

**Simmons** UNIVERSITY

School of Social Work

SocialWork@Simmons  
Field Education Manual  
Three Term Placement  
2021–2022



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## FORWARD

This manual has been prepared for students, field instructors, agency training directors, and faculty as a guide to field curriculum, policies and procedures. It is intended to give comprehensive information about the various roles and expectations of all parties in the School and agency partnership.

We encourage you to examine the contents of the manual. The Director of Field Education or your faculty field liaison will answer any questions you may have. We value the suggestions of our students and affiliated clinical instructors, and welcome any input you may have.

The administration and faculty appreciate the ongoing commitment and investment of our affiliated training centers. We are grateful to all who participate in the field practicum component of the curriculum, enabling and enhancing the integration of theory, social work practice, and professional development.



A handwritten signature in black ink, which appears to read 'Elana Premack Sandler'.

Elana Premack Sandler  
Director of Field Education, Online MSW  
Simmons University School of Social Work

**Updates to the Field Manual regarding policy and procedure changes are made biannually. Interim changes will be posted in Foundations on the LMS.**

## **MSW PROGRAM**

The Simmons University School of Social Work Master's Degree program prepares individuals for practice in the profession of social work with particular competence in clinical social work practice. The curriculum emphasizes the profession's dual focus on the individual and the environment. Students are expected to learn theory and practice skills to serve clients at all levels of social work practice (individuals, families, groups, organizations, and communities in the context of the political, economic, and social systems).

### **MISSION OF THE MSW PROGRAM**

The mission of the MSW program is to prepare masters level professional practitioners with skills for clinical social work practice in a complex, multicultural world using knowledge based on evidence-informed and field-informed practice, in which clinical practice is defined, in part, as a disciplined process for collaboration, in service of social, emotional and behavioral change for individuals, groups, families, organizations and communities. This educational experience, consistent with the history and philosophy of the social work profession, is grounded in a values perspective that emphasizes client strengths, actively opposes all forms of oppression and supports social, economic and environmental justice. The curriculum is designed to help students develop competence, critical thinking and the ability to attend to clients' presenting concerns and build on their strengths, as well as cultural responsiveness and self-awareness.

### **MSW PROGRAM GOALS**

Students learn multiple social work roles and skills necessary to be effective within evolving fields of practice. Graduates will be able to work with a variety of populations and social issues, using a broad and flexible array of evidence-informed interventions at an advanced level. They will have the ability to work with individuals, families, groups and communities to facilitate development and change in the service of social, economic and environmental justice. Graduates will be prepared to practice with an appreciation for the dignity and worth of the person and the importance of human relationships; with a sense of integrity and a commitment to supporting human rights and actively opposing structures and practices that oppress and marginalize individuals, groups and communities. The MSW program goals are directly linked to our mission statement.

1. Provide high quality education for generalist practice and a concentration in clinical social work.
2. Create and sustain a learning environment that encourages critical thinking and problem-solving, promotes cultural responsiveness and self-awareness, and values the contributions of all stakeholders to the educational experience.
3. Enact a program culture that creates and sustains a learning environment in which we critically self-reflect on issues of human rights, race, gender identity, sexual orientation, age, disability, ethnicity, class, national origin, immigration status, religion, the intersection among these factors and the roles they play in education and the practice of social work.
4. Infuse all activities of the MSW program including the implicit and explicit curricula, with the values and ethics of the social work profession.

5. Prepare students for competent ethical practice in a complex, multicultural world and a rapidly changing global environment.
6. Promote the development of professional knowledge and skills and accountability through the use of evidence-informed practice and a commitment to lifelong learning.

## **DEFINITION OF CLINICAL SOCIAL WORK PRACTICE**

A disciplined process for collaboration in-service of social, emotional, and behavioral change for individuals, groups, families, organizations, and communities, clinical social work draws on knowledge of human development, relational and group process, cultural learning, and social policies and practices. It employs evidence-informed methods that facilitate change through dialogue and collective action. It is grounded in a history of commitment to social justice and guided by a professional code of ethics.

## **GUIDING PRINCIPLES FOR FIELD EDUCATION**

### **CODE OF ETHICS**

The School supports the National Association of Social Workers' Code of ethics and expects students, faculty, and field instructors to abide by its provisions. A copy of the code is on reserve in the Simmons Social Work Library and on the NASW website:

<https://www.socialworkers.org/About/Ethics/Code-of-Ethics/Code-of-Ethics-English>.

### ***Dual Relationships and Conflict of Interest***

As noted in the revised NASW Code of Ethics, field instructors and field liaisons should not work with any student with whom they have a dual relationship. Dual relationships occur when the student and field instructor have or initiate an additional relationship, for example, a close social or intimate relationship, therapist-client relationship, or business involvement. Likewise, social work students should not work with clients with whom they have a dual relationship.

***If in any aspect of field education, the potential of a dual relationship exists, the student or field instructor should notify the field liaison or the Director of Field Education. All involved parties will participate in efforts to resolve the issue or make other arrangements.***

## **STANDARDS FOR PROFESSIONAL PRACTICE EDUCATION\***

### ***Introduction***

These standards are presented in a social work framework that values diversity of perspective and experience, understands there is diversity between and within cultures, and respects difference. Achieving professionalism in social work requires a commitment to and demonstration of the values of the social work profession.

The Simmons School of Social Work (SSW) is committed to preparing its graduates to be highly competent and ethical social work practitioners. Faculty make a commitment to provide students with a

curriculum that supports their educational and professional development and that assists them in adherence to these standards. Additionally, the SSW is mandated by the Council on Social Work Education (CSWE) to promote and evaluate professional development for students in Social Work programs (BSW, MSW). Likewise, the SSW is responsible to the community at large for graduating knowledgeable, ethical, and skilled social work professionals whose practice reflects the competencies, skills, and values of the social work profession.

This document outlines eight professional performance standards:

1. Self-Awareness
2. Communication
3. Electronic Communication
4. Openness and Willingness to Learn
5. Physical and Cognitive Ability
6. Emotional Stability and Stress Management
7. Professional Values and Ethics
8. Respect for Diversity and Social Justice

Each professional standard is accompanied by descriptions of behavioral expectations. Students must satisfy the professional standards to enroll in, progress through, and graduate from the SSW.

Specifically, students are expected to act in a manner that is consistent with the values, ethics, and conduct required for professional social work practice in the classroom, in field placements, and in the broader school community. Becoming a professional is a gradual process; as a result, the SSW faculty, field instructors, and administrators will continually assess students in accordance with these standards, which constitute the criteria for professional performance.

In addition to the standards outlined in this document, SSW students are expected to abide by the *NASW Code of Ethics (NASW, 2017)*, the [Simmons University Student Code of Conduct](#), and the policies outlined in the Field Education Manual, the SSW Student Handbook and in the Simmons University Handbook. Procedures for addressing a violation of the Standards for Professional Practice or any of the ethics, codes, or policies identified above are outlined in the SSW Student Handbook and the [Simmons University Student Code of Conduct](#). The ultimate goal of the SSW Standards for Professional Practice is to help you have a successful experience at the SSW and to be prepared for post-graduate practice. This document does not include the complete NASW Code of Ethics or the CSWE Educational Policies, however it highlights particular ethics and competencies to serve as a framework for professional and ethical behaviors to abide by while a student at the SSW. As a SSW student, you will be informed of the Standards for Professional Practice at the time of application to the SSW and in the foundations course. The standards are on the SSW web site and also in the SSW Student Handbook. Additionally, students and field instructors are expected to read and sign in agreement of the Standards on the student's learning plan.

To participate in a degree program, you are expected to satisfy program requirements, including these Professional Standards, with or without accommodations. If you seek reasonable accommodations for disabilities, you must contact the Simmons Office of Accessibility Services. This office will determine your eligibility for accommodations and recommend accommodations and/or services.

## ***Professional Standards***

### **1. Self-Awareness**

Expectations to meet the standard:

- a. Accurately assess your own strengths and limitations and display a willingness to examine and change behaviors that interfere with your work in field placement, in the classroom, on campus, and in the larger community
- b. Actively examine your own biases
- c. Seek supervision and use constructive feedback to inform practice
- d. Take responsibility for your own actions and consider the impact of these actions on others
- e. Demonstrate a willingness to examine and assess the relationship between your own personal values/socialization and their alignment with expected professional ethics
- f. Reconcile conflicts between your personal values and those of the profession, as required by the *NASW Code of Ethics*

### **2. Communication**

Expectations to meet the standard:

- a. Express ideas, thoughts, and feelings clearly in the classroom and in field placement
- b. In written work, communicate clearly and at a level that reflects the academic standards of SSW programs
- c. Demonstrate a willingness and ability to actively listen to others with objectivity and openness
- d. Communicate responsibly and respectfully, with speech that is free of bias, discriminatory language, or stereotyping in all interactions with colleagues, faculty, field instructors, staff, and clients
- e. Advocate for yourself in an ethical, direct, respectful, and responsible manner using SSW agency-specific channels for conflict management

### **3. Electronic Communication and Use of Social Media**

Expectations to meet the standard:

- a. Demonstrate respect for the privacy of your clients; refrain from gathering information about clients from online sources without the client's consent (i.e., googling client history, accessing client social media); photographing clients; or publishing client information on social media
- b. Communicate about and with colleagues and peers with respect and accuracy, avoiding cyberbullying, harassment, or making derogatory or defamatory comments, or disclosing personal information without consent
- c. Follow relevant laws, field education agency policy, NASW Code of Ethics (1.07) pertaining to social media and in use of technology in all aspects of service delivery
- d. Maintain awareness of how personal communications using social media could affect professional relationships with clients, colleagues, and agencies

**4. Openness and Willingness to Learn; Flexibility and Adaptability**

Expectations to meet the standard:

- a. Demonstrate openness to learning new ideas and perspectives
- b. As required by the demands of professional practice, be flexible and adaptable in new situations and as circumstances change
- c. Assume the stance of a learner with humility; avoid solely relying on current or past professional experiences to inform your judgment or decision-making in the field and in the classroom
- d. Demonstrate a willingness to effectively communicate your learning needs and request clarification to understand requirement

**5. Physical and Cognitive Ability, Critical Thinking**

Expectations to meet the standard:

- a. Attend and participate in classes and field placement as scheduled, demonstrating punctuality, dependability, accountability, and the ability to prioritize responsibilities
- b. Navigate transportation needed to attend field and classroom requirements
- c. Use the technology required to engage in scholarship and effective practice including, but not limited to, use of computers, telephones, and agency electronic records and databases
- d. Demonstrate the ability to acquire knowledge and reflect on experiences to inform practice
- e. Demonstrate the capacity to think critically and to apply effective problem solving skills that are well reasoned, examine multiple perspectives and worldviews, integrate evidence and knowledge, and lead to well-supported decisions and conclusions

**6. Emotional and Mental Stability, and Stress Management**

Expectations to meet the standard:

- a. In accordance with the NASW Code of Ethics (4.05), demonstrate the ability to honor the best interests of people for whom you have professional responsibility by keeping personal life circumstances or problems from interfering with judgment or performance
- b. Recognize current life stressors that may interfere with scholastic or professional performance; seek and effectively use help for medical or emotional problems such as those problems stemming from psychosocial distress, substance misuse and mental health difficulties
- c. Demonstrate professional boundaries, including ethical use of self-disclosure
- d. Maintain respectful relationships with all colleagues, faculty, field instructors, staff and clients consistent with the NASW Code of Ethics (2.01)

**7. Professional Values and Ethics**

Expectations to meet the standard:

- a. Exhibit judgment and conduct that is consistent with the values and ethics of the profession as stated in the NASW Code of Ethics, as well as with established laws, policies and professional standards

- b. In accordance with the NASW Code of Ethics section on: Dishonesty, Fraud, and Deception (4.04), you should not participate in, condone, or be associated with dishonesty, fraud, or deception
- c. Demonstrate professional and academic integrity, including exhibiting truthfulness in fulfilling program requirements. Students should remain aware of, and abide by, the Simmons Honor Code
- d. Follow Federal and State laws and agency policies regarding confidentiality and mandatory reporting

## 8. **Respect for Diversity and Social Justice**

Expectations to meet the standard:

- a. Exhibit a willingness to relate and work nonjudgmentally across difference with others
- b. Demonstrate knowledge of, and sensitivity to: diversity, oppression, and privilege, including a willingness to examine personal beliefs, values and assumptions that perpetuate oppression

Meeting the academic degree requirements is not sufficient to successfully complete the program. If you meet the academic requirements, but fail to adhere to the NASW Code of Ethics and/or the Standards for Professional Practice, you are at risk for dismissal or other disciplinary action.

\*Acknowledgements to UNC Chapel Hill School of Social Work Technical Standards Document

Approved by SSW faculty 5/10/18

## **SIMMONS UNIVERSITY POLICY ON VALUING DIVERSITY**

Simmons University is first and foremost an academic community that prepares students to be well informed, open minded, and sensitive to values. We strive to foster an atmosphere within which students may develop the resources to become actively engaged members of society and to lead rich personal lives. We hope to achieve these goals through an active and continual exchange of ideas among students and faculty and the general University community. To ensure that these goals are attained, Simmons has committed itself to the following principles.

Simmons University supports the principle and spirit of equal employment opportunity for all persons, based on each individual's qualifications and fitness. It is the University's policy to administer its employment and personnel policies without regard to race, color, religion, national origin, gender, sexual orientation, legally recognized handicap, or veteran status.

In accordance with applicable law, admission to the University's undergraduate baccalaureate program is reserved for women. The University is committed to admitting students of any race, color, or national and ethnic origin to all programs and activities made generally available to students at the University, including scholarship and loan programs, athletic programs, and other University-administered social, educational, recreational programs, and student services.

Simmons University subscribes to the policies set forth in Section 504 of the Federal Rehabilitation Act of 1973, which mandates equal opportunity for qualified handicapped persons in educational programs and activities. Simmons University strives to ensure that all decisions concerning hiring and promotion of

faculty and staff, or the educational progress of its students, are based on considerations appropriate to an academic institution and not on factors such as race, color, gender, sexual orientation, religion, age, national origin, handicap, or veteran status. Furthermore, Simmons University is committed to creating an atmosphere within which the diversity of its members' individual roles meets with understanding, respect, and encouragement, and where discrimination and harassment by any member of the faculty, staff, or student body against any other will be condemned and redressed. The University does not tolerate sexual harassment of employees or students.

