

**Field Education Manual**  
**Master of Social Work Program**

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**HOWARD  
UNIVERSITY**



**SCHOOL OF SOCIAL WORK**

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## ACKNOWLEDGMENT

Field education plays a central role in the master's curriculum by providing a wide range of opportunities for students to develop their practice skills and become competent in advanced social work practice. The concurrent field and class experiences are interactional, with the field experience component serving as a mechanism for integrating the knowledge, skills and values that comprise professional practice.

The field experience provides a critical vehicle for the application of theoretical knowledge within a professional work environment. It is an educational process where educational assumptions about how integration of learning occurs and where students have an opportunity to explore their professional selves in accordance with the total curriculum and its goals and objectives.

Without the contribution of numerous social workers from more than 350 agencies and programs located in the Washington-Virginia-Maryland area, the school would not be able to provide the excellent quality of education currently offered to its student population. Professional education could not exist without close collaboration and cooperation between the School of Social Work and the larger social work community. A mutually satisfying partnership between participating agencies and the school is an integral part of the educational process.

The school is grateful to all the agencies, Field Instructors, and other providers of community resources whose invaluable contributions have helped the school to develop and maintain a field education program which has prepared its students to assume leadership roles nationally and throughout the global community.

Cudore L. Snell, DSW Dean

Janice Davis, MSW, LICSW. Coordinator of Field Education

## **THE PURPOSE OF THE MANUAL**

The Field Education Manual has been designed to make the job of the Field Instructor less complicated. It also serves as a guide to students, faculty, and Field Instructors for understanding field education at Howard University School of Social Work. It provides information related to all aspects of field education including documents, the different forms required by Field Instructors, and explanations as to how they should be used. It also describes all key persons and processes accountable for student learning. Finally, it explains policies and procedures governing the student learning process.

All students enrolled in field education, all Faculty Consultants, and all Field Instructors are issued a manual upon entering the program, which addresses and explains matters pertaining to field education. Manuals are also available to other interested parties, i.e. faculty and administrators who need the information for facilitating the integration of field education requirements with other parts of the curriculum. This assures that all parties have the information necessary for understanding fully the requirements of the field education component of the Master of Social Work education program. The manual also provides a general description of the policies and procedures governing field education. In instances where policy changes occur subsequent to the publication of the Field Education Manual, students and agencies will be informed by the Coordinator of Field Education.

## MISSIONS STATEMENT AND THE BLACK PERSPECTIVE

Howard University School of Social Work is committed to educating future social work leaders for the purpose of changing and transforming those human, organizational, social and economic conditions which impact the quality of life of African Americans, other people of color, and the global community. Consistent with the mission of Howard University, the School of Social Work is dedicated to the pursuit and advancement of knowledge through discovery, research, partnerships, innovative practices, and other scholarly and educational endeavors of its faculty, students, and graduates. The School of Social Work places a high priority on advocacy for social justice and commitment to lifelong learning through community service, international linkages, public policy and utilization of technology. The School's mission is an expression of the Black Perspective, which evolved from the experiences of African Americans and African people throughout the Diaspora.

Further, the mission of social work is an expression of our guiding philosophy, known as the Black perspective. This perspective is described in the following six statements of Principles.

**Principle 1:** The Black Perspective is an affirming and profoundly liberating stance, both at individual and collective levels. It celebrates the richness, productivity, and vigor of the lives of African-Americans and Blacks in other parts of the world. The School of Social Work is committed to imbuing social work practice and theory with this perspective. This mission means a commitment, on our part, to use increasing levels of scholastic productivity and rigor, teaching effectiveness, and social work practice competence as tools to advance the contemporary Black agenda of social justice; it also means a commitment to public services, an arena of importance to all segments of the Black Community.

**Principle 2:** Precisely because the Black Perspective is, first of all, an affirmation of strength, it insists on delineating ways in which that strength can be used to respond to the continuing oppression of Black people. The search for the causes, consequences, and elimination of oppression is inherent in all areas of social work practice, research, and education.

**Principle 3:** The Black Perspective is distinctive but not monolithic. Simplistic, global characterizations of Black individuals, families, groups, and communities are intolerable. It is equally unacceptable to overlook the genuine cultural, economic, political, and social bonds of distinctiveness that do exist. Producing social work practitioners, researchers, and educators who are faithful, both to the commonalities of interests and experiences and to the rich and complex diversities within the Black populations, is a demanding educational task. Knowledge of commonalities and diversities is continually expanding. Keeping abreast of knowledge contributing to it, and adapting social work practice to it are prime elements of our mission.

**Principle 4:** The Black Perspective is a positive and vivifying stance, not a negative or exclusionary one. This means that the School of Social Work has a special mission to educate Black social work practitioners, educators, and researchers, while at the same time providing quality professional education to any student regardless of race, creed, sex, or national origin. The School's curriculum gives primacy to Black content and, in fact, the School is a national leader in the development of social work curriculum materials that are responsive to the Black population. At the same time, the curriculum provides all of our students with broad based professional preparation which gives our graduates career flexibility and the skills needed to work with the diverse elements of modern American society.

**Principle 5:** The Black Perspective means a special sensitivity to the experiences of all oppressed and underserved groups in American society. There is no contradiction between giving primacy to the Black experience and being responsive to the perspectives and experiences of other groups who have been subjected to oppressive forces. Howard University's heritage as a leader in the struggle for social justice places the School of Social Work in a uniquely advantageous position to work with all groups seeking equality and freedom from oppression.

**Principle 6:** An international dimension with a special emphasis on Africa and the Caribbean area is intrinsic to the School's Black Perspective. The School of Social Work has a mission to educate foreign students for positions of direct social work practice and for leadership roles in social welfare administration and policy in their home

countries. An additional aspect of the international dimension is the School's commitment to developing an area of social work practice dealing with refugees and other displaced populations—both those individuals displaced within their own countries and those displaced across national borders. A final aspect of the international dimension is the School's desire to foster in its graduates a sense of involvement with and commitment to other parts of the world as an element of their professional identity. For this reason, it is especially important for the school to also address those areas where issues of social justice and social welfare for people of color are crucial.

# **CHAPTER I**

## **INTRODUCTION TO FIELD EDUCATION**

Howard University School of Social Work seeks to prepare, through classroom and field experiences, advanced social workers (direct service practitioners, administrators, and community organizers) who possess the analytic skills and substantive knowledge needed to address social problems at all levels of modern society, using current social work intervention techniques and theories.

Field education is a major component of the educational program of graduate students. It takes place in an agency setting under the instruction of an experienced social worker who holds a Master of Social Work (MSW) degree. The field experience is structured in accordance with the mission of the School, its curriculum and educational goals, and current knowledge about the integration of field and practice.

Field education seeks to develop social workers who identify with the social work profession, as a whole and who in practice, are task oriented in addressing human needs and problems, rather than limiting themselves to the exclusive use of one method of intervention. Field education gives students an opportunity to test their commitment to the field, and to evaluate their ability to meet the demands and challenges of a professional career.

In field education, students are engaged in actual practice in order to learn about how to work with clients. Field education represents a significant portion of the two year master's program, with performance expectations increasing between the first year and second year of study. During the two years of study, the emphasis is placed on practice, the application of knowledge, social work values, and appropriate professional behavior.

## OBJECTIVES

The purpose of field education is to provide opportunities for students to develop competence in practice skills within the framework of social work values and ethics. More specifically, the primary objectives for field education are to:

1. provide a structured experiential learning experience;
2. promote students' integrative learning;
3. provide ways for students to:
  - a. develop self- awareness and make increasing disciplined use of self in professional relationships,
  - b. learn and apply concepts and principles of social work practice through knowledge of the professional code of ethics and the ability to solve and understand ethical dilemmas,
  - c. integrate knowledge and make differential use of a variety of strategies geared toward improvement of services,
  - d. acquire understanding of a range of theoretical perspectives and conceptual skills for critical thinking in providing Direct and Community, Administration, & Policy social work practice, inclusive of community organization,
  - e. increase empirical and practice based knowledge and increase competence in working with populations-at risk and people from diverse backgrounds, and promote economic and social justice, and
  - f. recognize the impact of racism, sexism, ageism and other social, economic, and political factors have on social work,
4. provide a mechanism for validating the relevance of curriculum content for practice.

