



# **Baccalaureate Social Work (BSW) Program**

## **Field Education Manual**

**2022 - 2023**

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*Welcome Students and Field Education Partners*

Welcome to the Simmons College BSW Field Education Program. This BSW Field Education Manual is intended as a guide for students, faculty, and field instructors as a means of educating, informing, and supporting the process of field instruction, an essential component of social work education and training. Primarily, the Manual is designed as a resource to help students navigate their field education experience and assist field instructors in their role as mentors and BSW Program partners. It contains information regarding the requirements, expectations, and policies of BSW field education, as well as required forms and documents that support the field experience. This Manual, as well as many other resources for students and field instructors, is available on the Simmons College BSW Program webpage: [simmons.edu/ug/bsw/](http://simmons.edu/ug/bsw/). We wish our students and professional partners well and look forward to a rewarding field education experience.

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### ***Simmons University and the School of Social Work – Brief Introduction and Background***

Simmons University, a private, non-sectarian institution, was founded in 1899 to provide a high-quality liberal arts education, combined with professional preparation, to women at the undergraduate level. The University's Mission, "To provide transformative learning that links passion with lifelong purpose," has been realized throughout its history as its academic programs have expanded and graduates have taken their places as professional leaders in the community. Today, the University is fully accredited by the New England Association of Schools and Colleges (NEASC), enrolls almost 2000 undergraduate students annually, and houses five graduate schools for men and women. One of the areas for which the University has become best known is the education and preparation of graduate level social work professionals under the auspices of its School of Social Work.

In 1904, Simmons became the first college to provide training for clinical social workers, filling a critical community need, expanding the profession, and offering a vehicle through which women could advance their careers. Since then, the Simmons University School of Social Work (SSW) has been a leader in social work education and an enduring example of the University's signature commitment to academic rigor, strong professional preparation, and visionary thinking. Open to men and women, the SSW offers an MSW Program that has been continuously accredited by the Council on Social Work Education and a PhD Program for advanced clinical social work scholars, which opened in 1983. Throughout its history, the SSW has recognized the critical role that its graduates play in the local, national, and global community and has endeavored to provide social work education in a way that maintains the highest educational standards while remaining sensitive to the diverse, changing needs of students and the clients they serve. As a reflection of this knowledge and commitment, the SSW has created unique and innovative programs that attract dedicated students and infuse a steady flow of competent, well trained individuals into the profession. These programs include the Urban Leadership Program and the Interdisciplinary Program in collaboration with the College's School of Management. In each of its programs, the SSW seeks to advance the core values and aims of the social work profession.

The Simmons Baccalaureate Social Work (BSW) Program is the most recent endeavor of the School of Social Work. Focused planning for the new BSW Program began in 2010, and the Program opened to students in the Fall of 2012. In June of 2014, the Program was accredited by the Council of Social Work Education (CSWE). The BSW Program espouses the same core principles and values of the MSW Program while structuring its curriculum around generalist practice competencies appropriate for undergraduate-level social work students. The BSW Program was re-accredited in June 2018, for a further 8 years by CSWE.

### ***Generalist Practice***

Baccalaureate social work education is intended to teach and train students as social work generalists. The Simmons University BSW Program utilizes the following definition of generalist practice, as articulated by the Council on Social Work Education:

Generalist practice is grounded in the liberal arts and the person and environment construct. To promote human and social well-being, generalist practitioners use a range of prevention and intervention methods in their practice with individuals, families, groups, organizations, and communities. The generalist practitioner identifies with the social work profession and applies ethical principles and critical thinking in practice. Generalist practitioners incorporate diversity in their practice and advocate for human rights and social and economic justice. They recognize, support, and build on the strengths and resiliency of all human beings. They engage in research-informed practice and are proactive in responding to the impact of context on professional practice (*Council on Social Work Education 2008 EPAS Standard B2.2, p. 7-8*).

Consistent with this definition, the Program utilizes a curriculum model that flows from the University's liberal arts foundation, integrating the University Core Curriculum, Social Work Program courses, and Field Education into a cohesive whole.

### ***Simmons College Baccalaureate Social Work Program Mission Statement***

Consistent with the mission of Simmons University, its MSW Program, and the *Educational Policy and Accreditation Standards* (2015) put forth by the Council on Social Work Education, the Simmons University BSW Program's Mission is:

to prepare baccalaureate-level students for professional generalist social work practice and lifelong professional and personal learning. Consistent with the mission and vision of Simmons University, the School of Social Work, and professional social work tradition, the Program seeks to develop competent, ethical practitioners who are attuned to the values of the social work profession, embrace a professional social work identity, value diversity, and seek social justice through effective advocacy and social change efforts.



### ***Simmons University BSW Program Goals***

Within the liberal arts tradition and guided by the purpose and values of the social work profession, the Simmons University BSW Program aims to:

1. Participate in the fulfillment of the mission and goals of Simmons University and the School of Social Work by contributing to a liberal arts foundation and providing strong professional social work career preparation at the baccalaureate level;
2. Prepare students for generalist social work employment and graduate-level education;
3. Provide students with instruction, field experiences, and opportunities to develop the knowledge, values, and skills and master the core competencies needed for effective, culturally sensitive, evidence-based, ethical social work practice;
4. Provide students with instructional opportunities that will facilitate the development of the critical thinking and writing skills necessary for effective social work practice;
5. Prepare students to become competent practitioners, social justice advocates, policy analysts, and agents of social change;
6. Provide a foundation for students' professional futures, emphasizing life-long learning, growth, and professional development

### ***Simmons University BSW Program's Core Competencies and Practice Behaviors: The Foundation of the Professional Curriculum***

The Simmons BSW Program endorses and follows the expectations of its accrediting organization, the Council on Social Work Education (CSWE). Part of the function of CSWE is to set educational standards that ensure that social work students at the undergraduate and graduate-level are receiving high quality educational and training experiences that will prepare them for their careers. CSWE is responsible for continuously reviewing best practices in the field of social work and regularly updating their *Educational Policy and Accreditation Standards*. Accredited social work programs are responsible for meeting these standards, which are designed to progressively build students' skills and abilities through their course and field work. The most recent update of the CSWE educational policy occurred in 2008, and it is around these accreditation standards that the BSW Program at Simmons is structured.

In keeping with the 2015 *Council on Social Work Education's Educational Policy and Accreditation Standards*, the Simmons BSW Program strives to prepare its graduates for generalist practice through the mastery of the knowledge, values, and skills needed for effective, competent, ethical practice. Thus, the BSW Program has adopted the ten CSWE Core Competencies (numbered) and accompanying Practice Behaviors (bulleted) as the foundation for its professional curriculum. This means that the Program's courses, field placements, and overall educational experience are structured to assist students in progressively building their ability to perform each Practice Behavior. Once a student is able to consistently perform the Practice Behaviors that correspond to a particular Core Competency, the student will have achieved mastery of the Core Competency in that area. Thus, by the completion of their baccalaureate education and training, the Simmons University BSW graduate will demonstrate the ability to:

**1) Demonstrate Ethical and Professional Behavior**

- 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

**2) Engage Diversity and Difference in Practice**

- 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

**3) Advance Human Rights and Social, Economic, and Environmental Justice**

- 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

**4) Engage In Practice-informed Research and Research-informed Practice**

- 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

**5) Engage in Policy Practice**

- 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

**6) Engage with Individuals, Families, Groups, Organizations, and Communities**

- 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

**7) Assess Individuals, Families, Groups, Organizations, and Communities**

- 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

**8) Intervene with Individuals, Families, Groups, Organizations, and Communities**

- 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

**9) Evaluate Practice with Individuals, Families, Groups, Organizations, and Communities**

- 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

***The Simmons BSW Program Curriculum: Integrating the University Core Curriculum,  
Social Work Courses, and Field Education***

According to Dr. L Dee Fink's (2003) "Taxonomy of Significant Learning," creating effective courses and a coherent curriculum involves attention to key areas of student learning. These include not only providing foundational knowledge, but assisting students in applying what is learned and helping them to integrate and make connections within and among their subjects so that the information they have gained can be useful in their lives and work. This taxonomy emphasizes the need for students to gain knowledge, build practical skills, learn about themselves and others, develop a sense of caring about those around them, and employ this knowledge to become life-long learners. In this way, the taxonomy mirrors the mandate that undergraduate social work education be both grounded in the liberal arts and based in an intentional curriculum design that combines classroom learning and field work to allow students to master the Core Competencies and Practice Behaviors necessary for effective, competent practice. The Simmons University BSW Program's formal curriculum design is based upon this philosophy of knowledge building, application, and integration.

