

## MATCHING PROCESS POLICIES AND PROCEDURES

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### A. Placement Matching

All students must complete the following requirements for participation in the Field Education Program:

- Successful admission into the University of North Carolina School of Social Work;
- Completion of a Safety in Field Education Course (currently two options for completion);
- Completion of the School's Orientation program (i.e., JumpStart), including field orientation;
- Completion of a criminal background check and other paperwork required by the agency (as applicable);
- Signed Student Field Placement Agreement (completed before beginning field placement);
- Completion of the applicable Field Education Planning Guide (i.e., Generalist or Specialization Field Education Planning Guide).

The Field Education Office takes responsibility for making assignments to field practicum settings. The Assistant Dean of Field Education has final approval for all field placements.

Every effort is made to match students to a field placement that matches their individual interests and career goals. However, due to the voluntary nature of field instructors, educational standards, and community resources this is not always possible.

Students are matched with one agency at a time. A student must decline a placement before being matched elsewhere. If the Field Team has determined that an agency offered to a student for the pre-placement interview is the best available match for the student, the student **may not** refuse that placement assignment for non-educational reasons.

#### 1. Placement Matching—Generalist Students

Students requesting a generalist placement are required to submit the online Generalist Field Education Planning Guide to the Field Education Office. Referrals to placements are made after an interview with a member of the field faculty and consideration of work and educational background, interests, and availability of field placement agencies. Students are notified of their field placement match via e-mail to their UNC e-mail account.

#### 2. Placement Matching—Specialization Students

Students requesting a specialization placement are required to complete and submit the online Specialization Field Education Planning Guide to the Field Education Office. Students are assigned a placement manager who takes primary responsibility for providing leadership to and guiding the student through the placement process. Generally the placement manager is the student's assigned generalist field faculty person or seminar leader; for students in the Winston Salem Distance Education (DE) program, the placement manager is the program's coordinator of field education. Students are encouraged to seek counsel and advice from other faculty members in the School and

from their current field instructor regarding placement options. However, it is always the student's decision to identify their three top choices on the Specialization Field Education Planning Guide.

The field education faculty meets as a team to review each student's placement choices; for Winston Salem DE students, this review is performed by the coordinator of field education. The faculty review how well the student's choices match with the learning opportunities available in the field placement and the "goodness of fit" with the field instructor and agency, including the style of supervision needed. Students are notified of their placement match via e-mail to their UNC e-mail account.

During the Specialization matching process, multiple students might be interested in the same field placement. After exploring the possibility of the field setting accepting more than one student, the Field Education Office will use the following principles (in no particular order) in determining which student will be placed at the field site:

- How closely the student's second choice would meet their learning goals;
- How well the proposed field instructor's and student's learning/teaching styles match;
- The agency expectations of the student (e.g., skill level, professional experience, age, maturity of the student, requirements for languages other than English);
- How well the placement fits with the student's career goals;
- The strength of the student's generalist placement;
- Duplication of prior employment or generalist field placement experiences; and
- Special needs of the student such as health or disability.

The Field Office does not consider travel distance to field sites or financial need in these decisions.

If a placement becomes unavailable between the time the student submits their agency preferences and the time field matches are announced, the student will be notified that one of their three preferences is no longer available and will be asked to choose another option in its place.

#### B. Arranging for the Pre-Placement Interview and Confirming the Placement Match

At the point of referral, the Field Education Office will contact the proposed field instructor/task supervisor regarding a possible placement assignment, and provide information regarding the student, including the student's resume. At the same time, the student will be notified that a placement assignment has been recommended to the field instructor/task supervisor, and the student will be provided with information regarding how to contact the field instructor/task supervisor to schedule an interview to assess the appropriateness of the match.

After the placement interview, the student and field instructor are requested to advise the Field Education Office (in Winston Salem, the coordinator of field education) of the outcome; Chapel Hill and Triangle DE 3-year MSW program students must submit their respective Confirmation Form online. If interview has raised a student's concerns about the proposed educational experience at the placement, the student should immediately contact the Field Office to discuss the interview and their rationale for wanting to decline the match. Students will have two opportunities to receive placement assignments, based on the rationale for the rematch and the availability of resources. If the student remains dissatisfied with the field placement process after two attempted placement

assignments, the student must schedule a meeting with the Assistant Dean of Field Education before additional placement assignments will be considered.

If the field instructor decides to decline the match, he or she should immediately contact the Assistant Dean of Field Education.

Students are required to successfully interview and be officially accepted by the field placement agency and field instructor/task supervisor. Occasionally, a student is not accepted for placement after the initial interview because the field instructor/task supervisor thinks that the student is not appropriate professionally. If a student is not accepted for a field placement after two different interviews for reasons of professional inappropriateness, the student will not be allowed to interview at another field setting until a meeting occurs between the student, the field faculty, the Assistant Dean for Field Education, and the Associate Dean for Academic Affairs. The purpose of the meeting will be to assess and address the issues identified by the field instructors who interviewed the student and to assist the student in correcting or addressing such challenges. On occasion, the student may be referred to the Committee on Students.

Once students have made a commitment to their respective agencies, students are expected to complete their field placement in that agency. However, if at any point during the practicum, the student determines that she or he will not be going to a field placement as planned, or is not a good match for the agency, then the student shall contact the Field Education Office. Once the situation has been discussed with and agreed upon by the field education faculty, the student shall notify the agency to which they were assigned. This notification must be completed before a referral to another agency will be pursued by the Field Education Office.