



**Department of Human Services  
and Counseling**

**Supervisor Field Manual**

**Updated August 2024**

# What Supervisors Need to Know about Field Placement

*“Learning is the process whereby knowledge is created through the transformation of experience.”  
David Kolb, 1984*

## **Welcome to the field placement experience!**

Thank you for serving as a field supervisor to an MSU Denver Human Services and Counseling undergraduate major! The field experience is vital to the learning process for students, and the field supervisor plays a central role in the student’s educational growth and development. We appreciate your willingness to mentor students as well as offer your expertise and guidance. If you have any questions about field placement, please contact the student’s seminar instructor or the MSU Denver Human Services and Counseling Field Director, Angela Furney: [afurney@msudenver.edu](mailto:afurney@msudenver.edu).

## **Overview of Internship**

Students completing an internship must be senior-level and are typically in the final semester of their undergraduate degree. They will have completed several courses related to the field as well as specific courses within their chosen concentration area of: Addiction Studies, High Risk Youth, Mental Health Counseling, or Trauma Studies. Students may complete an internship Spring, Summer, or Fall semesters.

Please be mindful of the full semester commitment when determining a schedule for your intern. Students must complete their hours throughout the full length of the semester:

- Students cannot end their placement earlier than two weeks prior to the end of the semester.
- Students must complete all hours by the end of the semester to pass the class.

## **Seminar Class:**

In addition to the weekly schedule at your agency, students attend a seminar class on campus. The class meets every other week in the Spring and Fall semesters and every week in the Summer semester. Attendance is mandatory for students at each class meeting. Please allow students flexibility in scheduling their hours so they may attend the seminar classes.

## **Supervisor and Agency Expectations**

### **Supervision Hours:**

Students must participate in the equivalent of one hour per week of individual or small group supervision. CAC certification requires that the group supervised include no more than six individuals. Please keep in mind that individual supervision offers students a vital learning experience and supports their professional development and growth. One-on-one supervision is required when working with the student to develop the learning contract as well as when reviewing the midterm and final evaluations.

### **Criteria for Supervisors:**

Internship supervisors must have a master’s degree in Human Services, Social Work, Counseling, Behavioral or Social Sciences, or a related field. An exception to this requirement may be made if the supervisor has a bachelor’s degree and at least 10 years of appropriate professional supervisory

experience necessary to create a positive learning environment for the student. To request an exception, students need to email their proposed supervisor's resume to the field director.

Students who are seeking hours towards the Certified Addictions Technician (CAT) credential must be supervised by a Licensed Addictions Counselor (**LAC**). The supervisor will need to sign the Work Verification Form to verify the number of hours completed at the end of the internship.

**Dual relationships cannot exist** between the site and/or supervisor and the student. Examples of this include: supervisors who also hold adjunct faculty positions within the Department of Human Services and Counseling and have the potential to teach the student in class (current or future semesters), agencies where the student receives services (current or within the past five years), or personal relationships (prior to or during the field placement). If you have any concerns about a potential dual relationship, please discuss the situation with the Field Director.

### **Agency/Supervisor Responsibilities:**

If an agency agrees to serve as a placement site, the supervisor needs to be aware of the responsibilities involved in offering an effective learning environment for the student. Before beginning their placement, students will work with their supervisor to complete a **Site Agreement (See Appendix B)**, which outlines the responsibilities involved in providing an effective learning experience.

