to go should they have any questions regarding their own safety or the safety of a service-user. This could include:

- Building safety and security including any access or exit issues
- Emergency procedures and evacuation routes in case of a natural disaster or other emergency.
- Staff responsibilities and procedures regarding violence in the workplace.
- Guidelines for home/community visits.
- Communication procedures regarding knowing where the student is and how they can be located quickly.
- Transportation guidelines.
- Processes for debriefing critical incidents.
- Information regarding sexual harassment in the workplace.
- Guidelines regarding work time when there are others present in the workplace.

### **Definition of Generalist Social Work Practice:**

The program uses the following model of practice in preparing students for social work. We view professional social work as a problem solving activity whose chief purpose is the enhancement and restoration of people's capacity for social functioning. Guiding this purpose are the values and ethics of the profession as set forth by the National Association of Social Workers (2008). All people, regardless of their status, are worthy of dignity, respect, and competent service. Professional social work is especially attentive to individuals and groups who are marginalized because of their social transactions with oppressive social systems.

A central activity of social work is creative problem solving and nonviolent management of conflicts that people experience in transactions with their various social environments. The view that people are members of various social systems is necessary for a full understanding of the complex dynamics of person/environment change. With this perspective, we recognize that it is important to enhance the capacity of neighborhoods and communities to provide opportunities for belonging and participation and to address oppression through social change



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The purposes of social work are realized through four key functions:

1. Enhancing people's problem solving abilities.
2. Connecting people with resources.
3. Working to make resource systems more responsive and just.
4. Intervening to create new resources.

Execution of the above functions requires generalist social workers skilled in implementing a problem solving process. This process requires the engagement of client systems in a purposeful and ethical relationship that builds on strengths and adaptive efforts. Mutuality is a key feature of this relationship, bringing together the client's perspective and the knowledge-based perspective of the social worker for a holistic assessment of relevant aspects of the client/environment social relationship. The process involves intervention that recognizes the client's right to dignity, self-determination, and the fullest participation possible. Finally, the process requires continuous evaluation to assure accountability for both the implementation and the outcomes.

Clients may be individuals, groups, families, organizations, or communities. Social work practice may focus on facilitating change in the client system itself, change in some other system on behalf of the client system, and/or may involve activities aimed at achieving social justice for classes of people who are victims of oppression and discrimination.



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## OVERVIEW OF FIELD EDUCATION

Field education grows out of and is related to the overall goals of the Social Work Program. The primary goal of the Program is to prepare students for entry-level social work practice; the field, the site of social work's signature pedagogy, provides the context in which students learn to merge their social work knowledge, values, and skills in beginning professional practice.

In order to engage the student in applying classroom learning to practice experience, all Bethel social work students are required to complete two fieldwork placements: 80 hours (2 credit hours) in the Junior year and 400 hours (9 credit hours) in the Senior year. Students are required to select different agencies for the two placements to ensure a broad and varied experience in the field. Bethel College's Social Work Program can draw upon a large number of agencies within the area, representing a broad spectrum of social work practice.

The first fieldwork course, Field Experience (SWK372), provides practical experience in a social work setting during one term (Spring, Fall, or Interterm) of the Junior year. The placement provides an opportunity for a mentoring relationship with a professional practitioner and serves as an evaluation of the student's motivation, values, and skills for pursuing the social work major. Field Experience asks students to build on the skills taught in the prerequisite course, Skills for Human Service Work (SWK310), and also provides a context for understanding subsequent course material in the social work curriculum. Students enrolled in this course also participate in a biweekly on-campus field seminar to share placement experiences and to apply course material to the field experience.

Field Instruction (SWK472) is a senior-level course designed to provide students with opportunities to further integrate and apply knowledge and theory to actual social work practice situations. Students may begin Field Instruction at the beginning of any college term (Fall, Interterm, or Spring) and placements can be arranged as either concurrent or modified block placements. During the senior year, students are required to enroll in Pre-practice I and II, a weekly seminar with a component focusing on the fieldwork experience.

Credit for both Field Experience and Field Instruction is offered on a credit/no credit basis. Evaluation is provided by the agency and field instructor regarding work at the agency. The Field Instruction Coordinator offers feedback concerning the completion of requirements for written work in concurrent seminars and assigns the final grade in the course.



