

BSW FIELD EDUCATION PROGRAM

Welcome to the BSW Field Education program at FGCU. This is the part of your education where you apply classroom learning to agency practice. The focus of the BSW field education program is to develop generalist social work skills with a strengths-based perspective. This will be achieved thru your field placement experience.

Admission To The Field

Students must complete the following courses before they can be admitted to the field program:

SOW 3036 Introduction to Social Work and Social Welfare
SOW 3101 Human Behavior & the Social Environment I
SOW 3102 Human Behavior & the Social Environment II
SOW 3300 Practice I: Individuals & Families
SOW 3322 Practice II: Groups

In addition, students must have achieved a 2.5 GPA or better in all social work course work, and must not be on academic probation, in order to be admitted to the field program. If the GPA should fall below a 2.5 while a student is in the field program, it will be necessary for her/him to suspend field courses until the GPA again reaches a 2.5 or better.

The Field Curriculum

The field curriculum in the BSW program consists of 2 courses. SOW 4060, BSW Field Education I and SOW 4061 Field Education II are 12 credit hour courses, and are the actual supervised field placement experience. It requires that the student spend 500 hours in an approved placement and demonstrate beginning practice level competency with a strengths-based perspective at the end of that time. There is a fall semester evaluation and a final evaluation in the spring semester. The final evaluation-spring semester, the equivalent of a final exam in a classroom course, is submitted by the field instructor along with a recommended grade. The final grades from each evaluation(fall and spring) are assigned by the field liaison instructor of record, taking into consideration the recommended grade along with his/her own knowledge of the student's capacity and demonstrated functioning

SOW 4521, BSW Field Seminar, and SOW 4522, BSW Integrative Senior Seminar, are 3 credit hour courses, and are always taken in tandem with the field placement. The seminar enables students to integrate their classroom and field placement experiences and to learn from each other about the multiple applications of practice modalities in various settings. Standard letter grades are given in this course.

These 2 field courses represent approximately 20% of the successful graduate's BSW curriculum, and this percentage reflects the high value placed upon the satisfactory execution of these experiences. A description of each course follows:

BSW Field Education I and II

Both courses are designed to give the student a practice opportunity in a field of practice which is congruent with his/her interest areas. It is also expected that students will be afforded educational experiences which permit the practice and advancement of basic generalist skills with a strengths-based perspective including case management, assessment, crisis intervention and other intervention tasks, advocacy, recording, and evaluation. It is also expected that students will be exposed to populations of gender, ethnic, age, and cultural diversity, as well as to work with both individuals and groups. The opportunity to learn about policy issues, teamwork, and community organization is equally desirable. The student should exhibit growth in knowledge and skills throughout the placement and should have achieved a beginning worker level of competence by the completion of the placement.

The BSW program has developed placement affiliations with an extensive grouping of social service agencies for use in this course. Students will follow the placement process described in BSW Field Education Manual for the selection of their placement sites. Students will take this course over a span of 1 or 2 semesters for a total of 500 hours of field placement experience. In each instance, the placement will be guided by an approved field instructor in consultation with a field faculty liaison. Experience and progress in the placement will be structured around practice competency objectives which will be operationalized through the student learning contract, a document prepared jointly by the student and the field instructor. A copy of that contract outline can be found in the appendices of the BSW Field Education Manual.

The fall semester evaluation form and the final evaluation form are to be completed by the field instructor and submitted to the field office one week before the end of each semester. The grade will be assigned by the field liaison in a timely fashion. Points on the final evaluation indicate if the student receives a pass or fail grade; in order to receive a pass grade, the student must have 40 or more points.

The final evaluation form, based upon the competency objectives for this course, can be found in the appendices of the BSW Field Education Manual.

The overall student objectives for this course are as follows:

- The student will give evidence of the development of a sense of professional identity and responsibility.
- The student will demonstrate knowledge of and ability to absorb into practice the basic values and ethical principles of the profession.

- The student will demonstrate willingness to work with clients of diverse backgrounds, including the categories of gender, age, ethnicity, culture, religion, sexual orientation, and disability.
- The student will demonstrate a working understanding of social policy as it exhibits in social agency and community practice.
- The student will demonstrate beginning professional level competence with regard to assessment and intervention skills with individuals, groups, and communities.
- The student will practice satisfactory interpersonal skills and work habits.
- The student will demonstrate sufficient self-awareness and willingness to deal with personal issues required to function effectively with clients in the service environment.

