



West Texas A&M

U N I V E R S I T Y

Social Work

Field Practicum Manual

for the

MSSW Program

at

West Texas A&M University

Department of Psychology, Sociology, and Social Work

West Texas A&M University (WTAMU) serves people of all ages, regardless of socioeconomic level, race, color gender, religion, disability or national origin. WTAMU is an affirmative action/equal employment opportunity institution

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Social Work Program

Mission Statement, Goals and Objectives

The **mission** of the MSSW program at WTAMU is to prepare advanced generalist practitioners who are equipped with an eclectic knowledge base, professional values, and a wide range of advanced skills to assume the professional responsibilities of change agents in our rapidly changing, culturally diverse, global society. She or he should enhance the social functioning and interactions of her/his client systems, help clients develop resources, alleviate human suffering in the pursuit of the improvement of quality of life and conditions of people living in the rural Texas panhandle region, the state, the nation, and the world.

The **goals** of the MSSW program at West Texas A&M University are to educate students who:

- *Become Advanced Generalist Practitioners;*
- *Use a variety of theoretical perspectives;*
- *Develop their interventions at all levels of systems practice, and*
- *Are knowledgeable in the unique aspects of rural communities.*

The goals of the social work program at WTAMU complement and support the mission of the program and are directly derived from that mission. To be effective change agents in a rapidly changing society, social workers must become advanced general practitioners, use a variety of theoretical perspectives, develop interventions at all levels of practice, and for our region of the country, they must be knowledgeable in the unique aspects of rural communities. All of these components work in concert with the knowledge base gleaned from the courses required, and with the self-awareness that is cultivated throughout the curriculum.

The focus of **advanced generalist practice** is consistent with the mission and goals of the social work program. The goals, derived from the competencies, reflect the need to prepare practitioners who can practice across varying levels of practice. Advanced generalist graduates will be prepared to synthesize and apply a broad range of social work theories, determining those that best fit each specific client situation.

Graduates will be prepared with advanced practice skills which allow them to:

- differentially assess problems,
- employ specialized interventions,
- develop more rigorous evaluation techniques, and
- establish themselves as leaders

with systems of all sizes and levels of complexity.

This diversity, built upon the generalist foundation, but with a greater depth, breadth and ability to work independently, will prepare them to be advanced generalist practitioners in rural social work. This concentration is consistent with the needs and the demographics of the large geographical area, mostly rural, surrounding the location of the WTAMU campus. The ability to work with individuals and families, with groups, and with communities is essential. Students will be prepared to assume their place as change agents working within these different levels of practice.

Social Work Field Instruction Manual

Purpose of the Manual

The purpose of this manual is to provide essential information and guidelines to students, Field Instructors, agency administrators, and others involved with the graduate social work program at West Texas A&M University.

Purpose of Field Instruction

Field experience is a means of integrating academic knowledge of social welfare services and delivery systems with the student's innate and acquired abilities. It is the opportunity to measure the "possible" with "reality" and to attempt the ultimate...to be of meaningful service to other human beings, individually and collectively.

Description of the Field Instruction Program

The graduate Field Instruction Program is designed to provide students with practice experiences commensurate with the individual's academic and experiential preparation. Field Instruction 5488 and 5498 (Foundation courses) are designed to provide the student with social work activities that reinforce student knowledge of basic fundamentals in social work practice. Advanced Practice 6397, 6398, and 6399 (the second year courses) are intended to provide the student with the opportunity to build upon the knowledge and experience of the first placement and to focus upon the development and enhancement of skills in social work practice.

Time in the Field

At the Foundation level, students are required to complete 400 clock hours of internship in assigned agencies for a total of 8 credit hours. This internship is divided into two four-credit hour courses. Grades for both courses are Pass/Fail. The flexibility in grading is intended to provide the student freedom to explore personal strengths and weaknesses without affecting the student's grade point average.

At the Advanced level, students are required to complete 500 clock hours of internship in assigned agencies for a total of 9 credit hours. This internship is divided into three three-credit-hour courses. Grades for these courses are also Pass/Fail. The student receives a written evaluation of each placement that may be utilized in the provision of references for employment.

Field credit is not given for previous life or work experience, even if completed in an approved social work agency. Rarely will students be allowed to complete their field hours in an agency where they are currently employed. If this is approved, there must be clear differentiation between field assignments and supervision and employment assignments and supervision and the student will be responsible for showing this differentiation.

Field Instruction Goals

The overall goals of the practicum experience reflect the mission and the goals of the social work program. The field experience is designed to accomplish the following goals. Upon completion of the first 400 hours of field instruction.

1. Students will be able to enter the Advanced MSSW program having mastered a generalist perspective and generalist competencies which prepare them for advanced practice.
2. Students will be able to practice in a wide variety of settings and with clients of various sizes and diverse populations.
3. Students will be knowledgeable about the social context of practice, the changing nature of those contexts, the behavior of organizations, and the dynamics of change.
4. Students will uphold social work values and ethics that guide their practice, and
5. Students will be aware of their professional responsibility towards their own growth and development and the growth and development of their profession.

Upon completion of the Advanced 500 hours of field instruction

1. Students will be able to enter the profession having become entry level Advanced Generalist practitioners.
2. Students will be able to practice in a multitude of settings and with systems of various sizes and diverse populations, competent in a variety of social work roles.
3. Students will be adept at negotiating the social context of practice, the changing nature of those contexts, the behavior of organizations, and the dynamics of change using this knowledge to benefit their clients and to effect change in systems.
4. Students will uphold social work values and ethics that guide their practice, and,
5. Students will be actively working towards their own growth and development and the growth and development of the social work profession.

Field Instruction Objectives

The overall objective of the field internship is to provide a practical, service-oriented experience in which the learner's knowledge, skills, and personal qualities can be demonstrated and applied, enhanced and appraised. Field Education has been identified as the signature pedagogy of social work education; as such, the internship experience continues and reinforces connections between theory, classroom experiences, and the role of practitioner.

Specific field instruction objectives include the following:

- Identification as a professional social worker and conducting oneself accordingly.
- Application of social work ethical principles to guide professional practice.
- Application of critical thinking to inform and communicate professional judgments.
- Engaging diversity and difference in practice.
- Advancing human rights and social and economic justice.
- Engaging in research-informed practice, and practice-informed research.
- Application of knowledge of human behavior in the social environment.
- Engaging in policy practice to advance social and economic well-being and to deliver effective social services.
- Responding to contexts that shape practice.
- Engaging with, assessing, intervening, and evaluating individuals, families, groups, organizations, and communities.

In order to accomplish the goals of field placement, students will develop personalized goals and objectives (a learning contract) focusing upon their personal growth areas. Students will develop their personal goals and objectives to specifically address three areas, including gaining new knowledge, enhancing specific generalist practice skills and personal growth goals during their practicum experience.

Admission and Criteria into Field Instruction

Student selection and assignment includes meeting the minimum standards and requirements for admission for Field Instruction as set out below.

1. The student must have satisfactorily completed all academic prerequisites for Field Instruction. (See Social Work Field Application in Field Instruction Manual). An overall cumulative GPA of 3.0 is required for admission into Field Practicum courses.
2. An appraisal of the student's motivation and capacity to meet the goals and objectives of the Social Work program will be assessed by the Field Instruction Admission Committee. Whenever questions arise as to the suitability of a given student for field placement, the issue will be resolved by a majority evaluation of the admission committee, with consultation, if necessary from

the department head. A recommendation of denial of admittance into Field Practice will be briefly prepared in writing for confidential inclusion into the student's file.

3. For the purpose of evaluating potential candidates for entry into Field Instruction, the procedures will focus on the following: (a) protecting the client served by the student from unwitting and unintentional abuse or harm; (b) promoting student success; (c) assurance that Social Work Program at West Texas A&M University and the Social Work profession are well represented.

