



Thank you for your interest in having student interns placed with your agency. The MSW field practicum program requires first and second year students to complete an internship during the first two years of the MSW program. Typically, first and second year students begin their placements in the fall and continue in their placements for much of the academic year (August to April).

To become a placement site, the University requires a contractual relationship with an agency. The University's procurement department provides a contract that spells out the conditions of internship placements. Where needed, the practicum program can work with your agency in formulating a specifically tailored contract that meets agency needs, while still maintaining the accreditation standards of the practicum and university requirements.

The practicum program requires that an agency be able to provide certain learning assignments in order for students to meet educational goals and objectives. Because the program is designed to prepare students for integrative practice with an emphasis on social justice, an agency must be able to offer learning assignments that include opportunities for students to work with individuals, families, groups, organizations, and communities (e.g., collaboratives, systems of care). Integrative social work practice is the term used by the program to refer to the practice approach presented in the curriculum. To support students, agencies and field instructors, the MSW program assigns a faculty member to every student in placement. Faculty liaisons provide agencies with consultation and linkage between the MSW program and the agency.

All interns must be supervised by an MSW with at least two years of post-masters experience. In addition, the MSW program expects all MSWs who supervise students to complete 16 hours of training on supervision (offered by the program). It is strongly recommended that new field instructors complete supervision training before supervising an intern.

The University, through an enrollment fee, provides all students with malpractice insurance during their internship. To ensure proper risk management protocol, the practicum program recommends that all agencies consider (if such a procedure is not already in place) requiring a criminal background check of interns. As an educational institution, CSU Stanislaus is unable to initiate criminal background checks; students enrolled in the Child Welfare Training Project are an exception.

Additional information on the field program is available on the University's website. Enclosed is some basic information on the requirements for agencies and field instructors. At your earliest convenience, please complete the *practicum site information sheet* and a *field instructor vita form*. Return the forms to the address listed below attention, Field Coordinator. If you have additional questions please call (209) 667-3453.

Please accept my sincere thanks for your interest in having our interns placed with your agency.

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#### **Agency Settings**

The field program places students in a variety of human service agencies located in the University's six county service region. The field program gives priority to placing students with public and non-profit agencies providing services to children and or adult populations representing underserved at-risk minority groups. Several placements are in community mental health settings, public child welfare and social services, health related services, school based services, correctional settings, and long term services to adults.

Agencies are selected for their ability to provide quality instruction, commitment to collaborative participation in professional education, and commitment to client and community service. Priority is given to agencies involved in collaborative relationships with other human service systems and agencies providing integrated services to diverse populations.

Agency administrative support is a valued and necessary component of the practicum and represents a significant commitment to professional education. Agency administrators demonstrate their commitment to professional education by signing a formal agreement ensuring that the placement meets the MSW Program standards. The field instructor's job responsibilities are adjusted to make time available for student instruction and supervision. Necessary resources such as space, clerical support and field transportation are also provided.

#### **Selection of Agencies**

In determining the suitability of an agency for field placement, the social work program assesses an agency's interest and long term commitment to the practicum program. During preliminary discussions with the agency, the following areas are considered: auspices; target population served; nature and scope of services provided; size of social work staff; extent of community involvement; linkage with interagency collaboratives; standards of practice; availability of qualified staff for field instruction; facilities for students (space, recording facilities, etc.); and the willingness of the agency administration to support the field practicum program.

The Field Coordinator completes a visit to a potential agency and meets with the agency contact person and potential field instructors.

The purpose of the agency visit is to determine whether the agency meets practicum standards. The agency contact person is asked to complete a placement site information form and forward this to the program. This form is used to determine agency compliance with standards. Once it is determined that an agency is satisfactory, the University Purchasing Office sends an agreement for signature. Agency-University agreements are valid for five (5) years. Contracts must be reviewed and renewed at the expiration of each contract. Agencies may terminate the agreement with good cause.

The criteria used in evaluating agencies to determine their suitability for use as field instruction settings are as follows:

- Able to provide students an exposure to diverse client populations with particular emphasis on social justice issues and cultural and ethnic diversity and under-served oppressed groups.

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- Able to provide a comprehensive range of learning experiences involving all size systems of intervention.
- Philosophy of service and practice is compatible with the educational objectives of social work.
- Practices are consistent with the professional Code of Ethics of the profession.
- The agency is compliance with Title IV of the Civil Rights Act of 1964; that in the delivery of services, no person shall be excluded from participation or denied benefits, or is otherwise subjected to discrimination under any program or activity of that agency or center on the basis of race, color, or national origin.
- Maintains a working and learning environment free from sexual harassment of its students, employees and those who apply for student or employee status. (See sexual harassment policy in Item X)
- The agency has a respected standing by the professional community.
- The administration and staff are committed to the philosophy and mission of the Master of Social Work Program.
- The agency maintains sufficient staff to support the service mission of the agency without reliance on students.
- The agency has sufficient staffing resources to provide a qualified field instructor or agrees to other supervision arrangements as required.
- The agency agrees to sign an agreement with the University. The agreement provides an elaboration of the expectations and responsibilities of placement agencies.