Simmons University was founded on and has become known for providing "extraordinary professional preparation with an emphasis on intellectual exploration and rigor, the integration of theory and practice, leadership, and informed citizenship" (*Simmons College Undergraduate Course Catalog, 2016-2018, p. 7*), and it is upon this foundation that the BSW Program is built. In order to achieve its goals and intentions, the Program's curriculum integrates three key areas: the College Core Curriculum based in the liberal arts, BSW Program courses, and BSW Field Education. Through the Core Curriculum, students become well-rounded scholars and learners with foundational intellectual habits and abilities, including critical thinking and writing skills, an appreciation for diversity, information literacy skills, foreign language competencies, a foundation in science and mathematics, and an appreciation for the arts. Through BSW courses and field education, students learn the social work knowledge, values and skills they need to be strong practitioners.

## *Field Education Program*

### **Aim and Purpose of BSW Field Education at Simmons University**

The cornerstone of a BSW program is a well-organized and facilitated field education program. By fostering a strong sense of partnership, shared purpose, and mutual responsibility for student learning with field settings, the Simmons BSW Program endeavors to set the foundation for a supportive and challenging field experience for students. This foundation is structured to support the student's acquisition of the knowledge, values and skills necessary for effective generalist social work practice. By providing opportunities for students to demonstrate the practice behaviors and progressively master the core competencies of generalist social work, field work complements and reinforces classroom learning. The Program's field education component is aligned with the *Council on Social Work Education's Educational Policy and Accreditation Standards 2008* which describes field education as the profession's "signature pedagogy." According to the CSWE Educational Policy 2.3:

In social work, the signature pedagogy is field education. The intent of field education is to connect the theoretical and conceptual contribution of the classroom with the practical world of the practice setting. It is a basic precept of social work education that the two interrelated components of curriculum—classroom and field—are of equal importance within the curriculum, and each contributes to the development of the requisite competencies of professional practice. Field education is systematically designed, supervised, coordinated, and evaluated based on criteria by which students demonstrate the achievement of program competencies. (p.8)

As articulated in this statement, BSW field education is critical to the development of competent, effective, and well-prepared social work professionals. The Simmons BSW Program is committed to facilitating strong and diverse field education opportunities where students are challenged and their learning and professional development is supported.

### **General Plan of Field Education**

In keeping with the primary goal of preparing students for professional employment and connecting the classroom and field, Simmons University BSW faculty members select field education settings that give students the opportunity to provide direct services to client systems of all sizes utilizing generalist social work knowledge, values, and skills. The formal field placement Program of the junior and senior year is intended to be part of the larger field experience that occurs throughout the student's academic career in the BSW Program at Simmons University. Simmons BSW students begin their field education journey with service-learning. Service-learning is community or volunteer service that allows students to work within community organizations, gain beginning practical experience with various populations served by social workers, and formally reflect on their learning. Service-learning tasks range

from administrative support (general office tasks) to direct service (research, writing, one-on-one interactions with individuals, groups, communities, and organizations). Service-learners are expected to use their skills of observation within their host settings. Service-learning task assignments are informed by agency need and student experience and interests. In this way, students develop some basic social work skills and a beginning sense of professional identity. BSW students then move from freshman and sophomore service-learning placements in social service agencies to determine their interest in and suitability for the social work profession, to formal field placements during the second semester of or summer after the junior year and the entire senior year.

### **Field Placement Responsibilities of the BSW Program, the Agency, and the Student**

The Simmons BSW Program will:

- Provide the agency with a *Field Placement Manual*, which states the objectives, policies and expectations of the field placement experience;
- In cooperation with the agency, assign the student(s) to be placed in the agency and/or program;
- Provide the assigned field instructor/supervisor with training and support to enable the field instructor to be effective in their role;
- Provide a bachelor's or master's level field instructor/ supervisor if the agency is unable to do so;
- Assist the agency and field instructor/supervisor in planning an educational program for the student;
- Be available to the field instructor/supervisor for consultation and assistance should problems occur in the field placement;
- Provide advising, mentoring, and guidance to the student throughout the field placement;
- Plan and facilitate the classroom experience and assignments (Introduction to Social Work and Social Welfare, Social Work Practice I-IV, Social Work Field Placement and Seminar I & II) that supports and supplements service-learning and field placement;
- Be responsible for evaluating and grading the overall achievement of the student based on the field assessment completed by the agency field instructor/supervisor and the student's completion of any other assignments the faculty require as part of the field placement experience.

The Field Placement Agency will:

- Provide a field instructor/supervisor who has a bachelor's or master's degree in social work, at least 2 years of practice experience, and/or who has the knowledge and experience the University considers essential;
- Plan with the University faculty a field experience suitable to the student's needs;
- Orient the student to the agency's policies and procedures, including confidentiality and practices for maintaining safety;
- Provide the student with meaningful assignments and opportunities designed to develop the knowledge, values, and skills necessary for effective, competent social work practice;
- Complete a Student Learning Contract with the student at the beginning of the junior and senior field placement that defines and outlines assignments and expectations;

- Grant the field instructor/supervisor the necessary time to fulfill their responsibilities to the student as defined in the *Field Placement Manual*, including the provision of at least ½ hour of individual supervision per week for juniors and 1 hour of individual supervision per week for seniors;
- Be aware of the BSW Program's Mission and Goals and the Council on Social Work Education's Core Competencies and Practice Behaviors as foundational elements of the student's learning in field placement;
- Provide the student with an opportunity for an ongoing evaluation of the student's performance in the field of social work;
- Communicate with the BSW Program Director of Field Education on an ongoing basis and attend scheduled meetings for field instructors/supervisors;
- Complete and provide the University with an end of semester assessment of the student's performance in the field;
- Notify the University immediately should circumstances arise that would prevent the student from completing the field experience or fulfilling the field agreement.

The student in Field Placement will:

- Complete the number of service-learning or field education hours required for the placement experience (40 hours of service-learning for freshmen, 80 hours of service-learning for sophomores, 100 field placement hours for juniors, and 425 field placement hours for seniors);
- Behave in a professional manner and abide by the *Simmons Honor Code*, *NASW Code of Ethics*, and *Simmons SSW Standards for Professional Practice*;
- Abide by agency policies and procedures, including confidentiality and practices for maintaining safety;
- Take responsibility for field tasks and assignments as defined in the Student Learning Contract and carry them out in a timely fashion using their best effort;
- Participate fully in the supervisory relationship with the field instructor by seeking supervision and consultation when needed and being prepared for supervision meetings;
- Complete and provide the University with an end of semester assessment of their performance in the field.

### **BSW Field Education Opportunities**

The Simmons University BSW Program is rooted in the generalist model of social work education and this model forms the foundation of both classroom instruction and field work. The BSW faculty is committed to ensuring that students develop the full range of generalist practice skills and gain experience in a variety of practice areas. As a demonstration of this commitment, the Program has been structured to include field learning at every phase of the student's educational experience, beginning with the service-learning that takes place in the freshman and sophomore years and progressing to the junior and senior year field placements. This multi-layered field placement structure maximizes opportunities for the full breadth of generalist practice competencies to develop.

In keeping with the generalist practice model, all agency service-learning and field placement settings are specifically selected for, among other things, their ability to provide students with generalist practice opportunities where micro, mezzo, and macro-level social work knowledge, values, and skills can be learned and reinforced, Practice Behaviors can be demonstrated, and mastery of Core Competencies can be progressively achieved. To this end, the Program has developed relationships with multiple, diverse field placement sites throughout the greater Boston region.

Within each of these, and the Program's other partner service-learning and field placement settings, clients are offered a wide range of supportive services using a variety of intervention techniques, including case management, advocacy, information and referral, education, and counseling through work that takes place on individual, family, group, organizational, and community levels. In this way, students in the Simmons College BSW field Program are offered a wide range of opportunities in the field where they can demonstrate increasing mastery of generalist knowledge, values and skills, including the ability to intervene with client systems of all sizes, the ability to advocate effectively, and the ability to influence organizational and social policy. Students have opportunities to engage in service-learning and field placement within agencies serving particular populations, such as young children, adolescents, or older adults, or organizations offering a spectrum of services and serving people of various ages with different presenting challenges. Thus, over the course of their educational experience at Simmons, each student is provided with multiple opportunities to learn, develop, and advance the skills required for competent and effective generalist practice.

