



METROPOLITAN
STATE UNIVERSITYSM
OF DENVER

Department of Social Work
Field Education Manual
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FOREWORD

This manual is designed to provide students, community agency partners, including Field Instructors and Task Supervisors, and faculty with all the information needed to have a successful internship and field experience.

We would like to extend a deep thank you to all the community agencies and the respective Field Instructors and Task Supervisors who have volunteered to partner with our MSW and BSSW programs to provide real-life learning opportunities for our students.

This manual may be updated throughout the year, so please check online for the most updated policies, forms, and information. This manual will be available on the [Office of Field Education website](#).

We wish you all a very rewarding field education experience!

The Office of Field Education

Table of Contents

I.	INTRODUCTION TO THE SOCIAL WORK PROGRAM.....	6
A.	Metropolitan State University of Denver (MSU Denver) Overview.....	6
B.	Social Work Program Overview.....	6
C.	Accreditation Status.....	7
D.	Social Work Program Mission and Goals.....	7
E.	Social Work Program Requirements.....	7
II.	INTRODUCTION TO FIELD EDUCATION.....	8
A.	Philosophy of Field Education.....	8
1.	CSWE Nine Social Work Competencies.....	8
B.	Social Work Values and Commitment to Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion.....	9
1.	Definition of Anti-Racism.....	9
2.	Commitment to Anti-Racism.....	9
C.	Field Education Requirements.....	10
1.	Field Experience Course Overview.....	10
2.	Internship Hours Requirements.....	10
3.	Supervision.....	10
4.	Site Visits.....	12
5.	Field Experience Class.....	12
D.	BSSW Program.....	12
1.	BSSW Internship (Generalist) Overview.....	13
2.	BSSW Field Experience Course Learning Objectives.....	13
E.	MSW Program.....	14
1.	Foundation Year Internship (Generalist) Overview.....	14
2.	Foundation Year Field Experience Course Learning Objectives.....	15
3.	Concentration Year Internship (Specialist) Overview.....	15
4.	Concentration Year Field Experience Course Learning Objectives.....	17
5.	Capstone Class.....	17
F.	Grading, Assignments, Learning Agreement, and Evaluation.....	18
1.	Field Experience Course Grading.....	18
2.	Learning Agreement Guidelines.....	19
3.	Evaluation Guidelines.....	19

III.	INTERNSHIP SEARCH PROCESS	22
A.	Recruitment of New Internship Agencies (aka New Agency Affiliation).....	22
B.	Affiliation Agreement.....	22
C.	Roles and Responsibilities	23
1.	Agencies.....	23
2.	Field Instructors	24
3.	Off-Site Field Instructors	24
4.	Task Supervisors.....	25
D.	Student Internship Search Process	26
IV.	OFFICE of FIELD EDUCATION POLICIES	27
A.	Department of Social Work Policies.....	27
B.	General Field Education Policies.....	28
1.	Time in the Internship (Early Starts, Extensions, & Early Completions).....	28
2.	School Breaks and Holidays	30
3.	Paid and/or Stipend Internship.....	30
4.	Employment-Based (EB) Internships	30
5.	Employment Offers During Academic Year	32
6.	Distance Internships.....	33
7.	Longitudinal (aka Same Agency) Internships.....	33
8.	Safety in Field Education.....	34
9.	Confidentiality and the Use of Technology	35
10.	Social Media	36
11.	Liability Insurance	36
12.	Use of Personal Vehicle.....	36
13.	Worker’s Compensation (Internship-Related Injury or Illness)	37
14.	Attire	37
15.	Internship Disruption Policy.....	37
16.	Field Support Process	40
17.	Agency Review	46
18.	Accommodations in Field (including Pregnancy)	48
19.	Group Private Practice Policy.....	49

I. INTRODUCTION TO THE SOCIAL WORK PROGRAM

A. Metropolitan State University of Denver (MSU Denver) Overview

Vision

We are a nationally recognized leader for social mobility – where students of all ages and backgrounds build a better, more equitable Colorado through innovative and transformative education.

Mission

MSU Denver’s mission is to provide a high-quality, accessible, enriching education that prepares students for successful careers, post-graduate education and lifelong learning in a multicultural, global and technological society. To fulfill its mission, MSU Denver’s diverse university community engages the community at large in scholarly inquiry, creative activity and the application of knowledge.

Values

MSU Denver’s mission, vision, ongoing operations and strategic planning are informed by a [core set of values \(“CADRE”\)](#) that define who we are – and aspire to be – as a university:

- Community
- Access
- Diversity
- Respect
- Excellence

B. Social Work Program Overview

MSU Denver’s Department of Social Work educates social workers to serve the needs of individuals, families, groups, communities, and organizations in a multicultural and global society. MSU Denver’s program is fully accredited by the Council on Social Work Education (CSWE), the sole accrediting body for social work.

Our program combines academic, research, and field experience into a rigorous curriculum that teaches ethical decision making, scientific inquiry, cultural sensitivity, and global awareness as well as clinical assessment and intervention skills, leadership and management skills, and community organizing.

BSSW Program: Students applying to the BSSW program should have completed the prerequisite liberal arts perspective courses and the introductory social work courses, or they should be enrolled with the intent to complete them before the program begins. The major requires 120 credit hours to be completed, including general prerequisites, social work prerequisites, general studies courses, graduation requirements, and required social work courses.

MSW Regular (2-year) Program: This program is for students whose undergraduate degree is not in social work. Accepted students will complete 60 credit hours of graduate social work courses. The first year (30 credits) consists of foundation year coursework, and the second year (30 credits) consists of the concentration year coursework. Full-time students will complete the program in two (2) academic years; part-time students will complete the program in four (4) academic years.

MSW Advanced Standing Program: This program is for students whose undergraduate degree is in social work from a program accredited by the CSWE. Accepted students will complete the 30 credit hours of graduate social work courses in the concentration year. Full-time students will complete the program in one (1) academic year; part-time students will complete the program in two (2) academic years.

NOTE: *Students who have Advanced Standing status have already met the foundation year (1st year of the MSW program) competencies through their BSSW coursework. Competencies for all BSSW programs nationwide are equivalent to the foundation year (1st year) competencies of all MSW programs nationwide.*

C. Accreditation Status

The social work program is accredited by the [Council on Social Work Education \(CSWE\)](#), the sole accrediting body for social work programs in the U.S. Accreditation ensures that professional standards are met in curriculum content and delivery. Accredited programs periodically undergo rigorous review by the CSWE in order to ensure compliance with educational standards.

D. Social Work Program Mission and Goals

The primary mission of the Social Work program is to provide an inclusive, inspiring environment for undergraduate, graduate, and community education in social work that is value driven, research informed, culturally responsive, academically rigorous, and which links theory with practice. The program's faculty, students, and graduates are committed to helping those in need by recognizing the profession's core values; applying knowledge gained through scientific inquiry; promoting human rights as well as social and economic justice; and providing leadership in social, economic and political contexts for the betterment of humanity. The program will prepare students to:

- Conduct themselves as professional social workers who strive for continual professional development, who exercise core values and ethical decision making, and who practice personal reflection and self-correction.
- Engage in evidence-based, culturally sensitive advanced clinical social work practice with vulnerable, diverse client systems and circumstances using scientific inquiry, research-informed practice, and practice-informed research.
- Be advanced, macro-level social workers who are competent, effective, and innovative program designers and developers; political, community and agency leaders; and advocates and researchers in service delivery systems that address the needs of vulnerable and diverse client systems and circumstances using scientific inquiry, research-informed practice and practice-informed research.
- As citizens of the world, be effective change agents and leaders by recognizing the dynamic nature of social problems, policies, agency responses, and opportunities for social change in a diverse context as an evolving ecological system.

E. Social Work Program Requirements

You can find social work program and individual course requirements, descriptions, and syllabi through the following links:

- [BSSW Program](#)
- [MSW Program \(Foundation, Concentration, and Part-Time Program\)](#)

- [MSW Program \(Advanced Standing\)](#)
- [Course Descriptions and Syllabi](#)

II. INTRODUCTION TO FIELD EDUCATION

A. Philosophy of Field Education

In 2008, the Council on Social Work Education (CSWE) designated field education as the “signature pedagogy” of social work. The major purpose of the field education curriculum is to develop a social work practitioner who:

- Is grounded in the knowledge and value base of the social work profession,
- Uses the knowledge base to guide his/her/their interventions with clients and client systems, and
- Evaluates the outcome of her/his/their interventions in order to improve them.

(Adapted from www.nanfed.org).

1. CSWE Nine Social Work Competencies

It is in the field placement (aka internship) that students get a chance to apply what they are learning in the classroom to real life practice situations. The Council on Social Work Education (CSWE) has adopted a competency-based education framework to identify and assess what students demonstrate in practice. In the CSWE 2015 Educational Policy and Accreditation Standards (EPAS), social work practice competence consists of nine interrelated competencies and component behaviors that consist of knowledge, values, skills, and cognitive and affective processes.

- **Competency 1: Demonstrate Ethical and Professional Behavior**
- **Competency #2: Engage Diversity and Difference in Practice**
- **Competency #3: Advance Human Rights and Social, Economic, and Environmental Justice**
- **Competency #4: Engage in Practice-Informed Research and Research-informed Practice**
- **Competency #5: Engage in Policy Practice**
- **Competency #6: Engage with Individuals, Families, Groups, Organizations, and Communities**
- **Competency #7: Assess with Individuals, Families, Groups, Organizations, and Communities**
- **Competency #8: Intervene with Individuals, Families, Groups, Organizations, and Communities**
- **Competency #9: Evaluate Practice with Individuals, Families, Groups, Organizations, and Communities**

B. Social Work Values and Commitment to Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion

1. Definition of Anti-Racism

We, the MSU-Denver Social Work Office of Field Education, acknowledge the presence of power and privilege and its global impact on those with marginalized identities. We recognize that the social work profession has contributed to and continues to uphold systems of oppression.

We define anti-racism as the active practice of evaluating and dismantling racism and oppression through challenging and ultimately changing the systems that preserve it. We celebrate the different identities of those on our team and those who we work with, and we center and prioritize the voices and experiences of Black, Indigenous, and others who identify as People of Color (BIPOC) and other marginalized communities. We hold ourselves and each other accountable to evaluating the ways our multiple identities interact within these systems. We hold the belief that this definition will grow and change as we continue to seek out new ways of unlearning the oppressive systems we have been taught to uphold.

2. Commitment to Anti-Racism

The MSU-Denver Social Work Office of Field Education, in alignment with the University, (e.g. [MSU Board of Trustees Resolution](#); [MSU Denver Land and Labor Acknowledgement](#)) and our profession, (e.g. [NASW Code of Ethics](#); [NASW Report on Racial Justice](#), [CSWE Antiracism Press Release](#)) is committed to anti-racism and anti-oppression.

The Office of Field Education's commitment is to provide an inclusive field education experience in which theory and practice reflect anti-racist social work practice. Our commitment to practicing anti-racism includes but is not limited to the following actions and deliverables:

- reviewing and updating policies and practices related to better supporting the field education experience for BIPOC students and/or students with other marginalized identities;
- engaging field education students in becoming agents of change towards dismantling systems of oppression;
- reviewing and updating field education curriculum with a stronger focus on diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI) and culturally responsive course content;
- collaborating with community partners who have aligned values and ethics;
- supporting internship agencies to ensure their follow through with social work DEI values;
- providing opportunities for field staff and faculty to engage in continued reflection, education, and growth around DEI and anti-racism;
- creating open feedback loops for students, faculty, staff, and community partners to collaborate and share their knowledge with us and each other to advance anti-racism social work field education.

C. Field Education Requirements

1. Field Experience Course Overview

As part of the required Field Experience courses, every student in the BSSW and MSW programs will find a placement within a community agency and complete an internship under the guidance and supervision of an experienced professional social worker, the Field Instructor.

Each Field Experience course is divided into two (2) required components:

- Internship (aka Field Placement or Practicum) in agency
- Biweekly field education class facilitated by a Faculty Field Liaison

Additional resources for Field Education can be found on the Office of Field Education [website](#).

2. Internship Hours Requirements

Students will be in the internship for 30 weeks from the start of the fall semester (mid-August) until the end of the spring semester (mid-May). Students are expected to complete their internship in the same agency for the entire academic year (30 weeks). Students are not typically allowed to switch internships mid-year. The total required hours are:

BSSW (Undergraduate Seniors)	13-14 hours/week (200/semester and 400/year)
MSW Foundation (1 st year)	13-14 hours/week (200/semester and 400/year)
MSW Concentration (2 nd year)	16-17 hours/week (250/semester and 500/year)

NOTE: *The hour requirements are minimum hour requirements. Students may exceed the minimum number of hours. If an agency requests that an intern complete more than the minimum number of required hours, this should be communicated and agreed upon in advance between the student and agency, prior to the start of the internship. If students agree to complete more hours than the minimum requirement, it is expected that they will do their best to honor this commitment, or utilize the Field Support Process if they find that they need to renegotiate the agreement.*

Please see [section IV. B. 1. “Time in the Internship”](#) for further information related to requests for Early Starts, Early Completions, and/or Extensions.

