

SCHOOL OF SOCIAL WORK
B.S.W. PROGRAM
FIELD READINESS HANDBOOK
2009-2010

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In addition to reading this manual thoroughly in preparation for entry into Field Work, students are urged to also read and be familiar with the policies and procedures in the BSW Student Handbook.

BSW FIELD EDUCATION: WHAT IS IT?

After completing the bulk of their theoretical study, BSW students receive practical social work experience through the Field Work component of the curriculum. Students must successfully complete a minimum of 425 hours of work in a professional setting under the supervision of a qualified social work practitioner. Field Work is required of all students graduating from the School including those transferring from other programs. Terms of the CSWE accreditation prohibit the School from awarding Field Work credit for previous life experience, or previous professional experience, or for field instruction completed at another college or university. This is normally an unpaid internship; however, occasional exceptions are made with faculty approval for paid placements.

Students normally complete their Field Work during the senior year, two days per week (concurrent with course work), September through May. In order to accommodate individual student programs, the School also has January through July placements. Students beginning in January and completing Field in July are held to all of the same requirements and standards as students entering field in September and completing in May.

Although satisfactory completion of Field Work is a requirement for graduation from the BSW program, placement in the field is not automatic. Each student must complete requirements established as prerequisites for Field, must make application for placement as detailed in this Handbook, and must be judged by faculty to be ready to assume the professional responsibilities involved in doing Field Work. Assignment to a particular field agency is also a faculty decision. However, the application process which students follow involves their searching out and expressing preferences about agencies to which they would like to be assigned. These preferences weigh heavily among the several considerations, which the faculty take into account in making assignments. Ultimately, a student's participation in an agency is a privilege granted by that agency. Students are not paid for their services except in rare instances in which an arrangement, made with faculty approval, was negotiated prior to the placement.

Throughout the period of Field Work, each student also attends a small weekly Field Work seminar. These seminars serve as a peer support group, as well as an opportunity to process field experiences and promote the integration of learning from the field with theory learned in the classroom. Weekly Field Work seminars are one and one-quarter hour in length.

Both Field Work and Field Work Seminar are credit courses. Students will need to register for SWK 404 and 406 (Field Work I and Field Seminar I) and SWK 405 and 407 (Field Work II and Field Seminar II). Students earn a letter grade for Field Seminar and a pass (P) or no pass (NP) for Field Work. A total of ten credit hours are awarded for Field Work and two credit hours for Field Work Seminar. In the normal two semesters' placement these are divided evenly, five and one credit hours each semester.

For further questions, please contact the BSW Field Coordinator:
Professor Shannon Mokoro

978-542-6610

smokoro@salemstate.edu

THE FIELD EDUCATION CALENDAR

The calendar for Field Work is based on that followed by the agency rather than the academic calendar. This means that students doing concurrent placements (two days per week) beginning in September must plan to work during semester break. These students are allowed six days vacation during the course of their Field Work experience. (Four days are usually taken sometime during the winter break period and two days during the spring vacation.) However, students must observe the “days off” of the particular agency in which they are placed. For example, those placed in school settings must observe the School’s vacation periods in December, February, and April; and hence, **DO NOT** get any additional days of vacation. Students may also find this to be the case with religiously affiliated agencies. Students are permitted a reasonable number of sick days; however, absences of more than several days should be discussed with his/her faculty advisor. Under no circumstances may a student complete Field Work with fewer than the required minimum 425 hours.

In the case of students doing concurrent placements beginning in January, the time pressures for fulfilling the required minimum 425 hours are somewhat greater. Consequently, no provision for vacation days is possible for these students and even sick days may need to be made up.

FIELD READINESS CALENDAR

Field Readiness Meetings

You must attend one of these meetings in order to be eligible to enter field:

- Monday, February 2nd 11 a.m.-12 p.m.
- Friday, February 6th 12 p.m.-1 p.m.
- Monday, February 9th 4 p.m.-5 p.m.
- Tuesday, February 10th 2 p.m.-3 p.m.
- Wednesday, February 11th 1 p.m.-2 p.m.

Deadline for list of potential agencies to be approved

Tues. February 17th

The BSW Field Coordinator must approve your list of potential agencies before you go on any interviews!

Agency Day

Mon. February 23rd

Field Readiness Packet due date

Fri. April 10th

Packets must be in a folder or notebook and in Professor Mokoro’s possession by 5:00 p.m.

Notification of Field Placements

begins May 8th

The BSW Field Committee will begin to look at student packets and make decisions of appropriateness of fit and then notify students and agencies of a positive placement.

NOTES:

- Please remember to send a thank you note to each person with whom you interview
- Please remember to contact the agency to which you **will not** be going to thank them and let them know you have been placed elsewhere.

