

# LIBERTY UNIVERSITY

DEPARTMENT *of*  
SOCIAL WORK

## **Bachelor of Science in Social Work Residential and Hybrid Programs Field Manual**



**Liberty University  
Department of Social Work**

DeMoss 3314  
1971 University Blvd.  
Lynchburg, VA 24515  
(434) 582-757

**Christine Fulmer, MSW**  
**Lead Chair of the Department of Social Work**  
**(434) 592-7665**

**Cheryl Nitz, MSW**  
**Chair of Field Education**  
**(434) 592-6289**

**Stacey Hildebrand**  
**Field Support**  
**(434) 582-7686**

**Rebeca Leon**  
**Field Support**  
**(434) 582-7732**

**Kate Milner**  
**Field Support**  
**(434) 592-3118**

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# I. INTRODUCTION

Field education is a central component of the instruction and training that students receive to prepare them for a professional career in social work. Fieldwork offers students the opportunity to:

- Develop and demonstrate competencies as a social work professional as defined by the Council on Social Work Education
- Apply the theory and knowledge gained in the classroom to different practice settings as a beginning practitioner, and to broaden their exposure to this application in different settings by sharing experiences with peers who are placed in other various settings
- Receive support and mentoring during this early professional experience from an experienced Field Instructor, a Faculty Liaison, and their peers

This manual provides an overview of Liberty University's social work field education policies, procedures, and requirements for the Bachelor of Science in Social Work (BSSW). The purpose of the manual is to orient and offer guidance to BSSW students, faculty, field instructors, and other agency personnel involved in social work field education as they engage in the field experience.

In addition to describing the roles and responsibilities of each party involved, this manual provides an overview of the Department of Social Work's mission statement, goals and learning outcomes; the social work competencies and behaviors adopted by the Department; Code of Ethics for the National Association of Social Workers (NASW) and the North American Association of Christians in Social Work (NACSW); and the Council on Social Work Education (CSWE) Education Policy and Accreditation Standards (EPAS). This information offers guiding principles for social work education that support the goal of successfully preparing students for a professional career in social work.

Any inquiries or comments regarding any of the information included in this manual should be directed to [socialworkfield@liberty.edu](mailto:socialworkfield@liberty.edu). Written inquiries and/or comments may also be sent by postal mail to the Department of Social Work, DeMoss Hall Room 3315, Liberty University, 1971 University Blvd. Lynchburg, VA 24515.

## II. MISSION STATEMENT, GOALS, AND LEARNING OUTCOMES

### A. Mission Statement

The mission of Liberty University's Department of Social Work is to prepare Christ-centered men and women to impact the world through competent generalist social work practice by equipping them with the knowledge, values, skills and cognitive and affective processes of the profession essential for enhancing individual, family, and community well-being.

### B. Program Goals

The goals of Liberty University's Department of Social Work are to develop Christ-centered competent social workers, who:

1. Advocate for oppressed people groups;
2. Embrace the values of the profession;
3. Recognize the impact of the environment on human behavior;
4. Are empathetic and strength-based;
5. Practice with research-informed wisdom;
6. Demonstrate cultural and relational humility; and
7. Are healthy emotionally, physically, and spiritually.

### C. Program Learning Outcomes

Upon completion of the BSSW, the student will be able to demonstrate competency as a beginning social work professional in the following areas:

- Integrate faith in the practice of social work.
- Demonstrate Ethical and Professional Behavior (combined the two)
- Engage Diversity and Difference in Practice
- Advance Human Rights and Social, Economic & Environmental Justice
- Engage in Practice-Informed Research & Research-Informed Practice
- Engage in Policy Practice
- Engage with Individuals, Families, Groups, Organizations and Communities
- Assess Individuals, Families, Groups, Organizations and Communities
- Intervene with Individuals, Families, Groups, Organizations and Communities
- Evaluate Practice with Individuals, Families, Groups, Organizations and Communities

### III. SOCIAL WORK COMPETENCIES AND PRACTICE BEHAVIORS

The table below depicts Liberty University’s social work competencies and the behaviors that relate to each competency. As a program accredited by the Council on Social Work Education (CSWE), the program reflects these competencies as defined by CSWE in the 2105 Educational and Policy Standards. The social work curriculum, including field education, is generalist focused and is designed to prepare students to master each competency through demonstration of knowledge, values, skills, cognitive and affective processes, as well each of the associated behaviors in a real-life practice setting. Students are prepared in a generalist approach that facilitates development of competencies that can be applied broadly to a variety of clients and populations, at a variety of levels (micro, mezzo, macro) and in a variety of settings.

SOCIAL WORK COMPETENCIES	SOCIAL WORK PRACTICE BEHAVIORS
<p><b>DEMONSTRATE ETHICAL AND PROFESSIONAL BEHAVIOR</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• make ethical decisions by applying the standards of the NASW Code of Ethics, relevant laws and regulations, models for ethical decision-making, ethical conduct of research, and additional codes of ethics as appropriate to context;</li> <li>• use reflection and self-regulation to manage personal values and maintain professionalism in practice situations;</li> <li>• demonstrate professional demeanor in behavior, appearance, and oral, written and electronic communication</li> <li>• use technology ethically and appropriately to facilitate practice outcomes; and</li> <li>• use supervision and consultation to guide professional judgment and behavior.</li> </ul>
<p><b>ENGAGE DIVERSITY AND DIFFERENCE IN PRACTICE</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• apply and communicate understanding of the importance of diversity and difference in shaping life experiences in practice at the micro, mezzo, and macro levels;</li> <li>• present themselves as learners and engage clients and constituencies as experts of their own experiences; and</li> <li>• apply self-awareness and self-regulation to manage the influence of personal biases and values in working with diverse clients and constituencies</li> </ul>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• apply their understanding of social, economic and environmental justice to advocate for human rights at the individual and system levels</li> </ul>

SOCIAL WORK COMPETENCIES	SOCIAL WORK PRACTICE BEHAVIORS
ADVANCE HUMAN RIGHTS, SOCIAL, ECONOMIC & ENVIRONMENTAL JUSTICE	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>engage in practices that advance social, economic and environmental justice.</li> </ul>
ENGAGE IN PRACTICE-INFORMED RESEARCH AND RESEARCH- INFORMED PRACTICE	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>use practice experience and theory to inform scientific inquiry and research;</li> <li>apply critical thinking to engage in analysis of quantitative and qualitative research methods and research findings; and</li> <li>use and translate research evidence to inform and improve practice, policy, and service delivery.</li> </ul>
POLICY PRACTICE	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>identify social policy at the local, state and federal level that impacts well-being, service delivery and access to social services.</li> <li>assess how social welfare and economic policies impact the delivery of and access to social services;</li> <li>apply critical thinking to analyze, formulate and advocate for policies that advance human rights and social, economic and environmental justice.</li> </ul>
ENGAGE WITH INDIVIDUALS, FAMILIES, GROUPS, ORGANIZATIONS, AND COMMUNITIES	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>apply knowledge of human behavior and the social environment, person-in-environment and other multidisciplinary theoretical frameworks to engage with clients and constituencies; and</li> <li>use empathy, reflection, and interpersonal skills to effectively engage diverse clients and constituencies.</li> </ul>
ASSESS INDIVIDUALS, FAMILIES, GROUPS, ORGANIZATIONS, AND COMMUNITIES	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>collect and organize data and apply critical thinking to interpret information from clients and constituencies.</li> <li>apply knowledge of human behavior and the social environment, person-in-environment, and other multidisciplinary theoretical frameworks in the analysis of assessment data from clients and constituencies.</li> <li>develop mutually agreed-on intervention goals and objectives based on the critical assessment of strengths, needs, and challenges within clients and constituencies; and</li> </ul>

SOCIAL WORK COMPETENCIES	• SOCIAL WORK PRACTICE BEHAVIORS
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• select appropriate intervention strategies based on the assessment, research knowledge, and values and preferences of clients and constituencies.</li> </ul>
<p><b>INTERVENE WITH INDIVIDUALS, FAMILIES, GROUPS, ORGANIZATIONS, AND COMMUNITIES</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• critically choose and implement interventions to achieve practice goals and enhance capacities of clients and constituencies;</li> <li>• apply knowledge of human behavior and the social environment, person-in-environment, and other multidisciplinary theoretical frameworks in interventions with clients and constituencies;</li> <li>• use inter-professional collaboration as appropriate to achieve beneficial practice outcomes;</li> <li>• negotiate, mediate, and advocate with and on behalf of diverse clients and constituencies; and</li> <li>• facilitate effective transitions and endings that advance mutually agreed-on goals</li> </ul>
<p><b>EVALUATE PRACTICE WITH INDIVIDUALS, FAMILIES, GROUPS, ORGANIZATIONS, AND COMMUNITIES</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• select and use appropriate methods for evaluation of outcomes;</li> <li>• apply knowledge of human behavior and social environment, person-in-environment, and other multidisciplinary theoretical frameworks in the evaluation of outcomes;</li> <li>• critically analyze, monitor, and evaluate intervention and program processes and outcomes; and apply evaluation findings to improve practice effectiveness at the micro, mezzo and macro levels</li> </ul>
<p><b>INTEGRATE FAITH AND PRACTICE</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Integrate faith and practice through a process of ethical reasoning</li> <li>• Respect spiritual diversity</li> <li>• Assess client strengths and needs using bio-psycho-social-spiritual model</li> </ul>

## IV. Guiding Principles

### A. NASW CODE OF ETHICS

The *NASW Code of Ethics* is a key set of values, principles, and standards that guide the conduct of faculty, staff and students at Liberty University's Department of Social Work. The *Code* is relevant to all social workers and social work students, regardless of their professional functions, the settings in which they work, or the populations they serve. A copy of the Code of Ethics is in the student handbook.

As described on the NASW website, the [NASW Code of Ethics](#) serves six purposes:

1. The *Code* identifies core values on which social work's mission is based.
2. The *Code* summarizes broad ethical principles that reflect the profession's core values and establishes a set of specific ethical standards that should be used to guide social work practice.
3. The *Code* is designed to help social workers identify relevant considerations when professional obligations conflict or ethical uncertainties arise.
4. The *Code* provides ethical standards to which the general public can hold the social work profession accountable.
5. The *Code* socializes practitioners new to the field to social work's mission, values, ethical principles, and ethical standards.
6. The *Code* articulates standards that the social work profession itself can use to assess whether social workers have engaged in unethical conduct. NASW has formal procedures to adjudicate ethics complaints filed against its members. In subscribing to this *Code*, social workers are required to cooperate in its implementation, participate in NASW adjudication proceedings, and abide by any NASW disciplinary rulings or sanctions based on it.

### B. NACSW STATEMENT OF FAITH AND PRACTICE

NACSW is a membership association that seeks to equip its members to integrate Christian faith and professional social work practice. To this end, NACSW established a set of values, principles, and standards to guide the conduct of social workers seeking to professionally integrate the Christian faith into their social work practice. The [NACSW Statement of Faith and Practice](#) guides the practice of faculty, staff and students of Liberty University's Department of Social Work.

### C. CSWE EDUCATION POLICY AND ACCREDITATION STANDARDS

The Council on Social Work Education (CSWE) uses the Educational Policy and Accreditation Standards (EPAS) to accredit baccalaureate- and master's-level social work programs. As described on their [website](#), CSWE supports academic excellence by establishing thresholds for professional competence. It permits programs to use traditional and emerging models of curriculum design by balancing requirements that promote comparability across programs with a level of flexibility that encourages programs to differentiate. The Liberty University Department of Social Work is committed to adhering to the EPAS standards and has secured accreditation for its BSSW program. This ensures that the program is congruent with current standards of practice in the field of social work and provides a framework by which ongoing peer evaluation ensures high standards of quality. Additional benefits to graduates are that such accreditation is required for graduates to pursue licensure and/or Advanced Standing eligibility for graduate social work education.