SOW 4521 Field Seminar and SOW 4522 BSW Integrative Seminar.

BSW Field Seminar: This seminar is taken concurrently with Field Education I. The course is designed to assist the student in making the transition from a classroom learning experience to the agency practice setting. The student will begin to develop his/her own professional identity and will begin a relationship with professionals in the community.

The seminar's approach is the strength-based generalist practice of social work. The seminar will promote the development of professional competence.

BSW Integrative Field Seminar: This seminar accompanies field education II in the BSW program. The course fosters the integration of theory and practice and promotes development of professional competence. The student will develop his/her resume, a portfolio, and participate in an employment interview as preparation to seeking employment in the community. It is highly experiential in format and highlights student sharing of agency policy and practices, service delivery methods, professional development issues, and issues of values and ethics. Teaching methods may include discussion, case presentations, analytical assignments, field visits, guest speakers, debates, and simulations. Seminar is a separate academic course and all students are required to take it concomitantly with field education II.

The Agency

Social service agencies provide the laboratory sites for student field placements. All public agencies and occasional private agencies are prospective field placement sites. Private practices and insurance driven organizations are usually not considered for student placements. Agencies must complete an agency profile sheet to become a placement host, must be willing to cooperate fully with the field program's policies and procedures, and must sign the affiliation agreement (sample in appendices). Agencies selected by the school tend to be those with solid service histories and the ability to offer a broad selection of generalist experiences to students. Exceedingly narrow duties or

highly clinical focuses are not appropriate for the BSW generalist student. The prospective agency should understand that it will be asked to assign students to a variety of direct and indirect client practice experiences, to provide office space and reasonable clerical support for the student role, to permit adequate field instruction time for student supervision, and to be committed to a participatory role in the preparation of competent future human service workers. The school views the agency as a full partner in the provision of quality education and welcomes feedback which leads to improvements in the BSW program and in the community-school cooperative venture.

There are various intrinsic rewards for an agency in assuming the role of field placement site, rewards that relate to educational/mentoring objectives as well as long term service provision objectives. More concrete rewards include the services provided by the student on behalf of the agency, the opportunity to hire students who have been trained under agency auspices, and fee waiver benefits to field instructors.

The following criteria are used for selection of field placement agencies:

- The agency should have a substantial history of service provision within sound ethical standards. Adequate stability is necessary to provide a solid foundation for comfortable student learning and growth.
- The agency should be committed to the development of BSW workers and to its role in that process.
- The agency should be willing to see its field instruction staff as having a general educational role with the student that goes beyond the teaching of a specific agency job or jobs.
- The agency must complete the agency profile sheet and have field instruction staff available who meet the field instructor criteria; it will also be asked to sign the agency affiliation agreement.
- The agency should be willing to allow sufficient supervisory time, should be able to provide appropriate space and work materials for students to function satisfactorily, and pay standard mileage rates if student must drive on job.
- There should be sufficient number and variety of assignments available that students will get a broad learning experience consistent with the generalist curriculum taught by the school.
- The agency should be willing to provide suitable orientation for the student, as well as on-going inclusion in basic agency activities such as staff meetings, in-service trainings, and safety measures.
- Agencies should not ask students to do anything that they do not ask of paid social service staff (such as routine clerical work, transportation unrelated to

assigned cases, some fund raising activities, or going on home visits alone when proper safety maintenance calls for reinforcement).

- The agency should have written policies in place with regard to sexual harassment, accommodations of persons with disabilities, affirmative action and non-discrimination, and commitment to diversity and social justice.
- Agencies who expect to take large numbers of students should be willing to develop student manuals which contain all information students need in order to execute a successful placement in that setting.
- Agencies must be willing to permit students to bring to class examples of their work such as psycho-socials and process recordings for confidential discussion; all identifying items in such materials should be removed before transportation of the documents, either physically or electronically.

The Field Instructor

Typically, field instructors are paid agency employees who are provided time by the agency to perform the field instruction role. Occasionally, persons who are not employed or who are in private practice are accepted in the field instruction role; this can sometimes be done in order to accommodate a student placement in an agency which temporarily does not have a qualified field instructor; this is not an ideal arrangement and the school is always hesitant to authorize such placement configurations, but exceptions can be made.