Complaints of discrimination or harassment should be addressed to the applicable dean for appropriate action (see University Policy on Nondiscrimination)

### **STATEMENT OF SOLIDARITY FOR RACIAL JUSTICE FROM THE COLLEGE OF SOCIAL SCIENCES, POLICY, AND PRACTICE**

We, the staff, faculty and administrators of the College of Social Sciences, Policy, and Practice (CSSPP), know that the recent instance of police brutality in Minnesota is not unique to that community. Racial injustices happen in our hometown of Boston and across the United States. We know that anti-Blackness is a particularly virulent force in our society and that we must actively seek to become anti-racist. We also know that Black people are not the only ones systemically victimized in our society. We ache for everyone whose difference is deemed threatening and therefore subject to violence. We understand problems in policing, from militarization to lack of real transparency and real accountability, affect everyone. We support social and political action to provoke systemic change that promotes justice, safeguards human rights, and ensures fair and equitable treatment and respect for human dignity for all people.

#### **We are committed to the following actions:**

- Initiating, supporting and making space for critical dialogue about the systemic forces of racism that shape us and construct our relationships with others and our communities.
- Investigating and analyzing how these dynamics affect the communities within which we live and work.
- Participating in social and political actions to interrupt oppressive practices and promote systemic changes.
- Strategizing around solutions to dismantle racist institutions and practices.
- Supporting those who are most affected by racism and injustices inherent in our systems.
- Advocating for policies that support alternatives to policing, including community- based approaches to safety and conflict resolution.
- Creating a learning environment that supports equity, promotes inclusion, and works to break down systems of oppression.
- Accessing and creating resources that advance equity.
- Avoiding actions that add to the undue labors of Black persons by asking them to navigate these violent waters on behalf of our non-Black community members.

We commit to holding ourselves accountable to effectuate change. We recognize that expressions of sympathies and condolences to the family, friends, and communities of George Floyd, Ahmaud Arbery, Breonna Taylor, Tony McDade, are not enough. Their recent murders, and the murders and victimization of countless other people of African descent due to white supremacy, of which racist police brutality is a part, serves as a stark reminder of the deadly effects and enduring need to undo systemic racism in this country. Fueled by our collective commitment to undo institutional racism, the root cause of society's most entrenched social justice and human rights issues, we stand against all injustice and oppression. We stand with the thousands of groups protesting and calling for action. We say the names aloud of all those murdered in the United States by police officers.

As James Baldwin stated: "Not everything that is faced can be changed, but nothing can be changed until it is faced."

### **FIELD ADVISORY BOARD**

The Field Department convenes a Field Advisory Board that meets twice each year with field partners from a diverse group of community partnership agencies for the purpose of seeking consultation from, and collaborating with our colleagues to: communicate current trends in social work education; elicit feedback about our department and our students; seek input from partners about ways in which the School can better support our agencies and our students; exchange ideas about ways in which our training relationships can be strengthened for the benefit of all parties; seek creative solutions to common dilemmas; and gather information about current clinical practices that the School needs to support in the curriculum.

### **FIELD EDUCATION OVERVIEW**

Field education is an integral part of the School of Social Work curriculum. Four terms of field education must be successfully completed in order to satisfy degree requirements. The first term of field education is completed in the Field Education Lab and the three subsequent terms are completed in an agency-based setting. Admission to the program does not guarantee acceptance to a field placement. For further information please see the section titled Field Placement Selection Process.

The Field Education Lab is a 14-week course including weekly asynchronous content and accompanying live sessions. Its content constitutes the first term of the generalist placement. This course is a learning lab where students will apply generalist knowledge and skills through simulated interactions with client-actors in scenarios similar to those they will encounter in agency-based settings. These interactions take place in the live sessions with actors who are trained in advance to respond to student interventions. Additionally, students prepare for working in subsequent community-based settings by learning about supervision, how to use process recordings and other reflective and evaluative tools, agency and social policy context of clinical practice, and planning for safety in practice settings.

In the three-term agency-based placement, students continue to integrate and apply the theories they learn in class with actual practice with individuals, families, groups and larger systems. The first term will be a continuation of the generalist field placement, and students will continue to develop the accompanying

competencies.

Field education provides practice learning in a wide range of training agencies representing both traditional and evolving fields of practice. The goal is to prepare professional social workers with the knowledge and skills to work with a range of clients and problem areas, to analyze and apply theory critically, and to utilize a variety of interventions according to client need. The field curriculum supports the mission and goals of the MSW program and the values of the social work profession, including social and economic justice and respect for diversity. It provides the opportunity to support and apply the School's definition of clinical social work which emphasizes training students to work with individuals, families, groups, organizations and communities, in order to help clients improve their psychological and social functioning, and gain access to social and economic resources.

- Field education at Simmons is designed as a concurrent course of study with classroom curriculum.
- The field education curriculum provides a foundation in generalist social work practice through the Field Education Lab and the first term in an agency-based placement. The second and third terms in the agency-based placement are specialized, with a concentration in clinical social work.
- The field education program carries a total of 17 credits.

Under social work supervision, students are to demonstrate skills in a range of roles including direct clinical practice; accessing and, at times, developing services; formulating assessments and treatment plans; collaborating with interprofessional teams and community providers; case management; and advocacy, to name a few.

Agencies are asked to teach students about the policies and organizational issues affecting service to clients, and to provide opportunities for students to learn about organizational dynamics and change. Students develop the ability to practice in a self-directed manner, and to use supervision to gain self-awareness. Finally, students are expected to critically evaluate their own practice learning and understanding of the change process.

The field education curriculum underscores social work values and ethics, including a commitment to social and economic justice, multicultural practice, promotion of diversity in organizations, the emancipation of oppressed people and social action. Students learn skills in identifying and addressing oppression and injustice affecting client systems.

## **CRITERIA FOR ADMISSIONS TO FIELD EDUCATION**

Students are admitted to the MSW program based on a minimum grade point average, personal statement, employment and/or volunteer history and recommendations. Only students who are matriculated in the MSW program are eligible for a field placement. Once granted admission to the MSW program, in order to secure a field placement, each student must follow procedures and meet guidelines outlined by the Field Department. The first requirement for beginning an agency-based placement is the successful completion of the Field Education Lab course.

Generalist and specialized field experiences are differentiated as follows:

## GENERALIST PRACTICE FIELD PLACEMENT

This first field experience (Field Education Lab and first term of agency-based placement) provides a foundation in generalist social work practice over the course of two consecutive terms. The generalist field education courses will prepare students with:

- An introduction to social work identity and the ethical standards and values that define the profession
- Exposure to the roles of social workers, such as clinicians, advocates, and case managers
- The ability to engage and assess individuals, families, groups, organizations, and communities
- Training, support, and feedback from experienced social work clinicians
- Skills in building therapeutic relationships with clients and integrating clinical practices into their work

## SPECIALIZED PRACTICE FIELD PLACEMENT

The specialized field experience (second and third terms of agency placement) will enable students to build on their generalist knowledge and hone assessment and intervention skills. This second clinical experience takes place over the course of two terms and provides students with:

- Increased clinical opportunities to practice engaging, assessing, intervening, and evaluating diverse client groups (individuals, families, and organizations)
- Regular practice applying theoretical concepts learned in the classroom to client interactions
- Increased exposure to evidence-informed practices
- Further practice applying their clinical skills while benefiting from the support and feedback of a skilled field instructor
- The knowledge and confidence to grow increasingly autonomous as professional social workers

## FIELD EDUCATION SCHEDULES

- **Field Education Lab:** Students complete a one term classroom course that prepares them for the agency based field placement. This course requires approximately 10 hours/week.
- **Generalist Placement:** Students are in field placement three days a week (24 hours) for one term
- **Specialized Placement:** Students are in field placement three days a week (24 hours) for two terms

**Students in each of the SW@S program options begin field education courses as follows:**

- Extended (8 terms): Term 4
- Full-time (6 terms): Term 2
- Accelerated (4 terms): Term 1
- Advanced Standing (4 terms) Term 2
  - Students are in field placement three days a week, 24 hours a week, for three terms

Upon completion of the Field Education Lab, students must be available to complete a 24-hour a week agency-based placement (for three terms) to successfully complete their field practicum. Students may

need to add hours to their weekly schedule to make up for missed time due to late start or absences. Students can complete no more than 32 hours per week in an agency placement. They are required to adjust their schedule to be in accordance with the field instructor's schedule in order to complete these field practicum hours. Additionally, students must be available for placement Monday through Friday, 8 am to 8 pm to align with agency activities. If a student wants to adjust their schedule after the start of the placement, they must complete a change in hours form and gain approval from their field instructor and field liaison. Students who are absent for 20% of the total required hours without approval may fail the course.

The MSW degree requirements cannot be met without the successful completion of four terms of field education. MSW program students are required to complete, in total, 1104 hours of field education in their agency-based internship. In the three-term agency-based placement, regular attendance is required, three days a week (24 hours per week). If students exceed the hours required for one placement term they may not be used towards completion of hours in a future term. There is some flexibility in planning the structure of field placements (starting and ending dates, hours per day) based on student and/or agency needs as long as the time requirement is met. Students are expected to adhere to the same workday hours as professional staff unless individual arrangements have been made and approved by the agency and SW@Simmons Field Education Department. The School does not consider occasional overtime work as deductible from overall field hours, nor can overtime be accrued or taken as vacation days. However, if an agency has evening appointments or regular early morning hours that the student attends, the schedule should be adjusted accordingly. When students work extra days, holidays, or school vacation days, it is expected that they be granted compensatory time. Arrangements for compensatory time should be made with the field instructor.

### ***Absences***

Students may use up to nine excused absences (72 hours) over the course of the three terms due to agency closings, holidays, illnesses or inclement weather without being required to make up this time. Any days beyond the permitted nine days must be made up. If an emergency arises necessitating absence from the field, the student is responsible for immediately notifying the field instructor and taking responsibility for postponing appointments or scheduled meetings. Students are to record their absences on the field log. In case of prolonged absence, the student and field instructor should notify the field liaison so that a plan can be made to meet the needs of the agency, the student's situation and the School's educational requirements.

Students are generally expected to attend their field placement for 46 weeks so there is an opportunity to integrate learning from their clinical practice course throughout the placement experience. In rare circumstances where students are required to be out of field for more than the allowed nine days, students must receive approval from the Field Education Department, and their placement agency, and relevant offices at Simmons University, which may include the Office of Accessibility Services or Student Affairs. All permitted absences beyond the 72 hours allotted to students must be made up.

### ***Conferences***

Students are permitted to attend training events and conferences if the faculty and agency agree that

attendance is directly related to or will enhance learning or client service. Such requests should be limited to 3 days per placement.

### ***Religious Holidays***

Students who are unable, because of their religious beliefs, to attend classes or to participate in an examination, class or work requirement on a particular day shall be excused from the class, study or work requirement and shall be provided with an opportunity to make up the examination, study or work they may have missed. It has been the policy of the Simmons School of Social Work to respect the right of all students, faculty and staff to celebrate those religious holidays that they deem important. This is in keeping with our commitment to the development of a diverse community. A student who plans to miss field placement as a consequence of religious observances must make prior arrangements for the absence from field placement with the agency and field instructor. Students may use excused absence days to cover days missed for religious observance as long as these days have not been used up. Students who have exceeded the allotted excused absence days, will be expected to make up the missed time as negotiated with their field instructor.

## **SAFETY POLICIES**

The SW@Simmons Field Education Department has adopted the following policy and procedures regarding the safety of SW@Simmons student interns in the field. This policy has been created to recognize that violence in the lives of clients can create potential dangers to professional social workers and students engaged in the study of the profession. We believe issues of safety are relevant in all communities and settings. We urge SW@Simmons students to become familiar with this policy regardless of the location of their internship placement.

### ***Policy***

The School of Social Work is responsible for providing all students and field liaisons with general written information about safety in field placement. SW@Simmons expects each agency to be responsible for orienting student interns to the safety policies and procedures of that agency and setting. Such orientation should include, but not be limited to:

- Discussion of safety issues in the community and within the agency building(s).
- Work with particular clients prone to violent behavior, and with clients who may be sharing living quarters with persons prone to violent behavior, to the extent that such information is known.
- Security of personal belongings of the SW@Simmons intern while at the agency.
- Procedures for the student(s) to follow in the event of a safety or security problem should be reviewed at the beginning of the placement with ample opportunity for questions and discussion as needed.

SW@Simmons students should not be required to engage or to remain in assignments or at placements in which they feel physically at risk. SW@Simmons urges all agencies to make the same accommodations to ensure students' safety as they make for their own agency staff and in some situations the agency may need to make even greater accommodations for a student. If a student's concerns about safety interfere in whole or in part with the learning process, the field liaison should be contacted by the field instructor to

facilitate prompt exploration of the concerns and to seek a mutually satisfying resolution.

### ***Procedures***

- A. If an incident occurs in which a student is personally threatened or hurt, it is the student's responsibility to notify the field instructor immediately. The field instructor, agency contact person, or agency director should then contact the Director of Field Education immediately to discuss what actions the agency and Simmons SSW should take to assure the student's physical and emotional well-being in the wake of the incident, and on an ongoing basis if needed.
- B. The Director of Field Education will document the incident, the steps taken to address it, and will meet with the student and faculty field liaison to assess the student's readiness to return to the field and any other issues relevant to the situation. The Director of Field Education may alert the Director or Associate Director of the SSW about incidents and concerns on an as-needed basis.

### ***Safety Guidelines for Students in the Field***

#### **Agency Protocol**

It is important for students to know the agency's safety and security protocol for office and home visits with clients at the start of the placement. If the agency does not have safety and security policies and/or procedures, the field instructor and student should review and discuss any issues related to safety and security in the setting.

SW@Simmons students are urged to bring their questions and concerns to the field instructor. Regular communication, particularly about safety concerns, is strongly encouraged.

The following are guidelines and suggestions that may be helpful to students, field instructors and field liaisons as they consider the particular safety issues in their settings. Specific steps taken by students or agency personnel will obviously be determined by the individual situation, the nature of the setting, etc.

#### **Security of Belongings**

All students in the field are expected to have a secure place to keep coats, handbags, cell phones, laptops and other belongings while at placement. It is preferable that the space be one that can be locked, and could be in a desk drawer or filing cabinet. Students should not leave handbags and other personal articles visible and unattended, even in an office with the door closed.

