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Field Overview
Social work education has traditionally embodied a two-pronged approach to professional learning: encouraging the assimilation of knowledge and values through the classroom setting and the assimilation of skills through a field work practicum. This direct exposure by the student to social work practice is, in essence, a form of experiential learning (the gaining of knowledge pertaining to, or deriving from, personal experience). Since the days of Mary Richmond, “learning through doing” has held an important place in social work education.

The student must learn to combine knowledge with values when developing the professional use of self in social work education. The aim of field instruction is the integration of knowledge and practice resulting in practice wisdom and an internalization of the professional role. Field instruction focuses on: 1) learning through experience, 2) reflecting upon one’s practice, 3) developing a cognitive framework to inform practice, and 4) enhancing self-awareness of one’s impact upon client systems by an application of new knowledge and behaviors.

Field education places the individual goals and learning needs of students central to the teaching/learning process and provides a structure to assist students to achieve these objectives. The structure may take many forms, but fundamental to field education is the necessity for a supportive interpersonal learning climate.

Field instruction is a form of teaching which occurs within an agency or organizational context and is related to student learning experiences as they interact with clients and the complex systems of service delivery. A specific purpose of field instruction is to help students link classroom theory and learning with practice activities.

Introduction
This field practicum manual is intended to serve as a comprehensive guide to the Department of Social Work Field Instruction Programs of Florida A&M University (FAMU). Potential users of this manual include practica for Bachelor of Social Work (BSW) and Master of Social Work (MSW) students, Field Instructors, Agency Supervisors, Faculty Field Liaisons, Departmental faculty, and the Field Coordinators. This manual should assist users in understanding the field practicum process and expectations. The Field Manual is updated annually with any procedural or information changes and is available to all participants of the field process. The document and appendices are available on the FAMU Department of Social Work website.

Purpose
The purpose of the Field Manual is to provide a comprehensive resource including policies and procedures to all constituents involved in the field experience with Florida A&M University Department of Social Work student.
Department Mission and Goals
The mission of the Department of Social Work to educate and train social work practitioners to serve and empower individuals, communities, and organizations, while promoting social and economic justice, and demonstrating knowledge and skills that affirm professional values, and skills in enhancing and contributing to the profession and community.

BSW Program Mission
The mission statement of the Bachelor of Social Work (BSW) Program in the Department of Social Work is to provide a beginning generalist curriculum reflecting the history, knowledge, values, ethics and skills of the profession. We seek to educate students who will engage in the problem-solving process with individuals, groups and communities; promote social and economic justice for oppressed people; and demonstrate knowledge and sensitivity to human diversity. Program graduates will be prepared for beginning social work practice and/or advanced standing upon entry into a graduate program of study. Therefore, our BSW Program provides our students with the educational goals and objectives to enhance their social work education and promote life-long learning:

MSW Program
The mission of the Master of Social Work program is to advance social and economic justice by educating students for knowledgeable, ethical, and culturally competent leadership as macro social work practitioners. Specifically, the foci are social service administration, program planning and evaluation, policy analysis and advocacy, and community practice designed for diverse populations.

Practicum Philosophy
Each student is required to complete field practica experiences as part of the BSW and MSW Programs at Florida A&M University to demonstrate the integration of theory and practice, the development of social work skills, and the development of a professional identity. Students are placed in social service agencies or organizations to work and learn under the guidance of an experienced and qualified Field Instructor and possibly Task Supervisor.

Field Practicum Process
Students are required to attend the Field Orientation Meeting which is held prior to the field practicum experience. The meeting is held in the semester before the practicum. The date, time and location of this meeting are posted on flyers throughout the Department. It is very important that students be present and on time. The BSW Field Coordinator or MSW Field Director will preside over the meeting. The purpose of this meeting is to prepare the student for the actual practicum
experience. A variety of issues are addressed; such as, information regarding administrative policies and procedures, distribution and review of the academic calendar, review of the required practicum paperwork, process of agency orientation, role of the student in the practicum setting, assignment of faculty liaison to student and field practicum hours. Students have an opportunity to share information with their peers regarding their assigned practicum agency. All students’ are notified that the Field Manual is located on the Social Work website. The course syllabus for Field Experience and Integrative Seminar is given to students during their first class meeting of the Integrative Seminar class.

**Criminal Record Background Screening**

In accordance with Florida Statute 943.0542, it is be necessary for all students to have a Volunteer & Employee Criminal History System (VECHS) screening on file with the Department, prior to approval for field practicum. Florida law restricts access to children, the elderly and disabled clients by persons convicted of specific misdemeanors and felonies (Chapter 435 Florida Statutes). These restrictions are imposed by law on social service agencies and health care facilities, which in turn requires students to comply with the same restrictions, as do volunteers and employees. The criminal background check is performed by the Florida Department of Law Enforcement (FDLE) in conjunction with the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI). Based on Florida law, the Department cannot guarantee a practicum site for a student with a criminal history. Furthermore, it is important to note that expunged and sealed records may also be accessed by social service agencies as they conduct their own criminal record check.

**Professional Liability Insurance**

All students will be enrolled with FAMU Risk Management professional liability insurance prior to enrolling in field practicum courses. The importance of securing liability insurance is critical, as the possibility of one being held personally responsible for some alleged malpractice, error or mistake, arising out of the practicum experience may occur. The insurance will cover the student while in the field practicum. The University requires its students to carry and maintain student professional social work liability insurance in amounts no less than $1,000,000.00 per occurrence and $1,000,000.00 in the aggregate.

**Interview with the Coordinator/Director**

The interview is intended to cultivate professional development by preparing students for their actual agency interviews. During the interview, students are asked questions relating to the ethics, and personal and professional goals. Feedback is given to the student at the end of the interview. Information is also discussed regarding the various fields of practice and available agencies the student has expressed interest in, based on information in the field application. Once a field of interest is identified, the Field staff initiates contact with the practicum site for consideration of
placement. The referral is based on several factors beyond a student’s interest. These factors include: availability of agency, student’s desire to work with a particular population, skill level of the student, availability of a field instructor within the agency, disposition of both student and potential field instructor, specific educational needs, and the student’s ability to function in a particular setting. The student’s areas of interest and professional goals are shared with the Field Instructor during the referral. If the agency is agreeable, the telephone number and name of the Field Instructor will be given to the student for an interview. The student will be responsible for scheduling the agency interview. This is done for two (2) reasons; first, it promotes professional development for the student and second it becomes less problematic to the process when the Field Instructor/agency representative and student schedule an interview together.

Agency Interview
Students will interview with the prospective Field Instructor or agency representative during the time scheduled for the interview. However, it is in the best interest of the student to secure a placement as soon as possible. Concurrently, in the event a student is experiencing difficulty obtaining a practicum site, this gives the student ample time to interview with more than one agency. The interview process should be comparable to that of a new employee. Questions should be asked about the student’s goals, strengths, needs and interest. It is also important to discuss the role of the social worker and the student within the agency. This serves to ensure that the student has a clear understanding about the Field Instructor’s expectations and their goodness of fit with the organization. It is also important for the student to ask questions to ensure a goodness of fit with the program and the clients the agency serves. When an affirmative agreement for placement is reached between the student, Field Instructor and Field Coordinator/Director, the Field Confirmation Agreement form is given to the student to take to the agency for the Field Instructor’s signature. The form must also be signed by the student. Once signed, the student returns the document to the Field Coordinator/Director. The Field Coordinator/Director signs the document and enters it into the student’s field file. Students must wear professional business attire to the interview and submit their resume to the interviewee as with any professional interview.

