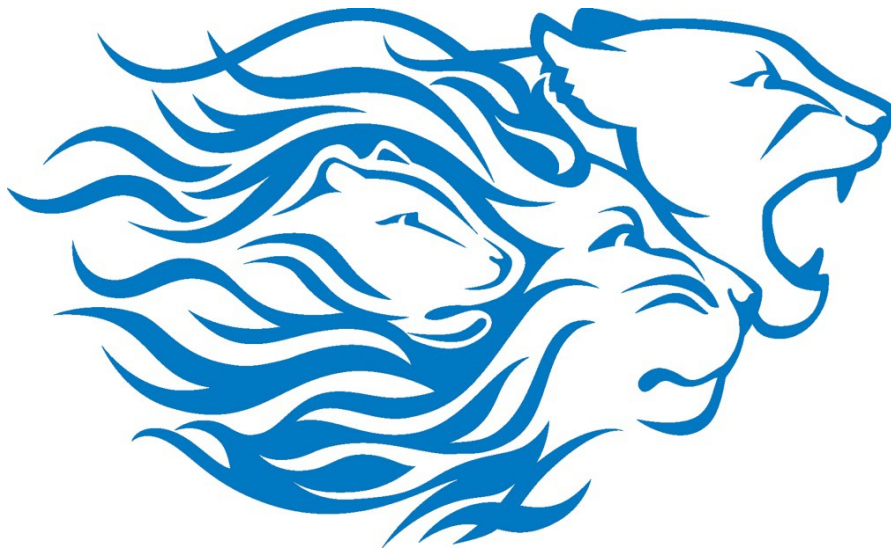




# Widener University

**CENTER FOR SOCIAL WORK EDUCATION**

## **MSW Field Policy Manual**



**CENTER FOR SOCIAL WORK EDUCATION  
2022-2023**

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# **Administration**

**Jennifer Cullen, MSW, PhD**  
**Director, Center for Social Work Education**

**Michelle Brandt, MSW, LSW**  
**Director, Field Education**

**Patricia A. Fletcher, MSW, PhD, LCSW**  
**Director, On-Campus MSW Program**

**Carly King, MSSW, LSW**  
**Director, Online MSW Program**

**Lisa Allen, MSW, LSW**  
**Assistant Director, Field Education**

**Tangela Harden, MSS**  
**Assistant Director, Field Education**

**Tina Radin, MSW, LSW**  
**Assistant Director, Field Education**

**Regina Rothe, MSW, LCSW**  
**Assistant Director, Field Education**

**Assistant Director, Online MSW Program**

**Rebecca Vlam, MSS, LCSW**  
**Assistant Director, On-Campus MSW Program**

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*These policies are subject to alteration based upon programmatic and procedural changes.*

## MSW FIELD EDUCATION INFORMATION 2022-2023

The Council on Social Work Education (CSWE) has identified the field experience as the signature pedagogy in social work education. The overall objective of the Field Education Program is to provide students with the opportunity to integrate and apply the basic knowledge, values, skills, and cognitive and affective processes gained throughout the MSW curriculum to social work practice within an agency setting. Each year of field education is designed to provide an opportunity for developmental mastery of social work competencies, dimensions, and behaviors. Upon completion of the two years of field, the student should have the requisite knowledge, skills, and commitment to professional values and ethics that support social caring, economic justice, and knowledge development, along with an appreciation of diversity, self-awareness, and self-discipline to provide competent clinical social work services. In addition, MSW students should demonstrate mastery of the competencies and related behaviors established by the Council on Social Work Education and the Center for Social Work Education.

The Widener Center for Social Work Education MSW program is designed to join the students' classroom learning with the field experience, providing students the opportunity to merge acquired course knowledge with agency clients.

### MSW Program – Online

In the MSW Program online, the practice classes precede the field experience, providing students with the beginning knowledge, values, skills, and cognitive and affective processes necessary to enter the field. While students are engaged in the field placement, they participate in a concurrent field seminar online. The field seminar instructor is designated as the student's faculty liaison. The field seminar provides students with the opportunity to develop their skills of self-reflection. Assignments in the field seminar include participating in field discussions (written and opportunities for live, synchronous), written reflections, and written process recordings.

### MSW Program – Campus Based

In the MSW Program on campus, students are enrolled in their practice classes concurrently with field. Generalist students enroll in a field seminar that alternates weekly meetings in person and online throughout the two semesters of field. Specialization students engage in field discussions and complete field assignments within the advanced practice classes.

### MSW Program – Campus Based and Online

The Widener Center for Social Work Education recognizes the importance of the role of the faculty field liaison as the student's link between the MSW program and the field placement agency. Furthering the program's commitment to field education, the student's field seminar instructor (SW 552 and SW 553, SW 637 and SW 638) also serves as the student's field liaison throughout the field year. The faculty field liaison, as an individual with thorough knowledge of the student and the curriculum, communicates regularly with the agency. In short, the faculty liaison supports

the field instructor, reiterates the field placement expectations to the field instructor, and helps with planning and implementation so that the curriculum can be well integrated into practice.

### **The generalist/ first year field placement:**

1. Provides the student with two (2) consecutive semesters of field practice for sixteen (16) hours per week plus a weekly seminar (SW 552 & SW 553). The student spends a minimum **total of 450 hours** in the approved field setting along with the seminar for which they earn six (6) credit hours. All generalist/ first year field placement hours are completed within two consecutive semesters at a single agency approved by the Director/ Assistant Director of Field Education. ***Please note that some agencies, especially the more selective sites, have their own internship requirements to which students must agree in order to accept the placement.***
  - a. Students accrue field hours only for the actual amount of time spent engaged in field-related tasks approved by the agency supervisor and faculty liaison. If students miss time for any reason (sickness, weather, holiday, etc.), the hours must be made up. The minimum number of field hours (450 for generalist/first year) must be met by the end of the field year/ two consecutive semesters.
  - b. Students are required to accrue at least 225 hours by the end of the first semester (SW 552). Requests for alternate plans for accrual of hours must be submitted in writing to the Director/ Assistant Director of Field Education and agreed to by the agency field instructor and/or site supervisor prior to the start of SW 552.
  - c. Students are required to stay in the field placement until the end of the field year (SW 553) even if they have acquired the minimum number of hours (450) prior to the end of the field year/ second consecutive semester.
  - d. It is the student's responsibility to collaborate with the agency and calculate how many hours must be completed weekly in order to meet the minimum number of total field hours (450). Students must be in the placement a minimum of fourteen hours and a maximum of sixteen hours per week and a minimum of four consecutive hour increments per day, unless previous arrangements have been made with the agency field instructor and field liaison and approved by the Director/ Assistant Director of Field Education.
  - e. Widener Center for Social Work Education prioritizes in-person attendance in field. If the agency provides and/or requires some remote/virtual learning opportunities in accordance with their regular service provision, the Director / Assistant Director of Field Education will vet the agency's request and collaborate with the agency and student on determining a plan. This plan will include agency capacity to provide adequate training and supervision through remote learning opportunities. If a student requests a fully remote placement due to health reasons, they will be referred to the [Office of Student Accessibility Services](#) for consideration of an accommodation. Only students with accommodations will be approved to complete a fully remote field placement.
2. Offers the student the opportunity to engage in agency-based social work practice from a person-in-environment, generalist perspective consistent with the values, ethics, and

principles of the social work profession.

3. Provides opportunities for students to demonstrate all nine competencies and related behaviors (refer to Generalist Learning Contract).
4. Allows students to provide direct service to clients and client systems for at least six (6) hours weekly. Soon after a beginning agency program orientation, students should be assigned one to two cases, working up to at least six (6) hours of direct client contact by approximately eight (8) weeks into the placement.
  - a. Students must begin field hours, including client contact, by Week 7 of the semester. If the placement is delayed beyond this point, students must meet with the faculty field liaison and Director/ Assistant Director of Field Education and may be required to withdraw from the placement and course.
5. Provides micro practice learning opportunities that may include, but are not limited to, the following: biopsychosocial assessments, crisis intervention, intake, individual counseling, family and/or group work, case management, and advocacy.
6. Provides opportunities to learn about macro practice during the course of the academic year. Macro practice learning opportunities may include, but are not limited to, the following: program planning and development, evaluation practice, community outreach, attendance at administrative meetings such as board meetings, committee meetings, and task force meetings.