Valuables should not be brought to placement settings. Items of value should not be left in cars, and should not be placed out of view just prior to leaving a vehicle. Neither the agency nor Simmons can be responsible for lost, stolen or damaged personal items.

#### **Safety Issues Related to Working with Clients**

When working with clients, it is important to remember that the treatment process often makes people feel vulnerable and may challenge their usual coping mechanisms. With some people, this can contribute to problems with behavioral control, and can raise issues of safety for the client, the social worker, the student intern and others. We urge all SW@Simmons students to consult with their agency field

instructors to prepare adequately for handling of specific situations that are potentially difficult or threatening, such as medical emergencies, suicide or homicide risks, potential abuse of others and the presence of weapons.

### **Safety Guidelines for Office Meetings**

If a student will be meeting with a client with whom the student does not feel safe, it is important for the student to discuss the situation promptly and fully with the agency field instructor. Based on the outcome of this discussion, there may be a decision that a student will not see the client or will see the client under specific circumstances or controls. However, if it is decided that a student will see the client, several points should be considered. A client's mental status should be assessed. When considering the location of the meeting, it might be helpful to think about what is in the room, whether there is more than one exit and where each person might sit. It may also be helpful to think about whether to include someone else in the meeting. When discussing the time of the appointment, it can be helpful to think about whether or not many people are around at the time being considered for the meeting. It is also important to discuss the plan for backup and assistance in the event that the client becomes agitated. A student should never see a potentially dangerous client alone without someone else in the agency knowing about the client, the appointment time and the location of the appointment. Students should keep field instructors informed about their schedules at the agencies at all times.

### **Safety Guidelines for Travel by Car**

When interns are traveling by car to an agency or to home visits, it is advisable for the agency to know the students' destination and the approximate time they will return to the office. Students should remain alert, lock doors, and close windows. Students should carry a fully charged cell phone in the event of an emergency.

### **Safety Guidelines for Travel by Foot or Public Transportation**

When traveling by foot or public transportation, students are encouraged not to carry valuables, to the extent possible. Money, license, keys and other essentials might be carried in a pocket. If a handbag carried under the arm is grabbed, it is best to let go of it. It is helpful to dress in comfortable clothes that are loose fitting, and to wear sturdy, flat walking shoes. It is also helpful to be alert, and to walk with a purpose, as if one has a clear destination. One should be aware of people in the immediate area.

### **Safety Guidelines for Home Visits**

It is important for students to familiarize themselves with the client's file prior to a home visit. If there is a question about safety concerns, plan accordingly with field instructors. It might be decided that meeting at a neutral place or going with another worker is the appropriate plan. Someone at the agency should always know the student's itinerary. It is helpful to stay alert and to think about what to wear, which room to meet in and where to sit. Students may ask clients to place pets in a separate room if there is a perceived safety risk. If a student feels threatened at any point during the interview, it is advised to err on the side of caution and terminate the visit. If a student is unwelcome in a client's home, the student should respond accordingly and leave the area. If a student hears an argument from inside the house or apartment, the student may decide to reschedule the visit or call to assess the situation before entering. A

student should never see a potentially dangerous client alone. A cell phone is essential for students conducting home visits.

### **Health Safety**

Students should be alerted to the existence of biohazards. They should receive training and information about how to protect themselves from infectious diseases and other potential health hazards.

### **Post-Incident Protocol**

If an incident occurs in which a student is personally threatened or hurt, the field instructor, agency contact person, or agency director should contact the Director of Field Education immediately to discuss what actions the agency and School should take to ensure the student's physical and emotional well-being.

The Director of Field Education will document the incident and the steps taken to address it, and will meet with the student and field liaison. Together, they will assess the student's readiness to return to the field and any other issues relevant to the situation.

*Simmons SSW thanks Boston University School of Social Work for sharing their safety policy that was used in developing the SSW safety policy.*

### ***Policy Regarding Intern Use of Vehicles for Agency Business***

Field placement agencies require or request that student interns use vehicles in the performance of their internship activities, which may include transporting clients. This may involve student interns driving their own vehicles or agency vehicles; or student interns as passengers in an agency vehicle or vehicle owned by an agency staff member. The use of a vehicle for purposes of carrying out internship activities is acceptable in some internship situations, provided that adequate safeguards are in place to manage the potential risks. Documentation outlining each party's responsibilities should also be in place. This policy is intended to assist in identifying the safeguards that are minimally necessary; and to allocate responsibilities among the parties appropriately.

### ***Responsibilities of the School of Social Work Field Education Department***

Inform students that they should inquire prior to the placement about agency expectations regarding the use of agency and/or personal vehicles for placement purposes. They should address vehicle use and related issues of safety, insurance coverage and liability in the field education agreement.

### ***Responsibilities of Field Placement Agencies***

Have a vehicle safety policy that addresses the use of agency and student personal vehicles to conduct agency business (including transporting clients) with specific attention to:

- Driver eligibility (including driving record checks)
- Liability insurance coverage, including the type of insurance coverage students are expected to have on their own vehicles
- Evidence of agency insurance coverage for use of agency vehicles
- Safe driving tips
- Procedure for reporting to designated agency personnel any incident including, but not limited to,

- accidents, moving violations, disruptive or concerning client behavior while being transported
- Procedures for assessing, always in consultation with an agency supervisor or other qualified staff person, appropriateness of clients to be transported (including an assessment procedure to determine if an additional staff person should be in the vehicle)
- Steps to take in the event that a client evidences concerning behavior during transport
- Provision of the agency vehicle safety policy and evidence of liability insurance to the Field Education Department
- Student interns should receive a copy of the agency's vehicle safety policy, availability of appropriate safety training, and supervision with regard to safely transporting clients

### ***Responsibilities of Student***

- Have automobile insurance coverage for their personal vehicle as required by the agency and provide evidence of this to the agency
- Agree to a driving record check by agency or School if required by agency
- Report to designated agency personnel any incidents, including but not limited to accidents, moving violations, concerning client behavior, that occurred during transport

*Simmons SSW thanks Boston University School of Social Work for sharing their vehicular safety policy that was used in developing this policy.*

## **SOCIAL MEDIA GUIDELINES**

Social media communities and tools, such as Facebook, Twitter, LinkedIn, YouTube, Google +, Pinterest and various blog sites are just a few examples of exciting ways to connect with others and share information. However, the rapid growth of social media communication tools and their ease of accessibility can also have unintended and potentially damaging consequences to users. Social Work professionals, including students, are expected to adhere to social work values and ethics and engage in professional conduct as outlined in the NASW Code of Ethics when using social media communication tools, whether they are using a personal site or an agency site.

Common issues that social workers need to understand and manage when utilizing social media include, but are not limited to, privacy and confidentiality (Section 1.07), conflicts of interest and dual relationships (Section 1.06), and informed consent (Section 1.03) in our relationships with clients, colleagues and in our practice settings. Utilizing social media communication tools as a social work professional requires ongoing attention to these ethical challenges.

### ***Professional vs. Personal Use of Social Media***

As a social work professional, it is important to consider whether you are using social media channels for professional activities such as advancing social justice issues, advocating for vulnerable populations, and promoting your professional identity versus using these sites to maintain contact with friends and family. We must be cognizant that the legal, ethical and clinical responsibilities we have as professionals do not cease when we leave the agency nor are they confined to the physical setting of an office. Our ethical obligations extend to the virtual world of the Internet and include the use of social media communication

tools whether we use them professionally or personally.

According to the 2017 NASW, ASWB, CSWE, & CSWA Standards for Technology in Social Work Practice, “social workers should be careful in determining what information or opinions they post, where they post the information or opinions, what language they use, and who might access the information or opinions they post. Social workers should consider how members of their organizations and communities may react to information that social workers decide to share electronically. Social workers should apply the principles of honesty, respect, and social justice, whether their electronic communications are for personal or work-related purposes.” (Standard 2.19)

### ***Dual and Multiple Relationships***

The NASW Code of Ethics states, “social workers should not engage in dual or multiple relationships...in which there is a risk of exploitation or potential harm to the client...and social workers...are responsible for setting clear, appropriate, and culturally sensitive boundaries” (1.06c) The Code goes on to note that “dual or multiple relationships can occur simultaneously or consecutively” (1.06c). Our ethical obligations to clients, colleagues and other professionals are no different when using social media channels.

### ***Privacy Settings and Interpersonal Interaction via Social Media***

Managing friend requests and maintaining privacy settings is critical regardless of whether you use social media for personal and/or professional reasons. Allowing clients, former clients, or others, such as supervisors (and field instructors) in your professional circle to cross into your personal life may complicate and blur your professional boundaries. As a professional, for all social media accounts, you must fully consider the extent of your privacy settings, how you will manage friend requests, your level of self-disclosure and how you will monitor wall posts or other interactions. Be aware that if you do not employ any privacy settings on your social media accounts, your profiles are public.

All professionals must evaluate the scope of their social media connections. Since this is still an emerging professional topic, some professionals may be cautious and guarded in their use of social media while others may be more open. It is your responsibility as a professional social worker to abide by the Code of Ethics, including your virtual communications and use social work values and principles to guide your interactions.

### **Maintaining Confidentiality and Privacy**

There is a huge potential for unintentionally sharing protected information when using social media so always use good ethical judgment. Be cautious when you post information about your agency (field placement and classroom work, if you are a student) or agency staff. Do not post confidential or private information about clients or colleagues. Be aware of agency policies regarding the use of social media and scrupulously follow agency policies. Do not discuss a client, patient or situation on a social media site even if you are disguising the information.

### **Respect Time and Property**

Before using social media communication tools on behalf of your agency, be sure to seek approval of any

messages or posts. Be careful not to endorse or promote a product, cause or position without prior approval. If you have personal sites, maintain them on your own time using your own computer. (If you are a student, your time in the field and the resources provided to you in your field placement are to be used for field related matters.)

### **Be Accurate and Authentic**

Do not pretend to be someone else or hide your identity when using social media. Be clear if you are sharing personal views and use good judgment regarding sensitive issues. Verify information before you post it, correct mistakes in a timely manner and be aware of legal liability issues such as copyright infringement, defamation and posting proprietary information.

### **Think Before You Post**

When social workers post information on blogs, Web sites, and social networking sites, they should be aware that others may use, share, and adapt their messages. For instance, if a social worker posts a written article, photo, or video online, others may edit the posting and share it with others. Postings and other electronic messages may be misinterpreted, misrepresented, or taken out of context. Although it would be unreasonable to expect social workers to keep track of all uses of their postings, when feasible social workers should try to correct misuses of their postings when such misuses come to their attention. (Standards for Technology in Social Work Practice, Standard 2.24)

### **Do No Harm**

Social media channels provide an excellent means to build our community, however, as you navigate these channels, do no harm to yourself, your field site, your clients, the School of Social Work or to the social work profession in the process.

**Failure of students to adhere to these standards, or failure to maintain a client's confidentiality in any form, including the use of social media, will result in a disciplinary process, which may include dismissal from the MSW program. Please refer to the Student Policy Handbook for more information on this topic.**

## **FIELD PLACEMENT SELECTION AND AGENCY RESPONSIBILITIES: POLICIES, PROCEDURES AND CRITERIA**

In our commitment to provide the best possible learning experiences for students, the School is committed to affiliations with a broad spectrum of training sites serving a diverse population of clients and representing various fields of practice, problem areas, geographical regions and communities. In developing and vetting new field sites, the School requires agencies to complete a qualification form that describes the potential learning opportunities. The goal is to ensure that the site will provide opportunities for students to engage in comprehensive learning that enables them to gain mastery in all nine CSWE competencies. Simmons faculty reviews each placement that is secured and qualified by the placement team.

To meet the objectives of field education, the School is affiliated with a broad spectrum of human service

agencies and programs. Settings include, but are not limited to:

- Child/family home-based programs
- Homeless shelters
- Advocacy programs for immigrants and refugees
- Schools
- Councils on aging
- Municipal social services
- Specialized programs for LGBTQ clients
- Acute treatment settings for substance use disorders
- General hospitals
- Community health centers
- Integrated care settings
- Criminal justice
- Outpatient mental health clinics and programs
- Residential treatment centers
- Hospices

Field faculty keep abreast of shifts in service needs and at-risk populations in order to keep the School's curriculum current with emerging trends and developments in social services and also to identify fields of practice that need professional social workers. Affiliated placement agencies must demonstrate a commitment to training social work students and have programs that reflect the values and ethics of the profession, as well as the School's mission, goals, and objectives. The agency and field instructors provide the opportunity for interns to develop a social work identity and to gain knowledge and skills in social work practice with particular emphasis on direct clinical practice at multiple levels of social work practice (individuals, families, groups, organizations, communities with particular emphasis on direct clinical practice in the specialist terms).

### **RESPONSIBILITIES OF THE AGENCY TO THE SCHOOL AND FIELD PLACEMENT SITE CRITERIA**

In order to qualify as a placement site, agencies must have standards and philosophy acceptable to the School, the Council on Social Work Education (CSWE) and the professional community. The setting must adhere to the National Association of Social Workers (NASW) Code of Ethics, and provide needed services to the community. The agency must be willing to follow school expectations delineated in this Field Education Manual.

It is expected that agency staff will offer an orientation to the setting, its services, its safety procedures and its policies for their students. The agency should provide a spectrum of learning experiences with attention to the educational value for the particular trainee along with agency service needs. Client assignments should facilitate student development of knowledge and practice skills.

A minimum of one hour per week is required for formal supervisory meetings with each student and her/his primary supervisor. In addition, time must be allotted for reading process recordings, reflection assignments, and other reports; planning informal meetings; and consulting with the field liaison and

other school representatives as needed. If the field instructor is new to student supervision the agency should be willing to allow time for her/him to complete the Virtual Guide to Field Education for Field Instructors. This training is located in the Learning Management System. In addition, the agency should assume responsibility for support and/or supervision of beginning field instructors and coverage of student cases at times when the student is in school or on vacation. Since the placement is assigned a faculty field liaison, this liaison plays a key role in the continuing assessment of the quality of the setting as a training site.

