1. How many hours will students spend in their Field Placement Agency Internship?

Students will be in their field placements for 30 weeks from the start of the fall semester (August 22, 2016) until the end of the spring semester (May 6, 2017).

BSW and MSW Foundation Year Students: 16 hours/week (480 hours/year)
MSW Concentration Year Students: 20 hours/week (600 hours/year)

2. What are the supervision requirements?

Each student must receive at least one hour of supervision every week from a qualified agency Field Instructor (FI).

- BSW students - FI must have a BSW degree with at least two years of post-degree work experience OR must have an MSW degree.
- MSW students- FI must have an MSW degree with at least two years of post-degree work experience. Field Instructors are NOT required to be licensed as an LCSW.

Field Instructors assume a teaching role for the students. In Supervision they assist the student in integrating social work knowledge, values, and skills into the student's practice. At least 50% of all supervision must be individual supervision- the other half may be group supervision with other interns. However, some students may require more individual supervision than others.

3. Does the one hour of supervision need to be a set hour, or can an FI provide a cumulative total of one hour of supervision each week?

The supervision hour must be a set hour each week. Many FIs provide additional “on the go” supervision throughout the week to manage administrative issues- student tasks, answer questions, and debrief cases. However, field instruction supervision combines other elements of supervision including the educational supervision and supportive supervision. Students should have a designated, uninterrupted time to explore the connection between their classroom work and their field practice, and to examine how their personal biases and identities interact with the work they do. In supervision, students should be pushed to grapple with ethical dilemmas and to consider issues of power, privilege, and social justice. Students will experience a range of emotions as they move through their internship and develop into their professional self, and they need a safe space in which to do this.

4. Can an agency that does not have a qualified Field Instructor (FI) on staff accept a student intern?

Maybe. In cases where there is not anyone on staff available to serve as a Field Instructor, the agency may elect to find an off-site Field Instructor to provide the necessary supervision. This off-site Field Instructor may be a Board Member, a staff member of a closely related agency, or another person with significant knowledge and understanding of the field placement agency. The off-site Field Instructor would be required to provide at least one hour of supervision for the student every other week. In supervision, the student would present what they are working on in their agency and learning in class, and the off-site Field Instructor would focus on helping the student connect how the social work knowledge, values, and skills they are learning in the classroom integrate with their field work.

Agencies that use an off-site Field Instructor must provide students with a Task Supervisor (TS) to provide regular ongoing support and guidance to the student on a daily basis at the agency. The Task Supervisor supplements the every other week supervision provided by the FI. The Task Supervisor does not have to hold a social work degree. This person should have significant work experience at the agency or with a similar client population. The Task Supervisor is responsible for monitoring the day to day activities of the internship. They must provide the regular one hour a week of supervision to the student. In supervision, the Task Supervisor focuses on skill development and supportive supervision.
5. Can an internship be arranged for evening/weekend hours?

Field placements are designed to take place when the task supervisor/field instructor are regularly employed and available for supervision.

Some agencies may require specific trainings/work hours outside the regularly scheduled business hours for field placement. It is up to the student and field instructor to specify work hours before the field placement begins. While certain agencies may have evening groups or other opportunities that allow students to complete their required hours during evenings and weekends, this cannot be guaranteed. While we understand that students may have outside financial/family commitments, no excuses from completing required field placement hours will be granted. It is up to the student to arrange their schedule to allow for completion of all required coursework and field placement hours.

6. What is the process for students to obtain a field placement?

a. Students complete Application for Field Placement in January before their internship will begin.
b. The Field Director(s) will assess each student's interests, goals, and background. Based on this information and the student's concentration, the Field Director will refer each student to three potential field agencies.
c. The student will then contact each agency for an interview. This is typically done by the student emailing an agency a cover letter and resume and requesting an interview. The interview is a two-way process—agencies may offer or deny an internship to a student, and a student may also determine whether the agency will be able to meet their learning requirements for a field placement.
d. Once an agency offers a student an internship, and the students accepts, the student must complete an official Confirmation of Field Placement form and submit it to the Field Director. Under NO circumstances may a student interview with an agency without prior permission from the Field Director.