### **Typical Student Field Placement Activities**

*The ways in which students learn to demonstrate the practice behaviors and master core competencies include:*

- Observing & shadowing the field instructor and/or other agency personnel
- Reviewing case files/client records
- Conducting/participating in office interviews with clients
- Conducting/participating in home visits with clients
- Providing direct client support, education, referral, and advocacy
- Providing case management and resource linking
- Developing bio-psycho-social assessments
- Developing intervention plans
- Observing/participating in staff discussions and meetings
- Participating in supervision meetings
- Observing/participating in role plays
- Reading and analyzing case studies
- Observing/participating in interdisciplinary case conferences
- Observing/participating in family meetings
- Observing/facilitating or co-facilitating group meetings
- Observing/participating in agency board meetings
- Observing/participating in treatment team meetings



- Completing and reviewing process recordings
- Reviewing and completing agency reports and documentation
- Participation in lobbying, policy analysis, development, and reform
- Participating in professional meetings, agency workshops and training opportunities
- Developing and mobilizing neighborhood and community initiatives and resources
- Completing agency-based research
- Participating in grant-writing

### **Freshman and Sophomore Service-Learning**

Students are introduced to field learning immediately upon entering the BSW Program through the Program's service-learning component. The Program requires that freshmen and sophomores complete 40 and 80 hours of service-learning per academic year, respectively, as a way of intentionally connecting the classroom and field from the beginning of the student's educational experience. The first course in the Program's social work sequence (SW 101) has a service-learning component, allowing students to complete 40 hours of service-learning as part of their course work. The service-learning experience is formally facilitated by the University's Scott/Ross Center for Community Service to develop relationships with appropriate field settings. Through assignments and class discussion, the Director of Field Education ensures that the service-learning experience is developmentally challenging and provides appropriate and meaningful opportunities for students to begin their field work journey.

Prior to beginning their service-learning experience, each BSW student participates in an orientation and is provided with the BSW Program Guide to Service-Learning. This Guide orients students and service-learning supervisors to the goals and intentions of service-learning and provides them with helpful information and guidelines regarding their service-learning experience. Through service-learning, students are provided with opportunities to build their skills gradually during the beginning of their educational experience, allowing them to gain a wider range of practical skills, build their resume, and be more prepared for the rigors of their junior and senior year field placements. In addition, because a hallmark of service-learning is self-reflection, students are required to think critically about their experiences, completing writing assignments, participating in classroom discussions, and/ or out of classroom small group service-learning reflection meetings that allow them to progressively assess their emerging skills and competencies, as well as areas needing work and refinement.

Service-learning hours may be paid or unpaid but must involve work with or on behalf of people and be documented by the person supervising the service-learning activity. Throughout the academic year, freshman and sophomore BSW students must submit a service-learning time sheet, signed by their supervisor, to the BSW Director of Field Education. In addition, student performance in the service-learning setting is evaluated by the service-learning supervisor. Students also complete a self-assessment of their performance. These evaluation tools are designed to allow students to continuously reflect upon and improve their field learning. Occasionally, service-learning requirements may be waived for students who are currently employed in or have had significant experience in the social service field.

### **Junior-Year BSW Field Placement**

As the second phase of the BSW Program's Field Education component, junior-year students complete a 100-hour field placement within a social work setting and supervised by a social worker, during the spring or summer semester. This intermediate field placement experience is meant to advance the knowledge, values, and skills students have gained through their service-learning, provide continued orientation to field work within a community setting, and offer an additional opportunity for students to identify areas of interest and professional strengths and needs. Arranged and overseen by the BSW Director of Field Education, this field placement is completed concurrently with the Junior Field Seminar where field learning is integrated into the course material through class discussion, reflective journaling, and other writing assignments. This field placement also provides a way for BSW Program faculty to evaluate student readiness for the rigors and demands of the field placement that occurs in the senior year. At the end of the junior field placement, each student's progress in the BSW Program and in the field is formally reviewed and a determination is made regarding the student's readiness to move on to the senior year field placement. This review process involves the evaluation of student field performance by their agency field supervisors, a student self-evaluation, and a field experience essay written by the student. These sources of information are reviewed and discussed during individual field evaluation conferences conducted by the BSW Program faculty with each student where final determinations about senior student field placement are made.

### **Senior-Year BSW Field Placement**

The Simmons BSW Program's Field Education component culminates with the 425-hour, year-long, senior year social work field placement, supervised by a bachelor's or master's level social worker. This intensive field experience is intended to broaden and deepen the students' experiences and skills, and allow students to practice the social work concepts learned in the classroom and explored during their service-learning experiences and junior year field placement. During the senior year placement, it is expected that students will ultimately demonstrate mastery of the Program's core competencies and practice behaviors within the field context.

In order to complete the required 425 hours in the field, students are generally in the field setting 16 hours per week during the regular academic year (September to May), with University holidays and breaks off. Most students arrange their field placement on a two-day per week schedule, taking their required courses in three day blocks. This schedule may vary from student to student, depending upon agency needs and students' course needs, employment requirements, and family obligations. In addition to weekly work within the agency setting, senior BSW students also participate in a weekly Social Work Field Seminar (I & II), led by one of the Field Liaisons. The Field Seminar is intended to integrate the field experience with academic learning through class discussion, case presentations, and course assignments. Evaluation of senior BSW students in field placement occurs during each semester (fall and spring). This evaluation involves an end-of-semester formal assessment of the student's field performance by the agency field supervisor, as well as an assessment of the student's Field Seminar assignments. These

sources of information are reviewed with the student and are used to determine a student's readiness to move on in the field placement and, ultimately, the student's readiness for graduation and graduate study.

### ***BSW Policies, Criteria, and Procedures for Field Education***

#### **Simmons Honor Code, NASW Code of Ethics, and SSW Standards for Professional Practice Education**

All Simmons students, regardless of their major, are accountable to the Simmons Honor Code, which is available on the University website (<http://www.simmons.edu/handbook/conduct/honor-system.php>) and outlines expectations related to academic honesty and personal responsibility and integrity. All BSW students are expected to abide by the University Honor Code as a condition of their enrollment in the Program. In the interest of promoting high educational, ethical, and professional standards and in an effort to prepare students for their careers, the School of Social Work has articulated the additional expectation that all social work students (BSW and MSW) adhere to the *National Association of Social Workers (NASW) Code of Ethics* and the School's *Standards for Professional Practice Education* throughout their time at Simmons.

Both students and field instructors are expected to abide by the *NASW Code of Ethics* as a guide for their activities in the course of field instruction and learning. As the professional organization for social workers, NASW outlines the ethical standards and practices widely accepted by the profession, making specific reference to conduct in practice settings. The NASW Code can be located on the website for the National Association of Social Workers (<http://www.socialworkers.org/pubs/code/default.asp>) and outlines responsibilities for professional practice for practitioners and social work students. All BSW students, as part of their application for admission into the Program, are required to review the NASW Code and sign a statement acknowledging their willingness to uphold its professional standards as a condition of their participation in the Program. Significant classroom instruction during the junior and senior year is devoted to discussing the Code and student responsibilities as emerging social work professionals.

As a supplement to the NASW Code, the *Simmons SSW Standards for Professional Practice Education* outline several additional expectations to which social work students are accountable, as stated below:

- 1) Self-awareness, self-assessment and self-monitoring: Students are expected to make a commitment to learning about self-awareness and to using self-reflection consistently and genuinely. Accepting supervision and incorporating feedback are critical to this process. As students progress through the BSW Program, they are expected to accurately assess their own strengths and limitations and to display a willingness to examine and change behaviors that

interfere with their work at a field placement or in the classroom. Included in this is a willingness to diligently examine and address their own biases.

2) Openness and willingness to learn, flexibility and adaptability: BSW students are expected to demonstrate openness to, and active engagement in, learning new ideas and perspectives. Students should actively seek to understand the worldviews and values of others. As required by the demands of professional practice, students should be flexible and adaptable in new situations and as circumstances change.

3) Interpersonal skills: BSW students are expected to demonstrate the interpersonal skills and capacities needed to relate to clients, agency colleagues, fellow students, faculty, and staff. The capacity and skills to actively engage with others across difference and in situations of conflict should improve and deepen as students progress through the BSW Program.

