



March 2017

RE: Employer placements

Requesting placement in the agency where you work requires additional evaluation and consideration. The standard policy of the Social Work Program states that interns will be placed in agencies that are different from their place of current or prior employment. This policy is based on the educational rationale that interns should be exposed to a broad variety of practice experiences and organizational cultures. Any such request must be submitted early in the placement process. The initial proposal should be submitted as quickly as possible.

As the enclosed policy indicates, the purpose of this preliminary review is to determine the nature of your current circumstances and the rationale for the agency's plan. The agency must be prepared to clarify in a written proposal how your proposed placement responsibilities will be different from your job and how your placement will be organizationally and administratively separate from your employment. It is essential that your employee role and proposed placement be clearly differentiated and physically separate. Secondly, the agency's proposal must be educationally sound in that it meets your educational needs and provides you with learning assignments that meet the learning objectives of the MSW Department.

In order to have interns, agencies must meet certain contractual requirements. Your first step is to determine whether your agency has an agreement in place with the University. The agency must have a qualified MSW (employed within the agency) available to provide weekly supervision. Once you have reviewed the attached information, please have your supervisor or administrative representative review the requirements, complete the proposal form, and submit it to the office of the field coordinator.

Thank you.

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## **USE OF EMPLOYMENT AGENCY AS FIELDWORK SITE**

Students who are employed in social work agencies may request that their agency be evaluated for suitability as a field placement site. The employee placement with one's employer is implemented by the agency by submitting a completed proposal form. The Field Coordinator, in consultation with the Field Committee, is responsible for reviewing the proposal and determining its acceptability.

The purpose of fieldwork is to provide an opportunity for interns to integrate theoretical knowledge and conceptual frameworks with direct social work practice in an agency providing social work services. It is an educationally focused experience with clearly defined educational objectives. Interns are required to be under the supervision of an experienced MSW level social worker. The practicum experience is design to provide new and challenging experiences to the intern, and to maximize learning opportunities. The practicum site must include experiences that engage interns in supervised, direct service activities, and provide practice experiences in the application of theory and skills. It is the educational goal of the program to produce a professionally reflective, self-evaluating, knowledgeable and relatively autonomous professional social worker. In order to assure the educational focus of the practicum experience, the following criteria must be met:

- The agency must be able to provide a practicum site for the intern during fieldwork hours that is in a different physical location, and that the learning assignments are significantly different from normal work activities and duties.
  - Assigned hours for practicum must be completed in a different program area or unit of the agency, allowing for an actual physical separation of employment and practicum activities.
  - The intern must have practicum assignments with a different client population, program area or service area during the fieldwork hours.
  - The proposed practicum assignments must be educationally focused and address the MSW department's educational objectives.
  - As part of the MOU, the agency must provide the employee with a work schedule of no more than 30 hours per week.
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- There must be available a qualified Field Instructor (MSW with 2 years post graduate experience) who is different from the line supervisor of the student. The Field Instructor must be available to the intern during the hours when the intern is in his or her practicum. There can be no possibility of a dual relationship.
    - The identified Field Instructor must complete the 3 hour field instructor training (Introduction to Field Instruction) prior to the implementation of the placement, and the agency must take steps to ensure that agency staff is informed of the requirements and expectations of the practicum.
  - The agency must submit a written proposal describing the differentiation between employment activities and practicum activities. The proposal must be signed off by the intern, proposed Field Instructor, work supervisor, and agency representative.
  - The proposal must provide a schedule that adheres to the practicum calendar: Specific hours and/or blocks of time must be designated as practicum hours. Typically, an intern is required to spend 16-20 hours per week in practicum – depending on whether the intern is completing the two year or three year program. Practicum hours must be scheduled at a minimum of 4 hours at a time; 8 hour blocks are preferred, and the schedule should provide the best educational experience. Hours will be clocked from mid-August through mid-May. Interns are not allowed to accelerate the accumulation of hours nor count any employment hours towards the required hours. It is the responsibility of the agency to obtain a copy of the current year Field Calendar.
    - If the proposal involves the assignment of a “Task Supervisor,” the proposal must provide specific details regarding this proposed arrangement.
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## **PROCEDURES FOR DEVELOPING EMPLOYMENT SITES AS FIELD PLACEMENT SETTINGS**

Interns requesting that their agency of employment be utilized as their practicum placement need to carry out the following steps:

1. Present your agency supervisor with the policies and procedures regarding the development of the proposal.
2. Ask your employer to complete the "Proposal to Utilize Employment Agency for Fieldwork Site and MOU." All sections of the form must be completed before submitted. Once it is completed and signed off by all parties, your employer should submit the proposal to:

**Attn: Field Education Office**

MSW Program DBH 122C  
California State University, Stanislaus  
One University Circle  
Turlock, CA 95382

Approved proposals and MOUs will be signed off by the Field Coordinator and returned to the agency. Written notification to the student will be made in all cases where a proposal is not approved. Students should have an alternative plan developed for the completion of practicum hours in the event that the proposal is not acceptable and/or does not meet educational requirements.

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