Field instructors should have a master's degree in social work. With a minimum of 2 year's practice experience and a minimum of a year of supervisory experience, or a bachelor degree in a social work with 3 years of practice experience and at least one year of supervisory experience. All prospective field instructors are asked to clear their role with their agency and to provide the school with a current resume. All potential field instructors must agree to attend all sessions of the school's required field instructor training program even if they may have attended such training at another educational facility (unless they have a certificate of attendance for the Florida field consortium 16 hour curriculum); this should be done either prior to or during the first semester of assuming the field instructor role for a student.

The field instructor role includes interviewing prospective students, providing orientation and on-going educational experiences, designing broad and well-balanced placement experiences in conjunction with school expectations, overseeing the placement from start to finish, helping the student develop and execute his/her learning contract, providing supervision which includes weekly private protected supervisory conferences, modeling sound ethical practice and appropriately mentoring students, maintaining a close interactive relationship with the school throughout the placement, working with the student and school liaison to resolve any challenging situations which arise, giving the student timely and honest feedback on his/her work and areas needing development, and

completing all student field evaluation forms required by the school. The field instructor is viewed by the school as a full educational partner in the provision of a quality student education within a responsible cooperative framework.

Amongst the intrinsic rewards reported by field instructors who assume this role are the impetus to remain current in their field, the intellectual stimulation, the exposure to contemporary curriculums, the university affiliation, the opportunity to participate in student education and professional growth, the rewards of mentoring, the opportunity to “give back” to the profession and to help contribute to a quality work force for social services, the opportunity to refine supervisory skills, and related personal growth. More concrete perquisites provided by the Florida Gulf Coast University are fee waiver certificates for taking courses in the state university system, library usage, and possible reduced-rate continuing education credits.

Specific criteria for selection of field instructors are:

- Have approval for such role from his/her agency and submit a current resume.
- Possess a master’s in social work with a minimum of 2 years direct service experience and a minimum of 1 year of supervisory experience.
- Possess a bachelor’s degree in social work such as those mentioned above plus 3 years of direct services experience and at least 1 year of supervisory experience.
- Preferably have a minimum of 6 month paid experience in the agency in which the student is placed.
- Possess sufficient competence in the pertinent practice areas in which she/he will be teaching.
- Be willing to perform the role described in the descriptive paragraphs above and be willing to make the necessary time commitment even if that might call for some flexibility in time usage.
- Agree to attend all sessions of the required field instructor training within the first semester of assuming the field instructor role for a student.
- Be willing to provide a minimum of one hour private face-to-face supervision conference time per student, plus other supervision time as necessary for completion of a satisfactory placement.
- Be willing to make the necessary time commitment to student education and mentoring.
- Possess demonstrated or probable capacity for teaching and assessing student educational needs and abilities.

- Knowledge of or willingness to familiarize self with the educational curriculum of the BSW program at Florida Gulf Coast University.
- Be willing to assume the partnership perspective required by this role and to perform all related functions.
- Exhibit high standards in professional values and ethics and commitment to social justice and diversity.

Field Instructor Training

Reference has previously been made to the fact that all field instructors are expected to agree to attend the 16 hour training series offered by the school either prior to becoming a field instructor or within the first semester of assuming the role. The training required is based on a state wide curriculum which is being offered at all Florida schools of social work and which was operationalized in 1995-96. Any field instructor who has taken this training since 1995 at any Florida school will not be required to repeat it. It will continued to be offered by all Florida schools at no cost; 16 continuing education contact hours will be given to all eligible licensed under provider CE Provider #50-4944,exp. 03/07.

The training is normally offered in two consecutive sessions over the course of one semester; adequate advance notice is always provided. The content of the training consists of the following ten modules:

1. Field instructor roles and expectations
2. Adult learning theories and teaching strategies
3. Models of supervision
4. Curriculum overview and integration of theory and practice
5. Research and evaluation of practice
6. The placement process
7. Designing a successful internship
8. Diversity and pluralism in field education
9. Ethics and legal issues
10. Evaluation of students

Any questions or concerns about the training should be addressed to the SW Coordinator of Field Education, Harvey Heckes, MSW,LCSW at hheckes@fgcu.edu.

THE ROLE OF THE STUDENT IN FIELD EDUCATION

The field placement experience exists for educational purposes; it provides the student with an opportunity to practice what he/she is being taught in the classroom , and to assess her/his interest in and aptitude for the hands-on tasks that constitute the social

services professions. It permits and requires students to demonstrate that they are able to absorb the values and develop the skills necessary for satisfactory performance in the field. It permits the instructor to determine the student's readiness and to actively pursue the above purposes as well as the student's own personal objectives with and appropriateness for entry level practice in human services employment. It provides a laboratory for the integration of theory and practice and for identifying with the values, principles, and objectives of the profession. students need to understand all this and to consciously include it in their own learning approach to the field placement course seminar.