Expectations of agencies include:

- An ability to engage students in learning across the nine competencies, outlined in the Student Learning section in the Field Education section of this manual.
- Field instructors should receive support and consultation on their supervision in the agency.
- Field practicum training must be valued and supported in the agency
- In its commitment to overall quality of service to clients and training, it is expected that agencies will provide supervision, staff development, and other learning opportunities for staff and involve students in relevant offerings.
- The agency will recommend highly qualified staff to serve as field instructors (see “Criteria for Selection of Field Instructor,” below) and when possible a staff member will serve as overall liaison for the School, i.e., the training director.
- The agency will, to the best of its ability, provide an adequate amount of direct clinical service for learning.
- The agency will provide adequate office space and access to a telephone, and should reimburse for travel and other expenses incurred in carrying out the social work role.
- The agency will orient the student to agency practices and procedures, documentation requirements, and safety issues, and provide needed specialized training for work with the agency's client population.

Agency selection criteria is based on a site’s capacity to provide these learning experiences and to also facilitate the development of various skills, including:

- Integration and analysis of theory and practice
- Advocacy practice
- Engage in social policy practice
- Intervention with systems
- Application of evidence-based practices
- Development of critical thinking and self-reflection
- Biopsychosocial assessments
- Effective use of therapeutic relationships
- Interprofessional collaboration and teamwork
- Evaluation of practice outcomes

We expect agencies to provide an environment that celebrates diverse individuals and to hold a commitment to creating equitable, inclusive practices and a willingness to foster conversations about power and privilege, race, and other marginalized identities. We expect Field Instructors to be able to

work through difficult issues and conversations that support interns' growth and development as a social worker, as well as their own growth as a supervisor.

### ***Criteria for Selection of Field Instructors***

Field Instructors of Simmons students are fully qualified according to School standards and Council on Social Work Education standards. It is essential that field instructors be fully identified with the social work profession and committed to its values and ethics. All primary field instructors must have a Masters in Social Work degree from a CSWE-accredited program and two years of supervised post-masters experience. It is preferable that field instructors are licensed at the highest level for the state in which they practice. Interest and ability in supervising, in conceptualizing various theoretical perspectives, and stimulating students' critical thinking skills are all essential qualities for field instructors. The field instructor is expected to keep abreast of current content and trends in social work practice. The field instructor must be objective in evaluating the student's performance and be able to collaborate with the assigned faculty field liaison, particularly when difficulties arise.

Field instructors should be grounded in a broad social work perspective and sensitive to issues of diversity in regard to race, ethnicity, culture, and sexual orientation. The School requests supervisors who have knowledge and skill in several methods or modalities such as family treatment, group work, and advocacy. In addition, field instructors should be able to refer students to other supervisors, readings, or consultants regarding modalities with which they are not familiar. Field instructors should be familiar with and able to teach the various roles utilized by clinical social workers. They should also be aware of the range of fields of social work practice to enhance the student's broader training and to help them develop skills in accessing other services for their clients.

Field instructors (and other agency staff as appropriate) are expected to teach direct (micro) service to individual clients, couples, families and groups, and to teach skills to intervene on their behalf with larger systems and organizations. Depending on setting and client needs, students are expected to learn several of the following skills: advocacy, outreach, negotiating and coordinating services, administration, consultation, program planning, and policy development.

The agency and field instructor are expected to provide an adequate and varied client load. The instructor ensures that the student is incorporated into the agency system and helps them to learn its philosophy, mission, place in the community, practices and procedures. The school relies upon field instructors to keep the field liaison informed about their own or student absences or any other possible disruption in the learning process.

### **The School requires all field instructors and task managers to submit a resume and licensure information for verification of credentials.**

Expectations for field instructors can be summarized as follows:

- Students are required to receive one hour of individual supervision per week with their primary field instructor. Students are encouraged to participate in additional group or other supplemental supervision available to clinical trainees at the site.
- Field instructors should allot additional time to read and comment on process recordings and other reports, plan informal meetings and consult with the field liaison and other School representatives as needed.

- New field instructors who have not previously supervised an MSW intern are required to complete the Virtual Guide to Field Education for Field Instructors. This course is located on 2SW, the Simmons Learning Management System (<https://2sw.socialwork.simmons.edu/login>). This is optional for field instructors with previous supervisory experience. Those who complete the course and obtain a score of at least 80% on the accompanying quiz will receive four free CEUs.
- The primary field instructor, in collaboration with the student, will complete a learning plan detailing learning goals and responsibilities.
- Field instructors must collaborate with students to complete one written evaluation of student performance for each placement term.
- Field instructors should assist interns in securing adequate office space and equipment to accommodate students, including privacy for interviewing clients.

### **Student placed in agency with Field Instructor without required credentials or experience**

It is the policy of the MSW program to assume responsibility for reinforcing the social work perspective in the absence of the required supervision. Although it is an unusual occurrence for a student not to have an MSW supervisor with appropriate credentials and experience, the program is prepared to assume responsibility for reinforcing the social work perspective when it is necessary to do so. When the agency cannot provide the appropriate social work supervision, the MSW program takes the responsibility in reinforcement of the social work perspective by either hiring a social work supervisor or deploying a Field Department faculty person to provide supervision in addition to the agency-based supervision.

## **EVALUATION OF FIELD PLACEMENT EFFECTIVENESS POLICIES, PROCEDURES AND CRITERIA**

### **Policies**

- The evaluation of field setting effectiveness is on-going and begins with the first contact between the field liaison and the agency. The liaison reports concerns about the effectiveness to the Field Department as they occur. To the extent possible, the field liaison remains assigned to the same agency from year to year in order to be knowledgeable about the agency and to maintain close working relationships with agency staff, facilitating a natural process by which the agency partner can be monitored for its ability to deliver the learning experience expected by the School.
- A formal evaluation is completed by the liaison at the end of the placement and is submitted to the Field Department. The evaluation is the Placement Quality Rating Tool (PQRT).

### **Procedures**

- At the end of each placement period, the Field faculty for each program option (campus and online) complete PQRT forms. Placements with low ratings are identified and a member of the Field Department faculty seeks more information from the liaisons for settings with low ratings. Based on the information gathered, settings assessed to be ineffective are discontinued per the decision of the Field Department.

### **Criteria**

- The PQRT assesses the overall quality of the training site. This includes: field instruction, the quality of the learning opportunities (congruence with social work competencies), and the overall quality of the learning environment.

## **MONITORING STUDENTS: POLICIES, PROCEDURES AND CRITERIA**

### **Policies:**

- The field liaison has primary responsibility for monitoring the viability of the learning experience for each field placement, and help the student integrate and optimize learning experiences in both class and field and to facilitate the mastery of social work practice.
- The field liaison is responsible for collaborating with the field instructor and the agency training director in evaluating student progress and learning and, when necessary, serves as a mediator in problem situations.
- The field liaison monitors and evaluates the educational process; follows student progress; supports and mentors students on their practice and professional development; and provides support to agencies in the form of consultation, mediation, advocacy, problem solving, and negotiation.

### **Procedures:**

- Each field liaison reports to a member of the field faculty when concerns arise about a student's performance, or the viability of the learning environment.
- Early in the placement, the field liaison meets the student in order to get acquainted with the student's background, learning style, and learning needs, as well as to explain the liaison role and the ways in which the student can access advising resources.
- The liaison arranges individual and/or group meetings throughout the placement in response to student needs and interests. Students should initiate a meeting with their liaison around any questions or concerns.
- The liaison conducts a minimum of 1 field visit each term during which the student's learning plan and progress toward learning goals is reviewed. In addition, the Field Instructor reviews student process recordings and other assignments prior to the field visit. The liaison also reviews the semester evaluation.
- The liaison makes contact with the Field Instructor early in the Semester to discuss the development of the learning plan, the role of the liaison and general performance expectations.
- The liaison reviews the completed learning plan. Should any concerns identified by the student or Field Instructor arise, the liaison is notified and works to facilitate collaborative problem-solving efforts which could include requesting a level 2 review.
- Liaisons report more complicated issues or problems to a full-time Field Education faculty person who serves as the liaison's department contact. Liaisons also attend monthly meetings at which student concerns are also addressed.

**Criteria:** The field liaison, in collaboration with field faculty if there are concerns, is responsible for monitoring the following:

- Completion of field assignments
- Learning activities assigned that are congruent with social work competencies and multiple levels of practice
- Consistent attendance in the field placement
- Compliance with the Code of Ethics and Standards for Professional Practice
- Satisfactory completion of the evaluation each semester with scrutiny to assure that performance is adequate for the student to earn a passing grade and move to the next semester of field learning

### **RESPONSIBILITIES OF THE SCHOOL OF SOCIAL WORK TO THE AFFILIATED AGENCY**

Providing high quality education of students for social work practice is the responsibility of the School, the affiliated training site, the field instructor and the student. It is essential that each party collaborate fully in achieving the goal of preparing graduates for the profession. The following statements are intended to clarify these responsibilities and expectations and enhance our mutual efforts to achieve these goals:

- The School will affiliate with the training site following a mutual exploration of the School and agency missions, expectations and commitment to work together in the field preparation of students.
- The School will assign a field liaison to the student and agency. The field liaison will assist in planning field curriculum, provide consultation to the field instructor and assign a grade for field education.
- The field liaison will maintain good communication with the agency and field instructor and will visit (virtually) the placement at least once each term and more often if concerns arise.
- The Field Education faculty will be available to consult, plan, problem solve and discuss issues related to specific students or general training issues.
- The School will provide the student's resume prior to the interview for placement.
- The School, in consultation with the agency, will work together to problem solve students' difficulties. The School may consider whether a student should be transferred to another setting.
- The School will endeavor to keep the agency informed about its policies, aims, curriculum content and administrative changes.
- The School will provide the agency with a copy of its standard affiliation agreement signed by the Associate Provost. It is the responsibility of the agency to sign the affiliation agreement and return it to the School. If the agency provides their own affiliation agreement, it will be reviewed by the Director of Field Education, the General Counsel, and the Associate Provost before it is signed.

## **RESPONSIBILITIES OF THE STUDENT TO THE AFFILIATED AGENCY**

The student's dual role of trainee and staff member carries special privileges and responsibilities. Students, as professional representatives of the agency, are expected to identify with the goals and values of the agency and to learn and carry out its policies and procedures. It is also the responsibility of the student to learn the community resources as well as the agency's function in the total service delivery. This School strongly supports the following position statement by the Massachusetts Chapter, National Association of Social Workers:

*In accordance with the Patient's Bill of Rights (Chapter 214), NASW recommends that social work students identify themselves as trainees/students/interns to patients/clients either verbally or through the use of name tags except in emergency situations where it is clinically contraindicated as determined by student and instructor. Student status should be clearly designated in signing notes in the record.*

### ***Health Insurance***

All students are expected to have health insurance and are responsible for obtaining their own health insurance coverage. Many affiliated agencies in which Simmons students are assigned to complete field placements expect students to maintain health insurance coverage throughout their placement. At this time, Simmons University does not offer a student health insurance plan.

### ***Background Checks***

Background checks, including drug screens, are required by many placement agencies. The School encourages agencies to initiate the process of requesting a background check as soon as possible. Students are urged to include anything that might be discovered in a background check on their intake form so that an appropriate placement plan can be made. Students may incur additional costs including background checks, immunizations or other agency requirements.

### ***Field Instruction***

Students are expected to prepare for and participate in supervisory meetings and to bring to the attention of the field instructor any obstacles they see as interfering with the learning process. Students and instructors are encouraged to consult with the field liaison as needed.

### ***Record Keeping***

In addition to completing required reflection assignments each week, students are responsible for meeting general agency documentation requirements (e.g., intake assessments, chart notes, periodic summaries, termination and transfer summaries). For agencies, documentation is a crucial and mandatory part of the accountability process. Student documentation should be kept up-to-date so that appropriate service may be provided to clients when circumstances such as illness or vacations take students away from their placements temporarily.

### ***Confidentiality***

All social workers are required to adhere to HIPAA (Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act of 1996, Public Law 104-191) regulations regarding the privacy of client information outside the agency setting. Unless you have the client's written permission, confidentiality must be strictly maintained when disclosing, discussing or writing about clients in the classroom or in assignments or process recordings. Care should be taken to disguise identifying information on process recordings and assessments seen by field liaisons or used in class assignments in accordance with HIPAA regulations. Simmons recommends that a designated agency contact review agency confidentiality and informed consent policies with social work interns. If using a personal computer for placement-related work, students should discuss with a supervisor how to connect and configure the device to maintain HIPAA compliance.

### ***Other Student Responsibilities and Rights***

Students and field liaisons are expected to be in contact at regular intervals during the field placement terms to discuss both field and academic course work. This includes:

- A virtual or phone introductory meeting.
- Discussions, as needed, about concerns or problems in field placement or academic coursework as it pertains to field education.
- A meeting to prepare for the field visit
- A field visit with the student and field instructor
- An optional meeting to review post-graduation plans

## **PLACEMENT PROCESS: POLICIES, PROCEDURES AND CRITERIA**

The placement team works individually with students to secure a field education placement with a qualified field instructor. Students begin working with their assigned placement specialist 120 days before the start of the field placement term. Placement specialists engage students through an initial welcome call where they discuss their past work experiences and their educational goals. Students are encouraged to use their field education experience to explore varied social work roles and settings and to gain an understanding of how social work approaches can be applied across the spectrum of services and service environments. Throughout the field education experience and at the end of each student's internship, the placement setting and field instructor are reviewed by the assigned field liaison and concerns are assessed by The Field Department to determine future viability for student learning. Agencies and field instructors that are deemed unsuitable are identified and will not be used again.

### **PLACEMENT FORMS**

Student success will email each student a link to their placement form upon admission to the program. All students are required to complete this form within five days of receiving it. This form is for students to share their previous work experience, interests in the field and for the SW@Simmons Field Department to share important policies and procedures. If a student does not complete this form or agree with the field placement policies at least 120 days before the start of the student's placement term, the placement team will not be able to begin the student's placement search. This may result in a required leave of absence

from the program or delay graduation.

### **TRAVEL DISTANCE POLICY**

The placement team values field placement as a core component of the MSW program and makes every attempt to place students as close to their preferred placement address as possible, usually within 1 hour of that address. The placement team starts their search as close as possible to this address and expands the search radius based on site availability. Students may be placed up to 60 miles away if a closer approved placement is not available. It is expected that students will plan for and arrange their own transportation to and from their assigned field placement sites.

### **INTERVIEWS**

Before a placement can be made final, an interview must occur between the student and the agency. Once a student is notified of a potential placement interview, the student must contact this agency within 48 hours of notification to set up an interview. After the interview, students are expected to notify their placement specialist regarding the outcome of the interview.