3. Supervision

Each student must receive at least one (1) hour of supervision weekly by a qualified Field Instructor (see below for criteria and additional details).

Field Instructors are social work educators and serve in the roles of teacher, guide, challenger, and role model. According to Maypole (1997), supervision is considered to have three (3) components which interact to achieve the goals of the agency and MSU Denver’s BSSW & MSW field programs:

- **Administrative:** To ensure the student’s accountability to the agency and to MSU Denver’s field program policies and procedures;
- **Educational:** To support the developing professional capacity of the student as it relates to the transmission of social work knowledge, skills, attitudes, and values; and
- **Supportive:** To promote student self-care, personal growth, advocate for student learning needs, and provide emotional support.

Field Instructors may provide biweekly (every other week) supervision if supplemented by weekly supervision by a Task Supervisor with a related degree (e.g. counseling, psychology, etc.) or significant relevant work experience.

Supervision options:

Option 1:	One hour of weekly supervision from an On-Site Field Instructor AND →	NO TASK SUPERVISOR
Option 2:	One hour of supervision every other week (more if needed) from an On-Site Field Instructor AND →	One hour of supervision every other week (or weekly) from an On-Site Task Supervisor
Option 3	One hour of supervision every other week (more if needed) from an Off-Site Field Instructor AND →	One hour of supervision weekly from an On-Site Task Supervisor

NOTE: Supervision may be a combination of individual and group, depending on the learning style and needs of the student. It is strongly recommended that at least 50% of all supervision hours should be individual. When group supervision models are used, the Task Supervisor and/or Field Instructor should be available to meet individually as needed throughout the semester, depending on the student’s level and learning needs, for the purposes of establishing a trusted relationship and addressing any differentiated learning needs.

a. Definitions of Roles in Field Education

Agency Internship Coordinator: Individual at the agency responsible for establishing the partnership between the University and the Agency. This is typically who the student initially contacts to request an interview for an internship. This may or may not be the same person as the Field Instructor.

Faculty Field Liaison (FFL): University instructor who teaches the field experience class and provides support to students and agencies as well as conducting site visits at agencies.

Field Instructor: Individual who has primary responsibility for the student’s learning experience in the Internship and ensures appropriate learning experiences are provided that integrate social work theory, values, and practice.

For BSSW students: Must have a BSSW or MSW degree from an accredited social work program and at least two (2) years of post-degree work experience.

For MSW students: Must have a MSW degree from an accredited social work program and at least two (2) years of post-degree experience.

An *Off-Site Field Instructor (OSFI)* may be requested from the Office of Field Education when needed.

Task Supervisor: A staff member at the internship agency who is responsible for supervising the day-to-day activities of the student during the internship. While a social work degree is not required, the Task Supervisor must have appropriate level of experience within the Internship agency. Must work in conjunction with the Field Instructor to provide constructive feedback and ensure appropriate learning assignments, tasks, and experiences.

4. Site Visits

Each student will be assigned a Faculty Field Liaison (FFL). The FFL is responsible for teaching the biweekly field seminar in addition to providing at least two (2) in-person or virtual site visits per year to each student's agency.

The site visits serve as a means to maintain regular contact with the student and agency supervisor(s) to monitor that placement learning objectives are being met, ensure academic curriculum is infused with practice in the field, support safe learning environments (see [section IV. B. 8. "Safety in Field Education"](#)), and assist with mediating any conflict that may occur in the field (see [section IV. B. 16. "Field Support Process"](#)).

If a student has multiple supervisors (e.g. an on-site Task Supervisor and an Off-Site Field Instructor) then all parties should be invited to and participate in the site visits whenever possible. See the field calendar available on the [Office of Field Education website](#) for site visit dates.

5. Field Experience Class

Each student will participate in a biweekly field education class to complement their experiences in their internship. The seminar will be led by their FFL. Field seminar classes are offered in face-to-face, online and hybrid formats. The seminar will be a place where students will discuss specific content (e.g. vicarious trauma, crisis intervention, ethical dilemmas, etc.), process what is happening in their Internships, and complete assignments designed to integrate social work theory to practice.

D. BSSW Program

The Field Experience courses required for the BSSW program are: SWK 4500 and SWK 4510. These two courses must be completed consecutively.

Students cannot enroll in any Field Experience course without formal written acceptance into the BSSW Program. Students must adhere to the required sequence of BSSW coursework.

1. BSSW Internship (Generalist) Overview

In the BSSW internship, students are exposed to generalist social work practice. The goal of the generalist practitioner is to enhance human and social well-being, and the goal of the BSSW student is to develop a base of core social work knowledge, values, and skills. Students will work at a variety of system levels - individuals, families, groups, organization, and communities. Students should be engaged in all steps of client work including assessment, planning, intervention, termination, and evaluation. The generalist social worker should take on a variety of social work roles - advocate, broker, networker, counselor, educator, case manager, facilitator, planner, researcher, mediator, and administrator. Depending on the experience and comfort level of each student and the opportunities within the internship site, they may progress from observing and shadowing their Field Instructor to co-facilitating therapy or group sessions and handling a small individual client load. BSSW students will be in their Internships for 13-14 hours each week over the course of the fall and spring semesters.

Examples of types of learning activities BSSW students may be involved in:

- Psycho-social assessments
- Shadowing and observation of individual therapy sessions
- Shadowing and observation of family therapy sessions
- Interviewing and problem-solving
- Supportive counseling with individuals and families
- Co-facilitation of groups
- Resource identification and referral
- Case management
- Advocacy and crisis intervention
- Evaluations (determination of outcomes, data collection, etc.)
- Community development task forces
- Involvement in community organizing
- Attend agency board meetings
- Professional and educational workshops
- Developing and presenting training workshops/materials
- Volunteer recruitment
- Involvement in policy development and advocacy
- Complete agency documentation under advisement of supervisor

2. BSSW Field Experience Course Learning Objectives

Upon completion of the Field Experience course, students should be able to:

1. Demonstrate ethical and professional behavior
2. Engage diversity and difference in practice
3. Advance human rights and social, economic, and environmental justice
4. Engage in practice-informed research and research-informed practice
5. Engage in policy practice

6. Engage with individuals, families, groups, organizations, and communities
7. Assess individuals, families, groups, organizations, and communities
8. Intervene with individuals, families, groups, organizations, and communities
9. Evaluate individuals, families, groups, organizations, and communities

E. MSW Program

The Field Experience courses required for the foundation year course sequence are: SWKM 5625 and SWKM 5675. These two courses must be completed consecutively.

The Field Experience courses required for the concentration year course sequence are: SWKM 6725 and SWKM 6775. These two courses must be completed consecutively.

Students cannot enroll in any Field Experience course without formal written acceptance into the MSW program. Students must adhere to required sequence of MSW coursework.

1. Foundation Year Internship (Generalist) Overview

In the Foundation Year internship, students are exposed to generalist social work practice. The goal of the practitioner is to enhance human and social well-being and develop a base of core social work knowledge, values, and skills. Students will work with a variety of system levels - individuals, families, groups, organization, and communities. Students should be engaged in all steps of client work, including assessment, planning, intervention, termination, and evaluation. The generalist social worker should take on a variety of social work roles - advocate, broker, networker, counselor, educator, case manager, facilitator, planner, researcher, mediator, and administrator. Depending on the experience and comfort level of each student, they may progress from observing and shadowing their Field Instructor to co-facilitating therapy or group sessions and handling a small individual client load. Foundation year students will be in their internships for 13-14 hours each week.

Examples of types of activities foundation year students may be involved in:

- Psycho-social assessments
- Interviewing and problem-solving
- Supportive counseling with individuals
- Supportive counseling with families
- Shadowing and observation of providers
- Co-facilitation of groups
- Completion of agency paperwork
- Resource identification and referral
- Case management
- Advocacy and crisis intervention
- Evaluations (determination of outcomes, data collection, etc.)
- Community development task forces
- Agency Board meetings
- Community organizing

- Professional and educational workshops
- Developing and presenting training workshops/materials
- Involvement in policy development and advocacy
- Volunteer recruitment

2. Foundation Year Field Experience Course Learning Objectives

Upon completion of the Field Experience course, students should be able to:

1. Identify with professional values and ethics and evaluate individual strengths and areas for growth via personal reflection, journals and engaged classroom discourse
2. Integrate the application of knowledge in the academic setting to the practice experiences in the field aligned with current research
3. Integrate the application of knowledge in the academic setting to the practice experiences in the field aligned with current research
4. Apply legal and ethical decision-making skills to issues specific to mental health, child welfare systems and issues specific to community assessment, program design, organizational leadership in a variety of service delivery areas
5. Recognize and continually evaluate one's own attitudes and consciousness toward diversity and social justice, including but not limited to race, gender, ableness, age, size, class, sexual orientation, culture, power and privilege and linguistic differences
6. Evaluate, select and implement appropriate assessment, intervention and evaluation tools for use with diverse target populations
7. Apply policy practice skills to advocate at multiple levels for the promotion of client and community well-being by identifying the risk factors, increasing prevention efforts and equality of access to services
8. Relate mental health theories, models and macro practice theories and research appropriate to client systems and circumstances

3. Concentration Year Internship (Specialist) Overview

In the Concentration year internship, students will focus on the development of more specialized skills in direct practice and/or macro practice. The Concentration year internship will also allow for increasingly autonomous practice. Concentration year students will be in their internships for 16-17 hours each week.

Micro or direct practice prepares students for advanced practice with individuals, families, and small groups. Students will utilize a variety of interventions with clients based on various clinical theories. They will apply ethical principles of social work practice to inform their professional judgments. Students learn how to monitor progress and evaluate outcomes of interventions and how to determine which approaches are more effective. They will be expected to carry an individual case load of clients if doing a direct care internship.

Examples of direct practice activities Concentration year students may be involved in include:

- Advanced clinical assessments
- Development of treatment plans
- Autonomous individual therapy with intentional intervention or psychotherapeutic models based on advanced theories
- Autonomous family therapy with intentional intervention or psychotherapeutic models based on advanced theories
- Creates and leads group therapy with intentional intervention or psychotherapeutic models based on advanced theories
- Developing client satisfaction surveys
- Develop and provide a presentation on a relevant topic
- Raise awareness of mental health issues by developing and disseminating educational materials
- Advocate for client access to social work services
- Plan and facilitate weekly group sessions
- Develop resource guide to address target population needs
- Case management and resource referral
- Evaluations (determination of outcomes, data collection, etc.)
- Leads community meetings to address gaps in service
- Policy development and advocacy
- Lobbying of legislatures
- Write policy briefs and analysis

Macro practice focuses on community need, program design and development, resource acquisition, program maintenance, leadership and organizational administration, policy and the values and ethics that guide these areas of practice.

Examples of macro level activities Concentration year students may be involved in include:

- Developing and implementing an agency needs assessment
- Interagency taskforce meetings
- Promoting opportunities for citizen action
- Grant writing
- Working with groups for educational, community organizing, or legislative change purposes
- Supervise agency volunteers
- Analyze, formulate, and advocate for policies that advance social well-being.
- Outreach and coalition development with other agencies
- Research, evaluation, and data collection
- Develop and provide educational trainings, workshops, and materials
- Develop and administer a specific program within agency.
- Policy development and advocacy
- Lobbying of legislatures
- Write policy briefs and analysis

4. Concentration Year Field Experience Course Learning Objectives

Upon completion of the Field Experience course, students should be able to:

1. Identify with professional values and ethics and evaluate individual strengths and areas for growth via personal reflection, journals and engaged classroom discourse.
2. Integrate the application of knowledge in the academic setting to the practice experiences in the field aligned with current research
3. Integrate the application of knowledge in the academic setting to the practice experiences in the field aligned with current research
4. Apply legal and ethical decision-making skills to issues specific to mental health, child welfare systems and issues specific to community assessment, program design, organizational leadership in a variety of service delivery areas
5. Recognize and continually evaluate one's own attitudes and consciousness toward diversity and social justice, including but not limited to race, gender, ableness, age, size, class, sexual orientation, culture, power and privilege and linguistic differences
6. Evaluate, select and implement appropriate assessment, intervention and evaluation tools for use with diverse target populations
7. Apply policy practice skills to advocate at multiple levels for the promotion of client and community well-being by identifying the risk factors, increasing prevention efforts and equality of access to services
8. Relate mental health theories, models and macro practice theories and research appropriate to client systems and circumstances

5. Capstone Class

Each concentration year student will be expected to complete a field-based quality improvement project. The project will span the course of two semesters. Students will complete the project in the following courses:

<i>Fall Semester</i>	<i>Spring Semester</i>
SWKM 6700 Capstone I	SWKM 6750 Capstone II

In the fall Capstone course, students will learn about project options and develop a project proposal. Project options include:

- program evaluation,
- social documentary
- grant proposal or program plan
- program curriculum
- training
- public education campaign

Once the student's proposed project is approved by the Capstone professor and Department of Social Work Research Ethics Committee, students will carry out their project in the spring semester. Spring semester will conclude with a project report on the student's work.