Learning assignments must allow students to gain experience in a micro, mezzo and macro practice for all BSW and Foundation MSW students. Generalist practice social work is strongly encouraged at this level. However, for Concentration MSW students their learning assignments must allow them to gain experiences at the macro level of practice to include policy, administrative and community practice. In general, the learning assignments are made to enable students to increase their knowledge base and apply what she/he has learned in the classroom environment.
Registering for BSW Practicum & Field Seminar

SOW (4510)
Field experience is the practicum portion of social work education. In the field setting, students are provided educationally directed learning experiences in social service agencies or community settings under social work supervision. Students apply test and integrate principles, theories, skills and values presented in earlier courses as they work with individuals, families, groups, organizations and communities in field settings. A minimum of 480 clock hours is required for fall and spring semester students with 416 clock hours required for summer semester students. These differentials are due to the lower number of weeks established by the university for the summer term.

SOW (4522)
A weekly seminar, accompanying SOW 4510 Field Experience is offered to facilitate discussion of prior learning (social work curriculum) with agency practice in field placement. Each student will select cases from placement for discussion (with confidentiality) throughout the seminar. Emphasis is placed on the professionalization of students.

Registering for MSW Practicum & Field Seminar

SOW (5534)
Before entering foundation practicum students must have successfully completed or concurrently be enrolled in first year foundation coursework. In the foundation level field setting, students are provided educationally directed learning experiences in social service agencies or community settings under social work supervision. Students apply test and integrate principles, theories, skills and values presented in earlier courses as they work with individuals, families, groups, organizations and communities in field settings. The field practicum must be taken concurrently with Field Seminar I [225 clock hours].

SOW (5545)
A bi-weekly seminar, accompanying SOW 5534 Field Practicum is offered to facilitate discussion of prior learning (social work curriculum) with agency practice in field placement. Each student will select cases from placement for discussion (with confidentiality) throughout the seminar. Emphasis is placed on the professionalization of students.

SOW (5535)
Continuation of the foundation-year MSW-supervised field experience in an approved social work setting. The field practicum must be taken concurrently with Field Seminar II [225 clock hours].
SOW (5546)
Continuation of the foundation-year seminar; focus on integrating knowledge, values and skills in relation to field experience.

SOW (5538)
In the advanced level field setting, students are placed in approved MSW-supervised placement where they are engaged in a wide range of community and administrative practice tasks where their advanced knowledge, values and skills may be applied [225 clock hours].

SOW (5547)
A bi-weekly seminar, accompanying SOW 5538 Field Practicum is offered to facilitate discussion of prior learning (social work curriculum) with agency practice in field placement. Integration of advanced knowledge and skills applied in the field placement.

SOW (5539)
Continuation of the advanced MSW-supervised placement where they engage in community development and administration tasks; focus on integrating knowledge, values and skills in relation to field experience. Students continue with their 225 clock hours.

SOW (5548)
Continuation of the advanced-year seminar; integration of advanced knowledge and skills applied in the field placement.

BSW Field Practicum Hours
Full time, block placement students must complete 32 hours per week or 480 hours over one semester. This is required of students entering field during the fall or spring semesters. A block placement student who enters field during the summer must complete 32 hours per week or 416 hours over the semester. BSW Part-time placement students must complete 16 hours per week or 480 over two consecutive semesters. This is required of students entering field during the fall or spring semesters. A part-time student who enters placement during the summer must complete 16 hours per week or 416 hours over two semesters. The requirements are based on week differentials between the summer semesters with 416 hours versus the fall/spring semesters with 480 hours. These semester differentials are established by the University. All part-time students will receive a grade of incomplete (I) at the end of the first semester. The final grade will be issued at the end of the second semester.
MSW Field Practicum Hours

MSW field placement students must complete a total of 900 hours over four semesters. Before entering foundation practicum students must have successfully completed or concurrently be enrolled in first year foundation coursework. In the foundation level field setting, students are provided educationally directed learning experiences in social service agencies or community settings under social work supervision. Students apply test and integrate principles, theories, skills and values presented in earlier courses as they work with individuals, families, groups, organizations and communities in field settings. The field practicum I will be taken in the spring semester and students must complete a total of 225 hours over the spring semester. The field practicum II will be taken in the summer and students must complete a total of 225 hours over the summer semester. The field practicum III will be taken in the fall and students must complete a total of 225 hours over the fall semester. The field practicum IV is taken in the last semester and students must complete a total of 225 hours over one semester.

Roles and Responsibilities

A full-time Field Coordinator/Director is assigned responsibility by the Department of Social Work for developing field placement sites, placing students, monitoring student performance in the field, evaluating the field education program of the Social Work Department, and identifying field agencies to meet the needs of students expecting to engage in the field education process.

In coordinating the activities of the field program, the Field Coordinator/Director:

- Process, review, and access applications of new agencies for possible affiliation with the Department of Social Work;
- Review and assess currently affiliated agencies;
- Process, review, and access applications for new field instructors;
- Develop and maintain resources by which students may become familiar with available agencies and fields of practice;
- Plan and implement the process for student assignments to field practicum, and assign students to agencies;
- Consult with students and, when necessary, with faculty, the Coordinator/ Director, and/or field instructors in selection of placements;
- Design, review, and revise supplemental materials such as the field manual, field forms, and field directories;
• Organize and conduct field practicum orientation meetings for students, field instructors, and faculty;
• Consult with faculty and, in conjunction with the Coordinator/ Director, make liaison assignments;
• Consult with faculty liaisons regarding individual student problems, and/or requests for change of placement;
• Consult individually with students as they require direction or support in negotiating and completing field practicum course requirements;
• Consult with the Curriculum Committee to review and revise learning objectives for field courses;
• Plan, in consultation with the Field Practicum Advisory Committee, seminars, workshops, and recognition events for field instructors;
• Design and implement an ongoing evaluation for field practicum to ensure that learning objectives are met;
• Coordinate and provide field instructors with training and seminars.

Field Faculty Liaison
The Faculty Liaison must have a minimum of two (2) years of professional social work experience post MSW degree. The responsibilities of the Faculty Liaison during the placement semester include, but are not limited to the following:

• To serve as a link between the BSW/MSW faculty and the BSW/MSW administration (Program Director and Field Coordinator) and the agency, Field Instructor, and to promote and monitor the completion of a quality field experience;
• To provide orientation to the practicum process and social work program expectations for the student, the Field Instructor, and the agency;
• To offer information and assistance in the development of the learning contract, including suggestions for task and activities, evaluation criteria, and outcomes;
• To provide support regarding practicum issues by responding to questions, mediating conflicts, implementing changes, and advocating, when needed, on the student’s behalf;
• To serve as a consultant to practicum agencies and Field Instructors in the establishment and evaluation of practicum arrangements, plans, and structures and
providing assistance and support to Field Instructors in their roles as teachers and mentors;

- To monitor the practicum experience and ensure that the student and Field Instructor are meeting the goals established by you and the social work program. The social work practicum faculty will conduct a minimum of one agency visit during the semester. (More visits may be implemented as the situation warrants). The liaison will meet with the student, field instructor and if applicable, the task supervisor, to discuss assignments (task), activities, progress toward goals in the learning contract and any attributes or challenges regarding the students’ performance;

- To be available throughout the practicum experience to assess the student’s interest, goals, skill development, and professional aspirations;

- To be able to provide the student with a “safe space” to process his/her practicum experience and challenges;

- To provide honest feedback to the student and Field Instructor when feedback is needed.

Field Instructor

Based on the standards established by the Council on Social Work Education for field study, the agency staff member designated as Field Instructor for BSW/MSW student must have a Master of Social Work (MSW) degree and a minimum of two years of professional experience post degree, or a Bachelor of Social Work (BSW) Degree with a minimum of two years of professional experience post degree. The BSW field instructor can only be used for a BSW Field Student.

