

Frequently Asked Questions

BSW Field Education

What is Field Education?

According to the Council on social Work Education (CSWE) – the intent of field education is to connect the theoretical and conceptual contribution of the classroom with a practice setting. The basic precept of social work education is that two interrelated components of curriculum – classroom and field – contribute to the development of requisite competencies of professional practice. Field education is systematically designed, supervised, coordinated, and evaluated based on criteria by which students demonstrate the achievements of program and CSWE competencies.

What is the difference between “Field Practicum”; “Field Placement” and “Integrative Field Seminar”?

The “field practicum: refers to the total field education experience, consisting of both a weekly integrative field seminar and a field placement. What is the weekly integrative field seminar – the seminar provides students with an opportunity to discuss and compare field placement experiences, learn from each other, examine personal values vs. professional values, ethical issues in social work practice, and further integrate knowledge and experience through peer facilitation assignments, weekly reflections and group process, which are connected to past/present courses

What is the Field Placement Process?

Students must have successfully completed both the social work program process – Advancement and Junior Year Foundation Sequence. Students must have: senior status (90 credit hours). Completed the following courses with a grade of C or better: SOC 300; SOCW 249; SOCW 325; SOCW 340; SOCW 370; SOCW 341; POLI 382, Obtained a 2.0 cumulative grade point average. Obtained a 2.5 average in social work courses. Consistently demonstrated a commitment to professional social work standards of behavior (NASW Code of Ethics).

Field Education Hour Requirements (When do I complete my field practicum?)

Practicums begin in the fall semester of senior year and continue across both fall and spring at the same field site. Practicum Hours & field expectations: By the end of each semester – 170 hours; this averages about 13 hours per week.

Student Placement Policy (Can I choose my own placement?)

Students are placed by the Field Coordinator in human service agencies which have met the program’s selection criteria. Field coordinator works with the student to identify particular

interests and needs, it is important that student understand that placement may not be first choice based on a variety of reasons. Students should not initiate contact with a potential field placement site without discussion and approval from the Field Coordinator. Students **will not** be placed in a practicum agency or program in which the student: Has completed a previous formal internship or volunteer experience. Is currently, or has previously been, employed. Is, or has ever been, a client. Has a family member who is, or has been, a client of that agency.

Selection of Field Instructors (Does my field instructor have to be a social worker?)

Council on Social Work Education (CSWE) standards require that field instructors for students either have a BSW or MSW from an accredited school of social work. The field instructor should have at least two years of post-degree related work experience. A field instructor without a social work degree may be considered in agencies where there is no social worker.

Placement Interests (My placement interests are very specific and I feel it's important that I have several options and interviews so I can make the best decision. How does that work?)

The Field Coordinator works with the student to identify an agency that fits the student's interests and needs. The student may not always be placed in the agency of first choice. When making the Field placement decision, the Field Coordinator **will attempt to** balance the interests and needs of the student, the agency and the program. The availability of placements changes each year. Some organizations only accept MSW students; others have only a certain number of placements or have application deadlines. **Students will interview with one potential site at a time and the results of that interview will guide the next steps**

Where are placements located and how far will I have to travel for my placement?

Students should expect to complete their placements in a location that is within a 75 mile radius of State University of New York Fredonia. The University has affiliation agreements with well over 50 placement sites with this geographic area and continues to develop additional sites each year. While some students will be close to home or the University, other students will need to commute to access specific settings that are not available to home or the University.

What if I don't have a driver's license or I don't have a car?

It is possible to have a field placement on a bus route. It is very important that students understand that not having a driver's license and/or access to a car or reliable transportation may significantly limit the options that are available. Students are still responsible for obtaining a reliable way of meeting his/her commitments to be at the field placement as scheduled.

Policy on Students Using Their Own Vehicles for Practicum Activities

Please be aware that neither the University, nor the social work program provides automobile liability coverage during activities in the Field Practicum. Assuring adequate insurance coverage and proper registration is the responsibility of the student and/or vehicle owner. The social work program and the University discourages the transportation of clients, or other agency related persons, in students' personal vehicles during activities related to their Field Practicum. If the practicum agency requires transport of clients as part of the student's practicum activities, the student should contact the Field Coordinator. The Field Coordinator will contact the agency and discuss the program and university's policy on this matter. If all Liability concerns are addressed between the program and the agency, the agency shall be responsible for compensating the student for travel. FREDONIA DOES NOT REIMBURSE FOR MILEAGE.

Policy on Paid Practicum & Stipends

This type of field placement is made only after careful consideration of the circumstances. Students should not complete a Field Practicum in their current work place setting nor in a place where they have ever been employed. However, under certain circumstances and conditions, students may be placed in the agency in which they are currently working, either as a paid employee or under some other job program arrangement. Exceptions usually occur when the agency is large with multiple programs and the practicum will occur in a separate program from the one in which the student is currently working. (Please see the manual for the Paid employment form).

What if I work and can't get time off? Can I do my placement in the evening & on week-ends?

There are *very* limited number placements that include *some* hours in the evening and/or weekends and, like other placements, these change from year to year. The overwhelming majority of placement sites require students be available during normal daytime hours. Students are strongly encouraged to collaborate with the faculty field liaison regarding any planning around work at the beginning of the fall semester.

Field Placement during break

Students must coordinate with both the field instructor and faculty field liaison regarding field hours during semester breaks. Students are expected to negotiate field placement hours with the field instructor regarding field site policies and obligations about field placement during the semester break.

Legal Issues? I have some legal issues from my past. Will that keep me from getting a field placement?

Many human services organizations require the following: criminal background and Sex Offender Registry checks. In addition, Protective Service agencies will check whether student applicants have histories of involvement with Protective Services. Some organizations have additional requirements such as medical clearances prior to acceptance. The field application will ask about these situations and it is crucial that you work closely with the field coordinator and that you understand that your available placements may be limited.

What if I still have questions after reading the FAQ document?

More detail is available in our Field Manual. You are expected to review this manual in full before applying for field and throughout your participation in field. You may access the field manual on the Field Education page of the Social Work Program site. Please note that all documents and the manual are updated from time to time so you are advised to always assure that you are reviewing the most recent version (all versions are dated).

The link is: <https://www.fredonia.edu/academics/colleges-schools/college-liberal-arts-sciences/sociocultural-justice-sciences/social-work/field-education>