The preceding objectives are consistent with current and projected needs in the field and with the requirements of the educational program. They seek to produce social workers capable of progressive, independent, self-directed, self-evaluative practice, who are capable of focusing creatively on the interplay between people and their social environments, and who are capable of accepting responsibility for working for social as well as personal change. Students, within this context, are expected to move toward higher levels of proficiency in advanced practice in their respective areas of concentration, to develop competency in evaluating their own practice skills, and to demonstrate leadership.

## CHAPTER II

### FIELD EDUCATION OVERVIEW

The social work program at Howard University is a concurrent program where theoretical knowledge is taught in a classroom setting at the same time it is being applied to actual practice situations in a community based site. All full-time students, both first and second year, are expected to enroll in concurrent placements. Students involved in unique projects, (i.e. special grant projects) may be assigned to block placements.

The first year field education courses support the first year foundation curriculum; and, the second year field education courses support the practice method and field of practice concentration programs selected by students.

All students enrolled in field education courses are placed at foundation sites for the first two semesters of their first year of field education. During the second semester students begin to participate in differential foundation experiences. During their second year, the field experience training is more advanced and the focus shifts to the students' areas of concentration. Exceptions to this practice may occur when students achieve advanced standing. To insure that these policies are implemented, the Coordinator of Field Education or her designee approves and assigns all field education placements.

### Placement Requirements

All MSW students are required to complete a total of 1,000 clock hours of field education. First year students are expected to spend two days (16 clock hours) per week in their field sites (a total of 208 hour per semester) while second year students are expected to spend 2 1/2 days (20 clock hours) per week in their sites (a total of 260 hours per semester).

Most field education assignments occur on Tuesdays and Wednesdays for first year students and on Wednesdays (1/2 day), Thursdays and Fridays for second year students. Arrangements for other times must be agreed upon by all parties involved with the placement. If a consensus cannot be reached regarding modifying the student's schedule, the student, and agency must adhere to the regularly assigned days and times.

While the first year students attend a total of four integrated seminars, second year students attend three seminars. The dates and times associated with these seminars are provided on the calendar for the School and the calendar for Field Education. The seminars are taught by Faculty Consultants. The additional hours that make up the total of 1000 hours are earned in the seminars and required orientation. Therefore a student who does not complete orientation and seminars cannot earn enough hours to meet this minimal requirement.

Faculty Consultants can be full-time faculty members or part-time adjunct faculty members who have been hired to work exclusively with field placement students. Other responsibilities are discussed on **page 11**.

Faculty Consultants follow course outlines which were developed by the Coordinator of Field Education in conjunction with the Field Education Advisory Committee with feedback from the chairs of the Direct and Community, Administration, & Policy Practice sequences. All course outlines are approved by the Curriculum Committee and faculty members. Each seminar extends from 9:00 a.m. to 12:00 p.m. The seminars are planned integrative seminars where placement experiences and educational content is discussed, and where theoretical frameworks are applied and integrated through the learning contract developed by the school's Field Instructors, and students. Students are encouraged, in these seminars to discuss their professional development, problem solving techniques, and to explore alternative ways of using theories in an applied setting. Field education seminars offer an excellent opportunity for students to enhance and expand the knowledge base they have gained in their field experiences.

All absences in field or in field education seminars must be compensated for per the requirements of the respective Field Instructor and Faculty Consultant. Extended absences in field education adversely affect the learning experience and the quality of services provided. Absences should therefore not be taken lightly. Special care must

be given to assure that the services provided to the client population are not disrupted. Adherence to this standard is essential to optimal professional development. Every effort should be made to sustain consistent services during field education assignments.

The School places its students in a wide range of institutional settings. Most of the agencies are located in the Washington metropolitan area; however, some are located in Maryland and Virginia. These settings include non-profit and for-profit agencies, public and private agencies, and local, state and federal agencies of the U.S. government.

Students are expected, once assigned, to understand the professional commitment they make when entering field. Since their focus should always be on providing quality services to clients, personal issues cannot impede or interfere with the client-student- agency relationship, or violate standards set by the NASW Code of Ethics. Students who do not adhere to professional standards may be asked to leave the placement (See [NASW Code of Ethics](#) and Student Review Committee Process on **Page 13**).

If personal issues negatively impact the performance of a student, the Field Instructor must inform the Faculty Consultant, who, in turn, sets up a conference between the Field Instructor and the student. If the concerns cannot be resolved, the Faculty Consultant develops a written report and submits it to the student's academic advisor and to the Coordinator of Field Education: at this time, a decision may be made to send the case to the Student Review Committee for academic planning for the student. The Student Review Committee then assesses the situation and makes recommendations to the Dean of Academic Affairs.

# FOUNDATION FIELD EDUCATION

## Overview of Field Education I

Field Education I is taken concurrently with the practice methods foundation courses. The learning experiences are developed to enable students to master generalist knowledge of concepts, skills, theories, behaviors, and values used in social work practice. Instruction provided in the field allows students to apply the theoretical knowledge gained in foundation methods courses to clients within agency settings under the close supervision of qualified Field Instructors. The goal is to prepare students for entering Field Education II where students select their methods of practice. Methods of practice include Micro Practice (Direct Practice) and Community, Administration, & Policy Practice. All assignments in Field Education are designed to explore problem solving and strengths based strategies utilized at various levels of the system in which social workers operate.

Issues important to populations at risk, i.e., lesbians, gays, and other diverse populations, women and religious groups are covered. The Black Perspective is also emphasized.

### The objectives of Field Education I are to:

1. explore the nature, value base and ethical issues of social work practice;
2. examine the development of an awareness of self in social work practice as it relates to establishing professional relationships;
3. analyze the problem-solving process and strengths perspective for Direct and Community, Administration, & Policy social work practice;
4. explore the knowledge and skills needed as a generalist foundation social work practitioner;
5. examine oral and written communication skills germane to the field of social work;
6. assess the implementation and evaluation of agency policies to address and promote social and economic justice using the Black Perspective; and
7. identify and develop strategies for integrating practice and theory from the Black Perspective.

### The educational outcomes expected of all students who satisfactorily complete Field Education I include:

1. demonstrate understanding of the nature, value base and ethics of the social work profession (Competency 2.1.2);
2. demonstrate ability to identify, and solve ethical dilemmas, and other issues related to race, ethnicity, and gender (Competency 2.14);
3. demonstrate ability and skills in the appropriate use of self as it influences client intervention and building relationships(Competency 2.1.1); ;
4. demonstrate knowledge and skills in the use of problem solving processes and the strengths perspectives for Direct and Community, Administration, & Policy social work practice (Competency 2.1.10);
5. demonstrate understanding of the utilization of the social work practice approaches in developing generalist knowledge and skills (Competencies 2.1.6, 2.1.7, 2.1.8);
6. demonstrate knowledge and skills in the effective use of oral and written communication germane to the field of social work (Competency 2.1.3);
7. demonstrate an understanding of the development, implementation and evaluation of agency policies and their relationship to ethical guidelines (Competency 2.1.9); and
8. demonstrate an ability to identify and develop strategies for integrating practice and theory from the Black Perspective(Competency 2.1.5) .

## **Overview of Field Education II:**

In the second semester of the first year of study, students select one of two practice method concentrations: micro (Direct Practice), macro (Community, Administration, & Policy Practice). Field Education II, while still a foundation course, uses a differential model, which permits students to achieve beginning autonomy and to develop skills in their practice method concentrations.

### **The learning objectives of Field Education II are:**

1. assess social work ethics and values and assess methods used to resolve ethical dilemmas with special emphasis on social and economic justice;
2. apply assessment techniques and skills by critically analyzing client needs and identifying helping modalities relevant to various system levels;
3. analyze skills needed for interviewing, collecting, and interpreting significant information necessary to engage client systems in the problem-solving process using strengths based perspectives;
4. explore theoretical frameworks as a means of addressing client needs by using knowledge of bio-psycho-social environmental factors;
5. examine and master oral and written communication skills germane to the field of social work as evidenced by process recordings and case documentation;
6. assess the approaches used in implementing, maintaining, and evaluating agency policies from an ethical and legal perspective as a means of improving students' ability to solve ethical dilemmas and advocate on behalf of diverse populations using the Black Perspective; and
7. explore the concepts of transference and counter transference as they relate to clients and other systems.