A SAMPLING OF BSW FIELD WORK AGENCIES USED IN RECENT YEARS

This is by no means an exhaustive list of all of the agencies available.

AIDS Action, Boston, MA
Anchor to Winward, Inc., Marblehead, MA
Bay Cove Early Intervention, Dorchester, MA
Beth Israel Deaconess Medical Center, Boston, MA
Beverly Hospital, Beverly, MA
Beverly Senior Center Beverly, MA
Boston Alzheimer Center, Jamaica Plain, MA
Brooksby Village
CAB Health and Recovery Services, Danvers and Boston, MA
Center for Addictive Behaviors, Salem, MA
Chelsea District Court
Chelsea Housing Authority, Chelsea, MA
Child Development Programs of Cape Ann, Inc., Gloucester, MA
Communities for People – Teen Community Program, Somerville, MA
DARE Family Services, Roxbury, MA
District Attorney’s Office, Victim/Witness Assistance Program Salem, MA
Edinburg Center, Lexington, MA
Elder Services of the Merrimack Valley Lawrence, MA
Essex County Community Corrections Center, Newburyport and Lawrence, MA
Evercare Hospice and Palliative Care, Waltham, MA
Family Center of Somerville, MA
Gloucester Council on Aging Gloucester, MA
Greater Lowell VNA Hospice, Lowell, MA
Greater Lynn Senior Services
Harbor Schools & Family Services, Newbury, MA
Health and Education Services
Help for Abused Women and Children (HAWC)
Home for Little Wanderers
Jewish Rehabilitation Services, Swampscott, MA
Marblehead Public Schools (Bell School), Marblehead, MA
Massachusetts Commission for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing, Dorchester, MA
Massachusetts Department of Children & Families
 Arlington, Lawrence, Lowell, Lynn, Malden, and Salem, MA
Massachusetts Department of Mental Health
Minuteman Senior Services
Morgan Memorial Employment and Rehabilitation Center, Salem, MA
Newburyport Council on Aging, Newburyport, MA
North Essex Mental Health Center, Newburyport, MA
North Shore Community Action Program, Peabody, MA
North Shore Community College, Danvers and Beverly, MA

North Shore Elder Services, Danvers MA
North Shore Infant and Toddler Program
North Shore Medical Center, The Hunt Center, Danvers, MA
Pathways for Children, Gloucester, MA
Pioneer House, Salem, MA
Project Cope, Lynn, MA
Revere Public Schools (Lincoln Elementary), Revere, MA
Salem District Court, Probation Department, Salem, MA
Salem Public Schools - Horace Mann Lab School, Salem, MA
Salvation Army, Lynn, Salem, Saugus, MA
Solstice Adolescent Program, Rowley, MA (Health & Education Services, Inc., parent agency)
Somerville District Court, Trial Division, Somerville, MA
Strongest Link AIDS Services, Danvers, MA
Sutton Hill Nursing & Retirement Center, North Andover, MA
Waltham District Court, Probation Department, Salem, MA
Wellspring House, Gloucester, MA

REQUIREMENTS FOR FIELD EDUCATION

A formal application process is required for students wishing to enter Field Work. Students who wish to be assigned to placement must demonstrate their readiness for undertaking Field Work through fulfillment of both academic and non-academic criteria.

Academic Requirements

Students in the BSW Program are required to take five social work courses prior to beginning Field Work. These are:

- Introduction to Social Welfare,
- Social Service Volunteer Practicum,
- Generalist Practice I,
- Generalist Practice II, and
- Race, Class, and Ethnicity

These courses must be taken at Salem State College. Grades of at least a “C-” are required in these major courses. The student must achieve a cumulative grade point average of at least “B-” in these five social work courses prior to being considered for a Field Work agency assignment. At the end of his/her Field Work experience, the student may have no more than 15 credits to complete his/her degree.

Simply meeting the academic requirements is not grounds for automatic approval to enter into Field Work. Students must satisfactorily complete the Field Readiness packet and meet the non-academic requirements.

Non-Academic Requirements

In addition to the above academic requirements and standards that must be maintained prior to field placement, the students must meet additional, non-academic standards established by the faculty in the School of Social Work. As the Salem State College Catalog states, a “student’s readiness for assignment to a Field Work agency will be assessed by his/her level of maturity and responsibility and his/her commitment to the field of social work as ascertained in consultation with his/her department advisor.”