Placement opportunities that are lost as a result of students delaying responses to invitations to interview at prospective placement sites will count as "failed" interviews.

Placement searches for students who are not offered an internship after one interview will be interrupted until the student meets with a field department administrator who will provide interview coaching. These students may also be asked to participate in additional interview coaching through the Career Center. The placement search can resume once these requirements are met.

Placement searches for students who are not offered placements after 3 consecutive interviews will cease. See: Failure to Secure a Field Placement section.

### **ON-TIME PLACEMENT**

On-time placement is not guaranteed. Simmons School of Social Work will make every effort possible to obtain a field placement prior to the term start date; however, placement efforts may continue beyond the start date. Any delay in a student's placement start date will result in the need for being in the field for additional hours each week, attending field during the term break and/or adding time at the end of the term. If a placement is not secured by academic week 3, the student will need to move to the next cohort and may be required to take a leave of absence. Students for whom placements have not been secured by academic week 3, and who have followed all placement policies, will be eligible to withdraw from their courses with no financial penalty.

### **PLACEMENT NOTIFICATION**

Once students are notified of their secured placement site, they must contact the site within 48 hours of notification to set up a schedule, confirm their placement start date and confirm that all documents and/or extra requirements (e.g., extra immunizations, background check, etc.) are complete.

## **FIELD PLACEMENT AGENCY ASSIGNMENT**

The placement search takes into account many factors to ensure that field education agencies are able to meet SW@Simmons program expectations and students' learning needs. At times, this results in limited availability of suitable agencies. For this reason, students are required to interview at assigned faculty approved placement agencies. If students have significant concerns about the placement experience after an interview, they should contact their field placement specialist within two days to discuss them. If a student declines a faculty approved placement this may delay their placement start and graduation and may require a leave of absence. The placement team will not be able to continue a placement search for students who decline an agency placement based on their inability to adhere to the placement policies, including the distance policy, relocation policy or scheduling policy. If a student declines a placement agency for these reasons, they will be required to submit a placement referral. See the Referral policy section.

## **SCHEDULING POLICY**

To satisfy degree requirements, students are required to complete 24 hours/week in their generalist/specialized agency-based field placement. Students must be available to complete their placement hours Monday through Friday between 8am and 8pm to align with agency activities and ensure substantive client interaction. Students should not expect to complete field placement hours on the weekend. Students are additionally required to adjust their schedule to be in accordance with the field instructor's schedule to ensure appropriate supervision is available.

## **RELOCATION POLICY**

Students who relocate during the program must complete a relocation form at least 8 weeks prior to the start of their placement term. This requirement is to ensure there is sufficient time to secure an appropriate field education experience near the student's new address. Students can obtain the relocation form from their placement specialist or student success specialist. Notifying the University in other ways is not sufficient and on-time placement cannot be guaranteed for students who do not submit this form. Students who need to relocate during their field placement and wish to continue in placement without interruption, must complete a relocation form 14 weeks in advance of their anticipated move and be available to interview, as needed, in the new location. The Field Department is unable to arrange field placements for less than one term, and students who move and change placements are required to complete 3 additional weeks in the field to account for the time needed to orient to a new placement setting, develop a new learning plan, and engage new clients. Relocation may require a leave of absence or a course sequence adjustment.

## **REFERRAL POLICY**

Students are encouraged to play an active role in the placement process. One way to do this is by submitting referrals via a personal referral link provided by their student success specialist or placement specialist. Referrals must be submitted through this form at least 6 weeks prior to the start of the placement term and must include the name of a specific field instructor or an agency with an identified

contact person who has expressed interest in hosting an MSW student. The placement team will reach out to the proposed site within two days of receipt of the referral form and students can expect a status update from the placement team within ten business days. All referrals are subject to approval by the SW@Simmons Field Education Department.

### **MASSACHUSETTS REFERRAL POLICY**

Students living in the following Massachusetts counties: Suffolk, Essex, Plymouth, Norfolk, Middlesex, Bristol and the following cities in Worcester County: Berlin, Blackstone, Boylston, Clinton, Fitchburg, Grafton, Harvard, Hopedale, Lancaster, Lunenburg, Mendon, Milford, Millville, Northborough, Northbridge, Shrewsbury, Southborough, Sterling, Upton, Uxbridge, West Boylston, Westborough are not permitted to submit referrals other than to their current place of employment. Students in these areas should not contact sites or field instructors directly unless instructed by their placement specialist.

Many sites in these locations that are referred by students are already in the Simmons network, meaning the Simmons placement team and field faculty have established relationships with these agencies and field instructors. Placements at these sites must be arranged through the collaboration of the on-campus and online placement teams. Because of these long-standing partnerships, many sites expect to hear from a Simmons placement representative rather than hearing from a student directly. Direct contacts from students can damage these partnerships and can negatively impact students' placement processes.

Students who have connections to agencies or field instructors, or those who have specific interests within their community, should contact their placement specialist directly to discuss how to proceed.

### **INTERNATIONAL POLICY**

Students cannot complete field placement outside of the continental United States and Hawaii. Students will not be placed internationally, including U.S. military bases, or in U.S. territories. Students living abroad with an upcoming placement term will need to relocate to the continental United States or Hawaii in order to be assigned a placement. Students are required to provide written notice of a new address at least 14 weeks prior to the first placement term so the placement team can work to secure a placement site. Placement is not guaranteed for students who do not adhere to the foregoing requirements and not following the requirements may necessitate a leave of absence from the program.

### **FIELD PRACTICUM IN THE STUDENT'S PLACE OF EMPLOYMENT**

The SW@Simmons Field Education Department permits students to complete their agency field placement in an employer-based placement. Students who wish to use their place of paid employment as a field placement must complete a worksite-based field placement application which can be obtained from the student's placement specialist. Each application will be carefully reviewed by the Field Department and decided upon within the framework of Council on Social Work Education (CSWE) and School standards and expectations.

## **FAILURE TO SECURE A FIELD PLACEMENT**

In the event of three unsuccessful field placement interviews, the field department reassesses the student's appropriateness for field placement. Planning for another field placement may not begin until a Level 2 Review is held or other steps are taken as determined by the field department. It is at the discretion of the Director of Field Education, in consultation with the Associate Director, to recommend dismissal from the program if an appropriate graduate level clinical internship does not appear to be obtainable.

If a student does not accept a qualified placement following an interview and refuses subsequent agencies that meet their criteria, a Level 2 Review will be held. Based on the committee's review, one of the following outcomes will be stipulated:

1. In consultation with the placement team, the student will be given one additional opportunity to secure a placement;
2. The student will postpone field placement until a future placement term (re-entry review required).

Failure to obtain a placement has implications for a student's progress toward completion of the MSW.

## **STUDENT LEARNING IN THE FIELD: FRAMEWORKS AND CURRICULUM**

The SSW is committed to continuous examination and improvement of student learning outcomes within the framework of the nine CSWE competencies. The SSW has developed a structure for systematically gathering evidence of student learning, and for regularly assessing the implicit curriculum (learning environment). Student learning is assessed by course based embedded measures and through the field evaluation. Implicit curriculum is assessed by an annual survey. Assessment findings are reported to and analyzed by faculty and administrators and are used to inform curricular revisions, to address changes in the learning environment, and to make changes to our evaluation methods. Built into our assessment plan is a continuous feedback loop that is foundational to our capacity to strengthen student learning. Our stakeholders are included in this feedback loop and include our students, our field agencies, our faculty and our staff. We also post our annual findings on the SSW website for the larger public.

## **CSWE COMPETENCIES**

The Council on Social Work Education (CSWE) has delineated nine core competencies for all social work students. Embedded in each competency are the dimensions of practice (knowledge, values, skills, cognitive and affective processes). Observable behaviors associated with each competency provide opportunities for students to demonstrate abilities within each competency. Evaluation of field performance will be based on students' ability to demonstrate the observable behaviors. At the completion of the MSW program, students are expected to achieve competence through their Field Education and coursework in the following areas.

The nine CSWE competencies at the generalist and specialist levels with the associated observable behaviors are listed below.

## **GENERALIST TERM COMPETENCIES AND OBSERVABLE BEHAVIORS**

### ***Competency 1: Demonstrate Ethical and Professional Behavior***

Social workers understand the value base of the profession and its ethical standards, as well as relevant laws and regulations that may impact practice at the micro, mezzo, and macro levels. Social workers understand frameworks of ethical decision-making and how to apply principles of critical thinking to those frameworks in practice, research, and policy arenas. Social workers recognize personal values and the distinction between personal and professional values. They also understand how their personal experiences and affective reactions influence their professional judgment and behavior. Social workers understand the profession's history, its mission, and the roles and responsibilities of the profession. Social Workers also understand the role of other professions when engaged in interprofessional teams. Social workers recognize the importance of lifelong learning and are committed to continually updating their skills to ensure they are relevant and effective. Social workers also understand emerging forms of technology and the ethical use of technology in social work practice. Social workers:

- Make ethical decisions by applying the standards of the NASW Code of Ethics, relevant laws and regulations, models for ethical decision-making, ethical conduct of research, and additional codes of ethics as appropriate to context
- Use reflection and self-regulation to manage personal values and maintain professionalism in practice situations
- Demonstrate professional demeanor in behavior; appearance; and oral, written, and electronic communication
- Use technology ethically and appropriately to facilitate practice outcomes
- Use supervision and consultation to guide professional judgment and behavior.

### ***Competency 2: Engage Diversity and Difference in Practice***

Social workers understand how diversity and difference characterize and shape the human experience and are critical to the formation of identity. The dimensions of diversity are understood as the intersectionality of multiple factors including but not limited to age, class, color, culture, disability and ability, ethnicity, gender, gender identity and expression, immigration status, marital status, political ideology, race, religion/spirituality, sex, sexual orientation, and tribal sovereign status. Social workers understand that, as a consequence of difference, a person's life experiences may include oppression, poverty, marginalization, and alienation as well as privilege, power, and acclaim. Social workers also understand the forms and mechanisms of oppression and discrimination and recognize the extent to which a culture's structures and values, including social, economic, political, and cultural exclusions, may oppress, marginalize, alienate, or create privilege and power. Social workers :

- Apply and communicate understanding of the importance of diversity and difference in shaping life experiences in practice at the micro, mezzo, and macro levels
- Present themselves as learners and engage clients and constituencies as experts of their own

experiences

- Apply self-awareness and self-regulation to manage the influence of personal biases and values in working with diverse clients and constituencies

### ***Competency 3: Advance Human Rights and Social, Economic, and Environmental Justice***

Social workers understand that every person regardless of position in society has fundamental human rights such as freedom, safety, privacy, an adequate standard of living, health care, and education. Social workers understand the global interconnections of oppression and human rights violations, and are knowledgeable about theories of human need and social justice and strategies to promote social and economic justice and human rights. Social workers understand strategies designed to eliminate oppressive structural barriers to ensure that social goods, rights, and responsibilities are distributed equitably and that civil, political, environmental, economic, social, and cultural human rights are protected. Social workers:

- Apply their understanding of social, economic, and environmental justice to advocate for human rights at the individual and system levels
- Engage in practices that advance social, economic, and environmental justice

### ***Competency 4: Engage in Practice-informed Research and Research-informed Practice***

Social workers understand quantitative and qualitative research methods and their respective roles in advancing a science of social work and in evaluating their practice. Social workers know the principles of logic, scientific inquiry, and culturally informed and ethical approaches to building knowledge. Social workers understand that evidence that informs practice derives from multi-disciplinary sources and multiple ways of knowing. They also understand the processes for translating research findings into effective practice. Social workers:

- Use practice experience and theory to inform scientific inquiry and research
- Apply critical thinking to engage in analysis of quantitative and qualitative research methods and research findings
- Use and translate research evidence to inform and improve practice, policy, and service delivery.

### ***Competency 5: Engage in Policy Practice***

Social workers understand that human rights and social justice, as well as social welfare and services, are mediated by policy and its implementation at the federal, state, and local levels. Social workers understand the history and current structures of social policies and services, the role of policy in service delivery, and the role of practice in policy development. Social workers understand their role in policy development and implementation within their practice settings at the micro, mezzo, and macro levels and they actively engage in policy practice to effect change within those settings. Social workers recognize and understand the historical, social, cultural, economic, organizational, environmental, and global influences that affect social policy. They are also knowledgeable about policy formulation, analysis, implementation, and evaluation. Social workers:

- Identify social policy at the local, state, and federal level that impacts well-being, service delivery, and access to social services
- Assess how social welfare and economic policies impact the delivery of and access to social

services

- Apply critical thinking to analyze, formulate, and advocate for policies that advance human rights and social, economic, and environmental justice

### ***Competency 6: Engage with Individuals, Families, Groups, Organizations, and Communities***

Social workers understand that engagement is an ongoing component of the dynamic and interactive process of social work practice with, and on behalf of, diverse individuals, families, groups, organizations, and communities. Social workers value the importance of human relationships. Social workers understand theories of human behavior and the social environment, and critically evaluate and apply this knowledge to facilitate engagement with clients and constituencies, including individuals, families, groups, organizations, and communities. Social workers understand strategies to engage diverse clients and constituencies to advance practice effectiveness. Social workers understand how their personal experiences and affective reactions may impact their ability to effectively engage with diverse clients and constituencies. Social workers value principles of relationship-building and inter-professional collaboration to facilitate engagement with clients, constituencies, and other professionals as appropriate. Social workers:

- Apply knowledge of human behavior and the social environment, person-in-environment, and other multidisciplinary theoretical frameworks to engage with clients and constituencies
- Use empathy, reflection, and interpersonal skills to effectively engage diverse clients and constituencies

### ***Competency 7: Assess Individuals, Families, Groups, Organizations, and Communities***

Social workers understand that assessment is an ongoing component of the dynamic and interactive process of social work practice with, and on behalf of, diverse individuals, families, groups, organizations, and communities. Social workers understand theories of human behavior and the social environment, and critically evaluate and apply this knowledge in the assessment of diverse clients and constituencies, including individuals, families, groups, organizations, and communities. Social workers understand methods of assessment with diverse clients and constituencies to advance practice effectiveness. Social workers recognize the implications of the larger practice context in the assessment process and value the importance of interprofessional collaboration in this process. Social workers understand how their personal experiences and affective reactions may affect their assessment and decision-making. Social workers:

