

# **Section V**

## **Social Work Field Education Structure**

## **V. SOCIAL WORK FIELD EDUCATION STRUCTURE**

### **A. THE ACCOUNTABILITY SYSTEM: SCHOOL-AGENCY STUDENT**

This section describes the system of reciprocal accountability in the field practicum. It specifies the areas for which the school, agency and student are each responsible, and thus what each can expect from the other.

### **B. The School: MSW Field Education Office**

The school's basic responsibility is the organization, implementation and oversight of the field education program. The responsibility is delegated to a staff member who serves as the Director of Field Education. The MSW Director of Field Education and clerical staff constitute the MSW Field Education Office. The MSW Field Education Office can be expected to carry out the following responsibilities:

1. Establish criteria for the selection of qualified field agencies.
2. Establish criteria for the selection of qualified field instructors.
3. Match students with available field agencies.
4. Provide background information on the student prior to placement.
5. Provide a faculty member to serve as liaison between the school and each field agency.
6. Provide orientation and a training program for new field instructors.
7. Provide a continuing program of field education for field instructors.
8. Provide a written guide to field education for practicum participants.
9. Provide opportunities for assessment of the field education program.
10. Provide advance notice of meetings where field instructors presence is warranted.
11. Establish and maintain a continuing interchange of information with practicum participants on programs and issues affecting field education.
12. Provide practicum participants with opportunities to participate in relevant school committees and task forces.
13. Issue continuing education credits for attendance at school-sponsored field education programs and for the practice of field instructions.

### **C. The Faculty Liaison**

The faculty liaison is the school's representative to the agency. The liaison's basic responsibility is to monitor the program and assist the field instructor and student in meeting field education objectives. The liaison can be expected to carry out the following responsibilities:

1. Initiate early contact with agency field instructor and student in order to clearly communicate availability and role as an educational resource.
2. Consult with the field instructor and the student in developing and implementing the learning contract.
3. Visit the field agency at least once per semester in the practicum year
4. Respond to requests from field instructors for information and assistance.
5. Consult with students on their field education and progress toward achieving field education objectives.
6. Assist students and/or field instructors in the resolution of field-related problems.
7. Alert the field instructors if students are experiencing academic difficulties after consultation with the students' academic advisors.
8. Participate in school-sponsored field education programs with field instructors and students.
9. Assign end-of-semester grades to students in collaboration with the field instructor and based on an informed judgment of the student's performance..
10. Inform the Director of Field Education of situations jeopardizing the student's progress in practicum, e.g. below-par performance, agency-student mismatch.
11. Make annual recommendations to the Director of Field Education for continued participation in the practicum of agencies and field instructors.

#### **D. The Agency**

The agency's basic responsibility is to provide conditions in the agency that support the achievement of field education objectives. The conditions constitute the criteria used by the school in the selection of qualified agencies. Thus the agency can be expected to carry out the following responsibilities:

1. Demonstrate a commitment to social work practice and social work education.
2. Accept students without regard age, sex, race, ethnicity, or religion.
3. Provide a qualified MSW field instructor.
4. Provide the field instructor with sufficient time and resources to carry out field instruction responsibilities with the student and the school.
5. Provide materials (e.g. paper, pens, access to case records/reports etc.)
6. Provide space (e.g. use of a desk, office space, storage of materials and private area for interviewing clients.
7. Provide equipment (e.g. telephone, photocopier, calculators, tape recorders)
8. Provide the resources and the range and depth of learning experiences required for the achievement of field education objectives.
9. Adopt an educational stance toward the student as a learner by developing a professional rather than an apprentice and by not assigning inappropriate job tasks.
10. Provide the student with resources required to carry out learning assignments such as clerical support, access to relevant agency records and documents, and travel reimbursements on authorized activity.
11. Provide vital and timely information to the school such as a written description of the agency's services and learning opportunities for students, confirmation of field placements, and updates on staff policy and program changes affecting field education.
12. Accept two or more students per practicum when sufficient MSW field instructors, learning opportunities, and physical facilities are available.
13. Delegate a staff member to serve as the field education coordinator within the agency and as contact person to the school whenever several students are in placement.

## **E. The Field Instructor**

Just as the faculty liaison is the school's representative to the agency, the field instructor is the agency's representative to the school. The agency delegates to the field instructor the responsibility of serving as the student's primary field learning resource.

To qualify for field instruction, the field instructor must have the MSW degree from an accredited school of social work, at least two years of post-MSW experience, practice competence in one or more professional areas, and an expressed interest and willingness to accept the field instructor's role and responsibilities within the school's field education framework. Further, all field instructors of 2<sup>nd</sup> year students, advanced standing students or first year students who are doing clinical work must have the LCSW.

The field instructor can be expected to carry out the following responsibilities:

1. Orient the student to the agency, staff and field instruction staff.
2. Actively collaborate with the student in the development, implementation and ongoing use of a field education contract.
3. Take overall responsibility for the student's educational experience in the agency and coordinate any experience delegated to other staff members.
4. Schedule weekly conferences/supervisory sessions (about 1 ½ hours) with the student.
5. Provide the student with ongoing feedback on the student's performance
6. Support the student's initiative, when required, in gaining access to other learning experiences and resources in the agency and professional community.
7. Maintain an ongoing record of the student's progress and complete written evaluations of the student's achievements at the end of each semester, including a recommended grade based on the student's progress.
8. Confer with the faculty liaison for mutual planning, review and assessment of the field education.
9. Inform the faculty liaison promptly of any problems in the field placement and, when required, develop a plan of remedial action with the liaison and the student.
10. Provide feedback to the liaison and the Director of MSW Field Education regarding the student's performance of his/her responsibilities.
11. Provide information to the school to assist in the future use of the placement, including the field instructor's interest in continuing service as a field instructor.
12. Participate in school-sponsored field education meetings.
13. When new to field instruction, attend the required orientation and training programs for new field instructors. Attend training sessions as provided by the MSW Field Education Office.

