



DEPARTMENT OF COUNSELOR EDUCATION,
SCHOOL PSYCHOLOGY, AND HUMAN SERVICES



Field Experience Handbook

CED 400 Field Experience in Human Services

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INTRODUCTION

The Human Services program at UNLV is committed to preparing students for careers in the human services field. An essential component of career preparation in human services is field experience. The traditional academic approach to learning provides a variety of information through lectures, reading of literature, observations, and field placement. These learning activities represent the beginning steps in training a professional. A human services career incorporates skills and techniques that can be learned and improved through experience. The optimum practice experience is in a human service setting under the guidance of an experienced helping professional. Completed under these conditions, the field experience can encourage the student's development as a human services practitioner.

The purpose of this Field Experience Student Handbook is to consolidate the materials needed to access a field placement and fully document the experience. The field experience student, the field experience coordinator, the course instructor, and the field supervisor (agency representative) all strive to work together to help the student gain an understanding of field procedures, regulations, and responsibilities as a new human services professional. This handbook is designed to help facilitate field experiences that make a meaningful contribution to the student's professional growth.

SUGGESTIONS FOR THE BEGINNING FIELD EXPERIENCE STUDENT

You are fulfilling a role that mixes a learning environment with professional and ethical standards. Placement in a field experience provides you with a unique position to participate in a wide variety of activities, develop and grow as a professional, and gain valuable skills that will help you in the future. This handbook is designed to help prepare you for the field experience. Hopefully, it will prepare you for a serious, but exciting event where you attempt to integrate the academic material you have learned at UNLV into a professional setting. **You should become familiar with the material in this handbook before you begin your field experience.**

The suggestions provided in the following section will make your field experience more valuable if they are followed. These suggestions incorporate ideas concerning how to relate to people and explain procedures that professionals in a new setting can follow. A few of these ideas are very specific to the field experience, but most suggestions can be used by any professional in any setting.

Students are required to work a total of **180 clock hours** per semester while in the field experience. Students enrolling in the field experience must complete their coursework before or concurrently with their first field experience semester. Students must complete an evaluation of both the site and the supervisor before the field experience credit is awarded. **Field supervisors are to meet weekly with the students for supervision and submit mid-semester and final evaluations of the student with whom they work.**

TERMS

Field Experience Student. The Human Services program student participating in CED 400, Field

Experience in Human Services.

Field Supervisor. The agency representative supervising the student's field experience.

Field Experience Coordinator. The University representative overseeing undergraduate field experience placements.

Course Instructor. The individual facilitating the CED 400 course.

The field placement is a culminating experience for Human Services students. It is a time when the student is expected to begin to apply the knowledge, theory, and experience acquired in the university setting prior to a professional placement.

GOALS OF THE FIELD EXPERIENCE

The goals of the field experience are to:

1. Produce a student who is able to assume the responsibilities of an entry-level human services worker.
2. Provide an experience that will encourage the student to integrate previous university study with the present field experience.
3. Develop an understanding of the complex professional demands of a human services professional. These demands are personal, physical, intellectual, and emotional in nature.
4. Develop an ability to analyze one's own professional performance, recognizing strengths and weaknesses.
5. Provide the student the opportunity to reassess professional commitments in the field of human services.

RESPONSIBILITIES OF FIELD EXPERIENCE STUDENT

The responsibilities of the field experience student are to:

1. Complete all responsibilities assigned by both the field supervisor and the field experience coordinator.
2. Realize that the student is a part of the agency in which s/he has been placed and is subject to agency policies.
3. Understand that placement duties and responsibilities are important. If the student cannot perform those responsibilities due to personal illness or death in the family, the field supervisor should be contacted immediately.
4. Report promptly for all field placement appointments and duties.
5. Maintain the professional behaviors and attitudes necessary for working with professionals, clients, and other members of the community.
6. Dress appropriately for work. Personal cleanliness and neatness are professional necessities.
7. Attend all scheduled 400 class meetings that take place at UNLV.
8. Participate fully in the CED 400 coursework.
9. Attend, whenever possible, related workshops and professional meetings to increase professional

growth and development.