## OBJECTIVES OF FIELD EDUCATION

The goal of supervised fieldwork is to provide an arena for students to use and integrate the knowledge, skills, and values learned throughout the rest of the Program's curriculum. In addition, field work makes unique contributions to student learning: the individualization of the student's learning needs and adaptation of teaching to these needs; an opportunity for the student to put knowledge to use in the service of others; and an opportunity for the student to experience her/himself in a professional role.

The specific objectives of the Field Experience (Junior-level) course follow:

1. Demonstrate ability to establish an appropriate helping relationship (Competency 6).
2. Demonstrate a beginning understanding of group work in the social services, including an ability to participate in or facilitate group interaction (Competency 8).
3. Understand the agency as a context for social work practice (Competency 5).
4. Demonstrate adherence to appropriate social work values and the Code of Ethics in the context of a social service agency (Competency 1).
5. Demonstrate interviewing and assessment skills appropriate to a beginning level in social work (Competency 7).
6. Have a beginning awareness of the roles social workers play in relation to other disciplines (Competency 1).
7. Display an ability to identify the problem-solving process in use in the social service agency and a beginning ability to use the problem-solving process with individuals or groups (Competency 7).
8. Demonstrate awareness of issues related to intersectionality with regard to class, race, ethnicity, color, culture, national origin, creed, religion/spirituality, age, gender, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity and expression, marital status, veteran or military status, immigration or citizenship status, political affiliation, tribal sovereignty status, ability/disability, or other individual or group difference as these issues affect the relationships and work of human service workers. (Competency 2)

The specific educational objectives of the Field Instruction (Senior-level) course follow. Upon completion of Field Instruction, a student should be able to:

1. Display ability to assume a professional role in relation to clients and other professionals, including demonstration of self-awareness, commitment to social work values and ethical standards, and professional autonomy and responsibility (Competency 1).
2. Demonstrate through practice, knowledge of the relationship of individuals and their environments and the diversity of needs and capabilities that the intersectionality of culture, ethnicity, race, gender, age, class, sexual orientation and other differences bring as well as the mechanisms and forms of privilege, power, and oppression found in the environment (Competency 2).
3. Understand and engage in practices that advance human rights and social, economic, and environmental justice (Competency 3).
4. Utilize social work research to improve practice and understand appropriate intervention possibilities; engage in practice-informed research and in evaluation of own practice interventions (Competency 4).
5. Engage in policy practice, demonstrating understanding of the role of policy in service delivery and access to services, and demonstrating the ability to critique and advocate for just policies and structures (Competency 5).



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6. In keeping with the importance of human relationship and collaboration, demonstrate ability to engage with individuals, families, groups, organizations, and communities (Competency 6).
  7. Demonstrate appropriate use of social work theories through assessment with and on behalf of individuals, families, groups, organizations, and communities (Competency 7).
  8. Demonstrate ability to intervene with individuals, families, groups, organizations, and communities (Competency 8).
  9. Evaluate practice with individuals, families, groups, organizations, and communities, applying findings to improve practice effectiveness (Competency 9).



## **GUIDELINES FOR THE SELECTION OF FIELD PLACEMENTS AND FIELD INSTRUCTORS**

The following are criteria to be considered in the selection of a field placement for Bethel College social work students. At times, a criterion may be waived at the discretion of the Field Coordinator in order to provide a student with a placement meeting her/his particular needs.

1. The availability of a social worker on staff with the desire, time, and motivation to be a field instructor. Although a master's level social worker is highly preferred, an experienced BSW may be designated as a field instructor. (If a licensed social worker staff member is not available, a licensed social work field instructor from outside the agency may also be utilized.) For Field Experience, a social work field instructor is preferred, but not required.
2. Administrative support for field instruction activities as demonstrated by:
  - a. Granting the field instructor or supervisor of daily activities the necessary time for teaching and supervising students.
  - b. Providing the student with physical facilities and materials necessary for him/her to function as a professional. These include desk space, facilities for privacy in interviewing and tutorial instruction, reimbursement for agency-related travel, and provision of essential clerical services.
  - c. Providing agency sanction for the student to assume responsibility for the clientele with whom s/he is working.
3. The opportunity for students to gain practice experience with individuals, families, groups, organizations, and communities.
4. The opportunity for students to gain practice experience with persons from diverse racial, ethnic, national origins, and cultural heritages and/or from age, religion, gender, disability, socio-economic status different from his/her own.
5. The agency's support of the educational focus of field instruction by granting time for supervisors to attend conferences, seminars, or workshops on field instruction sponsored by the Social Work Program.
6. The agency's proximity to Bethel College to allow for frequent visits by faculty field consultants.
7. The internal stability of the agency.
8. The agency's adherence to social work values and social work ethics.
9. The agency's adherence to a policy of non-discrimination regarding race, gender, age, religion, ethnic background, ability/disability, and sexual orientation and expression, color, national origin, citizenship status, and political affiliation (Include all that are in the Nondiscrimination Statement).