A. Maturity and Responsibility

The School of Social Work faculty assesses the student’s maturity and responsibility through interactions with the student in the classroom, during the advising process, through observations of the student’s willingness and ability to follow through on assignments and procedures involved in applying for Field Work, and by measuring the student against the Professional Standards for Social Work Education (see page 18 of this readiness manual) . Throughout the first three years of the program, students are expected to complete all course requirements in a prompt and thorough fashion. The student’s relationship to the volunteer agency in the Social Service Volunteer Practicum is also assessed.

Students are expected to initiate and keep periodic appointments with their faculty advisors and these appointments will be used to assess the student's increasing preparedness for Field Work, as well as for academic advising purposes. Students should expect to receive ongoing feedback from their faculty advisors regarding their readiness for Field Work.

The School recognizes that maturity is not a static or precisely defined entity, but it requires a baseline of emotional or mental health. We maintain that students who are going to interact forcefully in other people's lives must function on at least a level that they are not harmful to the clients. More specifically, students must be able to recognize their own issues as their issues and not the client's, and to be able to keep their own issues separate from their professional interventions. Students must be able to have at least enough control over their responses to their own issues that they are able to listen adequately, assess correctly, and intervene appropriately.

The School recognizes that each of us has areas of strength and vulnerability and is continually growing and maturing. The School further recognizes that vulnerability in certain areas does not preclude the ability to perform adequately in a professional capacity.

Students who are undergoing personal stress are urged to pursue counseling or psychotherapy. Such participation in counseling will not be held against the student in considering his/her readiness for Field Work. In certain circumstances, participation in counseling may be held as a prerequisite for (or accompaniment to) Field Work.

B. Commitment to the Field of Social Work

The School of Social Work assesses the student's commitment to the field of social work primarily by evaluation of the student's understanding and willingness to be guided by the values of the social work profession: respect for the unique worth of all clients, and their consequent rights to dignity and self-determination. Acknowledging that American culture inculcates prejudicial attitudes and discriminatory behavior (racism, sexism, ageism, anti-Semitism, homophobia, etc.) that are inimical to the values of the social work profession, the School offers throughout its curriculum opportunities for students to become aware of their own developing values and attitudes that are inimical to the social work profession.

The School does not contend that these can be eliminated within three years, but rather maintains that students must demonstrate an awareness of their contradiction to social work values and a willingness or openness to work toward their control and ultimate eradication. The School must feel confident that a student's attitudes and values will not interfere with the student's work with clients in such a way as to jeopardize the client's rights to dignity and self-determination

C. Criminal Record Check

The application for field placement requests that a student reveal to the BSW Field Coordinator any criminal record history. There are many social service agencies that conduct a criminal offense record information check of all paid or volunteer employees or students. This information is only shared with the agency when necessary and students are encouraged to take

charge of this informing process. This is intended to assure an appropriate and fully informed student-agency match and is also intended to protect the students as well as the clients and field agency.

STUDENT RESPONSIBILITY TO OBTAIN PROFESSIONAL LIABILITY

All students entering Field Work must be covered by professional liability (malpractice) insurance. Although some placement agencies carry such insurance covering both staff and interns, most do not. Consequently, it is required of students to purchase their own coverage. This insurance may be obtained at a reasonable cost through the National Association of Social Workers (NASW) agent, the American Professional Agency, Inc..

We strongly recommend that students obtain a student membership in NASW. NASW membership involves a group eligibility insurance plan. We recommend that you at least make joining NASW a part of your field work application process in order to avoid delays in processing your insurance application.

Application forms for both NASW membership and the insurance can be found in Appendix A of this Handbook or may be obtained in the Field Office. During the first month of placement, students must turn in a photocopy of their liability insurance coverage or they will not be allowed to continue in field placement.

CHANGING PLACEMENTS AND/OR REPEATING FIELD WORK

We work from the assumption that whatever problems arise during a field placement, can be worked out through unified efforts of the student, the field instructor, and the faculty liaison. On rare occasions, circumstances or problems develop within a student's placement that are sufficiently intractable that a change of agency assignment is necessary. Such a decision and the choice of another placement site are the responsibility of the BSW Field Work Coordinator in consultation with the student, field instructor, and the faculty liaison.

Even more rarely a student withdraws from, is asked to withdraw from, or fails Field Work. In that event, s/he may apply to be admitted to Field Work again at a later date, however, students must be aware that they are not guaranteed readmission to Field Work. Students must repeat the application process in full. The new application will be reviewed by faculty with particular attention to the preparedness of the student to address and correct the problem(s) that were at issue in the initial field placement.

AVENUES OF APPEAL

Appeals of faculty decisions regarding field placement should first be discussed with the student's faculty advisor. The student may also request a conference with the BSW Field Work Coordinator. Further avenues of appeal are consistent with those for the program in general, which are explained in detail in the *BSW Student Handbook*. This includes automatic referral to

the Student Progression Committee of any situation in which faculty believes a request for field placement should be rejected.

