

# Field Education Placements

## *Frequently Asked Questions*

### **How many internships am I required to engage in?**

**Full-time Weekday Program:** Two internships concurrent with classes during the two academic years (September to May).

**Part-time Weekend Program:** Two internships concurrent with classes during the second and third academic years (September to May).

**Advanced Standing Program:** One internship concurrent with classes for either the full-time Weekday Program or the part-time Weekend Program during the academic year (September to May).

**Combined M.S.W./Juris Doctor Program:** Two social work internships concurrent with classes during the first and fourth academic years (September to May).

### **How many hours do I need in each placement?**

**Full-time Weekday Program** *First Internship, First Year:* 450 hours, 15 hours per week for 15 weeks for two semesters. *Second Internship, Second Year* – 600 hours, 20 hours per week for 15 weeks for two semesters.

**Part-time Weekend Program:** *First Internship, Second Year* – 450 hours, 15 hours per week for 15 weeks for two semesters. *Second Internship, Third Year* – 600 hours, 20 hours per week for 15 weeks for two semesters.

**Advanced Standing Program:** *One internship*, either Weekday or Weekend Program – 600 hours, 20 hours per week for 15 weeks for two semesters.

**M.S.W./Juris Doctor Program:** *First Internship, First Year* – 450 hours, 15 hours per week for 15 weeks for two semesters. *Second Internship, Fourth Year* – 600 hours, 20 hours per week for 15 weeks for two semesters.

### **How am I assigned a field placement by the school?**

There are three choices for arranging a field placement. For students already admitted to one of the programs, faculty advisor agreement precedes the choice of option; final approval lies with the Assistant Dean for Field Education and/or the Assistant Directors of Field Education.

**Option A – Employment-Based Internship** This option is for students currently employed by a social services agency that might also provide the setting for an internship. There are accreditation stipulations that apply. See the next “frequently asked” question for more details on this option.

**Option B – School-Assigned Internship** Students are assigned a field placement from among the area agencies with which the School of Social Work has established an educational relationship. These agencies offer a history of success with students as well as supervisors who have committed themselves to the mission of the School. Students may suggest which agency from among those agencies they are most interested; however, the final determination of assignment lies with the School.

**Option C – Student Suggested Internship Opportunity** In some circumstances, students may suggest a placement opportunity at an agency with which the School of Social Work does not yet have an educational relationship. These suggestions are evaluated by the Assistant Dean for Field Education or Assistant Directors of Field Education using criteria from the School's accrediting agency, the Council on Social Work Education. Students may provide the name and telephone number of the agency and the name of a contact person, if available. The Assistant Dean for Field Education or Assistant Directors of Field Education will investigate the suitability of the suggested opportunity in consultation with the student's faculty advisor and the student.

### **What is an "employment-based" field placement?**

This is a possibility for students currently employed in an agency that provides social work services to clients. Stipulations for using one's place of employment for an internship include:

1. The experience must provide micro (direct service to individuals and families), mezzo (both helping and administrative groupwork), and macro (community outreach or administrative projects) opportunities for social work practice.
2. An M.S.W. with three years post-M.S.W. practice experience must be available to provide supervision to the student. This individual should have taken or be willing to take a seminar series in field supervision concurrent with supervising the student. Generally, this individual is not the student's current work supervisor.
3. The student must be engaged in duties other than typical work duties for the time of the internship.
4. Hours are arranged through consultation **by the student** with supervisors of the agency. These may be within the student's typical work schedule, be over and above the student's typical work schedule, or some combination of the two.

The Assistant Dean and Assistant Directors provide information to the student's work supervisors to assist in making an employment-based internship a viable option for students. Students may use their place of employment for two internships, provided that each experience is in different programs of the agency and that a different M.S.W. supervisor is available for each experience, and that each experience meets the curricular expectations of the two years of internship experience. New employment that meets criteria for a field placement may also be considered for a field placement opportunity, additional criteria related to the curriculum apply.

### **What is a "school-assigned" field placement?**

An internship that is "school-assigned" is made from among the over 300 agencies with which the School of Social Work has established an educational relationship over time. The range of agencies with which we have worked in the past includes schools, hospitals, mental health providers, community centers, elder

services, substance abuse treatment providers, providers of services to those with developmental disabilities, and many others. These assignments are made in consultation with the student's faculty advisor and the student and are based on educational needs and availability.

### **Can I look for a field placement on my own?**

You may suggest a placement opportunity and provide the Assistant Dean for Field Education or Assistant Directors of Field Education with the name of the suggested agency and the telephone number and the name of a contact person, if available. The Assistant Dean for Field Education or Assistant Directors of Field Education will investigate further and will determine the suitability of a site based on information gathered and in consultation with the student's faculty advisor. The site must have available:

1. Appropriate educational opportunities (micro, mezzo, and macro experiences) in which the student may engage, and
2. An M.S.W. with three years post-M.S.W. practice experience to supervise, who has taken or is willing to take a seminar series in student supervision.

The final determination of field site suitability is made by the Assistant Dean for Field Education or Assistant Directors of Field Education based on accreditation requirements.

### **Will my interests be taken into account when a field placement is made for me?**

You may make suggestions about the populations with which you would like to work. However, field placement assignment is also based on educational suitability, recommendations of advisors, and general availability.

Students who are employed and who do not plan to use their place of employment for an internship **must arrange for flexible time in their place of employment.** Almost all social work agencies expect that students will be available during the time when the agency is fully functioning so that they may attend staff meetings, case conferences, and professional consultation sessions. These are between the hours of 8:00 AM and 5:00 PM.

Also, field placements may be made up to 60 miles from the student's place of residence.

### **Who supervises field placements?**

Qualified social workers who have taken or are taking the seminar series in field instruction serve as field supervisors. They must have an earned M.S.W. and have three years post-M.S.W. practice experience. Many of our long-standing supervisors have worked with our students for many years. Many have graduated from our program and, thus, fully understand the goals and requirements of the advanced generalist practice curriculum.

## **What role does my advisor play in field placements?**

Faculty advisors will consult with you, and, based on the consultation and your individual educational needs, will support your ideas and/or will make additional recommendations to the Assistant Dean for Field Education or Assistant Directors of Field Education.

Faculty advisors also assist throughout the internship experience. They visit the agency, review and sign Learning Contracts and mid-year and final evaluations, and provide the final grades for the internship experience, which is graded "Pass" or "Fail".

## **What activities are required in field placements?**

There are three major social work practice areas in which students are required to engage for their field placement:

1. Direct Service with Individuals and Families (micro practice);
2. Helping and Administrative Group work and Organizational Development (mezzo practice); and
3. Community Outreach (first placement) or Administrative (second placement) Projects or Experiences (macro practice).

## **How are student experiences in field placements evaluated?**

Students are evaluated in their field placement experience by their field supervisors (the M.S.W.s who are provided as supervisors by the agency) and by their faculty advisors at the end of the first semester and at the end of the second semester. Universal learning objectives are indicated on standardized forms that provide guidelines, but the individual needs of the agency and the possibility for creativity and innovation are recognized.

**\*Before emailing or calling please READ THE QUESTIONS/ANSWERS THOROUGHLY\***

and consult the website at: [www.springfieldcollege.edu/ssw](http://www.springfieldcollege.edu/ssw)

You may also contact Ms. Sandra Nunley, Office of Field Education:

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