#### **The specialization/ second year field placement:**

1. Provides the student with two (2) consecutive semesters of field practice for 20 hours per week plus a weekly seminar (online) and practice class (campus based). The student spends a minimum **total of 560 hours** in the approved field setting along with a seminar or class for which six (6) credits are earned. All specialization/ second year field placement hours are completed in no more than three consecutive semesters at a single agency approved by the Director/ Assistant Director of Field Education. ***Please note that some agencies, especially the more selective sites, have their own internship requirements to which students must agree in order to accept the placement.***
  - a. Students accrue field hours only for the actual amount of time spent engaged in field-related tasks approved by the agency supervisor and faculty liaison. If students miss time for any reason (sickness, weather, holiday, etc.), the hours must be made up. The minimum number of field hours (560 for specialization/ second year) must be met by the end of the field year.
  - b. Students completing field in two semesters must accrue at least 280 hours by the end of the first semester (SW 637). Requests for alternate plans for accrual of hours must be submitted in writing to the Director/ Assistant Director of Field Education and agreed to by the agency field instructor and/or site supervisor prior to the start of SW 637. Students extending the placement to three semesters must accrue at

least 187 hours by the end of the first semester (SW 637) unless previous arrangements have been made with the Director/ Assistant Director of Field Education and agency field instructor.

- c. Students are required to stay in the field placement until the end of the field year (SW 638) even if they have acquired the minimum number of hours (560) prior to the end of the field year.
  - d. It is the student's responsibility to collaborate with the agency and calculate how many hours must be completed weekly in order to meet the minimum number of total field hours (560). Students in a two-semester placement must be in the placement a minimum of twenty hours and a maximum of twenty-four hours per week and a minimum of four consecutive hour increments per day, unless previous arrangements have been made with the agency field instructor and field liaison. Students in a three-semester placement must be in the placement a minimum of fourteen hours and a maximum of sixteen hours per week and a minimum of four consecutive hour increments per day, unless previous arrangements have been made with the agency field instructor and field liaison and approved by the Director/ Assistant Director of Field Education.
  - e. Widener Center for Social Work Education prioritizes in-person attendance in field. If the agency provides and/or requires some remote/virtual learning opportunities in accordance with their regular service provision, the Director / Assistant Director of Field Education will vet the agency and collaborate with the agency and student on determining a plan. This plan will include agency capacity to provide adequate training and supervision through remote learning opportunities. If a student requests a fully remote placement due to health reasons, they will be referred to the [Office of Student Accessibility Services](#) for consideration of an accommodation. Only students with accommodations will be approved to complete a fully remote field placement.
2. Offers the student the opportunity to engage in agency-based social work practice from a person-in-environment, clinical perspective consistent with the values, ethics, and principles of the social work profession.
  3. Provides opportunities for students to demonstrate all nine competencies and related behaviors (refer to Specialization Learning Contract).
  4. Allows students to provide clinical services for at least nine (9) hours weekly to individuals, families, and groups in the 20 hours per week of field placement.
    - a. Clinical services may include – but are not limited to – assessing; diagnosing; developing treatment plans; and individual, couple, family, and group counseling or therapy.
    - b. Students must begin field hours, including client contact, by Week 7 of the semester. If the placement is delayed beyond this point, students must meet with the faculty field liaison and Director/ Assistant Director of Field Education and may be required to withdraw from the placement and course.

5. Allows for student to attend weekly staff meetings, case conferences, in-service trainings, etc. to provide ample exposure to agency life.
6. Provides opportunity for students to examine and integrate the theories and skills of agency-based clinical social work practice with individuals, families, groups, communities, and organizations.
7. Encourages students to develop and refine their clinical assessment, intervention, and evaluation skills.
8. Provides opportunities for students to consolidate their own identities as professional, disciplined, and self-aware clinical social workers.

**Extended Field Option:** The Center for Social Work Education offers the option for second year field students to enroll in a fourteen to sixteen (14-16) hour per week specialization/ second year field placement that extends beyond the second semester (SW 638). Students who elect this option will complete the same minimum total number of hours in the field as the students who elect the traditional 20 hour per week option. Students who enroll in the extended field placement must take a one-credit field seminar (SW 652) during the third semester of field. This option must be discussed with and approved by the Director/ Assistant Director of Field Education and must be agreed upon by the host agency. In order to utilize this option, the student must begin the process of approval no later than the start of SW 638.

### Criteria for Selection of Field Placement Settings

Generalist/ first year field placement settings are selected on the basis of their capacity to provide the student with the opportunity to explore the social work roles and functions associated with agency-based social work practice from a generalist perspective with a range of client systems, including individuals, families, groups, communities, and organizations. Specialization/ second year field placement settings are selected on the basis of their capacity to provide the student with a more specialized focus on agency-based clinical social work practice with individuals, families, and small groups. Private practice settings are **not** approved for generalist field placements. In limited circumstances, multiple-practitioner private practice settings **may** be reviewed by the Director/ Assistant Director of Field Education on an individualized basis for specialization field placements. The Director/ Assistant Director of Field Education will review the following in considering a placement at a private practice for specialization year students:

- agency's structure (single-practitioner practices are not permitted)
- client population
- availability of on-site MSW supervision
- agency's existing relationship with Widener
- student's prior experience (students with minimal experience in the social work field or with a history of non-academic issues will not be approved)
- feasibility in demonstrating the behaviors specific to all nine competencies

Students requesting a specialization field placement at a private practice may be required to

complete the Learning Contract during planning as a way of identifying opportunities for demonstrating the specialized behaviors associated with the nine competencies.

To qualify as a field placement site, the social service agency setting must:

1. Conduct social work practice from a person-in-environment perspective.
2. Engage in social work practice that is consistent with the values, ethics, and principles of the social work profession.
3. Practice non-discrimination with regard to gender, sexual orientation, race, color, ethnicity, age, religion, or disability in the provision of services and operation of the setting.
4. Provide the student with adequate learning assignments and resources so that they can achieve the identified social work practice competencies, dimensions, and behaviors.
5. Provide the student with an orientation to the agency services, operations, structure, and personnel guidelines, including safety policies and procedures.
6. Provide the student with a qualified MSW field instructor who has adequate time to supervise, meet with the faculty liaison, and attend supervisory training seminars. In the event that a qualified MSW field instructor is not employed by the agency, a site supervisor must be provided by the agency (see Criteria for Selection of Field Instructors #6 for additional details).
7. Sign an Affiliation Agreement with the University indicating acceptance of respective responsibilities.

### Criteria for Selection of Field Instructors

Field instructors are selected who:

1. According to CSWE standards, have an MSW from an accredited social work program, have at least two years of post-graduate professional social work practice experience, and are committed to teaching the student the knowledge, skills, and values of the social work profession.
2. Have the skills to provide a knowledge base of agency-based social work practice from a generalist perspective if providing field instruction for a generalist/ first year student and a knowledge base of skills for agency-based clinical social work practice if providing field instruction for a specialization/ second year student.
3. Can provide a minimum of sixty (60) minutes of formal supervision on a weekly basis. The generalist/ first year field instructor will help the student look at the process of interaction with the client system in a planful manner through written process recordings, audio or video-tapings, observation, summarized process recordings, role plays, and case written



reports. The specialization/ second year field instructor will help the student on a weekly basis look at the process of interaction with the client through written process recordings, audio or videotaping, and live supervision.

4. Have adequate agency time to orient, prepare, teach, and supervise the assigned student.
5. Agree to participate in faculty liaison-led meetings, which may take place in person or via video or telephone conference calls. Faculty liaison conference calls take place during the beginning of the first semester of field (SW 552 and SW 637) and as needed throughout the student's field experience. All field instructors are invited to attend any Center-sponsored Continuing Education (CE) events free of charge, including the field orientation and evaluation seminars. CE events will also be offered as web-based seminars online. Field Instructor training attendance is encouraged when available, but not required. Field instructors are also invited to participate in monthly field instructor trainings (First Friday Field Discussions) led by Center faculty and field director/assistant field directors. First Friday Field Discussions are held on campus and online via Zoom.
6. In some circumstances when an agency is able to provide a suitable site supervisor but does not have a qualified MSW available to work with the intern, an off-site and/or volunteer supervisor *may* be assigned to provide the social work component of supervision. The use of an off-site MSW Field Instructor by each student must be approved by the Director/ Assistant Director of Field Education prior to the start of the field placement. In an effort to provide students with the greatest opportunity for success, students with limited experience in the field or with documented non-academic behavior issues are required to be placed only at an agency that can provide on-site MSW field instruction. When approved, off-site MSW field instructors are selected and assigned by the Director/ Assistant Director of Field Education and will work collaboratively with the agency-based site supervisor.

### The Field Placement Process

Only students who are officially accepted to the MSW program and registered for courses are eligible to work with the Director/ Assistant Director of Field Education on field planning. Students are accepted to the MSW program who demonstrate possession of the personal qualities and values that are needed for social work practice with oppressed and disadvantaged populations. These include the ability to form professional helping relationships with clients from diverse backgrounds and value systems, the ability to respect human dignity and be nonjudgmental, concern over social justice and the empowering of oppressed individuals and groups, and a commitment to helping others.