## V. Overview of Field Education

Field education is a central component of the instruction and training that students receive to prepare them for a professional career in social work. Fieldwork offers students the opportunity to:

- Develop and demonstrate competencies as a social work professional as defined by the Council on Social Work Education
- Apply the theory and knowledge gained in the classroom to different practice settings as a beginning practitioner, and to broaden their exposure to this application in different settings by sharing experiences with peers who are placed in other various settings
- Receive support and mentoring during this early professional experience from an experienced Field Instructor, a Faculty Liaison, and their peers

Social Work students must complete two separate and distinct internship experiences, junior and senior field, in order to graduate with a Bachelor's degree in Social Work (BSSW) from Liberty University. In the Junior and Senior Field Experience and Seminar courses, students receive supervised practice experience in an agency setting; while concurrently attending a seminar class that offers the opportunity to process their field experience. The integration of classroom and field activities provides students with a unique and comprehensive learning experience to support their development as professional social workers. Requiring two separate field experiences helps provide students with a well-rounded and generalist experience in the field.

Junior field students are required to complete a total of 100 hours (10 hours per week for 10 consecutive weeks) in a semester in addition to a weekly 2-hour synchronous seminar. Senior field students are required to complete a total of 400 hours (32 hours per week over 14 consecutive weeks) in addition to a weekly, 2-hour, synchronous seminar. Senior field students may alternatively select to complete the requirement in 20 hours per week over 22 weeks (1 ½ semesters). The junior field placement must be completed before the senior field placement and must provide a different learning experience with a different population and/or setting. *The Social Work Department does not provide exemptions to these requirements based on previous work or life experience.*

The Social Work Department offers field opportunities with a variety of client populations in a variety of practice settings (both private and public) for both junior and senior students. These settings include opportunities to engage in different levels of practice including direct practice with individuals (micro level), families and groups (mezzo level) and practice with communities or other system intervention such as policy analysis, administration, and research (macro-level). Students are also offered field opportunities in a variety of geographical locations, including international settings.

## VI. Agency Partners

### A. Criteria for Agencies hosting BSW Students in Field Experience

**Tasks & Assignments:** Agencies must be able to offer assignments, activities and opportunities that to help students to extend their classroom learning, further develop knowledge, values, skills, cognitive & affective processes, and to learn a broad range of social work interventions common to generalist social work practice and engage in behaviors associated with the social work competencies in a real-life setting.

Agencies must also be able to provide suitable space and resources necessary to carry out the tasks student(s) are assigned (e.g. desk, computer, telephone, etc.).

Agencies must provide adequate orientation to its client population, the agency, and its policies and practices. It is the expectation of the Department of Social Work that each agency serving as a field placement will have racial discrimination and harassment policies in place that guide the expected conduct of agency staff and volunteers.

**Supervision:** The agency will identify a staff member who would be willing to serve as the student's Agency Task Supervisor (ATS). The ATS must have adequate release time from his/her employer to provide direct supervision for social work students as they complete their required hours of field experience and assignments associated with their field experience course.

***Agency Task Supervisor (ATS):*** The individual appointed or designated by the Agency to oversee the daily tasks of the student. This person will conduct student orientations and in-service trainings, supervise the student's daily tasks, coordinate assignments and activities, verify timesheets, conduct regular supervision, and provide regular feedback as well as a final formal evaluation of student performance. They also will participate in at least two contacts with the Faculty Field Liaison (one brief conference call to confirm the Learning Contract, and one site visit or conference call to discuss student performance and evaluation). *If the Agency Task Supervisor meets the requirements for Field Instructor, they may fulfill both roles.*

***Field Instructor (FI):*** The Council on Social Work Education requires that BSW students receive instruction from Field Instructors who hold degrees from in an accredited program – either a Bachelors of Social Work (BSW) with 2 or more years post-graduate social work experience or a Master's of Social Work (MSW) with 1 or more years post-graduate social work experience. Licensure (LSW, LISW, LCSW, etc.) is preferred but not required. The Field Instructor will provide a social work perspective and provide ongoing feedback through a minimum of one (1) hour of weekly supervision with the student.

If an agency has no staff members who meet the qualifications of a Field Instructor, the student will need a third-party External Field Instructor upon whom the parties shall mutually agree. Options to fulfill this requirement are as follows:

***Field Instructor identified by the agency:*** If the agency has a degreed social worker affiliated with the agency who meets the education and experience requirements to serve as a Field Instructor, this is often ideal as that social worker is familiar with the agency.

***External Field Instructor:*** If the agency does not have a staff member who meets the requirements for Field Instructor, they agree to having a third-party external field instructor provide external supervision to the student for 1 hour a week during the placement.

This individual will provide a social work perspective and facilitate student learning through ongoing feedback in a minimum of one (1) hour of weekly supervision with the student. The supervision may be provided in person or by phone or videoconferencing.

The Agency Task Supervisor and the Field Instructor will collaborate in the development of the Learning Contract, Mid-semester evaluation, and Final Student Performance Evaluation. Both of these supervisors will communicate as needed with each other and with the Faculty Field Liaison to discuss the student's progress and any challenges that arise.

### **Student Intern Job Description**

BSW students are able to lead a variety of case management, counseling, and other tasks on behalf of individuals, families, groups, organizations, and communities. Some of the most common tasks for a BSW intern include:

- Scheduling client appointments;
- Providing support for an intake line and help with the triage of clients coming in for services;
- Utilizing a psychosocial assessment tool to engage clients—and, when appropriate, other members of client systems—in information-gathering and decision-making processes to help clients identify their goals, strengths, and challenges;
- Collaborating with clients and other service providers to develop, implement, monitor, and amend individualized case plans that promote clients' strengths, advance clients' well-being, and help clients achieve their goals;
- Conducting home visits to facilitate case plan development, implementation and monitoring;
- Identifying appropriate community resources for a client based on review of the client's assessment;
- Offering education, advocacy, referrals and supportive counseling to clients;
- Documenting case management activities in the appropriate client record system;
- Facilitating groups and designing group activities;
- Participating in or presenting staff meetings to discuss client cases
- Supporting the development and implementation of an agency's community education and public awareness efforts
- Supporting an agency's efforts to engage in policy analysis and policy action to advance social and economic justice; and
- Attending and taking notes during community meetings (e.g. FAPT meetings).

Students will collaborate with the agency to identify tasks that develop and demonstrate skill in each of the Social Work competencies.

### **Central Virginia Area (CVA) Partners**

The Department of Social Work partners with numerous organizations in the Central Virginia Area. The Department is eager to be of service to these agencies by providing well-prepared interns who can assist in expanding capacity to serve clients. This is also of immense value to our students who have the opportunity to be mentored by professionals in our local area.

Local partnering agencies are invited to attend a Field Fair on campus preceding the next placement semester. At this event, agency partners come to campus to interview multiple pre-selected students. Students are expected to interview with at least three potential field placements. In the fall and spring

semesters, the Department field staff hosts the Field Fair for students completing their Field Experience in the Central Virginia Area (CVA). At this event, local agency partners come to campus to interview students. Each agency has the opportunity to interview up to 6 students during the event.

While this event is optional for agencies, it is a highly beneficial and effective way to find the best placement match for both the agency and the student.

Students preparing for senior field may be identified by the field team as a particularly good fit for a specific agency in light of their interests and abilities. In this case, the senior is given the option to be pre-selected. In this case the student commits to interviewing at that particular agency and to completing the placement there if the interview is successful and the agency approves it. The student may choose to decline and instead participate in the Field Fair. If the student does want to proceed with the pre-selection process, the field team will contact the agency and offer this possibility. This allows seniors to interview and potentially be placed before the Field Fair, and allows agencies to have seniors secured before the Field Fair process.

Junior or senior students may also be given the option to interview at an agency which did not participate in the Field Fair process.

Once all interviews have been completed, both agencies and students submit Feedback Forms. Agencies provide feedback on each student's potential fit with the agency needs and internship specifics. Students also submit interview feedback, identifying their level of interest in each potential placement. Combined, this information guides the Field Staff in making placement decisions. Once these forms have been processed, the Field Team finalizes matches and notifies both the agency and the student of the final placements.

### **Distance Partners – Outside Central Virginia Area (OCVA) Partners**

The Department of Social Work partners with numerous organizations throughout the United States and the world. The Department is eager to be of service to these agencies by providing well-prepared interns who can assist in expanding capacity to serve clients. This is also of immense value to our students who have the opportunity to be mentored by professionals in their local area.

As is the case with local Central Virginia Area students, the field staff will discuss with OCVA students their interests. They can provide information on the established partners in each student's specific geographic area. It is common however that OCVA students may wish to pursue placement at an agency that does not yet have an established partnership with the university. In this case, the staff will support the student in communicating with that agency to ensure that it meets all educational requirements and to execute the required legal documentation to become a partner.

### **Onboarding Process for New Agency Partnerships**

In order to establish a partnership, the following forms should be completed and returned to the Department Field Staff by the designated deadline for approval.

**Agency Information Form:** This form details agency contact information, services rendered, pre-internship requirements (i.e. background checks, additional immunizations), proposed tasks for the intern, and relevant staff information.

**Field Instructor Form:** This form details the contact information and educational and vocational qualifications of the Field Instructor. This form includes a **Work History Form** or

**Updated Resume.** The field team will review the form to verify that the individual meets the requirements and standards set by Council on Social Work Education.

**Affiliation Agreement:** The University requires that all agencies partnering with the Department for field experiences sign a Liberty University Affiliation Agreement or submit an equal counterpart for review. This formal contract, signed by the agency and Liberty University, outlines the legal obligations to which both parties are agreeing. This agreement must be signed by a qualified individual from the agency who is authorized to sign legal agreements. Once signed by the agency, the Field Staff submits it to the University Contracts Department for final execution. If an agency requires the Department to sign an agreement, Memorandum of Understanding, or similar contract, prior to the student's field placement, the contracts department will review the contract and request any changes needed.

The Department must have a signed copy of this document before a student's placement can be finalized. Students will not be registered for the field placement course until this is completed. Any questions, needs, or specific accommodations regarding the Affiliation Agreement can be sent to the Field Team at [socialworkfield@liberty.edu](mailto:socialworkfield@liberty.edu).

If the placement receives preliminary approval, additional forms are required specific to the student and the proposed placement.

### **Field Orientation Training for students and agency staff for approved placements**

The Field Orientation Training for CVA students and agencies is held at the start of fall and spring semesters as a requirement for the student and Agency Task Supervisor. The Department Field Staff hold the training on campus and review details of field expectations and procedures. Agencies have the opportunity to ask pertinent questions and connect with the interning student(s). Once this training has been completed, the student may officially begin accruing field hours at their placements.

Field Orientation Training for OCVA students and agencies is also required and is available online through the seminar course. Students, Agency Task Supervisors and Field Instructors will complete the training and complete the activity together.

### **Department Faculty and Staff**

Agencies will have the opportunity to interact with multiple faculty and staff throughout the process of hosting an intern. **Field Support Staff** work directly with students and agencies in the Field Enrollment process, onboarding agencies, preparing students for field and getting the student(s) matched and ready to start their hours. **Faculty Field Liaisons** are the professors of the Field Experience and Seminar course students take with their internships. Faculty Field Liaisons are the primary contact for agencies while students are completing their hours.

