

University of Nevada, Las Vegas School of Social Work



Bachelor of Social Work BSW Field Practicum Manual

Updated January 2025

First Things First

Important information for students:

- Students enrolled in Field Education are required to use their Rebelmail account for communication purposes. Please link your personal email to this account.
- All document submissions must be labeled/named with your Last Name first, First Name second, i.e., Public, John Fall 2021 Learning Contract
- All required documents are on the [UNLV School of Social Work webpage](#) **DO NOT use other forms.**

The Field Education Department consists of:

- Marde Closson, Director of Field Education. (702)895-5848 marde.closson@unlv.edu
- Delayna Tonogan, Assistant Director of Field (702)895-3313 delayna.tonogan@unlv.edu
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The Field Education Department has alphabetically designated a point of contact for agencies and students:

Agency: First letter of name of the agency (please do not include THE)

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Please contact the appropriate staff member if you have any questions and/or concerns.

All Field Education Documents referenced in this manual can be found on [the Field Education Department Website](#):

Graduate Assistants are available during the course of each semester (excluding Summer Term) for any document submission issues, and can be reached at [Social Work Field email](#)

Terms Used:

Directors of Field:	Includes Director and Associate Director of Field Education
Agency Field Instructor:	Used interchangeably with AFI
Field Liaison:	Used interchangeably with Liaison
Electronically Submit:	Submitted via email or other designated venues

BSW PROGRAM RATIONALE, MISSION AND GOALS

The rationale of the University of Nevada, Las Vegas Bachelor of Social Work program is to prepare students for beginning level generalist social work practice. Generalist social work practice is defined as practice with all client systems from community to individual using multi-methods, multi-level approaches based on an open assessment, not tied to a particular theoretical approach. (Landon and Feit 1999).

The program conceptualization of generalist social work practice is based on the view that clients have problems of living that are multifaceted, and that their behaviors are determined by social, as well as personal factors. Therefore, beginning-level social workers must be educated to intervene at all systems levels from individuals, families, and groups to larger social systems and communities. Not only do we wish to educate beginning-level social workers to be capable of practicing social work at all system levels, but we also want students to consider all system levels as a context for intervention targets. For practice at the individual level, students must assess the family, group, community, organization, policy, and the socio-economic context in which the individual is situated, and how these contexts affect the individual's behavior. Students must also engage in program development and research. Students must assess the responsibilities of the organization's behavior, as well as the impact of the organization's behavior on individuals, families, groups, and communities. The normality of human behavior is stressed, as well as the view that social workers must often be advocates for their clients.

In addition, the Program emphasizes that social workers build on their client's strengths and empower clients to deal with their environments. To accomplish this, the strengths, ecological and empowering perspective is integrated into the curriculum by emphasizing that social work practitioners must form relationships with clients that are client-centered and be respectful of their perspectives and views. Also, the BSW program stresses nonjudgmental assessments with a problem-solving approach which assumes that clients' problems rarely reside solely within the clients themselves.

BSW PROGRAM MISSION

The essential mission of the UNLV School of Social Work's BSW program is to provide a generalist social work education for beginning-level social workers who will deliver human services to diverse urban populations. This mission is carried out through the education of students who will practice at the micro, mezzo, and macro levels using a generalist perspective.

BSW PROGRAM GOALS

The goals of the Bachelor Program are:

1. To educate students for beginning level generalist social work with diverse urban populations and client systems at all levels (individuals, families, groups, and communities) based on knowledge, values, ethics, and skills of social work practice built on a liberal arts foundation through classroom and coordinated field experience.
2. To educate students to identify and understand the factors that affect humans throughout the life cycle, with emphasis on diverse urban populations. To educate students to use the bio-psycho-social theoretical frameworks (i.e., systems theory, problem solving model, and the strengths/ empowerment perspective) to understand the dynamic and changing context of interaction between individuals, families, groups, and communities. Students will use this knowledge for assessments and problem solving with all client systems.
3. To educate students to demonstrate basic knowledge and develop skills in social research and statistics for the evaluation of professional practice at all system levels. Students will conduct ethical research with individuals, families, groups, organizations and communities.
4. To educate students to understand social welfare policies and services from history to identification of social problems; policy analysis implementation and evaluation; to analyze the effect of social policies and institutions on diverse urban populations, with a focus on oppression and discrimination and promotion of social and economic justice.
5. To prepare students for graduate school, and continual professional growth.

II. BSW PROGRAM OBJECTIVES/COMPETENCIES

Upon completion of the Bachelor of Social Work degree, BSW students will be able to achieve the following competencies that are based upon the standards of the Council on Social Work Education (CSWE) - Educational Policy and Accreditation Standards (EPSAS).

The program course assignments, practicum experiences and seminars will allow students the opportunity to achieve the following competencies:

- Demonstrate Ethical and Professional Behavior
- Engage Diversity and Difference in Practice

- Advance Human Rights and Social, Economic, and Environmental Justice
- Engage in Practice-informed Research and Research-informed Practice
- Engage in Policy Practice
- Engage with Individuals, Families, Groups, Organizations, and Communities
- Assess Individuals, Families, Groups, Organizations and Communities
- Intervene with Individuals, Families, Groups, Organizations, and Communities
- Evaluate Practice with Individuals, Families, Groups, Organizations, and Communities

III. FIELD PROGRAM RATIONALE

The field practicum experience provides the opportunity for students to realize the goals and objectives of the School through concrete, practicum, and community- based interactions with clients and practicing professionals. It is an integral component in the process of the student's professional development. The field practicum courses are designed to provide a unique opportunity for each social work student to develop and apply the skills, knowledge, and values acquired in the classroom to practice in local social service agencies. It is through the two field practicum experiences (SW 419 and SW 429) that the student begins to integrate theory and its practicum applications; sharpen awareness of personal values, attitudes, strengths and limitations;

THE FIELD PRACTICUM IS DESIGNED TO

1. Help students develop skills in theory application at the micro, mezzo, and macro levels.
2. Provide students with real world experiences of how social service agencies work with client systems by observing asocial workers in practice.
3. Help students investigate how concepts of social justice and multiculturalism are implemented in the field.
4. Assist students in identifying how generalist social work practice is based on the core mission of the profession.
5. Help students identify strengths and resources for client systems.
6. Support students in integrating concepts about human behavior in the social environment into proficiency in working with individuals, families, groups, organizations and communities.
7. Guide students in initiating and building upon client-worker relationships.
8. Help students understand the tasks of collecting and assessing information related to client concerns.
9. Aid students in recognizing client issues, problems, needs, resources and assets.
10. Facilitate students' use of empirical knowledge and technological advances in working with client systems.
11. Help students become familiar with program outcome evaluations informing practice effectiveness

Please note that the field practicum is designed to give students the opportunity to develop their core competency skills thus students are required to complete one practicum with an onsite AFI.

FIELD PRACTICUM OBJECTIVES

The objectives of the undergraduate field practicum flow from the mission, goals, and objectives of the program and reflect the Council on Social Work Education (CSWE) - Educational Policy and Accreditation Standards (EPAS), specifically the Core Competencies and Practice Behaviors. The program places an emphasis on critical thinking, professional mentoring, and respect for human diversity. Upon completion of the BSW Field Instruction (practicum, seminar, and course assignments) students are expected to demonstrate through practice behaviors the foundation competencies achieved through the following competencies:

1. Demonstrate Ethical and Professional Behavior

- Make ethical decisions by applying the standards of the NASW Code of Ethics, relevant laws and regulations, models for ethical decision-making, ethical conduct of research, and additional codes of ethics as appropriate to context.
- Demonstrate professional behavior; appearance; and oral, written, and electronic communication.
- Use technology ethically and appropriately to facilitate practice outcomes.
- Use supervision and consultation to guide professional judgment and behavior.