4) Communication skills: In all oral, written and electronic communication, students are expected to be respectful of others. In electronic communication, students should adhere to professional boundaries. In the classroom, students are expected to take responsibility for their role in discussions. They should strive to use active listening skills and to express ideas clearly. They are expected to self-monitor and not dominate a discussion. Increasingly, as students progress through the BSW Program, they should be able to communicate effectively in writing, both in classroom assignments and in the field placement. It is the student's responsibility to utilize resources to improve academic and field performance when problems in communication have been identified and brought to their attention for remediation.

5) Critical thinking skills: As students progress through the BSW Program, they are expected to be able to frame and address problems in a disciplined way and engage at greater levels of independence in problem solving efforts. Increasingly, problem-solving efforts should be well reasoned, examine multiple perspectives and worldviews, integrate evidence and knowledge, and lead to well-supported decisions and conclusions.

6) Presentation of self: Upon entry into the BSW Program, students are expected to commit to learning what is required for professional behavior. Professional behavior includes the ability to evaluate and respond to the demands and expectations of classroom and field placement environments, and the larger College community. Professional behavior also includes being punctual, dependable, and accountable and being able to prioritize responsibilities. Appearance, dress, and general demeanor can reflect professional behavior.

7) Self-care: Students are expected to recognize their own current life stressors and to seek ways to mitigate the effect of these stressors and field performance. In accordance with the *NASW Code of Ethics* (sec 4.05), social work students should not allow their own personal problems or issues to interfere with their judgment and performance or to jeopardize the best interests of people for whom they have professional responsibility. Social work students whose personal problems, psychosocial distress, legal problems, substance abuse, or mental health difficulties interfere with their judgment and responsibilities should immediately seek consultation with a faculty advisor, faculty member, or supervisor who will determine and assist in the necessary

steps and actions related to field placement and course work.

*\*\*\*Acknowledgements: School of Social Work University of Texas, Austin; Hunter College School of Social Work*

These professional standards guide all aspects of the BSW Program, and students are expected to abide by them. Student adherence to these professional expectations is continuously evaluated by faculty members in the context of BSW courses, through feedback from field instructors, and within the ongoing relationship between students and academic advisors.

### **Criminal Offender Record Information (CORI) Check**

The BSW program does not conduct a CORI however if agencies require any kind of background checks, screenings etc, these should be done in time for students to begin placement.

### **Transportation to Field Sites**

The BSW Program is not able to pay for student transportation. Discounted MBTA passes are available through Office of Student Leadership and Activities and must be purchased during the summer months for use in the fall semester and in November for use in the spring semester. Additional information is available here: <http://www.simmons.edu/campuslife/boston/mbta/>.

### **Sexual Harassment Policy**

Simmons University is committed to a policy that accords all members of the University community, including faculty, field instructors, students and staff, the right to be free from sex discrimination in the form of sexual harassment by any other member of the University community. "Sexual harassment" is defined as unwelcome sexual advances or other verbal or physical conduct of a sexual nature, when such behavior has the purpose or effect of creating an intimidating or offensive working or educational atmosphere.

In the educational context, such actions are prohibited when they have an impact on the educational process between students and academic or field faculty. Such actions, whether overt, implicit or misinterpreted, can cause great damage to those involved as well as to the University community as a whole. All members of the University community must be sensitive to the questions and difficulties that are inherent in any attempt to combine sexual relationships or sexual intimidation with professional and educational relationships.

The complete Simmons University Sexual Harassment Policy can be found at the following web address: <http://www.simmons.edu/handbook/conduct/sexual-harrassment.php>.

It is unlawful and expressly against College policy to retaliate against a person for filing either an informal or formal complaint of sexual harassment, or other forms of discriminatory harassment, or for cooperating with an investigation of a complaint of such alleged harassment.

Any student, faculty member, or staff person who has a complaint or concern about sexual harassment should immediately bring the matter to the attention of the Dean of the School of

Social Work and/or the Director of Field Education. The University will take appropriate corrective and preventive action, including disciplinary action, when its investigation discloses the occurrence of sexual harassment.

### **Safety Policy and Procedures**

The Simmons University BSW Program has adopted the following policy and procedures regarding the safety of BSW 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. There are inherent risks to agency staff and students in any situation requiring contact with the public. While fulfilling the agency's mission of providing services, it is the student's responsibility to be aware of the need for personal safety and to minimize risks as much as possible.

The agency has primary responsibility for orienting students to agency-specific safety issues. Field instructors are asked to discuss safety issues with students at the beginning of the semester. Safety issues can arise in the agency as well as in the community. We urge BSW students and BSW Program agency partners to become familiar with this policy.

### **Safety Policy**

The Simmons University Bachelor of Social Work Program is responsible for providing all students, faculty advisors, and the Director of Field Education with general written information about safety in field placement.

The BSW Program 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, within the agency building(s), with particular clients prone to violent behavior, and about 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 BSW intern while at the agency should be also covered. 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.

BSW interns should not be required to engage or to remain in assignments or at placements in which they feel physically at risk. The BSW Program 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 accommodation for a student. If a student's concerns about safety interfere in whole or in part with the learning process, the field advisor and the Director of Field Education should be contacted by the field instructor to facilitate prompt exploration of the concerns and to seek a mutually satisfying resolution.

## **Safety Procedures**

If an incident occurs in which a student is personally threatened or hurt, or if the student witnesses someone else being threatened or hurt, it is the student's responsibility to notify the field instructor and the Field Liaison immediately. The field instructor, agency contact person, or agency director should then contact the Field Liaison and the Director of Field Education immediately to discuss what actions the agency and the BSW Program should take to ensure the student's physical and emotional well-being in the wake of the incident and going forward.

The Director of Field Education will document the incident and the steps taken to address it and will meet with the student 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, BSW Program Director, Deans of Simmons University and of the School of Social Work 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 prior to 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. BSW 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, field liaisons, and the Director of Field Education as they consider the particular safety issues in their settings. Specific steps taken by students or agency personnel will obviously have to 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 impulse control, and can raise issues of safety for the client, the social worker, the student intern, and others.

There may be times when students work with individuals who have difficulty with reality testing, dealing with overwhelming emotions, and controlling their anger. Some of them may be prone to violence and may possess a weapon. Other clients may be intoxicated, under the influence of drugs, in withdrawal, or may have other medical or neurological disorders. Again, we urge all BSW students to consult with agency field instructors to prepare adequately for handling 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 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 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, and what to wear. 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 supervisors informed about their schedules at the agencies at all times.

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

When a student is traveling by car to an agency or to home visits, it is advisable to know where the student is going, and to look at a map before driving to unfamiliar areas. In general, remember to be alert, and to lock doors and close windows. The student should tell someone where they are going and the expected amount of time they will be away from the office. The agency should have your cell phone number or other information on how to contact you in the event of an emergency.

As a rule, students are not to use their own cars to transport clients. In those few situations where the agency cannot function without staff and students transporting clients in their own cars, a formal agreement must be worked out between the student and agency.



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

When traveling by foot or public transportation, it is advisable that students know where they are going and the route by which they will travel. Students are encouraged to carry the least amount of valuables with them as 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 to familiarize the student and the field instructor with the clients' file prior to the home visit. If there is a question of safety, 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. If a student ever feels threatened at any point during the interview, the student is encouraged to err on the side of caution and appropriately terminate the visit. If clients seem to feel threatened by the student entering their dwelling, the student should desist and not force the issue. If a student hears a heated argument from inside the house or apartment, the student may decide to re-schedule the visit or call to assess the situation before entering the dwelling.

A student should never see a potentially dangerous client alone without someone else in the agency knowing about it. In general, a cell phone is very useful for students doing home visits. We ask that an agency social worker accompany any student on home visits until the student feels comfortable making such visits alone. Students should not make home visits alone if there is any reason to believe that a potential danger exists. Students should 'check in' with the field instructor or designee after every home visit.

### **Social Media and Client Communication Policy**

Students participating in field education are expected to practice in an ethical manner, in accordance with the NASW Code of Ethics, while working with clients or programs within their placement. Students using social media sites are expected to use the highest privacy settings on their social media profiles to ensure private information and photographs cannot be accessed by the field agency personnel or clients. Students are not permitted to link to or view the social media profiles of clients or employees of the field education placement site or school. In the event that a student's social media profile or linkage is considered a poor professional practice or an ethical violation, the student will be subject to a student review. For confidentiality and safety reasons, BSW students are not permitted to share their personal telephone numbers with agency clients.