Students should be aware of the fact that in handling any and all of the above cases regarding the academic and non-academic requirements, CORIs, and changing or repeating field placements, the School will follow the procedures for levels of review as indicated in the “Professional Standards for Social Work Education.”

PROCEDURES FOR OBTAINING A FIELD WORK PLACEMENT

Students are expected to plan ahead for Field Work. As soon as you have a tentative idea of what semester you expect to be ready for Field Work, you should file a “Notice of Intent to Enter Field Work” form with the field secretary, Cindy Girouard. In the event that your plans change, file a new “Intent” form.

To request a Field Work placement you are expected to complete the following tasks:

1. Conference with your faculty advisor (a) early in the semester to establish that you will be academically eligible for field placement, and (b) to include registration for Field Work in your preregistration conference.
2. Carefully read carefully this Field Work Readiness Handbook and the BSW Student Handbook.
3. Attend the Field Work Readiness meetings scheduled by the BSW Field Work Coordinator. This should, if possible, include the Agency Day that is scheduled once a year—in spring semester.
4. Create a list of 2-3 agencies at which you wish to interview and have the list approved by the BSW Field Coordinator **before** interviewing.
5. After approval from the BSW Field Coordinator, visit and interview with **at least two possible placement agencies**. Start early as this always takes longer than expected.
6. Write (or type) a brief thank you note to each person with whom you interviewed.
7. After you have been notified by the BSW Field Coordinator of your placement, call the agency at which you will not be placed to thank them and inform them that you will be going to another agency.

Prepare your Field Work Application Packet including:

- a) A completed “Request for Field Work Placement” form (included in this Handbook.)
- b) A personal assessment of your own readiness for field placement. This assessment should follow the guidelines as detailed in the Self-Assessment guide of this handbook.
- c) A copy of your resume describing your past education, employment or volunteer experiences.
- d) One written recommendation from someone familiar with your character and work habits. (Not a SSC faculty member.)
- e) A summary of the agencies that you visited indicating your preferences. Please include names and telephone number of contact persons.

Submit your packet to the BSW Field Coordinator by the due date stated in the Field Work Readiness Calendar.

RESOURCES AVAILABLE TO STUDENTS **BEGINNING THE SEARCH FOR A FIELD WORK AGENCY**

1. The BSW Field Work Coordinator is regularly available to discuss concerns and suggest agencies to visit (see Readiness Calendar and her conference schedule for times.)
2. Your faculty advisor is the first person with whom you should discuss your Field Work plans. Other faculty may have knowledge of a particular type of agency or of agencies in a particular geographical area—you should feel free to ask their advice.
3. Hard copy of BSW Agency Requests for Field Students (see books in Social Work Office.)
4. Members of the faculty have expertise in different practice areas and with different client populations. As you consider a particular placement interest, you may want to seek out a faculty person with experience in that area as someone with whom to discuss your interest.
5. Students currently in field placements are usually very willing to discuss their field experience. You can often make contact with these students through START. START also schedules one meeting each semester specifically to assist students who are engaged in the Field Work readiness

LOCATING A NEW PLACEMENT AGENCY

Over the years our list of agencies in which students have been placed for Field Work has grown—partly as a result of students finding new agencies of special interest to them. Whether the student will be placed in such an agency is the decision of the faculty, however, we will be glad to explore the student's request.

The School welcomes student creativity in identifying potential placements in non-traditional settings, so long as qualified social work field instruction is available. On occasion, such agencies have gladly extended themselves in order to obtain the services of an MSW field instructor from some other agency in the community.

A request for placement in a new agency involves the following steps:

- a) The student must contact the potential placement agency and determine that the agency can provide: (a) weekly supervision with an MSW, and (b) exposure to the range of generalist practice work with individuals, families, groups, and a macro project
- b) The student must submit, along with their regular Field Work application materials, sufficient information about the new agency's program to acquaint faculty with its

- c) Faculty will consider this information in making their decision about a placement assignment for the student. If the new agency appears to be appropriate for the student's placement, they will make a tentative assignment, pending a visit to the agency by a faculty member to assess the appropriateness of the placement. Only then will the final decision be made.

When a student is dealing with a new prospective placement agency, s/he needs to give that agency some basic information about our program and our expectations for Field Work. Copies of the materials included in Appendix B of the Handbook should be given to the agency representative with whom the student speaks. The agency person is welcome to call the BSW Field Work Coordinator for additional information.

Faculty Advisor _____
(you advisor should sign this space)

REQUEST FOR FIELD WORK PLACEMENT

Please Note: This form summarizes your request, details of which may be included in the other pieces of your application packet.