The assigned Field Instructor has the responsibility of providing educational guidance to the student in meeting the learning objectives and other requirements for field placement. Furthermore, he/she is expected to be able to transmit understanding of social work practice beyond knowledge of the specific placement setting. The Field Instructor must be willing to draw upon other qualified professional staff members for access to their knowledge and skills in specific areas of practice. He/she should be able to relate effectively with the student, to stimulate and support the student in the learning process, and assist the student when integrating values and ethics of the social work profession.

Responsibilities of the Field Instructor during the placement semester include, but are not limited to:

- Attending departmental orientation meetings;

- Providing the student with a general orientation of the agency;
• Identifying and designing learning assignments;
• Reviewing, modifying, and signing the student’s Learning Plan to the Field Coordinator/Director by the academic calendar due date;
• Providing continuous supervision related to field assignments;
• Scheduling weekly supervision related to field assignments and theory related to monitoring the student’s progress;
• Meeting weekly with the BSW/MSW Field Instructors and documenting hours of meeting on monthly, mid-term and final time sheets. The timesheets will help maintain and record the one hour weekly meeting with the Field Instructor and student.
• Maintaining contact with the Faculty Liaison and if applicable, the Task Supervisor in an effort to provide continuity for a quality learning experience;
• Consulting with and signing the student’s midterm and final evaluations. Student should be informed of grade recommendation by the Field Instructor and Task Supervisor, if applicable. Evaluations should be submitted to the Field Coordinator/Director by the academic calendar due date;
• Monitoring and signing student timesheets of field hours as indicated on the academic calendar;
• Consulting with the student and Task Supervisor, if applicable before submitting a grade recommendation to the Field Coordinator/Director;
• Meeting with the Faculty Liaison, Task Supervisor (if applicable) and student during the agency site visit;
• Maintaining contact with the Faculty Liaison;
• Consulting with the student and Faculty Liaison or Field Coordinator/Director regarding a students’ performance, if a problem arises requiring resolution from outside the agency;
• Conducting a personal interview with the student being considered for field placement to determine if the agency would be appropriate for the student.

**Supervisor in Special Placement**

An External/Offsite Field Instructor and Task Supervisor not a part of the agency staff can create a successful special placement. However, it will depend upon the clarification of the role expectations, as well as the relationship between the Field Instructor and Task Supervisor. Due to these issues, among other unforeseen factors, Special placements are not encouraged. However,
when it is necessary, arrangements must be made to ensure that supervision standards are maintained.

**Role of External/Offsite Field Instructor**

- Consult with Task Supervisor identifying and designing learning assignments;
- Review the Field Instructors/Students academic calendar for all assignment due dates;
- Review, and if necessary modify and sign Learning Plan;
- Maintain contact with and meet student at least bi-weekly, relating to assignments, theory and practice;
- Maintain contact with the Task Supervisor to monitor the student’s progress;
- Maintain documentation of weekly supervisory meetings with student on the timesheet;
- Review, and if necessary, modify and sign the Midterm and Final Evaluations before submitting to the Field coordinator;
- Review and complete the Field Instructor’s Evaluation of the Field Practicum form;
- Consult with Task Supervisor in regards to each of the aforementioned items;
- Consult with the Faculty Liaison, Task Supervisor and student during the agency field/site visit by the Faculty Liaison.

**Role of the Task Supervisor When Working With an External/Offsite Field Instructor**

- Provides student with a general orientation to the field agency;
- Consult with the External/Offsite Field Instructor to identify learning assignments;
- Review, modify and sign the Learning Plan;
- Provides daily supervision to the student;
- Schedules weekly supervision meeting;
- Maintains contact with both External/Offsite Field Instructor and Faculty Liaison;
- Arranges External/Offsite Field Instructor’s review of all documents and learning assignments;
- Reviews and signs the Midterm and Final Evaluations.
**Task Supervisor**
A Task Supervisor and Field Instructor can create a successful placement. It depends upon clarification of the role expectations, as well as the relationship the Field Instructor and Task Supervisor has with each other. The Task Supervisor may hold a BSW or MSW degree, however, if the Task Supervisor does not hold the professional degree, the Field Instructor should work closely with the Task Supervisor to ensure social work knowledge, skills and values are being taught with the student. The supervisor should have a minimum of one (1) year of experience with the agency before supervising a student.

**Responsibilities of the Task Supervisor during the placement semester include, but are not limited to:**

- Providing student with a general orientation to the field agency;
- Consulting with Field Instructor to identify learning assignments for the student;
- Reviewing, modifying, and signing off on the Learning Plan;
- Providing daily supervision to student(s);
- Maintaining weekly consultation with the Field Instructor for the purpose of preserving continuity of the educational experience and establishing clear communication for the student;
- Consulting with the Faculty Liaison, if needed;
- Consulting with Field Instructor and student during the, midterm and final evaluations;
- Making a grade recommendation to the Field Instructor;
- Reporting any problems or concerns regarding a student’s performance to the Field Instructor and works with student toward overcoming deficits.

**BSW/MSW Student**
As a student in the Social Work program, the field practicum presents an opportunity for the student to implement the knowledge, skills and values one has learned in an educational setting, and apply those attributes to actual practice. The opportunity to learn and demonstrate professionalism in the work place is paramount to good social work practice. Therefore, the expectations and responsibilities of all students in the Social Work field practicum program are as follows:
- Arrive at the agency on time. If you are ill or simply delayed, contact the agency immediately. It is your responsibility to resolve any problems that may occur by your not being available;
- Attend the Integrative Field Seminar class regularly and on time;
- Be sure your attire meets the agency standard of a social worker. Realize that one’s personal fashion statement may not be suitable for a professional work setting. Be mindful that you are representing not only the profession and the agency but also the clients it serves;
- Observe the work of others. One can learn a lot by shadowing agency staff;
- Seek out opportunities to gain exposure to specialized cases and different practice approaches;
- Engage in collaborative co-facilitation activities whenever possible;
- Demonstrate a willingness to invite and accept feedback;
- Take responsibility for your own learning. Request more direct supervision, if needed. Seek out new and challenging experiences;
- If a problem or misunderstanding arises within the agency, go directly to the source, if possible. Often issues can be resolved when they are addressed in an engaging yet direct approach;
- Follow protocol within the agency. If a problem occurs or your educational needs are not adequately being met, address it with the Field Instructor. The Field Instructor cannot attend to one’s questions or concerns if they are not known. If the problem is not resolved at this level, it should be brought to the attention of the Faculty Liaison;
- Develop assessment, interviewing and documentation skills;
- Complete all field education and agency related forms;
- Complete all required field practicum hours;
- Honor the Field Confirmation Agreement by remaining with the field agency until the placement period officially ends at the close of the semester. Notify the Faculty Liaison as soon as possible, if extenuating circumstances arises which adversely impacts one ability to complete the practicum;
- Complete and receive clearance by the VECHS Level II criminal record background screening prior to field placement;
• Develop self-awareness by maintaining a weekly activity log and submitting them to the Field Coordinator/Director during each Integrative Field Seminar class;

• Completion of the learning plan, midterm evaluation, and final evaluation as a process mutually negotiated between the Field Instructor and student (if applicable, Task Supervisor). The plan and evaluations should be submitted to the Field Coordinator/Director by the due dates indicated on the academic calendar;

• Maintain a copy of all field related materials for your files. (i.e., learning plan, timesheets, working agreement, weekly activity logs, assignments, etc.);

• Keep up with assignments, appointments, deadlines and projects related to the agency and the field practicum;

• Gain exposure to micro, mezzo and macro practice;

• Learn to advocate appropriately for the client and oneself, when needed. Be respectful in your advocacy without being offensive toward others;

• Approach the social work faculty and field instructors as an adult learner by being able to distinguish between personal and professional conflicts;

• Utilize appropriate telephone etiquette. Speak professionally on the telephone when in the agency. Turn your cell phone off when you attend a meeting or engaged in a conversation with a client. Record appropriate messages on your agency voice mailbox. Refrain from using slang or religious language in your messages. Be mindful that you are representing an organization that serves an expansive public;

• Invest in your own self-care. Develop a method for coping with stress and time management. Create a healthy balance between maintaining personal and professional obligations;

• Attend workshops, conferences and meetings;

• Learn how to identify and utilize community resources to make appropriate referrals for the client system;

• Complete an agency presentation;

• Follow the NASW Code of Ethics;

• Follow the agency policy, procedures, legal regulations and confidentiality standards;

• Engage in professional activities. While drinking coffee, filing, copying, and taking messages are activities that occur in the normal operation of the agency, it is not the
sole responsibility of the student to engage in these activities at the expense of their professional development.