## F. The Student

The basic responsibility of the student is for his or her own learning in the field agency and the profession. In general, the student can be expected to: 1) repeatedly practice the activities inherent in field education objectives as described in the Field Education course outline; 2) learn the entire curriculum, essentially apply and test classroom content in the field setting; and 3) develop practice and analytic skills sufficient upon graduation for responsible professional practice.

Students are expected to be active participants in their field education process by working closely with the MSW Director of Field Education. When all parties agree on a field education agency, it is the responsibility of the student to stay in touch with the agency field instructor to keep pace with any changes in the agency affecting the placement and to notify the agency field instructor of any change in the student, situation likely to affect the placement.

In agreeing to the field placement, the student accepts the following responsibilities:

1. To adhere to standards of professional ethics, including the principles of confidentiality and accountability reflected in the Code of Ethics of the National Association of Social Workers. Also to be in compliance with NJ Social Work licensure, students must refer to themselves as “social work interns” in field placements.
2. To account for field hours weekly and provide a total of the number of hours at the end of each semester. A minimum of two days per week over two semesters is required for foundation year students, and three days per week for advanced year students. Usually, this is accomplished by functioning in the field setting 16 hours each week school is in session, for foundation year students, and 24 hours a week for advanced year students. Field hours should be prearranged and regularized after consultation with the field instructor. It is the policy of Kean University's MSW Program that the number of hours in field education exceed the minimum required by CSWE. 50% of field hours must be done during business hours (M-F, 9am-5pm).
3. To notify both the agency and the Social Work Department assigned Faculty Liaison at once of any anticipated lateness or absence due to illness or emergency. Lost time must be made up within a reasonable time, with the exception of one allowed sick day per semester which does not have to be made up.
4. To notify the field instructor and the faculty liaison if the student does not plan to continue at the agency during school vacation periods (not required). Arrangements should be made with the field instructor regarding the coverage of student's caseload. The exception to this rule is that during the semester break, students return to their field education the first working day after January 1, so that continuity can be maintained in assignments. Field Education during the second semester and fourth semester will end prior to the end of the academic semester to make up for this.

5. To assume professional responsibility for the confidential nature of the agency records by disguising any case material used in class. Such material must be initialed by the supervisor before leaving the agency to assure confidentiality. Confidentiality extends as well to any contact with fellow workers, clientele or the community.
6. To follow the professional practice of obtaining general informed consent of clients in regards to either oral or written interviews.
7. To actively participate in weekly supervisory sessions with field instructors and provide agendas to the field instructor prior to the sessions.
8. To arrange and be responsible for his or her own transportation to the agency whether it is by public transportation, own car, or by sharing the expenses in a car pool. When using his/her own car at work the student must show evidence of having a personal and public liability insurance policy and where possible should have taken a defensive driver's course.
9. To attend and participate in weekly seminar meetings with other students and faculty during the foundation year practicum.
10. To bring to the attention of the field instructor and faculty liaison any problems or conditions that may interfere with gaining maximum benefit from the field practicum experience.
11. To engage actively in the evaluation process by a continual self assessment and by asking for feedback from the field instructor.
12. To follow through with all required procedures to obtain a field placement. (Return form by due date, keeping all appointments for interviews, etc.)
13. To gain knowledge and understanding of the philosophy and methods of agency practice and operation and comply with agency work requirements
14. To complete topic paper assignments and process recordings in the foundation year practicum. Unless otherwise specified, topic papers are to be shared with the field instructor, as well as the faculty liaison
15. To secure clearance from field instructor for material to be presented in class assignments
16. To demonstrate a commitment to offering services within the agency structure
17. To record in case records consistently with the agency's policies and procedures.
18. To comply with the agency rules with respect to field work.
19. To demonstrate professional conduct as a representative of the agency.
20. To complete paper assignments and "supervisory agendas" in the advanced year practicum.
21. To inquire about potential dangers at the field placement

22. To observe, test, integrate and apply in social work practice the theoretical and conceptual knowledge presented in the social work curriculum
23. To prepare for regularly-scheduled supervision sessions with the field instructor and be available for other important agency meetings
24. To prepare one process recording and an agenda and submit a copy to the field instructor at least one day prior to the regularly scheduled week with the field instructor and seek out information about any policy, procedure, expectations or requirements that is unclear or which raise questions. The student should also make the field instructor aware of any concern or problem which affects the placement at any time so that it can be resolved.
25. To sign the end of the semester field evaluation form that is sent back to the university and keeps a copy for their use.

Students who will enter the second year are to follow all of the above. Additionally the student will confer with the MSW Director of Field Education no later than February 1st, regarding a 2nd year placement. If for any reason the student decides not to return for her/his second year, the student must notify the MSW Director of Field Education and the field instructor at once.

#### **G. Insurance**

Students, faculty, and staff are covered under a liability insurance policy provided by Kean University of New Jersey for practice in participating agencies as part of their field education.