F. Grading, Assignments, Learning Agreement, and Evaluation

1. Field Experience Course Grading

The Field Experience Course has *two* (2) components: the Agency Internship and the Field Experience class. A student must successfully complete both components in order to pass the Field Experience class. If a student does not pass EITHER the Agency Internship portion of the class OR the Field Experience Coursework portion of the class, then the requirements of this course have not been met and the student will receive a failing grade for the entire course. If a student fails the Field Experience Course, then a Performance Review may take place. Students may be required to repeat the course in its entirety before continuing in the program; complete additional requirements; or be dismissed from the program.

a. Agency Internship

In order to pass this component of the class, each student is required to complete both of the following: required hours of placement and an evaluation provided by the agency supervisor(s).

- **Hours:** Agency supervisors will verify completion of hours upon submission of the evaluation. Please see [Section II. C. 1. “Hours Requirements”](#) above regarding the number of hours required for each student level.
- **Evaluation:** The agency supervisor(s) will complete an evaluation for the student toward the end of each semester. Feedback provided from the agency supervisor(s) on the evaluation is a critical component in assessing whether the student has demonstrated the CSWE nine social work competencies. This evaluation will assist in determining whether the student passes the Agency Internship component of the Field Experience course. Please see [Section II. F. 3. “Evaluation Guidelines”](#) below for more specific details about completion of the student evaluation.

b. Field Experience Class

The FFL will determine points earned for participation and assignments in the course. The grade received on this portion of the class will be what appears on the student transcript, provided the student also successfully completes both components of the course.

- **BSSW Students:** must successfully complete the coursework portion with a C- or better to pass the class.
- **MSW Students:** must successfully complete the coursework portion with a B- or better to pass the class.

Assignment details are outlined in each course syllabus. Assignments are subject to change.

2. Learning Agreement Guidelines

The purpose of the Learning Agreement is to provide an opportunity for the student and agency to create a detailed internship plan. It is a comprehensive planning tool that will help the student understand their primary responsibilities for the internship. In this way, the Learning Agreement ensures that both student and agency have clearly communicated and are in agreement about their expectations for what will be learned and accomplished each semester.

The Learning Agreement is to be completed towards the beginning of each semester (check syllabus for due date). The student is primarily responsible for writing and designing the learning activities, in discussion with the Field Instructor and the student's Faculty Field Liaison (FFL). Time frames in which the learning will take place or be completed should also be included in the Learning Agreement. The Learning Agreement will be discussed during the FFL site visit each semester.

The Learning Agreement is flexible and may be modified throughout the year. Either the student, the agency, or the FFL may request to revisit the Learning Agreement at any time throughout the semester to ensure the student is engaged in appropriate learning experiences. The Field Support Process may be used to clarify and/or re-negotiate the Learning Agreement if needed.

The framework for the Learning Agreement is the [Council on Social Work Education \(CSWE\) nine \(9\) social work competencies](#). (Please see [Section II. A. 1.](#) above for more information on the 9 competencies.) The student and agency supervisor(s) should work together to identify learning activities for each of the CSWE competencies. Learning activities should provide opportunity for student to develop each of the practice behaviors listed within each competency. Therefore, at least two learning activities must be included under each competency.

3. Evaluation Guidelines

Evaluations are completed at the end of each semester by the student's Field Instructor (and Task Supervisor, when applicable). If a student has more than one supervisor (e.g. a Task Supervisor and an Off-Site Field Instructor), then both supervisors are expected to contribute feedback to the student's evaluation. This evaluation is designed to assess the student's proficiency of the practice behaviors identified on the Learning Agreement for each of the nine social work competencies. The FFL will use the information in this evaluation to determine if the student has passed the Agency Internship portion of the course.

a) *Field Evaluation Ratings*

Student evaluations are rated using the following scale:

EE	Exceeds Expectations: Student has performed at a superior level. Student has proven they have not only fully met expectations of an undergraduate/graduate student, but also have shown mastery of this area <u>significantly above and beyond expectations</u> . Student <u>takes initiative and critically reflects on their performance</u> in this area.
ME	Meets Expectations: Student has performed at an accomplished level. Student <u>consistently and completely demonstrates competence</u> in this

	area. Student has used learning activities and supervision to demonstrate full mastery of this area as an undergraduate/graduate student.
AE	Approaching Expectations: Student has performed at a <u>beginning level</u> and has not yet demonstrated the minimum expectations in this area as an undergraduate/graduate student. Student <u>development is in-progress</u> in this area- one <u>can see movement</u> and <u>student shows an interest in, and is working towards, growth</u> in this area.
DE	Does Not Meet Expectations: Student has performed at a low and inconsistent level in this area. Student <u>has had an opportunity to demonstrate</u> this practice behavior and <u>has been unable to</u> . Student performance is <u>unsatisfactory</u> .
NO	No Opportunity to Evaluate: In the <u>first semester only</u> , the ‘NO’ rating may be used sparingly for unusual circumstances. Student <u>has not had the chance to demonstrate competence</u> in this area. <u>No attempts</u> to address this area have been made. <i>This rating may not be used in second semester.</i>

NOTE: *The ratings that a student receives on this evaluation do not translate into a letter grade. Rather, this evaluation is designed to focus on constructive feedback to assist the student in growing as a social work professional while allowing the student to engage in critical self-reflection as they move through their educational journey.*

b) Criteria for a Passing Evaluation

The following guidelines are provided to determine if a student has successfully demonstrated competencies and is therefore considered a passing evaluation:

- **Fall Semester**
 - **BSSW Students:** In order to pass, may not receive Does Not Meet Expectations (DE) on more than 30% of the total practice behaviors.
 - **MSW Students:** In order to pass, may not receive Does Not Meet Expectations (DE) on more than 20% of the total practice behaviors.
 - *NOTE: If a student receives a rating Approaching Expectations (AE), Does Not Meet Expectations (DE) or No Opportunity to Evaluate (NO) under **any** practice behaviors, the student, agency supervisor, and FFL will develop a plan to improve their skill development in any such areas for the remainder of the Internship (through spring semester).*
- **Spring Semester**
 - **BSSW Students:** In order to pass, may not receive Approaching Expectations (AE) and/or Does Not Meet Expectations (DE) on more than 30% of the total practice behaviors.

- **MSW Students:** In order to pass, may not receive Approaching Expectations (AE) and/or Does Not Meet Expectations (DE) on more than 20% of the total practice behaviors.
- *NOTE: Students may not receive a rating of NO (No Opportunity to Evaluate) during spring semester.*

c) **Process for Completing Field Evaluations**

Evaluations for students in both programs (BSSW and MSW) will be completed through the Sonia database. Detailed instructions on how to complete this evaluation can be found in the Sonia Guide (for both [students](#) and [agencies](#)) and will also be shared by the Office of Field Education when the evaluation process begins.

The process for completing the Field Evaluation is in and of itself a critical professional development skill and is designed to mirror what might be expected at annual performance review. The Field Evaluation process includes the student, the agency, and the FFL and is designed according to the following steps:

- **Step 1: Student Self-Reflection:** The student first completes a self-evaluation, including ratings for each competency and all required comment sections, through the Sonia field database. This is an opportunity for the student to reflect on their own growth, learning, and professional development throughout the semester.
- **Step 2: Agency Feedback:** Agency supervisor(s) will then complete their portion of the evaluation of student via the Sonia field database. Comments may be made under any section. If a student receives a rating of ‘EE’, ‘AE’, or ‘DE’, comments are required to indicate in which areas the student is exceptionally strong or in which areas the student needs improvement. Agency supervisor(s) click on “Save Draft”.

***NOTE:** In cases where a student has multiple supervisors (e.g. Agency supervisors and OSFIs) they are both expected to review and contribute to the student’s evaluation. The Task Supervisor and OSFI each hold different knowledge and awareness of the student’s performance; the Task Supervisor has the most direct observation of the student’s practice, while the OSFI holds awareness of professional social work competencies. Therefore, Task Supervisors and OSFIs will need to coordinate with each other and maintain communication while completing the agency portion of the evaluation.*

- **Step 3: Evaluation Conference:** Agency supervisor(s) (including OSFI if applicable) and student schedule a one-hour meeting to have the evaluation conference. This conference is intended to be used as a mechanism for dialogue to give the student feedback about their performance. Students and agency supervisor(s) should both explain their ratings and provide examples to support their selections. Agency supervisor(s) may choose to adjust their ratings and comments based on this dialogue. The student and agency supervisor(s) ratings and comments do not need to be in agreement. Agency supervisor(s) should submit the evaluation after the Evaluation Conference has been held.
- **Step 4: Final Submit:** After the Evaluation Conference, students may enter any additional comments or feedback into the dialogue box. They will also check that they have completed all

the required hours. Then students will click “Student Final Submit”. The finalized evaluation is then available for review by the FFL.

III. INTERNSHIP SEARCH PROCESS

A. Recruitment of New Internship Agencies (aka New Agency Affiliation)

The Office of Field Education is responsible for recruiting and developing relationships with community agencies for them to become Internship sites. Internships should provide students with new educational experiences and allow students to meet the nine social work competencies at their level of practice (generalized or specialized). Each potential new agency is carefully screened through the New Agency Affiliation process.

Community agencies interested in having a student intern at their agency are welcome to contact the Department of Social Work’s Office of Field Education. This Office of Field Education will then initiate the New Agency Affiliation process, which involves several steps:

- **NEW AGENCY AFFILIATION MEETING:**
A New Agency Affiliation meeting is scheduled between the agency and a representative from the Office of Field Education. The purpose of the meeting is for the Office of Field Education to learn more about the organization and to discuss social work internship expectations and accreditation requirements.
- **DATABASE SETUP:**
Each new agency needs to be set up in the Sonia field database. Students cannot search for the new agency or be allocated to the new agency until this step is complete.
- **AFFILIATION AGREEMENT:**
This final documentation formalizes the partnership between the new agency and the Department of Social Work’s Office of Field Education. See section below (“Affiliation Agreements”) for more information.

NOTE: *In order to maintain the integrity of the placement search process, and to preserve ongoing relationships with field agencies, students **are not** allowed to contact new agencies to propose placements or inquire about availability without prior approval by the Office of Field Education. If a student would like to suggest an agency be added to the database of affiliated internships, the first step is to contact the Office of Field Education and provide contact information for the agency. When suggesting a new agency, please know that this process takes time, and there is never a guarantee that a given agency will be approved as an internship.*

B. Affiliation Agreement

All agencies must submit a signed Affiliation Agreement that outlines roles and responsibilities of all parties in order to become an internship agency. The document must be signed by appropriate agency leadership as well as the MSU Denver Department of Social Work Chair and Director of Field Education. Agencies can review the

Affiliation Agreement by contacting the Office of Field Education at field@msudenver.edu. Any requested revisions to the MSU Denver Department of Social Work Affiliation Agreement must be reviewed by MSU Denver Contracts Department and executed by the MSU Denver Provost.

C. Roles and Responsibilities

1. Agencies

Agencies will be selected to be an affiliated field agency for the MSU Denver MSW and/or BSSW programs based on the following criteria:

- The agency provides social work services to “enhance human well-being and help meet the basic human needs of all people, with particular attention to the needs and empowerment of people who are vulnerable, oppressed, and living in poverty.” (NASW Code of Ethics, 2008)
- The agency is able to provide learning assignments and practice opportunities for students that allow them to achieve mastery of the CSWE nine (9) social work competencies appropriate to the student’s educational level (BSSW or MSW). Please see [Section II. A. 1.](#) above for more information on the 9 competencies.
- The agency is responsible for identifying a qualified Field Instructor (and/or Task Supervisor and Off-Site Field Instructor [OSFI] in collaboration with the MSU Denver Office of Field Education) to provide a meaningful and consistent learning experience to the student.
- The agency signs an Affiliation Agreement and agrees to the responsibilities set forth in the agreement.
- The agency has a commitment to active participation as a partner in professional education for social work. They demonstrate an acceptance the [NASW Code of Ethics](#) and the basic mission, values, and goals of the school’s educational program. The agency aligns with social work core values around social justice, diversity, equity and inclusion.
- The agency must comply with all federal, state, and local Equal Employment Opportunity (EEO) laws and regulations. This includes but is not limited to discrimination on the basis of race, color or national origin, creed, religion, sex (including sexual harassment), sexual orientation or preference, gender identity and expressions, age, marital status, disability, Vietnam-era Veteran or other Protected Veteran.
- Some additional criteria include the following guidelines:
 - It is important to be aware of possible dual roles within agencies. For example, an intern should not be placed in an internship where the leadership of the agency is a direct relative or in cases where a student is the Executive Director of the agency.
 - Individual private practice settings are generally not available as placement settings. Group private practice settings are screened to ensure that they pay particular attention to the needs of people who are vulnerable, oppressed, and/or living in poverty and that they provide learning opportunities to engage in social justice work in an agency-based setting.