The Field Instruction Program is designed to provide students with practice experiences commensurate with the individual's academic and experiential preparation.

Foundation students will complete two field practicum courses, SOCW 5488 and SOCW 5498 for a total of 400 clock hours of internship. The courses are worth four credits each for a total of 8 credit hours of field instruction. SOCW 5488 will be completed in the second semester of the foundation year, while SOCW 5498 will be completed in the third semester of the foundation year.

Advanced standing students (and second year non-advanced standing students) will complete 500 clock hours of internship across three semesters. SOCW 6397, SOCW 6398, and SOCW 6399 will be completed in the second, third, and fourth semesters of the advanced program, respectively. One placement will incorporate experience with individuals and families, group work or mezzo level practice, and also administrative or macro level practice. These foci are important for the MSSW students to become advanced generalist practitioners within the rural context of the MSSW program.

The Social Work Program at WTAMU contracts with a wide variety of social agencies in the Texas Panhandle to provide field experience to social work students. The social agencies involved with field placement vary from medical and clinical settings to social service and community center settings offering the student a wide range of social work experiences.

The foundation level (non-advanced standing) field instruction experience places emphasis on basic fundamental knowledge for social work practice. The overall content of field instruction relates to the total social work curriculum by providing, under direct field instruction supervision and classroom instruction, a solid foundation and knowledge of the generalist approach to practice including:

- social work skills and values;
- social work practice skills with individuals, families, groups, and communities;
- social work intervention skills; and
- communication and relationship skills.

Field experience intensifies in depth as the student progresses through the levels of social work field instruction. The two courses of field instruction at the foundation level provide measurable integrated learning experiences. Students are actively and directly involved in pursuing preparation for a wide range of social work activities and translating these learning experiences to deeper understanding and development.

The second year field experiences build upon the foundation level field placements by providing a varied experience in different levels of social work practice. By focusing on different levels of practice, MSSW students will gain valuable experience in advanced generalist practice skills. These experiences may all occur within the same agency, or students may be placed in different agencies to benefit fully from

exposure to different levels of practice. Additionally, field experience provides a valuable opportunity for self-awareness and professional relationship development.

The responsibility for the field instruction and education provided to the student in the field placement rests jointly with the agency field instructor, field director, and the field liaison of field instruction. The student is responsible for making the best possible use of the opportunity provided.

- (1) Students are given assignments balanced in such a way as to give a general exposure: agency function and clientele served.
- (2) Field experience includes the opportunity for meaningful and direct services to clients where the student is expected to develop relationships and to strengthen assessment and service skills.

Process of Obtaining a Placement

Students are required to complete an application for field instruction, a form that provides confirmation of the student's eligibility for field instruction. The Field Director reviews the applications, ascertains the availability of placements within the agencies, and determines approval of field placement.

The student makes an appointment with the Field Director. A joint decision by student and Field Director determines the appropriate placement options and the student then goes to interview with the agencies. Once the interviews are completed, the student informs the Field Director of the placement he or she would like. In the event a student is accepted and accepts the field placement, the process ends with the student informing the agency of their choice and the completion of the disposition form. The student who is not accepted or does not accept the field placement schedules additional interviews and repeats the process. The Field Director will send out an official email informing both the student and the agency that they have been assigned to each other for the upcoming semesters.

Grading of Field Practicum

The grade for all field instruction courses is pass/fail. The reason for this is to allow the student the opportunity to grow in "areas" that cannot be easily assessed and graded in a "letter grade" format. In addition, it allows the student more freedom in discussing weakness of their work with agency and faculty supervisors.

Removal of a Student from Field Placement

The following are grounds to remove a student from field:

1. Failure to maintain confidentiality about a client as mandated by agency policy and/or the NASW Code of Ethics.
2. Failure to abide by the NASW Code of Ethics.
3. An attempt to harm oneself.
4. An attempt to harm someone else.
5. Repeated tardiness at the agency and/or tardiness without notification.
6. Repeated absences from the agency and/or tardiness without notification.
7. Repeated change in schedule field hours without prior approval from the field supervisor and notifying field faculty.

8. Inappropriate behavior in connection with the field placement. **Inappropriate behavior as listed in the official Code of Student Life, NASW Code of Ethics, and/or the human resource policies of the placement agency.**
9. Failure to exhibit adequate knowledge, communication and interpersonal skills.

The final decision regarding removal from field will be made by the Field Director, with documentation from the Field Instructor, Field Director, and agency. The student may appeal the decision following the guidelines in the official Code of Student Life.

Knowledge Objectives

Students will develop knowledge objectives that relate to the following:

- (1) To develop and use an orderly theoretical framework of knowledge of people and the environmental influence upon them. To understand client systems (individual, group and community) and their problem situations.
- (2) To develop knowledge and understanding of social welfare programs, policies, and resources in order to use them constructively in helping clients solve problems and activate desirable goals or changes.
- (3) To gain first-hand knowledge and understanding of the policy, function, philosophy and method of operation of the specific agency or institution assigned.
- (4) To increase understanding of the basic principles of the helping process in order to understand accurately and objectively the person, the problem and the process through which services are extended.

Performance Objectives

Students will develop performance objectives that relate to the following:

- (1) To demonstrate skill in the disciplined use of relationships with clients and professional and non-professional associates, which reflects understanding of the knowledge, values, and skills taught through the curriculum.
- (2) To demonstrate ability to apply the principle of social work methods in mutual efforts with clients and other personnel to effect change. Specific evidence of this skill will be demonstrated as the student:
 - a. demonstrates skill in interviewing and forming effective helping relationships;
 - b. exhibits a mature, responsible approach to his/her role as a helping person;
 - c. gains understanding of community resources and activities and is able to use them effectively;
 - d. is able to use the policy and function of the agency effectively with clients in their personal, family or economic needs;
 - e. develops proper work habits; and
 - f. develops appreciation of the research method for increasing knowledge and testing utility of existing help-services and methods.

Personal Objectives

Goals that the individual student might identify as desirable personal objectives could include the following:

- (1) Capacity for relationships. This aim will be reflected in:
 - a. the ability to get along well with agency staff;
 - b. the ability to relate to the Field Instructor in a positive, meaningful and growth-producing way and the ability to use criticism constructively;
 - c. relationships to other persons and professionals who are also providing services to the client and
 - d. relationships to assigned clientele that are founded on respect, warmth, objective concern, and the desire to be of help.
- (2) Attitude. The student's attitude toward the field placement agency, clientele, supervision, the profession, and to life itself have an important bearing on the internship. Students should be receptive to learning experiences provided by the agency or institution. Students are expected to take the initiative for acquiring knowledge which will enhance their effectiveness at the field placement.

In their work with clients, students are expected to pursue the development and strengthening of attitudes related to the following social work principles: acceptance, objectivity, confidentiality, client self-determination, and being non-judgmental. Students are also expected to understand and align themselves with the goals and functions of the agency in which they are placed and with the principles, ethics and goals of the social work profession.

- (3) Sensitivity. Students are expected to develop the ability to perceive, sense and observe the perceptions and feelings of others.
- (4) Perceptions and Judgment. The goal of this objective is to become skilled in relating one's perceptions to objective criteria and basing one's judgment of situations, circumstances and needs upon sound, objective facts.
- (5) Self-Awareness. Self-awareness is a never-ending goal of examining one's own strengths, weaknesses and areas for growth, and understanding and how these affect relationships with others. This also involves the development of the ability to use supervision and consultation in developing awareness of one's own performance and to take responsibility for continuing education and practice development.
- (6) Communication. Students should develop the capacity for receptive listening and the ability to effectively communicate their ideas in writing (recording, correspondence, etc.) and verbally (with clients, in supervisory conferences and in participation in agency staff meetings, conferences, etc.).