## **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.

## **Post Incident Safety Protocol**

If an incident occurs in which a student is personally threatened or hurt, or if the student witnesses someone else being 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 College should take to ensure the student's physical and emotional well-being.

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

Where appropriate, Simmons University offices, e.g. the Office of General Counsel, the Office of the President, will be notified about an incident.

*The Simmons University BSW Program thanks the Simmons University Master of Social Work Program for sharing their safety policy, which was used in developing the BSW safety policy.*

## **Identifying Concerns in Field Placement**

There may be occasions when students have concerns about aspects of their placement (e.g. amount of supervision, agency policies, appropriateness of practice-related activities and responsibilities, and/or workload). 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 student's Field Liaison immediately. The Field Liaison is available for consultation regarding the problem(s), helping to identify the issues and suggesting steps towards a resolution.

If problems persist despite the efforts of the field instructor, student, and Field Liaison, then the Director of Field Education will be brought in. If all attempts to resolve the issue has not been successful, a determination will be made regarding termination of the Field Placement. In the event that a field placement is terminated, a formal review of academic performance and conduct issues may be initiated, as described in this handbook.

## **Problems in the Field Placement Agency**

If there are problems in the agency that affect student learning (e.g. not enough tasks, insufficient supervision), the Field Director should be notified. The Field Director discusses the difficulties with all involved parties, makes an assessment and collaboratively helps to develop a plan. The

agency training director and/or BSW Program Director may join in this process. Plans to improve the situation are always the first step Director of Field and they will remain involved to monitor progress towards changes that are being initiated. If, for example, supervision time has not been adequate, the School would work with the agency to address this problem. If the agency is unable to provide a sufficient level of training and supervision, the student will be placed in a new setting.

### **Concerns Regarding Student Performance and Conduct in Field Placement**

The School of Social Work requests that the field instructor notify the Director of Field Education promptly regarding any concerns about the student's performance or conduct in the agency. If needed, a meeting of appropriate parties (Director of Field Education, student, field instructor and, at times, the BSW Program Director) will be held to assess and locate areas of difficulty. Plans are generally made to alleviate or resolve problems by carefully designed and monitored strategies. The outcome of a meeting will include a plan of action, written by the Field Liaison, with copies distributed to the student and field instructor and the Field Director. Goals set forth will be reviewed periodically. The Field director and field instructor remain in close communication with each other and the student throughout this process. The Director of Field Education and BSW Program Director may decide, in consultation with the Associate Dean, to meet with the student to address the concerns raised. The Director of Field Education, or other faculty teaching the field seminar course, will issue an academic warning to address and document the problems highlighted. The instructor develops a revised learning plan as described above. Some incidents of student conduct related to field may warrant a review of academic performance and conduct issues (described in this handbook), as well as immediate termination from a field placement.

Social Work education and training is an exciting and rewarding time of learning, growth, and change that can also be quite demanding. As a result, students occasionally encounter difficulties in meeting the standards and expectations of the Program. BSW Program faculty and administrators endeavor to assist each student in meeting their educational and professional goals and objectives and working through difficulties as they arise.

### **Supportive Educational Services**

The Simmons University Center for Academic Achievement (<http://www.simmons.edu/offices/caa/>) provides a range of services to students experiencing academic difficulty in courses or in the field. Academic problems in the field placement are often in the area of writing, which may appear in process recordings and in agency record keeping. The Center for Academic Achievement offers workshops and individual assessments of learning difficulties. Individual tutoring is also available. The field advisor can help the student arrange for these services if needed.

**Additional educational services include:**

**Simmons University Writing Center:**

<http://www.simmons.edu/offices/writing-center/>

**Simmons University Career Education Center:**

<http://www.simmons.edu/cec/>

### **Supportive Health Services**

While major difficulties are rare, sometimes students require additional support and assistance in the context of the field placement. If a student's health prevents them from attending field placement for an extended period of time, the student must notify the Field Liaison. There are many programs on the Simmons University campus that support student health. The field liaison can help the student arrange for these services if needed. Below, please find web links for these resources:

**Simmons University Health Center:**

<http://www.simmons.edu/offices/health-center/>

**Simmons University Counseling Center:**

<http://www.simmons.edu/offices/counseling-center/>

### **Students with Disabilities/Requests for Accommodations**

If a student has a disability and anticipates that they will need a reasonable accommodation in the classroom or in the field or service-learning placement, it is important that the student contact Timothy Rogers, Associate Director, Disability Services, Center for Academic Achievement, 617-521-2470 or via email at [timothy.rogers@simmons.edu](mailto:timothy.rogers@simmons.edu). Reasonable accommodations will be provided for students with documented physical, sensory, systemic, cognitive, learning, and psychiatric disabilities. Students with disabilities receiving accommodations for Field Education must contact the Director of Field Education to discuss implementation of any accommodations. Students are encouraged to speak with their field instructors within the first two weeks of the semester to discuss their individual needs for accommodations. The aforementioned process is required prior to making any request for accommodations of the agency or field instructor.

### **Academic and Performance Standards for BSW Students**

Students admitted into the BSW Program at Simmons University are expected to uphold the academic and professional standards of the Program and are regularly evaluated throughout their academic careers.

In order to be retained in the BSW Program, students must meet the following standards:

Academic Standards:

- ✓ Maintain an overall grade point average of at least 2.0
- ✓ Pass all required Social Work courses with at least a C or better

#### Professional Standards:

- ✓ Complete all required service-learning and field placement hours
- ✓ Receive a satisfactory *Student Field Assessment* from the field supervisor at the end of junior year and end of each semester of the senior year
- ✓ Adhere to the *Simmons University Honor Code*
- ✓ Adhere to the *NASW Code of Ethics*
- ✓ Adhere to the *SSW Standards for Professional Practice Education*

### **Course Grading and Social Work Student Grading Policy**

Expectations for individual BSW courses, including assessment and grading procedures, are addressed in the first several pages of every BSW course syllabus and are verbally reviewed with students at the beginning of the semester. Students are offered several opportunities in each course to demonstrate their mastery of course objectives that are linked to the Program's practice behaviors and core competencies through a variety of assignments, including homework, exams, papers, presentations, and participation in class discussion and group work. Students are graded using both formative and summative measures, aimed at assessing student achievement and determining the overall course grade.

In order to maintain high professional and academic standards, it is BSW Program policy that students graduating from Simmons University with a BSW will have earned a 2.0 cumulative average in their overall college course work and at least a B in each of their required social work courses. In the case where a student does not meet the minimum grade requirements in a social work course, an Education Planning Committee meeting will be convened, and the student may be asked to repeat the course before moving on to the next level in the sequence.

### **Student Admission to Field Placement**

The Simmons University BSW Program takes great care to only admit into senior year field placement those students who have demonstrated their readiness for the responsibilities and challenges that senior year field placement entails. The ability to enter the senior year field placement component is a privilege that is earned by strong foundational course work and satisfactory completion of required service-learning and junior-year field placement work. Students who move on to the senior-year field placement have demonstrated maturity, integrity, and professionalism and a commitment to a career in social work by being actively involved in their learning and growth.

The end of the junior year placement marks a critical point in the academic journey of a Simmons University BSW student. It is at this point that students must demonstrate readiness to enter the Program's senior-year practice sequence and their senior field placement. By this point in their educational journey, students have completed foundational courses and service-learning requirements, and have solidified their intention to continue as a social work major by making formal application to the BSW Program. Students who meet the requirements of the Program are

granted admission as BSW students and move on to the social work practice sequence and, in the spring or summer semester, the junior-year field placement. The 100-hour junior-year field placement provides an important opportunity for students to grow their practice competencies. It is also a vehicle through which student performance is evaluated and readiness for the senior-year field placement is assessed. Students in their junior field placement are not expected to have mastered the Program's practice behaviors and core competencies. Rather, it is anticipated that they will demonstrate the knowledge, values and skills that are articulated in the practice behaviors and core competencies at a beginning, foundational level that readies them for the rigors of their 425-hour senior-year field placement. At the completion of the junior-year field placement, a formal evaluation takes place and includes the following components:

- 1) Student Assessment by Field Supervisor
- 2) Student Self-Evaluation

In order to be admitted into their senior-year field placement, students must receive a recommendation from their supervisor to move on to Senior Field. In addition to the assessment completed by the field supervisor, each student completes a Student Self-Evaluation. The Student Self-Evaluation is a self-efficacy instrument which allows each student to rate the student's junior-year field placement performance, using the practice behaviors and core competencies. Finally, at the end of the junior year, each student completes a 3-page Student Field Experience Essay which allows the student to describe in detail and reflect upon their junior year field experience, articulate their perceived areas of strength and need, and assess their readiness for senior-year field placement. Each of these documents are reviewed by the BSW Program faculty and then discussed with the student in a formal Field Evaluation Conference. During the Field Evaluation Conference, the student's performance in the junior-year field placement (as objectively assessed by the field supervisor and subjectively assessed by the student) is reviewed and the student's readiness to enter the senior-year field placement is discussed and determined.