I. IDENTIFYING INFORMATION

Name: _____

Permanent Address: _____

Summer Mailing Address (if different): _____

Residence During the School Year: _____

E-Mail Address: _____

Cell #: _____ Home #: _____

Dorm #: _____ Work #: _____

II. GRADES IN SOCIAL WORK REQUIRED COURSES:

Date Entered Major: _____

Profession of Social Work _____

Social Welfare Past & Present _____

Generalist Practice I _____

Generalist Practice II _____

Race, Class & Ethnicity _____

Average of above _____

Salem State College Grade Point Average: _____ Date Expected for Graduation: _____

Additional notes from advisor:

III. What particular skills or interests do you have which might contribute to your Field Work?

IV. Employment experience (include summer and part-time jobs):

V. Social service experience (include volunteer, SSVP, and paid work):

VI. What are your career plans after graduation?

VII. What is your style of learning?

VIII. Will you have a car available for placement?

Yes _____ No _____

IX. What communities do you prefer for placement?

X. What type of agency or kind of population do you prefer for placement?

XI. Fluency in _____ (langue(s) other than English).

XII. Have you ever been convicted of a felony or have a criminal record in Massachusetts or any other state?

XIII. How do you assess your readiness for Field Work? (Please read carefully the material entitled, "Academic and Non-Academic Criteria for Field Work" and The Professional Standards for Social Work Education." Write and attach a brief statement using the "Self-Assessment Guide" on the page 17.)

XIV. Attachments:

- Readiness Self-Assessment
- Resume

- One reference from someone familiar with your work habits and character (not SSC faculty)
- List of at least 2 agencies in which you are interested in being placed, in order of preference. Include a short statement about your interest/curiosity for each agency.
 - The name, title, phone number, and e-mail of the contact person for each agency.

BSW FIELD EDUCATION PLACEMENT POLICY AND GUIDELINES AT STUDENT'S PLACE OF EMPLOYMENT

In an effort to be supportive of students' varying lifestyles, commitments, and responsibilities, the School of Social Work's BSW Program allows students to complete field work placements in their place of employment. Students wishing to complete their field work hours at their place of employment must complete all of the field readiness requirements and in addition must complete a Request for Employer Placement form. The form must be submitted before the field readiness packet is due. The Coordinator of BSW Field Education reviews the request, which includes a detailed description by the potential field instructor of the duties to be completed by the student. The review of the request also includes a telephone call and a visit to the potential field work site. Once the site is approved as appropriate and the determination has been made that the student will engage in duties that differ from those associated with the student's employment, the student may complete the readiness process.

The School will make a serious effort to honor the student's request for such a placement, provided the placement meets the following criteria:

1. The agency must meet the criteria for a Field Education site.
2. The Field Instructor is an integral part of the School of Social Work Field Work Program and a member of the educational team. He/she must hold a CSWE accredited baccalaureate or Master's in social work in order to supervise our students.
3. Assignments must be in an area or unit which will provide new learning experiences of depth and diversity not available in the current job and which will facilitate meeting of the curriculum objectives.
4. All of the hours required for Field Education are used for meeting educational objectives.
5. The proposed workload must meet the criteria of a field education experience: that is at least one-half the ordinary daily assignment of an employee.
6. The agency and School agree on a plan to ensure educational objectives are achieved and a Teaching/Learning Agreement is negotiated in advance of placement.
7. The proposal along with the Employee-Student Field Placement Plan (on the next page) must be submitted to and approved by the BSW Field Education Coordinator.

Please contact Professor Mokoro for any clarification of this policy.

EMPLOYEE-STUDENT FIELD EDUCATION PLAN

Student Name: _____ Date: _____

Student Address: _____

Student Telephone: Home _____ Cell _____

Proposed Field Agency:

Agency Name: _____

Agency Address: _____

Agency Telephone: _____

Name of contact person for field placement: _____

Telephone: _____

Field Agency personnel and an employee who wishes to remain at that agency for field placement, need to furnish a statement which clearly defines how educational experiences will differ from work assignments for the student-employee.

Using the following as an outline, please answer the questions in full and attach your typed statement to this form.

I. WORK EXPERIENCE

- A. What is your current position at this agency? What past positions have you held at this agency? Include the dates these positions were held.
- B. Describe in full your current and past work assignments while you held these positions.
- C. Please name your current and past work supervisors at this agency.

II. PROPOSED EDUCATION EXPERIENCE

- A. Describe what your educational assignments will be in this Field Agency. Include the new client populations and client problems which you will work with that differ from your paid work experience.