2. Advance human rights and social, racial, economic, and environmental justice.

- Advocate for human rights at the individual, family, group, organizational, and community system levels;
- Engage in practices that advance human rights to promote social, economic, and environmental justice.

3. Engage anti-racism, diversity, equity, and inclusion (ADEI) in practice.

- Demonstrate anti-racist and anti-oppressive social work practice at the individual, family, group, organizational, community, research and policy levels; and
- Demonstrate cultural humility by applying critical reflection, self-awareness, and self-regulation to manage the influence of bias, power, privilege, and values in working with clients and constituencies, acknowledging them as experts of their own lived experiences.

4. Engage in Practice-informed Research and Research-informed Practice

- Apply research findings to inform and improve practice, policy, and programs;
- And identify ethical, culturally informed, anti-racist, and anti-oppressive strategies that address inherent biases for use in quantitative and qualitative research methods to advance the purposes of social work.

5. Engage in Policy Practice

- Use social justice, anti-racist, and anti-oppressive lenses to assess how social welfare policies affect the delivery of and access to social services;
- And apply critical thinking to analyze, formulate, and advocate for policies that advance human rights and social, racial, economic, and environmental justice.

6. Engage with Individuals, Families, Groups, Organizations, and Organizations, and Communities

- Apply knowledge of human behavior and person-in-environment, as well as interprofessional conceptual frameworks, to engage with clients and constituencies;
- And use empathy, reflection, and interpersonal skills to engage in culturally responsive practice with clients and constituencies.

7. Assess Individuals, Families, Groups, Organizations, and Communities

- Apply theories of human behavior and person-in-environment, as well as other culturally responsive and interprofessional conceptual frameworks, when assessing clients and constituencies;
- And demonstrate respect for client self-determination during the assessment process by collaborating with clients and constituencies in developing a mutually agreed-upon plan. Use empathy, reflection, and interpersonal skills to effectively engage diverse clients and constituencies.

8. Intervene with Individuals, Families, Groups, Organizations, and Communities

- Engage with clients and constituencies to critically choose and implement culturally responsive, evidence-informed interventions to achieve client and constituency goals;
- And incorporate culturally responsive methods to negotiate, mediate, and advocate with and on behalf of clients and constituencies.

9. Evaluate Practice with Individuals, Families, Groups, Organizations, and Communities

- Select and use culturally responsive methods for evaluation of outcomes;
- And critically analyze outcomes and apply evaluation findings to improve practice effectiveness with individuals, families, groups, organizations, and communities.

IV. RELATIONSHIP OF FIELD PRACTICUM TO THE TOTAL PROGRAM

Students will have completed the following social work courses prior to acceptance for field practicum placement: Introduction to Social Work (SW 101), Social Work Practice I (SW 410), Social Welfare Policy and Services (SW 401), Human Behavior in the Social Environment I (SW 315), Human Behavior in the Social Environment II (SW 425), Intro to Professional Practice (SW 411) and if not concurrently, Social Work Research I (SW 416). In addition to the social work prerequisites, students will have completed liberal arts courses in related disciplines including Composition I and II (ENG 101, ENG 102), Oral Communication (COM 101), Human Biology (BIO 100), Economics of Discrimination (ECO 180), Introduction to Sociology (SOC 101), General Psychology (PSY 101), Cultural Anthropology (ANT 101), and two ethnic, multicultural or c r o s s -cultural classes. These courses are essential in providing students with a liberal arts perspective and the orienting theories on which to build and apply social work knowledge, values, and skills in the field practicum. These and other courses are required to be completed prior to the student starting their first Field Practicum (SW 419). The field practicum courses must be taken in succession with the corresponding practice methods courses (SW 420 and SW 421).

Activities provided by the wide variety of field agencies and professional networks within and beyond Clark County allow students to integrate and apply increasingly complex concepts from the practice courses to experiences in the field. Integration of theory and practice is facilitated through faculty review and feedback in the development of learning contracts, journals, course assignments drawn from the practice experience, and field seminar classes that focus specifically on integrating students' field experience with curriculum content. Each student will supply a course syllabus to Agency Field Instructors to enhance integration of course work in

the field. In addition, as students begin the second practicum course, Field Practicum II (SW 429), they are assisted in developing activities that reflect growth and increased levels of complexity, skill, and autonomy.

Information about the field practicum and its relationship to the total program is disseminated in a variety of ways. This Field Practicum Manual is available for all field practicum students, Agency Field Instructors, and School of Social Work faculty as it is posted on the School of Social Work Field Education website. Faculty Field Liaisons meet face-to-face at least twice each semester with students and Agency Field Instructors to provide support and to clarify requirements of the program.

Orientations for Agency Field Instructors and Preceptors are offered once per year to encourage ongoing dialogue between the School and Agency Field Instructors and to facilitate communication around educational goals, instructional methods, and techniques. The AFI Training is mandatory for all new MSW Agency Field Instructors. Additional trainings may be offered throughout the year for Agency Field Instructors (AFIs) and Preceptors interested in further developing their instructor skills.

Orientation and trainings offered supply CEUs through the State of Nevada Board of Examiners for Social Workers.

V. ASSIGNMENT TO A PRACTICUM AGENCY SITE

A Field Practicum is defined as an on site (not remote) experience in one (1) agency/organization that has been contracted with the University and the School of Social Work. Because of liability insurance issues, Field Education is not capable of tracking or allowing students to be placed in multiple Practicum sites simultaneously during the course of one semester. Please follow these steps to secure a Practicum:

Step 1 – The Resume and Cover Letter:

Students entering a practicum search must first create a current Resume and Cover Letter describing their education, experience, and objectives for field placement. UNLV Career Services can assist students with resume building and interview preparation. Please call them to inquire about dates and time of availability at 702-895-3495 if interested. You can also visit them on-line at <https://www.unlv.edu/careerservices>. The prerequisite SW 411 course covers the skills needed for completing this important first step.

Step 2– Sign-up for Handshake:

Please log in to Career Services <https://www.unlv.edu/careerservices>. Click on Student Instructions and FAQs and follow the directions.

Please note: Only agencies that have contracted as approved Field Practicum sites, i.e., have Educational Affiliation Agreements (EAA) with the University, may be considered for Practicums. If you encounter any problems with setting up an account or logging onto Handshake, please contact Career Services at 702-895-3495.

Step 3- Searching for Placements:

In the search field, type in the phrase Social Work Practicum. This will bring up all of the Practicum placement opportunities that are available. Once you locate an agency you are interested in, click the "apply" button. Your resume will be sent directly to the contact person the agency has chosen to receive the paperwork. You can check to see which positions you applied to by clicking on the "Job Postings and On-Campus Recruiting OCR Interviews" tab. From this tab you can click on the "Applications tab" which will bring up a window with all positions you have applied to. Please mark all the areas for matching qualifications.

Please note that the approved agencies will show as: Social Work Practicum- Name of Agency. Example: Social Work Practicum- Nevada Partnership for Homeless Youth.

Step 4 – The Agency Interview:

The Field Education Program adheres to a “matching” philosophy; that is, Practicum works best when agencies and students “choose” each other. At the agency interview, either party - the student or the agency - may choose to accept or reject the other. Students are advised to interview at multiple agency sites to facilitate an informed choice. Agencies are not obligated to accept any given student solely on the act that he or she has been referred by the University. Similarly, after interviewing, students may not accept agencies to which they have been referred. If there are no matches (based on Practicum position availability, incompatibility of goals, or some other reasonable criteria), the student is advised to immediately contact their Field Education Department designated contact person.

Step 5 –Practicum Site Selection:

Once a student has been offered and has accepted a practicum at a particular site, s h e or he is to notify the Field Education Department by submitting the **Practicum Selection Form** located on the Field Education website. Upon providing this information to the Field Education Department, the student will need to receive a verification email from the Field Office that the form was received and approved in order to begin their practicum the first week of the semester. All practicum selections will need to be approved by the Field Office and must be on site (not remote) experiences.