### **The expected educational outcomes of Field Education II are:**

1. demonstrate ability to complete psycho-social assessments using current techniques and theories (Competency 2.1.7, 2.1.10);
2. demonstrate understanding of the nature, value base, and ethics of the social work profession (Competencies 2.1.1, 2.1.2);
3. demonstrate an ability to identify and assess client needs by utilizing the biopsychosocial environment and cultural theoretical frameworks (Competencies 2.1.3, 2.1.6, 2.1.7, 2.1.10);
4. demonstrate ability and skills in the appropriate use of self as it influences client behavior (Competencies 2.2.1, 2.1.4);
5. demonstrate knowledge and skill in the use of strengths based and problem solving models and strategies (Competencies 2.1.3, 2.1.4, 2.1.6, 2.1.10);
6. demonstrate knowledge and skills in the effective use of oral and written communication skills used by social work practitioners (Competency 2.1.3); and
7. demonstrate an ability to develop, implement and evaluate policies, programs and legislation governing, or used by the agency in providing services (Competency 2.1.8, 2.1.9).

## **Advanced Field Instruction**

At the beginning of the second year of study, students are expected to switch from focusing on foundation practice to focusing on specialized areas of concentration (micro or macro). While the micro concentration provides a rich and varied body of practice theory and practice opportunities for learning to work with individuals, families, and small groups from diverse populations, the macro concentration prepares students to intervene, as practitioners, in larger systems of society, such as large groups, institutions, organizations, and communities. The systems subject to such intervention are communities, institutions and private social welfare organizations, as well as the executive, judicial, and legislative branches of government.

Each second year student is expected to enroll in and complete Field Education III and IV. These courses build on the foundation curriculum, through special knowledge and education in a practice method class (micro or macro) plus an assignment in a field of practice. Fields of practice include family and child welfare, social gerontology, social work in mental health settings, social work with displaced populations, social work in health care settings, and social work in criminal justice. Field Education I and II are prerequisites for Field Education III and IV. Field education courses are taken sequentially with their respective methods courses.

Field Education III and IV provide opportunities for students to grow and develop in the application of professional values, knowledge, and strategies essential for engaging in advanced social work practice. Learning experiences are selected to give students opportunities to develop, demonstrate, and apply their competencies in an actual social work environment.

## **The overall objectives of Advanced Field Education III are as follows:**

### **Direct Practice Student**

1. assess skills in planning, implementing and evaluating various models of intervention;
2. assess knowledge and skills needed in applying strategies and techniques related to various models of intervention;
3. examine and evaluate historical models of intervention to assess sensitivity and relevance to oppressed people, people of color, women, and at-risk populations; and
4. analyze skills needed in applying theoretical knowledge, social work values and ethics to various models for intervention to promote social and economic justice.

### **Community, Administration, & Policy Practice Student**

1. examine the historical and theoretical frameworks and functions for managing human service organizations;
2. analyze professional and personal values and ethics needed in developing managerial leadership skills in settings serving oppressed people, people of color, women, and at-risk populations;
3. examine the planning and budgeting processes for human service organizations; and
4. analyze strategies utilized in practice/program evaluations, (i.e. needs assessments, process evaluations, outcome evaluations and cost-benefit analysis).

## **The expected educational outcomes of Advanced Field Education III are as follows:**

### **Direct Practice Student**

1. demonstrate competence in implementing, planning and evaluating various models of advanced intervention (Competencies 2.1.6, 2.1.10);
2. demonstrate advanced skill in the systematic examination of one's use of self in advanced direct practice to ensure effectiveness (Competency 2.1.1);
3. Critically analyze and assess the impact of policies, case laws, and/or practices on consumer well-being and access to services utilizing multiple sources of information related to the field of practice (Competency 2.1.8)
4. demonstrate knowledge and skills in identifying and utilizing strategies and techniques related to various models of intervention (Competencies 2.1.3, 2.1.7);
5. demonstrate ability to implement and evaluate the appropriateness of traditional models of intervention for oppressed people, people of color, women, and at-risk populations (Competencies 2.1.4, 2.1.5, 2.1.9; and
6. demonstrate skills in resolving ethical dilemmas as they relate to social justice and economic issues (Competencies 2.1.2, 2.1.5).

### **Community, Administration, & Policy Practice Student**

1. demonstrate an ability to implement strategies and operations used for managing human service organizations (Competency 2.1.9);
2. Demonstrate advanced skills in recognizing and applying social work values and ethics in response to ethical dilemmas and recognizing personal values and bias and how they impact practice behaviors (Competency 2.1.2)
3. Demonstrate the ability to critically assess the relatedness and interdependence of major components of

macro practice and stakeholders and integrate relevant information to formulate arguments that utilize diverse forms of practice and research based knowledge (Competencies 2.1.3);

4. demonstrate competence in the managerial leadership skills needed in settings serving oppressed people, people of color, women, and at-risk populations (Competencies 2.1.1, 2.1.4, 2.1.5);
5. demonstrate an ability to implement budgetary principles and auditing standards utilized in human service organizations (Competency 2.1.8, 2.1.10);
6. identify, understand, and implement research based models to assess practice and program evaluations for agency and client outcomes (Competency 2.1.6); and
7. gain an understanding of the interplay between the community and the agency (Competencies 2.1.7, 2.1.9).

### **The overall objectives of Advanced Field Education IV are as follows:**

#### **Direct Practice Student**

1. apply advanced assessment, engagement and intervention skills within the framework of the problem solving process and strength-based perspectives as they relate to issues of loss and other clinical syndromes;
2. explore the relationship between pharmacology and biopsychosocial assessments and interventions;
3. explore the affects of racism, sexism, and other discriminatory practices on service delivery and their impact on client functioning in diverse populations; and
4. examine professional development as it influences values and ethics used in intervening on behalf of clients from diverse populations.

#### **Community, Administration, & Policy Practice Student**

1. explore strategies involved in securing and managing human services agency resources;
2. analyze the information processing capacity of human service agencies for utilizing current computer technology and information systems;
3. develop managerial leadership strategies to improve services for oppressed people, people of color, women, and at-risk populations; and
4. explore strategies for establishing and maintaining a culturally diverse and representative workplace.

### **The expected educational outcomes of Advanced Field Education IV are as follows:**

#### **Direct Practice Student**

1. demonstrate ability to apply advanced intervention strategies as they relate to issues of loss and other clinical syndromes (Competencies 2.1.7, 2.1.10);
2. demonstrate knowledge of pharmacological practices and their utilization in biopsychosocial treatment (Competencies 2.1.7, 2.1.10);
3. demonstrate ability to utilize critical thinking to assess theories, models, and modalities selected for interventions and integrate diverse forms of practice informed research in the application of practice interventions (Competencies 2.1.3, 2.1.6);
4. demonstrate advanced abilities to analyze multiple sources of information related to the field of practice and critique the impact of policy and resource allocation (Competency 2.1.8);
5. demonstrate ability to identify and practice intervention strategies that enhance diverse client populations'

functioning (Competencies 2.1.4, 2.1.5, 2.1.9, 2.1.10) ; and

6. demonstrate ability to resolve ethical dilemmas and refrain from one's own issues in determining client intervention and practice decisions (Competencies 2.1.1., 2.1.2).

#### **Community, Administration, & Policy Practice Student**

1. demonstrate knowledge and skills of financial management and leadership strategies (Competencies 2.1.1, 2.1.3, 2.1.10);
2. advanced ability to recognize and apply social work values and ethics when working with communities, organizations or policy (Competency 2.1.1)
3. demonstrate knowledge of various computer technologies and management information systems used in human service agencies (Competency 2.1.6, 2.1.9);
4. demonstrate an ability to critically analyze social policy and to implement managerial leadership strategies as a means of improving services to oppressed people, people of color, women, and at-risk populations (Competencies 2.1.4, 2.1.5, 2.1.8 2.1.7); and
5. demonstrate the ability to integrate theories related to diverse populations into service delivery systems and management, to maximize the resources of the agency (Competencies 2.1.4, 2.1.5, 2.1.10).