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## **ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES IN FIELD EDUCATION**

The quality of teaching and learning in field instruction depends upon the collaboration of the major participants: the student, the agency, and the faculty liaison or Field Coordinator. The following is a delineation of the responsibilities each of these participants needs to assume to ensure an effective learning experience.

### **Responsibilities of the Student**

1. Complete a field instruction application form and return it to the Field Coordinator by the appropriate due date.
2. Arrange a placement interview with the agency.
3. Report to the agency at the date and time specified for the beginning of placement.
4. Participate with the field instructor in formulating a learning contract that articulates learning objectives and learning assignments.
5. Develop professional work habits in completion of agency assignments.
6. Attend and actively participate in weekly conferences with the field instructor.
7. Observe the agency's schedule for working hours. In the case of illness or other extraordinary circumstances necessitating absence, the student is expected to notify his/her field instructor about the reasons for the absence and expected date of return. The student must arrange to make up for lost time to complete the hours required. Students are entitled to time away consistent with Bethel College's schedule.
8. Make advance preparations for case responsibilities when absent for vacations.
9. Seek assistance from the faculty liaison when encountering problems in the placement.
10. Participate in the midterm and final evaluation conferences with the field instructor.
11. Complete an evaluation of the field experience at the end of the placement and return to Bethel's Field Coordinator.
12. Adhere to the social work Code of Ethics in work with clients, colleagues, and the agency.
13. Complete all agency records as requested.
14. Make efforts to apply principles learned in the classroom to practice in the field.

### **Responsibilities of the Agency**

1. Identify an appropriate field instructor or supervisor of daily activities and grant this person the necessary time to fulfill her/his field teaching responsibilities.
2. Provide the student with opportunities to get practice experience with individuals, families, groups, community organizations, and policy-making bodies.
3. Provide physical facilities and materials necessary for the student to function as a professional. These include desk space, facilities for privacy in interviewing, reimbursement for agency-related travel, and provision of essential clerical services.
4. Allow the student access to case files, recordings, board meeting minutes, and other agency documents that can substantially enhance the student's agency experience.
5. Provide agency sanction for the student to carry caseload responsibilities.
6. Grant the field instructor time for consultation meetings with social work faculty and to enhance her/his knowledge of field instruction by attending conferences or workshops on field instruction sponsored by the Social Work Program.



7. Ensure the safety of the student including educating student about courses of action to take in potentially dangerous situations both inside and outside the agency (ie. home visits or volatile clients) and informing student about agency sexual harassment policies.

### **Field Instructor**

The field instructor is the practitioner who has agreed to teach and provide learning assignments for the social work student in the field setting.

Field instructors must be licensed social workers and generally have a master's degree in social work. At times, an experienced licensed social worker with a bachelor's degree may be designated as the field instructor. Occasionally, practitioners who have particularly valuable knowledge and experience but who do not have an MSW may be appointed as supervisors of daily work with oversight or additional supervision provided by a licensed social worker outside the agency.