RESPONSIBILITIES OF FIELD SUPERVISOR (AGENCY REPRESENTATIVE)

1. Provide the field experience student with adequate and effective supervision. Meet with the student at least once a week to provide feedback on their performance.
2. Acquaint the student with the policies and traditions of the professional setting.
3. Provide the student with opportunities for observation.
4. Direct and assist the student in planning assigned activities.
5. Involve the field experience student in a variety of learning activities that cultivate the following skills:
 - a. Assessment and documentation
 - b. Case management
 - c. Planning and evaluation
 - d. Problem-solving and decision-making
 - e. Individual, small, and large group client communication and facilitation
 - f. Professional staff relationships
6. Promote the field student's realization of the needs of the client and encourage the consideration of interventions and programs to meet those needs.
7. At the midterm and end of the semester, complete the student evaluation in Portfolio (formerly Chalk and Wire) and meet with the student to discuss it.

RESPONSIBILITIES OF FIELD EXPERIENCE COORDINATOR (UNIVERSITY REPRESENTATIVE)

1. Communicate with the faculty with regard to curriculum, program evaluations, and quality of program.
2. Promote communication between the University and community professionals.
3. Provide field supervisors with information regarding the program, evaluation materials, feedback relating to the placement, and letters of appreciation to administrators and field supervisors of cooperating agencies.
4. Maintain an official file of those who completed the field experience.
5. Develop and implement follow-up studies for the improvement of the field program.
6. Secure new and effective placements for the Field Experience program.

RESPONSIBILITIES OF THE COURSE INSTRUCTOR

1. Facilitate the coursework and grading for CED 400.
2. Review the field experience documents from field supervisors.
3. Integrate the requirements and documents from the Field Experience Handbook into coursework.

4. Promote communication between the student, field supervisor, and field experience coordinator.
5. Promote communication between the University and community professionals.

PROFESSIONAL ATTITUDE AND Demeanor

1. Remember that first impressions are important. Convey an attitude of enthusiasm, cooperativeness, and respect.
2. Be cognizant of the agency, its procedures, policies, and philosophies.
3. Always be on time. Nothing looks worse than a “professional” who is late.
4. You will be considered a member of the agency staff. You are expected to play an active role in the organization, but are not expected to do a job that no one else is willing to do.
5. If problems arise, follow the appropriate channels of authority when seeking solutions. First, talk to your field supervisor. If the problems cannot be resolved, talk to the course instructor or the field experience coordinator. Always discuss problems before they become too big. However, do not become a habitual complainer.
6. Maintain a professional attitude at all times.
7. Your field supervisor will assign you the majority of your responsibilities. If you are assigned a job that you do not understand or feel you do not have the skills to complete, discuss this with your field supervisor.
8. When you make suggestions, have a realistic expectation of their acceptance, concentrating on the process of suggesting rather than promoting your own ideas.
9. Demonstrate initiative on the job and keep your field supervisor informed.
10. Personal hygiene is important, and every effort should be made to be neat and clean.
11. Remember, you are in a learning environment. Feedback should be viewed as constructive, not negative, and part of the learning process.
12. Be organized and be an effective planner. Pay attention to details.
13. Observe your field supervisor. Remember, they have been working in the field and can provide some valuable lessons for you to learn. Pay attention to how your supervisor conducts themselves and how they deal with different situations.
14. Maintain neat, accurate, and complete records of your experience. Completeness is crucial because you will not always be around to answer questions about your records.
15. Learn all you can from your field experience. Learning about the organization of your workplace could include:
 - a. Agency schedules
 - b. Agency objectives and goals
 - c. Organization
 - d. Policies and procedures
 - e. Budget
 - f. Filing systems
 - g. In-service training procedure

- h. Funding and funding restrictions
 - i. Supplies and materials
 - j. Sources and kinds of reference materials
 - k. How a professional organization functions
16. Maintain professional standards of confidentiality, respecting both the client and the agency in regard to discussion outside of the work setting.
 17. Do not be on your cell phone while on site unless during a break.
 18. Follow proper etiquette when working virtually with others, including proper communication and appropriate virtual backgrounds.
 19. Students should be familiar with the [NOHS Code of Ethics](#)
 20. HAVE FUN! Even though it is a learning experience, you still should enjoy what you are doing.

POLICY ON FIELD EXPERIENCE STUDENT CONDUCT

Professional behavior is required of students at all times. This is especially true for students in field experience, because these students are, for all intents and purposes, functioning as professional human services workers despite their status as students. In view of this, appropriate student conduct in these settings is of the utmost significance. It is during these experiences that students and faculty alike will have the best opportunity to discern any areas of concern regarding a given student's appropriateness and preparedness for the professional role. In the event that a student's conduct is anything less than absolutely professional, the faculty has the obligation to the student, the profession, and the public to take whatever steps are necessary to rectify the situation. Violations of professional ethics codes, insubordination to supervisors, mistreatment of colleagues, support staff or clients, demonstrations of gross clinical misjudgment, or other actions inconsistent with professional standards of behavior are evidence of unprofessional conduct. Unprofessional conduct will not be tolerated; in extreme instances, students may be administratively dropped from the internship.