2. Field Instructors

Field Instructors within the practice setting are essential partners and on-site teachers in the endeavor of helping the student to develop the requisite competencies/advanced practice behaviors of professional practice. Field Instructors must meet the following criteria:

- For MSW level students:
 - Hold an MSW degree from an accredited social work program with at least two (2) years post-graduate experience.
- For BSSW level students:
 - Hold a BSSW or MSW degree from an accredited social work program with at least two (2) years of post-degree experience.
- Agree to attend and participate in the Field Agency Orientation provided by the Office of Field Education in the Department of Social Work.
- Commit to provide educationally focused experiences and opportunities for student learning appropriate to the student's educational sequence.
- Able to provide one-hour of individual supervision per week, and ongoing supervision and consultation as needed.

Exceptions: In certain circumstances, Field Instructors may provide bi-weekly supervision to their students IF this is supplemented by regular weekly supervision by an experienced Task Supervisor.

- Agree to all responsibilities set forth by the Affiliation Agreement with the University. Field Instructors understand and support the mission, values, and goals of the University's educational program.
- Willing to be in consistent and clear communication with the Department of Social Work and/or FFL and complete all necessary student evaluations and other required paperwork. Agree to participate in site visits with FFL each semester and engage in the [Field Support Process](#) as needed.

3. Off-Site Field Instructors

When qualified agencies do not have a MSW staff member on staff, the agency is responsible for identifying an Off-Site Field Instructor (OSFI) to work in collaboration with an on-site agency staff member (*if there are challenges in identifying a qualified individual, please contact the Office of Field Education*). In these situations, an agency staff member will serve as the Task Supervisor (see below) to direct the day-to-day activities of the internship as well as provide constructive feedback and supervisions. The Off-Site Field Instructor must meet the following criteria:

- For MSW level student: Hold an MSW degree from an accredited social work program with at least two (2) years post-graduate experience.
- For BSSW level student: Have a BSSW or MSW degree from an accredited social work program with at least two (2) years post-degree experience.

- Have a thorough understanding of the agency’s mission, services, and daily workings.
- Agree to attend and participate in the Agency Orientation, which is provided by the Department of Social Work.
- Understand and support the mission, values, and goals of the University’s educational program.
- Assume responsibility for the student’s overall learning experience and ensure that a social work perspective is reinforced throughout the educational process.
- Provide bi-weekly (every other week) supervision to their students if this is supplemented by regular weekly one-hour supervision by an experienced Task Supervisor with appropriate level of experience within the Internship agency.
- Agree to participate in site visits with FFL each semester and engage in the Field Support Process as needed.
- Maintain consistent and clear communication with the agency Task Supervisor, the student’s Faculty Field Liaison (FFL) regarding the student’s progress.
- Review and submit all necessary student documentation, including Learning Agreements at the beginning of each semester and Evaluations at the end of each semester.
- Carry professional liability insurance [only required for Off-Site Field Instructors who are not paid or contracted employees of MSU Denver]

NOTE: *The Field Support Process should be utilized if any issues arise between the student and their assigned OSFI. The FFL is the student or agency’s first point of contact to resolve issues in the supervisory relationships between OSFIs and Task Supervisors.*

4. Task Supervisors

If an agency does not have a qualified MSW Field Instructor on staff, an on-site Task Supervisor should be designated for the student.

Additionally, even when there is a Field Instructor, it may be beneficial to also assign a student to a Task Supervisor(s) to assist with the learning experience (*this is NOT mandatory when a student is working with a qualified, On-Site Field Instructor*). This Task Supervisor will work with the Field Instructor to provide an effective Internship by meeting the following criteria:

- Be a skilled and capable professional in his/her/their field and is very knowledgeable about the agency.
- Agree to attend and participate in the Agency Orientation and training provided by the Office of Field Education in the Department of Social Work.

- Direct the day-to-day activities of the internship, and in coordination with the Field Instructor, identify educationally focused experiences and opportunities for student learning appropriate to the student's educational sequence.
- Commitment to maintain constant and clear communication with the Field Instructor regarding the student's progress.
- If the agency is using an Off-Site Field Instructor OR if the Field Instructor is using a biweekly supervision model, the Task Supervisor must assume responsibility for scheduling regular one-hour weekly supervision meetings with the student in order to provide assistance with planning, managing, and completing field assignments and provide ongoing feedback and support.
- Task Supervisors understand and support the mission, values, and goals of the University's educational program.
- Willing to be in constant and clear communication with the MSU Denver Department of Social Work at all times and complete all necessary student evaluations and other required paperwork.

D. Student Internship Search Process

1. Students will attend a Field Information Session and learn about the internship requirements and search process. Students will then be directed to the Sonia Field Database to access the *Field Application* in the early spring before the academic year in which their internship will take place.
2. Students submit their completed *Field Application* through the Sonia Field Database to Office of Field Education by date listed on application. The application and attached resume will assist the Office of Field Education in assessing each student's interests, goals, and background.
3. Students have the option to research placement opportunities available through our partner agencies using the Sonia database. They may preference up to five (5) agencies to discuss with their assigned Placement Navigator from the Office of Field Education. Alternately, students may request to complete an Employment-Based Internship if they are already working at an agency doing social work focused tasks that may meet learning requirements. Please see [Section IV. B. 4. "EB Internships"](#) below.
4. Students meet with their assigned Placement Navigator (Office of Field Education staff) to discuss their field application and potential placement sites.
5. Students will receive options and contact information for up to five (5) potential internship agencies from the Office of Field Education via the Sonia Field Database.
6. Students contact each assigned agency to submit application materials and request internship interviews. These interviews are to be treated as professional job interviews. It is a chance for the student to learn more about the agency, potential learning activities, and Field Instructor to determine if this will be a suitable agency for them to be placed at. Similarly, it is an opportunity for the agency and Field Instructor to determine if the student will be a match for their agency.

7. Agency will determine whether to offer or decline the internship to the student. The student will decide to accept or decline the agency's internship offer.
8. Once a mutually determined Internship is agreed upon, agencies will send students a notice of acceptance, "an internship offer", through the Sonia Field Database and then, with the agency, students will complete the Field Confirmation Form through Sonia.

All students must have secured an approved internship with the Office of Field Education prior to the end of the first week of the fall semester and/or the university's 100% refund deadline for dropping courses.

Once a student has accepted an internship, they are expected to follow through with that plan. Students may not accept an offer and then go back on their commitment to the agency. This is unprofessional and reflects poorly on the individual as a student and a representative of our social work program.

***NOTE:** Under no circumstances are students allowed to interview with an agency without prior permission from the Office of Field Education. The goal of the internship is to learn and practice social work knowledge, values, and skills in order to become a more effective social work practitioner. While we will work hard to ensure that each student's placement is in line with their future career interests, the emphasis remains on the educational value of a placement site.*

In order to suggest a new agency to add to the list of approved agency partners, please contact the Office of Field Education. Providing the office with contact information may help expedite the process. The screening and approval process takes time and there are no guarantees as to an agency being approved. Please see [Section III. A. "New Agency Affiliation Process"](#) above for more information.

IV. OFFICE of FIELD EDUCATION POLICIES

A. Department of Social Work Policies

Policies are subject to change at the departmental level. For the most up-to-date policies, students should refer to the Department of Social Work website:

[BSSW Program Policies](#)

[MSW Program Policies](#)

The BSSW and MSW student handbooks also contain relevant policies, including the attendance policies, grievance policy, Grade Appeal Policy, APA Policy, Late Assignment Policy, Online Course Policy, and Academic Dishonesty/Plagiarism Policy.

[Download the BSSW Student Handbook](#)

[Download the MSW Student Handbook](#)

B. General Field Education Policies

1. Time in the Internship (Early Starts, Extensions, & Early Completions)

As stated in [Section II. C. 1. “Hours Requirements”](#), the expected duration of the internship is 30 weeks from the start of the fall semester (mid-August) until the end of the spring semester (mid-May). Students are expected to complete their field placement in the same agency for the entire academic year (30 weeks). Students are not typically allowed to switch internships mid-year.

While students may work extended hours over winter break, they may not terminate from their internships early. This may mean students will accrue more hours than the required hours.

NOTE: *The required hours are a minimum number. Any student who wishes to terminate from internship before the official end date must gain approval in advance from the Field Instructor, Faculty Field Liaison, and the Office of Field Education. Students are expected to be in their internships from the beginning of the fall semester through the end of the spring semester unless an alternative plan is negotiated. An alternative plan must be discussed between the field agency, student, and the Office of Field Education. Final approval of an alternative plan must be obtained from the Office of Field Education prior to the student starting at their internship.*

Some internships require students to perform some of their field hours serving in an on-call capacity. Students should discuss how to count the hours completed on-call with their FFL and their agency supervisor (Field Instructor/Task Supervisor). All on-call hours where students are actively engaged in internship work will count towards the required minimum number of hours. For hours spent on-call but without active work, students should follow agency guidance on counting the hours.

a) *Early Starts in Field*

At MSU Denver, social work internships start at the beginning of fall semester (typically around the third week of August) and finish with the end of spring semester (typically in the middle of May). The internships are designed to run concurrent with the field experience class so that a Faculty Field Liaison is available to support the students in their internships and students are covered by university liability insurance. In general, early starts are discouraged. However, when there are requests for a student to begin their internship prior to the start of the fall semester, i.e. an early start, the following criteria needs to be met:

1. The request for the early start must be initiated by the agency. The early start request is not to be at the discretion of the student unless it is related to an accommodation which has been approved by [MSU Denver’s Access Center](#).
 - a. Approved accommodations may be related to a student’s documented condition or disability or under Title IX, for students who experience pregnancy, childbirth, health conditions related to pregnancy, termination of pregnancy, and/or recovery. See [Section IV. B. 18. “Accommodations”](#) below.
2. A Field Affiliation Agreement needs to be in place between the agency and MSU Denver, Department of Social Work.

3. The student must be registered for a fall section of the appropriate social work Field Experience course.
4. The student must have an assigned Field Instructor and/or Task Supervisor who is responsible for overseeing the student's hours at the agency.
5. Someone from the Office of Field Education will need to be available to be in the role of temporary Faculty Field Liaison for the time in the summer. This person will be available if the student needs support with their internship in the summer. However, there will be no site visits during the summer unless the student support process is needed. At the start of the fall semester, an on-going Faculty Field Liaison (the student's Field Seminar professor) will be assigned for the rest of the year.
6. Students may accrue up to, but no more than, 40 internship hours during the summer. However, students who start early will still need to complete the remainder of their internship hours from August to May as determined by what level student they are in the social work program. See [Section II. C. 1. "Hours Requirements"](#) above.
7. The only approved tasks for early starts of student internships are attending agency orientations and other on-boarding activities. Direct practice with clients is not an approved activity for early starts.
8. The early start plan needs to be put in writing through the Field Confirmation Form and approved by the Associate Director of Field.

b) Agency Requests for Internship Extensions

In rare exceptions, if an agency requests that a student continue at the agency beyond the end of the semester and the successful completion of the internship, this request should be made clearly and agreed upon before the start of the internship. If a student agrees to this arrangement, they should do their best to honor the agreement. In these cases, the internship is considered complete, and the agency needs to either have the student move to a volunteer or paid position. Students will not be covered by the MSU Denver's liability insurance and Worker's Compensation coverage after a final grade has been assigned.

c) Student Requests for Early Completion

Students are expected to be in their internships from the beginning of the fall semester through the end of the spring semester. Students are not permitted to complete their internships early, even if they exceed the minimum number of required hours for the semester/year.

In rare exceptions, if a student needs to make a request to complete their internship early due to a unique circumstance, this may be considered on a case-by-case basis using the Field Support Process to consult with the FFL and, if needed, the Office of Field Education. The early completion request must be approved by the FFL and a written plan for submission of the final evaluation should be provided to the Office of Field Education.

Students are advised to consult with the Access Center (SEE BELOW) if the early completion request is related to an accommodation. See [Section IV. B. 18. “Accommodations”](#) below.

2. School Breaks and Holidays

The Department of Social Work does not require students to be in placement during regularly scheduled school holidays and breaks. However, school holidays may differ from agency holidays. In this case, students must arrange their internship schedule in coordination with their agency supervisor. Some agencies may require students to continue Internship hours during breaks and holidays to ensure continuity of care. Any agency requirements for the student to be in field during school breaks and/or holidays should be discussed during the internship interview.