The following is a list of responsibilities that the supervisor, in conjunction with agency staff, must be willing to provide for the student:

- Provide one hour of Master's-level supervision per week throughout the placement
- Collaborate with the student in the development of a learning contract
- Participate in a site visit with the seminar instructor
- Provide ongoing feedback, including a mid-term evaluation and a final evaluation
- Review and uphold the policies and procedures outlined in the Supervisor Field Manual
- Provide an orientation to the agency and training for the student to be successful
- Demonstrate policies and procedures that meet professional and ethical standards
- Contact the seminar instructor as quickly as possible with concerns about the student

The Student Agrees to:

- Coordinate a site visit with the seminar instructor and field supervisor
- Uphold the Ethical Standards of Human Services Professionals and follow relevant guidelines in the CO Mental Health Statute
- Discuss concerns with the field supervisor and/or seminar instructor as quickly as possible
- Attend and participate in the seminar class
- Uphold the policies and procedures outlined in the Student Field Manual

### **Safety and Scope of Practice:**

Given that MSU Denver students are undergraduates, they are not trained to perform some duties that might be expected of a graduate student in a field placement. As such, please be aware of the duties that are appropriate and inappropriate to do at the site.

Students in **unpaid** placements MAY NOT:

- Drive clients
- Restrain clients
- Provide individual psychotherapy for a client
- Lead psychotherapy groups without a qualified therapist present
- Open or close an agency
- Be left alone at an agency
- Provide direct observation of a urinalysis
- Have a case load of clients for which the student has sole responsibility

Students who are paid employees of an agency, and who have received training that supports safety for the student, staff, and clients, may perform such activities as part of their work expectations.

Students ARE ENCOURAGED TO:

- Shadow professionals in one-on-one sessions with clients and in groups
- Co-facilitate groups with an employee of the agency
- Participate in staff meetings and training opportunities
- Conduct intakes after proper training
- Write chart notes and complete other agency documentation after proper training
- Enter client documentation and other data into computer systems

### **Appropriate Learning Activities:**

The field supervisor is responsible for facilitating student involvement in appropriate learning activities and experiences, as well as providing training to support student success.

A helpful process to follow in supporting student success is to:

- Offer an initial orientation and training for different agency tasks.
- Allow the student to shadow professional staff performing the tasks.
- Have the student co-facilitate the process with a professional staff member.
- Have the student facilitate the process with supervision.

The field supervisor is responsible for determining student readiness for different tasks and responsibilities at the agency. Some students may have lots of experience in the field prior to their practicum and internship and others may have limited experience.

### **Private Psychotherapy Clinic Settings:**

Field experience benefits students by providing exposure not only to client interactions but also to agency dynamics and industry challenges. For this reason, field placements in private practice, remote, or home-based settings are rarely approved. Instead, students are encouraged to explore agency settings that provide a wide range of services to clients.

Private practice settings will be evaluated on a case-by-case basis using the following criteria:

- engages with multiple external points of contact within the larger social services delivery system (e.g., schools, courts, families, etc).

- articulates a defined mission and agency policies and procedures that align with the Department of Human Services and Counseling.
- utilizes a structured intake process.
- provides diverse training opportunities for students to engage in differing treatment modalities (e.g., individual, couple, family, group).
- creates a learning environment where students progress on a continuum that begins with opportunities to shadow/observe and move towards co-facilitation of groups.
- offers a supervision plan that includes ongoing feedback.

This is not an exhaustive list; it is an attempt to explain the rationale behind site approval.

### **Background Checks:**

Metropolitan State University of Denver nor the Department of Human Services and Counseling require students to complete a background check. Each of our students has a unique story, which draws them to the field of Human Services, and there are situations where that history may include arrests, convictions, or jail time. For this reason, please take every precaution you normally would when extending an offer of volunteer service or employment at your agency.

### **Federal Work Study:**

Some non-profit agencies may qualify to utilize Federal Work-Study Funds to pay students. The student must be awarded Federal Work-Study funds to qualify. The agency pays 25% of the total amount the student is awarded. For example, if a student receives an award of \$2500 per semester, the agency will need to pay \$625 of that amount. Details are available in the Work-Study Handbook for Off-Campus Agency Supervisors found on the Human Resources website.

### **Worker's Compensation:**

Students in unpaid placements will be covered by the University's Workers' Compensation and Professional Liability insurance during the field semester. Students in paid placements must be covered by the agency for Workers' Compensation insurance. Information about MSU Denver Worker's Compensation policies and procedures, including a list of providers/ locations/ hours, will be provided to students on the first day of their seminar class. Please contact the field coordinator if you would like to have a copy of the information for your records.