## **VII. Mutual Roles and Responsibilities**

Field education requires the ongoing cooperation and involvement of various professionals to provide students with comprehensive and quality learning experience in the social work field. The various roles and responsibilities of each key player are described below.

**Agency Task Supervisor** The on-site individual appointed or designated by the Agency to oversee the

daily tasks of the student. They also supervise and facilitate student learning. *The Field Instructor may perform this role as well if onsite.* In addition, the ATS has the following roles:

- Complete agency onboarding process by communicating with the Field Team and completing needed documentation such as Agency Information Form, Field Instructor form, etc
- Interview potential students and provide feedback and whether they would be a good fit
- Ensure that all the agency's required onboarding procedures and documentation for the student to begin their hours at the agency are completed.
- If agency is CVA, attend a Field Orientation Training at Liberty University with the students. If agency is OCVA, participate in the Online Field Orientation Training.
- Ensure that the student receives an orientation to the agency and is trained as needed.
- Supervise daily tasks, collaborate on assignments and coordinate activities and learning opportunities.
- Provide regular feedback and conduct regular supervision
- Verify and sign weekly timesheets presented by students.
- Participate in a Learning Contract call (online or phone conference) meeting with students, Faculty Field Liaison, and the External Field Instructor (if applicable). Sign the contract forms.
- Collaborate with the student to develop and structure assignments and activities to help them:
  - a) learn a broad range of social work interventions common to generalist social work practice
  - b) engage in activities that allow students to demonstrate the social work competencies.
- Collaborate with the Field Instructor to review a mid-semester evaluation of the students' progress in completing the Learning Contract goals and students' performance in applying the practice behaviors associated with the core competencies.
- Participate in a site visit with the Faculty Field Liaison, the student, and External Field Instructor (if applicable). If the student is at an OCVA placement, this will be conducted via phone call.
- Collaborate with the Field Instructor to complete a final formal evaluation of student performance and review this with the student in-person.
- Notify Faculty Field Liaison promptly if problems arise with students during placement or in the case of an unanticipated, extended leave of absence. Work with the faculty member to explore alternative plans for supervision of students.
- Notify the Faculty Field Liaison of any concerns as soon as they become evident.

**Field Instructor** The Field Instructor will provide a social work perspective and ongoing feedback through a minimum of one (1) hour of weekly supervision with the student. If the Agency Task Supervisor is a degreed social worker, the two functions of Agency Task Supervisor and Field Instructor are combined. If the agency does not have a degreed social worker on staff, a separate field instructor will be identified. The Field Instructor's roles and responsibilities include the following:

- Complete the Field Instructor Form to verify that the individual meets the educational and vocational requirements and standards set by Council on Social Work Education.
- External Field Instructors will need to sign an Independent Contractor Agreement prior to the start of the student's field experience. Although this is a volunteer position, the agreement defines the legal partnership between the external field instructor and LU and outlines the requirements.

- Collaborate with the student and Agency Task Supervisor to develop a Learning Contract ensuring that the student has assignments and activities to help them:
  - c) learn a broad range of social work interventions common to generalist social work practice
  - d) engage in activities that allow students to demonstrate the social work competencies.
- Participate in a Learning Contract call (online or phone conference) meeting with students, Faculty Field Liaison, and the Agency Task Supervisor. Sign the contract forms.
- Provide a minimum of one (1) hour a week in supervisory conference with students in order to provide feedback and fulfill the following:
  - a) Process with the student the field experience, aid the student in developing self-awareness and self-correction. Provide discussion to supplement student learning and development of skills and competencies.
  - b) Evaluate agency assignments and activities to ensure students learn a broad range of social work interventions common to generalist social work practice and engage in practice behaviors associated with the social work competencies.
  - c) Evaluate the student's progress toward fulfilling the requirements of the Learning Contract.
- Collaborate with the Agency Task Supervisor to review a mid-semester evaluation of the students' progress in completing the Learning Contract goals and students' performance in applying the practice behaviors associated with the core competencies.
- Participate in a site visit with the Faculty Field Liaison, the student, and Agency Task Supervisor. If the student is at an OCVA placement, this will be conducted via phone call.
- Collaborate with the Agency Task Supervisor to complete a final formal evaluation of student performance and review this with the student in an in-person or conference call.
- Notify the Faculty Field Liaison of any concerns as soon as they become evident.
- Notify Faculty Field Liaison promptly in the case of an unanticipated, extended leave of absence. Work with the faculty member to explore alternative plans for supervision of students.
- Be available to students for consultation in emergency situations

**Students** roles and responsibilities include the following:

- Communicate in a timely and professional manner with faculty and staff in the department as well as agency and community members.
- **ENROLLMENT PROCESS**
  - Complete all required field enrollment assignments in Blackboard by the set deadlines in the course.
  - Submit written requests for any extension needed for set deadlines.
  - Complete any waiver requests needed for unique placements or requests (Form 4A-C).
  - CVA students interview with assigned agencies at the Field Fair or on-site at the potential placement.
  - OCVA students will, with the support of the field team, interview with potential agencies
  - Finalizing placement: After the placement has been approved by the field team, schedule an appointment to complete the Beginning Contract with Agency Task Supervisor and submit the form to both the field team and again in the field experience course.
  - Onboarding: Complete any agency on-boarding requirements (e.g. drug test, agency specific paperwork, additional background check, etc.) by the deadlines set by the agency.
  - Complete the Field Orientation Training before beginning field hours.

- **AT PLACEMENT – MEETINGS AND DOCUMENTATION**
  - Participate in frequent supervision with the Agency Task Supervisor
  - Participate in weekly, one (1) hour supervisory meetings with the Field Instructor.
  - Arrange and participate in required meetings and phone conferences during the field experience as assigned with the Faculty Field Liaison, Agency Task Supervisor, and Field Instructor.
  
  - Learning Contract: Collaborate, by phone or in person with the Agency Task Supervisor, Faculty Field Liaison, and Field Instructor to develop a Learning Contract.
  - Learning Contract meeting: Arrange and participate in meeting to review Contract with above parties
  
  - Site Visit/Mid-Semester Evaluation: Arrange and participate in a site visit with the Faculty Field Liaison, the Agency Task Supervisor and the External Field Instructor (if applicable).
  - Be teachable and receptive to feedback given by the Faculty Field Liaison, Agency Task Supervisor, Field Instructor and any other agency personnel.
  
  - Complete tasks assigned by the agency and all field experience requirements by assigned deadlines in order to satisfactorily complete the course.
  - Seek opportunities to engage in opportunities that relate to the social work competencies.
  
  - Final Evaluation: Complete a self-evaluation of their performance in applying the practice behaviors associated with the core competencies. Participate in a meeting with the Agency Task Supervisor and Field Instructor to review a final formal evaluation of student performance
  
- **SEMINAR**
  - Attend field seminar class weekly and actively participate in class activities and discussions.
  - Complete all seminar assignments by assigned due dates, including weekly timesheets and supervisory agendas, Learning Contract, Evaluations and others as assigned
  
- **PERFORMANCE IN FIELD**
  - Perform in a responsible and professional manner. Conduct should reflect those of the social work profession and be in accordance with agency policies and procedures.
  - Apply principles of social work learned in the classroom to the field and strive continuously to improve skills through periodic self-evaluation.
  - Apply principles according to the Code of Ethics of the social work profession in their field experience at all times.
  - Keep commitments to the agency, the clients, and the Department of Social Work.
  - Abide by both the agency and Liberty University’s policies around sexual harassment and discrimination while at their field placement and any other location performing field activities
  
  - In accordance with the Social Work Student Handbook, uphold the following Professional Performance Skills and Expectations:
    - Adherence to the Department Attendance Policy
      - Adhere to Department and class-specific policies regarding dress code and professional dress
      - Punctuality



- Come to class prepared (readings and assignments completed)
- Complete all assignments on time and to Liberty University level standards
- Actively participate in class discussions and activities
- Demonstrate knowledge of and commitment to the essential values and ethical Standards of social work specified in the NASW Code of Ethics and the NACSW Statement of Faith and Practice
- Demonstrate use of critical thinking skills
- Exhibit knowledge of how one's values, attitudes, beliefs, emotions, and past experiences affect thinking, behavior, and relationships
- Use self-disclosure appropriately
- Demonstrates ability to assess own strengths, limitations, and suitability for professional practice
- Clearly articulate ideas, thoughts, and concepts through effective oral communication
- Manage constructive feedback
- Demonstrate a willingness to understand and respect diversity regarding race, gender, age, religion, ethnicity, disability, and sexual orientation
- Advocate for yourself through the proper channels of authority
- Work collaboratively and cooperatively with others
- Demonstrate respect for others' opinions
- Communicate with the Department faculty, staff and classmates in a professional and respectful manner
- Communicate with community members in a professional and respectful manner
- Attend Social Work events in professional dress unless otherwise specified

**Faculty Field Liaisons** teach the field experience and seminar courses and work directly with students and agencies during the internship. Their roles and responsibilities include the following:

- Teach weekly field seminar course for junior and/or senior students engaged in field experience.
- Keep records of student time spent in field through the receipt and review of weekly timesheets.
- Keep records of students' supervision experiences through the receipt and review of completed supervisory agenda forms.
- Conduct a Learning Contract conference call with each student, Agency Task Supervisor and Field Instructor to discuss the Learning Contract draft, tasks and assignments.
- Conduct a mid-semester evaluation visit, either on-site or by conference call, to discuss with the student, the Agency Task Supervisor and Field Instructor, the student's progress in Learning Contract tasks and goals and development of competencies.
- Provide consultation and assistance to students, Field Instructors, and other agency personnel as necessary.
- Monitor and evaluate students' field experiences to ensure optimal learning and professional development through conference calls, on-site visits or conference calls, assignment submissions, and review of several evaluation forms: Student Self-Evaluation, Field Instructor Evaluation of Student, and Student Evaluation of Field Experience.
- Provide guidance to agency staff as they work with students on-site at international field placement settings that are not affiliated with a specific study-abroad program.
- Promptly notify the Chair of Field Education of any problems that arise with field students or field placement staff.

**Field staff** exist to support both residential and hybrid students throughout the field enrollment process. All documentation is processed through the field staff, who also review and approve placements. Tasks include:

- Develop relationships with community agencies locally, across the United States and overseas to enlist their support in serving as potential field placements.
- Confirm eligibility of agencies to serve as field placements.
- Confirm eligibility of individual professionals to serve as Field Instructors or External Field Instructors for social work students.
- Negotiate and facilitate the execution of legal agreements between the agencies and the University.
- Assist OCVA students in the field enrollment process of securing a placement.
- Match CVA students with CVA partnering agencies based on interests and skills

**Chair of Field Education** The roles and responsibilities of the Chair of Field Education, with the support of the other field staff, include the following:

- Development, oversight, and continuity of the field education programs and policies.
- Lead Field Orientation Trainings for students and Field Instructors as well as workshops on field-related topics.
- Monitor the performance of Agency Task Supervisors, Field Instructors and partnering agencies for quality assurance and field program improvement purposes.
- Provide training and ongoing support to Faculty Field Liaisons.
- Disseminate field-related literature and materials to Field Instructors to facilitate continued education.
- Develop relationships with community agencies locally, across the United States and overseas to enlist their support in serving as potential field placements.
- Confirm eligibility of agencies to serve as field placements.
- Confirm eligibility of individual professionals to serve as Field Instructors for social work students.
- Negotiate and facilitate the execution of legal agreements between the agencies and the University.
- Review and approve waiver requests and unique placement proposals.
- Serve as the contact for reporting incidents of discrimination, harassment, assault, and/or other safety issues.