Agency
As a participant in the education and training of the student for social work practice, the field agency has responsibilities, which include the following:

- Sign an agency agreement with the University that clearly states the roles and responsibilities of the University and agency;
- Provide staff generally accepting of students in training without discrimination with regard to race, religion, sexual orientation, age, gender, disability, national origin, creed, veteran status or political orientation;
- Each agency must be able to provide a generalist practice experience with individuals, families, groups, communities and organizations for the student(s);
- Complete an Agency Data Sheet for Field Practicum which outlines the target client population, task performed in the practicum setting, and resources provided for student learning;
- Make physical office space and other resources available for student’s use in completing field related task and assignments;
- The agency must refer the designated field instructor to attend the field instructors orientation meeting for all new instructors;
- The agency must demonstrate a understanding and respect for human diversity and populations-at-risk;
- Each agency must demonstrate a commitment to work with the University and the students’ it serves;
- Provide accommodations to meet the special needs of students in accordance with the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 (ADA);
- Inform each student of potential work safety issues.
Administrative Policies

Holidays
Students are entitled to observe University holidays. However, students are not entitled to participate in Spring Breaks as observed by the University. As a student’s prolonged absence from the agency may create problems in terms of continuity of care to clients. This may also decrease the number of hours required the student must complete to satisfy the course mandates. Conversely, if the agency observes Spring Break or a holiday the University does not observe the student may count those hours as clock hours earned and are not required to ‘make up’ those hours. Therefore, students and field instructors should determine as part of the Learning Plan, the student’s holiday schedule, and if necessary arrangements for the student to ‘make up’ any lost hours.

Observance of Religious Holy Days by Students
A student who wishes to observe a religious holy day shall notify in writing, the field instructor, faculty liaison and field coordinator/director at the beginning of the semester during the first week of practicum. The student will be held responsible for any material covered during the excused absence, but shall be permitted reasonable time to make up any work missed. However, failure to complete the missed work within the timeframe requested will adversely impact the students’ grade. The student will not be penalized for clock hours observed during the religious holy day. Any student who feels that he or she has been unreasonably denied educational benefits because of his or her religious belief or practice may seek redress by notifying in writing the nature of his or her grievance to the Provost and Vice President for Academic Affairs or Vice President of Student Affairs who will investigate and document each occurrence (grievance) and ensure that appropriate corrective action is taken to assure compliance with this policy. If the matter is not resolved satisfactorily the student may file a complaint pursuant to Rule 6C3-10.103, Florida Administrative Code, with the Office of Equal Opportunity Programs.

Field Practicum Hours
All fall and spring semesters BSW students must complete 480 clock hours of field work. During the summer semester, BSW students must complete 416 clock hours of field work. These requirements are based on week differentials between the summer and fall/spring semesters established by the University. The hours can be completed in the form of a block placement or part-time placement. Once the placement period begins, a student cannot switch their placement from block to part-time or part-time to block, as it can become disruptive to the practicum agency and adversely impact the continuity of services to clients. Block placements consist of a 32-hour workweek over a period of one semester. Part-time placements consist of a 16-hour work week over two consecutive semesters.
In the case of part-time placement, students that begin their practicum during the summer semester and completes the sequence in the fall must accrue 416 clock hours. Students that start their practicum in the fall or spring and complete the sequence in the following spring or summer semesters must accrue 480 clock hours.

MSW full-time students have a delayed entry into field practice and take their first field practicum concurrently with their second semester of course work in generalist practice. Foundation students complete sixteen (16) hours per week for a minimum of 450 field placement hours over fall and spring semesters and are expected to work through the end of each semester.

The concentration practicum is (16) clock hours per week for a minimum of 450 hours over fall and spring semesters. Students’ generally schedule field placement hours Monday through Thursday, and/or Fridays, unless otherwise arranged with the approval of the field instructor and faculty liaison; students and are expected to work through the end of each semester.

If a BSW/MSW student fails to complete the required practicum hours due to factors beyond their control (i.e. a death in the family, illness, etc.) they will be issued a grade of Incomplete (I) and allowed to complete their hours and outstanding assignments the following semester. Once the hours and assignments are completed, a final letter grade will be issued. However, if a student fails to complete the required hours the next semester, the incomplete grade will convert into a failing grade of (F). Conversely, if a student fails to complete the required hours due to factors within their control (i.e. not reporting to the agency, leaving early without notifying the field instructor or task supervisor, taking days off when they should be working, etc.) they will be issued a failing grade for the Field Experience in Social Work and Integrative Field Seminar courses. No student can receive consecutive ‘I’ grades for the same course(s) as it is a violation of University policy.

In some instances a student may complete the required number of field practicum hours early thereby wanting to end the practicum before the semester ends. This would be in direct violation of the agreement established on the Field Confirmation Form which specifies the beginning and ending dates of the practicum period and the regulations of the University which establishes the cycle of time that determines the semester period. Under rare circumstances, the agency may request that a student begin the field practicum early (i.e. to attend a training session that is necessary to the practicum experience). When this occurs the agency must submit to the field coordinator a written request explaining the need for this action. The coordinator/director will review this matter and make a determination as to comply or not with this request, as the Department cannot mandate a student to start a practicum before the actual semester begins. However, if a decision is made to allow a student to begin the practicum early and the student is
willing and able to do so, then the agency must immediately start counting those hours toward the student’s field practicum experience.

**Employment and Practicum-BSW**
As a rule, student placement in agencies of employment is not encouraged. However, when a BSW student is interested in such a placement, the student must submit in writing his/her current job description and tasks as well as a description of the social work student role and tasks. As a result, assignments and supervision are structured to be different within the internship than those processes that are part of the student’s employment. The intern tasks must be different from the assigned tasks as an employee. Supervision as a “student” must also be clearly defined and separate from that as an employee. A letter from the student’s work supervisor in support of this arrangement and contact between the BSW Field Coordinator and potential field instructor are required. The BSW Field Coordinator evaluates each student’s employment-related field request on a case-by-case basis.

**Employment and Practicum-MSW**
The MSW program has been designed to meet the needs of working students. Many of our students are already employed in social service agencies in the area. The MSW program’s policy is that students complete their field practicum requirements at agencies in which the student has never volunteered, never been employed, nor is currently employed at. This policy, however, creates challenges for students who have minimal flexibility in their schedules due to their employment.

To meet these challenges, the MSW Field Director may grant an exception to allow the working student to use her or his place of employment for one semester as their field placement provided that the following conditions are met:

- The field practicum must have social work as its primary function. The organization must be one in which social work practice is clearly distinguishable from the practice of other disciplines.
- The organization must provide students with a qualitatively different experience from that provided by their regular employment.
- The student must have a different supervisor, one in which a qualified MSW social worker and is available as a field instructor to assume responsibility for student learning.
- The field practicum must have a clearly identifiable educational focus apart from the student’s employment responsibilities.
• The organization must support the student in meeting University obligations to produce high-quality assignments and projects and attending field seminars. The MSW Field Director will not grant exceptions regarding seminar attendance requirements because of the work responsibilities at the students’ place of employment.