Organizing Principles

Since Field Instruction is provided in a variety of agency and institutional settings, and organizational operations differ, it is expected that the accomplishment of the objectives of Field Instruction will necessarily vary in ways peculiar to the particular Field Instructor and agency setting in which the student performs. Nevertheless, the examination of some generic principles that apply to all settings will be helpful. It may be helpful to view these principles in two ways: (1) the academic framework from which Field Instruction operates and (2) the operational framework in achievement of the goals.

Academic Framework

- Field education is the signature pedagogy of social work education.
- Field instruction is educationally directed and student oriented.
- The student is provided an opportunity for practical experience in, examining and developing and applying the knowledge, values, and skills imparted in the classroom.
- The student is provided opportunity to assess the agency, its program and its function within the community, state and national systems of social and welfare services.

Operational Framework

- Individualization of the student's educational needs.
- Ordering of learning experiences to begin with specifics and move toward generalization.
- Progression from assignments of rather limited and discreet practice tasks to those more complex.
- Provision for gradual assumption of responsibilities.
- Progression from tasks which may be familiar to understanding and working with new, unfamiliar knowledge or processes.

Administration of Field Instruction

Criteria for Selecting Agencies for the Field Practicum:

- Commitment to social work education, including field instruction
- Delivery of high quality of services to clients, and sound administration to support the program.
- Participation in the community.
- Adherence to the ethical values of the profession.
- Willingness to engage students in wide range of field experiences, providing them with opportunities to use a variety of interventions with clients, targets, and action systems from a broad spectrum of socio-economic backgrounds and cultural orientation.
- Willingness to place primary focus on the educational experiences for the students; the agency should not be dependent on students to maintain the agency's programs.
- Provision of adequate office space, clerical assistance, telephone, and supplies.
- Willingness to provide qualified personnel to teach students with firm provisions to safeguard their time for this assignment and to maintain a reasonable degree of continuity in field teaching.
- Openness to innovation, research and evaluation.
- The morale of the agency should be conducive to learning.
- The agency should be in full compliance with Title VI of the Civil Rights Law.
- Willingness to enter into a written contractual agreement between the agency and the school.

Criteria for the Selection of Field Instructors

- Master's Degree in Social Work or equivalent degree and/or experience.
- Evidence of involvement in continuing education.
- Skill and knowledge in practice, including a thorough knowledge of the Agency and a degree of autonomy in practice.
- Previous experience in supervision or field instruction is preferred.
- Completion of a course on field instruction is desired.
- Professional interest in and motivation for field instruction.
- Ability to conceptualize, analyze, synthesize, generalize and communicate.
- Potential, at least, for joy and competency in teaching.
- Acceptance of educational responsibility, including the proper use of authority, the ability to evaluate, and willingness to collaborate with the school.

- Personality that will provide an acceptable role model for students.
- Adequate time available for field instruction.
- Belief that students who satisfactorily complete the master's social work degree have competence in working with client, target, and action systems.
- Ability to relate to students from varying backgrounds and to understand them.
- Strong identification with social work and concern about social issues.

In some cases, a Field Instructor is selected who does not have the Master's Degree in Social Work. Usually, this exception is made for a person who has a Master's Degree (or the equivalent) in some related field, or for an experienced BSW caseworker who is designated by a MSW to work closely with the student. Exceptions may also be made for a person who possesses some exceptional qualities as an instructor or a person knowledgeable and involved in "grass root social programs" that give merit to the assignment of students to this person. To ensure a social work focus of field instruction where the Field Instructor is not a qualified social worker, the Field Director may become more involved with the student and the Field Instructor during the field experience.

Procedures for Faculty Monitoring of the Practicum

The degree of faculty involvement in Field Practicum depends upon several factors including: experience with the agency and instructors providing practicum, individual needs of students and unforeseen circumstances. Agency and telephone visits are used by the Field Director to coordinate and facilitate the educational needs of the student. Field-integrating seminars are scheduled throughout the semester to provide the student access to other students' experiences, to share mutual concerns and to assist in the integration of practice with theory.

Mechanisms for Obtaining Field Instructors' Input into the Program

Agency Field Instructors are given opportunities to provide input into the program through both formal and informal channels. Optimum benefits from a Field Practicum can be achieved only when there is a partnership approach between the agency and school to provide the student with individualized experiences suited to the student's needs and desires. Through this relationship, input from agency supervisors and students is encouraged. Formal input is provided by an Advisory Council that consists of agency representatives. Written evaluations are conducted by the students and the Field Instructors at the completion of each practicum experience.

Orientation Sessions and Seminars for Field Instructors

Each agency Field Instructor is provided a copy of the Field Instruction Manual which includes a detailed description of the field instruction component. Orientation for new agency Field Instructors is primarily an individualized process provided by the Field Director. A workshop is scheduled at least once each year where students, agency Field Instructors and faculty work together in an effort to strengthen the field instruction component. Ongoing communication between faculty and agency Field Instructors provides a continuity of the field instruction effort.

Roles and Responsibilities

A formal contractual agreement between all field instruction agencies and West Texas A&M University is required.¹ The responsibility for the proper training and education offered the student in his field placement rests jointly with the Field Instructor and the Field Director. The student has the responsibility to make the best possible use of the opportunity provided. The following lists of responsibilities are intended to be used as a guide, keeping in mind the goals and objectives of Field Instruction.

Field Instruction Agency

In order for the Field Instructor to carry out these responsibilities effectively, it is assumed that the field placement agency or institution will provide an environment conducive to the student's professional development and will:

- Accept the student in the spirit of a staff member rather than that of a second-class citizen in the agency.
- Provide the student with adequate physical facilities and needed work items.
- Provide sufficient time for the Field Instructor to carry out his or her responsibilities to the student and the university.

Field Instructor

Once the student arrives at the agency, the Field Instructor coordinates the student's orientation to the agency and the initiation of field assignments. Regular supervisory conferences, held no less than twice monthly, may be supplemented with additional brief supervisory contacts, depending on the student's needs.

Educational issues, as well as administrative issues, encountered in the supervision of students must be identified as early as possible and, when necessary, a remedial plan of action will be developed with the student and Field Director. Whenever the Field Instructor is uncertain about the gravity of her/his observations, the Field Director should be consulted as soon as possible. Unethical conduct on the part of the student should be reported immediately. (Please refer to policy on removal of students from field placement.)

Field Instructor responsibilities include:

¹ See Student Placement Contract in the Appendix.

- To orient the student to the agency, staff, and field instruction staff. This includes all relevant personnel policies and procedures, dress code, record keeping, agency documentation, etc.
- To identify for the student the parameters of her or his role and responsibilities within the agency.
- To actively collaborate with the student in the development, implementation, and on-going use of an educational contract.
- To take overall responsibility for the student's educational experience in the agency and coordinate any experience delegated to other staff members.
- To provide the necessary experiences to meet the educational goals, such as selecting appropriate cases or groups for instructional purpose and to selecting other meaningful learning experiences, such as participation in staff meetings, conferences, visits to other agencies, assigned readings, etc.
- To serve as a professional role model.
- To help the student understand and appropriately use the network of human services available to the agency and its clients.
- To formally evaluate, with the student, the progress of the student at mid-term and at the semester's end.
- To provide regularly scheduled and uninterrupted supervisory conferences for the purpose of enhancing the student's educational learning and practice skills, and to offer the student on-going feedback on the his/her performance.
- To provide necessary training and monitoring of student's compliance with safety policies and procedures for conducting home visits, interacting with potentially difficult clients, and handling emergencies. Students and Field Instructors should work out a plan, in advance, for what to do and how to get help if a student feels unsafe.
- To notify the Field Liaison as soon as possible should problems regarding the student arise in the field setting.
- To participate with the Social Work Program in a continuing mutual effort to upgrade and enhance the Field Program and to attend seminars or workshops held for Field Instructors.
- To participate with the Social Work Program as faculty whenever possible by sharing their expertise in specific areas.
- To facilitate a positive, cooperative working relationship between the agency and the Social Work Program, including communicating to the Field Director any planned or unexpected changes which would impact actual or future supervision of students.

