

FIELD PLACEMENT ASSIGNMENT POLICIES & PROCEDURES

These policies and procedures provide information about potential practicum assignments.

If a student chooses more than one placement possibility to be researched by the Office of Practicum Education, they must submit all relevant information for review, along with a current resume.

While first areas of interest may not be available, all students are assigned an effective practicum that provides the experiences relevant to advanced generalist practice and the expected practice competencies for the first or second year of practicum.

All field assignments must be approved by the Director or Assistant Director of Field Education.

Current students & incoming students:

Please submit as soon as possible

Due date is 1/31 for returning students

** (Worksheets are reviewed in the order that they are received)**

Submit Field Placement Assignment

Worksheet with Current Resume Online at:

https://docs.google.com/forms/d/1jEMPmZ1DjEah6KLoqLTg8uz5vQuRROZuONM_bUWMtpw/edit

QUESTIONS?

Before emailing or calling, please read this information thoroughly and consult the website at:

<https://springfield.edu/academics/school-of-arts-and-sciences/departments-of-social-work/fieldwork>

If consultation is needed to complete the Field Placement Assignment Worksheet, contact:

Jacqueline LeHouiller, Administrative Associate: (413) 748-3001

jlehouiller@springfieldcollege.edu or

Dominique Shabazz, Director of Practicum Education: (413) 748-3027 **dshabazz@springfieldcollege.edu**

placement process

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I. Procedures for completing the Practicum Placement Assignment Worksheet and steps in the field placement assignment process

1. **Read this entire document completely and carefully**, particularly the materials relevant to the potential placement(s) and the related form(s) to be submitted to the Office of Practicum Education for review.
2. **It is strongly encouraged that you discuss your ideas about an upcoming practicum placement with your faculty advisor.**
 - Incoming students do not need to speak to a Faculty Advisor. The Office of Practicum Education will communicate directly with these students.
3. **Upload a current resume along with the practicum placement assignment worksheet submission in the form online.** If this is a second placement, be sure your first placement is included on your current resume. If a current resume is not attached, your interests cannot be addressed as effectively.
4. **Students can schedule a field placement consultation meeting with The Office of Practicum Education to discuss ideas and questions.**
6. Students should plan to interview at one placement possibility at a time.
7. The Dept. of Graduate Social Work has relationships with agencies throughout New England and New York. Assignments are made based on opportunities for students to develop advanced generalist skills, supervisory credentials, and expertise at the site, as well as availability at the agency. All placements provide opportunities to acquire the required social work competencies and reflect Advanced Generalist Practice.

II. Three potential placement possibilities

The three potential placement possibilities students may request for consideration by the Office of Field Education are:

- A. **A Department of Social Work Assigned Placement** in an agency the school has worked with in the past. The school works with more than 300 agencies in New England and New York State; please suggest a population and a kind of service in which you are most interested.

• **Students requesting this placement submit “Possibility A” in the Field Placement Assignment Worksheet.**

- B. **An Employment-Based Placement** at the student’s current agency of employment. This typically takes place in a separate program or in a separate role from the student’s current employment setting. The Office of Field Education will assess student’s proposals and connect with appropriate employment representatives to determine if the placement requirements can be met.

The employment position, whether separate from, or part of, one’s job, must

provide: • Appropriate supervision:

- Individual with MSW, and two years’ post-MSW experience strongly preferred for first year students and the supervising individual must be licensed at LCSW or LICSW level in MA for second year students, LCSW for second year CT students). The Office of Field Education may make exceptions on a case-by-case basis in accordance with CSWE and state professional licensing regulations.
- Appropriate hours (number of hours and appropriate MSW internship experiences available in those hours)
- Experiences that will fully address the requirements of the school’s curriculum in advanced generalist practice.

• **Students requesting this placement submit “Possibility B” in the Practicum Placement Assignment Worksheet.**

- To be completed in consultation with appropriate and authorized representatives from place of employment.

- C. **Possible New Agency Suggestion**: Students may suggest an agency, which will be researched by The Office of Practicum Education to assure appropriate supervisory credentials and learning experiences that meet curricular expectations of advanced generalist practice. **Students are not required to do this or choose this option.**

Supervisory Requirements: Individual with MSW, and two years’ post-MSW experience strongly preferred for first year students and the supervising individual must be licensed at LCSW or LICSW level in MA for second year students, LCSW for second year CT students). The Office of Practicum Education may make exceptions on a case-by-case basis in accordance with CSWE and state professional licensing regulations.

Students interested in this possibility may provide an agency name, telephone number, email address, and, if available, a contact person. If a contact person is not provided, The Office of Practicum Education will make efforts to research the appropriate contact person. Note:

Suggesting an agency does not automatically mean that the agency will be approved for placement – all placements must provide the necessary supervision and learning experiences.