The characteristics described above are continually assessed through the field application and placement process. Adherence to University, Center for Social Work Education, and field policies, processes, and timelines is one important way that students demonstrate readiness for field education. Students on non-academic probation with or without a Student Performance Improvement Plan (SPIP) must inform and present the plan to their assigned Director/Assistant Director of field at the start of field planning

All students must demonstrate successful completion of the following criteria in order to be admitted to the field education component of the MSW program:

- Completion of the field application by the pre-set deadline, which demonstrates:
  - good academic standing in the MSW program (all students must have a cumulative GPA of at least 3.0 for all courses);
  - relevant work, volunteer, and life experience that prepare the student for field education;
  - availability (at least one full business day per week) in order to fulfill the commitment required to complete the field requirements
    - In the event that the student is unable to make one full business day available for field, the Director / Assistant Director of Field Education will work with the student in an effort to identify a placement with appropriate supervision and learning opportunities during the hours they are available. If a placement with appropriate supervision and learning opportunities cannot be identified, the student will delay the start of field to the next field start date. Students with limited availability for field education are encouraged to speak with their employer at the start of field planning to explore the possibility of flexing their work schedule to make time for field.
  - awareness of expectations and requirements through the acknowledgement of the field statement.
- Completion of field interview with Director/ Assistant Director of Field Education by the pre-set deadline, which allows the Director/ Assistant Director of Field Education to assess the student's readiness for field education based on the characteristics demonstrated upon admission to the program and listed above. Students are expected to have some daytime availability for field planning,
  - Field Interviews with the Director/ Assistant Director of Field Education take place Monday – Friday 8:00am – 5:00pm Eastern Standard Time.
  - Most agency interviews will take place during regular business hours.
- Active participation in the field planning / matching process, which is described in detail below.

The processes for on-campus students and online students are slightly different due to regional differences and the placement process requests of some agencies. Please read the appropriate process instructions carefully and contact your Director/ Assistant Director of Field Education if you have questions. All students beginning the field process must be in good standing in the MSW program.

#### [Process for Matching Students and Field Settings – MSW Program Online](#)

Matching students with a field placement setting that is aligned with their professional interests, experience, and learning needs and provides rich supervision and learning opportunities consistent with the requirements of the field year (generalist or specialization) is the goal of the field placement process and requires preparation and planning. This is a collaborative process that requires consistent and timely communication between the student and the Director/

Assistant Director of Field Education. Widener University Center for Social Work Education utilizes a field software program (Exxat) and learning management system (Canvas) for all field students to guide and organize the planning process. All ongoing communication takes place via Widener's Outlook email. It is the student's responsibility to check their Outlook account regularly during field planning and to use their University email for all correspondence with the Director/ Assistant Director of Field Education and potential host agencies.

Planning may start as early as six to eight months prior to the beginning of field. Students will be notified by the field office at the appropriate time to begin the process; however, it is ultimately the student's responsibility to be aware of their individualized program ladder and anticipated field start dates. Students will submit a completed field application, updated resume, and current program ladder for review via Canvas. The student will then schedule a meeting with the Director/ Assistant Director of Field Education via Zoom or other virtual technology or in person when possible. During this meeting, the student and Director/ Assistant Director of Field Education will review the application and explore the student's agency setting preferences, previous social work experience and skill level, practice domain interests, needs regarding geographic location, availability and future professional goals. Every effort is made to meet the student's learning interests and practical needs; however, the student is encouraged to be flexible with their requests within the parameters of field placement requirements outlined by CSWE and agency capacity to host students.

**The field placement process is a collaborative effort between the student and the Director/ Assistant Director of Field Education. Students should refer to the Canvas field planning course for specific instructions and deadlines pertaining to the planning process.**

Following the interview, the student will submit a list of possible field agencies to their assigned field director by the mutually agreed upon date. Involving students in the task of identifying appropriate agencies is purposeful, as it requires the student to demonstrate their understanding of generalist social work tasks and their ability to identify resources in the community where they reside. Students will receive verbal and written instructions/guidance on this process from their assigned Director/ Assistant Director of Field Education.

Once the student's list is received, the Director/ Assistant Director of Field Education will identify agencies that meet the supervision and learning criteria for the appropriate field year. Once a response of interest is received from one of the agencies, the Director/ Assistant Director of Field Education will limit contact with other agencies and explore availability of MSW supervision and ability to accept a student, and present the student for consideration for student placement. The process of actively pursuing one agency at a time comes from the desire to be respectful of our students' and agency partners' time and resources.

If the student is accepted as a potential intern, the student and agency representative schedule a preliminary interview. Each student is given an outline of possible questions to help focus the interview. Once an offer is extended to the student, no further outreach is conducted on their behalf. If either the student or the agency representative has serious reservations about the placement, the Director/ Assistant Director of Field Education will address these reservations with both parties to determine whether adjustments might be made that would facilitate a successful match. However,

if the problems cannot be resolved, an interview with another agency is pursued. If a student is not accepted for a field placement, the Director/ Assistant Director of Field Education seeks constructive feedback from the agency in order to work with the student developmentally in preparation for future interviews. It is the student's right to decline a placement offered, however such a decision comes with the risk of a possible delay in the start of field.

The ultimate determination of a field match is up to the Director/ Assistant Director of Field Education. Students who are not matched with an agency after two interviews must participate in an administrative review with the Director/ Assistant Director of Field Education to discuss next steps. Based on feedback received from the agencies and the student's response to feedback discussed during the administrative review, options may range from a third field interview to a delay in placement.

The process of field placement for specialization/ second year students begins six to eight months prior to the start of the second year of field. Again, students will be notified by the field office at the appropriate time to begin the process; however, it is ultimately the student's responsibility to be aware of their program ladder and anticipated field start dates. These students complete and submit an Application for Field, a current program ladder, and an updated resume for review via Canvas.

Similar to the process described for generalist/ first year field students, they will again meet with the Director/ Assistant Director of Field Education via Zoom or other virtual technology or in person when possible to explore in more detail their field needs. Following the interview, the student will submit a list of possible field agencies to their assigned Director/ Assistant Director of Field Education by the mutually agreed upon date. Involving students in the task of identifying appropriate agencies is purposeful, as it requires the student to demonstrate their understanding of specialization (clinical) social work services and their ability to identify resources in the community where they reside. Students will receive verbal and written instructions/guidance on this process from their assigned Director/ Assistant Director of Field Education.

Once the student's list is received, the Director/ Assistant Director of Field Education will identify agencies that meet the supervision and learning criteria for the appropriate field year. Once a response is received from one of the agencies, the Director/ Assistant Director of Field Education will limit contact with other agencies and explore availability of MSW supervision and ability to accept a student, and present the student for consideration for student placement. The process of actively pursuing one agency at a time comes from the desire to be respectful of our students' and agency partners' time and resources.

If the student is accepted as a potential intern, the student and agency representative schedule a preliminary interview. Each student is given an outline of possible questions to help focus the interview. Once an offer is extended to the student, no further outreach is conducted on their behalf. If either the student or the agency representative has serious reservations about the placement, the Director/ Assistant Director of Field Education will address these reservations with both parties to determine whether adjustments might be made that would facilitate a successful match. However, if the problems cannot be resolved, an interview with another agency is pursued. If a student is not accepted for a field placement, the Director/ Assistant Director of Field Education seeks

constructive feedback from the agency in order to work with the student developmentally in preparation for future interviews. It is the student's right to decline a placement offered, however such a decision comes with the risk of a possible delay in the start of field.

The ultimate determination of a field match is up to the Director/ Assistant Director of Field Education. Students who are not matched with an agency after two interviews will participate in an administrative review with the Director/ Assistant Director of Field Education to discuss next steps. Based on feedback received from the agencies and the student's response to feedback discussed during the administrative review, options may range from a third field interview to a delay in placement.

In the event that students must delay the start of their field placement (SW 552 or SW 637) – whether due to personal hardship, not completing required paperwork and tasks in time, or otherwise – they may be required to meet with the Director of Field Education and Online MSW Program Director to discuss the factors leading to a field delay and progression in the program. **Unresponsiveness to meeting requests may affect a student's course progression** (see "Course Registration"). The final decision regarding dismissal due to an extended delay of field is up to the Director of Field Education and Online MSW Program Director (Please see "Field Instruction Probation and Termination Policy").

All MSW students are required to go through the field placement process in order to be eligible for field placement. **Students are encouraged to network and may explore field options but are not to schedule agency interviews without the approval of the Director/ Assistant Director of Field Education.** This provides the Director/ Assistant Director of Field Education with the opportunity to vet the placement and ensure it is a viable option before the student or agency invests significant time. Not following the designated field process or scheduling independent interviews may place the student's status in the field placement process in jeopardy.

#### Process for Matching Students and Field Settings – MSW Program Campus Based

Matching students with a field placement setting that is aligned with their professional interests, experience, and learning needs and provides rich supervision and learning opportunities consistent with the requirements of the field year (generalist or specialization) is the goal of the field placement process and requires preparation and planning. This is a collaborative process that requires consistent and timely communication between the student and the Director/ Assistant Director of Field Education. Widener University Center for Social Work Education utilizes a field software program (Exxat) and learning management system (Canvas) for all field students to guide and organize the planning process. All ongoing communication takes place via Widener's Outlook email. It is the student's responsibility to check their Outlook account regularly during field planning and to use their University email for all correspondence with the Director/ Assistant Director of Field Education and potential host agencies.