## **CHAPTER III**

### **ORGANIZATION AND STRUCTURE OF FIELD EDUCATION**

#### **Roles of the Faculty Consultant**

The school utilizes Faculty Consultants to serve as liaisons between the school and affiliated agencies, and to provide academic instruction geared toward promoting maximum integration of classroom learning and field education.

#### **Responsibilities of Faculty Consultants**

##### **Orientation Seminars**

New students are expected to attend a Field Education Orientation seminar prior to reporting to their field placement sites. This seminar accounts for 10 hours of the total number of hours needed to complete the first year. Field Education students confirm their placements after interviewing at assigned agencies, and receiving a Faculty Consultant assignment. The Faculty Consultant is responsible for meeting with students at field seminars. The seminars include four sessions per semester for first year students and three sessions for second-year students. These sessions are required and account for a total of 20 percent of the final field education grade. Faculty Consultants are responsible for conducting the seminars using the course syllabus.

##### **Student Evaluations and Agency Responsibility**

Faculty Consultants are expected to contact the Field Instructor at least twice per year by telephone, and to visit the agency at least once during the academic year. Requests for additional visits or telephone conferences may be initiated by the Field Instructor, the student, or the consultant. The purposes of the field visits are to assess the progress of the student, to aid Field Instructors as needed, and to identify and address educational problems as early as possible. The Faculty Consultant is responsible for maintaining contact sheets on each student in his or her group, and for submitting these contact sheets to the Office of Field Education at the end of each academic year or semester, as appropriate. These forms are used to evaluate student experiences at the agencies and for assisting in determining a final grade for students. Although grades are recommended by Field Instructors, the final responsibility for grades rest with Faculty Consultants.

Faculty Consultants are also responsible for insuring that Field Instructors submit all written evaluations, including the student learning contract, the mid-term and final evaluations, and other evaluations or reports required by the School of Social Work. These forms are available in the Office of Field Education.

In situations where disputes or problems arise in the agency between students and Field Instructors, the Faculty Consultant has the responsibility of assessing the situation and for bringing the matter to the attention of the Coordinator of Field Education and to other relevant parties. The request for a change of placement, or withdrawal of the student, may be initiated by the student, the Field Instructor, or the School. The School reserves the right to make the final decision regarding the action to be taken, and is responsible for interpreting the decision for the student and Field Instructor.

Additionally, the Faculty Consultant is responsible for evaluating the continuing suitability of agencies as field sites and for submitting his or her evaluations on the agency contact sheet to the Office of Field Education. The Faculty Consultant's evaluation includes an appraisal of the quality of the education received in the placement and a rating of the performance of students in seminars. This appraisal also shares observations regarding field experiences and special competencies with the Coordinator of Field Education and the Field Advisory Committee.

## **Change of Placement**

In situations where issues arise between students and Field Instructors requiring a change of placement, either the student or the instructor may request a change. The request must be made to the Faculty Consultant who is responsible, in coordination with the Coordinator of Field Education, for validating the necessity of the request. If a change of placement is granted, documentation is provided as to the reason for the change of placement.

Changing a placement is a very serious matter. This action should not be taken lightly because it impacts the quality of the learning experience received by the student, and may impede the student from completing course requirements on time. It can also impact completion of the program. Sometimes issues arising at the agency cannot be resolved between the parties involved. When this situation occurs students are referred to the Student Review Committee which is responsible for resolving academic performance issues. The Student Review Committee's role is articulated below. All efforts should be made to address the learning issues raised by the student, the agency, or the Faculty Consultant prior to considering moving the student to a new site.

## **Student Review Committee Process**

The primary function of the Student Review Committee is to help make appropriate educational plans for the student experiencing difficulty in practicum and/or class. The Committee will also address, where appropriate, behavior in other settings that constitute unprofessional conduct as prescribed by the NASW professional code of ethics. The process will be a review of students who are experiencing problems that are based on scholastic performance which includes academic performance and professional conduct. Reviews will be conducted for students who have been referred to the Student Review Committee by the student's advisor.

## **1. Membership**

The Student Review Committee shall consist of five faculty members and up to two student members. The student body will select student members and the Dean will appoint faculty members and the Committee Chairperson. Committee members will disqualify themselves if they are involved in any way in the procedures.

Student members will not review any cases and only participate in policy discussions in line with the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act of 1974 as amended.

## **2. Meetings**

The committee shall meet every two months at a minimum. Additional meetings will be called upon the request of the Dean, faculty, or students. A quorum shall consist of (3) members of the Committee.

## **3. Confidentiality**

The nature of the problems to be handled by the Committee requires strict confidentiality of information emanating from the review.

## **4. Procedure**

A student would be referred to the Student Review Committee after the following steps have been taken by the Advisor:

- a. meet with the student on an individual basis,
- b. consult with the particular instructor(s) or other parties involved,
- c. obtain, where necessary, a written assessment from identified instructors and/or other parties.

The advisor will summarize these oral and written assessments and submit a written report to the Committee.

A decision on the best educational plan for the student will be made by the Committee. This plan shall be implemented by the Associate Dean for Academic Affairs with the assistance of the advisor.

## CHAPTER IV

### SELECTION, ROLES, AND EXPECTATIONS OF FIELD EDUCATION AGENCIES, FIELD INSTRUCTORS, AND STUDENTS

The Coordinator of Field Education is responsible for establishing, maintaining, implementing, and evaluating policies related to the Office of Field Education under the auspices of the Curriculum and Field Education Advisory Committees. The primary responsibilities of the Coordinator and/or her designee are as follows:

1. reviewing recommendations for new placements received from Faculty Consultants, Field Instructors, students, agencies or other interested parties;
2. approving, overseeing, and training social workers who wish to serve as Field Instructors in employee based field education settings or in non-employee based settings;
3. conducting ongoing evaluations of the quality and effectiveness of Field Instructors and developing, directing and monitoring field education related seminars;
4. chairing the Field Education Advisory Committee and serving on the Curriculum Committee to provide information regarding pertinent issues that impact field education;
5. advising faculty on policies related to field education;
6. interfacing with other agencies, schools and institutions related to curriculum issues and innovations in the field; and
7. insuring that policies related to field education and the School of Social Work are adhered to in making decisions related to field education.

#### Criteria for Selecting Field Education Settings

**The following criteria must be met for an agency to qualify as a field placement setting:**

1. the objectives of the agency must be in accord with the educational program and objectives of the School;
2. its philosophy and practice should support the values and ethics of the social work profession;
3. the organization should provide a program that is stable, has clarity of purpose and function, and has structures and procedures appropriate for carrying out its program;
4. the organization should provide adequate field education and there should be a staff of sufficient size to carry programs (students should not be utilized as substitutes for regularly needed staff);
5. the organization should provide meaningful experiences which enable students to learn and test social work skills, attitudes, and values;
6. the organization should be supportive of research activities (i.e. research informed practice and practice informed research), and be committed to assisting students in developing research skills;
7. the organization should allow time for Field Instructors to attend field seminars (training), plan curriculum for their students, and supervise their learning experiences;
8. the organization should have an ongoing commitment to improving the effectiveness of its staff and its services through means such as staff development, self-studies, professional personnel practices, etc.;
9. the organization should agree to treat all field education information, especially evaluations of students, confidentially, and to refer all student related inquiries to the School;
10. the organization should provide resources necessary for students to carry out assignments (i.e., telephone, desk, supplies, transportation costs, and clerical services);

11. the organization should qualify for membership in relevant standard-setting bodies; and, when relevant, meet the criteria of appropriate governmental agencies (for example, meeting state licensing requirements for social work practitioners);
12. the organization should be committed to the ethics and values of the social work profession, as indicated by clear statements of non-discrimination in the organization's statements, policies, and procedures. If the agency belongs to any professional organizations, or adheres to a specific code of ethics, these should be specified on the agency profile;
13. the agency's administrative policies regarding services to clients, to other agencies, and to the community should be consistent with the standards of practice appropriate to it.