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Springfield MA 01109
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748-3001 FAX:
(413) 788-2401

In addition, students selecting this possibility must also suggest a population and an area of service in which they are most interested in the event that the suggested agency is not possible for a placement.

Students are not required to provide suggested placements, but may do so if they wish. Note that suggested placements may already partner with the Department of Social Work, may not have availability for placements (for either year), or may not have the correct supervisory staff or cannot provide learning experiences relevant to the curriculum of the Department of Social Work.

- **Students requesting this placement submit “Possibility C” in the Practicum Placement Assignment Worksheet.**

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III. Student obligations in practicum assignment process

- Practicum assignments most often take place during the typical agency hours of 8:00 AM to 5:00 PM on weekdays to allow students to experience the full range of client services provided by the agency and to allow participation in social work services and agency meetings.
- Students must arrange for flexible employment and personal schedules to accommodate the needs of the placement assignment.

- Students must be prepared to travel up to 60 miles or up to one hour from their residence or employment to field assignments.
- Students must be available for the required thirteen (13) hours per week for the first placement and the required eighteen (18) hours per week for the second placement. Students may plan to be in placement up to two weeks before the academic year begins, approximately three weeks during winter break, and during the spring break, without special permission – however, all of these scheduling possibilities are subject to negotiation with approval by the placement agency and field supervisor and ***any exceptions must be cleared by The Office of Practicum Education and faculty advisor.***

Students initiate these conversations about scheduling with the agency and the expected supervisor. However, students must be aware that agencies have the final determination of when hours will be completed and may reject a potential intern if hours become a cause of concern during the interview process (i.e., if it is perceived that there will be too many complications) or thereafter, even after initial acceptance by the agency of the intern. All special arrangements must be approved by the Director of Practicum Education.

- Students with disabilities should contact The Office of Practicum Education to explore suitable sites (this information is confidential, as required by the Americans with Disabilities Act).
- Students must be aware that almost all placement agencies conduct a review of “criminal offense records information” (CORI), or criminal background check, and may not be able, by law, to accept a student with a record. Consider how this may affect you carefully. Students whose records may reveal criminal infractions should consider discussing these experiences with the placement personnel of The Office of Practicum Education and the placement personnel at the agency where they are interviewing in advance of the agency’s receipt of such records. Some agencies have discretion related to accepting an intern with a record; others do not (that is, a criminal record of any kind may mean that the intern cannot be accepted at that agency, by law, as well as by agency policy.)
- In addition, some agencies require drug screening.
- Some agencies also require special trainings or orientations before the student can begin internship hours.

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IV. Employment-based placement assignments “Possibility B” section in the practicum placement assignment worksheet

A. General information related to school, student and agency obligations for employment-based field assignments:

1. The Director of Practicum Education must approve all employment-based placements. 2. If the student has been employed for one year or more at the agency, the agency is expected to provide social work duties substantially different from student’s current work duties. If the student’s position is a completely new position in the agency, beginning in the summer months before placement, then the student may suggest to the Field faculty or staff that his or her work may be considered for a placement. (The student should be aware that this arrangement brings certain challenges.) “New Learning” is the critical factor to consider when evaluating the suitability of employment based internships.
3. The agency should also agree to provide appropriate MSW supervision for practicum hours by an individual other than the student’s employment supervisor.
4. A supervisor with an MSW, and two years’ post-MSW experience is strongly preferred for first year students. The supervising individual must be licensed at LCSW or LICSW level in MA for second year students, and LCSW for second year CT students. The Office of Field Education may make exceptions on a case-by-case basis in accordance with CSWE and state professional licensing regulations.
5. Practicum supervisor is strongly encouraged have taken or be willing to take a training seminar in student supervision at Springfield College or other New England school or department of social work; also called the Seminar in Field Instruction (SIFI). Most New England schools and departments offer this seminar series free of charge with CEUs and a certificate of completion provided.
6. As an employee of the agency, the student negotiates practicum hours directly with the agency (during, or part of regular work hours, or as added hours; the most convenient situation occurs when the agency allows the student to use work hours for internship hours, even though the student is in a separate setting from the location of employment) – 13 hours per week for first placement and 18 hours per week for second placement. The agency must be able to meet the curricular expectations of the school for the year of the student’s placement in order to be approved as a placement.
7. Practicum assignments in the student’s agency of employment are typically expected to take place during typical agency hours of 8:00 AM to 5:00 PM on weekdays to allow students to experience the full range of client services provided (unless unique arrangements are made to accommodate the individual student; in these cases, if alternate hours are planned for the internship, the student and the agency must guarantee that the experience will meet curricular expectations).
8. **Important:** Students must develop flexible employment and personal schedules to accommodate the needs of the field placement assignment.