Newly admitted full-time students (Regular and Advanced Standing) are provided log-in information to the field software program (Exxat) account and the Canvas field planning course upon admission to the program. Students are required to electronically complete an Application

for Field Placement and upload a resume containing current contact information. Once the application and resume upload are completed in Canvas, students make an appointment to meet individually with the Director/ Assistant Director of Field Education to explore the student's agency setting preferences, previous social work experience and skill level, practice domain interests, needs regarding geographic location, availability and future professional goals. Every effort is made to meet the student's learning interests and practical needs; however, the student is encouraged to be flexible with their requests within the parameters of field placement requirements outlined by CSWE and the agency capacity.

**The field placement process is a collaborative effort between the student and the Director/ Assistant Director of Field Education. Students should refer to the Canvas field planning course for specific instructions and deadlines pertaining to the planning process.**

Following the interview, the student will submit a list of possible field agencies to their assigned field director. The task of identifying appropriate agencies is purposeful, as it requires the student to demonstrate their understanding of generalist and clinical social work services and their ability to identify resources in the community where they reside. Students will receive verbal and written instructions/guidance on this process from their assigned Director/ Assistant Director of Field Education.

Once the student's list is received, the Director/ Assistant Director of Field Education will identify agencies that meet the supervision and learning criteria for the appropriate field year. Once a response is received from one of the agencies, the Director/ Assistant Director of Field Education will limit contact with other agencies and explore availability of MSW supervision and ability to accept a student, and present the student for consideration for student placement. The process of actively pursuing one agency at a time comes from the desire to be respectful of our agency partners' time.

If the student is accepted as a potential intern, the student and agency contact schedule a preliminary interview. Each student is given an outline of possible questions to help focus the interview. Once an offer is extended to the student, no further outreach is conducted on their behalf. If either the student or the agency representative has serious reservations about the placement, the Director/ Assistant Director of Field Education addresses these reservations with both parties to determine whether adjustments might be made that would facilitate a successful match. However, if the issues cannot be resolved, an interview with another agency is pursued. If a student is not accepted for a field placement, the Assistant/Director of Field Education seeks constructive feedback from the agency in order to work with the student developmentally in preparation for future interviews. It is the student's right to decline a placement offered, however such a decision comes with the risk of a possible delay in the start of field.

The ultimate determination of a field match is up to the Director/ Assistant Director of Field Education. Students who are not matched with an agency after two interviews must participate in an administrative review with the Director/ Assistant Director of Field Education to discuss next steps. Based on feedback received from the agencies and the student's response to feedback

discussed during the administrative review, options may range from a third field interview to a delay in placement.

The process of field placement for on-campus returning part-time generalist, part-time Advanced Standing students, and specialization year students begins during the Spring academic term. Students will be notified by the field office at the appropriate time to begin the process; however, it is ultimately the student's responsibility to be aware of their curriculum ladder and anticipated field start dates. Students will submit a completed field application and updated resume to their field software program (Exxat). The student will then schedule a meeting with the Director/ Assistant Director of Field Education to explore in more detail their field education needs. Following the interview, the student will submit a list of possible field agencies to their assigned Director/ Assistant Director of Field Education. The task of identifying appropriate agencies is purposeful, as it requires the student to demonstrate their understanding of specialization (clinical) social work tasks and their ability to identify resources in the community where they reside. Students will receive verbal and written instructions/guidance on this process from their assigned Director/ Assistant Director of Field Education. Once received, the Director/ Assistant Director of Field Education will pursue one agency at a time by contacting one of the appropriate agencies to explore availability of MSW supervision and ability to accept a student, and present the student for consideration for student placement. If the student is accepted as a potential intern, the student and agency representative schedule a preliminary interview. Each student is given an outline of possible questions to help focus the interview. Once an offer is extended to the student, no further outreach is conducted on their behalf. If either the student or the agency representative has serious reservations about the placement, the Director/ Assistant Director of Field Education will address these reservations with both parties to determine whether adjustments might be made that would facilitate a successful match. However, if the problems cannot be resolved, an interview with another agency is scheduled. If a student is not accepted for a field placement, the Director/ Assistant Director of Field Education seeks constructive feedback from the agency in order to work with the student developmentally in preparation for future interviews. It is the student's right to decline a placement offered, however such a decision comes with the risk of a possible delay in the start of field.

The ultimate determination of a field match is up to the Director/ Assistant Director of Field Education. Students who are not matched with an agency after two interviews will participate in an administrative review with the Director/ Assistant Director of Field Education to discuss next steps. Based on feedback received from the agencies and the student's response to feedback discussed during the administrative review, options may range from a third field interview to a delay in placement.

In the event that students must delay the start of their field placement (SW 552 or SW 637) – whether due to personal hardship, not completing required paperwork and tasks in time, or otherwise – they may be required to meet with the Director of Field Education and On-Campus MSW Program Director to discuss the factors leading to a field delay and progression in the program. **Unresponsiveness to meeting requests may affect a student's course progression (see "Course Registration").** The final decision regarding dismissal due to an extended delay of



field is up to the Director of Field Education and the On-Campus MSW Program Director (Please see “Field Instruction Probation and Termination Policy”).

All MSW students are required to go through the field placement process in order to be eligible for field placement. **Students may explore field options but are not to schedule agency interviews without the approval of the Director/ Assistant Director of Field Education.** This provides the Director/ Assistant Director of Field Education with the opportunity to vet the placement and ensure it is a viable option before the student or agency invests significant time. Not following the designated field process or scheduling independent interviews may place the student’s status in the field placement process in jeopardy.

### Processes Applicable to Both On-Campus and Online Students

All students entering generalist/ first year field and Advanced Standing students will be responsible for obtaining clearances. Students are required to utilize Castle Branch in order to obtain the clearances required in the state where they will complete their field placement. Previously obtained clearances that match the requirements listed in Castle Branch and that were obtained within six months from the field start date may be accepted. Requests to use previously required clearances must be discussed with the assigned field director. Students should be aware that positive reports for criminal history may impact the types of agencies students may pursue for field placement. Students are expected to disclose any criminal history to the Director/ Assistant Director of Field Education at the start of the field planning process in order to plan accordingly.

Widener Center for Social Work Education requires all students in the field to carry personal liability insurance in the amounts of \$1,000,000 per incident/\$3,000,000 aggregate for the duration of their field placements. ***Proof of insurance is to be submitted to the field office via the Canvas field planning course one (1) month prior to the field start date.*** This individual policy is in addition to the group policy provided by the University. A list of insurance providers is available in all Canvas field planning courses. Some agencies may require liability insurance in higher amounts than required by Widener. Such policies will be obtained at the expense of the student if the student accepts the placement.

Students who do not submit their clearances and/or malpractice insurance prior to the start of the semester will be permitted by Widener to start field, however hours will not count until all required documentation is submitted. Please note that the host agency may not allow students who have not completed required onboarding to start field until all requirements are met.

The following policy is adapted with permission from Temple University’s MSW Field Department:

In addition to Widener’s pre-field requirements, some host agencies will have additional clearances, training, and onboarding requirements. Such requirements must be met by the student and may include additional investment of time and/or finances.

Students should be aware that despite medical or recreational legalization, some field education sites may require drug testing. Students may be required to provide evidence of their authorized medical use of some medications. Students should also be informed that they may be prohibited



from some field sites due to evidence of use of prescribed and/or unprescribed drugs. Additionally, it may interfere with future job opportunities or the ability to obtain licensure. This issue is rapidly evolving, and students should keep apprised of applicable laws and regulations.

### Field Education at Place of Employment

Students who work in a setting where agency-based social work services are provided *may* have the opportunity to fulfill the field experience in the social work setting in which they are also employed. The student must have fulfilled the employee probationary requirements satisfactorily and may not have a history of non-academic issues in order to consider a worksite placement. Students must also consider and plan for the impact of any changes in their employment status on their field placement. Through careful planning with the Director/ Assistant Director of Field Education and the social work setting, a student may meet the field education requirements at their employment site.

In some circumstances, the student's field assignments and employment tasks *may* be the same and count toward required field hours **as long as the tasks have clear linkages to the nine social work competencies and the associated behaviors** specific to the appropriate field year (generalist or specialization/clinical). In order for a student's job to be approved to count towards field, the student will be required to identify a subset of clients and tasks that will serve as the focus of field during the two semesters of field education. **Due to the clinical specialization at Widener, student use of employment as a field placement is more likely to be applicable in the generalist year.** Any specialization year proposals must clearly identify clinical tasks. Clinical services may include – but are not limited to – assessing; diagnosing; developing treatment plans; and individual, couple, family, and group counseling or therapy. Worksite proposals may be presented to and reviewed by the field team prior to approval. If it is not feasible for employment tasks to count towards field, the student may explore a separate role and tasks within the agency of employment to serve as the field placement.