Our students do not purchase Personal Liability Insurance. According to our legal office, if students only conduct appropriate learning activities listed in this manual, they should not need additional insurance. If you would like the student to purchase insurance, please provide the details to the student in advance so they can comply with your requirements.

### **Title IX: Protection from Discrimination and Harassment**

Title IX is a federal law that prohibits sex-based discrimination on college campuses. In accordance with Title IX, MSU Denver strictly prohibits acts of sexual misconduct, including sexual harassment, sexual assault, stalking, and dating. Although off-campus, the agency setting is an extension of the classroom. For this reason, **students are protected under Title IX even as they are acting as a student intern at their placement.** No student will be retaliated against or failed from a placement course for filing a complaint related to sexual misconduct or participating in an investigation.

## Overview of Academic Expectations

### **Developing a Learning Contract:**

To maximize the impact of their placement, students are required to develop a learning contract that defines their learning goals and establishes specific activities that support growth as a professional in the field. The learning contract should be developed in collaboration with the field supervisor, and the field supervisor must sign the final copy to show support for the goals and learning activities. The seminar instructor is also involved in final approval of the learning contract.

Students find it helpful for supervisors to identify knowledge and skills necessary for success in the field, behaviors and attitudes required for professional environments, and networking connections beneficial for future employment. Students in practicum and internship complete a mid-term review of their learning contract as part of the evaluation process. This is a great opportunity to renegotiate the learning goals if necessary.

If you're working with a student on a continuing placement, please be aware that students must have different responsibilities from semester to semester. **Each placement must be a new learning experience.** Students may accomplish this by completing placements at different agencies or by completing different responsibilities at the same agency. Different position responsibilities must be documented on a new learning contract for continuing placements. Different responsibilities allow students to explore various career opportunities, grow their professional network, and learn new types and styles of supervision.

### **Using Employment for Practicum or Internship:**

It is permissible for students to use their job for practicum and internship hours but the position responsibilities and tasks must go beyond their current job duties. Metropolitan State University of Denver and the Department of Human Services and Counseling are not responsible or liable for situations that occur as a result of employment.

### **Site Visits:**

The seminar instructor will make a visit to the field placement site at some point during the semester. The site visit meeting should include the field supervisor and the student. Other appropriate agency staff are welcome to participate. The site visit offers an opportunity for direct verbal feedback from the field supervisor on the overall field placement experience, as well as student performance. The field supervisor may request an additional site visit if there are concerns with student performance or behavior or for other reasons. Speak with the seminar instructor to discuss this option.

### **Evaluation:**

Supervisors need to complete a mid-term review and a final evaluation of the student's performance. We ask that you evaluate students on our **Field Competencies (See Appendix A)**. When complete, please set a specific time to meet with the student to discuss the evaluation (mid-term review as well as the final evaluation). We ask that you provide as much specific and detailed information on each evaluation as possible since each student will be writing a paper detailing and reflecting upon the feedback received.

## Elements of a Successful Student Placement

### **Communication and Training:**

The most important aspect of a successful placement is open communication between the student and the field supervisor; the student and the seminar instructor; and the field supervisor and the seminar instructor. Please spend time with the student at the beginning of the placement clarifying expectations, reviewing policies and procedures, answering questions, providing guidance, offering training, and establishing a plan for student learning in the form of a learning contract.

Students are expected to behave in a professional manner and to dress in appropriate attire for the type of placement. Please inform students about expectations concerning behavior and attire. If there is a concern regarding a student's performance or behavior, please keep the seminar instructor informed about the concern. It is helpful to discuss protocol with the student about issues such as who the student should contact if s/he is ill and unable to make it to the placement site during regularly scheduled hours. Clear communication and guidance from the field supervisor about policies, procedures, and protocol will assist students to be successful in the placement.