Agencies are selected according to the quality of practice experiences provided, and according to the needs of the Master's program for preparing students for ethical practice. The School uses CSWE guidelines for selecting field sites.

Administrative planning and programming between the School and the agency related to the education of students should be sanctioned, accepted, and supported by all persons responsible for the operations of the agency. Adequate supervisory and consultative time for Field Instructors should be provided by the agency. Ongoing communication is essential in order to provide an integrated experience for students.

**The following administrative expectations are basic to every field education placement.**

1. The agency should provide adequate physical space and the equipment necessary for professional performance.
2. Student transportation costs incurred while conducting agency business should be paid by the agency.
3. The agency should adjust the regular duties and responsibilities of staff members who have been assigned to field education to allow time for conferences with students and the School.
4. The agency should meet the requirements for Field Instructors as set by the School (Please refer to the statement of criteria for selection of Field Education settings **p. 14**).
5. The administrative or governing body of the agency should approve field education, inform its staff of its decision, and authorize the staff to participate when appropriate.
6. First year students should participate in field education on two consecutive days a week (16 hours). Second year students should report to field education placements two and one-half consecutive days a week (20 hours). Field education is usually concurrent with classroom study. Changes related to times and dates are permitted if the following criteria are met:
  - The times and dates do not conflict with scheduled classes and field education seminars.
  - All parties (agency and students) agree to the proposed time and date changes.

If both parties cannot agree, the parties must adhere to the regular School schedule, i.e., Tuesday and Wednesday for first year students and Wednesday, Thursday, and Friday for second year students.

7. The Field Instructor promptly notifies the Faculty Consultant of excessive student absences or other concerns regarding students. If the Faculty Consultant is not available, reports should be made to the Coordinator of Field Education.
8. If students are frequently tardy or do not report for field education, the Faculty Consultant should be notified. If Field Instructors have other concerns or questions about the performances of students, they should notify the Faculty Consultant immediately. In addition, Field Instructors should be notified by the School if, for any reason, students will not be reporting for field education.

9. Approved holidays for students are listed in the School of Social Work calendar. Students are expected to make up days taken off or days lost because of agency holidays that are not observed by the School.
  
10. In the event of the termination of a placement, or of questionable student status in the School or the agency, the School should address the needs of the student on a carefully planned basis. Termination requests may be initiated by the student, the agency or the School. In any event, thorough planning and careful communication are essential. The educational status of the student should be clarified in instances where the student decides to apply for admission to the School at a later date. **Permission to leave placement should not be given without the approval of the Coordinator of Field Education. If a student leaves field education without permission from the Field Instructor, Faculty Consultant, Coordinator of Field Education, Dean or designee, a failing grade will be assigned.**
  
11. The agency may request that a student be removed. Before such action is taken, there should be a conference between the School and the Agency. The Faculty Consultant will make a thorough assessment of the situation. A written report of this assessment must be submitted to the Coordinator of Field Education. All placement decisions are made by the Coordinator of Field Education in consultation with the Faculty Consultant.
  
12. The final responsibility for field education grades rests with the Faculty Consultant who uses the evaluation and recommendations of the Field Instructor as a guide for the final decision. An “F” grade in field education during any semester requires a review and disposition by the Student Review Committee. Students earning a grade of “C” may also be referred to the Student Review Committee. Students may also be dismissed from field education because of professional misconduct, falsification of information, and other unethical or illegal activities. These behaviors are of a serious nature, and serve as a basis for referral for final disposition to the Student Review Committee or to a committee designated by the Dean or his designee.

## **Basic Expectations of the School**

### **The following are basic expectations of the School**

1. The School requires students to produce process recordings and keep logs of their daily activities. These are educational tools prepared by students to be reviewed by Faculty Consultants on their visits to the agency.
2. The School informs the agency of changes and additions in the School's calendar which may affect student attendance and performance in the agency.
3. The School provides regular seminars for Field Instructors, and supplies performance evaluation outlines and other resource materials necessary for field education. Materials are typically distributed at the orientation session for field education. This session is held at the beginning of the academic year. Materials may also be obtained from students or from the Office of Field Education, upon request.
4. The School will maintain contact with the agency through the Faculty Consultant, and will be prepared to discuss concerns an agency may have about student placements.
5. The School and agency site will discuss safety awareness and provide protocols for handling risky situations involving students in field placements.

## Assignment of Students to Field Placements

The Office of Field Education arranges field placements for all students. The Coordinator of Field Education and/or designee is responsible for appropriate student and agency matches within the guidelines determined by the School of Social Work.

Once first time entrants have been admitted officially to the School, they receive a letter from the Office of Field Education. They also receive a profile sheet which they complete and return by a specified date. Based upon student profile sheets and résumés, placement matches are made by the Coordinator of Field Education or her designee(s). Students are not permitted to select their own agency site, or make arrangements for placement at any agency site.

During the spring semester, agencies are surveyed to determine their availability for receiving field students. Requests for continuing agency affiliations are considered along with the Faculty Consultants' annual assessments of the performance of their assigned agencies.

The Office of Field Education maintains a list of affiliated agencies that have been approved by the School of Social Work as placement sites. **If a student is interested in an agency that has not been included on the list, he or she must meet with the Coordinator of Field Education about it. Under no circumstances should students negotiate placements with agencies without the approval of the Coordinator of Field Education. The Coordinator of Field Education approves all agencies used as sites.** While students identifying agency sites should be commended for their efforts, finding a site does not mean the site will be approved, or that the site will be deemed appropriate for student placements. Site selections are based solely on the educational objectives of the School, not personal preferences or availability or time constraints.

The selection process identifies agencies which have the means and professional commitment necessary for providing social work education as well as the characteristics essential for assuring optimal learning opportunities. The criteria for the selection of field agencies are:

1. compatibility of the philosophy of the agency with the School's philosophy;
2. opportunity for the development of student assignments consistent with the methods, organization and expectations of the program;
3. interest of the faculty in developing affiliations in the area of an agency's practice, with particular attention to emerging areas of service;
4. preference for public services and agencies serving culturally diverse populations i.e., racially, ethnically, or economically at-risk populations, and special populations (i.e., women, gays and lesbians, etc.); and
5. geographic distributions that normally permit each student to reach the placement within one hour of travel time from the place of residence.

## **The Role and Selection of Field Instructors**

The role of the Field Instructor is a highly significant one in the development of professionally competent graduates; therefore, careful consideration is given to the selection of Field Instructors. Field Instructors are selected on the basis of their interest in, and competence for providing field education.

Agencies recommend staff members to the School for consideration as Field Instructors. In addition, agency staff members may contact the School to indicate their interest in being Field Instructors. The final decision regarding the suitability of a staff member for the role of Field Instructor is made by the Office of Field Education.

The School takes responsibility for contributing to the development of its Field Instructors through seminars, institutes, individual consultations, and conferences. These activities enable the School to enhance the potential of its affiliates for providing staff development and other learning opportunities for its Field Instructors.

In addition, care is taken to select Field Instructors who are interested in keeping abreast of new trends in social work practice through continuing education and other professional development activities.

## **Criteria for Selecting Field Instructors**

1. All Field Instructors must have an MSW and two years of practice experience beyond the master's degree. In unusual circumstances where a graduate level Field Instructor is not available, the School may insure that the School's learning objectives are met by requesting a member of the School's faculty provide field instruction before the placement can be approved. These situations are rare, but may occur if the School deems a particular field experience to be an innovative or special opportunity for the School or the student. The faculty member assumes responsibility for providing the student with the necessary theoretical background, and for planning and evaluating field education assignments to assure that the educational experiences of student are consistent with the School's requirements.
2. Effective academic year 2002-2003, all new Field Instructors must meet the licensing requirements established by their state licensing boards. Howard University School of Social Work uses three jurisdictions and all Field Instructors must be aware of their state requirements.
3. Field Instructors must have been employed by the agency for a period of at least six months prior to becoming a Field Instructor.
4. It is desirable that potential Field Instructors hold supervisory positions or have some experience as supervisors. Staff members without such supervisory experience must meet the standards articulated above (**See #1**).
5. Field Instructors must agree to participate in the School's seminar for new Field Instructors and to attend other seminars that will be scheduled, from time to time, to improve the skills of Field Instructors, and to inform them of the School's policies and procedures.
6. Field Instructors are expected to accept their assignment as a Field Instructor for a minimum period of one academic year.