- B. Describe the new social work methods you will experience as a student, e.g.: with individuals/families/small groups, communities, program planning, administration, research and others.
- C. Name of qualified person to serve as your field instructor. State whether or not you have ever acted in any capacity as a supervisor for this person or whether you were supervised by them.
- D. Describe adjustment in workload, compared with that of a staff person, to make possible the necessary educational focus during Field Work hours.

III. DEFINE YOUR PROPOSED DAY AND TIME SCHEDULES

A. Paid employment: Days and Hours

B. Field Work: Days and Hours

(All of this time to be used for meeting educational objectives)

I understand that if this proposed plan for placement is approved, the School retains the right to reject this placement at any time, if it finds the above information to be in error.

SIGNED BY:

Field Instructor

Student-Employee

SELF-ASSESSMENT GUIDE

One of the purposes of this manual is to present you with an overview of the issues involved in doing Field Work and of the different Field Work settings so that you can begin to formulate your own ideas concerning placement. We encourage you to examine your readiness for this particular learning experience by a self-assessment of where you are. Listed below are several factors that you will address in relation to your readiness to enter field and your choice of placement.

1. **Strengths**

What particular skills do you feel you have? Try to identify your own resources. Do you know how to utilize your own resources? In what areas do you have a good knowledge base?

2. **Limitations**

What skills do you feel you are lacking? In what areas of knowledge do you feel you are somewhat lacking? Have you identified some of your own resources but have not developed them at this point to a level that you would consider to be an area of strength?

3. **Professional Social Work Standards**

Address how you feel you meet Standards 2.1.1 through 2.3.4

4. **Past Experience**

Consider your volunteer and paid experiences. Would you like to pursue any of these past experiences or go on to something new?

Please take the time and reflect and write about each of these factors carefully in coming to conclusions about the type of agency in which you would like to do your Field Work. This self-assessment must be typed, double-spaced, and checked for grammar and spelling.

Professional Standards for Social Work Education

These standards are used to assess a student's readiness for field education and throughout the entire practicum experience. As indicated in the self-assessment guide above, students must address how they have achieved these standards thus far in their professional development.

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Criteria for Evaluating Academic Performance, Policies and Procedures for Review of Academic Performance, and Academic Grievances

1.0 Introduction

This document delineates *Salem State College Professional Standards for Social Work Education* – standards that apply to students enrolled at the School of Social Work at Salem State College effective Summer 2003.

Because of the nature of professional social work practice, the School of Social Work has different expectations of students than do non-professional programs. The standards are linked to students' abilities to become effective social work professionals and are provided to clarify expectations and procedures regarding concerns about academic performance. The ultimate goal of the *Standards* is to help students have a successful experience at the School of Social Work.

Because becoming a professional is a gradual process, it is not expected that all criteria will be met at all times. Persons who teach and supervise students, along with program coordinators, will assess student academic performance and apply their professional judgment to determine if standards are being met during a student's educational career. Professional judgment is the capacity to assess a situation by applying the values and knowledge of the social work profession, combined with a professional's own experience and practice wisdom. It also represents the application of knowledge, values, and skills to making decisions in a helping process. This assessment of performance and professional judgment occurs as the student progresses through academic and field education courses.

All social work students will be provided with the School's *Professional Standards for Social Work Education* and the *National Association of Social Workers (NASW) Code of Ethics* during their orientation meeting at the School. Students will be asked to sign an acknowledgment documenting that they have read, are aware of the contents of, and will abide by the *Standards*. When students enter field education, they will sign an additional document that states they have read the *NASW Code of Ethics* as well as the *MSW Field Education Curriculum Guide* or *BSW Fieldwork Manual* and that they understand and will abide by these documents. These acknowledgement forms will be kept in students' files.

2.0 Criteria for Evaluating Academic Performance in the School's BSW and MSW Programs

In order to meet its responsibilities to provide quality professional education and to ensure that its graduates are able to function in a broad variety of professional situations, the School of Social Work evaluates the academic performance of its students in four general areas: acquisition of professional skills; emotional abilities; professional performance in field; and scholastic

performance. Meeting the criteria for scholastic achievement is necessary but not sufficient to ensure continued enrollment in a program. *Both professional behavior and scholastic performance* comprise academic standards in a professional social work program.

2.1 Acquisition of Professional Skills

The acquisition of each of the following skills is evaluated in accordance with undergraduate- and graduate-level educational standards.