Special Note:

Students can not submit a placement selection form for an agency that they have received services from or a family member or friend is employed at. Part of professional behavior is showing courtesy to the agencies to which a student applies. It is the student’s responsibility to notify all agencies with whom the student interviewed that a practicum selection has been made, opening t h e opportunity for the agency to select another student.

Step 6- Agency Requirements:

Please note that some agencies may require background checks, drug testing, physicals, and other medical screenings. Students are responsible for these expenses.

Some agencies may require students to attend an orientation prior to the start of the practicum. These hours are outside of the practicum and are unable to count as practicum hours.

VI. FIELD PRACTICUM SETTINGS AND SELECTION CRITERIA

In order for the field practicum to be effective, it is imperative that the School of Social Work and participating agencies work together in planning and carrying out the educationally directed experience. At the same time, the school also recognizes the social responsibility of the agency toward its clients and the community and is aware of the necessity of the educational objectives to be complementary to those of the agency. The relationship between the University, the School, and the agency is outlined in the Educational Affiliation Agreement and is formalized by the signing of this document. While the School retains primary responsibility for the quality of the educational experience, it can only carry out that responsibility through cooperation and ongoing communication between the Agency Field Instructors and the School.

Field Education Department policy mandates that agencies provide the School with, among other documentation, a description of their program and practicum activities to assist in appropriately matching students with the agency. The following are examples of agency practice areas that are currently available to BSW students:

Social Service/Community Resource
Domestic Violence
Health/Medical/Hospice
Mental Health Inpatient or Outpatient
Legal/Forensic

Educational / School Social Work Child
Welfare
Elder Care/Geriatric Substance
Abuse Homelessness

The criteria established for the selection of field agencies are as follows.

- An established social welfare program with a clear-cut sanction from the community.
- Commitment to the goals of professional social work education.
- Willingness to support the School's educational objectives.
- Commitment to and the ability to provide the resources (space, time, and other support) needed by agency staff and students involved in the activities of instructional field practice.
- Availability of qualified staff to supervise BSW students. Demonstrated identification with the social work profession.
- Thorough knowledge of the purposes, policies, and procedures of the agency.
- Willingness to advance professional development as demonstrated by successful completion of the MANDATORY Agency Field Instructor (AFI) Training as well as participation in other continuing education opportunities.

VII. SCHOOL OF SOCIAL WORK AND AGENCY RESPONSIBILITIES

The School of Social Work will provide at the request of the field agency, necessary and appropriate information about the student(s) assigned to the agency, including academic background, previous social work, and other work experience, career plans, and other relevant data if available.

A. Director of Field

The Director of Field will be responsible for

- Providing the agency with the necessary consultation and support to carry out the educational program goals.
- Providing specific learning objectives to be used in planning the educational program for students.
- Providing guidelines for evaluation of student progress.
- Obtaining regular feedback from the agency regarding the Field Program's strengths and limitations and recommending suitable modifications when appropriate.
- Maintaining regular communication with Agency Directors and Agency Field Instructors.
- Providing consultation regarding Field Practicum concerns.
- Providing continuing educational services including field instruction training seminars.

B. Assistant Director of Field

The Assistant Director of Field will assist the Director of Field in all responsibilities listed above.

In addition, the Assistant Director of Field is responsible for:

- Assisting in the development of Practicum Sites within the community.
- Teaching Social Work Practicum seminars.
- Providing supervision to students in the field.
- Serving as one of the Field Liaisons

C. Field Liaison

A Field Liaison provides the link between the school, the student, and the Agency Field Instructor. Students are assigned to a Field Liaison that is available for consultation on field issues that may arise on the part of the student or the agency. This occurs on the first Friday of the semester. For each assigned student, the Faculty Field Liaison is required to make at least two agency visits per semester to meet with the student and Agency Field Instructor. The two meetings will be in person unless directed otherwise by the Field Liaison. The focus of the visit depends on the needs of the student and the agency and involves consultation regarding the Learning Contract/Evaluation, problem-solving any practicum concerns, and clarifying any Field Education issues. In the case of concerns or issues requiring immediate attention, the Field Liaison will make additional agency visits or phone contacts as needed.

D. Field Agency

A field agency that agrees to participate in the education of social work students is responsible for:

- Providing an environment that is conducive to educational goals and objectives.
- Accepting the student as contributing services related to the function of the agency.
- Affording the student significant responsibility in assignments with clients, sufficient to enable meaningful practice behavior opportunities appropriate to the field objectives and Learning Contract/Evaluation.
- Making adjustments as necessary to enable the Agency Field Instructor sufficient time for planning of the student's activities, regular weekly and emergency conferences with the student, meetings with the Directors of Field and/or Field Liaison, writing of evaluations, and other duties

- Providing the Agency Field Instructor and students suitable physical facilities and work items including adequate desk space, t e l e p h o n e , supplies, clerical support, and privacy for client interviewing, g r o u p meetings, and supervision conferences.
- Assuring that a student is not, under any circumstances, left alone or solely responsible in an office, agency, or institutional setting. At least one agency staff members must be available at all times.
Agency Orientation: Students are encouraged to have an agency orientation that includes dress code, parking, hours of work, overtime expectations, the flexibility of hours, times and dates of staff meetings, policies regarding client care, reimbursement procedures for expenses, student safety plan, emergency contact information, policies and procedures related to social work activities.
- **Special Note:** Agencies must have a **safety plan** in place for students in case of emergencies such as fire, police, medical, and any possible unruly/ violent client issues.

E. Agency Field Instructor (AFI)

An Agency Field Instructor (AFI) is an employee of the agency selected to be the primary provider of instruction and supervision for social work students. The AFI should meet the criteria for selection as indicated below. AFIs are vital members of the field training team and, with the support of the Directors of Field Education, are charged with the responsibility of assuring that the planning, teaching, and evaluation components of students' field practicum experiences have a social work focus and are professionally sound

- Minimum of Bachelor of Social Work Degree
- Two (2) years of postgraduate experience in the field.
- Six (6) months of experience with the current agency.
- Reputation for professional competence
- Attitude of respect for students' competencies and needs.
- Ability and desire to teach social work theory and its application to professional practice.
- Demonstrate identification with the social work profession.
- Thorough knowledge of the purposes, policies, and procedures of the agency.
- Willingness to advance professional development in other continuing education opportunities.

Agency Field Instructors (AFIs) must have a current resume on file with the Field Education Department.

Recognizing that the Agency Field Instructor has other responsibilities besides student supervision, she/he should, however, allot a sufficient portion of her/his time for each student on designated field practicum days. This will include time for student instruction, program development, occasional meetings with the Directors of Field and/or Field Liaison, program and student evaluation, and other related activities.

The Agency Field Instructor must schedule at least one (1) hour of formal face to face supervision with students (individual or group) on a weekly basis and complete documentation of the supervision.

The Agency Field Instructor (AFI) should monitor practicum-related documentation particularly Field Practicum Time Sheets, Student Evaluations, and documents specific to the student's role in the agency. He or she is responsible for making sure that the student has access to guidance and consultation by other agency professionals in the Agency Field Instructor's (AFI's) absence (e.g., during vacation or illness). The Agency Field Instructor (AFI) is also expected to immediately notify the school if there is a significant change in the Agency Field Instructor's (AFI's) availability due to a change in employment status, staffing, etc.

Special Note: Some agencies may not have a staff member with social work degree. In that case an off site AFI will be utilized. A student will not be able to complete another practicum at the same agency if there is an off site Agency Field Instructor.

