INTRODUCTION TO THE SOCIAL WORK FIELD PLACEMENT PROCESS

FOR MSW STUDENTS
BEGINNING A SOCIAL WORK FIELD PLACEMENT
SOCIAL WORK FIELD PROGRAM WEBSITE

All Social Work Field Program field application forms, documents, policies, and procedures can be accessed on the Social Work Field Program website located at:

http://uwm.edu/socialwelfare/social-work-field-education-program/
DEADLINES FOR SUBMITTING AN APPLICATION FOR A SW FIELD PLACEMENT

Application periods for a SW Field Placement beginning with the:

- Fall Semester**………………February 15 – May 15 (**exceptions noted below)
- Spring Semester…………….July 15 – September 15
- Summer Semester………….January 1 – February 15

Off-Cycle Placement Deadlines**

- School Social Work..............February 15
- Veteran’s Administration……February 15
• If you are interested in pursuing a mental health or AODA practicum, or if you are pursuing a practicum outside of Milwaukee County, or with the Veteran’s Administration please submit your field application at the earliest possible date to optimize the placement options, as we compete with other educational programs for agency practicums.
SCHOOL SOCIAL WORK FIELD PLACEMENTS

• Two-semester School Social Work Field Placements only begin with the Fall Semester & include the Spring Semester to be in accord with the school year. Field applications for School Placements are due by February 15th.

• Students who have any questions about School Social Work should contact Field Assistant, Celine Italia at:

  coitalia@uwm.edu
SOCIAL WORK FIELD EDUCATION PROGRAM STAFF

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Jeanne Wagner, Field Program Director
Your Field Liaison is an employee / Clinical Academic Staff member of the UW Milwaukee Helen Bader Social Work Program who:

• is responsible for arranging, coordinating, and overseeing your field practicum experience.

• is available for information and consultation throughout your field practicum.

• meets with your Field Instructor and you at the field agency each semester.

• intervenes if difficulties arise during the field practicum.

• reviews the completed Learning Plan, Field Assignments, and all evaluations.

• calculates and assigns the final grade for your SW Field Course.
AGENCY FIELD INSTRUCTOR

Your Agency Field Instructor is a professional employee of the agency where you are having your field practicum who:

• is responsible for providing day-to-day field instruction and oversight of your field work at the field agency.

• is responsible for providing one-hour of weekly face-to-face supervision during each week of your field practicum.

• collaborates with you on the development of your Learning Plan

• reviews and provides feedback on your Field Assignments in supervision.

• evaluates your demonstration of competency in several areas as outlined in the Field Education course objectives on your Midterm and Final Evaluation Forms.

Your Field Instructor is not paid by UW-Milwaukee for her or his work with you.
FIELD EDUCATION IS INTENDED TO:

• Reinforce student identification with the values, purposes, and ethics of the Social Work profession.

• Promote professional Social Work skill and competence.

• Model understanding of and respect for diversity.

• Foster the integration of empirical & practice-based Social Work knowledge.

-Council on Social Work Education (CSWE)
THE SOCIAL WORK FIELD PRACTICUM & IMPORTANCE OF RELATIONSHIPS

The SW Field Education Practicum is a “relationship” involving three important parties:

- The UW-Milwaukee HBSSW Social Work Department.
- The HBSSW SW Field Student.
- The Field Agency.

Practicing appropriate professional communication with all relationship parties is vital to the success of the Field Practicum experience.
SW FIELD PLACEMENT REQUIREMENTS

GRADUATE STUDENTS who receive one of the following two exemptions will have one field placement for three consecutive semesters.

- Students who have received a BSW degree from an accredited program within five years of entering the MSW program are eligible to be exempted from SW 721.

- Students with a bachelor’s degree who have been employed full-time in a social work position and have been supervised by an MSW for at least two years are eligible to be exempted from SW 721. To request an exemption, you must submit a Social Work 721 Exemption Request Form to the Field Program office.

- Double Methods students will have a two semester field practicum in Macro Practice Social Work and a two semester field practicum in Direct Practice Social Work. If a Double Methods student receives an exemption from SW 721, the student will need to take an elective semester of field work (SW 921).