### **Responsibilities of the Field Instructor**

1. Participate in the selection of field instruction students through interviews and assessment of students referred by the Field Instruction Coordinator.
2. Write a learning contract with the student that identifies learning goals and assignments commensurate with the educational objectives of field instruction.
3. Orient the new student to the agency including agency policies, procedures, services, intake procedures, case assignments, planning and referral processes, sources of funding, administrative structure, and linkage to other agencies.
4. Provide the student with tutorial instruction through weekly conferences and additional informal consultation. Weekly supervision appointments should be scheduled at a regular time to promote the student's planning and should be scrupulously kept.
5. Provide the student with regular evaluative feedback about his/her progress toward achieving competency as a beginning-level practitioner.
6. Work collaboratively with the faculty liaison to maintain the educational focus of field instruction and to improve her/his field teaching skills.
7. Provide the Social Work Program with both midterm and final written evaluation reports of the senior student's performance and one written evaluation at the conclusion of each junior student's placement.
8. Participate in field instruction conferences and workshops sponsored by the Social Work Program.

### **Faculty Field Liaison**

A member of the social work faculty is assigned to consult with field instructors in every agency in which a student is placed. The faculty field liaison meets regularly with field instructors to establish specific learning objectives and assignments and to facilitate the educational goals of the field instruction program.

### **Responsibilities of the Faculty Field Liaison**

1. Work collaboratively with field instructors to ensure the educational focus of field instruction.
2. Meet regularly with field instructors to review student's learning assignments and progress toward fulfilling the field instruction course requirements.



3. Meet with the field instructor and student during the beginning phase of the placement to facilitate formulation of a learning contract.
4. Facilitate resolution of problems or conflict between the student, field instructor, and/or agency.
5. Read and evaluate the student's field journal, agency paper, and case presentation paper (seniors only).
6. Strengthen and support the field instructor's field teaching skills.
7. Support the field instructor in the process of evaluation of the student's performance at the midterm and completion of field placement.
8. Recommend continuing or discontinuing a student's field placement in the agency or continuing or discontinuing field instructor participation.

### **Field Instruction Coordinator**

The Coordinator of Field Instruction has primary responsibility for development and oversight of the field instruction program and for administering the policies governing the field instruction program.

### **Responsibilities of the Field Coordinator**

1. Select field placements and field instructors in accordance with the guidelines established by the Program.
2. Assign students to a field placement setting.
3. Provide field instructors and agencies with information about the Social Work Program including curriculum policies, goals, and expectations for student performance. Establish a plan for orientation and ongoing training for field instructors.
4. Assign faculty to serve as field liaisons to agencies in which students are enrolled in field placement.
5. Provide field instructors with a summary of the student's education, experience, and particular interests at the beginning of the placement.
6. Assign student's grade in consultation with the field instructor and faculty liaison.
7. Aid in final arbitration when problems and conflicts arise in the field placement which necessitate a change of field instructor or field placement.
8. Plan for orientation of students entering Field Experience or Field Instruction.
9. Assess the quality of field instruction provided to each student.
10. Teach or facilitate the Field Experience seminar and the field component of the Pre-practice Seminars.

### **Employment-Based Practicums:**

Students completing field instruction in an agency where they are employed should note the following guidelines:

1. All activities that count toward the minimum of 400 contact hours and for which the student receives credit for field instruction must be set forth and guided by the **Field Instruction Learning Contract**. This contract is established through collaboration among the student, the field instructor, and the field liaison. This requirement is the same as with all field instruction placements.
2. Availability of release time if needed for completion of course and field instruction requirements must be ensured by the agency.
3. Field Instruction must be educationally focused rather than solely focused on agency services.



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4. A separate field instruction supervisor must oversee the field instruction, and field instruction assignment must differ from those associated with the student's employment.  
(Example: A student may be employed in a position as a family support worker. Assignments under the Learning contract may require case planning or other tasks typically assigned to a social worker but not to a support worker. These are separate activities that would be guided by the Learning Contract and supervised through regular meetings with a separate field instruction supervisor.)
  5. Field Instruction in settings where the student is also employed must be administered in accordance with the pattern Bethel College uses for all students.
  6. Agencies involved in this type of field instruction placement must meet the same criteria as other field instruction agencies used by the Bethel College Social Work Program.
  7. Field instructors in this type of field instruction placement must meet the same criteria as other field instructors used by the Bethel College Social Work Program.



## OVERVIEW OF THE FIELD EDUCATION PROCESS

The process of field education begins with a selection process in which the student and the field agency/instructor mutually agree to work together. The learning process progresses from orientation through final evaluation and termination. Throughout the field process, field instructors help students integrate their academic learning with their day to day field experiences. With the assistance of both field instructor and liaison, the student prepares to become a social worker by using reflection and practice to integrate personal values and experiences with classroom learning and experience in the field.