### **Effective Use of Supervision:**

The student's relationship with the field supervisor is central to the learning experience. To make effective use of supervision time and experience, the Department of Human Services and Counseling at MSU Denver encourages students to be active participants in the process. Supervision meetings offer an opportunity to clarify policies and procedures, give feedback on performance, and provide guidance relating to specific situations and clients. It also offers a time to plan for activities and projects. Field supervisors are encouraged to ask students to prepare for supervision and are welcome to give students specific readings to discuss at the meetings.

### **Professional and Ethical Standards:**

Students are expected to maintain the following professional and ethical standards:

- Ethical Standards of Human Services Professionals developed by the National Organization for Human Services: <http://www.nationalhumanservices.org/>.
- Colorado Mental Health Statutes
- Agency Policies and Procedures. Please provide access to agency policies and procedures at the beginning of the placement. It is helpful to review agency policies and procedures during supervision with the student to be sure the student understands agency expectations.
- Department of Human Services and Counseling Professional Conduct Policy. Students are expected to conduct themselves professionally in the classroom, in interactions with other students, staff, faculty, and in their field placements. The Human Services and Counseling Professional Review Team will document and address any student behavior that conflicts with professional expectations.

We ask that you immediately report any and all unprofessional behaviors by a student at the site to both the field coordinator and the student's seminar instructor. We are deeply committed to ensuring students are ready to serve as helping professionals and this commitment requires your support.

**Thank you** for your partnership in the educational journey of our students! We appreciate your time, expertise, and commitment. Please do not hesitate to contact the field coordinator with any questions about this manual or the field placement process.

## Appendix A: Department of Human Services and Counseling Field Competencies

### Core Competencies (Departmental Learning Objectives):

1. **Attitude:** The student is enthusiastic about the field of Human Services and is able and willing to cooperate with field supervisors, co-workers, other interns, and the public.
2. **Agency Analysis:** The student is able to understand the context of the agency, i.e. the infrastructure, organization, and the contributions to community life.
3. **Ethical Knowledge:** The student demonstrates an understanding of ethical issues and a knowledge of all ethics codes that may apply in the setting.
4. **Ethical Dilemmas:** The student does not engage in activities that are contrary to the ethical standards and is able to use ethical decision-making when situations are not clear-cut.
5. **Cultural Knowledge:** The student is aware of: the impact of cultural diversity (in the broadest sense of the term); their own personal culture; the various ways in which an individual's multiple aspects of identity interact.
6. **Cultural Sensitivity:** The student is able to interact with individuals in meaningful ways that demonstrates an understanding of the impact of culture on personal style, values, perspectives and experiences.
7. **Professional Writing Skills:** The student produces clear professional writing as appropriate to the placement such as grants, reports, case notes, evaluations and assessments, marketing materials, etc.

### Direct Service Delivery Skills:

1. **Interpersonal Communication Skills:** The student communicates clearly and appropriately with field supervisors, clients, co-workers, and the public.
2. **Accepts Feedback:** The student is receptive to feedback.
3. **Utilizes Feedback:** The student responds to feedback in a professional manner by adapting the feedback into future performance.
4. **Assertiveness:** The student is able to initiate and communicate appropriately in individual and group settings.
5. **Manages Conflict:** The student utilizes communication to effectively manage conflict.
6. **Appropriate Intervention Skills:** The student is able to provide the service that is appropriate to the field placement site (for example: intake interviews, group facilitation, customer service, case management, mentoring, treatment planning, events coordination, educational presentations, fund-raising, grant writing, etc.).
7. **Problem Solves:** The student uses critical thinking skills and applies knowledge to solve problems.
8. **Self-Awareness:** The student is willing to examine his/her own feelings, values, and behaviors and is aware of his/her own strengths and challenges.
9. **Self-Care:** The student actively practiced self-care by establishing boundaries, seeking support when necessary, and taking steps to lead a healthy lifestyle.
10. **Professionalism:** The student presents him/herself in a professional manner through appropriate attire and personal grooming.