2.1.1 Communication Skills

The student demonstrates sufficient written and oral skills to comprehend information and communicate ideas and feelings. The following distinctions and similarities are made between written and oral communication skills:

a) *Evaluation of Written Communication Skills:* The student writes clearly, uses correct grammar and spelling, and applies appropriate writing style, including referencing, appropriate source citation, and documentation in accordance with the latest edition of the *American Psychological Association Style Manual*. The student possesses sufficient skills in written English to demonstrate an understanding of content presented in the social work course or program in which the student is enrolled. The student is able to complete adequately all written assignments, as specified by classroom and field education faculty, and meets the College's established *Minimum Writing Standards* (see page 48).

b) *Evaluation of Oral Communication Skills:* The student communicates effectively and sensitively with other students, faculty, staff, clients, and professionals. The student expresses ideas and feelings clearly and demonstrates a willingness and an ability to listen to others. The student possesses sufficient skills in spoken English to demonstrate understanding of content presented in the course or program in which the student is enrolled. The student is able to complete adequately all oral assignments, as specified by classroom and field education faculty.

2.1.2 Interpersonal Skills

The student demonstrates the interpersonal skills needed to relate effectively to other students, faculty, staff, clients, and professionals and to fulfill the ethical obligations of the profession. These skills include demonstrated compassion, empathy, altruism, integrity, and respect for and consideration of others. The student takes appropriate responsibility for his or her actions and considers the impact of these actions on others.

2.1.3 Cognitive Skills

The student exhibits sufficient knowledge of social work and clarity of thinking to process information and apply it to appropriate situations in classroom and field. The student demonstrates grounding in relevant social, behavioral and biological science knowledge and research—including knowledge and skills in relationship building, data gathering, assessment, intervention, and evaluation of practice. The student exhibits cognitive capacity sufficient to understand and execute the field education practicum.

2.1.4 Physical Skills

The student exhibits motor and sensory abilities to attend and participate in class, with or without reasonable accommodations. The student exhibits sufficient abilities to perform the essential functions of the field education practica, with or without reasonable accommodations. (See section 2.6 on *Accommodations for Disabilities* for clarification.)

2.2

Emotional Abilities Necessary for Performance in the BSW or MSW Program and Relevant Professional Practice

2.2.1 Stress Management

The student demonstrates ability to deal with current life stressors through the use of appropriate coping mechanisms. The student handles stress effectively by developing appropriate self-care, and supportive relationships with colleagues, peers, and others.

2.2.2 Emotional Abilities

The student uses sound judgment and demonstrates relational abilities in work with clients and colleagues. The student takes responsibility to seek and effectively use help, including resources outside the College, for medical or emotional problems that interfere with scholastic and professional performance. The student engages in counseling or seeks out support and help if personal problems, psychosocial distress, substance abuse, or mental health difficulties result in any of the following:

- compromise scholastic and other performance
- interfere with professional judgment and behavior, or
- jeopardize the best interests of those to whom the social work student has a professional responsibility (as outlined in the current Codes of Ethics by the National Association of Social Workers and the Commonwealth of Massachusetts Board of Registration for Social Work Licensure).

2.3

Professional Performance Skills Necessary for Work with Clients and Professional Practice

2.3.1 Professional Commitment

The student exhibits a strong commitment to the goals of social work and to the ethical standards of the profession, as specified in the NASW Code of Ethics and the Code of Ethics for Social Work Licensure in Massachusetts. The student demonstrates commitment to the essential values of social work that includes respect for the dignity and worth of every individual and a strong sense of social and economic justice.

2.3.2 Professional Behavior

The student exhibits behaviors that are in compliance with societal laws, institutional policies, program policies, and professional ethical standards in classroom, field education placement, and community. The student's appearance, dress, and general demeanor reflect a professional manner. The student shows potential for responsible and accountable behavior by knowing and practicing within the scope of professional social work standards: respecting others, being punctual and dependable, prioritizing responsibilities, attending class regularly, observing

deadlines, completing assignments on time, keeping appointments or making appropriate arrangements, and accepting supervision and criticism in a positive manner.

The student works effectively with others, regardless of level of authority. The student advocates for him/herself in an appropriate and responsible manner and uses proper channels for conflict resolution. The student shows a willingness to receive and accept feedback in supervision in a positive manner. The student evidences the ability to use such feedback to enhance professional development and appropriately provides feedback to others.

2.3.3 Self Awareness

The student exhibits knowledge of how one's values, attitudes, beliefs, emotions and past experiences affect thinking, behavior and relationships. The student accurately assesses his/her own strengths, limitations, and suitability for professional practice. The student demonstrates an awareness of self and how others perceive him or her. The student is able to reflect on his or her own limitations as they relate to professional abilities and practice. The student is willing to examine and change behavior when it interferes in working with clients and other professionals.