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**Field Instructors**

The field instructor is the student's mentor and supervisor in the placement site. The field instructor instructs, supervises, provides on-going feedback, and assesses student acquisition of knowledge, skills, and values. Field instructors are selected for the quality of their field instruction and commitment to educational standards of the MSW Program. The MSW Program looks for the following qualifications when selecting field instructors:

- MSW from an accredited program.
- Two years post-MSW experience in human services.
- Commitment to be available for an academic year.
- Knowledge and practice competence related to integrative practice and the student's concentration, "Children" or "Adults".

All potential field instructors complete a Field Instructor Vitae Form, which provides information on the person's academic background and work experience. The Field Coordinator reviews this information to ensure that all field instructors meet the requirements listed above.

The MSW program provides an orientation for new field instructors prior to placing students in agencies. The orientation introduces the field instructors to the MSW curriculum and the University's academic policies. It also prepares them to carry out educational assessments, determine student's learning styles, prepare educational contracts, supervise students, use classroom assessment techniques, evaluate the progress of learning, and write summative evaluations.

At the end of each academic year, Field Instructors will be provided with a *Field Instructor Feedback to Field Coordinator* form. The completion of this form will provide valuable information on how the Faculty Liaison can better assist the Field Instructor.

**Off-Site Field Instructors**

Under certain circumstances the field practicum program may permit the use of an off-site MSW to provide field instruction for a student placed in an agency with no MSW on staff. In addition to meeting the requirements for being a field instructor, off-site field instructors should have:

1. One year of work experience in an agency or service setting similar to the placement site.
2. Complete a field instructor orientation offered by the MSW program prior to assuming off-site field instruction responsibilities.

They will be expected to carry out the following responsibilities:

- Availability to meet with the student **at** the placement site a minimum of every other week.
- Availability to meet with the student every week for a minimum of one hour of supervision.
- Availability to meet with the student and the on-site task supervisor at least once a month.
- Take primary responsibility for ensuring the learning plan and required evaluations are completed.

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**Agency Responsibilities**

- Permit each student who is designated by the University to receive a social work field practicum at the Agency and shall furnish, and permit such students and University instructors' free access to appropriate Agency facilities for the field practicum.
- Furnish appropriate Agency facilities, in such a manner that there will be no conflict in the use thereof between the University's students and students from other educational institutions, if any.
- Maintain the Agency facilities used for the field practicum in such a manner that the facilities shall be available to the students and field instructor when needed.
- Assure that staff is adequate in number and quality to provide field instruction and to insure continuous management of the student program in cooperation with the Field Coordinator.
- Provide the resources necessary to provide an educationally focused field practicum in accordance with the policies and procedures of the social work program.
- Provide office space, telephone access, supplies, and other materials to enable a student to function effectively in their placement.
- Designate qualified field instructors.
- Modify the schedule of the designated field instructors to assure that adequate time is available for student supervision, field instructor meetings, training, and orientation.
- Adhere to policies and practices reflecting nondiscrimination applied to clients, staff, and students.
- Orient agency staff, who are enrolled as MSW students, as to the role of employee/student in the agency.
- Have the right, after consultation with the University, to refuse to accept further placements of the University's students who in the Agency's judgment are not participating satisfactorily in said program.
- Notify the Institution's Field Coordinator and the Field instructors, in advance, of any change in the Agency's personnel appointments, which may affect the student field program.

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#### **Responsibilities of the Field Instructor**

1. Provide an educationally focused fieldwork experience in accordance with policies and procedures of the Social Work Program, including the use of the following: learning contracts, educationally based recordings, appropriate supervision, and assignment of appropriate learning experiences.
2. Provide an agency orientation to the student at the beginning of the placement period.
3. Develop and assist the student in preparing a learning agreement during the first four to six weeks of placement.
4. Provide educationally focused experiences and opportunities for student learning, based on the learning agreement objectives and action plans.
5. Complete and submit a written evaluation at the end of each semester outlining student progress and further learning goals and needs.
6. Meet with the faculty liaison during the placement period to assess student progress and coordinate learning experiences.
7. Provide regular supervision for their student and be available for spontaneous consultation and/or supervision as needed.
8. Be available in the agency during the fieldwork hours when the student is present and arrange for back-up supervision when necessary.
9. Maintain communication with assigned field liaison or coordinator regarding student performance, potential difficulties or areas of concern, or changes in the agency which impact fieldwork.
10. Participate in field instructors training seminars.
11. Attend field instructor's orientations and other field related activities.
12. Provide feedback about the field program by completing the Field Instructor *Feedback to Field Coordinator* form at the end of each academic year.