### **Policies, Criteria, and Procedures for Selecting Field Settings**

The BSW Director of Field Education has a strong professional network and is continuously developing new service-learning and field placement sites and working to expand those that are already in place. In addition, the School of Social Work has many resources from which to draw and develop potential BSW field placements. The School of Social Work currently staffs 34 full-time and part-time faculty members, many of whom are social work practitioners in the community with well-developed professional networks. A group of these faculty members serves on the BSW Program Advisory Committee and can be called upon for assistance in identifying potential field placement sites that are appropriate for BSW students. Further, the School of Social Work has a very active and committed alumni board, of which a member of the SSW faculty is currently president. All of the board members are MSW-level practitioners with strong ties to the professional social work community and a commitment to assisting the BSW Program in its development. In addition, the SSW has a 100-year legacy with a cadre of MSW graduates, many of whom are social work practitioners and administrators at local agencies. Finally, the School of Social Work has a vibrant, well respected MSW Field Placement Program that is in

regular communication with the BSW Director of Field Education. The BSW and MSW field Programs work relatively independently, but collaboratively, to develop their respective field placement sites. If a member of the MSW Program field education staff becomes aware of a field placement site that does not meet the requirements for MSW field placement, but may be appropriate for a BSW student, the MSW Program field education staff will share that information with the BSW Director of Field Education. Likewise, the BSW Director of Field Education will refer a prospective field placement site to the MSW Program when the site seems more appropriate for an MSW student.

The School of Social Work's professional resources have been extremely beneficial in the development of the BSW Field Education Program. The SSW's extensive network and strong reputation in the community have created many in-roads for the BSW Program. Many times, potential field education sites have been initially identified through these networks and relationships, allowing the BSW Program to create a rich selection of diverse field settings that is always expanding. In this way, the BSW Program can be selective in choosing field placement settings that are compatible with its mission and goals and are capable of setting a strong foundation for students' professional futures.

Simmons College BSW Program field placement sites are selected because they have:

1. An interest in providing baccalaureate social work students with field training that will enhance their academic learning;
2. A commitment to student learning that is compatible with the mission and goals of the Simmons BSW Program, including a commitment to social work values, social justice, and respect for diversity;
3. The organizational stability necessary to address baccalaureate student learning needs and a commitment to partnership with the BSW Program in meeting those needs;
4. A qualified bachelor's or master's-level social worker on staff who has at least 2 years of practice experience who can provide ongoing supervision, support the student's learning process, and act as the student's professional mentor and teacher;
5. The ability to provide the student with meaningful assignments and opportunities designed to develop the knowledge, values, and skills necessary for effective, competent, generalist social work practice;
6. The possibility of hiring BSW graduates, including those students who have completed a field placement at the agency/organization.

Once a potential field placement site is identified, the BSW Director of Field Education contacts the agency to discuss their interest and suitability for student placement. In addition, the Field Director describes the Program's mission and goals, reviews CSWE learning requirements, and outlines expectations for BSW field placement. In this way, opportunities for student field learning are evaluated, and the agency's compatibility with the needs and intentions of the Program are assessed. If all of the Program's requirements for field placement are met by the agency, the Director of Field Education adds the agency to its network of potential field placement settings available to students.

## Qualifications and Expectations of Field Instructors

The Simmons College BSW Program takes seriously the responsibility to ensure that agency field instructors have the necessary credentials and practice experience to make them capable of designing and supporting rich field learning experiences and opportunities for students to develop the knowledge, values, and skills for effective generalist practice. In fulfillment of this responsibility, the BSW Program has the following requirements for field instructors supervising junior and senior students in field placement.

Field instructors (supervisors) must:

1. Hold a CSWE-accredited baccalaureate or master's degree in social work;
2. Have at least 2 years of experience in the field;
3. Be well-respected as a professional social worker in the site organization and the community;
4. Accept the values and ethical standards of the profession as articulated in the *NASW Code of Ethics*;
5. Be professionally committed to the student and see themselves as a mentor and teacher;
6. Accept the responsibilities that come with training a developing professional, including being present at the agency when the student is there and providing the student with meaningful assignments and opportunities;
7. Be committed to the supervisory relationship by providing ongoing guidance, individual weekly supervision (at least one hour per week for seniors and ½ hour per week for juniors), and providing the student with honest, constructive feedback on the student's performance;
8. Embrace a sense of educational partnership with the BSW Program and see their role as critical to the student's progressive development of the knowledge, values, and skills necessary for effective, competent, social work practice.

In order to provide the strongest, most effective educational experience possible to students, the Simmons BSW Program specifically seeks MSW-level social workers with several years of experience as field instructors. These individuals are often colleagues with whom BSW Program faculty members and/or other members of the SSW community have had long-standing professional relationships and can, therefore, feel confident in the field instructor's competence. In some circumstances, the field instructor may be new to the Program, with no established relationships, but possesses the credentials, practice experience, and longevity at the agency that are needed to be able to provide the student with opportunities to engage in field work that will maximize the student's learning. On occasion, the Program may approve a student for field placement with a field instructor who holds a baccalaureate degree in social work, but not an MSW, provided that the individual has several years of practice experience that demonstrates high-quality work. On other occasions, the Program may allow a student to be directly supervised by an experienced professional who holds a related degree in human services, but not a degree in social work, provided that another agency staff member, board member, or consultant who holds an MSW or BSW degree can provide an additional level of overall supervision of the student. In this way, the Program ensures that a social work perspective is reinforced with the



student in cases where the field instructor does not hold a CSWE-accredited baccalaureate or master's social work degree while allowing some flexibility for students to complete their field placement at an agency that provides an ideal social work learning experience but where a direct supervisor with a BSW or MSW is not available.

### **Procedures for Orientation and Placement of BSW Field Students**

The process of placing Simmons BSW students in the field is thoughtful and intentional and begins with orienting students to the expectations and requirements of field placement. Because Simmons BSW students begin their service-learning work immediately upon entering the Program, they are progressively oriented to the linkages between the classroom and the field from the beginning of their educational careers. Discussions about field placement occur early as a regular part of academic advising. In addition, the BSW Director of Field Education meets individually with each BSW student to arrange field placements and to create a long-term, individualized, field placement vision that addresses each student's field learning interests, priorities, and areas of need. Thus, from as early as their freshman year, students are already involved in formal field placement orientation, consultation, and planning and can anticipate their long-term field experiences.

As students progress through the BSW Program, they are gradually oriented to the increasing expectations and requirements of service-learning and field education. Students in service-learning are oriented to the expectations of their placement in formal group meetings with other students, prior to beginning their service-learning work. The process of orienting students to field work intensifies as students prepare to enter the 100-hour junior field placement that occurs during the spring or summer semester. This marks an important time for Simmons BSW students, as they have completed their foundational course and service-learning work, been formally accepted into the BSW Program, and done significant reflection on their personal and professional strengths and needs. Through this process, they begin to anticipate the challenges of the longer, more rigorous junior field placement. In a spirit of partnership, the Director of Field Education works with students early on in their junior year to review their service-learning work, discuss their field placement priorities, desires, and options. Decisions about each student's junior field placement assignment occur through a collaborative process between the student, their academic advisor, and the Director of Field Education. However, all field placement decisions are ultimately made by the Director of Field Education, who takes into account not only the student's wishes, but their strengths and areas needing skill expansion and growth. This process occurs during individual field advising with each student and during formal group field orientation meetings that occur with student cohorts. Once preliminary decisions about junior field placement assignments are made, students have the opportunity to visit the field placement site, learn more about the organization, and interview with their prospective field instructor and other agency staff members. Through this process, the field instructor, student, and Director of Field Education can determine the appropriateness of the match and, most likely, move forward with planning the student's junior field placement experience. At this time, the Agency Agreement is executed between the Simmons BSW Program and the respective field agency. In addition, the field instructor receives a copy of the BSW Field Placement Manual and Junior

Field Placement Packet and is scheduled for field instructor orientation and training, conducted by the BSW Program.