FIELD ACTIVITIES

Guidelines for Field Activities are guidelines that can be followed when planning the field experience. Students will receive access to these guidelines in their CED 400 course at the beginning of the semester. It is understood that an agency may not be able to give the student all the experiences listed. However, these guidelines can be used as suggested activities and can be viewed as a very helpful framework when structuring the student field experience. There are several experiences that have been starred. The Human Services program deems starred items as valuable activities that are encouraged.

Field supervisors are encouraged to modify any suggested (non-starred) experiences to meet the needs of their own particular situation. It is hoped that this flexibility will maximize both agency effectiveness and the student's professional growth. The field supervisor also retains the option to add experiences that will enrich the student's field experience.

The field student will check items off on the field activities list as they are experienced, specify

when each activity was accomplished, and describe the nature of the activity involvement. The field activities list will be submitted at midterm and at the conclusion of the field experience. Again, it is emphasized that not every internship will provide opportunities to accomplish all of the activities. Only the starred items must be completed.

Field activities will also be reflected in the Learning Contract, which each student develops with their field supervisor at the beginning of the field experience. **The Learning Contract includes learning objectives based upon items in the field supervisor's Midterm and Final Evaluation.** Students should add additional objectives to reflect their own individual learning goals.

The Internship Log identifies the number of hours worked at the field site. Field hours are to be logged or completed weekly via Portfolio (previously known as Chalk and Wire), a secure web-based software used for learning assessments and field placement tracking. Field supervisors will receive a notification from Portfolio when field experience students submit their weekly logs. The Field Supervisor will confirm, in Portfolio, that the student has completed the weekly hours toward the 180 hours of field experience each semester.

EVALUATION PROCEDURES

Evaluation is a critical component of the field experience. First, the evaluation provides a formal and an informal opportunity to receive feedback concerning professional attitudes and skills. Second, the evaluation procedure begins to establish a professional commitment to self-evaluation that will hopefully continue throughout the student's professional career.

The student's evaluation will be conducted according to standards established for a beginning human services worker. The student should not expect to perform as an experienced human services worker, but should strive to reach the highest possible proficiency while enrolled in the field experience.

The field experience includes five formal evaluations as outlined in the next section of the handbook. The evaluations requiring the supervisor's signature are completed by the supervisor via Portfolio, a secure web-based software used for learning assessments and field placement tracking.

Students must complete the course with a C or better grade and complete all 180 hours of field experience to successfully pass the course.

COMPONENTS OF THE EVALUATION PROCESS

1. **Weekly conferences** with the field supervisor provide an opportunity for **the supervisor and the field student** to discuss progress and to interact regarding questions and weekly planning. The weekly conferences are a critical component of the field experience. They do not include

formal evaluation.

2. The **Midterm Evaluation of Field Experience Student** is a formal evaluation conducted at the midterm (approximately the seventh week) of the field experience **by the field supervisor**. It is an excellent time to revisit the learning contract and discuss the strengths of the field student, as well as alert the student to any weaknesses that must be improved during the field experience. The field supervisor and student meet face-to-face to discuss the evaluation prior to its submission to the university instructor.
3. The **Final Evaluation of Field Experience Student** is a formal evaluation conducted at the end (approximately the fourteenth week) of the field experience **by the field supervisor**. It is a culminating procedure that gives the field student a description of functioning both for work within the agency and work with clients. After discussing the final evaluation with the field supervisor, the student should have a realistic description of the professional competence developed during the field placement.
4. The **student** must complete a **Midterm Student Self-Evaluation** at the midterm and the **Final Student Self-Evaluation** at the end of the semester. The self-evaluations allow the student to analyze the total field experience and to discuss personal and professional growth occurring during the placement. The analyses also serve as excellent opportunities to provide feedback with regard to the adequacy of internship supervision and support, as well as the academic preparation provided by the overall Human Services program.
5. The **student** must also provide **Student Feedback** at the end of the field experience. The evaluation is designed to provide input concerning the field supervisor and the field experience. This information is used to provide feedback to the various placements and supervisors participating in the field experience component of the Human Services program.