The student is expected to take responsibility for her/his own learning in the field setting regard to the placement. in demonstrating responsibility, the student is expected to perform the following tasks:

Attend the field planning session and the field orientation session offered by the field education office.

Complete and submit the appropriate application for field placement by the specified deadline.

Read the field manual and sign the field manual acknowledgment and commitment form agreeing to function within the guidelines of the manual and the regulations of the field program.

To perform within all guidelines provided by the university and the agency in which the student accepts a field placement, including the NASW Code of Ethics.

Reflect the profession's and the agency's standards in personal and professional behavior, including dress code.

Prepare for and participate in conferences with the field instructor and field liaison.

Maintain confidentiality standards of the profession and agency at all times.

Be responsible for own transportation to and from the field placement site or sites.

Maintain his/her own health and accident insurance and, when required by the agency, malpractice insurance.

Utilize the procedures established by the field education office for resolving concerns or differences that arise during the course of the field placement.

Matters concerning learning contracts, hours, leave time, field process, evaluation and grading, termination from field placement, and other topics of concern to students are covered in the BSW Field Education manual.

It is not unusual for students to find the field placement to be the most rewarding and stimulating component of their educational program. The field education office will perform in a responsible manner to provide the foundation process and support that makes the field placement as instructional, fruitful, and growth-producing as possible for each student. In order to maximize the benefits, it is important that the student invest responsibly in his/her own learning, seeing her/himself as a primary player in designing, negotiating, and creating the successful learning and professional experience that an internship can be.

A Word About Using Supervision

Supervision is a very special tool in the field of social services. It is the primary resource on which we rely for guidance of the student through the internship. It's effectiveness is enhanced when the student views it as a user-friendly tool which has significant benefits for which also has benefits beyond the immediate job/internship environment. Viewing it as a friend will bring considerable reward to the student; some of the rewards are:

- Overall guidance in enhancing the learning environment
- Timely feedback which results in growth and knowledge and skill development and confidence
- An advocate and buffer when needed
- A mentor who provides guidance about the profession as well as specific job training
- A source of contacts and networking for a variety of professional purposes
- General support during the educational process
- Role modeling for personal professional development

THE PLACEMENT PROCESS

The placement process consists of a set of steps designed to achieve a smooth operational procedure which is as fair as possible to both students and agencies. It is based on the belief that field is an integral part of the student's education and should clearly fit the student's learning objectives as well as the requirements of the field program. **Students are not permitted to locate and determine their own field placements but they are expected to play as large a role as possible in the selection process.** The field office maintains current rosters and descriptions of all approved field placements; there is an established process through which an agency becomes an approved field placement site. The following steps constitute the field placement process that is to be followed by all students.

Field Planning And Field Orientation Sessions

A field orientation session is offered well in advance of the Fall semester in which placements are scheduled to occur. All students expecting to enter field are required to attend the field orientation session; no exceptions are permitted for work, travel, or any other reasons; field planning is never scheduled during class times. Any student who fails to attend either required session will not be provided the information individually and

will be held responsible for knowing the content as if s/he had been in attendance. The field orientation session will last approximately 2 hours, field planning is done via individual interviews and students are given several weeks advance notice of the time and place for the orientation session.

At the planning session, students will be given an overview of the field education program, will be given the website address for the BSW Field Education Manual , will receive copies of the field application form, and will be given careful instructions about the selection process for field placements. They will learn how to access data about available field placements, they will learn important information about the agency perspective, and they will learn about the importance of supervision in the BSW field program. They will also be informed about hours, expectations, learning options, requirements, and the philosophy of the field placement office. They will be given a clear explanation of all steps in the planning process.

The first BSW Field Seminar Class in the Fall semester will provide helpful suggestions about how to succeed in a field placement, what to expect, how to utilize supervision, understanding the evaluation and grading process, important dates, and what steps to follow should they develop concerns or disappointment during the course of the internship.