Field Director / Liaison Responsibilities and Duties

The Field Director is responsible for the overall design and implementation of the field practicum experience. The Field Director works closely with the Field Liaison (If available) to provide professional social work education. The Field Director evaluates the field curriculum and monitors all aspects of the practicum experience. Responsibilities include:

- To orient the field agencies, Field Instructors, the Field Liaison, and students to the goals and objectives of the Social Work Program, specifically the Field Practicum objectives.
- Assure congruence between the MSSW program curriculum and the field education program.
- Assure congruence of field education with the CSWE accreditation standards.
- To establish and monitor Field Practicum policies, procedures, and evaluation processes.
- To prepare the student for Field Instruction and assign and give final approval for student placement.
- Identify, develop, and maintain effective partnerships with field agencies.
- Conduct periodic evaluations of practicum methodology and outcomes and initiate appropriate changes.
- Develop and provide oversight of strategies for recruitment, development, and training of field liaisons
- Supervise all field liaisons/instructors.
- Provide oversight of the development of all written and electronic practicum materials, including the field manuals, student's forms, and marketing.
- Oversee utilization of the online software system for student forms and the agency.
- Establish new contracts with agencies.
- To plan seminars for all Field Instructors designed to assist them in their efforts to provide experiences and supervision in line with student learning objectives.
- To plan recognition events for field agencies and Field Instructors.
- To conduct a formal evaluation of the student at the mid-point and at the end of the placement experience. These meetings are conducted along with the Field Liaison and Field Instructors.
- To review student journals and assignments as specified in the syllabus.
- To assign the student's grade.
- To jointly review the student's progress with the Field Instructor and Field Liaison.
- To act as liaison or mediator between the student and the agency.
- To respond quickly to concerns of the agency or student regarding the suitability of the placement.
- To meet with the Field Instructor/liaison and the student two times during the placement; once at the mid-point and once near the end of the student's placement. Meetings may be in person or by phone.

Field Liaison

The Field Liaison's role is to provide support to both the student, the field site, and field director throughout the course of the internship. Field Liaisons collect the learning agreements, help students and sites problem solve when issues arise, conduct one site visit per academic year and contact check in's. The Field Liaison monitors and evaluates the educational process, supports and mentor's students on their practice and professional development, and provides support to agencies in the form of consultation, mediation, advocacy, problem solving and negotiation.

- The Field Liaison is directly responsible to the Director of Field Education, who has overall responsibility for the field program. Responsibilities include:
- Help pertaining to academic difficulties.
- Instruction within the classroom.
- Involvement in the placement process; final approval by the Field Director
- Assurance of adequate caseload and other learning experiences in the practicum.
- Provision of liaison services between school and agency.
- Consultation around field related problems; be available to the student and field director if problems arise. If necessary, make additional visits to the agency or meet separately with the student/agency for consultation.
- Conduct midterm and final evaluations for students.
- Review, approve, and sign the student learning plan, evaluations, and time sheets.
- Contribute ideas for innovation and upgrading of the field practicum and for expansion into new agencies and practice fields.
- Assess the quality of placement experiences and make recommendations to the field director about retention of agency placement sites. Evaluate the quality of placements at the end of the year.
- To jointly review the students' progress with the field director.
- Aid in the reviewing of student's journals an assignment as specified in the syllabus.
- To keep the field director apprised of all relevant developments in the student's placement.
- Participate in faculty meetings related to curriculum development of the field practicum and concurrent classes.

To clarify an additional point, the Field Director works in collaboration with the Field Liaison to ensure that materials delivered in seminars and via assignments are congruent, timely, applicable, and according to CSWE standards. The Field Director is **not** the supervisor of the Field Liaison. If there is any concerns in regards to grading of assignments, or the delivery of the class materials, the student is requested to adhere to the general standard of pursuing remedy. Please attempt to direct the concerns to the Instructor on record for the class, whether that may be the Field Director or the Field Liaison, if that is not successful, to then approach the MSSW Program Director.

Student Responsibilities and Duties

Although the role expectations of the student will differ in some respects considering the diversity of agencies and individual characteristics of each student, all students are expected to meet the following responsibilities:

- To satisfy the application and screening procedures as outlined in Section VI of this guide.

- To arrange and participate in a pre-placement interview with the potential Field Agency and Field Instructor and work out a preliminary program for Field Instruction prior to placement in the agency.
- To adhere to professional social work ethics and to conform to usual standards and practices of the agency.²
- To meet work requirements as scheduled with the agency and as required by the University for satisfactory completion of Field Instruction.
- To take initiative in using the field instruction experience for the development and strengthening of Social Work knowledge and skills.
- To discuss with the Field Instructor, as a first step, any conflict developing in the placement.
- **STUDENTS ARE NO LONGER ALLOWED TO TRANSPORT CLIENTS AT ANY TIME!**

² See NASW Code of Ethics in the Appendix.

Field Placement Entry Process

Successful field experience benefits everyone involved: the students, the agencies, the University and the clients who probably have received more intensive, closely supervised service than would have been otherwise available. Since success more frequently follows careful planning, the following suggestions for the agency and the student are given for consideration.

Agency Responsibilities

Orientation to the Agency

Although the student will have visited with the Field Instructor and have prior knowledge of the agency, there is still a certain strangeness the first few days in a new setting that may be partially alleviated with a complete orientation to the agency. Some orientation procedures are quite informal, while some agencies have a structured, routine orientation process that all employees are required to complete prior to any “on the job” activities.

It is important for the students to receive a thorough orientation to the agency or institution. The student should become familiar with the essential details of the history of the organization, any legal aspects of services performed, and what people are served and why. Students particularly need to know how they will be treated and any limitations they may be confronted with as students. Another item of importance to the student is to have a physical location of his/her own. Although space availability varies depending upon the agency, the type of service provided, etc., optimally a room, a desk, or a table somewhere for administrative tasks, study, and relaxation should be provided.

Field Experiences

The first weeks of placement will normally consist of a gradual breaking-in of the student through reading of introductory material, observations of various social work activities and some participation of routine in-house work with clients, receptionist type activities, etc. When the Field Instructor determines the student ready, specific duties of service to individuals, groups, and community should be assigned relative to the student’s field placement level (first or second level placement) and capacity for assimilating the social work concepts to be taught.

Field experience objectives will be reviewed with the student periodically to determine the extent to which the student has become familiar or competent in relation to the objectives. A comparison of earlier case experiences and written work should reflect tangible evidence of the learning that has taken place.

Student goals and objectives (contract for learning) will be reviewed with the student at mid-term and at the end of the semester, prior to the Field Liaison's or Field Director's visit.

Student

The student must recognize the need to assume responsibility for maximizing the field experience. The student should develop his/her individual learning pattern to help achieve fundamental competence in self-awareness and the use of self in the delivery of social services. The student should recognize the need for review of academic work completed and the need for further study as appropriate to the field experiences, case assignments, etc. Organization of work is essential. Information (data gathering) is necessary both about the client and of the resources available for use. A plan of operation is needed and the following items should serve as a framework for operation:

- (1) Community orientation is one of the tools of the profession.
- (2) The student must work within the framework of the agency and its services.
- (3) The student must work within his/her own limitations and should seek to expand his/her abilities.
- (4) The client deserves the student's best effort.
- (5) Referral of a client to a community resource is not always a simple task.
- (6) Use of supervision is a skill that must be nurtured and developed as any other skill.

Evaluation of Field Practice

Evaluation of field instruction is an on-going process by both the Field Instructor and the Field Director.

The Field Instructor will be asked to conduct a formal evaluation of the student at midterm and the end of the placement experience. It is encouraged for the student to be involved in the evaluation process.

The Field Instructor and Field Director will jointly review the student's progress as appropriate. The Field Director has final responsibility for assignment of the student's grade.