To provide a meaningful field experience, the Agency Field Instructor (AFI) should:

- Understand how the overall objectives and specific curriculum of the School relating to the objectives of field instruction.
- Integrate these objectives with those of the agency and its policies and procedures.
- Assist the student to formulate a comprehensive educational plan through the Learning Contract/Evaluation.
- Integrate the student into her/his practice unit and establish an orientation program that will present a total picture of the agency.
- Select appropriate cases, objectives, learning tasks, and assignments for the student.
- Plan conferences and unit meetings.
- Assign written work (process and summary recordings, psychosocial

summaries, case notes, etc.) and review them with the student.

- Encourage the student to participate fully in the life of the agency.
- Provide feedback to the student on a regular weekly basis as to performance.
- Communicate with the student, Directors of Field, and/or Field Liaison any unusual opportunities, conditions, or problems as soon as they are evident.
- Participate with the student in the preparation of the Field Practicum Evaluations during the semester.
- Participate in training seminars for all agency-based field instruction.

F. Preceptor

In recognition of the fact that a student's experience in an agency can be enhanced by interaction with non-BSW/MSW human and social service professionals, some Agency Field Instructors (AFIs) may assign some supervisory responsibilities to a Preceptor. The Preceptor is selected by the Agency Field Instructor based on the Preceptor's experience or expertise in a particular area of service delivery. The Preceptor may be from professional disciplines other than social work such as marriage and family counseling, psychology, occupational and recreational therapy, etc.

The involvement of a Preceptor is at the discretion of the Agency Field Instructor. Both the Preceptor and the AFI are encouraged to develop clear avenues of communication as it relates to the student's progress through the practicum. Ultimately, the Agency Field Instructor (AFI) remains primarily responsible for the student's field training experience.

G. Agency Field Instructor (AFI) / Preceptor Orientation

The School of Social Work provides a training that is mandatory for all new and returning Agency Field Instructors. AFI training is also provided for Preceptors and open to all professionals desiring to work with social work students.

The training provides an opportunity to:

- Promote general consistency in the training of students with regard to basic social work skills across agencies.

- Foster a network of communication between Agency Field Instructors (AFIs) and the School of Social Work.
- Disseminate the most current information reflecting generally accepted principles of field supervision (including legal issues, examination of the supervisory relationship, promoting the optimal field learning experience, identifying and addressing student-agency problems, etc.).

VIII. STUDENTS IN THE FIELD PRACTICUM

1. Assignment to Agency

Assignment to an agency is the responsibility of the student through the completion of the tasks located in Section VI of this manual. The Directors of Field Education are always available to assist the student in this responsibility. Students can not complete a practicum at an agency that they have received service from or a family member or friend is employed.

2. Field Practicum Challenges

The Field Education Department promotes the view that problems encountered in the field practicum can be opportunities for learning, expansion of self-awareness, and professional development. When a student encounters problems at the practicum site, the following procedures are to be followed and can be initiated either by the student, Preceptor, Agency Field Instructor, Field Liaison, or field or social work faculty as appropriate:

1. The problem should initially be addressed between the student and the Agency Field Instructor (AFI) – preferably in the course of supervision. The AFI is advised to keep a record of observed problems and interventions they have attempted.
2. If the student and Agency Field Instructor are unsuccessful at arriving at a resolution to the problem, either party should immediately contact the assigned Field Liaison for consultation, mediation, or other action. Additional face-to-face meetings or other interventions may be mandated at the discretion of the Liaison toward problem resolution.
3. If the problem cannot be resolved with the assistance of the Faculty Field Liaison, the Directors of Field must be contacted immediately. The decisions of the Directors of Field are final. Intervention at this level could take courses but may include as a last resort, reassignment of the student to another practicum site.
4. If a practicum site terminates a student's placement at their agency, the student will be referred to the UNLV Field Education Committee for review prior to continuing the program.

Special Note: Circumstances involving a student and any emergency situation require that a **Field Practicum Incident Report** be completed and routed to the appropriate parties listed on the form. Please contact Field Office for the form.

3. Personal and Professional Development

Students must aim to achieve a level of maturity and ethical behavior that are in accord with their professional responsibilities. Self-understanding, self- acceptance, and acceptance of others are required in the helping professions. These qualities can be demonstrated by the student's awareness of how they are perceived by others; the ability to cooperate with clients and staff; and through the productive use of supervision. Students must also demonstrate respect for the individual's right to self-determination and the ability to work with people, not for people; the ability to see each person as an individual; willingness to recognize their own personal limitations; and openness to new ideas.

Professionalism requires taking the responsibility for one's own learning as demonstrated by the ability to carry out one's own workload effectively. Students must work collaboratively with others and participate appropriately in conferences and staff meetings. Preparation of written reports and appropriate case recordings, along with dependability and punctuality, are also expected professional responsibilities.

Students develop an understanding of the helping relationship through experience, as well as skills and self-discipline in its use. In the practicum, students develop the skills to initiate contact with client systems; to maintain rapport without sacrificing focus or limits; to handle relationships with persons from a variety of age, gender, ethnic, and socioeconomic backgrounds; to assist client systems in making plans and to modify those plans when necessary; to implement effective interventions at multiple client system levels, and to terminate the relationship based on an evaluation of one's actions and those of the client system.

Special Note: A "social work student" in a field practicum should **NOT** be referred to or sign any documentation using the title "intern". Currently, the term "intern" is reserved for post-master's professionals working on hours toward LCSW licensure in the state of Nevada and would constitute misrepresentation if used in reference to a BSW student.

IX. FIELD PRACTICUM SEMINAR

Field seminar classes are a component of the six (6) credit field practicum courses. These classes are very important, and your attendance is mandatory.

The seminar class is 25% of your practicum grade. Failure to meet the attendance and participation requirements results in a maximum grade of C in the class. These classes are designed to clarify student responsibilities and requirements for field, share practicum experiences and discuss concerns, and relate course concepts with field experiences. Written assignments, readings, case studies, classroom discussions, and interactive exercises will provide students with opportunities to demonstrate the development of analytical and practice skills. Students do not receive additional credit, nor do they register separately for the field seminar classes. Student attendance is mandatory for each class. Regular attendance and participation are mandatory and are viewed as professional behavior. Students may be dropped or receive a failing grade if they miss more than the allotted absences as outlined in their syllabus.

Students are expected to:

- Attend all classes in their entirety
- Participate in class discussions, exercises, activities, and assignments
- If students miss **one** class they will be expected to follow up with seminar instructor regarding their absence/participation and its effect on their grade.

While the content of the field practicum seminars may address a range of personal and professional issues, these class sessions are not in any way to be construed as “therapy”. Sharing information to promote professional growth is appropriate; however, students are expected to demonstrate an understanding of appropriate boundaries within an educational context. Additionally, by enrolling in field practicum courses including the seminar component, students are consenting to abide by the NASW Code of ethics. In a seminar, this is interpreted in part to mean that all students will protect the confidentiality of others. For example, if required to present case presentations, adequate attention must be given to securing the identity of clients. Also, relevant personal issues presented by other fellow students are not to be discussed or debated outside of the seminar class.

The discovery of dishonesty in the seminar or practicum (or inappropriate behavior in field practicum) will result in initiating the “counseling out” procedure, and the instructor has the right to assign a failing grade for the entire practicum course.

X. FIELD PRACTICUM REQUIREMENTS

A. Class Attendance and Participation

As described in section IX of this manual, students are expected to attend and

participate in field seminar classes that are designed to assist the student in integrating field practicum experiences with curriculum content. The seminar classes provide students the opportunity to broaden their own experience and knowledge through exposure to the experiences of other students. See Section IX of this manual for more information on field seminars and refer to the class syllabus.