In all cases, the MSW field instructor must be different from the student's ongoing work supervisor to ensure, in part, that the field instructor is free to focus on the educational aspects of the placement rather than administrative issues. The student's MSW field instructor must meet all of the Widener University Center for Social Work Education's established criteria to serve as a field instructor. The worksite setting must support the student's field placement by providing sufficient resources as well as populations and/or social work roles and functions for the student's field education experience.

Both generalist and specialization students should have a preliminary discussion with the appropriate worksite administrator(s) prior to the initial field interview about the possibility of a worksite field placement and discuss these ideas with the Director/ Assistant Director of Field Education during the interview. If the preliminary discussion indicates that a worksite field proposal is viable, the student completes the Worksite Field Proposal (see MSW Student Policy Manual Appendices) and submits it to the Director/ Assistant Director of Field Education by the agreed upon return date, but no later than sixty (60) days prior to the start of the placement. Students requesting to count their employment tasks towards their field requirements will also be required to begin the development of the Learning Contract in order to clearly identify tasks and

activities that connect to the competencies and submit it to their assigned Director/ Assistant Director of Field Education for review along with the proposal.

The Worksite Field Proposal and Learning Contract, as applicable, are reviewed by the Director/ Assistant Director of Field Education to assess the educational focus of the proposed field placement. A meeting or conference call is held with the student, MSW field instructor, work supervisor and appropriate agency representative(s) in order to further develop and/or finalize the plan. The worksite field placement cannot be approved until all signed paperwork is received and a meeting/call is held. The student submits the signed Worksite Proposal to the Director/ Assistant Director of Field Education and to the agency field instructor. The student retains a copy of the approved proposal and provides a copy to the worksite administrator. The field office will upload the approved plan to the field software program (Exxat) in order for the field liaison to have access to it throughout the placement.

During the placement, the faculty field liaison closely monitors the worksite placement to ensure that the agreed upon plan is fully implemented, and that the placement is consistent with the educational objectives of the School and the proposal made by the student.

If a student is offered a position of employment at their field agency at any point during field planning or the field placement, they must discuss the details and impact on their field education with the Director/ Assistant Director of Field Education and Faculty Liaison. Students who accept a paid position, whether it be their field education role or a separate role will be required to submit a worksite proposal.

**If a student engages in a worksite field placement without disclosing to the field office or if the student changes the work and field tasks without discussing with the faculty liaison, an Administrative Review will be required and the student's status in field may be at risk.**

If a student proposes a field placement using their employment, they agree to remain in their job for the duration of their two-semester field placement and must consider and plan for the impact of any changes in their employment status on their field placement. If the student's job is terminated by the agency, the Director of Field Education will review the circumstances of the termination based on information received from the agency field instructor/ work supervisor, field liaison, and a meeting with the student through an Administrative Field Review. The Director of Field Education will lead this review and involve appropriate administrators and/or faculty to participate. Administrative Field Reviews will take place in person or via video conference. After the review is completed, the Director of Field Education will make a determination regarding the student's status in the field program.

### Field Education Roles and Responsibilities

The success of a field placement depends upon cooperation between the social work program, the agency, the Director/ Assistant Director of Field Education, the faculty liaison, the field instructor, the site supervisor (as applicable), and the student. The following describes the various participants' roles and responsibilities:

## Responsibilities of the Social Work Program

It is the program's responsibility to:

1. Develop and maintain a curriculum that will prepare the social work student for clinical social work practice with individuals, families, and small groups.
2. Select a diverse population of students with the intellectual and personal characteristics and commitment to the profession of social work to successfully complete the degree requirements.
3. Provide faculty to coordinate field instruction and to fulfill faculty liaison responsibilities.
4. Plan and conduct periodic informational meetings and seminars for faculty and field instructors in order to adequately integrate the field placement with the curriculum.
5. Provide field settings with an Agreement of Affiliation that specifies mutual expectations and responsibilities.
6. Provide group malpractice liability insurance for all students in the field.
7. Inform field instructors of their privileges within the University (e.g., library use, CEU events – on campus and web-based).

## Responsibilities of the Field Setting

It is the field setting's responsibility to:

1. Provide qualified field instructors who have an MSW and two years of post-graduate professional experience.
2. Provide an orientation to the student on the social work setting and its mission, purpose, functions, and services, including safety policies and procedures.
3. Give the field instructor adequate time to prepare for and provide a minimum of sixty (60) minutes of individual student supervision weekly, and to attend field instruction informational meetings and seminars conducted by the Center for Social Work Education on campus or web-based.
4. Meet in person or via Skype, Zoom, or other virtual technology at least once yearly and maintain on-going telephone and e-mail contact with the faculty liaison and/or Director/Assistant Director of Field Education.
5. Provide adequate space and learning opportunities for the student to gain social work practice experience. In the event that the student will engage in provision of teletherapy/telehealth services, the agency will provide specific training and oversight.

6. Sign an Affiliation Agreement with the University indicating acceptance of designated responsibilities.
7. In some circumstances when an agency is able to provide a suitable site supervisor but does not have a qualified MSW available to work with the intern, an off-site and/or volunteer supervisor *may* be assigned to provide the social work component of supervision. The use of an off-site MSW Field Instructor by each student must be approved by the Director/ Assistant Director of Field Education. Students with limited experience in the field or with documented non-academic behavior issues may be required to be placed only at an agency that can provide on-site MSW field instruction. When approved, off-site MSW field instructors are selected and assigned by the Director/ Assistant Director of Field Education and will work collaboratively with the agency-based site supervisor.

#### Responsibilities of Director/ Assistant Director of Field Education

It is the Director/ Assistant Director of Field Education's responsibility to:

1. Develop and administer the MSW field program for students in the MSW program.
2. Coordinate the student placement process including:
  - a. Exploring and selecting field placements.
  - b. Matching students with field placements appropriate to the student's learning needs.
  - c. Maintaining active collaboration with agencies on selection of qualified field instructors.
3. Provide consultation for faculty liaisons regarding the student's overall learning process. If a serious problem arises with student's learning and/or a placement must be terminated, the Director of Field Education will coordinate the process.
4. Plan one meeting/conference call per semester for faculty liaisons to exchange information on students' learning needs in the field and the operation of the field program as part of curriculum planning for the MSW program.
5. Coordinate all field activities, including the development of a field calendar.
6. Provide on-site and web-based informational meetings and educational seminars for field instructors.
7. Provide on-site and web-based orientation to students and to field instructors during the first semester of the field placement.

#### Responsibilities of the Faculty Field Liaison

It is the faculty field liaison's responsibility to:

1. Schedule at least one visit during the first semester of field on site or via video or phone conference depending on location and availability of agency supervisor(s). Maintain ongoing regular contact with the field instructor and site supervisor as applicable throughout the placement via e-mail and/or phone/video conference.
2. Assist the student in the preparation of their Learning Contract and monitor progress made in achieving goals identified in the student's Learning Contract.
3. Prepare the student for placement, help the student plan learning goals and tasks, resolve learning problems, and evaluate the student's progress through joint discussion with the student and their field instructor and site supervisor as applicable.
4. Write a field liaison site visit report (see MSW Student Policy Manual Appendices) after each agency visit/ virtual visit and upload to the student's account in Exxat.
5. Communicate pertinent information about the student's learning needs, problems, and progress to the Director/ Assistant Director of Field Education.
6. Participate in each semester's curriculum planning meeting and all other regularly scheduled field meetings/conference calls with the Director/ Assistant Director of Field Education and other faculty field liaisons in relation to the operation of the field instruction program.
7. Participate in the Field Instructor Trainings – Orientation, Supervision, Evaluation, Field Instructor Appreciation, and any other field-related events throughout the year.
8. Award a "pass" or "non-pass" grade to the student for each semester of field. In the event of a "non-pass" grade or a Conditional Incomplete, the faculty field liaison must alert the Director of Field Education and arrange for a joint review and planning meeting with the student, faculty liaison, and Director/ Assistant Director of Field Education.
9. Act as a liaison between the program and the social work setting. The faculty field liaison conveys the program's field expectations to field instructor and site supervisor (as applicable), helps plan and implement the field experience, and provides information with regard to the MSW curriculum as it relates to student's field placement. The faculty field liaison is also expected to support and develop the social work setting's continued availability as a field placement setting for our program.
10. Facilitate field discussions on field-related issues and concerns.
11. Meet with students individually in person or via Skype, Zoom, other virtual technology, or phone conference as needed to address field concerns.
12. Monitor worksite field placements to ensure differentiation of field assignments from employment assignments.

13. Monitor hours on a monthly basis by reviewing time sheets and supervision logs submitted to Exxat.
14. Submit a mid-semester report via e-mail to the Director of Field Education that identifies issues pertaining to student hours; seminar grades; and communication between the liaison, the student, and the agency.