General Policies

Completion of Hours and Absence from Field Placement

- (1) All students are expected to complete the requisite number of hours in field. If this is not going to be accomplished within the time frame of a semester, the Field Director must be notified immediately to discuss possible arrangements.
- (2) If a student must be absent from field, he/she is responsible for calling the Field Instructor. The Field Instructor needs to inform the Field Director of any concerns regarding student absence.
- (3) If a student is absent for a significant period of time, the following options will be considered:
 - a. Withdrawal from the practicum by officially dropping the course(s), with the consent of the Field Director.
 - b. Taking an “incomplete” and finishing the next semester that field placement is offered. (Incompletes are only offered in rare circumstances, generally relating to circumstances beyond the student’s control.)
 - c. Earning a failing grade.
- (4) Holidays: Students may take all school holidays and whatever holidays are observed by the agency. If the student elects to work through a holiday, such as Spring Break, the hours will count toward the required clock hours. Holidays do not count toward the student’s hours unless he/she works.

Change of Placement

The following are policies regarding the change of students from an agency or organization:

- (1) If the student views the agency match as unworkable:
 - a. The student must talk with the Field Director about the proposed move. The Director, student and Field Instructor will then discuss the issues involved. Attempts will be made to explore solutions that can be achieved within the agency.
 - b. If the decision is made to move the student, the Field Director will make arrangements for an alternative placement site. Although this must be a thoughtful decision, the sooner it can be finalized, the better.
- (2) Should an agency request the removal of a student, for whatever reason:
 - a. The Field Director will remove the student within a time frame which is agreeable to the agency.

- b. Either prior to, or after removal of a student from an agency, depending on the urgency of the removal and/or the agency concerns, the Field Director must discuss with the student the circumstances which led to the agency's request.
- c. If the agency simply wished to explore whether a student should be removed or whether the situation is remediable, the Field Director will immediately respond with a conference.

Removal of a Student from Field Placement

The following are grounds to remove a student from field:

- Failure to maintain confidentiality about a client, as mandated by Agency policy and/or the NASW code of Ethics.
- Failure to abide by the NASW Code of Ethics.
- An attempt to harm oneself.
- An attempt to harm someone else.
- Repeated tardiness at the agency and/or tardiness without notification.
- Repeated absences from the agency and/or absence without notification.
- Repeated change in scheduled field hours without prior approval.
- Inappropriate behavior in connection with the field placement.

The Field Director will make the final decision regarding removal from field, with documentation from the Field Liaison, the Field Instructor and Agency. The student may appeal the decision following the guidelines in the official WTAMU catalog.

Whether the student will be allowed to return to field in the same or a different agency would depend on the seriousness of the incident and/or the ability of the student to work through the problem. It will be the Field Director's responsibility to work with the Field Liaison, the Field Instructor and the student around the issues and, if possible, to formulate conditions for a return to field.

Unsatisfactory Progress in Field Placement

When a student is not progressing at a satisfactory rate:

- The Field Instructor and/or Field Liaison will notify the Field Director as soon as a problem is suspected.
- The Field Director/Liaison will arrange a conference with the Field Instructor immediately.

- The student, Field Instructor and Field Director/Liaison will be involved in an analysis of the problem.
- The student is given formal notification that the performance is substandard.
- Guidelines are developed for the student to follow in bringing up the standard of his/her performance. These are given to the student in writing.
- If the student does not meet the course requirements, a failing grade will be earned.

Continuation Requests and Proposal: Student Desires the Foundation and Advanced Placement in the Same Agency

In recognition of the ability of some field placements agencies to offer a broad range of student learning experiences, the option of a field placement in the same agency for both the foundation and the advanced years is possible, providing certain criteria and policies are met.

There are fundamental differences between the foundation year and the advance year. The foundation education experience is designed to provide various opportunities for exposure to and application of the generalist roles of social work: broker, advocate, counselor/clinician, and teacher. Furthermore, the foundation field experience should prepare the student for the advanced, specialized learning that occurs in the second year.

In considering whether it is appropriate for a student to continue in the same agency for a second-year placement, the student and the field instructor should review the advance practice behaviors, which reflect not only a higher level of achievement in social work practice, but a concentration on a specific range of social work skills, either clinical or macro in nature. This is vastly different from merely increasing productivity or the size in caseload; it requires that the goals and objectives of the internship for the advance year be completely different than the prior year.

If the student wishes to be considered for continuation of his or her placement in the same agency for the advanced year of graduate study, a proposal must be submitted to the Field Director before the end of August going into the Advance Standing year. Continuation in the same agency will be considered only when the agency and the student are able to design an educationally based field learning experience which meet the criteria for an advance placement. This field placement must be entirely different from the foundation year experience.

Employment Based Internships

Traditionally, Social Work field placements are educationally focused, unpaid training experiences in Social Work settings which are selected on the basis of the student's level of placement and areas of interest. However, it is recognized that due to many personal factors, students may want to explore field internship opportunities in their places of employment. The guiding principles for these exceptional decisions is that the field placement experience must offer new and different learning opportunities from those associated with the student's regular employment and also must be educationally directed and professionally supervised by a Field Instructor who meets the standards of the Field Education Office.

Recently, CSWE temporarily adjusted the standards for employment-based internships in response the Covid-19 pandemic. From the Spring of 2020 field placements in an organization in which the student is employed, student field assignments and employment tasks may be the same and counted toward field hours as long as the tasks have clear linkages to the nine social work competencies and their concomitant behaviors as well as any competencies added by the program through May 2022. While professional activity and learning are not incompatible, there is a difference between the goals of educational development and those of employment. It should be remembered that in any situation, *the focus of the field placement must be on the student's academic learning.*

There are a number of potential problems that may arise when students attempt to combine jobs with field placement:

- The agency may emphasize productivity of the student employee, rather than the student's own learning.
- If job duties change, the position may no longer meet the criteria for social work activities at that student's level of placement.
- Both the student and the agency may be less willing to disclose problems that arise during the field placement, such as inadequate supervision, activities which are incongruent with placement expectations, situations that threaten their employment status, etc. This could lead to a delayed intervention by the Field Education Office, sometimes resulting in an "Unsatisfactory" or "Incomplete" grade for the field placement.

Consequently, paid employment can present many complicating factors that limit students' full utilization of the educational opportunity of field internships and should be weighed carefully by the student and the employer. Therefore, the Field Education Office cautions students about the potential problems of these placement situations and reserves the right to approve paid employment as field

placements. To be considered for an Employment Based Internship, the following requirements must be met, and an application must be completed.

REQUIREMENTS FOR EMPLOYMENT BASED INTERNSHIPS

1. All of the required field hours must take place under the supervision of a Field Instructor who meets the standards of our program (MSW students must receive one hour of supervision at least every 40 hours of internship from someone with a MSW degree).
2. The agency *must agree* that the employee will be treated as a student and can complete the academic requirements of the internship. Internship requirements involve completing activities that might not otherwise be a part of the job description. Whereas employees may not have to go to city council meetings, read research articles, relate the NASW Code of Ethics to agency cases or write personally reflective journals for a professor, the intern will. Doing these activities may necessitate lighter caseloads, planned and varied assignments for educational purposes and additional hours above the normal workweek to achieve the internship requirements.
2. The agency must provide an employment supervisor who is a different person than a Field Instructor. This is to ensure, in part, that the Field Instructor is free to focus on the educational aspects of the internship while the employment supervisor can focus on the workload issues.
3. The field instruction tasks/assignments must be significantly new and different from the student's current or past job duties and will align with field placement assignments. Of the 480 hours required, 30% of the hours must be devoted to new tasks and learning opportunities.
4. The student's educational goals should be the primary focus of the position, not simply the needs of the agency.
5. The student must be in good academic standing and in good standing at their employing agency. It is strongly advised that students considering an employer-based placement have completed their probationary period in their employing agency before requesting an employer-based placement because an unsuccessful probationary period is also likely to result in disruption of the student's field placement.
6. The student must present evidence that role confusion (between student and employee) will not occur. A general rule is that role confusion will always exist in agencies with fewer than 25 employees unless you are physically located in separate places for the employment and the internship.
7. The Field Education Office requires that students get out of their comfort zones when in an internship. It is recommended that students use the internship experience to explore different agencies, populations, theoretical perspectives and supervision. An application will be rejected if

the employment-based internship keeps a student in the same kind of agency environment with the exact same population and the exact same kind of supervision.