B. Learning Contract/Evaluation

The Learning Contract/Evaluation is a formal document that consists of three (3) parts that require three (3) submissions:

1. First submission: (**Learning Contract**) The student must pick 4 specific activities for each competency from the Council on Social Work Education (CSWE) - Educational Policy and Accreditation Standards (EPAS).
2. Second submission: (**Midterm Evaluation**) The student is evaluated on each selected practice behavior for either In Progress or Not Practiced.
3. Third submission: (**Final Evaluation**) The student will be evaluated on completion of each practice behavior.

Special Note: There **MUST** be comments for each activity on the Midterm, and Final Evaluation explaining how the student will or has completed each practice behavior. The learning contract, midterm, and final comments are to be completed by the Agency Field Instructor and student. The AFI completes the midterm and final as this is their evaluation of the student.

The Learning Contract, completed by the student and the Agency Field Instructor (AFI) is prepared early in the practicum, identifying the specific practice behaviors that will be accomplished throughout the field practicum experience. The document is designed to assist the student in accomplishing the course objectives. In developing the Learning Contract, students are to follow the simple drop-down format provided for each Core Competency. Revisions may be suggested by the Faculty field Liaison and should be resubmitted in a timely manner. Once reviewed with the AFI, the document will be **electronically submitted by the AFI to the Liaison.**

Special Note: Students can count up to two (2) hours for developing the Learning Contract. They can count up to two (2) hours for the midterm and up to two (2) hours for the final evaluation. Students who do not submit the learning contract by the due date are unable to continue in their practicum until the learning contract is accepted by the Field Office. A student, Agency Field Instructor, or Faculty Field Liaison may initiate an Addendum to the original Learning Contract. Addendum's must be submitted at midterm of current semester and can include changes or additions to the original Learning Contract made after the due date.

Field Practicum Time Sheet

BSW students must complete a total of 240 hours per semester which is equivalent to 16 hours a week for 15 weeks.

Students are required to maintain an accurate record of field practicum hours and learning contract behaviors. Hours and activities such as supervision, reading, agency meetings, client interviews, training, and all other learning activities conducted during placement are to be recorded daily on the Field Practicum Time Sheet.

Students are to email their Field Practicum Time Sheets to their agency Field Instructor (AFI) and preceptor (if one is assigned) each week. Once the Agency Field Instructor (AFI) and preceptor have reviewed the Field Practicum Time Sheet, they will sign the document and send it back to the student. The student will upload the time sheet as a part of their journal entry in CANVAS. **Time sheets are due on Mondays by 5 pm.** Recorded activities should relate to Learning Contract practice behaviors. Regular review of the Field Practicum Time sheet record will assist the student, Agency Field Instructor (AFI), and Field Liaison in monitoring the student's progress toward accomplishing these specific tasks. **Only .5 hours per week will** be allotted for reading and it must be completed on site. Students must list the title of the readings on the time sheet. The readings cannot come from classroom textbooks. They should be scholarly or peer-reviewed articles.

Please note: Although students are encouraged to practice self-care, those self care activities are not part of the practicum and can not be included in their practicum hour total.

C. Field Practicum Weekly Supervision

BSW students are responsible for being prepared for educational supervision with the Agency Field Instructor. BSW Students must prepare an agenda prior to meeting with the AFI for supervision and include it in their weekly journal for the Field Liaison to review. Regular supervision will assist the student and Agency Field Instructor (AFI) in monitoring the student's progress toward accomplishing specific tasks and integrating classroom knowledge into the field experience. The AFI will score the student's progress and if there is a score of 0 or 4, the Agency Field Instructor will provide the rationale for the score. If a student earns three (3) unsatisfactory ratings in a specific behavior, the AFI will complete an action plan with the student to explain the steps that will be taken to assist the student in developing the required core competency skill. All undergraduate and graduate students enrolled in field practicum must participate in formal, face-to-face supervision for a minimum of one (1) hour on a weekly basis with the assigned Agency Field Instructor (AFI)

D. Monthly Check-ins

Each student is required to meet with their liaison for monthly check –ins. Students are expected to complete an agenda in order to prepare them for the monthly check-in. The agenda will be submitted to the SW Supervision Course prior to the meeting with the liaison.

XI. EVALUATION

A. Review of Evaluation Process

The evaluation of student learning in the field practicum is an ongoing process and is the responsibility of the Agency Field Instructor (AFI), Field Liaison, and the Directors of Field. Evaluation is based on student's timely completion of field practicum responsibilities, which include class attendance and assignments, successful completion of the practice behaviors outlined in the Learning Contract, hours and activities indicated on the Field Practicum Time Sheet, Experiential Journal, and the Field Practicum Evaluations. It is the student's responsibility to initiate each document in collaboration with their Agency Field Instructor (AFI) (except journals). Students and AFI should prepare a rough draft of comments prior to supervision and completion of the midterm and final evaluations. It is the AFI's responsibility to add the comments to the evaluations and determine if the student has developed the CORE Competency Skills identified in the learning contract. The AFI will then have the student review and sign the evaluation and then sign each document. It is the responsibility of the Agency Field Instructor (AFI) to electronically submit each document to the Liaison. The Agency Field Instructor will also complete the Field Practicum Weekly Supervision and Progress Report on a weekly basis with the student and will electronically submit the reports to the Liaison when they submit the midterm and the final learning contracts.

Evaluation begins at the onset of the semester when the student and the Agency Field Instructor (AFI) review expected outcomes for the field practicum. At midterm, the Agency Field Instructor (AFI) awards an in-progress, or not practiced for each competency listed on the Learning Contract/Evaluation form. At the semester's end, the Agency Field Instructor (AFI) will then award a passing or failing grade which awards points to the student evaluation. If the student does not receive a passing score for an evaluation, the student is not awarded any points.

Midterm Evaluation: If a student has at least 40% of total practice behaviors (14 out of 36) at "in-progress" or not practiced student receives "PASS" Pass = 15 points at Midterm Evaluation.

Final Evaluation: If a student has at least 90% of total practice behaviors (32 out of 36) at "pass" student receives "PASS" Pass = 20 points at Final Evaluation.

Special Note: The **Field Practicum Addendum Form** is also used to justify a “pass” or “fail” grade for the agency practicum section when a student exceeds or neglects to demonstrate acceptable social work skills for a student at her/his level of matriculation independent of having completed the contracted practice behaviors. If students receive a pass score on more than 9 practice behaviors at midterm, then an addendum needs to

be completed to identify learning activities for the rest of the semester.

The Field Department has ultimate responsibility for the assignment of grades. **Students must receive a grade of C or higher in order to pass the course.** If the student disagrees with the evaluation, a narrative statement specifying the reasons should be submitted to the Agency Field Instructor (AFI), Faculty Field Liaison, and Directors of Field within one (1) week after the Field Practicum Evaluation is due. Students are advised to maintain a copy of the evaluation for their own records. The completed evaluation forms become a part of the student's file. If the student and Field Department are unable to resolve the disputed grade, the student can request a review by the Director of the School of Social Work.

If not resolved to the student's satisfaction, the student then has until the end of the second week of instruction in the semester (Fall/Spring) following that in which the grade was given to file a grade grievance with the Faculty Senate Academic Standards Committee at the Faculty Senate Office. This link will take you to the Grade grievance

In the case of serious difficulties, the school's counseling out policy has provisions for addressing concerns about student performance raised by the Agency Field Instructor (AFI) or the Field Liaison. The procedures for counseling out are described in the BSW Student Handbook.

Evaluation of the field program is also ongoing and occurs in a variety of ways by utilizing the online student evaluation surveys of Practicum Seminar Instructors, Agency Field Instructors, Field Liaisons, and Practicum sites.