3. Paid and/or Stipend Internship

If an agency offers a student a stipend (whether hourly or set amounts [x amount each semester/end of month/year/depends on agency]), they are typically not considered an employee of the agency. However, agencies should ensure that if they are offering the student a stipend as a "volunteer," that they are adhering to all the requirements of local, state and federal Labor Laws. MSU-Denver does not provide agencies with legal/HR advice on this and encourage agencies to consult with their own legal/HR to ensure they are following the labor laws when offering a stipend.

If the agency offers a stipend, students do not need to complete the Employment-Based Internship Request process – as they are NOT an employee. EB internships are different than a paid internship. In an EB internship, the student is navigating the dual role of being both an employee and an intern within the same agency. Contrastingly, in a paid internship or internship with a stipend, students are solely completing an internship role while being compensated for their time in the agency (either hourly or as a stipend) and are not otherwise employed at the agency. Therefore, they do not need to complete the process to request approval for an EB internship with the Office of Field Education.

A key difference between a paid/stipend internship and an EB internship is that a paid/stipend internship follows the academic year (starts in August and ends in May) and the student joins the agency for the distinct purpose of the internship. Contrastingly, in an EB internship the student is a permanent employee whose job has either started before the beginning of fall semester and/or may continue on indefinitely past the end of spring semester.

4. Employment-Based (EB) Internships

An Employment-Based (EB) internship is defined as an internship in an agency in which the student is also employed. To ensure an EB internship will meet CSWE accreditation requirements, there is a specialized process for students to request approval for an EB internship. EB internships are **not guaranteed** and cannot be required of an employer. Both the Office of Field Education and the employer must agree to an EB internship in order for it to be approved. The following EB internship guidelines have been developed:

- a. Students must clearly outline a proposed plan to meet all [nine social work competencies](#). In EB internships, student assignments and employee tasks may qualify as field hours when directly linked to the nine social work competencies and level of practice (generalist or specialized). Students are **not**

required to differentiate between employment and internship activities **as long as** their employment duties meet the nine social work competencies. If not all nine competencies can be met through the student's existing employment duties, the student and agency will work together to develop a plan to meet the remaining competencies. Depending on the student's professional development goals and/or agency requirements, the student may request to add/create new projects to support their learning, or instead the internship role may be entirely different and separate from the employment role. Students will communicate with their employer in advance to determine the structure of their EB internship. EB internships are most commonly structured in one of the three following ways:

- OPTION 1: The student's job meets all 9 social work competencies. Therefore, the student's job counts as their internship AS IS.
- OPTION 2: The student's job meets some but not all of the 9 social work competencies. New learning activities (tasks/responsibilities/projects) will be identified to meet the remaining competencies. Therefore, the student's job PLUS the added new learning activities count as their internship.
- OPTION 3: The student's internship is within the same organization but is entirely SEPARATE and different their job. The internship meets all 9 social work competencies.

- b. Students must have an appropriate internship for their student level. BSSW and MSW Foundation year students' internships should provide a generalist experience, including exposure to the three levels of work (micro, mezzo, and macro practice). MSW concentration level placements should reflect advanced/specialized social work practice.
- c. Supervision for the student's EB internship must be provided by a Field Instructor who meets the requirements (a professional with a BSW or MSW from an accredited social work program [depending on student level] that has at least two [2] years of post-graduate work experience). Preferably, the Field Instructor will have been employed by the student's agency for at least one year.
 - i. It is recommended but not required that the Field Instructor be a different person than the student's current employment supervisor. In cases where the Field Instructor is the same person as the student's employment supervisor, then weekly Field Instruction must be distinct from and in addition to employment supervision.
 - ii. In situations where there is no employee qualified to serve as the student's Field Instructor, an Off-Site Field Instructor (OSFI) may be requested. For EB internships utilizing an OSFI, an on-site Task Supervisor is required. The Task Supervisor must be an agency employee and works directly with the student. The Task Supervisor role may be (and often is) fulfilled by the student's employment supervisor.
- d. Students will be in their internship for 30 weeks from the start of the fall semester (mid-August) until the end of the spring semester (mid-May). Students in EB internships are expected to remain in their internship for the full duration of the academic year, even if they accrue more hours than the minimum requirement. NOTE: The required hours are a minimum number and may be exceeded. Please refer to [Section II. C. 1. "Hours Requirements"](#) and [Section IV. B. 1. "Time in the Internship"](#) for additional guidance. EB interns are expected to participate in their Field Experience course for the full duration of each semester. They will follow the same timeline, assignments, due dates as all other students enrolled in Field Seminar.

- e. The employer must have an existing agency affiliation with the Office of Field Education and assume all the responsibilities required of any other Field Agency. If the employer is not already an existing partner, the New Agency Affiliation process will be initiated.
- f. The agency must attempt to provide a positive learning environment in which the student is free to explore new personal growth as well as new professional learning.

Students are responsible for becoming informed about these EB internship requirements and approval process. The approval process is designed to ensure that an EB internship meets all the guidelines listed above. The process to request approval for an EB internship includes the following steps:

- a. Communicate the request to complete an Employment-Based Internship to their assigned Placement Navigator. Complete all required EB internship forms and checks in the Sonia database. An EB Internship Request Form must be reviewed and approved by the student's Placement Navigator. The EB Internship Request Form is completed collaboratively between the agency and student in order to demonstrate that the student has developed a plan, communicated the plan with the agency, and obtained the consent and support of all parties.
- b. It is highly recommended that a student is employed at least 3 months prior to the start of the EB internship. This allows sufficient time for the EB approval process to be completed with full consideration.

Students must consider carefully the option of completing their internship in their place of employment as the Field Experience is not about simply completing hours but is intended to be a meaningful educational experience. Because an EB internship creates a dual role (the student is both an employee and an intern), navigating an EB internship can present unique opportunities and unique challenges. In order for EB internships to be set up for success, it is important that all parties (student, employer, Field Instructor, FFL) have a shared understanding of the roles, boundaries, and expectations.

NOTE: *Students who are completing an approved employment-based internship should follow their employment agency's Worker's Compensation policies.*

NOTE: *In some cases, changes to employment could also impact the student's internship and vice versa. In situations where a student becomes unemployed in an organization where field education has co-occurred with employment, students will go through the Field Support Process (See [Section IV. B. 16. "Field Support Process"](#)) to determine next steps. Students in an EB internship who receive disciplinary action related to their employment and/or whose employment is terminated should contact their FFL within 24 hours.*

5. Employment Offers During Academic Year

Students are occasionally offered employment at their field agency during the course of their internship. If the job offer is **more than 6 weeks prior** to the completion of the internship, the student must request approval from the Office of Field Education before accepting the offer and/or beginning the new job. This is to ensure that the internship will meet Employment-Based (EB) internship requirements and guidelines, as indicated in Employment-Based internships section of this Manual.

- a. The student will request that their existing internship convert to an Employment-Based (EB) internship.
- b. The student should utilize the Field Support Process beginning with notifying their FFL.
- c. The student and agency must sign and submit an EB Internship Mid-Year Hire request form (using the template provided) in order to demonstrate that the new EB internship will meet all Employment-Based (EB) internship requirements and guidelines, as indicated in Employment-Based Internships section of this Manual. Required signatures include: the student's Employment Supervisor, assigned Field Instructor, and FFL.
- d. It is highly advised that the FFL consult with the student and agency to ensure the internship is in good standing and that roles/expectations are clear prior to the EB internship conversion being approved.

In rare occasions, students might be offered a new employment opportunity from a different agency than their internship. In general, students are not permitted to switch internships mid-year. In the event that a student is requesting an exception to this policy, these requests will be reviewed on a case-by-case basis and require careful consideration. Prior to making a decision or accepting an offer, the student is expected to utilize the Field Support Process to seek counsel from their FFL and the Office of Field Education.

1. As stated in [Section IV. B. I. "Time in Internship"](#) students are expected to complete their Field Experience in one agency and are not allowed to switch agencies mid-year without prior approval.
2. Any student requesting a mid-year internship change for any reason will be asked to go through the Field Support Process. This includes requests for a mid-year internship switch into a new EB internship which would require terminating their current internship.
3. If a student terminates from their internship without first notifying both their FFL and the Office of Field Education, there is no guarantee that a student will be allowed to continue in the Field Education course, and they may be referred to a full Performance Review (see: Field Support Process).

6. Distance Internships

There may be times when a student, due to necessity or desire, completes their internship at an agency outside of the Denver-metro area or in another state. The Office of Field Education will work with students to identify distance internships and to ensure that all Department of Social Work Field Education policies as well as CSWE standards can be met in the distance internship. In these circumstances, students are responsible for making all travel, lodging, food, and other living arrangements, including any associated expenses. Curriculum expectations for placements outside of the Denver-metro area or in other states are the same for those within the Denver-metro area. Students, Agency Supervisors, and Faculty Field Liaisons may be required to utilize technology (i.e. Skype or Zoom) as a part of the distance internship in order to conduct field site visits, evaluations, supervision, or other internship requirements. See [Section IV. B. 9. "Confidentiality and the Use of Technology"](#) for more information.

7. Longitudinal (aka Same Agency) Internships

Sometimes students request to remain in the same agency between the BSSW or MSW foundation year internship and the MSW concentration year internship and this needs to be vetted using the concentration year Same Agency Internship Request which can be obtained through the student's Sonia account managed by the Office of Field Education. Through this form, students and agencies can outline how staying at their current internship is beneficial to the student's learning and that certain criteria are met:

1. The student has the opportunity to pursue an educational experience which is new to the student and substantially different from previous internship or employment duties.
2. It is highly recommended that the student's supervisor (Field Instructor, Task Supervisor, and/or Off-Site Field Instructor [OSFI]) during the Concentration year internship is different from their BSW or Foundation year supervisor.

This request is reviewed by the Office of Field Education and students will be informed of the decision regarding the request.

8. Safety in Field Education

The safety of our students, staff, faculty, agency partners and community members is of utmost importance. The Department of Social Work recommends the following safety guidelines for students in the field. When a student initially joins an agency for the internship, the student and agency staff should review the agency's established safety policies and procedures for handling specific situations that are potentially difficult or threatening, such as client's threat of harm to self or others, medical emergencies, evacuation or shelter-in-place plans, etc.

The Office of Field Education utilizes a trauma-informed framework to prioritize student safety. We understand the importance of student safety as it impacts one's capacity for learning and growth. It is important to note that perception of safety may be a bit subjective and differ between individuals.

The safety and communications plan for telehealth and hybrid work should both align with the agencies stated policies as well as a student's identified preferences for enhancing safety. Safety and capacity to tolerate distress may change over the course of the academic year. Agency supervisors are encouraged to check-in a few times each semester to assess safety and support needs.

The following practice suggestions are intended to assist the student in developing a plan to address safety concerns:

- a. Agencies must have an accessible, available, and skilled support person during every student intern shift. While ideally this is the Task Supervisor or Field Instructor, it is understood that there may be circumstances that require an alternative shift supervisor. It is the agency's responsibility to make clear who is the intern's contact during their shift(s) if other than the Task Supervisor or Field Instructor.
- b. If the student has any safety concerns, such as but not limited to meeting with a client whom the student does not feel safe with, it is important to discuss the situation fully with agency staff and develop a plan for addressing safety concerns. The student may utilize the Field Support Process to bring their safety concerns to their FFL for further support if needed.
- c. It is strongly advised that an intern is never on-site without paid agency staff.
- d. Telehealth and hybrid work cultures may present with unique safety planning needs for staff and interns. It is understood that the supervisor may be available virtually or remotely during a student's internship shift.
- e. Agencies should have safety policies in place for home visits and after-hours meetings:
 - Students should notify appropriate agency staff when community visits (i.e. home visits) are planned, and provide information about who will be visited, the address and the expected length of time for the visit.

- Take a cell phone, if available, on home visits, especially when there are indications of a possible domestic dispute, physical violence, vicious animals, or if the client lives in an isolated or high crime area.
- f. Students should always be alert to their surroundings and of any potential factors that could put them at risk of harm.
 - g. Valuables should not be brought to placement settings or left in cars, and agencies with in-person on-site internships should provide secure place for interns to store their personal belongs such as wallet, ID, and/or cell phone.
 - h. Students are expected to adhere to Centers for Disease Control (CDC) and University guidelines, along with any federal, state or local recommendations and/or restrictions, regarding communicable diseases such as the COVID-19 pandemic.
 - If an internship is on-site, it is the expectation that the organization is observing CDC guidelines regarding Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) and, if PPE is required, that it also be provided if possible.
 - i. Seek out training opportunities to identify typical responses to emergency or hostile situations and plan of action related to these types of situations.
 - j. Avoid sharing personal contact information with clients or discuss with agency staff and instructors prior to distributing the number. Students are always expected to adhere to agency confidentiality and safety policies.