The junior BSW student field placement ultimately sets the foundation for the senior year by providing a vehicle for discussion around the student's preferences and field learning goals. Additionally, it provides a pathway to formally assess each student's readiness for the rigors and challenges of the 425-hour senior year field placement. Students who are formally evaluated as ready to enter the senior field placement begin a process of consultation with the Director of Field Education while they are completing the 100 hour field placement. Similar to the field advising and consultation process that takes place in preparation for the junior field placement, students meet individually with the Director of Field Education to plan a field placement experience that best suits their educational needs. In addition, students meet with the Director of Field Education together as a cohort for group orientation to the general expectations and requirements of senior year field learning. As with the junior year field placement, decisions regarding senior field placement assignments are made collaboratively, integrating both the student's preferences and the Director of Field Education's assessment of the student's strengths and needs. It is the Director of Field Education's responsibility to ensure that each student has field placement opportunities that are appropriately challenging and allow the student to broaden and advance their knowledge and practice skills. Thus, the Director of Field Placement will advise the student on senior field placement opportunities that will enhance the student's current skill set and be most beneficial in helping the student to effectively master the practice behaviors and core competencies required for effective generalist practice. Once preliminary decisions about senior field placement assignments are made, students have the opportunity to visit the field placement site, learn more about the organization, and interview with their prospective field instructor and other agency staff members. Through this process, the field instructor, student, and Director of Field Education can determine the appropriateness of the match and, most likely, move forward with planning the student's senior field placement experience. At this time, the Agency Agreement between the Simmons BSW Program and the respective field agency is completed as a formal demonstration of their joint commitment to the student's field placement experience. The field instructor also receives a copy of the Field Placement Manual and Senior Field Placement Packet and is scheduled for field instructor orientation and training, conducted by the BSW Program. The intent is that, before the end of the junior year, the student has an arranged senior year field placement that both interests them and is designed to meet their specific learning needs. This planning and preparation process allows students to begin their senior year field placement work soon after classes begin in the fall.

### **Orientation and Ongoing Support for Field Instructors**

The Simmons University BSW Program strives to create a field education program that is grounded in a sense of partnership and shared responsibility with field placement settings. In order for field education to be effective, it is critical that agencies and field instructors are oriented to the Program's goals and expectations, trained in the provision of effective field education, and supported by the Program in their ongoing work on behalf of students. To begin this process, all Simmons BSW Program field instructors supervising juniors and seniors are initially oriented to the goals and mission of the Program, CSWE educational standards, and field

education policies and procedures through their early discussions with the Director of Field Education. Soon after agencies are matched with students for field placement, field instructors also receive a copy of the Program's Field Education Manual, which comprehensively outlines, in writing, each of the components of the field education Program. The process of formal orientation, training, and support continues through scheduled meetings, held on campus, at the agency, or by telephone, prior to the beginning of each semester.

Field instructors supervising seniors attend one orientation and training meeting in August. The meeting held in August is designed to orient field instructors and to formally begin to build the relationship between the Program and the agency. During this orientation, BSW Program faculty members review the Program's goals, expectations, and procedures for student field instruction and discuss Program linkages to the *CSWE Educational Policy and Accreditation Standards*. This includes a detailed discussion of the Program's core competencies and practice behaviors and ways to implement student assignments that focus on their progressive mastery of the knowledge, values, and skills of competent generalist practice. In addition, the faculty provides formal training on typical student challenges and concerns, skills of effective mentoring and supervision, and gatekeeping responsibilities. Finally, the forms and documents that relate to each phase of field placement, as well as assessment protocols, are reviewed. This orientation also provides a forum for open discussion and sharing of expertise among field instructors as they anticipate the benefits and potential challenges of field instruction. Because juniors are in field placement during only one semester in the spring or summer, field instructors supervising these students will meet individually with the BSW Director of Field Education during the summer or fall. During that meeting, the Field Manual will be reviewed, and supervision and field requirements and concerns will be discussed.

### **Procedures for Monitoring BSW Students in Field Placement**

The process of monitoring students in field placement is an important one that is intended to ensure that students' field learning needs are being met and that field instructors feel supported in their work on behalf of students. Thus, it is critical that the process be appropriately planned and structured. To set the foundation for field learning, each junior and senior BSW student in field placement completes a Student Learning Contract, in partnership with their field instructor, at the beginning of the field placement experience. This contract outlines key student responsibilities, assignments, and expectations in the field. It also describes specific learning objectives that are aligned with the Program's core competencies and related practice behaviors. For each of the core competencies, students and field instructors develop assignments aimed at providing the student with opportunities to develop emerging knowledge, values and skills. The Learning Contract also specifies the ways in which the student's performance of the required practice behaviors and growing mastery of the core competencies will be measured and assessed. In this way, the Learning Contract not only makes expectations clear, but provides a specific vehicle through which student field learning can be monitored.

As a formal way to monitor students in the field, the Director of Field Education has ongoing contact with each field instructor who is supervising a junior or senior in BSW field placement. This contact occurs through check-in telephone calls and emails and through a formal field visit

with the student and field instructor at the agency once each semester. These meetings provide an opportunity for the student and field instructor to describe the student's learning experience in general, detail the assignments that the student is engaged in, and discuss the student's progressive demonstration of the Program's practice behaviors and mastery of the core competencies. In addition, these meetings provide a forum for the face-to-face discussion of any difficulties that have emerged in the field experience so that a plan can be made to resolve them. The Director of Field Education may decide to make more than one visit to the agency to provide consultation and support to the student and field instructor as needed.

Finally, BSW students in field placement are monitored through their weekly participation in Program courses, Junior Field Seminar, Social Work Field Seminar I & II, and Social Work Senior Seminar. Each of these courses is taken concurrently with some phase of field placement, integrates classroom discussion of the field placement experience into the course content, and has specific required assignments that connect practice and classroom learning. These assignments include field placement journals, process recordings, papers, presentations, and projects.

### **Procedures for Maintaining Field Liaison Contacts with Field Education Settings**

As detailed in the previous section, the Simmons BSW Program maintains ongoing contact with junior and senior field education settings through a series of regular telephone calls, emails, or formal visits to the agency to meet with the field instructor and student. This process is conducted directly by the BSW Director of Field Education, who is ultimately responsible for student field learning. The Simmons BSW Program is small, and therefore, additional field liaisons between the Program and field setting are not utilized. Students and field instructors have direct access to the Director of Field Education and can easily enlist the Director of Field Education for consultation when needed, allowing for a closer level of supervision and support. This can be especially important when difficulties or issues arise in the field placement and need to be resolved quickly. In addition to the ongoing contact that occurs between the Program and the field education setting throughout the semester, formal group meetings with all field instructors are held on campus at the beginning of each semester. These meetings provide orientation, continuity, training, and support for each field instructor and, by extension, the field setting as a whole.

### **Assessment of Student Field Performance**

BSW field learning is ultimately evaluated by the student's demonstration of the practice behaviors and gradual mastery of the core competencies necessary for effective, generalist social work practice. In the Simmons BSW Program, this learning is assessed through multiple evaluation systems. These include course work that is completed in conjunction with service-learning and field placement, and the formal, written evaluation of the student's service-learning and field performance, completed by the agency field instructor at the conclusion of the placement. During the junior and senior field experience, the BSW Director of

Field Education and the field instructor jointly monitor students' ability to demonstrate social work knowledge, values, and skills and the capacity to integrate academic learning with the field experience. Students' emerging practice behaviors and competencies in the field are assessed in the classroom through content and graded assignments that are linked to concurrent courses. For juniors, this includes participation in class discussion, homework assignments, and completion of the student field journal that are part of the Junior Field Seminar course. For seniors, evaluation of field learning occurs in the classroom through participation in class discussion and the completion of multiple graded assignments that are part of the Social Work Field Seminar I & II. These include weekly workbook assignments, student field journal, process recordings, agency papers and presentation. Students in field placement are expected to complete high-quality coursework and ultimately achieve a B or better for each semester.