8. Field instructor and work supervisor must agree that the student's internship performance will not influence their employment evaluation.

If the potential internship meets the above criteria, the student can then submit the *Employment Based Internship Proposal* form to the Field Education Office. The purpose of this proposal is to provide the Field Office with evidence that the proposed internship will include sufficient educational objectives and experiences to satisfy the WTAMU MSSW Social Work program's expectations and will be in compliance with the criteria spelled out in the "Policy Regarding Employment Based Internships" in the *Field Education Manual*.

In order to be considered for this special placement request, the student is responsible for completing and submitting this form to the Field Education Office at least *one month (30 days)* prior to the beginning of the placement. The decision will be made by the Field Education Office and will be communicated directly to the student as soon as possible. *Students should not assume that these placements will be automatically approved.*

APPENDICES

Sample Student Placement Contract

Student Placement Contract
Between
West Texas A&M University
and

Agency:

Address:

Telephone:

Contact Person:

In order to clarify the joint and separate responsibilities between West Texas A&M University, Canyon, Texas, hereinafter referred to as the School, and _____ (agency) hereinafter referred to as the Agency, under an agreement by which those institutions desire to provide field instruction in social work for selected students of the school, the following contract is mutually agreed upon:

1. The School and the Agency mutually agree that the purpose of field instruction placement in the Agency is to provide opportunities for learning to enable the student to meet the objectives for field instruction.
2. The Agency agrees to accept undergraduate and/or graduate students for field instruction in social work including participation in overall Agency programs and activities, as appropriate to the objectives for field instruction. It is expressly understood that the Agency reserves the right to reject any student at any time who, in the Agency's judgment, does not meet the criteria for acceptance of students, as well as any student who, in the Agency's judgment, is disruptive to the facility operation for any reason.
3. The Agency will provide a designated supervisor who assumes responsibility for the student and his or her learning experience. The Agency supervisor will be selected jointly by the Agency and school representatives according to criteria developed by the School. The School reserves the right to reject any supervisor who in the School's judgment does not meet appropriate criteria. The ratio of supervisor to student may not exceed ____:____.
4. The Agency will provide the use of existing office space, equipment, office supplies and clerical assistance when necessary, to complete the learning tasks. The Agency will not require the use of the student's automobile to facilitate Agency business without reimbursement as provided by the Agency's policies and procedures. In order for the student to be eligible for reimbursement, the travel must be pre-approved.
5. The Agency will provide such cases and client contacts as are deemed reasonable for a student during the time allotted for field experience.
6. The Agency supervisor will from time to time submit reports according to the format provided by the School to help the School arrive at an evaluation of the student's semester activities in field

experience.

7. The Agency agrees to promptly inform the School of any changes in Agency policies, procedures, and/or staff that might adversely affect field experiences of the students employed under this Contract.

8. The Agency agrees to provide the student with the Agency's standards and regulations for personnel. Students will follow office hours and stipulations against disclosing confidential information together with such other rules and regulations governing personnel. It is expressly understood that students are not employees of the Agency.

9. The School will assume responsibility for the selection of students to be considered for placement with the Agency, and share with the Agency prior to placement, information about the student's academic achievement and educational needs after written approval from the students.

10. The School agrees that it will honor a written request by the Agency detailing the reasons or cause for the request to relieve a student of his or her field instruction responsibilities in the Agency if such a student is found unsuitable for his or her assignment, or if unusual circumstances within the Agency dictate temporary termination of the field experience program.

11. The School will restrict the activities of its representatives, employees, and/or other agents from performing any service of the Agency except in the course of performance of field instruction or in accordance with provisions of another contract between the school and the agency.

12. The School will assume the responsibility for the administration of the field instruction program in relation to the educational requirements of the students and for cooperation with the Agency staff in maintaining standards to assure the quality of services required by the agency.

13. Prior to a student's acceptance for placement, each student must provide proof of current automobile liability insurance. The School agrees to the extent permitted by the laws and Constitution of the State of Texas and without waiving sovereign immunity to indemnify, save and hold Agency harmless of and from any and all liability, loss, costs and expenses incurred directly or indirectly from any act of the School to include the negligence of the School from any cause arising from or relating to the School's performance under this contract.

14. This agreement will become effective when signed by both parties and will automatically renew each year on the effective anniversary date. Either party may terminate this agreement at any time with thirty (30) days written notice. This agreement may be amended by written mutual agreement.

West Texas A & M University

Agency

Director, Social Work Program

Director

Printed Name

Printed Name

Date

Date

Dean, College of Education and Social Sciences

Chief Executive Officer, Agency

Printed Name

Printed Name

Date

Date

Provost/Vice-President of Academic Affairs

Printed Name

Date

The NASW Code of Ethics

Code of Ethics of the National Association of Social Workers Preamble

This code is intended to serve as a guide to the everyday conduct of members of the social work profession and as a basis for the adjudication of issues in ethics when the conduct of social workers is alleged to deviate from the standards expressed or implied in this code. It represents standards of ethical behavior for social workers in professional relationships with those served, with colleagues, with employers, with other individuals and professions, and with the community and society as a whole. It also embodies standards of ethical behavior governing individual conduct to the extent that such conduct is associated with an individual's status and identity as a social worker.

This code is based on the fundamental values of the social work profession that include the worth, dignity, and uniqueness of all persons as well as their rights and opportunities. It is also based on the nature of social work, which fosters conditions that promote these values.

In subscribing to and abiding by this code, the social worker is expected to view ethical responsibility in as inclusive a context as each situation demands and within which ethical judgment is required. The social worker is expected to take into consideration all the principles in this code that have a bearing upon any situation in which ethical judgment is to be exercised and professional intervention or conduct is planned. The course of action that the social worker chooses is expected to be consistent with the spirit as well as the letter of this code.

In itself, this code does not represent a set of rules that will prescribe all the behaviors of social workers in all the complexities of professional life. Rather, it offers general principles to guide conduct, and the judicious appraisal of conduct, in situations that have ethical implications. It provides the basis for making judgments about ethical actions before and after they occur. Frequently, the particular situation determines the ethical principles that apply and the manner of their application. In such cases, not only the

particular ethical principles are taken into immediate consideration, but also the entire code and its spirit. Specific applications of ethical principles must be judged within the context in which they are being considered. Ethical behavior in a given situation must satisfy not only the judgment of the individual social worker, but also the judgment of an unbiased jury of professional peers.

This code should not be used as an instrument to deprive any social worker of the opportunity of freedom to practice with professional integrity; nor should any disciplinary action be taken on the basis of this code without maximum provision for safeguarding the rights of the social worker affected.

The ethical behavior of social workers results not from edict, but from a personal commitment of the individual. This code is offered to affirm the will and zeal of all social workers to be ethical and to act ethically in all that they do as social workers.

The following codified ethical principles should guide social workers in the various roles and relationships and at the various levels of responsibility in which they function professionally. These principles also serve as a basis for the adjudication by the National Association of Social Workers of issues in ethics.

In subscribing to this code, social workers are required to cooperate in its implementation and abide by any disciplinary rulings based on it. They should also take adequate measures to discourage, prevent, expose, and correct the unethical conduct of colleagues. Finally, social workers should be equally ready to defend and assist colleagues unjustly charged with unethical conduct.