## Responsibilities of Field Instructors

Field Instructors should be familiar with the educational philosophy and the mission of the School and should:

1. make all necessary preparations for supervising students in the agency prior to the student's reporting date;
2. conduct an orientation session for field students which explains the policies and services of the agency, its relationship to the community, students' responsibility to the agency as well as to the client, the community resources most often used, office procedures, safety awareness, and other items helpful in starting students in field education;
3. keep students continuously informed of agency policies and changes in practices and procedures;
4. develop, in conjunction with students, an individual learning contract, which must be given to Consultants at the first seminar in each semester.
5. develop learning opportunities in the agency, and make specific assignments in consultation with students in accordance with written educational plans for students;
6. use the curriculum of the School of Social Work to develop for students a clear understanding about performance expectations;
7. assist students in a wide range of learning experiences in line with the expectations of the School, the individual needs of students, and the objectives and expectations of the setting;
8. provide clear feedback to students about field performance on an ongoing basis;
9. encourage maximum student activity and creativity within educationally sound limits;
10. meet with students for regularly planned weekly one hour conferences as a basis for continuing mutual educational assessments;
11. keep records of student attendance and absences, develop plans outlining how students will make up time, and submit these plans to Faculty Consultants; in the event that students do not comply, the matter should be reported to the Faculty Consultants, who upon further review, will attempt to rectify the problem or refer it to the Coordinator of Field Education and to the academic advisor.
12. provide midterms at the appropriate time and final evaluations at the end of the semester involving student input;
13. communicate on a continuing basis with Faculty Consultants or the Coordinator of Field Education regarding the performance of students;
14. recommend an appropriate **well-documented grade based on the student's mastery of 10 core competencies and practice behavior** to Faculty Consultants prior to the assigned due date for submitting grades to the Registrar's Office.

## Expectations of Students

### Students are expected to:

1. participate fully and responsibly in the learning experiences provided;
2. assume responsibility for making appointments with the Coordinator of Field Education to discuss field education placement plans, or participate in the process as delineated by the Coordinator of Field Education during field seminars.
3. assume responsibility for contacting, in a timely fashion, the designated agency for a pre-placement interview;
4. confirm placements after pre-placement interviews, with the Coordinator of Field Education;
5. work with Field Instructors in developing a written learning contract, which identifies other performance expectations;
6. prepare process recordings and journals for weekly field education conferences with the Field Instructor. All written assignments should be submitted on time. Process recordings are required for all students. The format used should be consistent with the requirements of their respective concentrations (Direct Practice and Community, Administration, & Policy Practice). Copies of the forms may be obtained from the Office of Field Education. A minimum of three process recordings are required per semester; however, this number may be increased, if necessary.
7. assume responsibility for following agency procedures, including time and holiday schedules;
8. respect client and agency confidentiality in order to insure the protection of the privacy of clients;
9. conduct themselves in a manner consistent with the values and ethics of the social work profession;
10. assume responsibility for informing the Field Instructor of absences in the event of emergencies, i.e. sickness, death or inclement weather; in all other situations, absences should be approved by the Field Instructor;
11. develop professional discipline and identification with the role of the social worker, and develop competence in performing this role;
12. assume responsibility for the integration of theoretical knowledge with practice, for evaluating the field experience, and for being active seekers in the development of professional skills, expertise, and competencies;
13. discuss matters with the Field Instructor concerning the agency's responsibility for the learning experiences of students, i.e. field education, agency policies, conferences, and evaluations;
14. assume responsibility for personal situations outside of field education (i.e. baby sitting, time management, etc.) that affect attendance and performance at the agency;
15. assume responsibility for arranging their work schedules to attend field education placements and seminars;
16. critically assess the quality of field education and share findings with Faculty Consultants and the Coordinator of Field Education;
17. meet agency expectations as outlined in the manual;
18. expect their Faculty Consultants to assist in developing a clear learning contract with the agency and Field Instructors containing learning objectives, agency policies, conferences, evaluations and field education strategies;
19. expect adequate and appropriate opportunities to test and develop their skills, within appropriate limits in their field placements;
20. make Faculty Consultants or the Coordinator of Field Education aware of actual or potential difficulties; and

21. participate in agency orientation and become familiar with the agency's policies and procedures, including information and procedures related to safety awareness.

## Students' Expectations of Field Education

Students, as participants in the educational process, have the right to expect optimal learning experiences in field. Four areas of expectations should be:

1. opportunities to participate in graduate level activities and to receive the educational support outlined in the manual;
2. adequate opportunities to test themselves and their skills, within limits, in the field placement;
3. opportunities to express concerns about their assignments, and to receive careful consideration of these concerns from **Faculty Consultants and Field Instructors** who are ultimately responsible for such matters; and
4. opportunities to engage in experiences consistent with the objectives required by the School, and to develop additional objectives with their Field Instructors concerning performance expectations, service responsibilities, agency routines, conferences, process recordings, attendance, etc.

## Field Placement Process

Request for becoming an affiliate of the School may be initiated by agencies, faculty members, alumni, field education personnel, or students. Once the request has been received, the potential affiliate is sent an introductory letter containing all forms required to be considered for approval. The letter includes an agency application form, an agency profile form, and an instructor's profile form. Upon receipt of the completed forms, the School carefully reviews the information provided on each document. Opportunities for agency and office visits are available to discuss the requirements of the school and the agencies, and to become familiar with the field education process. Final approval, if granted, is given by the school in consultation with the Coordinator of Field Education, or a designee, the Field Education Advisory Committee and other faculty, as needed.

Special consideration is given to agencies whose programs enable students to develop analytical, integrative and interactional skills in designing, administering, planning, evaluating, monitoring, maintaining and changing social systems. Special consideration is also given to governmental and non-traditional agencies whose services emphasize and support specialized aspects of the School's curriculum.

Students are matched to agencies through a formally structured process which includes the following: (1) an interview or group process/orientation with the prospective student to clarify his or her interests and goals, (2) a review of the field education profile sheet which must be completed by the student, and (3) an assessment of relevant materials about the student and factors related to agency-student compatibility.

For new entrants, assignments are based primarily on information gathered from student records, from an interview, or via the group data gathering process, which takes place in a classroom setting. These types of information allow the field education staff to assess the learning needs of students based on their career interests, backgrounds, previous experiences (salaried or volunteer), and education. Once the assessments have been completed, students are matched with prospective agencies, and meetings between students and their Field Instructors are scheduled. If all parties agree with the arrangements, the placements are then confirmed. If a student interviews with agencies and fails to confirm a placement at any agency after three attempts, the Coordinator of Field Education or a designee will meet with the student to determine if the student's interviews and expectations are consistent with the scope and expectations of the School. An assessment will be made at this time to determine the student's readiness for field education by the Coordinator of Field Education, in consultation with the student's advisor, the Dean of Academic and Student Advancement. A student may be counseled out of the MSW program if he or she cannot meet the demands of the educational curriculum.

In the spring semester of the first year, students submit information about their goals for advanced field education. A group information gathering process with the Coordinator of Field Education and/or designee is then held to discuss goals, areas of concentration, fields of practice, learning needs, and preferences for field settings. During the session,

the Coordinator of Field Education and/or designee helps students to clarify goals and to structure their second year field education experiences. Prior to the group process interview, the Coordinator discusses the interests and needs of students with Faculty Consultants and reviews their evaluations. Once the agencies have been identified for pre-placement interviews, students follow the formal matching procedures described above.