2.3.4 Ethical Obligations

The student's current behavior and classroom performance demonstrate adherence to the ethical expectations and obligations of professional social work practice standards. Ethical behaviors include:

- Adherence to the NASW Code of Ethics and the Standards for Social Work Licensure in Massachusetts;
- Proper and timely disclosure of any convictions or offenses that may have an impact on the ability to practice professionally as well as willingness to engage in responsible collaborative decision making regarding how this history may affect the appropriate field practicum;
- Systematic evaluation of clients and their situations in an unbiased, factual way;
- Sufficient suspension of personal biases during interactions with others;
- Empathic communication and support of the client as a basis for a productive professional relationship;
- Appreciation of the value of diversity, sensitivity and respect for another individual's lifestyle and values as well as effective and nonjudgmental intervention with others who are different from oneself;
- Willingness to provide appropriate service to all persons in need of assistance, regardless of the person's age, class, race, religious beliefs, gender, disability, sexual orientation, and/or value system;
- The absence of the imposition of personal, religious, sexual, and/or cultural values on clients;

- Demonstration of respect for the rights of others as well as commitment to clients' rights to freedom of choice and self-determination;
- Maintenance of confidentiality as it relates to human service, classroom activities, and field placement;
- Demonstration of honesty and integrity by being truthful about background, experiences, and qualifications as well as doing one's own work, giving credit for the ideas of others, and providing proper citation of source materials;
- Demonstration of clear, appropriate, and culturally sensitive personal and professional boundaries;
- Absence of sexual harassment of others, including absence of verbal or physical threats, becoming involved in sexual relationships with clients, supervisors, or faculty;
- Absence of physical, emotional, verbal, or sexual abuse of others as well as absence of participation in dual relationships where conflicts of interest may exist.

THE EDUCATIONAL TEAM

The student, the faculty liaison, and the field instructor comprise the educational team. Each has certain roles and responsibilities in the process of working together toward providing a successful Field Work experience. These roles and responsibilities are summarized in the sections that follow.

The Student

Field Work provides opportunity for a student to learn while also providing valuable service to clients and to her/his placement agency. In so doing the student is responsible to employ professional ethics and the highest level of professional skill of which s/he is capable in doing her/his work. The student is called upon to demonstrate initiative and responsibility in developing and pursuing professional educational objectives throughout the placement.

In addition, students are expected to become familiar with the philosophy and objective of the agency and to become involved in the ongoing operation of the agency according to the mutual understanding between the field instructor, the student, and the faculty advisor. Student participation in an agency is a privilege granted by the good will of the agency.

Agencies establish such policies as working hours, procedure in the event of illness, and general routine directives. Students who do not meet these professional standards of the agency, the standards of our program or the ethical standards of the social work profession will be withdrawn from placement.

The Faculty Liaison/Advisor

While in Field Work placement each student is assigned to a faculty member who serves both as liaison to the field agency and faculty advisor to the student until the student's graduation. The faculty liaison's function with the student is to provide guidance, support, general information relevant to Field Work placement and to assist the student in pursuit of her/his learning goals. Further, this faculty member works with the Field Work student to help her/him employ academic knowledge and personal skill in a professional setting. The faculty liaison/advisor also serves as convener of the student's Field Work seminar and is responsible for determining the student's grades for both Field Work and Field Work Seminar.

It is valuable to view the Field Work student, the field instructor and the faculty advisor/liasion as a team that works together to ensure a productive field experience for the student. Within this learning team, the faculty person serves as a coordinator to facilitate the student's progress. S/he is also responsible for making changes of placement or withdrawing a student from placement should that become necessary.

The Agency Field Instructor

The agency field instructors are an integral part of our School's BSW program, and, therefore, should provide a helpful and positive experience for the student:

- by involving the student in meaningful agency experiences;
- by determining in conjunction with the student, appropriate assignments or case load for the student;
- by instructing the student as to the goals, scope, and operation of the agency as part of the student's orientation to the agency;
- by holding weekly conferences with the student;
- by discussing and evaluating student reports, assessment documents, and process recording;
- by participating in regular conferences with the faculty liaison;
- by participating in Field Instructors' Meetings and Workshops at the School;
- by providing an ongoing evaluation of the student's progress, and completing formal Field Work evaluations; and
- by making efforts to establish a close relationship with the Field Work student within which the student can benefit from the field instructor's professional skills, attitudes, and experiences.

APPENDICES

1. Memorandum regarding Field Readiness
2. Notice of Intent to Enter Field Work
3. NASW Membership Application
4. Student Professional Liability Insurance Program application
5. Materials to be shared with prospective Field Work Agencies
 - a. Memorandum from BSW Field Education Coordinator
 - b. BSW Field Work Program Agency Questionnaire (for new agencies)
 - c. Agency Field Instructor Role and Responsibilities
 - d. The Generalist Approach in Social Work