Field Education FAQs

Year II Placement Process

1. Why can’t I apply to any agency that interests me?

   We understand the wish to do so, but it is actually our community partners and agencies who determine whether they will utilize the independent application process or the traditional placement process. If they utilize the standard process, they establish the “rules” by which we vet and match students. Once we establish their requirements, it is up to the field department to try to get the match right for both agency and student. If we send you to a placement that has clearly indicated that they are looking for experience that you don’t have, we risk that you will lose another opportunity for which you are well-suited and qualified. This is a time-sensitive process.

2. Will my Year II field placement have a huge impact on the course of my future career?

   This is a common belief. Please keep in mind that your Year II placement is one of many steps you will take along your professional journey. Much more important than where your Year II placement will be is how you engage with the learning. Focus on developing advanced practice skills and deepening your professional identity as they will be crucial in (and can be translated to) any setting.

3. Can I apply to do an employment-based placement in order to make my life more financially stable?

   The Field Department actually encourages students to explore the feasibility of employment-based internships. There are particular guidelines that are required, and we are happy to review them with you. If we can help your worksite develop the right learning opportunities for you, it may be a mutually beneficial arrangement.

4. If I choose the Independent Application path for my Year II placement, will I be without the support of the Field Department?

   No. There is a reason that we require you to meet with a field faculty member before determining which path (independent application vs. traditional placement process) is right for you. If you apply through the independent application path you will send your application materials directly to agencies but also keep your field faculty member updated along the way about your progress (or lack thereof). Your field faculty member is also available to review cover letters and prepare questions and thoughts before your
interview(s).

It is in consultation with field faculty that you might decide to stop the independent application process and pivot to the traditional process. Ongoing communication is essential for either path and if you are not successful with independent application agencies, we will work with you to find a placement. You are not on your own!

5. If I don't have much exposure to clients in my Year I field placement, will I be able to secure a clinical Year II placement?

In the vast majority of cases, Year I students are engaged in generalist practice. All Year I MSW students’ educational goals (at all schools of social work) include the socialization to the profession and introduction to generalist skills (including working with larger systems). We encourage you to think about how you will talk about the skills you are acquiring in your current placement when interviewing for your next placement. Read this article for more perspective. How you describe your Year I placement, your growth, and learning are critical during the interview process. Agencies are seeking students who have cultural humility, are self-reflective, critical thinkers, and open to feedback. If you need help thinking about how to message your Year I placement, please talk to your Field Instructor, FLA, or Field Faculty member.

6. Is In-Home Therapy (IHT) really “clinical?”

IHT internships provide robust learning for clinical social work. The service delivery system has changed dramatically in the past decade or two, and with the advent of CBHI, in-home therapy is the most common community modality for the delivery of services to children and families. Meeting people in their homes provides a rich way to assess the “person-in-environment” and intervene with fewer barriers. You will learn how to complete comprehensive psychosocial assessments, implement focused interventions, develop and monitor treatment plans, understand diagnoses (and their impact on the client and family), utilize your practice skills to strengthen families, and even learn about insurance billing. You will be working with diverse clients in coordination with a diverse group of services and systems which may include: schools, the legal system, child welfare, medical, and collateral providers of behavioral health services.

7. Given the location of Simmons, are hospital placements plentiful?

There are quite a few medical settings in the Boston area and yet there are a limited number of social work internships. Hospitals are limited by the number of LICSWs they have available to supervise, and with the pandemic, resources at these sites have been reduced. You can learn the skills needed for a hospital/medical setting in other
agencies as well. Please refer to the FAQs regarding hospital placements for more information.