### Placement Selection

Field placements are typically arranged through the Field Coordinator. During the semester before placement is to begin, the Field Coordinator meets with the student to discuss interests, needs, and challenges the student faces as well as potentially available field agencies. The Field Coordinator and the student select one or more agencies as most appropriate in meeting the learning needs of the student. The Field Coordinator contacts each of these agencies to ask about the availability of a qualified field instructor and field assignments. The student is responsible for setting up appointments and interviewing with available field instructors and agencies. The student then selects the agency of her/his choice. A contract is then signed by the school, the agency and the student.

### Placement Objectives

Because Bethel's Social Work Program prepares students for entry-level social work, the school requires that field placements reflect a generalist approach to social work practice. The Objectives for Field Instruction and Field Experience should be used as guides in designing a placement. Within this framework, the field instructor, student, and liaison should plan for the following types of assignments when developing a plan for a Field Experience (SWK372 Junior Placement):

1. Chance to establish a helping relationship and practice interviewing and communication skills with one or more individuals.
2. Opportunity to observe, participate in, and assist in facilitating a task or treatment group.
3. Opportunity to learn about the agency through staff meetings and contacts with a variety of agency employees.
4. Chance to observe and identify the problem-solving process in use in the agency and show a beginning ability to use the problem-solving process.
5. Opportunity to work with persons of different age, race, color, gender, ethnicity, class, or gender orientation from the student.

In the senior-level course, Field Instruction (SWK472 Senior Placement), the field instructor, student, and liaison should adhere to the following standards when designing the placement and assignments:

1. Each student must gain practice experience with all sizes of systems: individuals and families, groups (task and/or treatment), the organization itself, and the community.
2. Each student must gain practice experience with persons from diverse racial, ethnic, and cultural heritages, and/or from age, sex, sexual orientation, socio-economic status different than his/her own.
3. Each student must have the opportunity to become knowledgeable about, observe, and critique agency and social policies affecting the provision of services to consumers of the agency's services.
4. Each student must gain practice experience in all phases of the problem-solving process: engagement, assessment and goal-setting, intervention, evaluation, and termination.



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## **Beginning the Field Placement**

Field education should begin in the same way that all social work does--with engagement and assessment. This beginning phase will probably last from 2 to 6 weeks. For successful completion of this phase, several tasks must be accomplished:

### **Engagement**

This is the time for the field instructor to establish credibility with the student and his/her availability as a mentor and role model. Together, the student and field instructor should establish an informal, unwritten contract or understanding of what they can expect from each other in terms of the roles and norms of the relationship. In establishing the student's relationship with the rest of the agency, the field instructor is expected to interpret the student's role to the agency and help the student observe agency norms and establish credibility with agency staff.

### **Assessment**

During these first weeks of the placement, the field instructor and the student should also collaborate together to complete assessment of both the student and the agency. Assessment of the student entails gaining an understanding of the student's abilities, strengths, skills, values, thinking, and life experiences so that appropriate assignments can be made. If desired, both student and field instructor can complete a learning styles inventory (available from Field Coordinator) as part of the assessment process. The field instructor-student team can profit from also assessing the agency to determine what opportunities might be available for the student. The objective of assessment is to develop a goodness of fit between the student and the agency and to begin the learning process for the student by examining the impact of self on social work activity and through exploration of the agency as context for practice.

### **Orientation**

The first few days of the field placement experience can set the tone for weeks to come and can influence the student's learning in later assignments. A certain amount of anxiety and a great number of expectations naturally accompany the beginning of the placement for both the student and the field instructor. It is normal for the student to feel some discomfort until he/she discerns the norms and expectations of the agency and has established a working relationship with the supervisor. It is common for a student to feel overwhelmed by the many tasks yet to be accomplished and the many things not known. A formal orientation to the agency and the work helps to relieve some of the anxiety and gives the student time to acclimate before actual work demands are made.