**Liberty University** is responsible for the following:

- Maintain CSWE standards and a continual quality improvement process to ensure continued accreditation from the Council on Social Work Education for the university's BSSW program
- Employ leadership that have graduate degrees in social work to oversee the administration of the Department of Social Work and Field Education.
- Employ faculty who have graduate degrees in social work and the practice experience essential for facilitating learning of social work theory, skills, and values.
- Oversee faculty and staff adherence to the NASW and NACSW Codes of Ethics and CSWE Education and Policy Accreditation Standards.
- Provide liability insurance coverage of a minimum of \$1 million per occurrence and \$3 million aggregate for students.

## VIII. Field Hours

### **Required Hours:** Junior Field – 100 hours

SOWK 370 (3-4 credit hours) *Juniors must be in the field for at least 10 hours per week for 10 weeks to complete a minimum of 100 hours.* Students completing Junior field will typically be in the field for 2 full work days.

### **Required Hours:** Senior Field—400 hours

SOWK 470 (9-11 credit hours) *Seniors must be in the field for at least 32 hours per week for 14 weeks to complete a minimum of 400 hours.* Students completing Senior field will typically be in the field 4 full work days a week for 14 weeks.

Students also have the opportunity to complete senior field over two semesters.

SOWK 475 (6-7 credit hours) Students complete 300 of their required field hours at about 20 hours per week for 14 weeks, to be followed by an additional 8 weeks through SOWK 477.

SOWK 477 (3-4 credit hours) Students complete their remaining 100 hours over an 8-week term. These 8 weeks must continue uninterrupted from the previous semester.

**Scheduling hours:** Students will collaborate with their Agency Task Supervisor to develop a schedule for field hours which will be documented in the Beginning Contract. Students must ensure that their schedule does not conflict with any other course requirements. Students must schedule their field hours around their field seminar class time. The field seminar class time does not count toward student's required field hours.

Students should arrange their academic course load to allow for field experience to be scheduled in half-day/full-day segments. CVA students enrolled in the *Junior Field Experience and Seminar* course will typically engage in field work primarily on Tuesdays and Thursdays. OCVA students have the flexibility to determine which days they complete their full and half day segments.

The fieldwork days for CVA students enrolled in the *Senior Field Experience and Seminar* course will typically engage in field work Tuesdays through Fridays for a minimum of 32 hours per week. OCVA students have the flexibility to set their own schedule for the week, provided they complete the minimum of 32 hours.

Students may want to attend educational events during field placement hours, such as workshops and conferences. Students must request prior approval from their Agency Task Supervisor to attend these events. The ATS will determine whether attending the event aligns with the student's Learning Contract.

If there is an unexpected delay in the start of field experience, or a subsequent interruption, it is the student's responsibility to increase their number of hours per week in order to complete the required minimum hours by the end of the semester.

**Modified Schedule Waiver (Form 4A)** Students with specific circumstances who wish to deviate from the standard schedule for field placement must submit a waiver request by filling out the Modified Schedule Proposal (Form 4A). Students will propose a schedule including the beginning date, expected completion date, number of weeks in field and any expected gaps. They must describe the reasons for the

request, the attempts to address their concerns, and steps they will take to ensure they will meet the requirements of the course in purpose and intent. Students requesting a modified schedule will still be required to meet all the Field Seminar requirements. Modified schedule proposals will be reviewed by the Chair of Field Education for approval. Submitting a proposal does not guarantee the student's approval of a modified schedule.

**Holidays and Inclement Weather** Students are responsible for informing their Agency Task Supervisor of their schedules and vacation plans. This should be handled in a professional manner similar to the process with an employer, with consideration given to the impact on the clients and agency. The Department of Social Work does not require students to complete field hours during breaks (e.g. University holidays, spring break, and reading days). However, depending on the nature of the work, an Agency Task Supervisor may request that a student work during these times. Students should clarify these expectations during their agency interviews.

If a field day falls upon an agency-observed holiday that is not observed by Liberty University, students must make up the missed hours. In all cases, the student must ensure the total number of required hours is completed.

**Personal or Medical Leave** Students are expected to notify their Agency Task Supervisor and Faculty Field Liaison in advance of any absence or late arrival in addition to following all agency procedures. This should be handled in a professional manner similar to the process with an employer, with consideration given to the impact on the clients and agency. If students miss scheduled hours in field for any reason, including illness or other special circumstances, they must make up the hours.

**Completing Field Hours Past the Deadline** There may be some extenuating circumstances such as an athletic schedule or a personal matter that hinder students from completing their hours in one semester. If extenuating circumstances occur, students may contact the Faculty Field Liaison to request approval to receive additional time to complete their required field hours. Students must receive advanced approval prior to continuing to complete field hours beyond the current semester.

If approved, this accommodation will require the establishment of a written contract that includes the following: 1) the number of remaining hours to be completed, 2) the anticipated date by which the hours will be completed, 3) the day established for weekly agency supervision, and 4) the day and time to meet with the Faculty Field Liaison (or other assigned faculty member) to turn in weekly paperwork and to discuss any field issues.

**Additional Hours** Students are welcome to work more than the minimum recommended hours per week, but will need to continue engaging in field work for the specified number of weeks until the designated end date noted for the particular Field Experience and Seminar course. If students have completed their internship and would like to continue at the agency in a volunteer capacity, they are welcome to do so. Any additional hours accumulated after students reach the minimum hours required for their Junior Field Experience may not be used toward the hours required for their Senior Field Experience. Students must also keep in mind that they must satisfy any agency-specific requirements prior to ending their field work.

# I. Field Placements

The strong preference to enhance the student's competency in generalist social work practice is to provide learning opportunities in a variety of settings or with a variety of populations.

## **CVA Placements**

The Field team has developed establish partnerships with a number of local agencies within 1.5 hours of the University. The field team works closely with each agency to ensure consistent, quality placements for students. Students hoping to complete a CVA placement will be matched and assigned to interview with CVA agencies based on interests, skills and a variety of other factors. Students interested in a placement with a CVA agency, must go through the CVA placement process with the field team.

## **OCVA Placements**

The field team also has developed partnerships with agencies outside the 1.5 hour radius of the University. These are referred to as OCVA placements and are typically utilized by hybrid students.

As is the case with local Central Virginia Area students, the field staff will discuss with OCVA students their interests. The team can provide information on the established partners in each student's specific geographic area. It is common however that OCVA students may wish to pursue placement at an agency that does not yet have an established partnership with the university. In this case, the staff will support the student in communicating with that agency to ensure that it meets all educational requirements and to execute the required legal documentation to become a partner.

## **Employment-based Placements (Waiver Request Required – Form 4B)**

Because BSW internships are designed to be primarily educational in nature, it is considered an exception to do a placement at one's place of employment. However, some students may have the opportunity to complete their field placement where they are currently employed as long as the requirements are met. The Council on Social Work Education specifically requires that BSW programs employ policies to ensure the role of student as learner and to demonstrate that student assignments and field education supervision differ from those of the student's employment if they are given permission to participate in a field placement at the same organization.

Students need to submit an Employment-based Placement Proposal (Form 4B). This proposal will detail the student's request to participate in a field placement at their current place of employment. On the form they will demonstrate how the internship will significantly differ in tasks, responsibilities and supervisors in comparison to the student's employment. This often is accomplished by completing the internship in a different department of the agency or with a different service or population. Students must consult with agency staff when drafting this proposal. If students are continuing to be employed at the same time, they must identify the hours that will be designated for their paid functions, and the hours that will be designated for their internship. Employment Based Placement are considered to be less than ideal for student learning.

**Students pursuing an Employment-Based Placement should keep in mind that the hours spent in their current job will not count toward their field hours. The hours for their Field Experience must be spent doing tasks separate from their current job tasks and responsibilities.** This would be an additional 10 hours per week for 10 weeks for Junior field or an additional 32 hours per week for 14 weeks for Senior Field. Students must also be supervised by someone other than their current supervisor. The field experience is an educational learning opportunity and must be evaluated as such. The Council on

Social Work Education specifically requires that BSW programs employ policies to ensure the role of student as learner.

Submitting this waiver request does not guarantee the student an Employment Based Placement. Approval to move forward in pursuing this type of placement will be granted upon thorough review of this proposal by the Field Team and the Field Chair.

**Repeat Placements (Waiver Request Form 4C Required)**

Students hoping to complete their senior field placement at the same agency where they completed their junior field will also need to submit a waiver request. Students pursuing a Repeat Placement Proposal must secure a placement with significantly different responsibilities and opportunities for learning, such as being assigned to a different department in the agency, different setting or a different population.

It is not sufficient to simply allow a student to be in the same functions at a more advanced level than those in junior field placement. Students must also be supervised by someone other than their current supervisor. Also note that Senior Field hours are calculated entirely separately from Junior Field hours. On the form they will demonstrate the differences in tasks, responsibilities and supervisors. It is important that student tasks & assignments and field education supervision differ from the previous placement if they are given permission to participate in a field placement at the same organization. Students must consult with agency staff when drafting this proposal.

Submitting this proposal does not guarantee the student a Repeat Placement. Approval to move forward in pursuing this type of placement will be granted upon thorough review of this proposal by the Field Team and the Chair of Field Education.

*Repeat Placements are considered to be less than ideal for student learning. The strong preference to enhance the student's competency in generalist social work practice is to provide learning opportunities in a variety of settings or with a variety of populations.*

**Study Abroad (Junior field only)** Students have the opportunity to complete their junior field placement (SOWK 370) through LU Send Abroad. Students must take general education courses through a local university in addition to their field placement. These placements are a collaborative effort between the student, field staff, and the program staff in country. Students must complete all of the OCVA field enrollment requirements as well as the LU Send Abroad process listed in the [LU Send Abroad handbook](#).

**Best Semester: Uganda Studies Program:** Students spend a semester completing their field hours and taking courses at Uganda Christian University. For more information about the Uganda Studies Program, please go to the [Best Semester](#) website. *Students interested in this program should set an appointment with the field staff at least a year before they plan to go.*

**International Internships** Students have the opportunity to complete their field placements overseas with partner organizations through LU Send Abroad internship program. Students must complete all of the OCVA field enrollment requirements as well as the LU Send Abroad process listed in the [LU Send Abroad handbook](#). The Department currently partners with organizations in the Dominican Republic, Greece, Philippines and Spain. *Students interested in this opportunity program should set an appointment with the field staff at least a year before they plan to go.*

**Washington Fellowship (Senior field)** Students have the opportunity to complete their senior field hours through Liberty University's Washington Fellowship program. The Washington Fellowship program offers the opportunity to secure a semester-long internship in the Washington D.C. area. The program also arranges local housing and hosts various professional development and networking activities.

Students apply for this program through the Washington Fellowship office and work with the staff to seek out opportunities for potential placements in Washington D.C. Students who choose this program apply to many different organizations and agencies as internships in that area are competitive. Once a student has been accepted to one of these placements, they are responsible for working with the field team to process the required paperwork as this would be considered an OCVA placement.

For more information about this program and its requirements, please go to the [Washington Fellowship](#) website. *Students interested in this program must let the field team know at least a year in advance.*

## X. Student Eligibility for Field

Students must meet the following eligibility requirements prior to engaging in fieldwork:

1. Successfully pass the first of several Program Gates by receiving formal approval for admission into the BSSW Program (For details on the Gate Process, go to <https://www.liberty.edu/index.cfm?PID=34029>).
2. Be in good standing with the Department, which includes the following:
  - a. Have a “C” or higher in all social work classes and Gate prerequisite courses.
  - b. Maintain satisfactory citizenship and ethical behavior.
  - c. Consistently demonstrate the values of the profession: integrity, service, the value of human relationships, dignity and worth of a person, competence, and social justice.
3. Complete all required prerequisite courses.
4. Receive approval and verification of satisfactory completion of 40 hour observation (SOWK 135 or 150) prior to Junior Field (SOWK 370), and completion of Junior Field (SOWK 370) prior to Senior Field (SOWK 470)

**Gate Process** The Council on Social Work Education (CSWE) requires that all social work programs have a gatekeeping process to ensure that students have a thorough understanding of the profession of social work and will be a good fit for the program and profession. Gates 1, 2 and 3 are critical in assessing student readiness for field.