- All other students will have two separate field placements of two semesters each.
HAVING A FLEXIBLE SCHEDULE IS AN ABSOLUTE NECESSITY FOR INVOLVEMENT IN FIELD WORK

Field Work requires between:

- 16 - 20 hrs / week during the Fall & Spring Semesters.
- 21 - 27 hrs / week during the Summer Semester.

Most Field Agencies require students to be available for Field Work between 8 AM – 5 PM.

If you are only available for field work in the evenings and on weekends, it may be difficult to locate a Field Placement as we have limited options.

It is recommended that you try to make arrangements with your employer in advance of entering Field Work to have a flexible work schedule, in order to be available for Field Work during week day hours.
APPLICATION PROCESS: STEP ONE

• **Step 1: Submit application forms online**
  - Access electronic application forms from the SW Field Program website under "**MSW Program**.*"
  - Read and follow all instructions
  - All application forms must be typed / computer prepared.
  - Upload the following documents to the MSW Field Application Submission Page:
    • Field Application- Part 1
    • Field Application- Part 2
    • 721 Exemption form (if applicable, and if you have not already submitted it to the Social Work Office)
  - Wait for further instructions from the Social Work Office via email.
APPLICATION PROCESS: STEP TWO

• Step 2: Order a background check & submit background forms

  • All students entering a practicum are required to have a background check through CastleBranch. The fee is $45 for the initial check and is paid online directly to CastleBranch. (Some students who have previously completed a CastleBranch background check through UWM may be eligible for a recheck for a discounted price of $25.)

  • After the student’s field application has been processed, the Social Work Office will send the student instructions via email on which background check to order.

  • The student should then place their background check order through CastleBranch. They will also be required to upload the completed Background Information Disclosure and HBSSW Authorization Forms (available in the CastleBranch portal).
ADDITIONAL INFORMATION ON BACKGROUND CHECKS

Please note:

- Students will have access to the information, as will Field Program staff. Background checks will be sent to the field agency where the student has accepted a practicum upon request.

- The CastleBranch background check must be completed before the Field Liaison can work with a student on an agency referral.
On the MSW page of the Field Website, students can view a list of agencies that MSW students were placed at during the previous academic year.

Students may view this list to begin generating ideas of agencies where they may be interested in completing their field placement. When students have their initial meeting with the field liaison, they will be able to discuss available placement opportunities.

This is not a comprehensive list of agencies that the Social Work Program works with.

The Field Department cannot guarantee you a placement with one of the agencies on this list.
Clinical Mental Health & AODA Behavioral Health Placements are in great demand by graduate Social Work students.

Advanced level students in SW 821 & SW 822 are generally given preference for clinical placements.

The Field Department cannot guarantee a clinical placement for all student requests due to the limited number of these placements and high competition for these placements within HBSSW and with other university programs in Social Work and Psychology.
OVERVIEW OF THE PLACEMENT PROCESS

• Submit Part 1 & Part 2 of your field application online. Also submit your 721 Exemption Form, if applicable.

• Wait for email confirmation from the Social Work Field Office that your field application has been processed. Follow the email instructions to order your online background check.

• Schedule an appointment with your assigned Field Liaison to review your application and discuss placement interests. (The Social Work Office will inform you via email of your Field Liaison assignment)

• Your appointment will be scheduled at a time consistent with the time table for the specific agency placement you are requesting.
THE INITIAL APPOINTMENT
WITH YOUR SOCIAL WORK FIELD LIAISON

During the interview, the Social Work Field Liaison will:

- review the field application with you. (Revisions may be required.)
- Discuss any concerns or special placement needs.
- Gather information about possible field placement sites in your identified Social Work Practice Area.

As the Field Student you need to:

- Let the Field Liaison know of any Field Agencies you are interested in.  
  
  *Students are not to arrange their own placement.*

- Discuss any criminal background history that shows up on your Background Check.
FOLLOWING THE APPOINTMENT WITH THE SW FIELD LIAISON

• Part 1 of the application is sent by the SW Field Liaison as an e-mail attachment to prospective field agencies along with a request for an interview.

• The student is either notified by the SW Field Liaison to contact the Field Agency to arrange an in-person interview, or the Field Agency may also directly contact the student to arrange an interview.