- Collect and organize data, and apply critical thinking to interpret information from clients and constituencies
- Apply knowledge of human behavior and the social environment, person-in-environment, and other multidisciplinary theoretical frameworks in the analysis of assessment data from clients and constituencies
- Develop mutually agreed-on intervention goals and objectives based on the critical assessment of strengths, needs, and challenges within clients and constituencies
- Select appropriate intervention strategies based on the assessment, research knowledge, and values and preferences of clients and constituencies

### ***Competency 8: Intervene with Individuals, Families, Groups, Organizations, and Communities***

Social workers understand that intervention is an ongoing component of the dynamic and interactive process of social work practice with, and on behalf of, diverse individuals, families, groups, organizations, and communities. Social workers are knowledgeable about evidence-informed interventions to achieve the goals of clients and constituencies, including individuals, families, groups, organizations, and communities. Social workers understand theories of human behavior and the social environment, and critically evaluate and apply this knowledge to effectively intervene with clients and constituencies. Social workers understand methods of identifying, analyzing and implementing evidence-informed interventions to achieve client and constituency goals. Social workers value the importance of interprofessional teamwork and communication in interventions, recognizing that beneficial outcomes may require interdisciplinary, interprofessional, and inter-organizational collaboration. Social workers:

- Critically choose and implement interventions to achieve practice goals and enhance capacities of clients and constituencies
- Apply knowledge of human behavior and the social environment, person-in-environment, and other multidisciplinary theoretical frameworks in interventions with clients and constituencies
- Use inter-professional collaboration as appropriate to achieve beneficial practice outcomes
- Negotiate, mediate, and advocate with and on behalf of diverse clients and constituencies
- Facilitate effective transitions and endings that advance mutually agreed-on goals

### ***Competency 9: Evaluate Practice with Individuals, Families, Groups, Organizations, and Communities***

Social workers understand that evaluation is an ongoing component of the dynamic and interactive process of social work practice with, and on behalf of, diverse individuals, families, groups, organizations and communities. Social workers recognize the importance of evaluating processes and outcomes to advance practice, policy, and service delivery effectiveness. Social workers understand theories of human behavior and the social environment, and critically evaluate and apply this knowledge in evaluating outcomes. Social workers understand qualitative and quantitative methods for evaluating outcomes and practice effectiveness. Social workers:

- Select and use appropriate methods for evaluation of outcomes
- Apply knowledge of human behavior and the social environment, person-in-environment, and other multidisciplinary theoretical frameworks in the evaluation of outcomes
- Critically analyze, monitor, and evaluate intervention and program processes and outcomes
- Apply evaluation findings to improve practice effectiveness at the micro, mezzo, and macro levels

## **SPECIALIZED TERM COMPETENCIES AND OBSERVABLE BEHAVIORS**

### ***Competency 1: Demonstrate Ethical and Professional Behavior***

Clinical social workers consistently demonstrate the key values of the social work profession; they have knowledge of, and critically apply to practice, the laws, policies, and regulations that are pertinent to

clinical practice. Clinical social workers recognize ethical dilemmas and apply ethical decision-making frameworks to reach reasoned and principled decisions. They manage their emotional reactions, communication, behavior, and boundaries in all professional interactions. Clinical social workers understand the importance of interprofessional practice and are able to establish effective collaboration with others. They apply ethical and legal frameworks to evaluate the effective use of social media and emerging technology in clinical practice. Social workers:

- Seek and utilize feedback in supervision to identify and deepen areas of growth and guide professional development in clinical practice (including the use of technology)
- Anticipate, identify, and attend to ethical tensions and apply a framework rooted in the NASW Code of Ethics to guide decisions in clinical practice
- Understand and manage one's own emotional responses in the best interest of the client system
- Consistently demonstrate integrity and professional behavior in: appearance, communication (oral and written), and reliability in accordance with standards identified by the SSW, field agency, and professional codes
- Use values and frameworks of the profession to effectively engage in interprofessional partnerships and collaborations

### ***Competency 2: Engage Diversity and Difference in Practice***

Clinical social workers apply knowledge of the dimensions of diversity, difference, discrimination, marginalization, social and economic exclusion, and oppression to the engagement, assessment, intervention and evaluation phases of clinical practice. Clinical social workers understand the link between social factors and well-being and how pervasive inequities associated with gender, sexual orientation, disability, race, ethnicity, immigration status, poverty, exposure to violence, inadequate housing, and transportation impact overall well-being and access to effective services. Clinical social workers utilize intersectional analysis across multiple practice settings, paying particular attention to racism and its historical context in this country. They initiate and engage in professional interactions with cultural humility, and address oppression at the individual, community, and policy levels. Clinical social workers use and apply research knowledge of diverse populations to enhance client well-being and to work effectively with diverse populations. Social workers:

- Consistently identify the impact of inequities, diversity, difference, and oppression upon life Experiences and the provision of services
- Apply the skills associated with cultural humility, and the knowledge of social inequality to engagement, assessment, intervention, and evaluation at all levels of clinical practice
- Use process recordings and supervision to examine and enhance self-awareness of one's own attitudes and beliefs regarding stereotyping, bias and power-imbalances in practice client systems
- Commit to raising their social consciousness in the interest of challenging the structures of racism and other forms of oppression

### ***Competency 3: Advance Human Rights and Social, Economic and Environmental Justice***

Using knowledge and frameworks of the dynamics of institutional racism, oppression, and discrimination, and their intersections, clinical social workers develop and design strategies to promote human rights, and

social, economic, and environmental justice. Clinical social workers understand the critical use of theories and evidence in designing and developing social action strategies. Utilizing the National Association of Social Workers Code of Ethics and the United Nations Universal Declaration of Human Rights, students analyze how these dynamics manifest on the local, state, national, and global level and violate basic human rights of fairness, equity, equality, and social justice. Clinical social workers take action to advance human rights and social, economic, and environmental justice individually, collaboratively, and in coalitions. They develop their capacities to move into political arenas in a way that develops their own self-empowerment as change agents and allies of client systems. Of significant importance is the development of capacities to help others to empower themselves. Their practice is bolstered by mastery of advocacy and social action strategies that can then be incorporated into practice behaviors and skills, and applied at the micro, mezzo, and/or macro level of practice to effect change. Social workers:

- Identify and analyze social justice issues impacting the provision of client services
- Participate in agency or community level policy practice or social action strategies to promote human rights and social, economic, and environmental justice policies and services
- Consistently identify and practice targeted advocacy strategies and serve to improve client outcomes at applicable levels

#### ***Competency 4: Engage in Practice-informed Research and Research-informed Practice***

Clinical social workers integrate research into practice and consider how to evaluate issues drawn from their current practice. They critically review the empirical evidence for clinical interventions. They acquire skills to perform evidence-informed interventions. Clinical social workers assess ethical implications of practicing and implementing evidence-informed practices. They critically assess, identify, and work to address gaps in evidence-informed practice, policy and service delivery to improve client outcomes, the service delivery process, and program outcomes. Social workers:

- Locate, identify, and select evidence-informed practices
- Demonstrate evidence-informed practice in one's own direct clinical practice and system of service delivery
- Critically consider practice and organizational context to identify priority for process, outcome evaluation and/or needs assessment in supervision and discussion with field agency staff
- Formulate an evaluation plan designed to improve client outcomes, and/or programmatic efforts, with attention to potential areas for social action

#### ***Competency 5: Engage in Policy Practice***

Clinical social workers develop specialized knowledge about social welfare and economic policies at the agency, organizational, community, local, state, national, or international levels that have impacts on the clients they serve, and on the larger society or global community in terms of availability of resources, service delivery, legal protections, and income supports. They understand the steps of policy practice necessary to improve the delivery of and access to social welfare services and benefits for individuals and families. They analyze the effects of policies on marginalized and oppressed groups within a social, economic, and environmental justice context. They understand and utilize research to inform and evaluate social policy. They articulate outcomes they would like to achieve that would be congruent with

developing and implementing new policies, blocking harmful policies, modifying existing policies, to do so, they must draw from specific strategies for policy change, such as advocating, educating, testifying, mobilizing, monitoring, collaborating, and becoming active in coalitions. These activities can have an impact on the client, agency, organization, community, larger society, and/or the global community. Social workers:

- Evaluate social welfare or economic policies that are relevant to clinical social work practice and assess the impact on individuals or families
- Analyze advocacy needs within a clinical setting and propose a plan for implementation.
- Articulate a deeper understanding of how social welfare policies can either improve or negatively impact client well-being
- Develop a plan to apply skills in policy practice with aim of achieving policy change

### ***Competency 6: Engage with Individuals, Families, Groups, Organizations and Communities***

Clinical social workers have the ability to demonstrate genuineness, empathy, and respect in order to form trustworthy and collaborative alliances with client systems, as the helping relationship evolves over time. Furthermore, clinical social workers use these skills to engage with client systems that have been disenfranchised and marginalized as a result of racism, sexism, heterosexism, ableism, classism, homophobia, poverty, and other forms of structural and institutional oppression. Clinical social workers develop an awareness of professional use of self and an ability to critically self-reflect in order to form more client-centered relationships. They demonstrate an appreciation for the unique roles, cultures, and interpersonal dynamics of individuals, families and groups and use this awareness to inform the creation of client-centered relationships. They use psychodynamic, behavioral, social constructionist, and trans-theoretical theories to inform the engagement process over the course of the helping relationship with diverse client systems. This approach is commensurate the core values of the profession. Social workers:

- Consistently demonstrate active listening, attending, and reflecting skills
- Consistently demonstrate the patience that is required to build trust
- Create a collaborative working alliance before moving into problem solving
- Identify and utilize one's own social identity to enhance the engagement process
- Seek supervision and mentorship to enhance effective use of self in practice
- Use the six core values (social justice, importance of human relationships, dignity and worth of the person, integrity, competence and service) of the social work profession to guide decision-making regarding approaches to engagement

### ***Competency 7: Assess Individuals, Families, Groups, Organizations and Communities***

Clinical social workers use genuineness, empathy, and respect throughout the assessment process. They demonstrate attention to matters of safety and the immediate well-being of client systems. They use an ecologically informed approach to consider the impact of disenfranchisement and marginalization on client systems and their current functioning. They demonstrate an awareness of the ways in which personal bias and social identities may influence the assessment process. They demonstrate a commitment to social work ethics and values when examining the nature of problems. Clinical social workers

demonstrate an enhanced ability to use psychodynamic, behavioral, social constructionist and reciprocal interactionist theories to inform the assessment process over the course of the helping relationship with diverse client systems. This approach is commensurate with the core values of the profession. Social workers:

- Demonstrate the effective use of a mental status exam in the appropriate context
- Demonstrate the use of evidence-based assessment tools to assess for safety and well-being
- Demonstrate confidence in the ability to explore all domains of client systems' life and functioning
- Demonstrate the capacity to develop an evidence-informed hypothesis of client functioning based on social work paradigms
- Consistently practice the skills of empathy, attending, and affective exploration to elicit a client-centered picture of the strengths and challenges with which the client system interacts
- Demonstrate an ability to identify the ways in which their own biases and social identities impact the assessment process
- Assess client systems from a client-centered perspective, which honors life experiences, personal beliefs, current functioning, strengths and challenges, and barriers related to oppression and marginalization
- Demonstrate knowledge of distinct practice approaches in formulations
- Write a clear and concise assessment that reflects multi-dimensional understanding of the client/client system

### ***Competency 8: Intervene with Individuals, Families, Groups, Organizations and Communities***

Clinical social workers use empathy, genuineness, and respect throughout the intervention process. They have the ability to attend to matters of safety and immediate well-being among client systems throughout the intervention process. They use an ecologically informed approach that considers the impact of disenfranchisement and marginalization on client systems and their current functioning when co-creating interventions with client systems. They demonstrate an awareness of the impact of personal bias and social identities and the ways they influence the intervention process. They demonstrate a commitment to social work ethics and values by considering the ever-changing nature of assessment of client risks and protective factors throughout the intervention process. They demonstrate an enhanced ability to use distinct, client-centered interventions from various practice approaches that are consistent with the values of the profession. They understand the theoretical perspectives, empirical foundations, and treatment strategies associated with intervention methods they employ and can describe the strengths and limitations of those methods. Social workers:

- Demonstrate the effective use of a mental status exam in the appropriate context throughout the intervention process
- Demonstrate the skills necessary to effectively manage and attend to crises
- Use evidence-informed practices for interventions that are consistent with client systems' needs, strengths, and challenges
- Use information established during the engagement phase, and learned in the assessment phase, to inform interventions
- Determine ongoing treatment needs, access resources, and facilitate referrals as needed

- Remain attentive to eco-systemic factors that influence the treatment planning process
- Consistently re-evaluate engagement, assessment, and treatment planning over the course of treatment
- Engage client systems in a process that honors their thoughts, values, and beliefs with regard to developing mutually agreed upon approaches to treatment
- Collaboratively create treatment plans with client systems that accurately reflect needs, challenges, strengths and ecosystem factors
- Demonstrate awareness of the ways in which use of self, biases, and one's own social identities create a lens through which client systems are interpreted
- Demonstrate an understanding of the ways in which oppression, structural and systemic challenges pose barriers to treatment planning
- Use supervision to explore challenges in the intervention and treatment planning process

***Competency 9: Evaluate Practice with Individuals, Families, Groups, Organization and Communities***

Clinical social workers understand that evaluation practice is an essential and ongoing component of all social work practice with, and on behalf of diverse individuals, groups, families, and organizations. Clinical social workers recognize the importance of critically evaluating evidence-informed clinical practice and programs while considering research evidence, practice wisdom and client values and preferences. Clinical social workers apply qualitative and quantitative methods of evaluation to understand clinical needs, clients' experience of service, outcomes and practice effectiveness. Clinical social workers critically analyze the effectiveness and limitations of outcome measures, including standardized assessments and client feedback. Social workers:

- Create client-driven service plans that include evidence-informed, measurable outcomes
- Use the evaluation process to enhance practice in the agency setting
- Use evaluation findings to modify client interventions or improve program level effectiveness

**ADDITIONAL COMPONENTS OF THE FIELD CURRICULUM**

At SW@Simmons the field education courses and clinical practice classes are designed to be completed concurrently so that students have the opportunity to draw from their direct practice experience in the practice course and integrate practice course material in direct practice. Students complete one term of field education in the Field Education Lab followed by a three-term agency-based placement. In addition to the nine competencies, the following tools in Field Education assist students in successfully completing their field learning, tailor their learning goals to the agency mission (while linking them directly to the core competencies), and help them to integrate theoretical perspectives across the curriculum to direct practice.