• The agency must be formally affiliated via signed Agency Affiliation Agreement with Florida A & M University and the MSW program.

• The student’s employment work hours and field placement hours must be clearly articulated and differentiated.

The student who wishes to petition the MSW Field Director to grant an exemption must submit a written proposal to the MSW Field Director that addresses the stated condition. This proposal must include written documentation from the agency that explicitly addresses all of the above points, and that clearly delineates release time (work hours and field hours) necessary for the student to complete field practicum requirements. Once the proposal is received, the MSW Field Director and the MSW Faculty Field Liaison will review and, if appropriate, approve. *Under no circumstances will students be allowed to do more than one field practicum at their place of employment unless the MSW Field Director has given a special exception.*

**Advance Standing Student**
Each student requesting advance standing student will be required to submit documentation of their BSW field placement hours per been accepted in the Advance Standing Program. Therefore, any hours remaining to complete the required 900 field hours for the master program will be completed within the master advance year field placements.

**Taking an Extra Course**
In keeping with the curriculum, students should complete all course work prior to entering the field practicum; however, circumstances may arise when a student has only one (1) class to take when they apply for the practicum. If this should occur and the student desires a block placement, the student must take the outstanding course during a time which does not conflict with the practicum hours. To do otherwise would be disruptive to the agency and adversely impact the continuity of services to clients. It may also contribute to a reduction in the number of hours one must accumulate to meet the field experience requirements. Therefore, an outstanding course must be taken on evenings or weekends.

**Class Attendance**
Attendance in the Integrative Field Seminar course is important to the professional development of the student. It is also mandatory. Since the class meets only one (1) day a week, it is essential that
students report to class. Failure to attend and participate in the class will have an adverse impact on
the student’s grade. Participation is defined as actively and appropriately engaging in classroom
discussion, submitting scholarly assignments to the professor when assigned and attending class
regularly and on time. Poor performance in the Integrative Field Seminar class will automatically
be assessed toward the Field Experience. A failing grade in Field Seminar will result in a failing
grade in Field Experience and visa-versa, no exceptions. Part-time students that enroll for field over
two (2) semesters must attend the Integrative Field Seminar their first (1st) semester only, while in
practicum. During the second semester, the part-time student will complete their remaining
practicum hours. The midterm evaluation will be submitted at the conclusion of the first semester.
The final grade evaluation and completed record of field hours will be submitted at the conclusion
of the second semester.

Sick Leave
In cases of necessitating absence from the practicum setting students shall notify the field instructor
and task supervisor when applicable and take responsibility for canceling or rescheduling
appointments, meetings or other responsibilities. Hours must be made up at a time agreed upon
between the field instructor and the student. It is not the responsibility of the agency to
accommodate the student’s schedule. All sick days must be documented on the time sheet and
submitted to the field coordinator/director when the records of field hours are due in the Integrative
Field Seminar class. The record must be signed and dated by the field instructor before it is
submitted to the field coordinator/director. If the student has a documented medical excuse a copy
of that document should be attached to the time sheet. It is important that the student understand it
is ultimately their responsibility to monitor their own hours and take responsibility for making up
any lost time that might jeopardize their ability to complete the total number of hours mandated by
the program.

Administrative Leave
Professional development is an important component of every student’s training. On occasion, an
opportunity may arise wherein a student may have the opportunity to attend a conference, meeting
or workshop away from the agency that may conflict with attending the Integrative Field Seminar
class. When this occurs the student must verbally notify the Field Coordinator/Director and present
documented proof of their attendance at the event. Documented proof may be in the form of a
letter, fax or E-mail from the Field Instructor, stating the name, date(s) and time(s) of the event(s).
The letter or fax must be on official letterhead from the agency. The student should attach a copy
of the agenda or flyer to their time sheet when submitting to the Field Coordinator/Director. If the
Field Instructor feels it is important for the student to participate in this administrative opportunity
as a part of the student’s professional development it should be counted toward the field practicum
hours.
Travel
It is the student’s responsibility to secure transportation to and from the field setting. It is also their responsibility to provide their own automobile liability insurance coverage for agency-related travel if such coverage is not provided by the agency. The University has no such funds with which to reimburse students for the use of the vehicles or for other expenses incurred while conducting agency business. Reimbursement or agency-related expenses including travel should be the responsibility of the agency and should be congruent with the agency’s reimbursement policies and rates for regular staff. Travel expense for mileage reimbursement is 44.5 cents per mile (HB6001), as established by Florida law and reimbursement rates for meals (breakfast, lunch, and dinner) are $6, $11 and $19, respectively.

Special Students Services under the Americans with Disabilities Guidelines
Florida A&M University adheres to the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA). For students who provide documentation of special student status under the ADA steps will be taken to ensure that the reasonable accommodations are made within the agency setting. Students must contact the Office of Equal Opportunity Programs (OEO) at (850) 599-3076/3219 to become registered as a student with special needs under the ADA. Students may also contact the Learning Development and Evaluation Center (LDEC) at (850) 599-3180. The OEO will become responsible for ensuring that persons requesting accommodations are provided with the appropriate documentation and services. If a student has a disability that impairs their ability to perform a task related to the field, even after proper accommodations are made the program reserves the right to refer them to another field of social work or different discipline.

Confidentiality
The student must sign a Release of Information form in the event that confidential information needs to be shared with field agency personnel. The information shared must be related to the educational enhancement of the student. Likewise, in accordance with the National Association of Social Workers (NASW) Code of Ethics, it is important to protect the confidentiality of all information obtained in the course of professional services and in the Integrative Field Seminar class, except for compelling professional or academic reasons. It is important to not intentionally or unintentionally use or disclose any personally identifiable information a student shares in the seminar with those outside the class.

Professional Liability Insurance
All students are required to have professional liability insurance prior to enrolling in field practicum courses. The insurance must cover the student while they are in the field. The University requires its students to carry and maintain student professional social work liability insurance in amounts no less than $1, 000,000.00 per occurrence and $1,000,000.00 in the aggregate.
Criminal Record Background Screening
In accordance with Florida Statute 943.0542, it will be necessary for all students to have a Volunteer & Employee Criminal History System (VECHS) screening on file with the program, prior to approval for field practicum. Florida law restricts access to children, the elderly and disabled clients by persons convicted of specific misdemeanors and felonies (Chapter 435 Florida Statutes). These restrictions are imposed by law on social service agencies and health care facilities, which in turn requires students to comply with the same restrictions, as do their volunteers and employees. The criminal background check is performed by the Florida Department of Law Enforcement (FDLE) in conjunction with the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI). Based on Florida law, the Department cannot guarantee a practicum site for a student with a criminal history. Furthermore, it is important to note that expunged and sealed records may also be accessed by social service agencies as they conduct their own criminal record check.

Life Experience
The Department of Social Work does not grant social work course credit for life experience or previous work experience. A student cannot use past or current volunteer work life events or employment in lieu of the field practicum experience.

Health Risk Warning Liability
The student is responsible to inform the Field Coordinator/Director or Program Directors and the field instructor of any personal health care issues that could jeopardize the safety of clients/consumers or field practicum personnel. These health risks include any contagious disease or infection that is transmittable and hence would constitute a threat to the health or safety of others. Protection under federal regulations does not cover such individuals. Section 503 and 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, protects symptomatic and asymptomatic AIDS-infected individuals against discrimination on the basis of any actual, past, or perceived effect of AIDS infection that substantially limits any major life activity. Appropriate accommodations must be made for the student in the field practicum agency.