• The student should schedule an interview with the Field Agency in a timely manner.
FIELD AGENCY INTERVIEW

• The interview with a Field Agency is a two-way process.
  • The Field Agency interviews the student.
  • The student interviews the Field Agency.

• Refer to “Interviewing Tips” on the Field Dept. website.
  • Gather information about the Field Agency and the field placement from the Field Liaison and the Field Agency website.
  • Review the list of questions you may be asked.
  • Review the list of questions you may want to ask.
  • Know the location of the Field Agency and parking arrangements.
  • Dress professionally.
  • Timeliness counts.
DURING THE FIELD AGENCY INTERVIEW

- Discuss any “convictions” on your Background Check during the latter part of the Field Agency interview if you decide you want a practicum with the agency.

- Background Check results with a conviction will be sent to the agency after a student accepts an offer of a field practicum.

- Student completes the interview with the Field Agency with plans to follow-up with the Field Agency representative.

- Student contacts all involved Field Liaisons to provide an update on the status of each interview with a Field Agency.

- Student follows-up with all involved Field Agency representatives and all Field Liaisons when a final placement decision has been made.
APPLICATION PROCESS REMINDERS

• Following the acceptance of a field placement with a Field Agency, the student should **not** continue to explore additional placement possibilities.

• The student should contact all other Field Agencies where they have either interviewed or have an interview scheduled in order to let them know they have accepted a field practicum with another program.

• Three failed interviews with Field Agencies requires an assessment and recommendation from the SW Field Liaison regarding the student’s continuation in the Field Education Program.
REASONS FOR NOT BEING ACCEPTED FOR A PLACEMENT

- Students may not be accepted for placement by a Field Agency as a result of:
  - Limited Schedule Availability for Practicum
  - Criminal and/or Caregiver Background histories.
  - Competition with other placement applicants.
  - Poor presentation during the Field Agency interview.
  - Failed TB skin test.
  - Negative results in a health physical.
  - Positive drug test.
  - Failure to complete pre-placement requirements by the deadline.
PRE-PLACEMENT PROCESS

• When you have accepted a placement, contact the Field Agency to inquire about any pre-placement requirements:, such as:

  • Field Agency orientation program.
  • Medical examination
  • TB skin test; Hepatitis test and/or vaccine
  • Immunization records
  • Flu shot
  • Drug testing.
  • Field Agency Caregiver Background Check.
  • Proof of driver’s license and auto insurance.
  • Confidentiality acknowledgement.
  • Professional references.
MSW FIELD EDUCATION COURSE REGISTRATION

• Graduate students registering for SW Field Course 721 should register under the appropriate section for SW 721 and for the LAB / Integrated Field Seminar that is required to be taken in conjunction with SW 721.

• All other graduate students registering for SW Field Course 722 should register under the appropriate section. There is no LAB / Integrated Field Seminar with SW 722.

Contact your selected SW Field Liaison for assistance if you have questions.
REQUIRED ATTENDANCE OF THE “ORIENTATION TO FIELD PROGRAMS” PRESENTATION

• Students entering their first field placement are **required** to attend **one of two mandatory** “Orientation to Field Programs” prior to beginning the field practicum.

• Check the calendar on the SW Field Department website for dates, times, & locations.

• This information and the locations for these two presentations will be e-mailed to you through your UW-Milwaukee e-mail account.
SUMMER INTERNATIONAL SOCIAL WORK FIELD EDUCATION PROGRAMS

International Field Practicum Opportunities

• Plymouth, England (Harm Reduction AODA Programs)
• Linz, Austria (limited placement options available)
• Ghana, West Africa

For more information, contact Jeanne Wagner, SW Field Director @ jeanne@uwm.edu
SOCIAL WORK FIELD PLACEMENTS OFFER MANY OPPORTUNITIES

• NEW CHALLENGES

• PROFESSIONAL GROWTH

• PERSONAL DEVELOPMENT

• EMPLOYMENT POSSIBILITIES

• DEVELOP PROFESSIONAL RELATIONSHIPS
IF YOU HAVE QUESTIONS CONTACT:

SW FIELD EDUCATION PROGRAM DIRECTOR

JEANNE WAGNER @ 414.229.6501 OR

JEANNEW@UWM.EDU