Application

All students will complete the field application form in full, sign it, and bring to the individual interview with the field education coordinator. A copy will be required by any agency with whom a student interviews for a field placement. The field office will review the applications and then schedule individual interviews with each student for purposes of identifying agency sites which seem suitable for each student: students who turn in late field applications will be interviewed after other students are assigned to field placements. Students may prepare for the application and interview process by reviewing the directory of field placements online. Field applications must be in duplicate and brought to the individual interview. A copy of the application form is on the BSW website(<http://cps.fgcu.edu/SW/BSW/fieldeducation/index.html>). After the interview process is completed, all students will be informed of the agency with which they should interview; in general, students will have interviews with at least 2 agencies.

Field Placement Agency Interviews

During the interview, the BSW Field Education Coordinator will discuss with the student preferred agency practice settings. At the same time, the list of current BSW Field Placement Agencies will be reviewed. The selection is based upon the content in the field placement application and the student's learning needs. Students are not authorized to interview with any agency other than the ones selected during the interview. The Student will be given a Pre-placement Interview Assignment form with appropriate contact information for two agencies. Students will be given a third choice if for some reason the previous choices do not work out.

Following the individual interview, the student has the responsibility to arrange and attend the interviews with 2 perspective field placement agencies. After completion of the interviews, the student selects the agency for his/her field placement. Part of the decision making process involves calling both agencies to notify them of the decision. The student will need to arrange with the perspective field instructor to have the Field Confirmation Form completed. Each student will be required to complete the background checks if required by the field placement agency. Students may also be required to complete drug screenings. The field instructor needs to share with the student any unusual hours or any other specific requirements that the field placement agency may expect from the student. Some agencies may need information about student's backgrounds with regard to child and sexual abuse, substance abuse, misdemeanor or felony records, etc. The purpose is: (1) to provide proper protection and service for clients, and (2) to ensure that students who have unresolved issues are not exposed to situations which may precipitate inordinate personal stress or trauma for themselves.

Students are expected to self disclose appropriately and responsibly with the field placement agency. If a student needs a special accommodation due to a disability, the student is expected to share this with the BSW Field Education Coordinator and the Field Instructor. Students who do not disclose special needs cannot later attempt to hold an agency responsible for absent accommodation practices.

Finalizing The Placement

The final task in arranging the field placement is the completion of the Field Placement Confirmation Form. The student indicates the exact date and time when the field placement will begin. The hours per week should be completed. It is important that student and field instructor agree on the hours. The majority of students plan to do 16 hours per week in the field placement agency. The task supervisor should also be listed with appropriate contact information. This form must be signed by the student and field instructor. The placement confirmation date needs to be completed. The student is to send the completed form to the BSW Field Coordinator.

This form is important because it is used as a resource for contacting the Field Instructor and/or Task Supervisor. The form is kept in the student's field placement folder during the field placement experience.

Employment-Based Internships

The use of employment as an internship experience is strongly discouraged by the field office due to the fact that such placements are rarely able to give priority to a student's educational needs. The necessity for the student to meet all the requirements of paid employment normally results in the inability of both agency and student to treat the placement as primarily a learning experience. There are occasions when exceptions are made to this rule but only when the field office has assurance that a quality learning

experience will be promoted via reduced case load, increased supervisory time, special educational assignments, and/or other enhancements.

Students are never allowed to do a field placement in the same job in which they currently work or have worked before. The employment-based field placement is normally more successful when a student is beginning a new job and we are able to negotiate the parameters from the start. Once in a while it becomes feasible to let a student move to a new job within the same agency if there is completely new content and new supervision; however, it has been our experience that these are the placements which are most likely to be unsuccessful and the ones from which students most often have to be removed. The field office is exceedingly careful about approving requests for an employment-based internship.

SAMPLE OF FIELD PLACEMENT AGENCIES

1. <http://www.seniorfriendship.com>
2. <http://www.ccmileecounty.com>
3. <http://www.QUALITYLIFECENTER.ORG>
4. <http://www.leememorial.org>
5. <http://www.uss.salvationarmy.org>
6. <http://www.ceps.k12.fl.us>
7. <http://www.swfas.org/>
8. <http://www.pd.cjis20.org>
9. <http://www.lsfnet.org/>
10. <http://www.hopehospice.org>
11. <http://www.cptcollier.org>
12. <http://www.lee.k12.fl.us>

NOTE: Consult the BSW Field Education Manual for further information.

Interim Director of the Division of Social Work: Dr. Mary Hart, College of Professional Studies, Division of Social Work. Available at (239) 590-7839 or mhart@fgcu.edu .

SW Field Education Coordinator: Harvey Heckes, MSW, LCSW, College of Professional Studies, Division of Social Work. Available at (239) 590-7726 or hheckes@fgcu.edu.