When a student first arrives at the agency it is important to make him/her feel welcome. Providing a physical space for the student, taking him/her on a tour, and arranging for him/her to be introduced and welcomed informally by other staff is especially important. Students will also need ample time with the field instructor, their one official link with this new setting. It is appropriate for the student to read policy manuals and other materials during this orientation time, but reading should be kept to limited blocks of time. Students need activities involving real people/recipients of services to begin understanding what the work will be like and therefore to reduce the anxiety. (A checklist for orientation is on the next page.)



## Agency Orientation Checklist:

1. Nitty-gritty items
  - dress requirements
  - parking
  - mail and messages system
  - phone procedures and rules
  - locations of bathrooms
  - where to hang coat
  - location for emergency (fire, tornado etc.)
  - lunch times and breaks (is there someone for student to eat with the first day?)
  - agency schedule/holidays
  - security precautions, safety issues, sexual harassment policies
  - policy about reimbursements for travel
  - establish regular schedule of student
2. Introductions to agency
  - list of staff and extensions
  - organizational chart
  - appointment to meet key staff
  - description of departments and jobs
  - give student's name and number to receptionists
3. The agency
  - brief history
  - eligibility guidelines
  - funding sources
  - methods/interventions used
  - current issues
4. Record-keeping
  - statistical or annual reports
  - charts and charting; social histories, etc.
  - other files
5. How should student identify self?
  - oral contacts
  - reports (co-signature?)
6. Resource materials
  - library?
  - bibliography or suggested reading
  - community directory or other information on other agencies
  - glossary of abbreviations, agency jargon
7. Confidentiality requirements
8. Orientation to supervision
  - supervisory notebook?
9. The student
  - motivations
  - family background (genogram? ecomap?)
  - autobiography?
  - learning styles; work styles

## **DURING THE FIELD PLACEMENT**

After the initial orientation and assessment, it is time for choosing appropriate ongoing assignments for students and thus for the serious work of the placement to begin. The needs of four systems should be kept in mind in this process: the student, the agency, the recipients of services, and the Social Work Program. The initial phase of the placement clarifies the needs of the student. The field instructor has the responsibility to protect and look out for the interests of both the agency and the recipients of services. In any assignment, the ultimate responsibility for clients must rest with the field instructor or agency. Although it is essential that students do meaningful and real work, agencies should not plan to fill regular staffing needs with students. Students' learning should be protected with smaller caseloads/fewer assignments and more time for instruction, preparation, and reflection.

### **The Learning Contract**

An individualized learning contract is an important guide for the field experience and is a joint effort between field instructor and student. The contract is the agreement about what is to be learned and the specific assignments that will lead to that learning. The contract can be thought of as a road map for the field instruction experience. Both field instructor and student need to have some idea of where they are going (objectives), how to get there (learning experiences), and how they will know when they arrive (evaluation). The contract provides the overall structure and plan for the placement experience, although it can be adjusted when circumstances dictate. Because the contract will include information about expectations, it can diminish anxiety of the student about the unknown and can also aid in the process of ongoing feedback and evaluation.

The contract should be negotiated and written within the first month of the experience. The student should initiate the writing of the learning contract with the field instructor and is responsible for giving a copy of the contract to the field liaison. The following steps suggest a process that can facilitate the development of a contract:

1. Student and field instructor meet to discuss what the student is hoping to learn and gain from the placement and what the field instructor is expecting from the student. Review of potential assignments available in the agency should also be included.
2. The student writes a draft of his/her learning contract.
3. At a second conference, the student and field instructor modify the draft contract with additions or revisions. Discussion should include how accomplishments of the objectives will be evaluated. It may be helpful to specify the degree of skill or knowledge necessary to be rated as satisfactory, unsatisfactory, or outstanding. Use of examples to describe the various skill levels frequently clarifies the learning task for the student.
4. The student completes a final draft of the contract, arranges for appropriate signatures on the typed copy, and gives a copy to the Field Coordinator/field liaison.

The Learning Contract becomes part of the framework for training at the agency. The learning objectives and tasks become the basis for future evaluation of the student.

### **Practicum Assignments**

Following orientation and identification of educational experiences in the Learning Contract, the field instructor begins assigning specific cases and tasks. The field instructor, not the student, should take responsibility for finding cases from his/her own pool of cases or in consultation with other staff. A student's first cases should be task-oriented. When the presenting problem is concrete and can be resolved quickly through contacts with community resources or by playing an advocacy or linking role, the student can experience success. This gradually eases the student into the social work role, builds confidence, and prepares him/her for more difficult challenges.