***Field Syllabus***

The field curriculum is best outlined in the syllabus that corresponds to the appropriate field course. This section will provide an overview of the various learning experiences and requirements for field education. The clinical work and accompanying assignments are designed to help students integrate their classroom learning in their direct work with clients, organizations, and communities.

### ***The Field Education Lab***

In preparation for their agency-based placements students participate in a one-term Field Education Lab. In this course students will practice generalist social work skills. They will learn and practice fundamental engagement and clinical skills, key elements of clinical documentation, and how to engage in supervision. In addition they will develop an understanding of the social work role in a variety of settings, professional identity and expectations of field education. A central feature of the course includes participation in live simulations with actors who enact scripted clients who will be followed throughout the course. Using this format, students will practice engagement, assessment and planning, intervention, and evaluation skills, including exposure to risk assessment and working in interprofessional teams. Simulated client roles will represent social identities and life experiences of marginalized people, including experiences of intersectionality. The Field Education Lab includes the following elements:

- Asynchronous content with knowledge application questions and reflection prompts (up to 4 hours per week)
- Live sessions (two 2-hours sessions each week)
- Simulated practice with trained actors with live peer and instructor feedback
- Written assignments, including:
  - Field Education Lab Learning Plan and Self Evaluation
  - Reflection assignments, including process recording, based on simulated practice
  - Sample clinical documentation assignments

### ***The Agency-Based Placement***

#### **The Learning Plan and Evaluation**

At the beginning of the internship, the student and field instructor identify goals and objectives and formulate a mutually agreed upon Learning Plan based on the nine CSWE competencies. Students will complete a learning plan related to generalist level practice for their first term in placement. They will complete a second learning plan that covers specialized level practice at the beginning of term two. In collaboration with their Field Instructors, students will identify 2 or 3 specific activities for each competency, readily available at their particular site, that will allow them to gain mastery in each of the competency areas and help them to see the connection between micro practice and larger systems (families, communities, and organizations). Students should be encouraged to draw from their Field Education Lab evaluation as they formulate ongoing learning needs. They may choose to share this evaluation with their Field Instructor. The Learning Plan is a portion of a written document that becomes the basis of the students' evaluation.

The School expects that the student field-based learning activities will be as varied as the agency's service requirements permit. However, a key criterion for the selection of clients and other assignments will be their educational value. The process for developing an educational plan should include a mutual assessment of the student's present level of knowledge and skill. The student's past experience, interests, learning needs, and special talents should be taken into consideration. The plan will reflect the learning

opportunities the agency can offer, along with the School's expectations for field curriculum. The Learning Plan is available in The Placement Portal.

The student and field instructor should complete the Learning Plan by week six of placement. Once signatures are submitted in The Placement Portal, the assigned liaison will review it and contact the field instructor and/or student with changes as needed.

### **Process Recordings and Field Assignments**

In addition to agency documentation requirements, the School requires process recordings and other reflective learning assignments as a major learning and teaching tool in a student's field instruction. For each of the semesters that students are in their field placements, the Field liaison will request one process recording early in the semester (due dates in syllabus) to assure that students and field instructors have established a learning exchange that focuses on the process recording, and two more process recordings prior to the field visit to assess progress. The student will also be asked to reflect in writing on other areas of required learning as outlined in the appropriate syllabus (social identity and diversity; social policy, and social justice; research-informed practice; and larger systems learning and organizational context).

Process recordings enable the field instructor and liaison to more effectively perform their teaching roles and to evaluate the student's learning needs and progress. They help the student to rethink the interview in preparation for supervision, integrate theory and knowledge, develop interview skills, and increase the student's capacity for self-reflection. Attention should be paid to content, process, and technique, as well as the development of self-awareness. Field liaisons review some of the student's process recordings prior to each field visit. This facilitates an in-depth discussion of student progress and overall performance by the field instructor, student, and liaison.

Care should be taken to disguise identifying information on any assignment or documentation that is seen by liaisons or used in class assignments in accordance with HIPAA regulation:

*All social workers are required to adhere to HIPAA (Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act of 1996, Public Law 104-191) regulations regarding the privacy of client information outside of the agency setting. Unless you have the client's written permission, confidentiality must be strictly maintained when discussing or writing about clients in the classroom, in assignments and in process recordings.*

Students will be contacted by their field liaison periodically throughout the placement. This helps the student and liaison to track caseload and supervision requirements, and to identify potential problem areas. Students and field instructors should not wait for the liaison to initiate contact if they have a concern.

### **Field Instruction**

Learning through supervision is central to the development of practice knowledge and skills. The School expects one hour per week of individual supervision by a primary MSW field instructor. The field instructor must hold an MSW degree. It is preferable that the field instructor is licensed at the highest

level for that state. The MSW must have practiced full-time for at least two years after graduating.

The field instructor is expected to meet with the student in private, regularly scheduled, minimally interrupted meetings. Process recordings and/or other completed reflection assignments should be reviewed prior to the meeting. Supervision includes teaching content specific to the agency's field of practice, populations, and larger issues of social justice and oppression.

The field instructor will ensure the student receives an orientation to agency programs, policies, procedures and social work role expectations. Additionally, an orientation to safety policies and procedures will be provided.

### **Direct Practice Experience and Other Agency Assignments**

#### **In person contact with clients**

Respectful of the wide variation in service requirements in the spectrum of Simmons-affiliated placement agencies, the field liaison works with individual agencies to set expectations for the number and types of field assignments.

In general, the School expects that the students' education will address the broad needs of the agency's population with attention to diversity in race, ethnicity, age, gender, special needs and issues of social justice and oppression. The agency should provide an introduction to the agency system, its place in the larger system of services and the larger social context.

Two to three clients should be available for assignment to students within two weeks of students' arrival at the agency. Direct practice experiences and other assignments should increase over the three terms that the student is in their placement. **The School expects that student field work assignments will develop steadily up to at least 50% of direct contact with individuals, groups or families.** Students with assigned community projects, agency organizational projects, and social action efforts may spend fewer hours in direct client contact. In the specialized placement terms (terms two and three), it is expected that the student will have a core of direct practice that can include individuals, dyads (parent-child, couples), families, and larger systems. Simulations of social work practice within the field setting do not count toward field placement hours.

The agency should include the student in staff meetings and in-service training. Appropriate space and materials should be provided. Students should be given time during placement hours to do required agency written work and, when possible, some time for process recordings.

#### **Larger Systems Learning**

Social work practice with individuals, families and groups is embedded in an organizational and community context, thus students are expected to have practice opportunities with organizations and communities through a wide array of agency-based experiences. Within the field placement agency these practice opportunities should include: accessing agency services and resources, participating on an agency task force or committee, making referrals, identifying gaps in services and collaboration with other workers and other agency units. Students should also have the opportunity to work on behalf of clients across agencies, that is, with other community agencies, institutions and organizations. Depending on a

student's field placement this could include collaborative work with a school, court, public defender office, child welfare agency, nursing home, mental health clinic or health clinic.

As determined by each agency setting, students should be active participants on treatment teams, interprofessional teams, committees and task forces. In addition, students are expected to learn about their field placement agency's organizational structure, policies, documentation requirements and confidentiality practices. Students should also be provided opportunities to learn about the community served by the agency and/or the communities where clients reside.

Practice learning related to organizations and communities is reinforced in the learning plan, which delineates the student's learning activities regarding larger systems and interagency work and supervisory responsibility for orienting the student to the agency and community context. Practice learning related to organizations and communities is also amplified in the standard weekly process recording format and the special process recording format for larger systems interventions. In addition, all students complete a required assignment on the organizational context of agency practice, due to the field liaison.

### **Student Evaluation of Practice**

Students' evaluation of their own practice is a critical component of their learning in field education. Each student is expected, in collaboration with the client, to establish clear goals to be achieved during the course of their work together. Students and field instructors will be encouraged by the faculty of the Field Education Department to establish observable goals, and to devise measures by which progress can be evaluated. Students are encouraged to review progress periodically with their clients. At the end of the client contract, the student should evaluate the effectiveness of their interventions integrating learning from supervision and course materials. Specialized term students take a required course on *Evaluation of Social Work Practice*. Students are expected to apply concepts from that course to agency programs and outcome measurement policies. At the end of their agency-based placement students are also asked to provide the Field Department with an evaluation of their field learning experience.

## **EVALUATION OF STUDENT LEARNING: POLICIES, PROCEDURES AND CRITERIA**

*The School requires one student evaluation per field education term. Evaluations are written, following the same format. The evaluations will be completed electronically and will be available in The Placement Portal.*

Evaluations are a mutual effort of student and field instructor, with the instructor taking responsibility for the final version submitted to the School after the student has read it and points of difference have been addressed. The measure of student performance is based on: the review of student written work, including clinical documentation, and reflection assignments, direct observation in the practice environment (by the field instructor and other members of the team), in team meetings, case presentations, administrative duties, and participation in the larger scope of the organization's mission. The data gathered is rated at the level of observable behaviors. It is important that evaluations be balanced in presenting strengths, areas for growth, and challenges to enable the student, field instructor, and the field liaison to know which areas of learning need special attention. Ideally, the evaluation is an evolving process and nothing should

appear in it that has not already been discussed with the student in regular supervisory conferences. The School recommends that prior to the completion of the evaluation, at least one supervisory conference be set aside for discussion of the student's overall performance. Field instructors may request that students write self-appraisals for this purpose.

The evaluation framework is derived from the CSWE competencies and the associated observable behaviors and dimensions of practice ( knowledge, values, skills, cognitive and affective processes).

## **GRADES IN FIELD PLACEMENT**

Field Education will be graded each term with Pass, Marginal Pass, Fail, or Incomplete. Grades are based on performance in field and written assignments. Performance is assessed by the end of term evaluation and includes demonstrated learning in each competency area, consistent attendance, and adherence to the NASW Code of Ethics and the Simmons SSW Standards of Professional Practice.

### ***The Agency-Based Placement***

Agency-based field placements are graded using the following criteria.

**Pass:** Students who receive passing grades in field are those whose performance is satisfactory to excellent, and demonstrate:

- Professional and ethical behavior including consistent attendance, no tardiness, clear and thorough communication with supervisors about clinical work, timely completion of agency documentation, and timely communication when extensions are needed
- Progress toward learning goals
- Communication and interpersonal skills that enhance clinical work and/or relationships with other students, faculty, and staff
- Consistent ability to make use of supervision, follow supervisory directions, and seek supervisory guidance when necessary
- Adherence to the Standards of Professional Practice.
- Adherence to the NASW Code of Ethics Sufficient field education hours/attendance
- Assignments that consistently meet expectations as outlined in the course syllabus.
- Ability to demonstrate compassion, empathy, integrity, respect for others and cultural humility

**Marginal Pass or Fail\*:** Examples of behaviors resulting in a Marginal Pass or Fail include:

- Unprofessional/unethical behavior including excessive absences, tardiness, not informing appropriate agency personnel of absences, inadequate communication with supervisors about clinical work (including non-completion of process recordings as required), lateness with paperwork, inadequate documentation, etc.
- Insufficient progress toward learning goals
- Consistently problematic communication and interpersonal skills that negatively affect clinical work and/or relationships with other students, faculty, and staff
- Consistent inability to make use of supervision, including repeated difficulty in following supervisory directions, and failure to seek supervisory guidance when necessary
- Non-adherence to the NASW Code of Ethics

- Non-adherence to the Standards of Professional Practice.
- Insufficient field education hours/attendance
- A pattern of incomplete and/or late assignments without prior approval, or assignments of poor quality
- Inability to demonstrate compassion, empathy, integrity, respect for others or cultural humility

**Incomplete:** Field placements may be extended beyond the standard deadline with Field Director or Program Director approval.

**\*A Marginal Pass or Fail is assigned at the discretion of the Director of Field Education according to the specific nature of circumstances and the capacity of the student to reflect on, and correct the situation.**

***Consequences of Marginal Pass or Fail in Field Placement***

- Students who receive a **Marginal Pass** at the end of any term of field will have a Level 2 Review, engage in a corrective planning meeting, and will be placed on academic probation. This **may** result in the student being asked to complete additional time in the field at their own expense.
- A student who is asked to complete extended time in a field education course for learning and performance needs may be required to register for an additional term or more at the student’s expense. A passing grade will be required to move on in the program.
- Students who receive two marginal passes in field **will be dismissed** from the program.
- **Students will be given only one opportunity to extend a placement for performance reasons.**
- Students should anticipate that a grade of marginal pass in field would impact their graduation date.
- A grade of F in any term, or two MPs in field, will result in dismissal from the program.

The decision to grant the student an extended or repeated placement is predicated on: 1) the Field Department’s confidence in the student’s ability to function in the professional role and; 2) a performance evaluation that demonstrates the student’s ability to make progress towards the required competencies.

Continuation in classes after a student receives a marginal pass in the field should be carefully considered and discussed with the field liaison (**continuation in classes is not an implicit guarantee that a student will graduate from the MSW program**).

**WITHDRAWAL FROM THE FIELD PLACEMENT**

To withdraw from field after the add/drop period students must receive approval from the field liaison and the Director of Field Education. Withdrawal from field may necessitate withdrawal from the accompanying practice class (SW421 or SW424) as it is required that they be taken simultaneously. Students who withdraw during the term will be required to repeat the entire term. Students’ transcripts will show a “W” grade (for “withdrawn”) if a student withdraws from field after the fourth week, and up to the end of the eighth week. No withdrawals are permitted after week eight; the liaison will then record the grade earned until that point.

## **PROBLEM RESOLUTION IN THE FIELD PLACEMENT**

There may be occasions when students have concerns about aspects of their placement (e.g. amount of supervision, agency policies or number of clients). Alternately, agencies at times may identify concerns about a student's functioning or performance in the agency. When problems arise, it is always important for the student and/or field instructor to contact the field liaison as early as possible. The field liaison is available to consult with the student and field instructor, helping to identify the issues and steps towards resolution.