Harassment and Non-Discrimination
It is the policy of Florida Agricultural and Mechanical University to assure that each member of the University Community be permitted to work or attend classes in an environment free from any form of discrimination including race, religion, color, age, handicap, disability, sex, marital status, national origin, veteran status, and sexual harassment, as prohibited by state and federal statutes. Activities which alters the conditions of the work place making it an unwelcome setting are prohibited include, but not limited to sexual advances/pressure for dates, slurs, comments, jokes, innuendos, threats, inappropriate touching, beatings, inappropriate gestures, pictures, and graffiti and slang expressions.
It is the policy of the Department of Social Work at Florida A&M University to maintain an environment in which the dignity and worth of all students is respected and sexual harassment of students in their field placements is intolerable and unacceptable. Due to the unavoidable subordinate position students experience in field practicum settings, appropriate guidelines must be established for the student in the field practicum agency. These guidelines should, in part, pertain to complaints regarding sexual harassment of students because of the unavoidable subordinate position they experience in field placement settings. Sexual harassment of practicum students can be destructive to the learning environment, demoralizing to the student and adversely affect his/her performance in the agency. It may include harassment from a field instructor, a task supervisor, or any employee of the agency, regardless of gender.

Sexual harassment of a student from FAMU can be interpreted by behaviors or comments that overtly or covertly are understood to be of a sexual nature. This may be demonstrated when; a) submission to such conduct is made either explicitly or implicitly a term or condition of an individual’s continued placement; b) submission to are rejection of such conduct is used as a basis for decisions or assessments affecting the individual’s welfare as a student placed in an agency; c) 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 work or educational environment.

Examples of prohibited behavior may be demonstrated when; a) threats or intimidation of sexual contact which is not freely or mutually agreeable to both parties; b) continual or repeated verbal abuses of a sexual nature including graphic commentaries about a person’s body; sexual degrading words to describe the person, or propositions of a sexual nature; c) threats or insinuations that the person’s employment, grades, wages, promotional opportunities, classroom or work assignments or other conditions of continued placement may be adversely affected by not submitting to sexual advances.

Consensual sexual relationships between Field Instructor and student or between student and an agency employee are generally deemed unwise. Such relationships, although they may be appropriate in other settings are inappropriate when they occur between members of the teaching staff and students. A professional power differential exists in these situations in terms of the influence and authority which one can exercise over the other. The NASW Code of Ethics, section 3.02-(d), states social workers who function as educators for students should not engage in any relationship with students in which there is a risk of exploitation or potential harm to the student. (Dual or multiple relationships is when educators relate to students in more than one relationship, whether professional, social, or business. Dual or multiple relationships can occur simultaneously or consecutively). If a charge of sexual harassment is lodged regarding a once-consenting
relationship, the burden may be on the alleged offender to prove that the sexual harassment policy was not violated.

Sexual harassment of any practicum student from the Department of Social Work Program shall not be tolerated from any Field Instructor, Faculty Liaison, and Task Supervisor, employee or representative of the field practicum agency. To ensure that students are placed in an agency environment free from sexual harassment, the following will occur:

The resolution of the investigation may include, but is not limited to the following:

A. The complaint was founded and satisfactorily addressed by the field agency and the student should remain in the field placement.

B. The complaint was founded and satisfactorily addressed by the field agency but the student should be placed in an alternative field placement.

C. The complaint was founded and not satisfactorily addressed by the field agency and the student should be placed in another field placement.

D. The complaint was founded and not satisfactorily addressed and the field agency should no longer be approved as a field setting.

E. The complaint was unfounded and the student should remain in the placement.

F. The complaint was unfounded and the student should be placed in an alternative field site

The complainant following these procedures is in no way inhibited from pursuing other options such as bringing the matter to the attention of the University’s Affirmative Action Officer or pursing legal remedy. No student will be subject to restraint, interference, coercion, or reprisal for seeking information about sexual harassment, filing a sexual harassment complaint or serving as a witness. For more information, contact the FAMU Office of Equal Opportunity at (850) 599-3706.

Drug and Alcohol
Florida A&M University will not tolerate the sale, possession, or use of controlled substances with the exception of medication prescribed by a physician and taken in accordance with the prescribed
usage. The use, sale, possession, manufacturing, and bartering of narcotic drugs, central nervous system stimulants, hallucinogenic drugs, or barbiturates as defined by Federal, State, or University regulations shall be prohibited in all FAMU facilities about the campus or in any public gathering, recreational areas or facilities. This includes any practicum site where a student is placed. Any student in violation of this policy may be subject to dismissal from the University in accordance with the procedures of the Student Conduct Code. This includes termination from the field practicum site and the BSW Program. This termination will be final. In addition, legal sanctions by a court of competent jurisdiction may include a specific term of imprisonment with an appropriate fine. The court may also decree the forfeiture of property, suspend or cancel a license, remove a person from office, or impose any other civil penalty.

**Termination Policy for Academic of Unprofessional/Non-Academic Conduct**
A student may be removed or dismissed from the field practicum site and the Field Education Program at any time by the Field Instructor and/or the field agency for documented unprofessional conduct. Unprofessional conduct may include but is not limited to behavior that may be hazardous, unethical, illegal, unprofessional to the client, agency or faculty system, or commitment of a breach in confidentiality. There are serious consequences to egregious behavior. Additional infractions are listed in the **Protocol for Field Related Problem Solving.** A student may also be removed or dismissed for demonstrable lack of progress in achieving field practicum learning objectives in the course of the practicum experience. A written statement attesting to this action will be prepared by the Field Instructor in consultation with the Faculty Liaison for inclusion in the student’s file. The Field Coordinator/Director should be informed of this action by the Faculty Liaison. At such point in time, the Coordinator/Director will then notify the Program Director and Department Chair of the matter. The decision to terminate a student from a practicum can be difficult. Making the decision to terminate or assign a grade of “D” or below for agency performance may be aided by answering the following three questions truthfully:

1. Would I hire this student?
2. Would I be willing to supervise this student as an employee?
3. Would I want to be served by this student if I were a client?

A negative response to any of these questions warrants careful deliberation. This should assist the Field Instructor in clarifying their decision. Every effort should be made to protect the students’ rights. However, these rights must be carefully balanced against the professional obligation to assure quality in service delivery to clients. The professions first obligation is to the clients it serves. If after careful consideration, the decision to terminate is made then the decision to terminate shall be final.
In case of a lack of progress by the student due process will be followed. This entails providing written notification by the Field Instructor and if applicable, the Task Supervisor to the student regarding their unacceptable performance. The written notification shall include specific expectations for the student’s progress. These expectations will be discussed with the student in consultation with the Field Instructor and Faculty Liaison. A copy of the notification will be placed in the student’s file. Failure by the student to meet these expectations shall result in termination. This decision shall be final.

The procedures for termination are intended to provide a fair system of due process while simultaneously protecting the rights of all parties involved and the well-being of students, current and future clients. It is vital that the during the weekly supervision meetings between the Field Instructor and student(s), that documentation of each meeting be recorded onto the field practicum timesheet.

The field courses are distinct from most other university courses in that field placement in the community entails not only educational objectives for the student and faculty, but also professional responsibilities to clients, social service agencies, and the community. Among the students’ responsibilities to their education is the responsibility to utilize ongoing feedback from the faculty and agency supervisors. When students engage clients and assume service responsibilities, there are ongoing professional, educational and ethical responsibilities and courtesies to be considered. Also, considerable time and effort is spent on the part of faculty and community supervisors to plan and deliver a good field placement. For this reason, it is a serious matter to drop the field course during the semester.

**DROPPING and RE-ENTERING FIELD COURSES (When Performance Problems is an Issue)**

Any student who drops the field course(s) following substantial performance problems as noted by the Faculty Liaison, Field Instructor or Field Coordinator will not be allowed to reenroll the following semester without special review and permission of the Field Coordinator, Program Director and Field Faculty Committee. The usual procedure will be for students to take time off from field to address underlying deficits which impair their performance such as knowledge or interpersonal skill deficits, personal problems, personality or maturity factors, attendance problems, situational or circumstantial factors, etc. as noted by the Faculty Liaison or Field Instructor. Growth and development in these areas may require additional work and life experience, personal counseling or therapy, circumstantial changes which enhance a student’s stability, and remedial learning experiences.