**Gate 1:** SOWK 299 includes the Gate 1 Application and BSW Program Admission Process. The Gate 1 application process includes completion of pre-requisite courses, a comprehensive background check, 15 hours of volunteer work, and an autobiographical statement. The Gate 1 outcome may be formal approval into the program, denial or delay.

**Gate 2:** SOWK 365 includes the Gate 2 Application Process and Field Enrollment Process for Junior Field. Field enrollment is contingent on approval through Gate 2. If Gate approval is denied or deferred, the field enrollment process will be discontinued.

**Gate 3:** SOWK 465 includes the Gate 3 Application Process and Field Enrollment Process for Senior Field. Field enrollment is contingent on approval through Gate 2. If Gate approval is denied or deferred, the field enrollment process will be discontinued.

**Gate 4:** SOWK 499 includes Gate 4 and the Comprehensive Exam and clears the student for graduation.



## Gate 1 Application Components

### Background Check, Fingerprints & VA Child Abuse Search

All students are required to submit to a criminal background check and fingerprinting as part the approval into the BSSW program. Any student completing their field placement in the state of Virginia is required to complete the VA Child Abuse Search as well. The results of all the checks are submitted to the Department at Gate 1.

### Disclosure Statement Form

All students must also complete a Disclosure Statement Form. The form requests disclosure of charges or convictions of any misdemeanor or felony charge and disclosure of being named as a perpetrator of a founded report of child abuse or neglect. Answering in the affirmative will not necessarily preclude students from being able to secure a field placement but may limit the options for field placement as well as impact the ability of students to secure personal liability insurance. Ultimately field agencies must give approval for students to be placed at their agency, and those agencies may have their own criteria and process for making such determinations.

The form also requests disclosure of any personal or family issues, illnesses or addictions that could impair students' abilities to function well in a social work capacity for a particular agency or with a particular population. Depending on the nature and severity of the issue, the Department field staff can assist students in determining whether certain field placements would not be suitable for them. The goal of this effort is to secure field placements for students that would not compromise the well-being of the students and their potential clients.

If students fail to disclose any of the information requested, it cannot be guaranteed that they will be able to be placed in a field setting or complete the field education requirements for the BSSW degree.

Signing the Disclosure Form also indicates that students agree to immediately inform their Faculty Field Liaison if they are charged with a felony or a misdemeanor during their junior or senior field internship. The Faculty Field Liaison will consult with the Director of Field Education upon notification of this information.

### Pre-requisite Courses

Students must complete several prerequisite courses meant to provide the foundational knowledge and theory essential for engaging in field work from the generalist perspective. Students must complete these courses with a minimum grade of "C".

***Introduction to Social Work*** (SOWK 101) is a course that gives an overview of the field of social work practice. Topics regarding the ecclesiastical beginnings of the profession, additional historical components, the integration of faith and practice, as well as social work values and ethics will be explored.

***Social Work Field Exploration*** (SOWK 120) is a residential course that provides an overview of social work practice and settings of practice. Topics in the course are centered on social work practice in places such as child welfare, schools, domestic violence shelters, hospice, hospitals, and mental health clinics. During this course, students have the opportunity to attend multiple field exploration trips to a variety of local agencies that employ social workers.

***Social Work Field Exploration*** (SOWK 135) is a hybrid course that combines SOWK 120 and SOWK 150 into one course online. This course provides an overview of social work practice and practice settings. Topics in the course are centered on social work practice in places such as child



welfare, schools, domestic violence shelters, hospice, hospitals, mental health clinics, assisted living facilities, and early intervention programs. Students must also complete a background check and shadow a professional social worker for a full work week as a part of this course.

***Intensive Social Work Observation*** (SOWK 150) is a residential course that offers students the opportunity to spend a full work week observing a degreed social worker in one particular setting of practice. Settings may include, but are not limited to, places such as child welfare agencies, schools, domestic violence shelters, and hospice facilities.

***Chemical Dependency*** (SOWK 260) is a course that presents an overview of the concepts associated with the use and abuse of alcohol and other drugs. Topics in the course are the various perspectives on screening, treatment and prevention options; each topic is evaluated through a biblical worldview.

***Ethics in Professional Helping*** (SOWK 270) is a course on the study of values and principles of ethical decision making. Topics in the course are ethical dilemmas, critical thinking, professional codes of ethics, and common morality; each topic is evaluated through a biblical worldview.

***Human Behavior and the Social Environment*** (SOWK 300) is a course that utilizes a life course perspective and additional theoretical perspectives as tools for understanding human behavior and development across the life span. Particular focus is placed on the inter-relatedness of biological, psychological, social, and spiritual aspects with a “person in the environment” framework.

***Social Work Practice with Groups*** (SOWK 355) is provided as an on-campus intensive for hybrid and residential students as well a traditional semester-long course for residential students. This course provides students with the opportunity to develop an understanding of theories, methods and skills in relation to generalist practice with social work groups. This course also provides the forum for students to gain an understanding of cultural values of individuals and the impact of those values on the group process. Emphasis is placed on the importance of being a culturally sensitive group leader. The course also has a strong experiential component, providing opportunity for students to learn as both participant and leader and to receive feedback and supervision in facilitating groups.

### Expectations of Professionalism

As emerging professionals, students will be held to a standard of professionalism that reflects the values of social work and are expected to conduct themselves accordingly. All communication with faculty, University staff and agency staff should be conducted in an ethical manner, demonstrating professional demeanor in behavior, appearance, oral, written and electronic communication. Additionally, they will use reflection and self-regulation to manage personal values and maintain professionalism in all agency and university matters.

Students are expected to conduct themselves in a professional manner in all interactions with each other, agencies representatives and clients, and the Department. Although this is not an exhaustive list, professional conduct includes all of the following areas:

#### **D.1 Integrity**

Students are expected to provide high quality work that reflects best effort. They must exhibit positive, proactive behavior and always adhere to class, Department, and University academic honesty policies.

#### **D.2 Respect**

Students maintain professional demeanor even when stressed and are not verbally hostile, abusive, dismissive or inappropriately angry. They are careful not to distract others through socializing,

sleeping, leaving early or during class, reading unrelated material, doing homework for another class or wearing inappropriate attire. Students are not to use unapproved electronic devices in class. Students are respectful toward peers and adults and of learning environments both in and out of class.

### **D.3 Communication**

All student communication through email, Blackboard, phone calls, etc. must follow appropriate lines of communication and convey respect to the recipient in tone and verbiage. Students are responsible for considering grammar, punctuation, and time of day when sending correspondence. Professional response time for communication is 24-48 business hours. In order to make communication more efficient, please send communication to only necessary recipients rather than sending multiple copies of the same or similar message to multiple recipients.

Students are to resolve conflict with others (student, colleague, professor, staff etc.) by addressing the issue directly with the person first, rather than gossiping or complaining unproductively.

### **D.4 Time Management**

Students submit projects or assignments or other documentation on or before the deadline. They should always take responsibility for missing work or deadlines. Punctuality and providing advance notice when possible for absences or tardiness is expected.

### **D.5 Professional Interactions**

Students are expected to regularly participate in class discussions and reflect good preparation. Students assume and complete professional responsibilities conscientiously. This includes responsibly presenting oneself on social networking sites and maintaining appropriate boundaries in accordance with professional ethical guidelines. Students must refrain from posts that address someone with whom they have issue. It is important to recognize that actions online and content posted may negatively affect their reputations among instructors, colleagues, future employers, and clients, and may have consequences for their social work careers.

### **D.6 Attire**

Students must adhere to agency guidelines for attire during field experiences and University guidelines when in class. It is expected that students dress in business casual for all agency interactions, including interviews.

## **XI. Field Enrollment**

The field enrollment process is managed and guided by the field staff. All documentation is processed through the field staff, who also review and approve placements. This is the process of securing an agency placement. During this process, each student interviews with one or more placements then submits documentation to finalize the field placement. Once finalized, students are registered for the Field Experience and Seminar course. If Gate approval is denied or deferred, the field enrollment process will be discontinued.

### **Blackboard Course**

All documentation is now submitted through a blackboard course the semester before a student hopes to complete their field placement. Each course is a 16-week, 0-credit course and is Pass/Fail. Enrollment in these gate courses does not impact the number of credit hours students can take in a semester and does not have any associated tuition costs.

There will be assignments due for each course like any other course and assignments must be submitted correctly by the deadline. All forms should be completely filled out and signed, scanned, and uploaded into Blackboard in pdf format (.jpg files are not accepted). Students can use a scanning app (i.e.- Tiny Scanner or Cam Scanner) on their cell phone to scan and upload documents. Forms emailed directly to the Social Work Field Department will not be accepted.

If students are dropped from the course due to ineligibility, inactivity or to because they have decided to defer their field experience to a later semester, they must re-enroll in the course in a later semester.

**Field Advisor** Each student will be assigned to a member of the field team as their designated field advisor. Their field advisor will be their primary point of contact during the field enrollment process. Each student will work together with their field advisor to secure their placement for field.

### **Field Enrollment Assignments**

Each assignment in the SOWK 365 and SOWK 465 courses are put in place to ensure that each student is prepared for field and has the tools necessary to secure a field placement.

#### **Pre-Placement Meeting Preparation**

Students will indicate whether they are CVA or OCVA, whether they plan to submit a waiver request and their interest levels in various areas of social work and potential placement sites.

#### **Pre-Placement Meetings**

The purpose of this meeting is to discuss student interests, explore options for placement and provide clarity on the field enrollment process.

#### **Form 1: Acknowledgement of Requirements and Release of Information Form**

Students must initial each statement on the Acknowledgement section of the form, indicating their agreement to meet the requirements and responsibilities listed under the headings. Students sign and date this portion as it is the first contract with the field team indicating the student's desire to move forward in the process.

Students must sign and submit the Release of Information section of the form indicating their approval to release pertinent information by the field education staff to prospective field agencies. As part of the field placement assignment process, the field team will need to share student placement materials and other relevant information with potential agencies or Field Instructors. This information could include: criminal background information, information regarding accommodations that the student would be required to perform essential job tasks, faculty assessment of student's strengths and areas of improvement, overall student performance and student resumes. Students sign this agreement to allow the field team to release field enrollment information to agencies if it would benefit the matching and onboarding process.

#### **Self-Assessment**

Students read the article "Field Placement: Are you Fit? How is Your Practice Stamina?" and reflect on each component of the SHAPE model by providing 2-3 examples explaining the score they gave

themselves. Students will also identify 1-2 areas in which they need to grow, including a personal course of action to improve in these areas to facilitate field preparedness.

### Resume and Interview Workshop

In collaboration with the Career Center, the field staff will facilitate and host a workshop to prepare students for interviewing with potential agencies. Students update their resume, practice interviewing skills, and begin drafting specific questions tailored to the agencies they will be interviewing. The purpose of the workshop is for students to develop their interview skills in preparation for interviewing with prospective agencies in order to be placed for field.

### Student Resume

Students must develop and submit a professional resume to the Department of Social Work prior to Junior and Senior Field Experiences. Students should follow the social work resume sample on the student field website when developing their professional resumes. Students are highly recommended to submit their resume to the Career Center for review.