### **PROBLEMS IN THE FIELD PLACEMENT**

If there are problems in the agency that affect student learning (e.g. inadequate clinical opportunities, field instructor availability), the field liaison should be notified. The field liaison should conduct a Level 1 Review. The field liaison will discuss the difficulties with involved parties, make an assessment, and collaboratively help to develop a plan. Plans to improve the situation are always the first step and the liaison will remain involved to monitor progress towards change. If these efforts are unsuccessful, a Level 2 Review will be convened.

### **STUDENT PROBLEMS IN THE FIELD PLACEMENT**

The School requests that the field instructor notify the field liaison promptly regarding any concerns about the student's performance in the agency. The field liaison should conduct a Level 1 Review. The field liaison will discuss the difficulties with involved parties, make an assessment and collaboratively help to develop a plan. Plans to improve the situation are always the first step and the liaison will remain involved to monitor progress towards change. If these efforts are unsuccessful, or concerns are such that the agency is contemplating dismissal, a Level 2 Review will be convened immediately.

### **LEVEL 2 REVIEWS**

If there are concerns related to student performance in the field or related to a placement agency's ability to meet Simmons requirements that cannot be resolved through a Level 1 Review, a Level 2 Review meeting will be convened. The Level 2 Review is facilitated by a Field Department contact and attended by the student, field instructor, and field liaison. Please note that the Level 2 meeting will be held if the student fails to attend without notice. In such a case The Corrective Action Plan will be developed by those in attendance. The purpose of the meeting is to gain a clear understanding of the concerns in order to develop a corrective action plan. The corrective action plan is approved and made final by the Field Department contact who facilitates the meeting. The following are possible outcomes:

- The student may remain in their current placement and the field liaison will monitor the experience to ensure the corrective action plan is being followed.
- When an internship site is determined to be unable to meet Simmons program requirements, efforts to replace the student will be initiated immediately.
  - Please note: the ability to secure an alternate placement is impacted by many factors, most importantly the availability of an appropriate site for the student. Therefore, this

process may take some time and in some situations may necessitate a leave from field or the program.

- During the replacement process, students will be permitted to remain in their clinical practice course.
- Students should expect to complete a minimum of 3 additional weeks in the field to account for the time needed to orient to a new placement setting, develop a new learning plan and engage new clients. This is in addition to time owed to complete the total number of field hours (see Field Work Hours). There may be circumstances that necessitate a student add more time, either to address the student's learning needs or to meet agency needs.

### **TERMINATION OF THE FIELD PLACEMENT**

Students who are terminated from their placement due to a violation of the Standards for Professional Practice Education, field placement agency policy, Simmons policy, or the NASW Code of Ethics will participate in a Level 2 Review meeting with the following possible outcomes:

- **In the field education course:**
  - The student may be required to immediately withdraw from the field education course
  - The student may receive a marginal pass or failing grade
- **In the clinical practice course:**
  - If the student is required to withdraw from the field education course, they may be required to withdraw from the clinical practice course. This will be determined by a number of circumstances to be reviewed by academic and field leadership.

#### **Additional actions for students who are terminated from field placement may include:**

- The student may be required to complete an additional term of field and obtain a passing grade to continue (see Grades in Field Placement).
- The student may be asked to take a leave of absence from field education or from the MSW program (see Student Policy Handbook for LOA Policy).
- If the nature of the concern necessitates a Level 3 Review, the SSW Program Director or Associate Program Director will be consulted. Please consult the Student Policy Handbook for further information about the review process. The field department will follow recommendations from the Academic Standards Committee or the Honor Board, which may include dismissal from the program.
- If the student is required to retake a field education or practice course, this will be at the student's expense.

In all circumstances that involve a disruption in placement (replacement and termination), students should consult academic advising as such changes may necessitate a change in their plan of study.

Please see the *SW@Simmons Student Policy Handbook* for additional information.

### **STUDENT GUIDELINES FOR A CHANGE IN FIELD PLACEMENT**

***On rare occasions, a student requests a change of placement. Such requests must be made to the field***

***liaison who will then consult with the SW@Simmons Field Department. Students cannot leave an agency without first speaking with their field liaison and engaging in a problem resolution process, which would include a meeting with all relevant School and field placement agency representatives to develop a plan.***

The following replacement process must be followed:

- Contact your field liaison.
- The liaison will assess the situation and recommend a plan after conferring with their department contact with the goal of resolving the problem.
- The field liaison may arrange to meet with the student's field instructor and the student as a way to further assess the student's situation and attempt to problem solve to allow the student to stay in their current placement.
- If placement in a different setting is deemed necessary, it is expected that an appropriate termination process will be planned for all clients and that students will follow a professional process for bringing closure with the agency.
- The process of identifying and securing an alternative placement agency for the student may take several weeks. Students are expected to adhere to all placement policies during the replacement process. During this time, students are permitted to remain in their clinical practice classes.
- Students should expect to complete a minimum of 3 additional weeks in the field to account for the time needed to orient to a new placement setting, develop a new learning plan and engage new clients. This is in addition to time owed to complete the total number of field hours (see Field Work Hours). There may be circumstances that necessitate a student add more time, either to address the student's learning needs or to meet agency needs

***A student who prematurely ends a field placement, without approval of the Field Department, risks receiving a failing grade or being referred to the Academic Standards Committee (see SW@S Student Policy Handbook).***

***Students should be aware that any placement disruption or replacement could have the effect of delaying their graduation date. Alternate degree conferral dates include January, March, May, July, August, and October.***

## **LEAVE OF ABSENCE FROM FIELD PLACEMENT**

Students who are on leave from the program are required to complete an intent to return form at least 14 weeks before the start of the term they plan to return to the program. This form can be obtained from academic advising.

Please see the *SW@Simmons Student Policy Handbook* for additional information pertaining to leave of absence policies.

## **FIELD AND ACADEMIC ADVISING**

SocialWork@Simmons is committed to maintaining a Field Education Department consisting of both full and part-time faculty and staff, as well as field liaisons dedicated to assisting online students. The

Director of Field Education in collaboration with Assistant Directors, administers the Field Education Department, which comprises the field placement team and field liaisons.

### **ROLE OF THE FIELD LIAISON**

The purpose of field education advising is to help the student integrate and optimize learning experiences in both class and field and to facilitate the mastery of social work practice. The field liaison is responsible for collaborating with Academic Advising and the field instructor in evaluating student progress and learning, and when necessary, serves as a mediator in problem situations.

The field liaison monitors and evaluates the educational process, supports and mentors students on their practice and professional development, and provides support to agencies in the form of consultation, mediation, advocacy, problem solving and negotiation.

The field liaison's role includes:

- Communicating regularly with students
- Assuring adequate clinical activities and other learning experiences in the placement
- Collaborating with the field instructor in the development of an individualized learning plan
- Acting as a liaison between school and agency
- Consulting around field-related problems
- Determining the student's field grade

### **FIELD PLACEMENT TEAM**

The field placement team assigns each student a placement specialist who identifies and secures internship sites in students' home communities. The placement specialist's role includes:

- Verifying agency documents
- Ensuring agency documents and Affiliation Agreements are complete
- Submitting placements to faculty for review
- Sending placement details and instructions to student and field instructor

### **ACADEMIC ADVISORS**

The academic advisor provides guidance in regards to concerns or conflicts that might arise with course progression, plans of study and leave(s) of absence. In addition, the academic advisor might assist with clarification of learning styles and needs, along with guidance with materials found in any of the student handbooks.

The academic advisor serves as an advocate during the student's tenure in graduate school and helps connect the student with academic and other support. The academic advisor arranges individual and/or group meetings throughout the year in response to student needs and interests.

The academic advising relationship is a two-way street. Students are expected to initiate contact with their advisor when they need assistance and to respond to outreach from their advisor in a timely fashion.

- Students should let their academic advisor know immediately if problems arise. Sharing as much

as one can about her/his circumstances will enable the academic advisor to be more helpful.

- Students should respond promptly to emails and phone calls from the academic advisor.
- Students should prepare for and attend all scheduled advising meetings.

## **STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES/REQUESTS FOR ACCOMMODATIONS**

The Office of Accessibility Services (OAS) is a strategy-based student support office, which serves qualified Simmons University undergraduate and graduate students to ensure equal access to Simmons University facilities, educational and co-curricular programs, campus activities, and employment opportunities. Students who wish to receive academic accommodations for this course must first register due to a documented diagnosis or disability with the OAS.

Following registration, OAS provides eligible students with an Academic Accommodation Authorization document to share with the faculty members of their choosing to confirm their authorized accommodations. Students are not eligible to receive or use accommodations in any course until they have provided their Academic Accommodation Authorization document to the course's instructor. Accommodations are applied on a prospective basis; students are not eligible to apply accommodations on a retroactive basis.

When the Simmons on-the-ground campus is open, the OAS is physically located on the first floor of Lefavour Hall in the Center for Student Success and is open from 8:30 am to 4:30 pm Monday through Friday. OAS services are fully available for online students via remote access. For more information about the services and accommodations available through the Office of Accessibility Services, please review the OAS website at [simmons.edu/access](https://simmons.edu/access) or write to OAS at [access@simmons.edu](mailto:access@simmons.edu).

## **NOTICE OF NONDISCRIMINATION**

Chartered in 1899 and opened in 1902, Simmons is first and foremost an academic community whose goals include preparing students and other members of the Simmons community to be well informed, open-minded, and respectful of the values and diversity of others.

Simmons is, therefore, committed to the following principles:

- We support equal educational and employment opportunities for all persons, based on each individual's qualifications and fitness, and we seek to administer our university policies without regard to race, color, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity, marital or parental status, religion, age, national or ethnic origin, socio-economic status, ancestry, disability, veterans' status or genetic predisposition.
- We strive to administer our educational programs and activities, as well as the employment opportunities we provide, in accordance with all relevant state and federal requirements and implementing regulations. This includes, but is not limited to, Titles VI and VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972, the Age Discrimination Act of 1975, Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, and Titles I and III of the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 and the ADA Amendments Act of 2008, the Massachusetts Equal Rights

Law (M.G.L. 93, Section 102 et seq.), and Equal Pay Act, and Chapter 151B of the General Laws of Massachusetts, as amended.

- We are committed to making our programs and activities accessible to individuals with disabilities, including our online/digital services and offerings. We recognize that in the virtual/online learning environment, technology-dependent teaching and learning processes may create unique and unanticipated access barriers. We encourage individuals to contact us if an obstacle to access is found to exist. (See below for how to do so.)
- We seek to build and maintain a Simmons where the diversity of our community members is met with understanding, respect, and encouragement, and where unlawful discrimination, harassment and retaliation by any member of the administration, faculty, staff, or student body against any other individual will be investigated, evaluated and redressed. The College does not tolerate unlawful discrimination or harassment of its employees or students or retaliation against those who report incidents of unlawful behavior or those who cooperate in the investigation of such complaints.

### **Simmons Title IX Sexual Harassment Policy for Students, Faculty, Staff, and Visitors**

Title IX Federal law states that all students have the right to an education free of gender-based discrimination. Title IX requires Simmons to respond to reports of sexual harassment, which under the Title IX regulations includes:

- a) quid pro quo harassment of an individual by an employee;
- (b) unwelcome conduct determined “by a reasonable person to be *so severe, pervasive, and objectively offensive*” as to deny a person equal access to Simmons’ education programs and/or activities (including employment); or
- (c) sexual assault, dating violence, domestic violence, or stalking.

The Simmons Title IX Policy and a list of resources can be found here:

<https://internal.simmons.edu/students/general-information/title-ix/gender-based-misconduct-policy-for-students-faculty-staff-and-visitors>.

Additionally, the University has a Consensual Relationships Policy prohibiting intimate, romantic or sexual relationships between students, faculty, staff, contract employees of the University, teacher’s assistants, and supervisors at internship/field placement sites.

To make a report under our Title IX policy, please contact the Simmons Title IX Coordinator:

Gretchen Groggel Ralston, AVP & Associate General Counsel

[gretchen.groggelralston@simmons.edu](mailto:gretchen.groggelralston@simmons.edu), MCB C 208, 617-521-2768

### **Reporting Sexual Misconduct**

If you believe you have been subjected to gender-based misconduct (sexual harassment, sexual violence, gender discrimination, stalking, exploitation), please contact our Title IX Coordinator, at (617) 521-2768.

## **Students Reporting Discrimination or Retaliation**

If you are a student and you believe you have been subjected to unlawful discrimination or retaliation, please contact the Dean of your College, the Director of your Program or the Dean for Student Life. The Dean for Student Life can be found in C-115 of the Main Campus Building and at 617-521-2117.

## **Reporting a web/online accessibility barrier**

Please use this form: <http://www.simmons.edu/report-barrier>

We are committed to making our programs and activities accessible to all individuals.

## **For Advice on Whom to Contact about a Concern or Incident**

If you are unsure of where to bring complaints or concerns about unlawful discrimination, harassment or retaliation, please contact the Office of the General Counsel in E-200 in the Main Campus Building or call 617-521-2276.

## **GENDER-BASED MISCONDUCT POLICY**

This [Gender-Based Misconduct Policy](#) ("Policy") governs all community members, including undergraduate and graduate students, faculty, staff, those employed by others but working on the Simmons campus, and visitors to Simmons. The Policy defines the behavior that Simmons identifies as prohibited gender-based misconduct, the process for addressing such conduct, and the potential sanctions for engaging in prohibited conduct. This Policy expressly prohibits sexual harassment, sexual assault, sexual exploitation, stalking, and intimate partner violence.

In addition to the foregoing, the Policy and the Simmons Title IX website also:

- Explain how to report incidents of gender-based misconduct to Simmons.
- Detail the process for assessing, investigating, and resolving complaints of gender-based misconduct, including the implementation of interim measures when appropriate, and the use of sanctions against those who violate the Policy.
- Identify on and off campus resources available to individuals impacted by gender-based misconduct, and how to access those resources.
- Identify Simmons's Title IX Coordinator and Deputy Title IX Coordinators and other members of the Title IX team.

The Simmons Gender-Based Misconduct Policy can be found [here](#). If you have any questions about the Policy, please contact the Title IX Coordinator or other member of the Title IX Team.

## **STUDENT PROFESSIONAL LIABILITY INSURANCE**

The University carries a blanket insurance policy with the United Educators. The policy covers each student in field placement. The limits of liability are \$1,000,000 for each claim and \$3,000,000 aggregate.

If you wish to receive a copy of our policy, please contact the Field Education Department at 617-521-3910 or [sswonlinefielded@simmons.edu](mailto:sswonlinefielded@simmons.edu).