9. Confidentiality and the Use of Technology

In many cases, students may be complete portions of their internship work remotely using technology. All students must comply with relevant laws, regulations, ethical standards, and organizational policies to ensure the confidentiality of clients. Students and agencies are encouraged to utilize the standards listed in the Technology in Social Work Practice guide to inform their use of technology. [Here is a link to NASW's technology standards.](#)

While each agency should develop their own protocols around the use of technology and confidentiality, the following best practices should be followed by all students:

- Use of personal phone numbers or other electronic communication during internship is strongly discouraged. However, if use of personal phone numbers is necessary and/or required by the agency, take reasonable steps to maintain appropriate boundaries. For example, consider temporarily hiding your caller ID when making outgoing calls, through your phone's settings.
- Position web cameras so that others can only see your face- all visible confidential data should be removed from camera view.
- Conduct all sensitive conversations in a private space. Be mindful of the potential for family members or bystanders to overhear any portion of your discussions.

10. Social Media

The use of social media (i.e., Facebook, Twitter, YouTube, texting, SnapChat, etc.) can be helpful in building connections with colleagues and maintaining relationships with friends and family. As such, the boundary between personal and professional matters has become increasingly complex. It is important for students and agency staff to continually assess how the use of social media impacts ethical duties.

While social media tools may present innovative ways to service clients, the features that enable these benefits also present potentially serious challenges in a professional setting and within the context of internships. Privacy, confidentiality, and establishing professional boundaries, can be hindered when the necessary precautions to protect the student/employee and clients have not been taken. Students should familiarize themselves with and follow the [NASW Technology Standards](#).

As a part of a student's orientation to the agency, agency staff should review any applicable policies on social media use. In the event an agency does not have its own formal policy, the agency should set, and communicate to student interns, clear guidelines and expectations for social media use at the internship. Students should refrain from using personal social media during time spent at internship agencies.

11. Liability Insurance

Students who are completing their internships in approved field agency sites, and who are formally enrolled in a Field Experience course may be covered by MSU Denver's liability insurance through the State of Colorado. For coverage to be in effect, the student must be:

1. enrolled in MSU Denver;
2. registered for, and currently taking, the Field Experience course;
3. placed in an approved field agency;
4. and practicing in accordance with agency policy and within the guidelines of the Department of Social Work as set forth in this field manual.

MSU Denver shall provide students who participate in the program with indemnity against liability for their covered acts and omissions through the Colorado Risk Management Division, pursuant to section 24-30-1501 CRS, et seq. and in accordance with the provisions of the Colorado Governmental Immunity Act, section 24-10-101 CRS, et seq.

MSU Denver is an entity covered by the State of Colorado's self-insurance program pursuant to Part 101 to 120, Article 10 of Title 24, Colorado Revised Statutes. Liability for claims for injuries to persons or property arising out of acts or omissions of MSU Denver and certain covered individuals is controlled and limited by the Colorado Constitution, the Colorado Governmental Immunity Act, (C.R.S. §§ 24-10-101 et seq.), and the Risk Management Act (§§ 24-30-1501 et seq.). The University provides coverage via the State Liability Fund with a Combined Limit \$150/600,000 per CRS 24-10-114.

12. Use of Personal Vehicle

All students are required to find their own transportation to and from their internship. Students without cars will be placed in an agency accessible by public transportation (no more than a one-hour commute time from MSU Denver or their home, as appropriate). 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 MSU Denver's insurance, nor will the university or Department of Social Work reimburse students for the use of their vehicles. All issues regarding transportation, including the transportation of clients, must be discussed between the student and the Agency Supervisor prior to beginning placement. The Department will not be responsible for any decisions regarding transportation in the field.

13. Worker's Compensation (Internship-Related Injury or Illness)

All students who are enrolled in a Field Experience course and are completing their internship in an approved agency must sign a MSU Denver Worker's Compensation Acknowledgement which is embedded in the Field Confirmation Form.

This form allows them to be covered under MSU Denver's Worker's Compensation Policy for internship-related injury or illness while in the internship. Students who are completing an approved employment-based internship will be covered by the agency for liability insurance and workmen's compensation and should follow their employment agency's Worker's Compensation policies. Students who are completing an approved Employment-Based internship will be covered by the agency for liability insurance and worker's compensation and should follow their employment agency's worker's compensation policies.

Except in the case of a serious or life-threatening emergency, students in non-employment-based internships must be treated by one of MSU Denver's designated providers. Students must also notify MSU Denver Human Resources Office and the Director of Field Education within 48 hours of injury.

Specific information regarding worker's compensation procedures and designated providers is available on the MSU Denver HR website found at [MSU Denver Human Resources](#).

14. Attire

While expectations vary from agency to agency, students must follow the same dress code that is required of agency employees. Agency policies including, but not limited to dress, tattoos, and/or body piercings, must be adhered to. During the student's orientation to the agency, agency staff should review any pertinent policies or guidelines related to dress code.

15. Internship Disruption Policy

Students are required to complete two (2) consecutive semesters of internship at the same agency under the same Agency Field Instructor. This provides students with an in-depth experience in which they can move toward more independent social work functioning over the course of 10 months.

However, there may be unique circumstances in which students cannot remain at the same agency. Any potential disruptions in field require consultation with both the Faculty Field Liaison and the Office of Field Education.

NOTE: This section does not apply to challenges or concerns; in those cases students must utilize the Field Support Process. If a student encounters an issue with their internship that they are not able to resolve on their own, they must seek the support of the Faculty Field Liaison to assist in addressing any concerns. A student who resigns from an internship without prior approval of the Office of Field Education may receive a failing

grade in the Field Experience Course and a full Performance Review may be initiated. Students are not to initiate a search for a replacement internship without the approval of the Office of Field Education. Any replacement internship search must be approved and initiated by the Office of Field Education. (SEE: [Section IV.B.16 “Field Support Process”](#) for more information).

1. Same Year Changes in Internship

1. In situations where disruptions in internship occur due to no fault of their own or due to circumstances beyond the student’s control, efforts will be made to allow the student to secure a replacement internship in a different agency during the current academic year. Such disruptions include:
 - The student has moved to a new location that is more than a 30-mile drive from the internship agency, and switching to a hybrid or fully remote internship is not possible.
 - The agency or program closes down or relocates to a location that substantially increases a student’s commute (30 minutes or more) and remote/telehealth work is not an option.
 - Agency is experiencing a period of reorganization or instability that prevents them from providing the student with a quality learning experience.
 - Agency supervisor leaves the agency or is no longer able to provide supervision in keeping with University standards, and the agency is unable to identify other qualified staff who are able to serve in the supervisory role.
 - The student has experienced a family/personal crisis which makes working with the current client population or in the current setting unmanageable.
2. The student must work with their Faculty Field Liaison to determine an appropriate plan for termination with their previous placement. Students may be required to complete additional requirements in order to facilitate student growth and learning.
3. Any situation in which a student switches placements mid-year may require the student to complete an additional 30 hours in their new Internship for orientation purposes.
4. If at all possible, when a mid-year internship search is unavoidable, it is highly recommended for the change of placement to happen between the end of Fall semester and the beginning of Spring semester.
5. If a mid-year replacement internship cannot be secured, the student may need to withdraw from Field Experience course for the remainder of the academic year and wait until the following academic year to continue in field. In this case the Office of Field Education may ask the student to complete additional requirements to ensure learning goals are achieved.

2. Discontinuing Field Mid-Year and Returning the Following Year

There are some circumstances in which a student may decide to withdraw temporarily from their Social Work degree program or switch from a full-time to part-time program status due to medical or life-cycle issues.

If the student must discontinue the Field Experience course before the end of the fall semester, and there are no performance concerns indicating the need for the Field Support Process, then the student is eligible to resume the entire Field Experience course sequence the following year.

If the student must discontinue the Field Experience course after successfully completing the fall semester of field AND all required fall semester courses were also successfully completed, the student may return the following academic year to resume the Field Experience Coursework in the Spring semester only.

The student may be required to complete an additional 30 hours in their internship in the second semester (spring) field experience course to ensure adequate time for orientation to the agency and to resume the role of a student learner in the field experience.

Any student who allows more than one academic year to pass between completion of the two consecutive Field Experience courses will be required to complete the full two semester Field Experience course sequence over again.

3. Removal from Field due to Academic Performance in Other Coursework

Students who successfully complete the fall semester of their field course, may still be removed from the Field Experience Course sequence due to:

- failing to complete co-requisite or pre-requisite coursework;
- falling out of line with required course sequencing; or
- failing to maintain overall required academic standing.

Students who are removed from Field for these reasons, may resume the Field Experience Course sequence in the spring semester the following academic year if:

- the fall semester Field Course was completed successfully AND
- students have met all other academic requirements (course requirements and GPA).

Students whose placements are disrupted for this reason will be required to complete an additional 30 hours in their agency when they resume in order allow additional time to demonstrate that classroom learning can be fully integrated with their field experience.

4. MSU Denver Field Education Plan for Interruption of Internship Due to National or Local Events

MSU Denver has developed a plan to address temporary disruption to students' social work Internships due to national or local events such as communicable diseases, natural disasters, and/or civil unrest.

If students are advised by their agencies and agency supervisors, and/or government to not attend their internships, or if safety concerns warrant a temporary disruption in internships, students should immediately consult with BOTH their MSU Denver Faculty Field Liaison and their Field Supervisor(s) (Task Supervisor and/or Field Instructor).

In efforts to fulfill the intern's hour requirements and educational competencies during temporary internship stoppages, we are providing alternative field learning activities that can be completed off-site.

This policy is meant to address short term internship disruptions, with a maximum of 30 days. If the internship stoppage continues beyond a 30-day period, a review will be conducted by the MSU Denver Office of Field Education to determine the most appropriate response to support students in completing their internship requirements.

In many cases, students may be able to continue portions of internship work remotely using technology. See [Section IV. B. 9. "Confidentiality and the Use of Technology"](#) for more information.

5. *Alternate Learning Activities*

A student's FFL and/or Agency Supervisor(s) may assign student's alternative field learning activities that the student may complete in the event of a temporary field disruption. FFLs are encouraged to consult with the Office of Field Education for a comprehensive list of alternative field learning activities that build upon current student learning.

16. Field Support Process

The Office of Field Education is committed to ensuring that students intern in quality learning environments. However, there may be times in which unexpected challenges arise. The Field Support Process is designed to ensure these issues are addressed in a timely and effective manner. The Field Support Process is considered an extension of the Field Experience course curriculum, in that learning how to address conflict and solve problems collaboratively are essential social work skills. The intention is to create space for reflection and growth, so that the experience can become a learning opportunity.

NOTE: The following four levels of the Field Support Process are specifically intended to address issues related to internship. For all other issues not related to internship, such as classroom or academic issues, the Social Work Department has a separate process called the [Student Support and Performance Process](#). In both the Field Support Processes and the Department's Student Support Process, students are expected to demonstrate the [Social Work Standards of Professional and Ethical Behavior](#) as well as the University's [Codes of Conduct](#).

The Field Support Process may be used to share feedback, clarify expectations, and make agreements about a variety of issues related to the internship, including but not limited to:

- Attendance or schedule issues (e.g. timesheet documentation, missing hours, lateness)
- Communication skills and styles (verbal and written, across multiple methods including email and text)
- Onboarding and ongoing training needs
- Consistency or quality of supervision meetings
- Accommodation requests related to disability or pregnancy
- Learning activities to meet the nine social work competencies
- Differentiation of learning activities by level (generalist v. specialist)
- Career interests and long-term professional development goals of student
- Amount of workload (too much or too little)
- Timely submission of forms and documentation (e.g., Learning Agreement, Evaluation)
- Alignment and coordination of multiple parties (e.g., OSFI) or dual roles (e.g. EB)
- Organizational culture (e.g. staff turnover impacting work environment)
- Safety concerns (including vicarious trauma)
- Issues related to diversity, inclusion, equity, and/or belonging

The Field Support Process is designed to be reparative and restorative, with the goal of preserving internships if at all possible. It is most likely to be successful when utilized proactively and constructively. Any potential concerns should be addressed openly and directly as early as possible, and the final evaluation at the end of the semester should never be the first-time feedback is given or received.

The Field Support Process may be initiated by the student, agency (including Field Instructor[s], Task Supervisor[s] and/or Off-Site Field Instructor [OSFI]), Faculty Field Liaison (FFL), or Office of Field Education.

The four levels of the Field Support Process are outlined below. It should be noted that depending on the nature of the concern, a referral to higher levels of support is possible; if concern should be warranted, lower levels of the Field Support Process may be waived at any point.

1. *First Level of Field Support: Student and Agency Problem Solving*

At Level One, issues are openly discussed between student and agency (and OSFI if applicable). Level One discussions are often held during regularly scheduled supervision meetings. If needed, a dedicated Level One Field Support conference may be scheduled. The goal is to name and define the issue(s), clarify expectations, and identify strategies for improvement.

The student, agency, or OSFI may choose to consult with the FFL at any time during Level One. The FFL must be notified by whoever initiated the Level One immediately after any Level One discussions so they can monitor and support as needed.

Level One interventions may be repeated as often as needed. In most cases, issues can be resolved at Level One. If the concern persists, then the issue may be elevated to the second level of support.