### Agency Interviews

OCVA students will schedule interviews with identified. CVA students will be assigned interviews by the field team and will either complete them on-site at the agency or at the Field Fair. Once students have completed their interviews, they will submit the Interview Confirmation Quiz.

### Form 6 Field Commitment Contract

The Junior and Senior Field Experience and Seminar courses require a significant investment on the part of students to successfully complete. Each week, students must prepare for seminar, complete the recommended field hours, and complete field assignments. To ensure that students understand the commitment involved while taking these courses, students will be required to sign a Field Commitment Contract each semester that they are in the field. By signing the Contract, students agree to commit to their assigned field placement and the completion of all requirements of the field course in which they are enrolled and agree to make modifications to their schedules as appropriate.

### Form 7 Beginning Contract

Once the final placement has been approved, students will collaborate with their Agency Task Supervisor to complete the form, identifying tasks to be completed during the student's first week at the agency, detailing the student's start and end dates and the estimated days and times when the student will be at the agency each week. Students fill this form out with their assigned agency in order to establish expectations and schedules for the first week of their field placement. Students submit this form to the field staff to document the expected dates and hours. They will also resubmit the contract with any changes in their field course. *The Beginning Contract must be submitted prior to students being enrolled in the course.*

### Pre-Field Meeting

Students are required to attend this interactive workshop as one of the final steps in their field enrollment process. Expectations and requirements for field will be reviewed, including field seminar and field orientation training.

## CVA Placement Process

Students completing their Junior or Senior Field Experience within an hour and half of Lynchburg, Virginia, where the university is located, will participate in the CVA field enrollment process. In most cases, this means that the field team will assist you in exploring placement options with CVA agencies with whom we have an established partnership.

The Field Staff works closely with each student to match them with a previously established partner agency based on preferences and information from the field enrolment process. Interviews take place at the Field Fair, or on-site at the agency.

### Interviews with CVA Agencies

Agency interviews provide an opportunity for students to connect, learn more about the specific area of social work practice at each agency, network and ask specific questions that would help facilitate the matching of students with agency placements. These interviews also provide agency representatives the opportunity to learn more about the students and ask questions that would help them to determine which students would be the best fit for their agency.

Students who complete their Field Experience in the Central Virginia (CVA) will be assigned to interview with at least 3 agencies. If the agency is attending the Field Fair, students will receive a scheduled time slot for that agency. If the agency is not attending the Fair, students will have a week before the fair or the week of the fair to schedule and complete an interview with the agency.

Any student hoping to complete their field experience locally with pre-approved agencies in the Central Virginia Area (CVA) or within 1.5 hours of the greater Lynchburg area, must go through the field team before contacting the agency directly. The CVA Field Directory on the [field website](#) contains the most recent list of approved agencies.

### Pre-selected Interviews with CVA Agencies

Students who participated in their preplacement meeting with the Field Team in preparation for their Senior placement may be offered the opportunity to interview at a pre-selected agency.

This generally occurs if the Field Advisor believes that the student's interest and skills is a particularly good match with a CVA placement agency. The student will be provided the option to interview at the agency for an internship. This serves as a substitute for the Field Fair process. If the student elects to interview at the pre-selected agency, and they are accepted by the agency, the student is committed to that agency and is no longer eligible to interview elsewhere. This is intended to accelerate the selection process and provide a good match for the student. The student may decline this opportunity and opt to do the Field Fair instead. But they must do so BEFORE interviewing.

The Department Field Staff will match CVA students and agencies based on several factors. Placement Preference Form rankings, the timeliness of the submission, and the needs of the student or agency are all considered when placing students. Although the desire is to place all students in an agency according to the student preferences, this may not always be possible.

### Field Fair

In the fall and spring semesters, the Department field staff hosts the Field Fair for students completing their Field Experience in the Central Virginia Area (CVA). At this event, local agency partners come to

campus to interview students. Each agency has the opportunity to interview up to 6 students during the event.

#### Student Feedback Form (CVA only)

This form also should be completed by CVA students after they have completed all their assigned interviews. The student will describe each interview they had with their assigned agencies and provide feedback in order to help the Field team match them to a placement. This form must be submitted by the deadline to receive full consideration. The agencies also will give feedback about each prospective intern.

#### Placement Decisions

Once all interviews have been completed, both agencies and students submit Feedback Forms. Agencies provide feedback on each student's potential fit with the agency needs and internship specifics. Students also submit interview feedback, identifying their level of interest in each potential placement. Combined, this information will guide the Field Staff in making placement decisions. Once these forms have been processed, the Field Team will finalize matches and notify both the agency and the student of the placement decisions.

Once students have been notified of the placement decision, they must complete Form 6: Field Commitment Contract and reach out to the Agency Task Supervisor to schedule a time to complete Form 7: Beginning Contract.

If students are unable to fulfill the commitments listed in Form 6, they have the option to defer their field placement to a later semester. Deferring to a later semester means the student is agreeing to completing the field enrollment process again and accepting whichever placement they are assigned to next time.

Students who interview and are denied placement at an agency due to inappropriate behaviors or demonstrating poor interviewing skills will be referred for additional support through the Career Center. Students who interview at and are denied placement at multiple agencies due to inappropriate behaviors may be given a failing grade and/or deferred placement and a plan of restoration implemented.

#### OCVA Placement Process

Students completing their Junior or Senior Field Experience outside an hour and half of Lynchburg, Virginia, will participate in the OCVA field enrollment process. In most cases, this means that the field team will assist students in exploring placement options that require establishing a partnership with the identified agency, including a legal agreement to specify the terms. This type of placement also provides residential students the opportunity to build connections with agencies and social workers in an OCVA location where they would like to be after graduation.

#### Interviews with OCVA Agencies

Students pursuing an OCVA placement are responsible for networking and reaching out to agencies in their community. Students are recommended to reach out to the social worker they shadowed in SOWK 150 or SOWK 135 for connections and suggestions of potential placements.

For the students who prefer a placement outside Central Virginia, students will identify potential agencies that fit their interests and are in their preferred geographic area by completing the Pre-Placement Prep Quiz. It is the student's responsibility to schedule and complete at least one agency interview. It is highly

recommended that students select at least two agencies of interest, in case the student's first choice agency, with whom they interview, falls through.

#### Form 2: Agency Information Form

Once the student has interviewed and been accepted by the agency to proceed, the student is responsible for having the agency fill out Form 2: Agency Information Form. The field team reviews the information in this form to assist students in determining whether the agency will be appropriate for a potential placement.

With the assistance of the field staff, students identify a potential agency who meets all of the department criteria to serve as a field placement in Form 2: Agency Information Form and a qualified field instructor in Form 3: Field Instructor Information Form. Once students identify a proposed agency, they must submit a completed agency proposal which includes both of these forms. The Field Staff reviews the information from the proposal and supports the student in finalizing the field placement.

**Please note:** There is no guarantee that a proposed agency will be eligible to serve as a field placement. The department field staff will review the paperwork submitted by the agency to confirm that they meet the department's required criteria for agencies accepting students for field placement. Additionally, an Affiliation Agreement must be completed with authorized signatures from both the agency and the University.

The Department strongly recommends that all students seeking an internship that requires a new partnership identify a second potential placement agency as a back up plan. On occasion, agencies are not able to fulfill all the requirements or secure needed approvals to proceed.

#### Affiliation Agreements/MOU's

An Affiliation Agreement must be established between the agency and Liberty University in order for a student to complete an internship at their approved agency. This agreement must be signed by an authorized agency representative and Liberty University. This formal agreement outlines the legal obligations to which both parties are agreeing. Once the contract is fully executed, the student's placement can be finalized.

#### Finalizing Placements

**OCVA Placements:** Students are encouraged to submit forms as early as possible. Students who meet the deadlines set by the Department will be given priority in processing proposals for approval. Approvals occur on a "rolling basis" meaning the Field Team will review completed proposals as they are submitted and then notify students whether they may proceed.

**CVA Placements:** The Department Field Staff will match CVA students and agencies based on several factors. Student and agency feedback forms, the timeliness of the submission, and the needs of the student and agency are all considered when placing students. Although the desire is to place all students in the agency that meets their preferences, this may not always be possible.

Students will be notified by the field team of their placement decision. Agency representatives will also be notified by the field team which students are assigned to their agency to complete their field experience.

Students are responsible for inquiring with their agencies to begin onboarding requirements, background checks, etc.



## I. Registration for Field Course

The Field Team registers all students for both Junior and Senior Field Experience and Seminar courses (SOWK 370 and SOWK 470 or SOWK 475 and SOWK 477). Each section will correspond with a designated seminar time that students will be required to attend weekly. Students will be given the opportunity to indicate a preferred seminar time, however these are processed on a first come, first serve basis. Once agency placements are finalized and all field enrollment documentation have been submitted and approved, the field team will inform the student that they are cleared for registration and will proceed with providing the student's information to the registrar. This process can take 3-4 business days before it appears in the student's ASIST account. *Please keep in mind that the registrar will not enroll students with any holds on their accounts.*

## II. Recommended Liability Insurance

All students are required to have professional liability insurance while engaging in field work. Professional liability insurance provides legal defense and coverage for settlements or damages from legal action brought against students due to negligent acts, omissions, and errors while practicing at their field placement setting. Although it is not common for students to have legal action brought against them, it is still important to have this protection in place.

Liberty University provides insurance coverage of a minimum of \$1 million per occurrence and \$3 million aggregate for students.

The Department also recommends that students purchase additional professional liability insurance.

The coverage for liability insurance lasts 1 full year from the date of purchase. If students complete both senior and junior field within one year, students would only need to purchase it once while in the social work program.

Students who plan to engage in fieldwork **within the U.S., Puerto Rico, or the Virgin Islands** can obtain this insurance through: (1) the National Association of Social Workers (NASW) or (2) American Professional Agency Inc., the organization recommended by the North American Association of Christians in Social Work (NACSW).

Students who plan to engage in fieldwork **outside of the U.S., Puerto Rico, and the Virgin Islands** can secure professional liability insurance through: (1) American Professional Agency Inc. or (2) the organization recommended by the specific agency where they are completing their placement or through.

**NASW:** Students can purchase liability insurance through the NASW Insurance Company at <http://www.naswassurance.org/malpractice/student-liability-individuals/> or 888-278-0038. The cost of the insurance that meets the minimum requirements of the Department is approximately \$15 for one year. Please be aware that NASW requires that students become NASW members prior to purchasing the insurance. The NASW student membership cost is approximately \$57. Students can purchase NASW membership at <http://socialworkers.org/join.asp>.

**American Professional Agency Inc.:** Students can purchase liability insurance through American Professional Agency Inc. by going to the following link: [http://www.americanprofessional.com/wp-content/uploads/STUDENT\\_BROCHURE.pdf](http://www.americanprofessional.com/wp-content/uploads/STUDENT_BROCHURE.pdf). The cost of the insurance that meets the minimum requirements of the Department is approximately \$35 for one year. Students do not have to become a member of NACSW in order to purchase this insurance.



## XI. Weekly Field Seminars

The primary purpose of the seminar is for students to have the opportunity to share their field experiences and discuss how these experiences relate to the theories and practices learned in the classroom. Students should come to class prepared to learn from others and to share their own experiences as well to foster a climate that encourages mutual growth.

**Attendance:** Students are required to attend all weekly seminars as scheduled. Students in placement in the Central Virginia area will participate in person during scheduled class time as assigned. Students outside the Central Virginia area will attend all weekly synchronous seminars through WebEx. As a key part of the learning process, attendance is required at ALL seminars. Only ONE elective absence is permitted. Unexcused and/or excessive tardies or absences from the seminar sessions will negatively impact student's final grade in field. Each absence after the first will result in a loss of 100 points.