The review criteria will focus on the likelihood of successful performance in the field course based on criteria such as; nature and severity of the performance problem, ability to integrate the content and develop the skills required in the field course, student’s motivation toward corrective action,
judgment of the student’s ability to hear and use feedback constructively, availability and use of educational, career advising, and therapeutic resources.

The student must present documentation to the BSW/MSW Office of Field Education and Program Directors stating specific improvements in underlying deficits that initiated the decision to drop field. It should clarify the students’ efforts toward growth and change which will support the likelihood of satisfactory performance in the field. This documentation will be shared with the Faculty Field Committee and former Field Instructor/Task Supervisor.

A meeting will be held between all parties to discuss the student’s request to re-enter the practicum. There should be no communication with the student by the BSW Faculty or agency personnel prior to the meeting. This is recommended for the purpose of avoiding any appearance of inappropriately attempting to influence the outcome of the process. The meeting shall be presided over by the BSW Field Coordinator/MSW Field Director. If the former Field Instructor is unavailable, their designee or a representative from the same or similar field of practice should be present. The meeting will be held within 10 business days of the receipt of the request by the BSW/MSW Field Office. The BSW Field Coordinator/MSW Field Director will notify all participants of the date, location and time of the meeting. The student will have the opportunity to answer questions and share specific issues which he/she feels addresses their improvement and preparedness for field. Immediately following the meeting, the committee will conduct a closed meeting to discuss and make its’ recommendation. The recommendation will be written by the BSW Field Coordinator/MSW Field Director and forwarded to the student, meeting participants, Program Directors and Chair. Due to the skilled practice and professional knowledge of the Field Instructor, considerable weight will be given to their input toward the recommendation. If the student is granted permission to re-enter the practicum courses, information regarding the problem areas and suggested corrective actions, will be shared with prospective field agencies and Field Instructors. This policy has the dual purpose of protecting the wellbeing of the agency and its clientele as well as assuring the student receives an adequate opportunity and resources to improve his or her performance. However, if the student does not successfully complete the program, termination shall be final.

All students have the right of due process. If a student wishes to appeal a decision, he/she may refer to the Student Handbook section on Student Grievance Procedures for the College of Arts and Sciences.

Under certain circumstances, the BSW/MSW Program may initiate the removal of a student from a practicum site due to problems operating within the agency. These problems may create uncertainty for the student, hence; have an adverse impact on the quality of the practicum experience. Such problems can range from agency reorganization to the unplanned resignation of the Field Instructor, to sexual harassment. When such problems occur, the Faculty Liaison and/or BSW Field Coordinator/MSW Field Director will assess the problem by investigating the
placement, as warranted and allowed by the circumstances. The outcome of the assessment will determine whether the student will remain with the agency or be reassigned to another practicum site. The agency will be notified by the Faculty Liaison or BSW Field Coordinator/MSW Field Director of its’ concerns.

If the findings of the investigation determine it would be in the best interest of the student to remove him/her from the present site, as soon as it is feasible to do so, every effort should be made to initiate the transfer of the student to a new site. The agency will be notified of the impending move. If possible, the student should alert his/her clients of the impending move. This should be performed for the purpose of minimizing any emotional trauma the client population might experience due to the move.

**Protocol for Field Related Problem Solving**

**Step 1:** The student and the field instructor address the issue.

**Step 2:** If there is no resolution, either or both parties should contact the faculty liaison or the BSW Field Coordinator/MSW Field Director.

**Step 3:** The BSW Field Coordinator/MSW Field Director and/or faculty liaison meets with the student and field instructor to arrive at a solution.

**Step 4:** If there is no resolution, the BSW Field Coordinator/MSW Field Director seeks input Step 5: If there is still no resolution, the BSW Field Coordinator/MSW Field Director and BSW/MSW Program Director meet with the Field Committee to request a recommendation of resolution.

**Step 6:** If necessary, the BSW Field Coordinator/MSW Field Director and the Field Committee seeks input from the Chair.

**General Information**

The protocol for field related problem solving process is used when problems are identified with the practicum field experience. However, if the situation is unable to be resolved between students, field instructor, or task supervisor it becomes necessary to inform the field staff. Either the field instructor or the student can bring the problem to the attention of the faculty liaison. Therefore, any problem requiring the liaison’s intervention should be reported promptly. Regardless of who brings the problem to the attention of the faculty liaison, the liaison is expected to meet with both the student and field instructor or task supervisor in an effort to effectively problem solve.

It is important to remember, that with sufficient cause either an agency or the Department reserve the right to request the removal of a student from the agency setting. The agency must present
written documentation to the coordinator/director and a copy to the faculty liaison citing reasons for terminating the placement.

It is expected that during the course of field instruction the field instructor and student will keep adequate notes to document student progress. It is essential that when a problem is identified written expectations be shared with the student so that she/he can take appropriate steps to remedy the situation. It is further expected, if necessary such documentation be shared with the Department.

Identifying Student who may be experiencing problems in the Field Practicum
Most students who enter field will successfully complete their practicum experience. Although, students have different learning styles and subsequently progress at different rates, it is expected that each student adequately demonstrate the knowledge, skills, and values necessary for a generalist social worker.

Whenever there is a question about a student’s progress, the field instructor must immediately be in touch with the faculty liaison or BSW Field Coordinator/MSW Field Director for consultation. Various areas of performance may cause concern. Such areas of professional development include but are not limited to the following:

Personal Behavior
- Lying, violating agency/departmental policy, threat to others;
- Alcohol/drug abuse, irrational outburst, excessive crying;
- Refusing to advocate for clients; focusing on self-during client interview;
- Inappropriate touch, inappropriate interaction with the client;
- Over identification of clients, lecturing clients;
- Not showing up for the practicum or Integrative Seminar class; demanding to work with preferred clients only;
- Disregarding Code of Ethics; accepting money or gifts;
- Little or no evidence of professional responsibility (i.e. consistently late in meeting academic or agency deadline or fails to complete requirements);
- Personal problems or emotional difficulties consistently and significantly interfere.
Attitude

- Not willing to work with a particular client group;
- Homophobic, inability to engage clients because of biased attitudes;
- Lack of commitment to the profession;
- Concerned with the ‘salvation’ of others;
- Knowing it all, blaming others for personal failures;
- Apathy or failure to engage and invest in the field placement learning opportunities;
- When intervention fails, client is always assessed as resistant;
- Inability to hear and use feedback constructively.

Communication

- Accusing others as related to paranoid behavior
- Slurred speech
- Biased remarks
- Argumentativeness
- Constant criticisms
- Inability to write an adequate report/evaluation
- Inability to present to others

Interpersonal Interactions

- Inability to work with others
- Inability to utilize supervision
- Alienates colleagues and clients
- Arrogance, hostility or aggressiveness with others
- Inability to establish rapport with clients
- Very shy, quiet and anxious (that it seriously impedes work with clients and colleagues)
- Gossiping
Any of these behaviors or any other kind of behavior that causes the field instructor to question the student’s professional development must be reported to the faculty liaison or BSW Field Coordinator/MSW Field Director.

Following administrative protocols, the situation will be evaluated. The student demonstrating the problem is viewed as the primary educational responsibility of the Department, and the field instructor and agency share the burden of that problem student at a secondary level.