2. *Second Level of Field Support: Faculty Field Liaison (FFL) Intervention*

At Level Two, the FFL is brought in for additional support. The FFL will consult individually with both the student and with the agency supervisor(s) to gain an understanding of their perspectives and learn what Level One strategies have already been tried. Then the FFL will facilitate a discussion between all parties (student, agency, and/or OSFI if applicable).

A Level Two discussion may happen during a regularly scheduled site visit. If needed, a dedicated Level 2 Field Support conference may be scheduled.

The goal of Level Two is to gain a deeper understanding of the issues from each others' perspectives and to develop a plan for success in the field. The FFL's role is to explore additional support and steps that might be required for repair and/or improvement of the situation.

The FFL may need to reinforce course expectations, CSWE nine social work competencies, and/or Field Manual policy. The outcome of Level Two may include modification to the Learning Agreement, such as additional tasks that need to be accomplished. It may also include a written summary of agreements.

The FFL may choose to consult with the Office of Field Education at any time during Level Two. The FFL must inform the Office of Field Education about any Level Two interventions and provide a brief written summary which will be documented in the student file.

Level Two interventions may be repeated as needed. If the concerns continue to persist and/or escalate, then the issue may be elevated to the third level of support.

3. *Third Level of Field Support: Re-evaluation and/or Termination Conference*

At Level Three, the Office of Field Education becomes involved in order to provide additional support to the student, agency, and the FFL. An issue may advance to Level Three if/when Level One and Level Two strategies have been previously attempted and thoroughly exhausted.

Level Three involves a conference that is coordinated and facilitated by the Assistant Director of Field Education (ADFE).

Prior to any Level Three conference, the first step is to gather information. The ADFE will seek to understand the issue(s) from multiple perspectives and learn what Level One and Two strategies have already been tried. With respect to student privacy, the Office of Field Education may request individual consultations and/or written documentation from anyone with relevant knowledge of the specific situation as well as the student's overall performance academically and professionally in all areas of the program, including any but not limited to any of the following people:

- Student
- Faculty Field Liaison (FFL)
- Agency Supervisor(s)
- Agency Internship Coordinator
- Off-Site Field Instructor (OSFI)
- Clinical Field Faculty
- Academic and/or Faculty Advisor
- Director of Field Education
- BSSW and/or MSW Program Director

Because of the number of people involved in Level Three, patience is requested from all parties, in order to allow for thoughtful reflection and due diligence on the part of the Office of Field Education. The ADFE may recommend that the internship be placed on hold during the information gathering phase and/or prior to the Level Three conference.

During information gathering, the ADFE may determine that additional Level One or Two strategies should be attempted prior to proceeding with Level Three; if so, the ADFE will support the FFL with a plan to implement Level One or Two strategies.

After information gathering is concluded, the ADFE will determine who to invite to the Level Three conference. The makeup of each Level Three conference may vary depending on the situation and the type of Level Three conference.

The ADFE will prepare a written summary of findings and provide to conference attendees 24 hours in advance of the conference.

Generally there are two different types of Level Three conferences:

a. ***Re-evaluation Conference***

A Re-evaluation Conference is held after Level One or Two interventions have been unsuccessful thus far in resolving the existing challenges. Recognizing that an internship termination can be highly disruptive to a student's educational progress, the goal is to determine if there is any possible way for the internship to be retained. Often these are complex and sensitive situations that need careful consideration and further counsel. It can be helpful for the Office of Field Education to bring new perspective and clarification of policy in order to brainstorm creative or innovative solutions.

b. ***Termination Conference***

A Termination Conference is held after a student's internship has been terminated for any reason and under any circumstance, regardless of who has initiated the termination (agency or student). A Termination Conference may or may not be held after a Re-Evaluation Conference. A Termination Conference is always held in the event that an internship is terminated unexpectedly prior to the utilization of Level 1 or 2 interventions. The goal of a Termination Conference is to determine the student's next steps regarding their Field Experience course, given that successful completion of an internship is required to pass.

Level Three outcomes are determined jointly by a committee that consists of the ADFE, the Clinical Field Faculty (depending on whether the student is BSSW, MSW-Foundation, or MSW-Concentration) and the Director of Field Education. Any Level Three outcomes must be jointly approved by all three members of this committee. The Level Three committee may need to convene separately after a Level Three conference to make a final decision. The panel is intended to minimize bias and emphasize equity and fairness across the program. Any policy exceptions will be considered on a case-by-case basis. In order for policy exceptions to be approved, sufficient rationale must be provided. Degree exceptions require approval from the Chair of the Social Work Department.

There are numerous possible Level Three outcomes:

- **CONTINUE INTERNSHIP & FIELD EXPERIENCE COURSE**

This outcome is always prioritized if possible. The student and agency agree to continue working together to make the internship successful. The student will stay enrolled in their current Field Experience course. A written Performance Plan will be developed including any agreed upon modifications to the internship, specific goals to be met, dates for goals to be met, dates for progress meetings. A timetable for successful completion and indicators of success will be outlined.

- OR

- **TERMINATE INTERNSHIP & FIELD EXPERIENCE COURSE**

The student will discontinue both their internship and the Field Experience course; they are eligible to re-enroll in the Field Experience course when it is again offered the following academic year. This outcome is standard protocol, per Field Manual policy, after an internship has been terminated. (As stated in [Section II. C. 1. "Hours Requirements"](#), students are not allowed to switch internships mid-year.) This outcome is especially enforced when the internship has been terminated by the agency with documented cause and/or when the internship has been self-terminated by the student without adherence to the Field Support Process. If the termination occurs prior to the final withdrawal deadline, the student is advised to withdraw from their Field Experience course. If the termination occurs after the final withdrawal deadline, the student will be assigned an F grade at the end of the semester. A written Performance Plan may be developed with supplemental learning activities required for the student to demonstrate readiness prior to re-enrolling the following year.

- OR

- **REPLACE INTERNSHIP & CONTINUE FIELD EXPERIENCE COURSE**

This outcome is an exception to standard protocol, approved only in rare circumstances and on a case-by-case basis. As part of a Level Three Re-Evaluation or Termination Conference,

a student may petition for approval for a replacement internship, in order to allow them to stay enrolled in their current Field Experience course. A replacement internship is never guaranteed. A replacement internship requires special approval by the Office of Field Education as it is considered an exception to Field Manual policy.

This outcome is typically only considered in cases where: a) the student has already engaged fully in lower levels of the Field Support Process; b) the student's termination is not related to ethical violations or code of conduct; and c) this is the student's first incident with no prior documented concerns. This outcome may also be considered in circumstances where the agency has been unable to sufficiently address a student's safety concerns, and/or if the agency has terminated the student without following Field Support Process, thereby preventing the student from having an opportunity to demonstrate improvement.

In the rare event that a replacement internship is approved, students need to be advised of the following:

- A specific Performance Plan may be created which would be a part of the replacement internship. Additional assignments may be required in order to pass the Field Experience course and/or prior to beginning the replacement internship search. Additional hours may be assigned beyond the minimum requirement (some hours from first internship may be honored). Adjusted timeframe and due dates for class may be needed. Alternative arrangements for Learning Agreement (outside of Sonia) may be needed.
- Replacement internship searches happen outside of the typical timeframe. The Office of Field Education will use a customized approach to find an existing agency partner with capacity to support an off-cycle intern. Students approved for a replacement internship will be assigned a Placement Navigator to support them who will meet with them weekly until a replacement internship is secured.
- Students are not allowed to begin contacting agencies or searching for a replacement internship on their own without prior approval from the Office of Field Education.
- Replacement internship searches can take time (approximately 4 weeks at minimum). Students can likely expect a replacement internship search to delay their academic progress. An Incomplete will likely be assigned at the end of the semester.
- If at all possible, depending on the circumstances, it is highly recommended that replacement internships begin after the end of Fall semester when Spring semester starts.

▪ OR

- **REFERRAL TO LEVEL FOUR PERFORMANCE REVIEW**

The student must be terminated from the internship and the Field Experience course. They will be referred for a full Student Performance Review through the Social Work Department.

NOTE: A student may choose to resign from their internship and withdraw from the Field Experience course at any point prior to the final drop deadline (approximately at the end of Week 10 out of 15 each semester). Students should consult university policy regarding withdrawal deadlines. See [Section IV.B.15.2. "Discontinuing Field Mid-Year and Returning the Following Year"](#) for more information.

NOTE: Any time a student or agency is considering a termination for any reason, it is required that they contact their FFL and/or the Office of Field Education prior to proceeding. A student who self-terminates their internship without following the Field Support Process will be referred to a Level Three Termination

Conference and is at risk of failing their Field Experience course. An agency who terminates a student without following the Field Support Process will be referred to the Agency Review process and is at risk of discontinuing their partnership with the Office of Field Education. (See [Section IV.B.17 “Agency Review”](#) for more information.)

After a Level 3 conference, the ADFE will update the Level 3 written summary to reflect the outcome and/or decision of the Level 3 committee. The Level 3 summary will include the student’s Performance Plan if applicable. Completion of the Performance Plan (if applicable) will be monitored by the ADFE. A copy of the final Level 3 summary will be sent to the student, FFL, the Level Three committee members, and the student’s Academic Advisor. A copy will be saved in the student file.

4. Fourth Level of Field Support: Full Student Performance Review

At Level Four, the student is referred to the Social Work Department for a full Performance Review. A student will be referred to Level Four if the Level Three Performance Plan has not been completed successfully. A student may also be referred to Level Four if they exhibit concerns at Level Three before, during, or after the conference. Depending on the nature of the concerns, and/or if there is a documented pattern of concerns, lower levels of the Field Support Process may be waived and instead the student may be referred directly to a Level Four Performance Review. The procedure for a Level Four Performance Review is outlined in the Social Work Department’s [Student Support and Performance Process](#).

Field Support Issues Related to Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion

The Office of Field Education is committed to anti-racist and anti-oppressive practice (see full statement in the official Field Manual). The Field Support Process can be used to provide support for navigating Internship issues related to diversity, equity, belonging, and/or inclusion, such as microaggressions or dynamics of structural oppression. An intersectional framework to understanding identity and power dynamics will be applied throughout this process, with special sensitivity if/when those involved identify as Black, Indigenous, or People of Color (BIPOC), LGBTQI+, and/or other marginalized identities. In these circumstances the following additional steps may be taken:

- The Office of Field Education or student may consult with the Social Work Department’s Coordinator of Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion. This consultation may occur at any/all of the four levels of the Field Support Process.
- The student may invite an advocate (such as a BIPOC or LGBTQI+ faculty member or an Access Center representative) as an additional support person throughout the process.

Metropolitan State University of Denver is committed to maintaining environments that are welcoming, safe, and accessible, where all students, staff, faculty, visitors, guests, vendors, contractors, and others can study, work, and/or recreate free from discrimination, harassment, intimidation, and bullying, consistent with University policies, and relevant State and Federal Law. Allegations of discrimination should be reported to the Office of Equal Opportunity (OEO) at 303-615-0036, Student Services Building, 306. Complaints about student conduct and concerns about student welfare also may be submitted to the Dean of Students. Allegations of sexual or interpersonal violence shall not be subject to informal resolution. Alternatively, you may call the Dean of Students Office at office at 303-615-0220 or file a report online by visiting <https://www.msudenver.edu/dean-of-students/student-conduct/>.

Field Support Process Documentation

The outcomes of the Field Support Process, including any Performance Plan, if applicable, shall be documented by sending an email to the student's university email address and to a representative from the Office of Field Education (Faculty Field Liaison, Assistant Director and/or, Director) and any other relevant individuals who need to be informed. All written documentation will be saved in the student file.

Confidentiality

All procedures related to the performance review must be carried out in a manner which assures protection of the student's rights in line with the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act. Information related to the Field Support Process is to remain confidential and should be shared only with those persons involved with the student in an educational capacity.

17. Agency Review

Whenever a concern related to an internship is identified, the Field Support Process should be engaged as proactively as possible. As a summary of the [Field Support Process](#): the student may attempt to resolve issues on their own (Level 1), the Faculty Field Liaison (FFL) may work with the student and agency to resolve issues (Level 2), or the Office of Field Education may provide further support (Level 3).

However, occasionally serious, or systemic challenges may arise related to an agency or a supervisor that need to be addressed directly by the Office of Field Education. In such situations, the Field Support Process may have already been initiated but was not successful in reaching resolution through Levels 1-3. Or in rare circumstances, the Field Support Process may not be initiated at all, if the issues are deemed to be beyond the scope of what is considered appropriate to address through the Field Support Process. These may be sensitive situations involving higher-level concerns, multiple reports from multiple parties, and/or repeated concerns year after year. In these sensitive situations, the Office of Field Education will initiate the Agency Review process to provide additional intervention directly with the agency. An agency may also be placed under review if, through the Field Support Process, it is determined that a student needs to be removed from an agency for any reason.