B. Employment-based placement assignment process

1. Student consults with agency of employment and discusses practicum requirements. *Students are expected to be knowledgeable about what the practicum requirements are before beginning conversations with their employer.* The Office of Practicum Education assists as needed to



- explain the curriculum, Learning Contract, hours required, or other information. Additional information for supervisors may be found on the Department's Practicum Education webpage.
2. Student submits the fully completed Field Placement Assignment Worksheet sections and submits a current resume online **as soon as possible**.
 3. From a careful review of the agency of employment and opportunities provided there, the Director of Practicum Education makes the final determination of suitability based on supervision criteria and learning opportunities appropriate to the year of the placement. If the employment based practicum proposal is not found to be suitable, the student must accept an assignment from among the School's affiliated agencies.

V. AmeriCorps and work study

1. Possible AmeriCorps opportunities in addition to internship

AmeriCorps is a federally and state-funded program providing intensive service to meet critical community needs in the Springfield Public Schools. AmeriCorps provides stipends for students who are accepted through the AmeriCorps selection process. Students in AmeriCorps commit to hours and assignments over and above the internship requirements in the social work program. Students engage in their internship and their AmeriCorps hours simultaneously at the same agency. If you would like more information about AmeriCorps, please contact the AmeriCorps Program Offices at (413) 748-3403. Students may also want to discuss the possibility of an AmeriCorps placement with their faculty advisors. Students planning to develop employment-based internships are not eligible for AmeriCorps. The AmeriCorps selection process is competitive. Placements at this time are only in the Springfield Public Schools. More information about whether or not AmeriCorps positions will be available in any given year is learned in the spring of each year, once it is determined whether or not funding will be available.

2. Work-study funding possibilities

Affiliated agencies in Massachusetts and Vermont may be able to provide supplemental work-study funding for student stipends. To inquire about eligibility for work-study funding please contact the Financial Aid Office (413-748-3683). If a student is eligible to receive work-study funding, the Career Center (413) 748-3226 can help the student work with the placement site to possibly develop a work-study opportunity.

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VI. Summary of practicum expectations

The Department of Graduate Social Work at Springfield College prepares students for Advanced Generalist Practice. Skill sets students develop are applicable and transferable to all social work practice settings. Students develop skills to work with diverse client and social systems – from direct service with individuals and families, through program development, advocacy, and community outreach, to negotiating large organizations and effecting positive social change.

First Practicum: Foundation in Generalist Practice

(3 credits per semester, plus 1 credit seminar in fall semester and .5 credit seminar in the spring semester; 13 hours/week, for two semesters of 15 weeks, 200/per semester, total of 400 hours for the academic year)

A. Direct Service with Individuals and/or Families

May include: Working with individuals and/or families; Assessment, Intervention, Planning, Case Management, and Counseling; Conducting psychosocial assessments and Facilitating interagency referral and collaboration.

Products: Process Recordings

Direct Service with individuals/families should comprise a minimum of 35% of practicum hours

B. Direct Service with Groups

To include: Leading or co-leading one or more groups (planned with input and execution from student when possible). These experiences should include client helping groups, as well participation with groups of colleagues, such as in teams, committees, and task groups.

Product: Process Recordings

Group work should comprise of a minimum of 35% of practicum hours

C. Community Work

To include: Application of group skills to plan and conduct community meetings, conduct community assessments, and promote the empowerment of communities; community work may be viewed as outreach to and programming for the geographic, client base, or provider communities, among others. **Products:** In collaboration with supervisor, student develops Community Project to: 1. Enhance the agency's understanding of its communities,

2. Enable the community to obtain desired information or resources, and/or
3. Support the community's capacity to act effectively on its own behalf and of its constituencies' behalf.

Group and community experiences should comprise a minimum of 20% of practicum hours

Second Practicum: Advanced Generalist Practice Concentration

(3 credits per semester, plus 1 credit seminar in fall semester, advanced standing take another .5 credits in the spring semester; 18 hours per week for two semesters of 15 weeks, 250 hours/semester, total of 500 hours for the academic year)

A. Direct Service with Individuals and/or Families

To include: Movement to an advanced level of intervention; Experience with diverse populations requiring multilevel interventions, including counseling, advocacy, and sophisticated use of self; Increased challenges and successes in relationship-building; Development of comfort and flexibility with larger systems and agencies.

Product: Process Recordings

Direct service with individuals/families should comprise a minimum of 35% of practicum hours

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Springfield MA 01109
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B. Direct Service with Groups

To include: Leading and assisting group(s) in meeting developmental challenges. May include group curriculum development. Includes both client-helping groups and collegial groups.

Product: Process Recordings

Group work should comprise a minimum of 35% of practicum hours

C. Administration Experience

To include: Exploration of the role of leadership/administration/management in affecting direct service and communities; Application of skills such as client-focused services, systems analysis and improvement, organizational development, organizing meetings and outreach.

Products: In collaboration with agency administrators and supervisor, student develops new information, policies, resources, or programs

Group and Administrative experiences should comprise a minimum of 20% of practicum hours