Summary of Major Principles

- I. The Social Worker's Conduct and Comportment as a Social Worker
 - A. Propriety: The social worker should maintain high standards of personal conduct in the capacity or identity as a social worker.
 - B. Competence and Professional Development: The social worker should strive to become and remain proficient in professional practice and the performance of professional functions.
 - C. Service. The social worker should regard as primary the service obligation of the social work profession.
 - D. Integrity. The social worker should act in accordance with the highest standards of professional integrity.
 - E. Scholarship and Research. The social worker engaged in study and research should be guided by the conventions of scholarly inquiry.

- II. The Social Worker's Ethical Responsibility to Clients
 - A. Primacy of Clients' Interests. The social worker's primary responsibility is to clients.
 - B. Rights and Prerogatives of Clients. The social worker should respect the privacy of clients and hold in confidence all information obtained in the course of professional services.
 - C. Confidentiality and Privacy. The social worker should respect the privacy of clients and hold in confidence all information obtained in the course of professional service.
 - D. Fees. When setting fees, the social worker should ensure that they are fair, reasonable, considerate, and commensurate with the service performed and with due regard for the clients' ability to pay.

- III. The Social Worker's Ethical Responsibility to Colleagues
 - A. Respect, Fairness, and Courtesy. The social worker should treat colleagues with respect, courtesy, fairness, and good faith.
 - B. Dealing with Colleagues' Clients. The social worker has the responsibility to relate to the clients of colleagues with full professional consideration.

- IV. The Social Worker's Ethical Responsibility to Employers and Employing Organizations
 - A. Commitments to Employing Organizations. The social worker should adhere to commitments made to the employing organization.

- V. The Social Worker's Ethical Responsibility to the Social Work Profession
 - A. Maintaining the Integrity of the Profession. The social worker should uphold and advance the values, ethics, knowledge, and mission of the profession.
 - B. Community Service. The social worker should assist the profession in making social services available to the general public.
 - C. Development of Knowledge. The social worker should take full responsibility for identifying, developing, and fully utilizing knowledge for professional practice.

- VI. The Social Worker's Ethical Responsibility to Society
 - A. Promoting the General Welfare. The social worker should promote the general welfare of society.

NASW CODE OF ETHICS

- I. The Social Worker's Conduct and Comportment as a Social Worker
 - A) Propriety: The social worker should maintain high standards of personal conduct in the capacity or identity as a social worker.
 - 1) The private conduct of the social worker is a personal matter to the same degree as is any other person's, except when such conduct compromises the fulfillment of professional responsibilities.
 - 2) The social worker should not participate in, condone, or be associated with dishonesty, fraud, deceit, or misrepresentation.
 - 3) The social worker should distinguish clearly between statements and actions made as a private individual and as representative of the social work profession or an organization or group.
 - B) Competence and Professional Development: The social worker should strive to become and remain proficient in professional practice and the performance of professional functions.
 - 1) The social worker should accept responsibility or employment only on the basis of existing competence or the intention to acquire the necessary competence.
 - 2) The social worker should not misrepresent professional qualifications, education, experience, or affiliations.
 - 3) The social worker should not allow his or her own personal problems, psychosocial distress, substance abuse, or mental health difficulties to interfere with professional judgment and performance or jeopardize the best interests of those for whom the social worker has a professional responsibility.
 - 4) The social worker whose personal problems, psychosocial distress, substance abuse, or mental health difficulties interfere with professional judgment and performance should immediately seek consultation and take appropriate remedial action by seeking professional help, making adjustments in workload, terminating practice, or taking any other steps necessary to protect clients and others.
 - C) Service. The social worker should regard as primary the service obligation of the social work profession.
 - 1) The social worker should retain ultimate responsibility for the quality and extent of the service that the individual assumes, assigns, or performs.
 - 2) The social worker should act to prevent practices that are inhumane or discriminatory against any person or group of persons.
 - D) Integrity. The social worker should act in accordance with the highest standards of professional integrity.
 - 1) The social worker should be alert to and resist the influences and pressures that interfere with the exercise of professional discretion and impartial judgment required for the performance of professional functions.
 - 2) The social worker should not exploit professional relationships for personal gain.
 - E) Scholarship and Research. The social worker engaged in study and research should be guided by the conventions of scholarly inquiry.
 - 1) The social worker engaged in research should consider carefully its possible consequences for human beings.
 - 2) The social worker engaged in research should ascertain that the consent of participants in the research is voluntary and informed, without any implied deprivation or penalty for refusal to participate, and with due regard for participants' privacy and dignity.
 - 3) The social worker engaged in research should protect participants from unwarranted physical or mental discomfort, distress, harm, danger, or deprivation.

- 4) The social worker who engages in the evaluation of services or cases should discuss them only for the professional purposes and only with persons directly and professionally concerned with them.
- 5) Information obtained about participants in research should be treated as confidential.
- 6) The social worker should take credit only for work actually done in connection with scholarly and research endeavors and credit contributions made by others.

II. The Social Worker's Ethical Responsibility to Clients

A) Primacy of Clients' Interests. The social worker's primary responsibility is to clients.

- 1) The social worker should serve clients with devotion, loyalty, determination, and the maximum application of professional skill and competence.
- 2) The social worker should not exploit relationships with clients for personal advantage.
- 3) The social worker should not practice, condone, facilitate or collaborate with any form of discrimination on the basis of race, color, sex, sexual orientation, age, religion, national origin, marital status, political belief, mental or physical handicap, or any other preference or personal characteristic, condition, or status.
- 4) The social worker should not condone or engage in any dual or multiple relationships with clients or former clients in which there is a risk of exploitation or potential harm to the client. The social worker is responsible for setting clear, appropriate, and culturally sensitive boundaries.
- 5) The social worker should under no circumstances engage in sexual activities with clients.
- 6) The social worker should provide clients with accurate and complete information regarding the extent and nature of services available to them.
- 7) The social worker should apprise clients of their risks, rights, opportunities, and obligations associated with social service to them.
- 8) The social worker should seek advice and counsel of colleagues and supervisors whenever such consultation is in the best interest of clients.
- 9) The social worker should terminate services to clients, and professional relationships with them, when such service and relationships are no longer required or no longer serve the clients' needs or interests.
- 10) The social worker should withdraw services precipitously only under unusual circumstances, giving careful consideration to all factors in the situation and taking care to minimize possible adverse effects.
- 11) The social worker who anticipates the termination or interruption of service to clients should notify clients promptly and seek the transfer, referral, or continuation of service in relation to the clients' needs and preferences.

B) Rights and Prerogatives of Clients. The social worker should respect the privacy of clients and hold in confidence all information obtained in the course of professional services.

- 1) When the social worker must act on behalf of a client who has been adjudged legally incompetent, the social worker should safeguard the interests and rights of that client.
- 2) When another individual has been legally authorized to act in behalf of a client, the social worker should deal with that person always with the client's best interest in mind.
- 3) The social worker should not engage in any action that violates or diminishes the civil or legal rights of clients.

C) Confidentiality and Privacy. The social worker should respect the privacy of clients and hold in confidence all information obtained in the course of professional service.

- 1) The social worker should share with others confidences revealed by clients, without their consent, only for compelling professional reasons.

- 2) The social worker should inform clients fully about the limits of confidentiality in a given situation, the purposes for which information is obtained, and how it is used.
- 3) The social worker should afford clients reasonable access to any official social work records concerning them.
- 4) When providing clients with access to records, the social worker should take due care to protect the confidences of others contained in those records.
- 5) The social worker should obtain informed consent of clients before taping, recording, or permitting third party observation of their activities.

D) Fees. When setting fees, the social worker should ensure that they are fair, reasonable, considerate, and commensurate with the service performed and with due regard for the clients' ability to pay.

- 1) The social worker should not accept anything of value for making a referral.