7. What is the difference between a field instructor, faculty field liaison, etc.?

Field Instructor (FI) - a staff member at the field placement agency who is responsible for providing student with at least one hour a week of supervision. FI's must have a social work degree and typically at least two years of post-degree work experience in the field of social work. FI's are responsible for ensuring that the student is provided with learning assignments, tasks, and experiences that integrate social work theory, values, and practice.

Task Supervisor (TS) - a staff member at the field placement agency who may be responsible for supervising the day to day activities of the student during the internship. The Task Supervisor typically assumes a teaching role in skill development. The TS must work in conjunction with the FI to provide constructive feedback. Supervision time with the Task Supervisor must be supplemented with the required supervision time with the Field Instructor.

Agency Supervisor(s) - a shortened method of referring to all parties that supervise a student (refers to the field instructor and/or the task supervisor)

Faculty Field Liaison (FFL) - a member of the Department's faculty who provides a link between the agency, student, and school. The Faculty Field Liaison remains in regular contact with the Student and the Agency Supervisor(s) to monitor that placement learning objectives are being met, ensure academic curriculum is infused with practice in the field, and assist with mediating any conflicts that may occur in the field. The FFL is also responsible for leading the field seminar class and providing three in-person site visits per year to each student's agency.

Field Seminar - the weekly class led by the FFL, that allows students to process their field experience, integrate class work and agency practice, and develop as Social Work professionals. The Field Seminar may be held in person, on-campus, or online.

Field Director - a staff member of the Social Work Department that is responsible for securing agencies for field placement, matching students with appropriate placements, training Field Instructors, and developing all field education policies, procedures, and evaluations. The Field Director may also help mediate conflicts that occur in the field.
8. What if there is a conflict during the internship?

The Department is committed to ensuring that students are placed in quality learning environments in order to complete their field experience. However, there may be times in which problems arise during a field placement. It is best that these issues are addressed openly and immediately. Issues may be brought forth by the Student, Field Instructor/Task Supervisor, Faculty Field Liaison, or Field Director. In any circumstance, the Student Support and Problem Resolution Process on the Field Education website should be followed.

9. What the University’s policy in regards to use of a personal vehicle and transportation of clients?

Many agencies will require that students have access to their own transportation for the purposes of home visits, community work, etc. It is up to the student to inquire about the agency’s vehicle requirements during the interview process. Each agency will have its own policies regarding proof of driver’s license and insurance. Students’ use of personal or agency vehicles will not be covered under the Department’s insurance, nor will the Department reimburse students for the use of their vehicles. All issues in regards to transportation, including the transportation of clients, must be discussed between the student and the Field Instructor prior to beginning placement. The Department will not be responsible for any decisions in regards to transportation in the field.

10. Can a student start their internship before school starts?

Placement hours should be spread over the course of each full semester in order to allow the students to experience the placement concurrent with the content of classes (versus early completion of hours). At times, field placement agencies may require an earlier start date than the first week of classes for trainings or other activities. If you and your student agree to an earlier start date, you must contact the Field Director for permission prior to beginning your placement. Requests for early starts must include a rationale for the request of an earlier start date.

11. Will students be required to work over Holidays and School Breaks?

Students are not required to be in placement during regularly scheduled University Holidays and University Breaks. University Holidays may differ from Agency Holidays. In this case, students must arrange their work schedule in coordination with their Field Instructor. Agencies may require a student to complete hours of over Winter Break to ensure continuity of care, however this expectations must be discussed during the initial interview. While students may work extended hours over the Winter Break, they may not terminate form their field placements before the end of the semester. This may mean students will accrue more hours than the required hours.

IF YOU HAVE ADDITIONAL QUESTIONS, PLEASE CONTACT THE FIELD OFFICE:

303-556-4860
http://msudenver.edu/socialwork/officeoffieldeducation/

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