Concerns related to an agency may be raised by students, FFLs, agency supervisors (including Off-Site Field Instructors), or the Office of Field Education. Concerns may become known in a variety of ways: as a result of an FFL's observation of the student and the internship; from a student's report of their experience while at the agency; through feedback from other Social Work Department faculty or staff involved with the agency; or based on information shared in year-end surveys (completed by both students and FFLs).

Perceived concerns may include but are not limited to:

- Inadequate onboarding/training or supervision of interns,
- Inadequate or inappropriate learning activities, tasks, or responsibilities,
- Safety concerns,
- Ethical concerns,
- Lack of adherence to requested ADA accommodations,
- Identity-based micro-aggressions or other issues related to diversity, equity, inclusion (DEI),
- Whistleblower reports or anything else seriously impacting the learning environment.

Once a concern has been raised, the Office of Field Education will take steps to address and resolve as appropriate. The goal of the Agency Review process is always to assess accurately and work collaboratively in a fashion that maintains the quality of the professional relationship between the agency and MSU Denver, if possible. The steps of the Agency Review process are outlined in detail below.

Steps of the Agency Review Process

The Office of Field Education will take the following steps to resolve concerns with agencies under review:

1. The Office of Field Education Leadership Team (consisting of the Director of Undergraduate and Graduate Field Education and Associate and Assistant Directors of Field Education) monitors and assesses agency issues in the following ways:
 - a. The Field Leadership Team meets regularly to review new or ongoing agency-related concerns. A designated lead will be assigned to each agency to ensure consistency and follow-up.
 - b. The designated lead from the Field Leadership Team will gather information to accurately and thoroughly assess the nature of the concern and what would be needed for resolution. The designated lead will begin by gathering information about what, if any, attempts have been already made to address the concerns through the Field Support Process or other interventions. The designated lead may consult with and/or request written statements from any/all of the following:
 - i. The FFLs or OSFIs assigned to the agency
 - ii. Other members of the Office of Field Education (including Clinical Field Faculty)
 - iii. Any directly involved student(s), if appropriate
 - iv. The Social Work Department DEI Coordinator
 - v. The Social Work Department Chair and/or Directors
 - vi. Other campus resources (CARE Team, ACCESS Center, Office of Equal Opportunity, etc.)
 - c. The designated lead will use a comprehensive approach to assess whether this is a new concern or if there has been a pattern of concerns with previous attempts to resolve. Assessment will be done through an intersectional approach to diversity, equity, and inclusion. Power dynamics and differentials will be taken into consideration. Assessment of student safety will always be a priority.
 - d. The agency of concern will be flagged as “Under Review” until the following steps have been completed.
2. After thoroughly assessing the situation and in consultation with the other members of the Field Leadership team, the designated lead will identify a plan with any necessary next steps that may include any of the following steps or outcomes:
 - a. The Field Support Process may be re-initiated. The FFL may be asked to coordinate a Level 2 meeting between the student and agency, or a Level 3 conference may be facilitated with all parties in order to address and repair any harm done and identify agreements and solutions to continue the student’s internship.
 - b. An Agency Review meeting may be held between members of the Field Leadership Team and appropriate individuals at the agency (without students present) to discuss the concerns and to work towards a solution. This meeting may or may not include the FFL, Clinical Field Faculty, or other Social Work Department members with specific knowledge of the agency and/or issues.
 - c. A written plan for resolution may be developed, mutually agreed upon, and implemented by the agency and the Office of Field Education. Specifics of this plan will be documented in the agency’s file and in the “Notes” section of the Sonia field database. Resolution plans could

potentially include any of the following and/or any other adjustments that would respond to the presenting concerns:

- i. Adjusting the supervisory plan to meet the needs of students and the requirements of CSWE and/or MSU Denver
 - ii. Adjusting the tasks and responsibilities students will be given so as to be able to meet the expected competencies
 - iii. Reducing the number of students at an agency
 - iv. Adjusting the level (BSSW, Foundation, Concentration) of students placed at an agency
 - v. Requiring agency supervisors to participate in further orientation and/or training
- d. A note may be added in the Sonia database to provide nuanced guidance for potential intern applicants interested in the agency in the future.
- e. The agency partnership may be temporarily paused while “under review.” The agency would remain active in the Sonia Field Database, but the status would be adjusted to not be visible to students searching for future internships. This would allow further time to resolve the concern prior to another student accepting an internship there.
- f. If the concern is serious enough to warrant an urgent response, in situations related to safety concerns or significant compromises to the learning goals or learning environment, any current student internship(s) may be temporarily paused or immediately terminated.
- g. In the event that a concern is unable to be resolved to the satisfaction of the Office of Field Education policy, CSWE accreditation requirements, and/or the NASW Code of Ethics, and said concerns would seriously impact the quality of the learning or safety for a student, it may be decided to “close” an agency for future students unless or until a satisfactory solution can be agreed upon. The agency would be fully inactivated in the Sonia Field Database. It will also be assessed whether further actions are necessary.
3. If/when a satisfactory resolution has been reached:
- a. The agency will be made “Active” for other students to explore as an internship site.
 - b. Documentation will include both a brief note in Sonia as well as a detailed written summary of the issue(s), strategies used to address the issue(s), and the outcome.
 - c. Ongoing evaluation will occur to assess the efficacy of the plan. This will occur in consultation with the agency, the FFL, and the Office of Field Education Leadership Team.

18. Accommodations in Field (including Pregnancy)

Under the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) and Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, individuals with disabilities are guaranteed certain protections and rights of equal access to programs and services. Metropolitan State University of Denver is committed to providing an accessible and inclusive learning environment for all students, including those with disabilities. Students with a diagnosed condition/disability which may impact their access, performance, attendance, or grades in Field Education should contact the Access Center, located in the Plaza Building, Suite 122, 303-615-0200. Further information is available by visiting the Access Center website www.msudenver.edu/access.

The Access Center is the designated department responsible for coordinating accommodations and services for students with disabilities. Students may request accommodations for both the Field Experience class and for their agency internship. Students will need to provide an Accommodation Notification Letter obtained from the Access Center to their faculty to activate their accommodations.

Information pertaining to a student's disability is treated in a confidential manner. Students have a right to privacy in disability matters. It is up to the student to choose to disclose information regarding their disability and/or accommodations to their Agency Supervisor(s).

Any student who is requesting accommodations without an Accommodation Letter or requesting additional accommodations not included in their Accommodation Letter will be referred to the Access Center.

a. Pregnancy and Other Temporary Medical Conditions

Although temporary medical conditions are not covered as disabilities under the ADA or Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act, the institution recognizes that such injuries/illnesses can occur during the school year that may adversely affect a student's ability to fully participate in classes. Examples of temporary medical conditions may include, but are not limited to: broken limbs, hand injuries, or short-term impairments following surgery or medical treatments. Students seeking temporary accommodations should be referred to the Access Center for consultation.

Students seeking accommodations because of medically related complications due to pregnancy, childbirth, false pregnancy, termination of pregnancy, or recovery should contact the Access Center office to discuss their needs. Please review the [Guidelines Concerning Pregnant Students](#) for more details.

19. Group Private Practice Policy

The Office of Field Education includes group private practice settings in our array of community partnerships. Below are the guidelines for group private practices to be considered appropriate partners. These include requirements for orientation, training, and billing procedures.

Guidelines for Eligibility: In order to meet the goals of the field experience, group/private practices must meet the following criteria.

- Demonstrate a commitment to serving vulnerable, oppressed, marginalized, and/or diverse populations by one or more of the following criteria:
 - Accepting varied payment options such as Medicaid, sliding-scales, and/or low or no-cost; and/or
 - Providing specialized identity-based services to a specific marginalized population;
 - NOTE: Exceptions may be considered on a case-by-case basis for agencies which offer training in a highly specialized therapeutic treatment modality.
- Articulate a defined mission, and agency policies and procedures, that align with social work values.
- Offer opportunities for learning activities across multiple system levels (micro/mezzo/macro), such as one or more of the following:
 - Engage with multiple external points of contact within the larger social service delivery system (e.g. schools, courts, human services, etc.)
 - Offer case management and resource referral services if requested by client
 - Engage in mental health policy advocacy

- Utilize a structured intake process which screens for client acuity. Scaffold the assignment of clients to build confidence towards higher acuity clients. Discuss how it is determined what kinds of clients are appropriate for interns.
- Utilize a process to assess the interns' prior experience and readiness to work with clients, which takes into account the student's self-perception of readiness.
- Employ at least two practitioners, preferably one of whom is a social worker with at least 2 years of post-degree work experience from an accredited university.
 - Provide an onsite licensed supervisor for each intern who is providing therapy.
- Provide opportunities for students to engage in differing treatment modalities (ex- individual, couple, family, group).
- Provide a learning environment where students progress on a continuum that begins with opportunities to shadow/observe social work practice and move towards more independent practice over the course of the internship.

Expectations for Orientation, Training, and Learning Activities in Group/Private Practice Settings: This section reviews the orientation and training expectations for interns in these settings.

- Provide a clear orientation and onboarding process for all interns.
- Provide a safety protocol which includes who they are to contact in a client crisis and a back-up person at the agency if that person is not available. Utilization of the Safety protocol (see page 31 of the Field Manual) is required.
 - If the student is working in a face-to-face capacity, a supervisor or designated back-up clinician needs to be present while the student is on site.
 - If the student is working remotely, they must have access to an on-call supervisor and/or a back-up person at the agency to provide support during the student's internship hours. (See [section IV.B.8. "Safety in Field Education"](#) for more information.)
- Review and provide access to the agency's policy and procedure manual to students.
- Provide a template for the student's written disclosure statement which includes their status as an intern.
- In all cases, student learning must be oriented around the nine competencies as established by the Council on Social Work Education. Agencies must outline a plan which supports learning in all of these domains and includes learning activities outside of direct client-facing (or billable) hours. Agencies must differentiate between generalist and specialist practice as follows:
 - BSSW Students and MSW Foundation Year (Generalist Practice) students will have learning activities such as: case management; agency referrals; community outreach; skill building, facilitation of psychoeducational workshops; co-facilitation of group therapy; discharge planning; billing; program development; advocacy and/or policy work.
 - Concentration Year Students (Specialized Practice) can have all of the same learning activities as the Generalist students, with increased autonomy, and also can independently engage in advanced practice activities such as: therapy (individual, couples, family, and group) and training in advanced clinical skills.
- Agency should have a clearly defined plan for assessing and evaluating the practice of any Concentration Year students providing psychotherapy. Interns should have an opportunity to shadow clinicians at the agency and to have their sessions observed by supervisors to scaffold learning and work towards more autonomous practice with clients with oversight by their supervisor(s). Observation of at least one session a month is recommended.
- Agencies are expected to set a reasonable limit on MSW-Concentration interns' client caseload, in order to prioritize time for learning, integration, and skill development.

- There must be a process to determine the number of clients assigned and their level of acuity, which is based on the student's level of training and experience throughout the semester/year. There should be ongoing caseload reviews and check-ins with students throughout the year which inform client assignments. Agencies need to be willing to adjust the amount of clients based on student and FFL feedback.
- The total number of clients may vary depending on the frequency of sessions (e.g. weekly versus every other week), as well as student skill level and prior experience.
- For each hour of direct client-facing time, it is recommended that the intern have approximately an hour for preparation, notes, and debrief/reflection.
- A general guideline for an MSW-Concentration student completing 16-17 hours per week would be an upper limit of approximately 8 hours of direct client-facing (billable) hours per week.
- Agencies are expected to provide high quality supervision to interns providing psychotherapy to clients.
 - In settings where group supervision is utilized, there also needs to be sufficient opportunities for supervisors to connect individually with interns.
 - If an Off-Site Field Instructor (OSFI) is utilized, the OSFI and on-site Task Supervisor should communicate regularly.
 - As part of supervision, agencies are expected to support interns in developing self-care and containment strategies to prevent burnout, mitigate exposure to vicarious trauma, and support the development of a sustainable long-term clinical practice.

Billing for Interns: This section outlines policies related to the advertising of student intern services and billing practices.

- The NASW Code of Ethics 3.02 (<https://www.socialworkers.org/About/Ethics/Code-of-Ethics/Code-of-Ethics-English>) requires that students identify themselves as student interns to the agency constituents and clients. This should be clearly indicated on the agency website and/or any provider profiles as well as included in client disclosure statements.
- It is strongly recommended that agencies who bill for interns provide some compensation to those interns for the hours they are engaging in billable, direct client services.

NOTE: In order to ensure alignment with social work ethics and values, MSU-Denver Office of Field Education commits to monitoring best practice around billing for interns and to updating our agency partners if our Field Manual policies change in the future. Agencies are encouraged to consider social work ethics and values in regards to providing mental health services to low-income clients, especially if the client is being charged or billed full price for a pre-licensed social work intern who is still at a relatively early stage of their clinical learning and professional development.