III. The Social Worker's Ethical Responsibility to Colleagues

A) Respect, Fairness, and Courtesy. The social worker should treat colleagues with respect, courtesy, fairness, and good faith.

- 1) The social worker should cooperate with colleagues to promote professional interests and concerns.
- 2) The social worker should respect confidences shared by colleagues in the course of their professional relationships and transactions.
- 3) The social worker should create and maintain conditions of practice that facilitate ethical and competent professional performance by colleagues.
- 4) The social worker should treat with respect, and represent accurately and fairly, the qualifications, views, and findings of colleagues and use appropriate channels to express judgments on these matters.
- 5) The social worker who replaces or is replaced by a colleague in a professional practice should act with consideration for the interest, character, and reputation of that colleague.
- 6) The social worker should not exploit a dispute between a colleague and employers to obtain a position or otherwise advance the social worker's interests.
- 7) The social worker should seek arbitration or mediation when conflicts with colleagues require resolution for compelling professional reasons.
- 8) The social worker should extend to colleagues of other professions the same respect and cooperation that is extended to social work colleagues.
- 9) The social worker who serves as an employer, supervisor, or mentor to colleagues should make orderly and explicit arrangements regarding the condition of their continuing professional relationship.
- 10) The social worker who has the responsibility for employing and evaluating the performance of other staff members should fulfill such responsibility in a fair, considerate, and equitable manner, on the basis of clearly enunciated criteria.
- 11) The social worker who has the responsibility for evaluating the performance of employees, supervisors, or students should share evaluations with them.
- 12) The social worker should not use a professional position vested with power, such as that of employer, supervisor, teacher, or consultant to his or her advantage or to exploit others.
- 13) The social worker who has direct knowledge of a social work colleague's impairment due to personal problems, psychosocial distress, substance abuse, or mental health difficulties should consult with that colleague and assist the colleague in taking remedial action.

B) Dealing with Colleagues' Clients. The social worker has the responsibility to relate to the clients of colleagues with full professional consideration.

- 1) The social worker should not assume professional responsibility for the clients of another agency or a colleague without appropriate communication with that agency or colleague.
- 2) The social worker who serves the clients of colleagues, during a temporary absence or emergency, should serve those clients with the same consideration as that afforded any client.

IV. The Social Worker's Ethical Responsibility to Employers and Employing Organizations

A) Commitments to Employing Organizations. The social worker should adhere to commitments made to the employing organization.

- 1) The social worker should work to improve the employing agency's policies and procedures, and the efficiency and effectiveness of its services.
- 2) The social worker should not accept employment or arrange student field placements in an organization which is currently under public sanction by NASW for violating personnel standards, or imposing limitations on or penalties for professional actions on behalf of clients.
- 3) The social worker should act to prevent and eliminate discrimination in the employing organization's work assignments and in its employment policies and practices.
- 4) The social worker should use with scrupulous regard, and only for the purpose for which they are intended, the resources of the employing organization.

V. The Social Worker's Ethical Responsibility to the Social Work Profession

A) Maintaining the Integrity of the Profession. The social worker should uphold and advance the values, ethics, knowledge, and mission of the profession.

- 1) The social worker should protect and enhance the dignity and integrity of the profession and should be responsible and vigorous in discussion and criticism of the profession.
- 2) The social worker should take action through appropriate channels against unethical conduct by any other member of the profession.
- 3) The social worker should act to prevent the unauthorized and unqualified practice of social work.
- 4) The social worker should make no misrepresentation in advertising as to qualification, competence, service, or results to be achieved.

B) Community Service. The social worker should assist the profession in making social services available to the general public.

- 1) The social worker should contribute time and professional expertise to activities that promote respect for the utility, the integrity, and the competence of the social work profession.
- 2) The social worker should support the formulation, development, enactment and implementation of social policies of concern to the profession.

C) Development of Knowledge. The social worker should take full responsibility for identifying, developing, and fully utilizing knowledge for professional practice.

- 1) The social worker should base practice upon recognized knowledge relevant to social work.
- 2) The social worker should critically examine, and keep current with emerging knowledge relevant to social work.
- 3) The social worker should contribute to the knowledge base of social work and share research knowledge and practice wisdom with colleagues.

VI. The Social Worker's Ethical Responsibility to Society

A) Promoting the General Welfare. The social worker should promote the general welfare of society.

- 1) The social worker should act to prevent and eliminate discrimination against any person or group on the basis of race, color, sex, sexual orientation, age, religion, national origin, marital

status, political belief, mental or physical handicap, or any other preference or personal characteristic, condition, or status.

- 2) The social worker should act to ensure that all persons have access to the resources, services, and opportunities which they require.
- 3) The social worker should act to expand choice and opportunity for all persons, with special regard for disadvantaged or oppressed groups and persons.
- 4) The social worker should promote conditions that encourage respect for the diversity of cultures which constitute American society.
- 5) The social worker should provide appropriate professional services in public emergencies.
- 6) The social worker should advocate changes in policy and legislation to improve social conditions and to promote social justice.
- 7) The social worker should encourage informed participation by the public in shaping social policies and institutions.

Approved by the 1996 NASW Delegate Assembly and revised by the 1999 NASW Delegate Assembly.

Sample Disposition Form

**WEST TEXAS A&M UNIVERSITY
PLACEMENT DISPOSITION FORM**

Name of Student: _____

Agency: _____ Field Instructor: _____
(must be approved by Field Director)

Address of agency: _____

F.I. Phone: _____ F.I. Email: _____

Specific agency expectations of the student (Include use of personal vehicle, specific dress codes, unusual work schedules, malpractice insurance expectations, etc.)

Student work schedule (Days and hours in agency):

Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday

General statement of learning experiences to be provided to the student, including primary duties, involvement with clients, etc.

Student Signature: _____

Agency Field Instructor Signature: _____

() Approved () Disapproved

Field Director Signature: _____

Note: A notarized copy of the RELEASE AND WAIVER OF LIABILITY FORM must accompany this form. No placement hours will be counted prior to final approval by the University Program Director, Field Director or the Field Liaison.

Sample Release and Waiver of Liability

RELEASE AND WAIVER OF LIABILITY

KNOWN ALL PERSONS BY THESE PRESENTS:

That I, _____, age _____,
Student's Full Name

Address City County State Zip

for and in consideration of, and as part of my field instruction and social work training at West Texas A&M University, assume all risks of injury to my person or to my property arising out of or during the course of my field instruction resulting from negligence or otherwise, and that I do hereby release and waive any and all rights that I say I have or that may arise during my training in field instruction against all said University and (agency) _____ personnel, their agents, instructional staff, officers, and teachers.

I further agree to save and hold harmless said University and (agency) _____, their agents, instructional staff, officers, and teachers from any damages or injuries sustained by third parties to their persona or to their property arising from my acts or omission occurring during the course of said field instruction.

Witness my hand this _____ day of _____, 20_____.

Student Signature

THE STATE OF TEXAS

COUNTY OF _____

Before me, _____, known to me to be the person whose name is subscribed to the foregoing instrument on this day personally appeared and acknowledged to me that (s)he executed the same for the purposes and consideration therein expressed.

Given under my hand and seal of the office the ____ day of _____, 20_____.

My commission expires on the ____ day of _____, 20_____.

Signature – Notary Public State of Texas

Sample Authorization for Release of Information

**AUTHORIZATION FOR COMMENT
West Texas A&M University**

I, _____, hereby authorize

_____, hereinafter referred to as
Professor/Instructor/Administrator

“writer” to provide _____ with information and/or an
opinion regarding my fitness for filed placement or future employment.

I hereby authorize writer to use and/or release any information contained in
my student records as part of his or her response.

In full and complete consideration for the writer agreeing to respond on my
behalf, I hereby forever waive any possible claims of liability against, and
covenant not to sue, the writer or West Texas A&M University for any claim or
cause of action which may arise as a result of the requested submission.

Student Signature

Date