**Appendix B: Department of Human Services and Counseling  
Site Agreement**

Student Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Student ID (900/901#): \_\_\_\_\_

Placement Agency: \_\_\_\_\_ Semester & Year: \_\_\_\_\_

Supervisor Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Supervisor Degree(s): \_\_\_\_\_

**Number of hours required:**

- Internships vary in hour requirements. Students need to complete **200, 300, or 400** hours a semester, depending on their enrolled number of credits. Please clarify with your intern how many hours they need to complete.
- Students completing a **200-hour** internship need to average 12.5 hours/week over the fall and spring semesters and 20 hours/week over the summer semester.
- Students completing a **300-hour internship** need to average 20 hours/week over the fall and spring semesters and 30 hours/week over the summer semester.
- Students completing a **400-hour internship** need to average 25 hours/week over the fall and spring semesters and 40 hours/week over the summer semester.

**Important Note about Overnight Hours:**

- Hours worked while clients are sleeping cannot count toward the total hour requirement. As a result, students need to extend their internship hours before or after their working hours.

**Internship Information:**

Hours will begin on: \_\_\_\_\_ Hours will be completed by: \_\_\_\_\_

The position will require \_\_\_\_\_ hours per week for a total of \_\_\_\_\_ hours.

Intern will be on-site (days of week and times): \_\_\_\_\_

The position will be paid (Y/N): \_\_\_\_\_. If applicable, the hourly wage/salary will be: \_\_\_\_\_

Intern will be accruing hours toward a Certified Addiction Technician credential (Y/N): \_\_\_\_\_. If yes,

intern will receive supervision from a Licensed Addiction Counselor (LAC) in good standing (Y/N): \_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_ and hours will be verified at the end of the semester on a Work Verification Form (Y/N): \_\_\_\_\_

**The Internship Supervisor agrees to (please read and initial each item):**

- Provide **one hour of master's-level supervision per week** throughout the semester. If a student does not receive supervision for a particular week, their hours cannot count toward the hour log. Therefore, the supervisor agrees to ensure that, in their absence, the student will receive support and supervision from an equally qualified staff during any absence.
- Collaborate with the student in the development of a **learning contract**
- Participate in a **site visit** with the seminar instructor

- Provide ongoing feedback that includes areas of strength and areas of needed growth (a developmental expectation of an undergraduate intern) including a formal **mid-term evaluation** and a **final evaluation**
- Review and uphold the policies and procedures outlined in the **Supervisor Field Manual**
- Provide an orientation to the agency and training for the student to be successful
- Demonstrate policies and procedures that meet professional and ethical standards
- Contact the seminar instructor as quickly as possible with concerns about the student

**The student agrees to (please read and initial each item):**

- Coordinate a **site visit** with the seminar instructor and internship supervisor
- Uphold the Ethical Standards of Human Services Professionals and follow relevant guidelines in the CO Mental Health Statute (e.g., mandated reporting)
- Discuss concerns with internship supervisor and/or seminar instructor
- Attend and participate in the **seminar class**
- Uphold the policies and procedures outlined in the **Student Field Manual**

Students in *unpaid* placements **MAY NOT:**

- Drive clients
- Restrain clients
- Provide individual psychotherapy for a client
- Lead psychotherapy groups without a qualified therapist present
- Open or close an agency or be left alone at an agency
- Provide direct observation of a urinalysis
- Have a case load of clients for which the student has sole responsibility

Students are ENCOURAGED to:

- Shadow professionals in one-on-one sessions with clients and in groups
- Co-facilitate groups with an employee at the agency
- Participate in staff meetings and training opportunities
- Conduct intakes after proper training
- Write chart notes and complete other agency documentation after proper training
- Enter client documentation and other data into computer systems

By signing, we confirm a position has been offered and accepted at this agency, and we agree to support a successful placement by following all listed guidelines.

Student Signature: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Internship Supervisor Signature: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Return to Angela Furney, [afurney@msudenver.edu](mailto:afurney@msudenver.edu), upon completion by both parties.