### **Pre-Placement Interview**

Through a meeting with the Coordinator of Field Education and/or designee, or group process, each student is prepared for an interview with a Field Instructor. Students are given the following information: (1) interview protocol letter indicating proper demeanor for interviews, and (2) information that will be needed to contact agency based coordinators or Field Instructor to arrange the interview. Students are encouraged to prepare for the interview and to take an active role in this process. All placements are tentative, pending confirmation following the pre-placement interview.

Students and agencies are asked to confirm placements after initial interviews. Field Instructors should confirm the acceptance of student interns using the form mailed with the student's placement interview packet. The form may be returned to the Office of Field Education via mail or fax. It is the responsibility of both students and agencies to inform the Coordinator of Field Education of the outcome of interviews as soon as possible. Once this action has been taken, the Coordinator of Field Education begins processing necessary documents to confirm placements. When referrals do not result in confirmations, a determination is made as to why these placements did not result in confirmations (See Field Placement Process **pages 24-26**).

## **Additional Agency Requirements**

In addition to meeting the requirements of Howard University School of Social Work, some agencies may require the following before approving students for placement:

- Liability Insurance (Forms are available in the Office of Field Education as well as online at [www.naswinsurancetrust.org](http://www.naswinsurancetrust.org). This insurance requires NASW student membership). If student is required to obtain liability insurance a copy of their policy is required to be placed in their records indicating they have indeed complied with agency requirements and to inform the School of liability limits etc.
- Drug Testing
- Tuberculosis Test
- Police Checks/Clearance/FBI Clearance
- Applications and Writing Samples
- Credit Check
- Other requirements deemed necessary by the agency

These requirements, which were implemented to protect students and clients, vary from agency to agency. For additional information on these requirements, see the Coordinator for Field Education.

Additionally, inappropriate behavior, as outlined in the Student Handbook and HUSSW Student Handbook, will result in a review of the student's department to determine the student's suitability for continuing to participate in professional social work education. Examples of inappropriate behavior are drug use, sexual harassment of clients, illegal behavior, and verbal or physical assaults.

## CHAPTER V

### TIME AND ATTENDANCE AT FIELD EDUCATION SITES

The curriculum of the MSW program in the School of Social Work was designed to prepare students for advanced professional social work practice. Part of the professional preparation of students involves students paying special attention to punctuality, regular attendance, and professional dress and behavior at field instruction sites as well as in classes. When students are unable to fulfill these commitments, it is expected that they will be able to address these problems with their field education or consultant in a timely fashion.

Increasingly, students in the MSW program have found it necessary to work full-time or part-time while pursuing the degree. The degree requirements are rigorous and require a great deal of time in and out of the classroom. Working makes accomplishing the tasks required in field much more difficult. The faculty and administration of the School of Social Work are aware of the economic constraints faced by many students; however, the process of, and the standards for, sound graduate study **cannot** be compromised. During the first year, 16 hours per week of on-site field education are required, and 20 hours per week are required in the second year. Additionally, all field education students are required to attend mandatory field seminars. When students fail to attend these seminars, the number of hours required in field are not obtained and this places students in jeopardy of not completing field education requirements. In this situation, the assigned consultant may make a determination related to the appropriateness of a make up assignment for the student (See **pages 3 & 4**).

The requirement at the Howard University School of Social Work is that students accumulate 1,000 hours in two field education sites, 456 hours in the first field education year, and 544 hours in the second. These hours are consistent with mandatory accreditation standards.

Sometimes situations may occur that require students to change their hours or miss field days. The following policies were implemented to allow students to plan adequately for field education course work.

- Days in the field may be changed to accommodate the schedules of agencies or the students; however, all parties (agencies, students and Consultants) must agree to the new schedule.
- If an agreement cannot be reached, the parties involved should adhere to the established time schedule.
- During holidays observed by the School, students are not required to attend field education.
- If the agency has holidays which are **not** observed by the School, the student must make up hours before the end of the semester.
- In addition to field site attendance, students are **required to attend all** field education seminars.
- Howard University School of Social Work allows students to use as many as four days per academic year for exigencies, i.e. inclement weather, personal and/or family crises. For example, students may use this provision when they determine that the weather in their locale is too difficult to negotiate, or when personal or family emergencies cannot be addressed at another time. **This provision allows the student flexibility in planning for emergencies, but does not reduce the number of hours needed to complete field education.** Absences other than those mentioned above will not be excused so arrangements to make up time missed are required. Students must meet the requirements of the agency.

## **Weekend and Evening Placements**

The school encourages students to enroll in traditional placements because evening and weekend placements are in short supply. Several limitations should be considered in requesting weekend or evening placements:

1. staff involvement is usually limited;
2. opportunities to participate in staff meetings are limited, but required for students;
3. clients and supervisors may not be available during evening hours or on weekends;
4. opportunities for learning may be jeopardized due to the unavailability of a full complement of professional staff in the agency;
5. opportunities to interact with other social service agencies whose primary working hours are during the daytime hours are limited; and
6. special supervision may need to be developed.

Evening and weekend placements are allowed only when optimal conditions can be arranged. These are considered to be special placements; therefore, students who are accepted for these assignments need to make arrangements to ensure that objectives consistent with those of the MSW program can be achieved. In order to benefit fully from an MSW degree, students must be willing to amend their schedules to allow time for participating in the field education program.

Due to the limitations stated above, weekend placements are discouraged and cannot be guaranteed for all students applying for them. Finding an agency which may be open on weekends does not automatically lead to approval from the School of Social Work, nor does it mean the placement necessarily meets the educational standards required for Field Education.

## CHAPTER VI

### GRADING POLICY AND STUDENT EVALUATION

#### Introduction

The Howard University School Work Field Education grading policies are based on the Council on Social Work Education's (our accrediting body) standards which focus mastery of the Council on Social Work Education's ten core competencies and practice behaviors. Each of the ten core competencies contains specific, knowledge, values, skills, and the resulting practice behaviors that undergird the School's assessment methods. The 10 core competencies are:

#### Professional Identity

2.1.1 Identify as a professional social worker and conduct oneself accordingly.

#### Ethical Practice

2.1.2 Apply social work ethical principles to guide professional practice.

#### Critical Thinking

2.1.3 Apply critical thinking to inform and communicate professional judgments.

#### Diversity in Practice

2.1.4 Engage diversity and differences in practice.

#### Human Rights & Justice

2.1.5 Advance human rights and social and economic justice.

#### Research Based practice

2.1.6 Engage in research-informed practice and practice-informed research

#### Human Behavior

2.1.7 Apply knowledge of human behavior and the social environment.

#### Policy Practice

2.1.8 Engage in policy practice to advance social and economic well-being and to deliver effective social work services.

#### Practice Contexts

2.1.9 Respond to contexts that shape practice.

#### Engage, Assess, Intervene, Evaluate

2.1.10 Engage, assess, intervene, and evaluate with individuals, families, groups, organizations, and communities.

## Overall School Grading Policies

The table below provides a comparison between the Howard University School of Social Work overall grading policy and the grading rubric established through the competency based curriculum for Field Education. These grades have been cross tabulated.

Letter Grade	University Based Grade	Field Education Based Grade
A	Outstanding ( 90 – 100)	Advanced Competence (40 – 50)
B	Good (80 – 89)	Above Average Competence (30 – 39)
C	Fair (70 – 79)	Average Competence (20 – 29)
D*	Poor (60 – 69)	Below Average Competence
<b>*D grades are not given in field education</b>		
F	Failure (Less than 60)	Limited Competence (19 & below)
W	Official Withdrawal	Official Withdrawal
I	Incomplete (Grade following I/Calculated)	Incomplete (No grade calculated)

For the purposes of field education, the student’s standing is expressed in a letter grade based on the competence level of the student as illustrated above and further explained below:

A student’s standing is expressed in letter grades: (advanced competence 40-50); B (above average competence: 30-39); C (average competence: 20-29); D (below average competence. [Note that a “D” is not a grade given in Field Education]); F (limited competence: 19 and below); or W (withdrew, no grade value and not calculated); I (indicates that the student’s work was incomplete at the time of making grade reports and indicates extenuating circumstance which prevent completion of field education) A statement of the steps and activities needed to complete the requirements and a timeframe should accompany any “I” grade, and should be filed with the Office of Field Education and with student for inclusion in student records. *Any student performing 19 and below in field education will receive a grade of “F”*

### Academic Standards

All MSW students are expected to achieve a 3.00 cumulative grade point average (B) on a 4-point scale in order to graduate. Students may accumulate no more than eight credit hours of “C” grades. Grades of “C” must be compensated for in the final overall average.