B. CRITERIA FOR GRADING

Evaluation will be based on a variety of criteria designed to allow the student to demonstrate mastery of course objectives. These include the accomplishment of Learning Contract tasks, the Field Practicum Evaluation, the Experiential Journal, Field Practicum Time Sheet, and other written assignments, as well as classroom participation in the field seminar class. Specific criteria for grading are as follows: Specific criteria for grading are as follows:

Class Attendance and Participation (25 Points)

Attendance (12.5) Participation (12.5)

Learning Contract (10 Points)

Timesheet (15) = (7 Midterm and 8 Final)

Monthly Check-in (15) = (7 Midterm and 8 Final)

Field Practicum Evaluation (35 Points)

Midterm (15) and Final (20)

- Submitted assignments will be evaluated and graded on: content, clarity, specificity, understanding of social work concepts, values, and ethics, personal insight, originality, grammar, spelling, and promptness.
- All hours of field practicum experience must be completed, as well as all Field Practicum Time Sheets, journal entries, and evaluation forms submitted, to fulfill course requirements for grade assignment. The practicum is a 15-week course. Practicum hours and weekly assignments are expected to be distributed throughout the semester time frame. Therefore, anything **less than 15 weeks** of practicum experience will result in a failing grade in the course.
- The grade of “I” (Incomplete) can only be requested by an agency field instructor when a field student, who is doing otherwise acceptable work, is unable to complete a course because of illness or other conditions beyond the field student’s control. Unfinished work must be completed with the same field instructor except for extenuating circumstances. The field student has one academic semester from the date the mark of “I” is recorded to complete the course. Students must clear the “I” before proceeding with other practicum courses.
- It is the student's responsibility to communicate any difficulties encountered in this process to the Field Liaison and/or Directors of Field.

XII. SUPERVISION

All undergraduate and graduate students enrolled in field practicum must participate in formal, face-to-face supervision for a minimum of one (1) hour on a weekly basis with the assigned Agency Field Instructor (AFI) and be documented in the Journal. This supervision may be formatted in an individual or group setting. This may be clinical and/or administrative supervision as appropriate for the student’s learning needs and the structure of the practicum site. While occasional supervision sessions may be missed (e.g., due to illness, or vacation), the student’s Practicum Field Time Sheets must collectively reflect a pattern of regular contact and consultation with the Agency Field Instructor (AFI). The Agency Field Instructor will also document weekly supervision and complete the Field Practicum Weekly Supervision and Progress Report for the midterm and final evaluations with the student and will electronically submit the reports to the Liaison when they submit the midterm and the final learning contracts.

Special Note: Agencies and individual Agency Field Instructors (AFI) may request or require supervision requirements above and beyond those of the Field Education Department or the field may institute additional supervision requirements if the student manifests a practice concern.

This requirement is for the protection of both students and Agency Field Instructors (AFIs). AFIs who take on supervisory roles assume vicarious liability with students and other supervisees and may therefore be held legally responsible in some part for the performance of supervisees. AFIs who are, or become, unable to meet the supervisory requirement must notify the assigned Faculty Field Liaison immediately. If as a student, you believe your supervision falls below standards, first address the issue directly with the AFI and consult the Liaison for guidance.

COURSES IN THE FIELD SEQUENCE and STUDENT COMPETENCIES

The objectives of the Undergraduate Level Field Practicum flow from the mission, goals, and objectives of the program and reflect the Council on Social Work Education (CSWE) - Educational Policy and Accreditation Standards (EPAS), specifically the Core Competencies and Practice Behaviors. The program places an emphasis on critical thinking, professional mentoring, and respect for human diversity. Upon completion of the BSW Field Instruction (**practicum, seminar class, and course assignments**) students are expected to demonstrate through practice behaviors the Foundation competencies achieved through the following objectives:

1. Demonstrate Ethical and Professional Behavior.

- make ethical decisions by applying the standards of the National Association of Social Workers Code of Ethics, relevant laws and regulations, models for ethical decision making, ethical conduct of research, and additional codes of ethics within the profession as appropriate to the context;.
- demonstrate professional behavior; appearance; and oral, written, and electronic communication; Demonstrate professional demeanor in behavior; appearance; and oral, written, and electronic communication.
- use technology ethically and appropriately to facilitate practice outcomes; and
- use supervision and consultation to guide professional judgment and behavior.

2. Advance human rights and social, racial, economic, and environmental justice.

- advocate for human rights at the individual, family, group, organizational, and community system levels; and
- engage in practices that advance human rights to promote social, racial, economic, and environmental justice.

3. Engage Anti-Racism, Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (ADEI) in Practice

- demonstrate anti-racist and anti-oppressive social work practice at the individual, family, group, organizational, community, research, and policy levels; and
- demonstrate cultural humility by applying critical reflection, self-awareness, and self-regulation to manage the influence of bias, power, privilege, and values in working with clients and constituencies, acknowledging them as experts of their own lived experiences

4. Engage in Practice-informed Research and Research-informed Practice
 - apply research findings to inform and improve practice, policy, and programs; and
 - identify ethical, culturally informed, anti-racist, and anti-oppressive strategies that address inherent biases for use in quantitative and qualitative research methods to advance the purposes of social work.
5. Engage in policy practice.
 - use social justice, anti-racist, and anti-oppressive lenses to assess how social welfare policies affect the delivery of and access to social services; and
 - apply critical thinking to analyze, formulate, and advocate for policies that advance human rights and social, racial, economic, and environmental justice.
6. Engage with Individuals, Families, Groups, Organizations, and Communities
 - apply knowledge of human behavior and person-in-environment, as well as interprofessional conceptual frameworks, to engage with clients and constituencies; and
 - use empathy, reflection, and interpersonal skills to engage in culturally responsive practice with clients and constituencies.
7. Assess Individuals, Families, Groups, Organizations, and Communities.
 - apply theories of human behavior and person-in-environment, as well as other culturally responsive and interprofessional conceptual frameworks, when assessing clients and constituencies; and
 - demonstrate respect for client self-determination during the assessment process by collaborating with clients and constituencies in developing a mutually agreed-upon plan.
8. Intervene with Individuals, Families, Groups, Organizations, and Communities.
 - engage with clients and constituencies to critically choose and implement culturally responsive, evidence-informed interventions to achieve client and constituency goals; and
 - incorporate culturally responsive methods to negotiate, mediate, and advocate with and on behalf of clients and constituencies.
9. Evaluate Practice with Individuals, Families, Groups, Organizations, and Communities
 - select and use culturally responsive methods for evaluation of outcomes; and
 - critically analyze outcomes and apply evaluation findings to improve practice effectiveness with individuals, families, groups, organizations, and communities.

Field Practicum I and II

The BSW Field Practicum I (SW 419) and Field Practicum II (SW 429) each consist of 240 hours of experience with a social service agency and attendance in field seminar classes (in-person and/or online). The Field Practicum classes (SW 419 and SW 429) are taken in succession and concurrently with the corresponding practice courses (SW 420 and SW 421). Students are able to count 10 percent of their total hours for non-agency sponsored training or events if approved by AFI.

The BSW practicums are geared to familiarize the student with the basic roles and responsibilities of both the social worker and agency and to provide a broad range of generalist experiences. Students should be provided with a comprehensive orientation to the agency. Experiences should include opportunities to shadow and observe the AFI with clients and staff of diverse backgrounds, as well as the community. Students will eventually **participate in** the direct

delivery of client services, attend staff development and other administrative and collaborative meetings, and some administrative duties. Students should also review program evaluation procedures, become familiar with social policies that impact the agency and its client systems, and participate in planning and interventions targeted at multiple system levels

PRACTICUM POLICIES

General Agency Responsibilities

It is the responsibility of the agency's educational coordinator or field instructor to inform the University immediately of any changes in field placement arrangements and if any of the following changes occur:

1. Changes in agency address or phone number.
2. Changes in agency director and/or educational coordinator.
3. Proposed changes in field instructors.
4. Major adjustments proposed in student schedules.
5. Pending strikes and labor/management disputes.
6. Any extraordinary tension in the agency that may affect student learning.
7. Absence of the field instructor from the agency for more than one week.
8. Student absences for more than three days per term.

