**University of North Alabama**

**Department of Social Work**

**MSW Field Practicum FAQ’s**

**What is Field Placement?** Field Placement provides students the opportunity to integrate the knowledge, skills, and values learned in the classroom setting with the practical experiences that are provided at the agency. Field Placement is a required course in the foundation and advanced curriculums.

**What is the Field Placement Process?** Newly admitted MSW students are required to submit a Field Placement Preference form to begin the field placement process. This form should be completed and submitted via email to the Department of Social Work Director of Field Education, Mrs. Kimberly Wright (kgporter@una.edu).

The Director of Field will review the form and assess the appropriateness of potential placements listed. The student will then receive an email with approval to begin contacting potential placements. It is the student’s responsibility to contact the agency and arrange an agency interview for internship. The interview does not guarantee a student a practicum slot. The student must interview and be accepted by the agency. Students should treat this process like a job interview. Once the internship has been secured, the student will then return the Agency Interview Form to the Director of Field via email.

**Can I complete Field Placement at my current place of employment?**  Students who are currently employed at a human service agency can request an employment-based field placement. This request needs to be submitted well in advance and requires the approval of the Field Director.

The requirements for an Employment-Based MSW Field Placement are: the agency and Field Instructor must be approved by the Field Education Office; the agency must have an MSW who has two years post degree experience to supervise; the MSW Field Instructor cannot be the student’s direct supervisor; the field learning experiences for the student must be drawn from a unit of the agency different from the area where the student functions as an employee; and the student’s employment hours must be clearly defined and separate from the field learning placement hours.

Some exceptions may be made at this time due to the nature of the Pandemic (as stated in amended CSWE policy). This can be discussed with the Director of Field or your assigned Field Liaison.

**What are the hour requirements of Field?** MSW students enroll in field each 8-week session. (Exceptions can be made for part-time students). Field practicum runs concurrent with MSW academic courses. Advanced Standing Students will obtain a minimum of 500 Field internship hours. 2-Year Students will obtain a minimum of 900 hours. Each 8-week session, students will be required to obtain 128 hours at their field placement. Most students achieve this requirement by obtaining 16 hours per week. Students have the ability/flexibility to set their own hours in collaboration with their Field Agency.

**Can my placement be arranged for evening and/or weekend hours?** There are some Agency’s that offer the ability to earn hours in the evenings or on weekends. It is the student’s responsibility to seek out these Agency’s/opportunities. The Field Director and/or the assigned Field Liaison is available to assist students when needed. If you are working full time you should begin planning well in advance to balance your work, class, and personal commitments.

**Are there virtual field placement opportunities?** There are a few opportunities for Virtual Field Placements; however, these opportunities are limited and must be discussed with and approved by the Director of Field.

**Can my field placement be located where I am living?**  Yes, Field Placements can be secured in the city/state which you reside. The Agency must meet all University requirements for field placement.

**What is expected of my Agency Field Supervisor?** Field Supervisors are responsible for providing mentoring, supervision, and oversight for a student’s placements. Field Supervisors are encouraged to schedule weekly supervision meetings with the student. Field Supervisors are additionally responsible for completing a mid-term and final evaluation of the student’s performance.

**Do students need to have a car?** Students are responsible for securing transportation to their field placements regardless of location. As there is limited public transportation in many areas, students must have access to transportation to reach their field placements. It is to the student’s advantage to have a personal vehicle. Many of our local communities are small and have few resources for field placements; therefore, not having a personal vehicle will severely limit the field placement options.

 Many field placements offer services that are community-based and the majority of fieldwork sites require the use of a vehicle for field work. This means that many field placements require students to have a car to perform field related tasks such as transporting clients, community outreach, home visits, community work, attending meetings, etc.

**Do students need insurance?** Students are required to obtain student liability coverage through NASW (Assurance Insurance). Coverage is limited to $1,000,000/$3,000,000. Further information regarding this process will be shared at a later date. It is recommended that students also carry an automobile insurance policy if they will be using their car to carry out agency assignments (see above).