Students who receive a grade of “C” or below in a course may repeat that course to improve the grade, and the lower grade with its credits will be discounted in calculating the students’ cumulative averages. In the event of two identical low grades, only one shall be discounted. Students earning a grade of “C” or lower typically are experiencing difficulties in field. Appropriate attention is needed by the Coordinator of Field Education, the Faculty Consultant, and the academic advisor.

### Field Education Grade Assignments

**Student performance for all field education evaluations are as follows:**

**“A” (Advanced competence):** Advanced competence is characterized by mastery of the practice behaviors as well as consistent and progressive skill development. The student manifests advanced competency in integrating theory with practice. Creativity is often demonstrated as well as flexibility and a capacity to **perform above expected levels**. The student shows considerable capacity for **independent thinking, using the Field Instructor’s help to question and test out a working knowledge of social work practice**. The student is enthusiastic and eager for learning and makes productive use of the time for growth. The student is able to manage all aspects of the placement with maximum efficiency. The student demonstrates exceptional ability to carry out field education objectives and assignments, to perform without problems in interpersonal relationships, and to perform with integrity. Written

assignments are also judged to be exceptional. This category applies to exceptional performance.

**“B” (Above Average Competence):** Above average competence is characterized by strong knowledge in social work theory and more or less even progressive movement over the grading period. While there may be periods of unevenness, with some degree of regression or immobilization, the student gives evidence of both motivation and capacity to perform satisfactorily in all areas. The student is able to begin to integrate theory and practice. The student demonstrates the ability to complete field education assignments with integrity, and to perform without problems in interpersonal relationships. A grade of “B” implies good graduate performance and should not be considered an indicator of failing to achieve satisfactorily.

**“C” (Average Competence):** The student shows average competence to contribute to the profession and related practice behaviors. The student may have some difficulty in comprehending and interpreting subject matter in some areas and to carry out field education objectives and assignments. The student may have difficulty in establishing adequate interpersonal relationships, and difficulty in following procedures. In general, the **major characteristics are the unevenness** of the student’s performance and the lack of progress in skill development. The student has periods of improved functioning infrequently in response to specific directions from the Field Instructor. Students receiving a “C” in field education may be referred to the Student Review Committee to determine if this level of performance can be improved.

**“D” (Below Average Competence):** The student shows an emerging understanding of the practice behavior and demonstration of skill development and is characterized by major unevenness in the student’s performance and lack of appropriate skill development (**Note: “D” is not a grade given in field education**).

**“F” (Limited Competence):** The student shows little or no evidence of understanding the practice behavior and/or demonstration of skill development. The student has serious difficulty in all aspects of performance. **A referral to the Student Review Committee is required.**

**Field education grades are based on the application and demonstration of knowledge through performance in practice, whereas some classroom grades may be based solely on knowledge comprehension.**

Discussions regarding grades begin, on the part of the student, with the consultant. The first step is for the student to present concrete evidence to the consultant justifying the need for changing his or her grade. If the problem cannot be resolved, a student may file a written appeal with the Coordinator of Field Education. The written appeal will be reviewed and a mediation process enacted on the part of all parties to resolve the grade dispute. If the student does not agree, the matter may be brought before the Student Review Committee.

#### **Use of the grade of Incomplete in Field Education**

**“I” (Incomplete):** Incomplete indicates incomplete work and may be assigned only when unusual circumstances justify a student’s inability to complete field work requirements by the end of the semester.

#### **Unusual circumstances include the following:**

1. **Unavoidable absences or interruptions** If too much time has been lost, the student, after consulting with the Field Instructor in conjunction with the Faculty Consultant, should consider the possibility of withdrawing.
2. **Agency problems beyond the control of the student** Where there is substantial evidence that the problem is agency related, such as the transfer or death of a supervisor, restructuring of the organization, loss of student slots, etc., additional time may be allowed to attempt to resolve the problem. In these instances, it is important to deal with problems immediately, or make other arrangements prior to the next semester.
3. **Insufficient time or experience in an area of assessment** Where there is honest doubt that the student has been free to apply himself or herself, and where further evidence is needed to make an educational assessment, additional time may be allowed through the use of an **incomplete**.
4. **Disabilities or other learning impediments** In instances where the student is below average in performance because of a disability, an “I” may be given until the resources needed by the student have been provided, and, he or she has had an opportunity to complete the required assessments. If resources have already been provided to help the student compensate for his disability and the student is still unable

to perform satisfactorily, an “I” may not be appropriate.

In situations where students have not met all requirements by the end of the semester, it is best to address the problems affecting his or her performance immediately and directly. Where it is clear that a few additional weeks will not produce enough change to improve the student’s performance, the grade of incomplete would not be appropriate.

In all instances where a grade of incomplete is received in field education, the consultant is required to record the rationale for such a decision, and to indicate the steps to be taken to help the student remove the grade of incomplete. This statement must be filed in the student’s record, and a copy must be given to the Coordinator of Field Education.

Students with a grade of “I” must complete the work outlined in the record before continuing to the next level of field education.

### **Withdrawal**

Students may withdraw from the field education course during the official periods designated by the University Registrar’s office and the academic and field education calendars.

## CHAPTER VII

### EMPLOYMENT BASED EDUCATION PROGRAM (EBFE)

As the cost of graduate education has increased, the Howard University School of Social Work has become more sensitive to the needs of some of its students for having field experience opportunities in agencies where they are employed. Consequently, under certain conditions, students are permitted to obtain special permission to fulfill their internship requirements within their work settings.

Prospective students must provide data from their agency sites to the Office of Field Education indicating interest in EBFE placements. The Office will then contact the agency regarding the application process. The applicants complete the forms required and submit the forms to the School for approval. The agency, at this time, is advised of the guidelines and the timeframe for processing and approving the application. Failure to adhere to the guidelines may result in unnecessary delays. Students should discuss their needs openly with their agency contact prior to initiating the application process.

The application for Employee Based Field Education assumes the agency and the student will practice ethical principles such as acknowledging personal relationships, separating the field hours from work hours, and providing a MSW supervisor not serving as current employment supervisor. For possible ethical violations please refer to the NASW site on the Internet for a copy of the social work code of ethics.

Both student and agency representative are required to sign the Employee Based Field Education request document acknowledging their understanding of the requirement adhering to NASW Code of Ethics. A lack of signatures will result in request for Employee Based Field Education application being denied.

To obtain approval, the student, the agency, and the potential Field Instructor must demonstrate, via a written request, how the agency will meet the educational requirements of the School. The request should include the following:

#### **I. Employment Based Field Education Application Form**

In the Employment Based Field Education Application form, the potential Field Instructor explains how the new placement will differ from the employee's regular paid assignments. It also includes a detailed explanation of what the student's assignments will consist of i.e. learning objectives, strategies for achieving these objectives, opportunities for supervision, exposure to meetings and in-service training, and the logistics associated with the placement, such as office space, hours, etc.

## **II. Field Education Learning Contract**

### **The Learning Contract should include the following:**

1. agreement to implement predetermined objectives which have been established by the School;
2. the curriculum objectives to be achieved during the placement;
3. the learning experiences associated with each curriculum objective identified;
4. the outcome which can be expected as a result of the student's efforts;
5. the knowledge anticipated as a result of the student's educational experiences; and
6. a logical timeframe for completing the curriculum objectives identified. Please note that predetermined objectives are now required (see learning contract).

### **III. The Field Instructors' Profile Form:**

This form provides information related to the potential instructor's experiences and qualifications. A current résumé should also be attached.

### **IV. Agency Approval Process**

If an agency is not affiliated with the school, in addition to the EBFE application, an agency application form must also be submitted. Once the placement has been approved, the placement shall be subject to the rules, regulations, and procedures governing traditional placements.