**WebEx sessions:** Both video and audio participation during the entire seminar is required. It is the student's responsibility to select a location that provides adequate internet connectivity, and that visual and auditory distractions are kept to a minimum. Professional presentation and behavior is expected during all seminars. Web Etiquette will be discussed during the pre-field meeting and the first week of seminar.

**Quality of Seminar Participation:** Students will have the weekly opportunity to share their field experiences and discuss how these experiences relate to the theories and practices learned in the classroom. Students are expected to be on time to class and actively participate in order to earn full points. An active participant is one who actively listens, reacts to information, asks pertinent questions, shows signs of understanding, shares relevant insights, and contributes to the general learning of the class.

**Confidentiality:** Students should come to class prepared to share their field experience and how they are applying what they learned in the classroom in their field placement. For the purpose of maintaining client confidentiality, students should refrain from disclosing name or other identifying information about clients during discussions and on any written assignments. To help facilitate the discussion, students should have the NASW Code of Ethics Document and the LU Social Work Competencies and Practice Behaviors Document available during the seminar.

Every week, students must complete a participation quiz which includes submitting a paragraph describing the extent of their seminar participation (active, inactive, level of contribution to discussion, etc) and confirming that they were on time and present for the entire length of the seminar class and for students on WebEx that they had video and audio on during the entire seminar time, while observing appropriate web etiquette and minimal distractions.

## Field Assignments

**Agency Orientation Checklist:** Students will cover the items in the checklist with their Agency Task Supervisor to support the student's orientation to the agency.

**Beginning Contract for Field Experience:** This form is first completed and signed during the field enrollment process, with support from the Agency Task Supervisor and/or Field Instructor. The same

completed form will be uploaded for this course for documentation purposes and Faculty Liaison review. *It is important to alert the Faculty Field Liaison if any changes have occurred since the first submission.* Please note that permission from the Chair of Field Education must be obtained for any deviation from the original plan regarding hours or duration of the placement.

**Weekly Timesheet of Field Experience:** Students will document the field hours they complete each week using a timesheet and secure the appropriate signatures prior to submission. Students will document the hours completed during their field experience by completing the Field Experience Timesheet each week. Students must document all activities including the required one hour of supervision each week.

**Weekly Supervisory Agenda:** Students will complete the Supervisory Agenda form each week to document the weekly supervision session with their Field Instructor. The supervisory agenda form is meant to serve as a guide for the weekly hour-long supervision time between students and their Field Instructor. Student will prepare a minimum of three agenda items **prior** to the supervisory meeting. This facilitates a substantive meeting with maximum learning opportunity. Items could include ethical decision-making, problem solving, interactions with clients, learning objectives from previous supervision, specific questions/topics for discussion about policy or practice, etc. Students may desire to include case studies or process recordings to aid in the development of practice behaviors and competency. Students will document discussion of agenda items and any additional aspects indicated by their Field Instructor or Agency Task Supervisor. Students should include practice behaviors associated with core competencies in their discussion.

Students must bring a copy of this agenda to each weekly supervision meeting with the topics for discussion identified. The Field Instructor may also add to the agenda items in order to address specific issues related to the placement or student's performance such as items listed in the paragraph above. They also may initiate other activities guide learning (i.e. case studies, process recordings).

Students will complete the remaining sections of the form to document the discussion that occurs during the meeting. Since students will be evaluated at the end of their field experience on how well they demonstrated the practice behaviors associated with the core competencies, it is recommended that these practice behaviors be incorporated into the discussion during the supervisory time. If students meet with a separate Agency Task Supervisor, they are highly encouraged to develop a written agenda for those supervisions as well, as this facilitates best practice in supervision.

**Weekly Journal of Field Experience:** Weekly journal summaries offer students the opportunity to reflect on the field activities they participated in, their experience and learning, and how they observed or applied the core competencies. The summaries also offer students the opportunity to engage in a process of self-assessment and self-correction, and support the integration of theory and practice, as students are encouraged to reference previous learning, courses and texts in specified prompts. Students should use the journal template provided on Blackboard. To receive full credit, a complete response must be made for each prompt.

**Learning Contract for Field Experience:** Students develop a Learning Contract in collaboration with the Agency Task Supervisor and the Field Instructor that will identify tasks and projects to complete during placement that correspond to the Social Work Competencies and behaviors as specified by the Council on Social Work Education to equip students for the profession. The student will complete a draft of the Learning Contract with input and support from his or her Agency Task Supervisor, Field Instructor, and/or Faculty Field Liaison.

The student will arrange and participate in a web or telephone conference with his or her Agency Task Supervisor, Field Instructor, and Faculty Field Liaison, to discuss the learning contract draft. The student

will make revisions according to input received at the conference, secure the appropriate signatures on the form prior to submission, and resubmit his/her Learning Contract in finalized form.

**Field Application Presentation:** Students will make a professional presentation to the seminar class that facilitates application of key social work competencies. This presentation will provide the substance for a significant portion of the designated class time. Students will prepare a PowerPoint presentation according to the format provided on Blackboard, and will be responsible for facilitating class discussion addressing the pertinent issues. Professional attire is required. To support the integration of theory and practice, students will incorporate into each presentation at least one academic reference.

Please note that this differs from the sharing that students might typically do in the seminar which is often geared towards gaining support or insight into your experience, or offering that to others. In this assignment students are acting as teacher/facilitator to advance the other students' learning. It is not simply sharing their personal experience. They may select an individual, family or group as the topic of the presentation, according to the level of intervention typical of the field agency. For example, if the student's agency serves individuals or families, one can be selected that will be a good illustration of the agency's approach. In order to collect the information needed, students may use their own work or observations with the specific client, review of the client's written record, interview of an agency member who does direct work with the client, etc. Discussion questions should highlight 3-4 specific topics that would advance their peers' learning. Students are not expected to address all the topics in depth. Students may focus on any of the following: intervention approach, application of theory, diversity issues, boundary challenges, ethical dilemmas, macro implications, etc. As presenters, students must be prepared to offer additional insight or information on those areas as the discussion unfolds.

**Site Visit Participation & Mid-Semester Evaluation:** Student will schedule and participate in an on-site meeting with the Agency Task Supervisor, Field Instructor and Faculty Field Liaison to discuss their progress at their field placement sites. If the student is completing the field experience outside of Central Virginia, the site visit will occur by telephone or WebEx. The student will prepare for the meeting by reviewing the Learning Contract and will come prepared to share responses to each item on the Mid-Semester Evaluation form. Student will provide all parties with a copy of the Learning Contract for review and will participate in discussion with Field Instructor, Agency Task Supervisor, and Faculty Field Liaison in order to address tasks, responsibilities, supervision, development of competencies in all areas included in the Learning Contract.

Students will participate in this discussion, reviewing past and current tasks/responsibilities, strengths and areas for growth, progress towards learning contract goals, and soliciting feedback from the supervisor(s) and faculty liaison. Student strengths and areas for growth will be discussed. Additions or adjustments to responsibilities should also be discussed to address any need for additional breadth or depth of experience and address areas for growth. The Learning Contract should be carefully reviewed and revisions made in order to fulfill the Contract and provide additional breadth or depth of experience to address all competencies. A corrective action plan will be discussed as needed for any significant areas of concern identified and the Chair of Field Education will be notified as well.

## Evaluation of Field

**Professional Behavior and Adherence to Field Manual Policies/Procedures:** As emerging professionals, students are expected to conduct themselves accordingly. All communication with faculty, University staff and agency staff should be conducted in an ethical manner, demonstrating professional demeanor in behavior, appearance, oral, written and electronic communication. Additionally, they will

use reflection and self-regulation to manage personal values and maintain professionalism in all agency and university matters.

**Final Field Evaluation of Learning and Performance in the Field:** The field evaluation is a highly valuable exercise in each student's education. It provides critical feedback to individual students to assist in their development as professionals. It also provides helpful information for the Social Work Department as we serve students individually and as we seek to continually improve our program content and methods to equip our students to become excellent compassionate social workers.

**Final Student Self-Evaluation of Learning and Performance in the Field:** Students will complete a self-evaluation of their performance of practice behaviors associated with the social work core competencies. As an opportunity for self-reflection and self-correction, the student will complete this evaluation, identifying both strengths and areas for future development. A completed evaluation is one that has a rating for each practice behavior and includes justification of student ratings. To receive full credit this should demonstrate thoughtful consideration and differentiation between strengths and concerns.

**Final Field Instructor Evaluation of Student Learning and Performance in the Field:** The Agency Task Supervisor and Field Instructor will collaborate and complete a final field evaluation to assess the student's demonstration of the practice behaviors associated with the core competencies identified by the Council on Social Work Education as essential to generalist social work practice, to determine whether the student has met their learning contract goals, and to provide a suggested grade for the field experience part of the course. Once complete, the ATS and/or FI will meet with the student in person (or by WebEx) to provide feedback on their evaluation of student performance and discuss the student's progress, highlighting both strengths and areas for improvement as well as recommendations for further development. The Faculty Field Liaison will review the evaluation, participate in the meeting as needed, and will assign a grade based on the evaluation.

#### **Rating Scales:**

**Junior field placement interns** should be rated according to expectations of an undergraduate student intern completing junior field placement and preparing for an intensive senior field placement experience.

**Senior field placement interns** should be rated according to a reasonable standard of professional readiness to enter the field as entry level social workers. This would reflect knowledge and skill desired for a social worker entering the work force and fully prepared to be trained in functions specific to a position or field of practice.

**Student Feedback on Field Agency & Experience:** Students will complete an evaluation of their placement, seminar course, and the field experience as a whole. Completing this evaluation will assist the Department in assessing the quality of the field experience provided. Field staff may follow up with agencies to develop a plan to address any concerns noted in these evaluations.

## **Grade in Field**

**Seminar** makes up approximately 30% of the course grade. This includes Weekly Seminar Participation and the Field Application Presentation.

**Documentation and Reflection** makes up approximately 25% of the course grade. Assignments include: Weekly Timesheet of Field Experience, Weekly Supervisory Agenda, Weekly Journal of Field Experience and Student Feedback on Field Agency & Experience

**Field Placement** makes up approximately 45% of the course grade. Assignments include: Beginning Contract, Learning Contract, Agency Orientation Checklist, Site Visit Participation & Mid-Semester Evaluation, Final Field Evaluation of Learning and Performance in the Field, Final Student Self-Evaluation of Learning and Performance in the Field, Final Field Instructor Evaluation of Student Learning and Performance in the Field and Professional Behavior and Adherence to Field Manual Policies/Procedures.

## Challenges in Field

### Changes in Field Instructors

Students are expected to remain with their assigned Field Instructor over the course of a semester to complete their field hours. However, in the case of extenuating circumstances, it may be necessary to change Field Instructors. The Chair of Field Education, Faculty Field Liaison, Agency Task Supervisor, Field Instructor, or student may initiate a change. If students feel their Field Instructor needs to be changed for any reason, they must discuss this first with their Faculty Field Liaison. The Faculty Field Liaison will consult with Chair of Field Education, and if approved, the Faculty Field Liaison will begin the process of changing the Field Instructor.

### Terminating a Placement or Changing Agencies

Students are expected to remain at the assigned agency over the course of a semester to complete their field hours. If students are unable to complete the placement at the assigned agency, they should assume that it will be necessary to defer placement until the following semester. Any placements that end prematurely must be reviewed by the Faculty Field Liaison and Chair of Field Education. The Faculty Field Liaison will contact the field agency to discuss the student's performance thus far, and the circumstances which necessitated the termination of the placement. The student's eligibility to continue the program will be assessed at that time and the Chair of Field Education will inform the gate team of the results. In some cases this may result in a growth plan being established for the student, that will be required in order to resume field. If the student remains eligible to continue in the program, the student and field team will work together to arrange for a substitute placement for the next semester.