### Responsibilities of the Field Instructor

It is the responsibility of the field instructor to:

1. Submit a copy of their resume/CV to the Center for Social Work Education.
2. Orient the student to the social work setting and its mission, purpose, function, and services within the community, including safety policies and procedures.
3. Structure the student's field experience by collaborating with the student in assessing learning needs, developing the Learning Contract, and reviewing regular progress made in achieving the goals identified in the Learning Contract.
4. Provide regular weekly individual supervisory sessions for a minimum of sixty (60) minutes and be accessible to the student as needed to maximize the field learning experiences. The program encourages field instructors to require generalist/ first year students to submit on a weekly basis material that documents student/client system interactions in detail. Such documents may include written process recordings, audio/videotapes, and/or role-play scenarios. Progress notes and/or other methods of documentation of professional activities required by the field setting should also be examined. Depending on learning needs and learning style, specialization/ second year field students are encouraged to submit at least one written process recording, video, or audio tape weekly to help focus the supervision of their clinical work with clients.
5. Include the student in other professionally-related learning opportunities such as teaching seminars, study groups, staff meetings, and conferences within and outside of the agency.
6. Serve as a professional role model who is committed to the values and ethics of the social work profession and to the importance of supervision as a critical element of the student's learning process. Widener calls on our agency partners to take an active anti-racist/anti-oppressive stance in their work with clients, colleagues, and students.
7. Engage the student in a collaborative process of evaluation of the student's performance and learning in the field. Formal evaluations are done at the end of the first semester and at the end of each full field experience. The evaluation process should provide an opportunity for the field instructor and student to jointly assess the student's learning progress, set new learning goals, and review the stages of the learning process.
8. Review and sign the student's monthly documentation of field hours and supervision that

is submitted to the faculty field liaison via Exxat.

9. Maintain adequate communication with the faculty field liaison with regard to the student's progress, and provide feedback on the program's curriculum and field education program.
10. Complete an Evaluation of Faculty Field Liaison and Program at the end of the field experience.
11. Attend meetings or trainings for field instructors provided by the Center for Social Work Education.

#### Responsibilities of the Agency Site Supervisor (as applicable)

It is the site supervisor's responsibility to:

1. Hold an advanced degree and/or expertise in a field related to social work such as Counseling, Marriage and Family Therapy, Psychology, etc.
2. Provide administrative supervision by meeting regularly with the MSW intern to assign and review their caseload, work assignments, documentation, and other related tasks as appropriate.
3. Provide the student with information regarding agency policy, development of professional relationships within the agency, and general insight regarding the culture of the agency and/or program.
4. Provide ongoing supervision and consultation as the intern works to acquire social work competency.
5. Serve as a professional role model. Widener calls on our agency partners to take an active anti-racist/anti-oppressive stance in their work with clients, colleagues, and students.
6. Communicate regularly with the student's MSW field instructor.
7. Participate in the visits/meetings/phone calls with the MSW field instructor and faculty field liaison scheduled each semester.
8. Participate in the student's preparation of the Learning Contract.
9. Verify hours and sign the student's monthly time sheet.
10. Collaborate with the MSW field instructor in preparing the student's end of semester evaluations.

#### Responsibilities of the Student

It is the student's responsibility to:

1. Actively participate in field planning, meeting all pre-set deadlines and communicating with their assigned field director clearly and consistently.
2. Provide all clearances required by the field placement agency at the student's expense. These can include, but are not limited to, physical health examinations, immunizations, and/or a drug screen.
3. Obtain and maintain malpractice insurance for the duration of the field placements in the amount of \$1,000,000 per incident/\$3,000,000 aggregate at the student's expense. Proof of insurance is uploaded to Exxat one month before the start of their first field placement.
4. Abide by the NASW Code of Ethics during coursework and in all aspects of the field placement. This includes behavior associated with the use of technology (including social media) in field. This Code can be found in the Appendices the MSW program policy manual and on the NASW website.
5. Address any personal issues that may impede the student's ability to interact respectfully with clients, supervisors, fellow students, colleagues, faculty, and/or field personnel.
6. Take an active anti-racist/anti-oppressive stance in their work with clients, supervisors, peers, faculty, and field personnel.
7. Adhere to the field placement calendar and to their social work agency's work schedule, personnel practices, and work policies.
8. Demonstrate mastery of the required social work competencies on the Field Evaluation.
9. Prepare a Learning Contract, in collaboration with the field instructor and site supervisor as applicable, that describes learning goals and activities for the field year and regularly review with their field instructor progress made toward achieving identified learning goals and tasks. The Learning Contract is uploaded to Canvas for review by the faculty liaison, and a copy is provided to the field instructor within the first semester of field.
10. Perform field assignments, including all required documentation and planned delivery of services, in accordance with the NASW Code of Ethics.
11. Participate in supervisory conferences by preparing an agenda and addressing issues related to field assignments, theoretical issues, and/or related agency concerns. Students are encouraged to actively use supervision by identifying their learning needs and resolving any barriers to learning that might interfere with their learning process. Generalist/ first year students are encouraged to submit weekly process material that documents student/client interactions in detail. Specialization/ second year students are encouraged to submit at least one written process recording, video, or audio tape weekly to help focus the supervision of their clinical work with clients.



12. Complete readings and written material assigned by the field instructor in a timely manner.
13. Participate in written and live field discussions on field-related issues and concerns with the faculty field liaison.
14. Participate in social work setting staff meetings, student seminars, teaching seminars, study groups, and conferences.
15. Share academic material related to field learning with the field instructor.
16. Maintain confidentiality of client contact, case records, and other social work setting material. Students must have approval of their field instructor before taking client-specific materials out of the office or using case material for class purposes, and client identity must at all times be appropriately protected. Students must adhere to all agency policies related to confidentiality.
17. Maintain on-going communication with the field instructor and faculty field liaison about any concerns or problems interfering with successful field performance.
18. If a student is offered a position of employment at their field agency at any point during field planning or the field placement, they must discuss the details and impact on their field placement with the Director/ Assistant Director of Field Education. Students who accept a paid position, whether it be their field education role or a separate role will be required to submit a worksite proposal.
19. Complete the minimum required field hours in two consecutive semesters (or three consecutive semesters for extended field students). Upload the monthly field documentation of field hours and supervision times to Exxat for the faculty field liaison to review.
20. Complete the electronic Student Field Placement Evaluation at the end of the second semester of each year of field placement.

## The Learning Contract

### Purpose

The purpose of the Learning Contract is to serve as a vehicle to allow the student and field instructor to share expectations and to define, clarify, and focus the learning journey in the field. In addition to meeting the identified competencies, dimensions, and related behaviors, the Learning Contract requires the student to develop **individual, specific, and measurable** learning goals and activities for each semester. The Learning Contract also serves as a useful document for evaluating the progress the student is making during, as well as at the end of, the semester (see MSW Student Policy Manual Appendices).

## Procedures

At the beginning of the first semester of field, the student will review with their field instructor and site supervisor (as applicable) previous field, work, and volunteer experiences; career goals; and particular learning interests and needs, as well as what they need to learn in the specific field experience in order to carry out a generalist or clinical social work role. From this assessment, the student will develop specific, **individual and measurable** learning goals and tasks or activities based on the competencies and behaviors as ways to meet these goals. The student and field instructor/ site supervisor need to discuss and share ideas for the Learning Contract, but **the student is responsible for writing and submitting a copy of the contract to the faculty field liaison via Canvas by the date assigned by the Director/ Assistant Director of Field Education and faculty field liaison.**

The Learning Contract template first identifies the competencies and behaviors and then requires the student to identify the individual activities or tasks that the student, with the field instructor's guidance, will complete to achieve these competency goals. Students in their generalist/ first year of field should strive to develop a Learning Contract that integrates the generalist perspective into practice. The field placement should allow the student a wide range of learning opportunities to practice generalist social work skills with individuals, families, groups, organizations, and communities. Students in their specialization/ second year, clinical field placement should strive to develop a Learning Contract that integrates the foundation curriculum of social work practice from a generalist practice and the clinical social work practice curriculum at the specialization/ second year. The field placement should allow the student a wide range of learning opportunities to practice clinical social work with individuals, families, and small groups.

The student and field instructor/ site supervisor will use the Learning Contract **throughout the semester** to monitor the student's progress in achieving their identified learning tasks and goals. Similarly, the student and field instructor will review the Learning Contract at the end of the semester in order to incorporate an assessment of the student's progress in achieving their learning goals into the Field Placement Performance Evaluation.

## General Field Policies and Procedures

Listed below are the policies and procedural guidelines that govern the structure of field education:

1. Generalist/ first year students spend sixteen (16) hours per week in the field, for a minimum of 450 hours in field instruction over the course of two semesters. All generalist/ first year field placement hours are completed within two consecutive semesters at a single agency approved by the Director/ Assistant Director of Field Education. Students and field instructors develop their own agreed upon schedules to complete these hours over the course of the placement. In order to pass the first semester of field (SW 552), a generalist/ first year student must have at least 225 documented field hours unless special arrangements have been made with the faculty field liaison and/or the Director/ Assistant Director of Field Education and agreed upon by the agency MSW field instructor and/or site supervisor.