In addition to the evaluation of field learning that occurs in the classroom, junior and senior field learning is evaluated within the agency setting. This occurs by monitoring the student's progressive mastery of the Program's practice behaviors and core competencies through the successful completion of the goals and assignments outlined in their Student Learning Contract. Student progress is assessed through ongoing, weekly supervision with the agency field instructor and through regular check-in contacts and meetings between the field instructor, student, and BSW Director of Field Education. Through this ongoing process, students' strengths, as well as areas of difficulty and/or gaps in learning can be identified and remedied. Finally, junior and senior BSW students are formally assessed, in writing, by their field instructors at the conclusion of each semester of field placement using the Junior Field Placement Student Assessment and Senior Field Placement Student Assessment, respectively. Each of these assessments has been intentionally linked to the Program's core competencies and designed to measure each of the Program's practice behaviors. Utilizing these assessment questionnaires, field instructors provide an evaluation of the student's field performance in narrative form, highlighting strengths and perceived areas of need. In the case where a student does not meet the minimum requirements for the field, an Education Planning Committee meeting will be convened and the student may be asked to repeat the field placement and/or associated coursework or take other remedial action.

The Senior Field Placement Student Assessment, completed at the end of each semester, directly measures student performance in relation to the Program's practice behaviors and core competencies. Therefore, it provides a focal point for conversation between the student and field supervisor through which future learning and performance can be enhanced. By providing a description and evaluation of the student's strengths and areas needing improvement, this assessment guides student growth from the first to the second semester. In addition, it serves as one of the primary tools used to evaluate a student's readiness for graduation, employment, and graduate study.

### **Assessment of Field Setting Effectiveness**

In addition to the assessment of student learning and achievement in the field, it is critical for Programs to evaluate field setting and instructor effectiveness in providing a rich learning experience where students can integrate the knowledge, values, and skills of generalist social

work practice. In the Simmons BSW Program this is done informally through the Director of Field Education's observation of the field experience, conversations with the student, and interactions with the agency field instructor and other staff members during the course of the placement. In addition, field setting effectiveness is formally evaluated through the Student Evaluation of Field Setting instrument, completed by the student at the conclusion of the placement. This written assessment allows the student to assess the effectiveness of the field setting in meeting their overall learning needs, including the provision of experiences and assignments that allowed the student to learn and demonstrate the practice behaviors and core competencies. In addition, students are able to assess the field instructor's effectiveness in providing ongoing mentorship, guidance, and supervision. The Director of Field Education uses each of these pieces of information to evaluate the field setting and instructor and to determine if the agency will continue to be used as a placement for students. In this way, student learning and field placement effectiveness can be monitored and evaluated, allowing for a strong field education program where knowledge and skill acquisition can be maximized.

### **Identifying Concerns in Field Placement**

There may be occasions when students have concerns about aspects of their placement (e.g. amount of supervision, agency policies, appropriateness of practice-related activities and responsibilities, and/or workload). 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 Director of Field Education early on. The Director of Field Education is available for consultation regarding the problem(s), helping to identify the issues and suggesting steps towards a resolution. If problems persist despite the efforts of the field instructor, student, and Director of Field Education to resolve them, a determination will be made regarding termination of the Field Placement. In the event that a field placement is terminated, a formal review of academic performance and conduct issues may be initiated, as described in this BSW student handbook.

### **Problems in the Field Placement Agency**

If there are problems in the agency that affect student learning (e.g. not enough tasks, insufficient supervision), the Director of Field Education should be notified. The Director of Field Education discusses the difficulties with all involved parties, makes an assessment and collaboratively helps to develop a plan. The agency training director and/or BSW Program Director may join in this process. Plans to improve the situation are always the first step and the Director of Field will remain involved to monitor progress towards changes that are being initiated. If, for example, supervision time has not been adequate, the School would work with the agency to address this problem. If the agency is unable to provide a sufficient level of training and supervision, the student will be placed in a new setting. Concerns Regarding Student Performance and Conduct in Field Placement The School of Social Work requests that the field instructor notify the Director of Field Education promptly regarding any concerns about the student's performance or conduct in the agency. If needed, a meeting of appropriate parties (Director of Field Education, student, field instructor and, at times, the BSW Program Director) will be held to assess and locate areas of difficulty. Plans are generally made to alleviate or resolve problems by carefully

designed and monitored strategies. The outcome of a meeting will include a plan of action, written by the Director of Field Education, with copies distributed to the student and field instructor. Goals set forth will be reviewed periodically. The Director of Field and field instructor remain in close communication with each other and the student throughout this process. The Director of Field Education and BSW Program Director may decide, in consultation with the Associate Dean, to meet with the student to address the concerns raised. The Director of Field Education, or other faculty teaching the field seminar course, will issue an academic warning to address and document the problems highlighted. The instructor develops a revised learning plan as described above. Some incidents of student conduct related to field may warrant a review of academic performance and conduct issues (described in this handbook), as well as immediate termination from a field placement.

### **Termination of Field Placement**

If attempts to resolve the problem fail, a student may be asked to leave the placement. In the case of this occurrence, at the discretion of the Director of Field Education, there are a few possible outcomes:

- a) The student may be placed in a different agency and be asked to extend the required hours.
- b) The student may receive an "F" in their current field seminar course.
- c) The student may be reviewed for academic performance or conduct issues, as described in this handbook.

\*\*termination from field placement could result in termination from the BSW program.

### **Policies and Procedures for Terminating a Student's Enrollment in the BSW Program**

The Simmons University BSW Program is committed to ensuring that only those students who have demonstrated proficiency in the CSWE Core Competencies through coursework and field education enter the field of professional Social Work. This serves as a protection for clients and the Social Work profession and is a necessary component of the provision of ethical Social Work education. It is sometimes necessary to advise a student to reconsider their preferences for social work, to change their major, and to work with the Student Life Office, and Associate Dean for Student Life to evaluate additional options. Decisions to terminate a student from the BSW Program are made jointly among Program faculty, in consultation with the SSW Director. The basis for this decision will be based upon one or more of the following:

1. Failure to maintain the academic performance standards of the Program: BSW students must maintain at least a 2.0 overall grade point average, and achieve a C or better in each required Social Work core course (including courses with a SOCI designation);
2. Failure in Field Placement: BSW students must receive a satisfactory grade from their instructor for SW 345X Junior Virtual Field Experience Seminar course and a satisfactory *Student Field Assessment* from their field supervisor at the end of each term of the senior year placement;

3. Violation of the [Simmons University Code of Conduct](#), including cheating or plagiarism;
4. Failure to uphold professional Social Work values and ethics as articulated in the [NASW Code of Ethics](#);
5. Failure to uphold the [SSW Standards for Professional Practice Education](#) (Self Awareness, Openness and Willingness to Learn, Interpersonal Skills, Communication Skills, Critical Thinking Skills, Presentation of Self, and Self Care)

### **Student Appeals Process/Grievance Procedure**

BSW students who disagree with decisions made regarding their academic and professional performance will have the right to appeal these decisions. The appeals process for any student in the BSW Program is as follows:

1. Any student who has a grievance with a BSW faculty member or faculty committee should provide written documentation of the student's grievance to the particular faculty member or committee and attempt to resolve the issue;
2. If the student is unable to obtain a satisfactory resolution of the grievance with the faculty member or committee involved, they student should provide documentation of the grievance, in writing, to the BSW Program Director. Students submitting documentation of a grievance will be contacted by the BSW Program Director within 7 days for a consultation meeting. After consulting with the student and any other involved parties, the BSW Director will render a decision regarding the grievance within 10 days;
3. In the event that the student does not obtain satisfactory resolution of a grievance within the BSW Program, the student has the option of contacting the SSW Dean and providing documentation of the grievance in writing. Following a consultation meeting with the student to review the grievance, the Dean will render a decision, which shall be final.



**Nondiscrimination Policy**

In keeping with the values and purposes of the social work profession, Simmons University BSW Program values diversity and seeks to provide a learning environment where students feel respected, affirmed, and supported. The Program does not discriminate unlawfully on the basis of race, color, national origin, age, sex, disability, sexual orientation, religion, ancestry, genetic information, gender identity, gender expression, or veteran status in admission to, access to, treatment in, or employment in its programs and activities. The BSW Program administers its educational programs and activities in accordance with the requirements and implementing regulations of Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, Title IX of the Educational Amendments of 1972, the Age Discrimination Act of 1975, Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, and Title III of the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990.

In keeping with the Program's values and University policy, discrimination and harassment by any member of the faculty, staff, or student body against any other will be condemned and redressed. If a student has a complaint about unlawful discrimination or harassment, the student should report their concerns immediately to the BSW Program Director.