B. Hours Required

All students are required to complete **240 hours** of field experience for **Field Practicum I (SW 419)** and **240 hours** of field experience for **Field Practicum II (SW 429)**. Students are expected to establish and be accountable for a regular schedule in their practicum, **16 hours per week**. The practicum experience must be distributed over a **minimum of 15 weeks**.

Accountability for hours is established through the accurate completion of the Field Practicum Time Sheet submitted by the student to the Agency Field Instructor (AFI), who will then in turn sign and return it to the student who will upload to their journal. Inaccuracies, inconsistencies, receipt by someone other than Agency Field Instructor (AFI) or other designated agency representatives (i.e., Preceptor) not in an approved supervisory position, or other modifications to these Field Practicum Time Sheets will be cause for not crediting hours toward the course requirement. This could result in a "Fail" grade in the course.

The grade of "I" (Incomplete) can only be requested by a field instructor when a field student, who is doing otherwise acceptable work, is unable to complete a course because of illness or other conditions beyond the field student's control. Unfinished work must be completed with the same field instructor except under extenuating circumstances. The field student has one academic semester from the date the mark of "I" is recorded to complete the course.

Special Note: In general, students may begin counting their practicum hours on the first day of instruction of the semester in concurrence of their start date at their selected Practicum site and Agency Field Instructor. Students **MAY NOT** do practicum hours during Summer Sessions, over Winter Break, or prior to the start of the semester. Students **MUST** be at their practicum site for 15 weeks each semester.

In order to count a week, students must be at the practicum site for 16 hours. If there is an extenuating circumstance preventing that, the student will need to communicate

with the AFI, Liaison and the Field Office. If a student has not submitted a Practicum Selection Form to the Field Office and received confirmation that it was approved, they are unable to count any practicum hours.

C. Compensatory Time

The student's schedule should be in accordance with the agency's policy regarding normal working hours. Occasionally, agency programs require some appointments outside of regular hours. This is a professional obligation that should be met by arrangements planned in advance between the student and Agency Field Instructor (AFI) consistent with agency policy and field practicum perimeters. Occasionally, opportunities may arise such as special training, conferences, or service events. If these are congruent with the services provided by the agency and social work practice, these may be considered for inclusion in practicum hours with the prior approval of the Agency Field Instructor (or AFI). Only contact hours (hours actually spent in the training, etc.) may be counted as possible practicum hours, **NOT** travel, meals, or other secondary activities. It is advisable to present any unusual practicum activities or commitments to the Field Liaison for feedback and direction.

D. Field Practicum Days

Field practicum days should not interfere with class schedules. It is the student's responsibility to arrange or negotiate field days/hours that are compatible with his/her school and work schedule. Moreover, if the best learning for a student is facilitated by flexible scheduling of hours, this may be arranged between the Agency Field Instructor (AFI) and the student. Practicum hours **MUST** be completed during the appropriate semester. Students are able to begin their Practicum the first week of instruction each semester.

Special Note: Students **MAY NOT** do practicum hours during Summer Sessions, over Winter Break, or prior to the start of the semester.

E. Agency Orientation

Students are required to have an agency orientation that includes dress code, parking, hours of work, overtime expectations, the flexibility of hours, times, and dates of staff meetings, policies regarding transportation of clients, reimbursement procedures for expenses, student safety plan, contact information, policies and procedures related to social work activities.

Special Note: Agencies must have a safety plan in place for students in case of emergencies such as fire, police, or possible unruly/violent client behavior.

F. Student Dress Code

Students in placement are expected to dress and conduct themselves appropriately as professionals and within agency guidelines. Jeans, tank tops, tee shirts with slogans, sneakers, and sportswear such as bike pants, shorts, leggings, and sweatshirts are not generally acceptable attire in a professional setting. Revealing or provocative garments are not acceptable under any circumstances.

Students in health care and other settings may be asked to keep their hair above shoulder length, clip their nails short, limit jewelry, or wear protective garments supplied by the agency.

G. Home Visits

Home visits are a regular part of most placements. Even if they are not, a home visit may be clinically indicated in certain situations. Agencies will be expected to take appropriate measures to ensure the safety of students. At a minimum, the same safeguards provided to staff must be provided to students.

However, in some cases, students may need additional support and security provisions. The Director of Field education should be consulted if safety is a concern. Under **NO** circumstances should students transport agency clients in their own personal vehicles. Students should have agency staff with them during home visits.

H. Background Checks and Fingerprinting

Some agencies (e.g., hospitals, federal agencies, Clark County, and State of Nevada agencies) may require students to obtain special background checks that could also include fingerprinting, and/or medical clearance. It is very important to inquire about these checks and conditions at the time of the interview at the agency. The student is responsible to obtain, provide, and in some cases pay for the information required by the agency. Please initiate the background check as soon as possible, some of the checks can take 2-8 weeks to complete. If a student is held up because of incomplete requirements, it may hurt the student's ability to accumulate the required number of practicum hours.

Special Note: Students are responsible for these expenses.

I. Transportation

It is the student's responsibility to secure transportation to and from the field setting. The University has no funds with which to reimburse students for the use of their private automobiles and for other expenses incurred in the conduct of agency business. Under **NO** circumstances should students transport agency clients in their own personal vehicles. Students are able use an agency vehicle if they complete the driving requirements. Students is required to have agency staff with them when transporting clients in a company vehicle.

J. Liability

The University carries malpractice liability insurance that provides coverage for students during the practicum enrollment period. However, under **NO** circumstances should a field practicum student be left alone and responsible in an office or agency setting. At least one (1) agency staff member must be present and available. Supervising Agency Field Instructors (AFI) may be subject to vicarious liability for the performance of the student like any other supervisee.

If the student travels for agency purposes in his/her own or agency vehicle pursuant to field course activities, he/she should be quite clear about the coverage by agency

insurance and his/her personal liability in case of an accident. **Special Note:** Under **no** circumstances should students transport agency clients in their own personal vehicles. Students are able to use company issued vehicles if they complete the driving requirements set forth by the agency. The student is required to have agency staff with them when transporting clients in a company vehicle.

K. Holidays

Practicum schedules are designed to follow the academic calendar. However, some agencies may not observe all University holidays and breaks. Therefore, the scheduling of field practicum hours should be determined early in the academic year/semester in conjunction with the Agency Field Instructor (AFI). Students are required to complete practicum hours at the practicum site in order to count hours on an observed holiday.

L. Absences

The student should be allowed absence from field courses and practicum in cases of personal illness or when illness or death occurs in the immediate family. The student is required to notify the Agency Field Instructor (AFI) and the Faculty Field Liaison immediately. All practicum hours missed must be made up before a final semester grade will be given. Barring such emergencies, the student is expected to follow the practicum time guidelines as set up between the student and agency field instructor and the tardiness/absentee policies of the agency. Students are to give early attention to accounting for personal vacations or other planned activities that may interfere with competing practicum course requirements and to make the appropriate accommodations.

M. NASW Code of Ethics

The [NASW Code Of Ethics](#) is relevant to all social workers and social work students, regardless of their professional functions, the settings in which they work, or the populations they serve. Students should familiarize themselves with these principles. **In particular, confidentiality should be adhered to in all written assignments and class discussions.** Violation of the Code of Ethics could be grounds for dismissal from the field course.

N. Administrative Responsibility

Students are expected to understand agency values, policies, and procedures. No activity undertaken by the student should be to the detriment of clients, nor to the agency when it is pursuing its proper functions in the community.

O. Disability Accommodations

If you have a documented disability that may require assistance, you will need to contact the Disability Resource (DRC) for coordination of your academic accommodations. The DRC is located in the Reynolds Student Services Complex (SSC-A Room 143). The phone number is 702-895-0866 (TDD 702-895-0652).