2. Specialization/ second year students not utilizing the extended field option spend twenty (20) hours per week in the field for a minimum of 560 hours in field instruction over the course of two semesters. All specialization/ second year field placement hours for students not utilizing the extended field option are completed in no more than two consecutive semesters at a single agency approved by the Director/ Assistant Director of Field Education. In order to pass the first semester of field (SW 637), specialization/ second year students completing the two-semester field placement must have at least 280 documented field hours unless special arrangements have been made with the faculty field liaison and/or the Director/ Assistant Director of Field Education and agreed upon by the agency MSW field instructor and/or site supervisor. ***Please note that some agencies, especially the more selective sites, have their own internship requirements to which students must agree in order to accept the placement.***
3. The Center for Social Work Education offers the extended field option for specialization/ second year field students to enroll in a fourteen to sixteen (14-16) hour per week second year field placement that extends beyond the second semester (SW 638). All students requesting the three-semester placement must have at least 187 documented hours in the field in order to pass the first semester of field (SW 637). Students who elect this option will complete the same total number of hours in the field as the students who elect the traditional 20 hour per week option. Students who enroll in the extended field placement must take a one-credit field seminar (SW 652) during the third semester of field. In order to utilize this option, the student must begin the process of approval no later than the start of SW 638. There is a one credit fee assigned to students who register for SW 652.
4. Students accrue field hours only for the actual amount of time spent engaged in approved field-related activities. If students miss time for any reason (sickness, weather, holiday, etc.), the hours must be made up. The minimum number of field hours (450 for generalist/ first year and 560 for specialization/ second year) must be met by the end of the field year.
5. Widener Center for Social Work Education values a school/life balance and self-care for all students; therefore, students are not expected or permitted to be in contact with clients and/or agency staff or engaged in field activities outside of their scheduled field hours with the exception of urgent scheduling issues.
6. Students are permitted to count trainings and/or field-related seminars towards field time if they are required by the agency or pre-approved by the faculty field liaison as well as the student's agency field instructor and site supervisor as applicable.
7. Students are required to stay in the field placement until the end of the field year even if they have acquired the minimum number of hours prior to the end of the field year.
8. Any requested changes in scheduled field hours must be approved by the field instructor and the faculty field liaison. If the student works extra hours, they are entitled to take compensatory time during the same month if approved by the agency supervisor.
9. While every attempt is made to accommodate students' schedules, ***all students are***

***expected to be available at least one (1) full day per week during daytime business hours for field.*** Any exceptions must be approved by the Director/ Assistant Director of Field Education. A significant component of field education is the presence and active participation of a supervisor who meets the CSWE requirements while the student is in field. If a placement cannot be identified with appropriate supervision due to restricted student availability, the field placement may be delayed.

10. For students in the field over the fall and spring semesters: Students, together with the field instructor, agree to an attendance plan for the winter break between the fall and spring semesters. Students are strongly encouraged to take some amount of time off (at least one week) over this break but are not required to do so if they need the field hours or if they carry a caseload of clients. Students who carry a case load may be required by the agency to minimize the time away from the field placement during this break.
11. Students are required to complete monthly attendance records documenting their hours and supervision in the field. Time sheets/ supervision logs should be signed by the supervisor who is on-site and able to verify the student's attendance in field. These are submitted to the faculty field liaison via Exxat. Hours not documented, signed, and submitted to the liaison will not count towards field and may impact the student's ability to pass field.
12. Students provide their own transportation to and from the field site. Time spent traveling to and from the field site does not count towards field hours and should not be included in the monthly time sheet/ supervision log. Students should not drive clients unless the agency specifies to the intern that this requirement is part of the essential duties of the internship during the planning phase. In order for a student to transport clients, a written agreement between the student and the agency is required. This agreement must specify the agency's policy regarding transporting clients. Students will submit the written agreement to the Director of Field Education for review. Students are advised that internships requiring driving as an essential duty may require notification to the student's insurance carrier. The Center for Social Work Education does not assume responsibility for injury to or caused by the student during field.
13. If the student uses their car for field-related duties, the student and agency must prepare and submit a written agreement in relation to reimbursement.
14. Students requesting an exception to any policy or making a special request in planning and/or participating in or changing a generalist or specialization field placement will submit a proposal in writing after discussion with the Director/ Assistant Director of Field Education for review and approval by the Director of Field Education.
15. All students are expected to adhere to the standards of the NASW Code of Ethics and Widener University's Center for Social Work Education Code of Professional Conduct and the host agency's policy during the placement process and field work.
16. Any expression of concern about safety is taken seriously and addressed by the liaison and/or Director of Field Education. Per University policy, students are referred to Title IX

resources as appropriate (<https://www.widener.edu/profile/title-ix-office>). Additionally, concerns are explored directly with the agency field instructor and attempts are made to address and respond to the student's concern (for example, provision of an escort to the parking lot). When steps cannot be taken to resolve a student's concerns about safety, the Director of Field Education will work to re-place the student in an alternate agency. Depending on agency availability, this may require a delay to a subsequent semester.

## Evaluation and Field Practice Performance

It is the philosophy of the Center for Social Work Education to view a student's field education experiences from a developmental perspective. Skills and outcomes mastered one semester are built upon and further refined in the subsequent semesters of field instruction. The generalist/ first year of field provides students with opportunities to master the competencies, dimensions, and related behaviors required for social work practice from a generalist perspective with individuals, families, groups, organizations, and communities. The specialization/ second year of field education builds upon those competencies demonstrated in the first year and provides students with opportunities to master the competencies related to the concentration in clinical social work practice with individuals, families, groups, organizations, and communities.

In order to pass each semester of field, the following criteria must be met:

1. Students must earn an overall grade of 80% or greater in the corresponding field course/seminar.
2. Students must receive a passing field evaluation [a passing field evaluation consists of a minimum overall rating of three (3)].
3. Students must accrue the required number of hours.

<b>Course</b>	<b>Required Minimum # of Accrued Hours</b>
SW 552	<b>225</b>
SW 553	<b>225</b>
Total Generalist	<b>450</b>
SW 637	<b>280</b> (187 for extended field)
SW 638	<b>280</b> (187 for extended field)
SW 652	<b>187</b>
Total Specialization	<b>560</b>

Each year of field education (generalist and specialization) has a unique Field Evaluation (see MSW Student Policy Manual Appendices). The field evaluation allows the field instructor to address the student's performance through the lens of the behaviors and dimensions associated with each of the nine generalist or specialization competencies. There are four types of dimensional

content: skills, values, knowledge, and cognitive and affective processes.

At the end of each semester of field, the field instructor completes and submits a Field Evaluation reflecting the expectations of progress in competency development appropriate to the student's place in the program. Students' behaviors and their associated dimensions are directly assessed by the field instructor on a four-point scale measuring level of competence demonstrated by students (1=Pre-competence, 2=Emerging competence, 3=Competence, and 4=Advanced competence). Individual behavioral scores are then aggregated to create a single score for each Generalist and Specialized Competency.

In order to demonstrate competency for each semester of field, students are expected to earn an overall score of three (3) or above on each of the nine competencies. The competency score is based on the average of the scores earned on each related behavior. Generalist/ first year students are expected to demonstrate competency in all Core Competencies, Dimensions, and Related Behaviors, and specialization/ second year students are expected to demonstrate competency in all Specialized Competencies, Dimensions, and Related Behaviors. If the student does not earn a score of three (3) or above on each of the nine competencies, then the student may receive a grade of "Non-Pass" for the semester. The "Pass" or "Non-Pass" grade for field is awarded by the faculty field liaison. First semester evaluations with scores of one (1) or two (2) may result in a Conditional Incomplete, which may require the student to complete a performance improvement plan that will guide their demonstration of the competencies during the second semester of field.

It is strongly recommended that evaluation of field performance be a collaborative process between the student, field instructor, and site supervisor (as applicable). As part of the end of the semester evaluation process, students will be required by the faculty liaison to self-assess their performance over the semester in relation to the outcome criteria included on the Field Evaluation Form and the progress made toward achieving their individualized learning goals and activities identified in the student's Learning Contract. The student and field instructor should devote at least one supervisory session to discussion of the progress made in achieving individualized learning goals and to their respective ratings on the Field Evaluation Form. The Director/ Assistant Directors of Field Education provide training for field instructors and site supervisors each semester to explain the evaluation process.