In rare circumstances, it may be possible to change an agency placement to a different agency during the same semester. The Chair of Field Education, Faculty Field Liaison, Agency Task Supervisor, Field Instructor, or student may initiate a change. If students feel their placement needs to be changed for any reason, they must discuss this first with their Faculty Field Liaison. The Faculty Field Liaison will consult with Chair of Field Education. The same review process as described in the paragraph above will be initiated. If approved, the student and field team will work together to arrange for a substitute placement for the semester.

If a student must be removed from their field experience, no hours accrued at a previous placement will be "rolled over" into a subsequent placement or credited to students. Students who successfully complete a growth plan and are allowed to retake the course will need to start over in completing the minimum number of field hours.

Students are required to fulfill their field contract with the site. If students make the decision to withdraw from a Field Experience and Seminar course, they forfeit all field hours earned for the semester and will need to reapply for the Field Experience and Seminar course in a future semester.

### Restoration Process

Liberty University Faculty and Field Instructors have a professional and ethical responsibility to evaluate students on the social work competencies and associated practice behaviors.

As such, there is no guarantee that the faculty of Liberty approve program completion for students who demonstrate the need for continued growth which may interfere with future professional competence. Instead, a growth (or restoration) plan will be formulated in conjunction with the Department, students, and Field Instructor. The purpose of the restoration plan is to assist students in obtaining competency in the social work skills or personal, interpersonal, or ethical problems so that students may successfully continue in the program.

Students who interview and are denied placement at an agency due to inappropriate behaviors or demonstrating poor interviewing skills will be referred for additional support through the Career Center. Students who interview at and are denied placement at multiple agencies due to inappropriate behaviors may be given a failing grade and/or deferred placement and a plan of restoration implemented.

Restoration procedures can include such actions as repeating particular courses, obtaining personal counseling, completing additional assignments, participating in tutoring, using services at the Writing Center, and/or meeting with the Career Center. Once students have fulfilled all stipulations of the restoration plan, the Department of Social Work will meet to decide if they are ready to continue. Depending on the severity and nature of the situation, students may be subject to academic dismissal from the Department of Social Work or Liberty University.

Students enrolled in a Field Experience and Seminar course may be given a plan of restoration or a failing grade and/or delayed in the program and if any of the following apply:

1. Unprofessional or unethical conduct either at the field agency or in an interaction with Liberty University faculty and staff;
2. If the Field Instructor and/or Liberty University faculty determines that the student's current emotional, mental or physical well-being compromises the integrity of the field experience or potentially places the student, or others, in harm's way or an unduly vulnerable position.
3. The student demonstrates a failure to demonstrate growing competency in required areas, and an accompanying failure to demonstrate self-awareness and self-correction to facilitate growth in that area.

When student misconduct constitutes a violation of the University's Honor Code, the Faculty Field Liaison will fill out an Honor Code Violation form. The Office of Student Conduct and Faculty Field Liaison will investigate the situation with support from the Director of Field Education. The incident will be shared with the Social Work Department Lead Chair and if warranted, the Department Lead Chair will bring the issue to the Department of Social Work Leadership Team. A restoration plan will be formulated in conjunction with the program, students, and Field Instructor if appropriate. Once students have fulfilled all stipulations of the restoration process, the Social Work Program Leadership Team will meet with the students to develop a plan for possible continuation in the program.



In cases involving the Honor Code Violation, students will have an opportunity to appeal. Students seeking to appeal should follow the protocols described in the [Student Honor Code](#). The appeal deadlines must be observed. Written appeals are always required.

### Disciplinary Action/Termination from Field Placement

The Field Instructor must promptly notify the Faculty Field Liaison if it is anticipated that students will receive failing evaluations or be dismissed from their field placement. The Faculty Field Liaison will write an incident report to the Field Director which will be discussed with the Chair of the Social Work Department. The Chair and the Department will examine the nature and reason for the needed growth and/or dismissal and refer to the Restoration Committee, if warranted. At this point the students may receive a final grade of “F” for their field experience and their progress through the program will be deferred in order to allow time to address the areas of needed growth. These restorative procedures can include such things as requiring students to retake certain courses and/or seek personal counseling, etc. The Restoration Committee will determine whether the students are eligible to retake the Field Education and Seminar course. If, after restoration, the students are unable to reach competency in the growth areas, the Restoration Committee and the Leadership Team will meet to decide the best course of action for the students up to and including removal from the program.

If the dismissal involves a violation of the University’s Honor Code, the Faculty Field Liaison will fill out an Honor Code Violation form, which will be investigated by the Student Affairs Office and the Faculty Field Liaison with support from the Director of Field Education. The incident will be shared with the Social Work Department Chair who presents the situation to the Department of Social Work core faculty.

Students have the opportunity to appeal. The final decision regarding any accrued field hours is at the discretion of the Restoration Committee and Leadership Team based on a thorough evaluation of the incident.

## Safety and Respect in Field

### Safety Policy and Procedures

Students may experience a situation that compromises their personal safety while at their field placement agency or while performing field activities off-site. These situations may include personal injury by violent client or other persons, exposure to or contraction of infectious disease, or damage to personal property. If students or Agency Task Supervisors have questions about whether a particular incident is reportable, they may contact the Chair of Field Education. Students will need to follow a specific protocol in the event that any of these situations occur.

1. Students should immediately seek medical treatment as necessary, report the incident to their Field Instructor or Agency Task Supervisor, and follow any additional agency policies for reporting and addressing the situation.
2. Students notify their Faculty Field Liaison and should call the Chair of Field Education to report the incident within 24 hours of its occurrence.
3. Students are required to complete an Incident Report Form (located in Blackboard for the field course) and submit the form [here](#) within five (5) days of the incident.

As appropriate, the Chair of Field will contact students and their Agency Task Supervisors or Field Instructors to discuss any incidents which have been filed with the Department and determine if additional action is necessary.

### Discrimination, Harassment and Assault

Liberty University does not engage in unlawful discrimination or harassment because of race, color, ancestry, religion, age, sex, national origin, pregnancy or childbirth, disability or military veteran status in its educational programs and activities. The following persons have been designated to coordinate Liberty University's compliance with certain anti-discrimination laws: Director of Disability Academic Support at (434) 582-2159 or [odas@liberty.edu](mailto:odas@liberty.edu); Executive Director of Title IX at (434) 592-4999 or [TitleIX@liberty.edu](mailto:TitleIX@liberty.edu). The student should also complete the Incident Report Form (located in the Blackboard for the field course).

### Racial Discrimination and Harassment

Liberty University insists that all members of the University community are entitled to and shall be afforded an environment free of racism—whether overt or subtle. Therefore, members of the University community will not tolerate racial discrimination or harassment of any kind. Behavior that constitutes racial discrimination or harassment is prohibited by Title VII of the 1964 Civil Rights Act. This includes, but is not limited to racial/ethnic slurs, coarse jesting with racial/ethnic overtones and other forms of communication resulting in disparagement or intimidation based on race or ethnicity.

It is the expectation of the Department of Social Work that each agency serving as a field placement will have racial discrimination and harassment policies in place that guide the expected conduct of agency staff and volunteers. Students are expected to abide by both the agency and Liberty University's policies while at their field placement and any other location performing field activities.

**Reporting Process:** There is a specific protocol that students must follow in the event that any of these situations occur.

1. Students should immediately report the incident to their Field Instructor and follow any additional agency policies for reporting and addressing the situation. If the supervisor is the perpetrator of the harassment or discrimination, students should report the incident to the alternative staff member indicated in the agency's policy.
2. Students must call the Director of Field Education to report the incident within 24 hours of its occurrence.
3. Students are required to complete an Incident Report Form Form (located in the Blackboard for the field course) and submit the form [here](#) within five (5) days of the incident.

As appropriate, the Field Director will contact students and their Field Instructors to discuss incidents filed with the Department and to determine if additional corrective action is necessary.

### Sexual Harassment, Discrimination, and Assault

Liberty University is committed to providing a safe and nondiscriminatory learning, living, and working environment for all members of the University community. Liberty University expects all members of its community to treat everyone with a spirit of Christian love, mutual respect, and individual dignity.

The University does not unlawfully discriminate on the basis of sex in any of its education or employment programs and activities, nor does Liberty University tolerate sex discrimination or sexual harassment.



This policy prohibits sexual harassment, sexual assault, sexual exploitation, stalking, intimate partner violence, and retaliation, as those terms are defined in more detail below (collectively those terms are referred to in this policy as “Prohibited Conduct”). These forms of Prohibited Conduct are harmful to the well-being of the University community and its members, the learning and working environment, and collegial relationships amongst students, faculty, and employees.

All forms of Prohibited Conduct under this policy are regarded as serious University offenses, and violations of this policy will result in discipline, including potential separation from the University. Some forms of Prohibited Conduct may also violate state or federal laws, and criminal prosecution may occur independently of any disciplinary action imposed by the University.

It is the expectation of the Department of Social Work that each agency serving as a field placement will have sexual harassment and discrimination policies in place that guide the expected conduct of agency staff and volunteers. Students are expected to abide by both the agency and Liberty University’s policies around sexual harassment and discrimination while at their field placement and any other location performing field activities.

**Reporting Process:** Students who believe that they have been the subject of sexual harassment, discrimination, or assault in any form while at their field placement or while performing field work at another location should take the following steps described below.

1. Students should immediately report the incident to their Agency Task Supervisor or Field Instructor and follow any additional agency policies for reporting and addressing the situation. If the Field Instructor is the perpetrator of the harassment or discrimination, students should report the incident to the alternative staff member indicated in the agency’s policy.
2. Students should immediately report the incident to the Title IX Office.

Director of Title IX  
University Title IX Office  
(434) 592-4999  
[TitleIX@liberty.edu](mailto:TitleIX@liberty.edu)

3. Students should call the Chair of Field Education to report the incident within 24 hours of its occurrence. Students will be given the option of changing their field experience placement.
4. Students are required to complete an Incident Report Form (located in the Blackboard for the field course) and submit the form [here](#) within five (5) days of the incident.

For more information on Liberty University’s sexual harassment policies and procedures for students, please see the [Discrimination Harassment and Sexual Misconduct Policy](#).

### Addressing Grievances

If students have a grievance related to their field experience, they must follow the guidelines of successive steps below and thoroughly document their proceedings:

1. The student must discuss the matter with the person immediately involved, unless safety concerns would dictate otherwise.
2. If the grievance remains unresolved or the student is dissatisfied with the resolution, they should request the assistance of their Agency Task Supervisor and/or Field Instructor. If the Agency Task

Supervisor or Field Instructor is the person with which the student has a grievance, students should report the incident to the alternative staff member indicated in the agency's policy.

3. If the grievance is still unresolved after speaking to the Agency Task Supervisor or Field Instructor, the student should contact the Faculty Field Liaison for assistance.

4. If still unresolved, the student should then contact the Chair of Field.

5. If after all of the above steps have been taken and the student is dissatisfied with the outcome of these discussions, they can then bring their grievance to the Chair of the Social Work Department.

### Incident Reports

The student should complete the Incident Report Form if any of the following have occurred during the field placement: sexual discrimination or harassment, racial discrimination or harassment, personal injury by violent client or other persons, animal injury, exposure to or contraction of infectious disease, damage to personal property. If students are unsure about completing this form, contact the Chair of Field Education for advisement.