P. Mental Health Supports

At times the ability to balance the demands of a rigorous academic program, other life responsibilities, and internal stressors may become difficult thereby requiring professional intervention. The Student Counseling and Psychological Services (CAPS) (702-895-3627) is available on campus to help students with concerns before these become more serious problems and to address crises. As a part of being self-aware, it is incumbent upon each social work student to understand her or his personal issues and limitations and to seek assistance through CAPS or other community resources when these have the potential to interfere with appropriate social work practice. Field faculty or their designees who identify or suspect significant mental health issues are encouraged to direct students to appropriate resources.

Q. Petition Requirements

Petition forms are required for the following circumstances:

1. Students may petition to change their practicum site if there are circumstances at the agency preventing them from receiving an educational learning opportunity. Approval depends on the reasoning for changing practicum sites with a heavy emphasis placed on the student's educational goals.
2. Students may petition to do their practicum at their place of employment or at an agency that they have volunteered or have been employed at in the past. Placement of a student in a setting where he/she is employed will be considered only if the student has been employed at the agency for a minimum of six (6) months and if the educational objectives of the field practicum are assured. The Agency Field Instructor (AFI) must be different from the student's work supervisor, practicum activities must be different from the current work experience, and the schedule of field practicum hours/days must differ from the student's work schedule. A clear delineation between the employee role and student role must be provided in writing.

3. Students may petition to continue their practicum placement for an additional semester (i.e., SW 419 into SW 429). Approval requires a heavy emphasis upon the student completing different activities and practice behaviors in writing. Practicum will be considered only if the educational objectives of the field practicum are assured and there is an on site Agency Field Instructor. Students must complete one practicum with an on site AFI.

Petitions related to the practicum for the following semester must be submitted by November 15th for Spring semester and May 15th for Fall Semester.

The student may be required to submit a petition per the Directors of Field if an unusual or extraordinary situation is requested. For petitions, the student must provide written documentation clearly illustrating how the placement request complies with field objectives, policies, and guidelines. Such documentation must be submitted with the original signatures of the student, prospective Agency Field Instructor (AFI), and other individuals that may be closely linked to the situation.

All petitions must be received by the Directors of Field prior to the deadlines mentioned above. Failure to submit the petition may result in denial of placement.

Special Note: Field Practicum Petition Forms can be found on the Field Education website. Please note that petitions **are not** always granted, so students should be actively searching for other practicum placements while waiting for decisions to be made about the petition. Students are unable to submit a petition to continue at an agency with an off site AFI or petition at an agency where they received services or a family member or friend is employed.

Previous Experience

The Field Education Program will not, under any circumstances, credit a student for work or volunteer experience acquired prior to enrollment in practicum courses. The rationale for this policy is based on the philosophy that learning is a continuous process. Thus, even an individual with extensive experience in a particular area can still benefit from the learning opportunities available via monitored, supervised fieldwork.

R. Counseling Out Policy

In some cases, the student may be advised that participation in field practicum is contradictory to his or her welfare or that of the clients or population they serve. Circumstances or situations that initiate the counseling out process are available through the School of Social Work. As far as the Field Education Program is concerned, any field, other School faculty, or designee (e.g., Preceptor, Agency Field Instructor [AFI]) may recommend the initiation of this policy based on reasonable information that indicates that the student is not able or willing to function in accordance with School or professional standards. The discovery of dishonesty in the educational context (i.e., falsifying case information, copying peer papers, etc.) can result in the initiation of this policy. Outcomes can range from consultation to delay in field practicum, to participation in field practicum under specified conditions, assignment of a failing grade to dismissal from the

social work program. Students are advised of each stage in the process according to School policy.

S. Sexual Harassment

It is the policy of the University of Nevada, Las Vegas (UNLV) –School of Social Work, that in order to maintain an environment in which the dignity and worth of all students are respected, that harassment of students in their field placements is intolerable and unacceptable. It is seen as a form of behavior that seriously undermines the atmosphere of trust essential to the learning environment. Also, willful false accusations of harassment will not be condoned.

The School of Social Work recognizes that the harassment policies and procedures adopted by UNLV may not apply to the harassment of a student in the field practicum agency where he/she is not an employee of the agency or where harassment is coming from someone who is not a university instructor. The following guidelines are provided in case there are situations or complaints regarding harassment of students (due to the unavoidable subordinate position students experience in field placement at times). Harassment of students may include harassment from a field instructor, agency employee, community representative, etc.

- 1) Harassment may be defined as unwanted sexual advances or visual, verbal, or physical conduct of an inappropriate nature. May involve the behavior of the field instructor or any person employed by the field practicum agency of either gender when such behavior falls within the definition outlined below (the following is a partial list):
 - a.) Harassment of a student from UNLV is defined as unwelcome sexual advances, requests for sexual favors, verbal or other expressive behaviors, or physical conduct commonly understood to be of a sexual nature when:
 - i.) Submission to such conduct is made either explicitly or implicitly a term or condition of an individual's continued placement.
 - ii.) Submission to or rejection of such conduct is used as a basis for decisions or assessments affecting the individual's welfare as a student placed in the agency:
 - iii.) Such conduct has the purpose or effect of unreasonably and substantially interfering with an individual's welfare, academic, or professional performance, or creates an intimidating, hostile, offensive, and demeaning internship/educational environment.
- (1) Consensual relationships are deemed unwise and seen as

professionally inappropriate when they occur between members of the teaching staff or other agency staff (specifically, in the field for this policy) and students. A professional power differential exists in these situations in terms of the influence and authority which, one can exercise over the other. Also, this type of relationship begins to professionally and ethically concern the NASW Code of Ethics

- 2) Harassment of any practicum student from the school shall not be tolerated by a field instructor, employee, or representative of the field practicum agency. To best ensure that students are placed in an agency environment free from sexual harassment, the following needs to occur:
 - a) Any field practicum setting approved for use as a field placement shall provide the student with a copy of its own “harassment policy” utilized within the agency setting. Agency policies and procedures shall be reviewed in complete detail with the student. Students should be clear on whom to inform and who are the designated persons to share the matter with. UNLV, and the Field Education Faculty, may also request a copy of this policy at any given time. If the agency has **no** such policy, the School of Social Work **strongly urges** that one be developed.
 - b) Each field practicum agency is responsible for orienting students to the harassment policies and procedures in that particular setting. This orientation should include, but not be limited to:
 - c) discussion of harassment within the agency setting, including professional and non-professional staff, field instructors, etc.
 - (1) discussion of harassment issues with clients; and
 - (2) harassment from fellow colleagues.
 - b) If a student believes that they has been the subject of harassment in the field practicum setting, the student will notify the following personnel concerning the field: the field instructor; the field faculty; and/or the Director of Field Education or Assistant Director of Field Education.
 - i) Any student who believes that they have encountered harassment is encouraged to discuss the concern with any one of the following persons at the University with whom they feel comfortable: Field Education Faculty mentioned above, the Advisor, the Department Director, Dean of the College, Equal Opportunity Counselors, University Personnel Services, etc.
 - ii) If the field practicum setting has a specifically designated individual or office to deal with these matters, that person or office should also be notified by the student. The student is strongly encouraged to notify agency personnel.
 - iii) The School faculty member receiving the report shall immediately notify the

School Director, Director of Field Education, field faculty, designated Personnel Services officer, etc., and follow procedures in accordance with the University policies. This will take you to the Harassment Policies

T. Paid Practicums

Practicum activities and student roles are separate and distinct from “employment.” Very few agencies offer a “stipend,” which consists of limited funds given to students as compensation for time spent in their practicum. However, stipends are offered solely at the agency's discretion. Students who receive stipends are situated the same as students who do not receive stipends and are not to be treated as employees by the agency.