### Changing Field Placement

Each student is carefully matched with an appropriate social work setting in order to maximize their learning opportunities and serve the agency clients. Upon acceptance of a placement, students commit to two consecutive semesters. Changes to approved and accepted placements are not typically approved once the placement is finalized and/or once the semester begins. It is recognized that changes in agency settings and/or in a student's life circumstances may impact learning opportunities in the field. The first step in addressing such changes includes problem-solving. The Director/ Assistant Director of Field Education and the faculty field liaison are available to support students should issues in need of problem-solving arise. It is important to discuss any changes that impact a student's success in field with the field instructor and field liaison in order to problem solve and re-evaluate learning goals and opportunities

Changes in social work field settings that may adversely affect the student's learning sometimes arise. Such changes may include but are not limited to agency closure, supervisor availability, client needs, agency schedule, etc.. When this occurs, the faculty field liaison explores with the field instructor and student the issues that arose and alternative solutions are explored. When students are interested in a new placement for reasons apart from changes that occur in the field setting, the first step is problem-solving with the field instructor and liaison. If issues are not resolved, the student will be required to submit a written proposal to request a change in field placement. The faculty field liaison consults with the Director of Field Education to review the student's written proposal/request for a change in field placement. The proposal must include the following:

- Reason for request to change.
- Problem-solving efforts previously made and outcome of efforts.
- Impact of change on agency and clients served.
- Impact of change on student's learning and progress in field course(s).
- Plan for moving forward.

If a change in placement is approved by the Director of Field Education, the Assistant Director of Field Education, faculty field liaison, and student will explore new field options. The Director of Field Education makes the final decision regarding approval to change field placements and the timing of re-placement. Please note that a change in field placement may impact the timing of the student's progression in the program.

### Field Education Probation and Termination Policy

During the field placement, most problems are successfully resolved collaboratively between the field instructor, site supervisor (as applicable), and student during regular supervision. However, if during the course of the semester the field instructor and/or site supervisor identify problems or assess that adequate progress is not being achieved, they are encouraged by the field office to pursue conflict/problem resolution with the student and with the support of the faculty field liaison and Director of Field Education as needed. A meeting/phone conference should be held with the field instructor, site supervisor (as applicable), student, and faculty field liaison to review the concerns and develop a clear plan and expectations for moving forward. A written statement summarizing the meeting and identified field performance problems should be prepared by the faculty field liaison within one week of the joint meeting, with copies submitted to the Director of Field Education, student, field instructor, and site supervisor (as applicable).

The student may be required to develop a plan for improvement to identify and monitor expectations and supports required in response to the concerns discussed. Throughout the balance of the semester, the faculty field liaison will monitor the student's progress and provide whatever support is needed to assist the student, field instructor, and site supervisor (as applicable) in helping the student achieve an adequate level of performance by the end of the semester. In the event that the field instructor or site supervisor decide to terminate a student's placement without following this communication process, the Director of Field Education and MSW Program Director (Campus-Based or Online) will conduct an Administrative Review involving input from the student, supervisor(s), and liaison.



In order to demonstrate competency, students are expected to earn an overall score of three (3) or above on each of the nine competencies in the field evaluation within the time frame of the field placement. The competency score is based on the average of the scores earned on each related behavior. Generalist/ first year students are expected to demonstrate competency on all Core Competencies and Related Behaviors, and specialization/ second year students are expected to demonstrate competency on all Specialized Competencies and Related Behaviors.

If the student does not earn an overall score of three (3) or above on each of the nine competencies, then the student may receive a grade of “Non-Pass” for the semester, which is the equivalent of an “F”. If the student does not earn an overall score of three (3) or above on each of the nine competencies in the first semester, the student may receive a grade of “Non-Pass” or a Conditional Incomplete (see below for information regarding Conditional Incomplete).

Students are required to demonstrate the competencies within the time frame of the field placement. In order to pass the first semester of field (SW 552), a generalist student must have the minimum required documented field hours unless special arrangements have been made with the faculty field liaison and/or the Director of Field Education. Specialization students completing the two-semester or three-semester field placement must have the minimum required documented field hours in order to pass the first semester of field (SW 637) unless special arrangements have been made with the faculty field liaison and/or the Director of Field Education. It is the student’s responsibility to submit signed time sheets monthly in Exxat in order for the faculty liaison to monitor cumulative hours. Students who do not provide documentation of hours are at risk of receiving a grade of non-pass. Students who are below the required number of hours at the end of the semester may request a grade of Incomplete. Such requests must be made in writing, include a plan for making up missing hours and be submitted prior to the last day of the semester.

The “Pass”, “Non-Pass”, or “Incomplete” grade for field is awarded by the faculty field liaison. The Center for Social Work Education’s policies for failure, withdrawal, and reinstatement apply to the field grade.

### Conditional Incomplete

While students are expected to demonstrate competency with overall ratings of three (3) or above on each of the nine competencies by the end of the field year, it is recognized that some students may still be within the pre-competence and emerging competence range (scores of one or two) at the end of the first semester of the field placement (SW 552 and SW 637). Under certain circumstances where a student was not able to demonstrate competency in some areas, the field liaison in conjunction with the Director/ Assistant Director of Field Education can assign the student a grade of Conditional Incomplete, which would place them automatically on probation.

Students placed on field probation receive an incomplete form signed by the Faculty Field Liaison and submitted to the Field Director outlining the specific performance deficits and the specific field competencies that need to be improved and fulfillment dates during the next semester of field instruction placement. This plan should be guided by the Learning Contract and developed in collaboration with the student, field instructor, and faculty liaison.



If the student does not show improvement in the identified areas by the specified dates, they may fail field placement for the entire year, which will result in dismissal from the program. The student must submit relevant documentation of their resolution of the identified problems. The Director of Field Education assesses the student's readiness for fieldwork for final disposition.

When the student is experiencing non-academic issues that impact their ability to sustain the field placement, the field liaison, in conjunction with the Director of Field Education, may assign the first semester student a grade of Conditional Incomplete. Students earning the grade of Conditional Incomplete due to non-academic issues will be required to develop a Student Performance Improvement Plan (SPIP) to address these areas. The SPIP is created in collaboration with the student and administrators. The purpose of the SPIP is to clearly outline areas requiring improvement and how said areas connect to the NASW Code of Ethics, the CSWE Competencies and Related Behaviors, the Center for Social Work Education Code of Professional Conduct, and/or the Graduate Student Handbook.

A student earning a Conditional Incomplete for the first semester of the field placement due to academic or non-academic issues may remain in the field placement for the second semester. Students with a Conditional Incomplete will collaborate with the liaison on the request for an incomplete form, including a plan for meeting agreed upon goals with dates for review. The request for an incomplete form with the corresponding plan will be submitted to the Director of Field Education and MSW Program Director. Students receiving a Conditional Incomplete are automatically placed on probation.

If, at the end of the second semester of field, the student receives overall scores of three or above on all nine Competencies and/or the identified non-academic issues have been resolved, the student will receive a passing grade for both field semesters. If the student does not show significant improvement in the identified areas by the specified dates, they may fail field for the entire year, which results in dismissal from the program.

#### Field Placement Terminated by the Field Agency

If a student's field placement is terminated by the agency for any reason related to student performance, behavior, attendance or otherwise, an administrative field review will take place. The Director of Field Education and MSW Program Director (Campus-Based or Online) review the circumstances of the termination based on information received from the MSW field instructor, site supervisor (as applicable), field liaison, and a meeting (on campus or via video conference) with the student. A determination is made by the Director of Field Education and MSW Program Director (Campus-Based or Online) whether or not the student will be offered a new field placement or receive a failing grade for field.

If it is determined that the student is unable to meet performance expectations in the field due to issues related to professional behavior, professional competence, ethical behavior, conduct, violation of agency policy around substance use/ impairment, or other reported offenses, the student may immediately receive a failing grade and be dismissed from the program. A failing grade due to field placement termination will supersede any other mark, including a "W" for withdrawal.

In certain circumstances, a student may be offered the opportunity to repeat their field experience after demonstrating understanding of the concerns that led to the termination, detailing the efforts made to address the concerns, and demonstrating evidence of improvement. Such determinations may include a Student Performance Improvement Plan (SPIP). The SPIP is created in collaboration with the student and administrators. The purpose of the SPIP is to clearly outline areas requiring improvement and how said areas connect to the NASW Code of Ethics, the CSWE Competencies and Related Behaviors, the Center for Social Work Education Code of Professional Conduct, and/or the Graduate Student Handbook.

In the event that a student is terminated in the final semester of field (SW 638), they may be required to re-take SW 637 in order to successfully complete two consecutive semesters of the specialization placement with the corresponding seminar course work.

#### [Administrative Field Review](#)

If a student is at risk of failing field at any time during the field placement due to academic or non-academic issues, an Administrative Field Review will be conducted. The Director of Field Education and MSW Program Director (Campus-Based or Online) will lead this review and invite the student and appropriate administrators and/or faculty to participate. Administrative Field Reviews will take place in person or via video conference. After the review is completed, the Director of Field Education and MSW Program Director (Campus-Based or Online) will make a decision regarding the student's status in the field program.

#### [Appealing Field Grade](#)

The Widener Center for Social Work Education Appeals Policy also applies to failures in the field placement.