## **Integration of Theory and Practice**

Fieldwork experience is a primary arena in the social work curriculum for the integration of learning from classroom and practice. In field, the student must act on the abstract ideas learned in the classroom. There are two primary ways in which the field curriculum is designed for integration: 1) ongoing educationally-directed supervision of the student by the field instructor, and 2) integrating field seminars.

### **1. Ongoing Supervision and Feedback**

The student and the field instructor should have a regularly scheduled weekly conference. The content of these meetings will vary depending upon the stage of the placement and needs of the student, but should be educationally focused. In the beginning, meeting time will be consumed with orientation, assessing the student, and in developing a trusting relationship. Integration of theory and practice can be encouraged by discussing together the student's courses, key concepts from classes and how they will fit with fieldwork. After orientation, the contract can be developed. As case and task assignments are made, conference time can be spent in preparing the student for work with cases through role play, "tuning in", and review of the records. The student and field instructor together should continually explore connections between field and classroom content. The student should be challenged to apply theories to cases or agency situations and to assess the environmental and societal issues raised by practice situations. It is also expected that the field instructor and student will discuss values, ethics, policy, and personal experiences and style as they influence the student's work. Near the end of the placement, the student will need conference time to discuss and plan for termination with the agency and clients.

Both student and field instructor should prepare for supervisory sessions by developing an agenda. A supervisory notebook can be a helpful tool for field instructors. The field instructor may keep track of topics of discussion, examples of accomplishments or problems encountered, and assignments made with due dates. The notebook can be used in this way to keep records for evaluative purposes.

Learning requires specific feedback; field instructors should offer feedback regularly and students should routinely ask for it. The Learning Contract should be used as the standard for discussing student progress. It may be helpful to review the Final Evaluation form from time to time to compare the student's work with evaluation criteria. As in all of social work, the field instructor and student can profit from using a strengths perspective.

Some additional recommendations for fieldwork instructors supervising students are:

- Communicate the attitude that students are learners and not workers. Invite them to take advantage of all educational opportunities possible. It is important to decrease the pressure to perform and emphasize learning.
- Be direct and honest in evaluating the student's work. Viewing criticism as constructive is helpful to learning.
- Be open with sharing your own experiences in work and in field placements. It is helpful for students to know that field instructors are fallible and to see them as models of lifelong learners.
- Ask the student for course syllabi or textbooks in order to become acquainted with class content and theories. In this way, theory-practice integration is encouraged.
- Schedule ample time to be available to students, yet urge them to also develop independence as they gain confidence in the role of social worker.

## 2. Student Course Assignments

In addition to the supervisory conferences, the Field Experience seminar and the field component of the Pre-practice Seminar are designed for integration of classroom and field learning. Each seminar is concurrent with the student's practice in the agency. Please see the next section for information on student assignments.

### STUDENT ASSIGNMENTS

Requirements for the **Field Experience** (SWK372 Junior Placement) course ask students to meet in a seminar biweekly. Students must complete the following assignments which address integration:

- Journal of experiences from the field agency and reflections upon how theory and concepts of social work apply to the practical experiences.
- Paper describing the agency using systems concepts.
- Description of an intervention with a recipient of services who is different from the student in one of the following ways: race, ethnicity, culture, age, class, gender, sexual orientation, class, disability/ability, religion/spirituality.
- Readings related to social work values and Code of Ethics as well as other topics.

Concurrent with **Field Instruction** (SWK472 Senior Placement), students attend the Pre-practice Seminar with social work faculty. The seminar gives opportunity for students to learn about other types of field settings, share experiences, and further integrate theory with practice.

Assignments to be completed by students include the following:

- Journal of experiences and reflections upon how theory and social work concepts apply to practical experiences.
- Oral and written presentation about the agency.
- Written and oral presentation of a case study from fieldwork, including theories used to understand and make decisions about case.
- Completion of evaluation research of student's own practice.

Field Assignment descriptions can be found on Thresher Connect under Field Manual forms for placement.

## ENDING THE FIELD PLACEMENT

Evaluation is an important ingredient for continuous professional development. It provides essential information about strengths and acquired skills and identifies areas where additional growth is needed. Students particularly need evaluative feedback to help them feel confident about their performance and to offer assurance that they are meeting the expectations.