Possible Outcomes

A student’s failure to meet the minimum level of academic or nonacademic performance may result in the following:

A. **Failure of Field Practicum** The grade of ‘D’ or ‘F’ can be given for documented unprofessional conduct or for demonstrable lack of progress in achieving field practicum learning objectives. A student may be dismissed from the field agency at any time by the field instructor and/or the field agency. A written statement attesting to this action will be prepared by the field instructor and submitted to the field faculty liaison or field coordinator for inclusion in the student’s file. The field committee will review the written statement prior to its inclusion into the student’s file. A failing grade will result in the student being terminated from field practicum. Any student who receives a failing grade but desires to earn a BSW degree from the program must reapply to the program in writing. The application to re-enter the program will be reviewed by the field committee and a decision will be rendered in writing from the field coordinator on behalf of the committee to the applicant stating acceptance or denial of the application. The decision of the committee will be final.

B. **Repeat of Field Practicum** The student may be issued a grade of ‘I’ for incomplete, if he/she is unable to fulfill the required number of hours due to issues beyond the student’s control (e.g. illness, death of a parent or sibling or other emergencies requiring the student to leave the placement and University). Documented proof of the emergency must be submitted to the Field Coordinator before an ‘I’ grade is issued. If a student receives an ‘I’ letter grade, he/she must complete the remaining requirements (hours or assignments) by the next semester. If a student fails to fulfill the requirements during the next semester, the letter grade of ‘I’ will automatically convert into and ‘F’. Any student who receives a failing grade must reapply to the program and submit a letter explaining why they failed to complete the field practicum requirements within the designated time frame listed and why they are now requesting to re-enter the program. The application and letter to re-enter the Field Experience and the Integrative Field Seminar courses will be reviewed by the field committee, a decision will be rendered in writing from the field coordinator on behalf of the committee to the applicant. The
committee may request an interview with the applicant and or additional documentation from other sources before rendering a decision. If so, it is the responsibility of the applicant to appear before the committee to answer any questions or concerns by members of the committee at a date and time established by the committee. It is also the responsibility of the applicant to present additional documentation, if requested by the committee, within a time frame established by the committee. If the applicant fails to comply with the request, the matter will be taken up by the committee as an independent body of the program. The decision of the committee will be final.

Note: See Termination Policy for Academic or Unprofessional Conduct for additional information regarding terminations.

Criteria for the Selection of Field Agencies
In order for agencies to be approved by the BSW/MSW Program for the purpose of providing field instruction, they must meet the following criteria:

a. Agency’s philosophy of service shall be compatible with the philosophy, values, and ethics of the social work profession.

b. Agencies shall be related in purpose and function to the mission, methods, and curriculum of the BSW/MSW Program.

c. Agencies shall be clear about their program and methods.

d. The volume and flow of agency programs shall offer students a wide range of learning opportunities.

e. The administration and staff of the agency shall have respect for professional education and acceptance of the objectives and educational focus of the program of field instruction.

f. Agencies shall have qualified field instructors

g. Agencies may provide release time for field instructors to carry out field instruction responsibilities and to attend field-related meetings.

h. The staff shall be large enough to ensure that the basic agency program is developed and maintained sufficiently without reliance on students.

i. Agencies shall make available suitable desk space, telephones, dictating facilities, supplies, agency-related transportation/travel reimbursements, clerical services, and/or interviewing facilities.

j. Agencies shall support the University’s equal opportunity policy, providing equal treatment and opportunity, without regard to race, color, religion,
national origin, sex, age, disability, veteran status, or sexual preference except where such distinction is required by law.

k. Agencies shall agree to the execution of a written agreement between the BSW/MSW Programs and the Agency.

Agency Affiliation Process and University – Agency Agreement
The process of agency affiliation with the BSW/MSW Programs for the purpose of field instruction usually evolves as follows:

a. The agency either expresses its interest in affiliation by contacting the BSW Coordinator or MSW Field Director contacts an agency to determine its suitability. The BSW Coordinator/MSW Field Director either schedules a site visit to discuss practicum requirements or makes available the Agency Data Form, several Field Instructor Vita Forms, and a copy of this Field Manual.

b. The BSW Coordinator or MSW Field Director reviews the completed forms and if a site visit has not occurred, a site visit is scheduled to discuss field practicum requirements and to assess further the agency’s and designated field instructor’s qualification.

c. Upon approval of the agency as a field placement site, a University – Agency Agreement is signed by duly-authorized representatives of both the Agency and the University.

Criteria for the Selection of Field Instructors
The term, “field instructor,” designates an individual who is an employee of an agency and who is assigned instructional responsibility for a student enrolled in a field course and placed with that agency. In order to be approved by the BSW/MSW Program as a field instructor, he/she must meet the criteria below. The BSW Coordinator or the MSW Field Director must approve exemptions from one or more of these qualifications.

a. All field instructors shall possess the Master of Social Work degree from a Council on Social Work Education-accredited school of social work.

b. Field instructors shall have at least two years of social work experience following the Master’s degree.

c. Field instructors shall have ability in, and knowledge of areas of, social work practice being taught by the BSW/MSW Program.
d. Field instructors shall have thorough knowledge of the agency in which they are employed.

e. New field instructors shall attend a training seminar in field instruction provided by the BSW/MSW Program.

f. Field instructors shall demonstrate interest in supervision, staff development and instruction.

g. Field instructors shall make use of support systems designed for field instruction.

h. Field instructors shall understand, accept, and incorporate the educational objectives of the BSW/MSW Program into the instruction process with students.

**New Field Instructor Process**

For new agencies, the field instructor selection process is a part of the initial agency affiliation process. Curriculum vitas for potential field instructors are reviewed jointly with agency applications.

**Support Systems for Field Instructors**

The agency-based field instructors serve as extensions of the social work faculty. Their contributions to the education of students are substantial. Since they work in partnership with faculty, it is important that they participate in Seminars and workshops for all field instructors related to social work and student/educational issues. Individual field consultation from faculty assigned as liaisons to the agency and use of the Florida A & M University library facilities.

**Changing the Field Placement Site**

Request for a change in placement once the initial placement has been accepted is discouraged and will only be considered as a result of extenuating circumstances. Below is a sample list of when this may occur:

- The student’s academic, financial, health conditions, or transportation arrangements change, requiring a different type of placement or a delay of placement.
- The agency is no longer accessible to the student with different abilities and cannot make the necessary adjustments to become accessible during the semester.
- The agency is coping with significant internal issues, such as finances or staff changes, which makes it inappropriate for field students during that particular semester.
When a change of placement proves to be in the best interest of all parties concerned, the student must discuss the matter with the agency Field Instructor. Together, they examine the reasons for, and consequences of, a change of field placement. If the student and the agency Field Instructor cannot resolve the matter, the student then takes the issue to the BSW/MSW Faculty Field Liaison, who will discuss the concerns with both the student and the Field Instructor and recommend a plan of action to the BSW Coordinator or the MSW Field Director. The MSW Field Director makes the final decision about changing placement and/or Field Instructor. If a change is deemed necessary, the student must follow the process below:

- Complete a “Change of Field Placement Request Form.”
- Once the BSW Coordinator or the MSW Field Director receives this completed form, the student’s BSW/MSW Faculty Field Liaison is contacted to discuss how to accomplish the change with the least disruption.
- The BSW Coordinator or the MSW Field Director will also advise the Field Instructor of the student’s placement status.

If the agency Field Instructor requests that the student be moved from the agency, the following must occur:

- The Field Instructor and the Agency Executive informs the student and the BSW/MSW Faculty Field Liaison the reasons for the change and make suggestions regarding how the change may occur with the least disruption.
- The student, the BSW/MSW Faculty Field Liaison, and the BSW Coordinator or the MSW Field Director meet together to explore options; the final decision is made by the BSW Coordinator or the MSW Field Director.
- The students may appeal the decision in writing through the appeal process outlined in the BSW/MSW Student Manual.

Students are advised that the steps listed above must be adhered to before a new placement (including new job practicum requests) will be sought, and there are no guarantees that an appropriate new placement will be available at the time of the request. This process may delay practicum start date, require the student to make up lost hours and impact the program of study sequence.