

## Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs) about the MSW Department Field Placement (Internship)

### 1. How many placements are required?

During the course of the MSW program, the Traditional and Hybrid students have two field placements. One in their foundation (1<sup>st</sup>) year and another in their advanced (2<sup>nd</sup>) year.

### 2. How many hours must I complete?

All students must complete a minimum of 1,000 hours in field placement over the course two years.

Traditional Program	Hybrid Program
250 hours per semester	500 hours per summer x 2 quarters
500 hours per year	13 weeks of full time equivalency x 2
1,000 total hours	1,000 total hours

### 3. How will I be graded on my field placement?

Students receive either credit or no credit for field placement. An organizational Field Instructor, in consult with an MSW Department Field Liaison will recommend a grade. The MSW department Field Liaison is typically the instructor of record. Students MUST:

- Complete all field placement hours (each semester and each year),
  - Attend all field instruction seminars,
  - Successfully meet and achieve the learning competencies, as articulated in the appropriate Practicum Learning Plan
- ✓ [SW 5040 Foundation Learning Plan & Evaluation Form \(1<sup>st</sup> year students\)](#)  
 ✓ [SW 5041 Advanced Learning Plan & Evaluation Form \(2<sup>nd</sup> year students\)](#)

### 4. What days of week are placement scheduled?

Traditional Program	Hybrid Program
Tuesdays and Thursdays only	Monday through Friday

### 5. Am I allowed to work more than the “normal” field placement days and hours?

Traditional Program	Hybrid Program
<i>The simple answer is no. Schedule changes that accelerate the accumulation of hours are not permitted. Students may not “bank” hours in an effort to complete field hours prior to the end of field placement. Field hours must be scheduled in blocks of no less than four hours.</i>	<i>No student is allowed to work more than 40 hours per week.</i>

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**6. Am I allowed to complete field placement hours when the university is not open?**

The MSW Department creates a field calendar and distributes it at the beginning of each academic year. It contains field placement dates and other important dates like holidays and campus closures. Students are discouraged from collecting hours when the university is closed.

**7. What is the MSW Department requirement for field supervision?**

Students must be supervised by someone in the agency with an MSW. This person, typically referred to as the Field Instructor (FI), must have two years of post-Masters experience. Students and Field Instructors must participate in supervision at least one hour per week.

Students are also supervised by someone in the MSW Department. This person is typically referred to as the Faculty Liaison (FL). The FL visit agencies in the fall and spring to evaluate the appropriateness of the placement and learning acquisition by the student(s).

**8. Do I have any role in selecting my placement agencies?**

The Field Coordinator plays a major role in matching students and placement agencies in the foundation year. Students play a major role in their advanced year. Students select three agencies with which they want to interview and then rank order their preferences. Ultimately, it is up to the placement agency to make the decision.

**9. What if an agency I am interested in is not on the list?**

This means that the MSW Department does not have a contract with the agency, and therefore, students are unable to complete their practicum hours there.

**10. Am I allowed to locate an agency to complete my practicum hours?**

Generally speaking, students' complete hours in agencies that the MSW Department already has a contract. On occasion, student have located agencies and subsequently students were allowed to complete their hours. This is decided on a case-by-case basis.

There is an exception for the Hybrid Program. Some Hybrid students are located in geographic areas outside of the MSW Department's geographic area. When this occurs, students are frequently asked for agency referrals.

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### **11. What if I have problems at my placement agency? How do I resolve issues?**

The process is outlined below:

- Student – The student is able to resolve the issue by him/herself.
- Field Instructor and/or Task Supervisor – When the student is unable to resolve the issue, the student has a conversation with the Field Instructor or the Task Supervisor or both in an attempt to solve the problem.
- Field Liaison – When the student and Field Instructor or Task Supervisor or both are unable to resolve the issue, the student has a conversation with the Field Liaison who will intercede as necessary.
- Field Coordinator – When the problem cannot be resolved with/by the Field Liaison, the Field Coordinator may become involved.

### **12. Are field seminars mandatory?**

Yes, integrative field seminars are mandatory. Seminars must be taken concurrently with practice courses in both foundation and advanced classes. Students must attend all seminars to receive credit for field placement.

### **13. Am I allowed to switch placement agencies?**

It is the practice of the MSW Department to avoid reassignment of students at any time after the first three weeks into the semester. However, reassignment of a student from one field site to another during an academic year may occur for several reasons: loss of the field instructor, agency changes that impact student's ability to learn, etc. Students experiencing performance problems, solely as a result of skill deficits, will not be reassigned to a different agency.

### **14. What if I can't or don't have transportation to my placement agency?**

The MSW program expects students to provide their own transportation to and from their field placement site.

### **15. What is the policy for transportation of clients?**

Agencies should not require students to transport clients in their personal vehicles. Students who agree to use their personal cars for field placement purposes must provide the agency with proof of insurance. Any travel reimbursement is arranged directly between the agency and the student.

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### **16. Am I insured while I am in placement?**

Yes, students are required to have professional liability insurance. Coverage is provided through the CSU Risk Management Authority, Executive Order Number 986. The MSW Department has a certificate of liability insurance.

### **17. Am I covered through Worker's Compensation while in placement?**

At the present time, the university and most agencies do not provide worker's compensation. As part of the agency orientation, students are expected to discuss all liability issues with their field instructor.

### **18. What are the rules about confidentiality?**

Students have an ethical, moral and legal obligation to take appropriate steps to ensure client confidentiality. To preserve client confidentiality students must:

- Comply with all agency policies and procedures regarding confidentiality and sign a confidentiality form where required by agency policy.
- Protect client confidentiality when carrying out our educational assignments.

### **19. Am I a mandated reporter?**

Yes, in many situations the law defines students as mandated reporters, who must report certain suspected conditions to the authorities. Reportable conditions may relate to situations involving child abuse, elder abuse, threats of harm, certain offenses, etc. Students must comply with all legal requirements related to mandated reporting. The student's agency orientation should cover policies and procedures related to this requirement.

### **20. Am I allowed to do a placement in the same agency in which I am employed?**

Any plan for such a placement is implemented well in advance. These are called employment based field placements. Policies and procedures and forms regarding employer placements are available from the MSW Department. Employer based placement requests should be discussed with the Field Director before submitting an application for a placement. Employment hours are NOT counted toward the MSW field placement hours.

**For more information, take a look at:**

- [Letter and Guidelines](#)
- [Employment based placement PROPOSAL and MOU](#)