Evaluation also provides the school and the student with a written record of the student's performance for purposes of granting credit and writing recommendations for graduate school or employment. Although evaluation should be an integral part of the regularly scheduled conferences between field instructor and student, there are two times in which evaluation is a more formalized process: at midterm, and at the completion of field work.

1. Midterm Assessment: Midway through each field placement, the field instructor and student schedule a conference to assess the student's progress, to adjust assignments, and to reaffirm or modify the Learning Contract. The field instructor in a senior placement, along with the student, completes the "Midterm Evaluation Form" and submits it to the faculty liaison. Field instructors in junior placements can review the evaluation form with students to offer a midway forecast of the final evaluation; there is no submission of an evaluation.
2. Final Evaluation: The final evaluation asks the field instructor to rate the student's demonstrated competencies and readiness for beginning-level social work practice. (Copies of the Field Instruction (SWK472) and Field Experience (SWK372) final evaluation forms will be supplied by the department)

### Termination

The dynamics of the ending of the field instructor-student relationship may be seen as parallel to dynamics of the termination of the student-client relationship. Because of the similarity, it is part of the learning process for the student to attend to the common themes in endings. Themes that may emerge include a denial of the feelings associated with endings, a reluctance to say good-bye, guilt or regret, and sadness and loss. It is important for student and field instructor to express feelings about the student's leaving and to plan for the student to deal with termination with clients in a parallel manner. An ending evaluation conference or "exit interview" which focuses on strengths and weaknesses of the field instructor-student relationship is considered essential. By identifying issues in the ending phase between the student and the field instructor, the student can develop ability to deal with the termination phase of practice.

## **LIST OF REQUIRED FORMS FOR SWK372 (JUNIOR PLACEMENT)**

All forms are available to students on the Thresher Connect Social Work Program Page, [https://connect.bethelks.edu/ICS/Campus\\_Life/Campus\\_Groups/Social\\_Work\\_Professional\\_Program/SWK372\\_Field\\_Manual\\_and\\_Forms\\_for\\_Jr\\_Placement.jnz](https://connect.bethelks.edu/ICS/Campus_Life/Campus_Groups/Social_Work_Professional_Program/SWK372_Field_Manual_and_Forms_for_Jr_Placement.jnz)

Field Instructors will be able to access documents off campus through the Bethel Website, using this link here: <https://www.bethelks.edu/academics/areas-study/social-work/field-instruction-materials/>  
The link will be emailed to Field Instructors. All documents can be emailed upon request.

- Junior (Field Experience) Learning Contract
- Timesheet
- Student's Evaluation of the Field Placement
- Field Instructor's Evaluation of Student (Survey Monkey link)
- Application for Field Instruction (Senior Placement)
- Field Liaison Feedback (Survey Monkey link)
- Field Placement Agency Information Form
- Field Instructor Resume
- Field Placement Contract

## **LIST OF REQUIRED FORMS FOR SWK472 (SENIOR PLACEMENT)**

All forms are available to students on the Thresher Connect Social Work Program Page, [https://connect.bethelks.edu/ICS/Campus\\_Life/Campus\\_Groups/Social\\_Work\\_Professional\\_Program/SWK472\\_Field\\_Manual\\_and\\_Forms\\_for\\_Sr\\_Placement.jnz](https://connect.bethelks.edu/ICS/Campus_Life/Campus_Groups/Social_Work_Professional_Program/SWK472_Field_Manual_and_Forms_for_Sr_Placement.jnz)

Field Instructors will be able to access documents off campus through the Bethel Website, using this link here: <https://www.bethelks.edu/academics/areas-study/social-work/field-instruction-materials/>  
The link will be emailed to Field Instructors. All documents can be emailed upon request.

- Senior (Field Instruction) Learning Contract
- Timesheet
- Field Instructor's Midterm Evaluation of Student (Survey Monkey link)
- Field Instructor's Final Evaluation of Student (Survey Monkey link)
- Student's Evaluation of Field Placement
- Field Liaison Feedback (Survey Monkey link)
- Field Instructor Resume
- Field Placement Contract
- Social Work Program Feedback Form

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