



To: Incoming First-Year Full Time MSW Students
From: Rebecca B. Brigham, MSW, Director of Field Education
Date: April 28, 2009
Re: Field Practicum Planning Procedures

Welcome to the School of Social Work and the Field Education Program! As you know, field education is an integral component of your graduate program. While classroom learning focuses on discrete knowledge and theoretical background, the field placement provides opportunities to practice and exercise the skills and knowledge obtained in the classroom. The Foundation Practicum provides the student with opportunities to develop generalist social work knowledge and skills through placement in a selected community agency. In this placement, it is intended that students experience a range of direct practice opportunities with a variety of individuals, families and groups, and also have opportunities to understand and work within an organization and community.

Two courses constitute the Foundation Practicum: SoWo520, **Social Work Practicum I**, and SoWo521, **Social Work Practicum II**. During the Foundation Practicum, students are in field approximately 220 hours, depending on the length of the academic calendar, for each of two semesters. Typically, this amounts to two full days a week for a total of sixty days. Associated with these courses is a required Field Seminar, SoWo523 and SoWo524 which meets for 2 hours every other Monday or Tuesday depending on your assigned section. The purpose of the seminar is to facilitate the integration of field and classroom learning. Students meet in small discussion groups to provide a supportive environment for topical discussion, consultation, skill building and problem solving.

The School is committed to arranging placements which are appropriate to the goals of the program and incorporate your learning needs and interests. Please review the following steps in the practicum planning process and make certain that you meet any identified deadlines.

1. Using the following instructions, complete the Foundation Practicum Planning Guide online and upload a recent resume into the database, as soon as possible, but **no later than Friday, May 29, 2009**. The Field Office will not begin considering possible field placement sites for you until all documents are completed. Students who do not meet this deadline risk being considered for field placements toward the end of the process, when many placements will have been filled.
2. To Log In, go to www.uncssw.org and enter your last name in the username box and your PID# in the password box. Please enter a hyphen (-) after the 4th digit of your PID. You will then move to a page that asks you to change your username and password. Your new password must be 8 alpha/numeric characters long and contain at least one number
3. **Student Information:** During the summer, please send any changes to Student Services Manager Linda Wilson at LWilson@unc.edu.

4. **Upload Resume:** To provide an overview of your background experience, please upload a current resume. Your resume will be made available to your potential Field Instructor. Click on **Upload Resume**; click **Browse** to locate your resume on your computer; select the appropriate file and click **Upload Resume** to upload to the Field Education database. You can then click your back button and click **View Resume** to see that your resume has been uploaded.
5. In the **Add/Edit/Print Forms** box, click on **Foundation Planning Guide**. Complete each section of the form. Click **Continue** to move forward through your form. Once it is completed or, if you need to exit the form before it is finished, click **Save & Exit**. To return to your form at a later date to make changes, go to **Print Forms**; click on **Foundation Planning Guide** and click **Continue** on each page of the form until you arrive at the section you want to change. (If you are returning to your document within the same day you created it, remember to hit your “refresh” button before attempting to find the document.)
 - a. Steps 1-8 – Complete each section. In the “major objectives” section you should discuss specific learning objectives you hope to achieve, that is, the knowledge and skills you want to acquire. In the “assignments” section you should discuss specific activities you would like to have in your field placement that will help you achieve your objectives. It is essential that you thoroughly complete these sections. Your Planning Guide will be made available to your potential Field Instructor.
 - b. Steps 9-13 – Only complete if you are requesting a placement in an employing agency.
 - c. Step 14 – Signature Page. Click in the box next to your name to sign the Planning Guide.
6. Once the form is complete and signed, the Field Education Office can access and review your planning guide. You **do not** have to submit any hard copy documents to this office.
7. After you have completed the Planning Guide and uploaded your resume, a faculty member from the Field Education Program will review your form and contact you to discuss your interests. After reviewing available placements an assignment will be made. The assignment is based on your learning goals as well as available field placement sites. You will not be placed in an agency which would duplicate previous human services experiences that you have had. **That being said, the more you are able to articulate your interests to learning goals on answering the questions on the planning guide, the more readily we will be able to understand your interests and place you as we are able.**

In late July and early August, you will be notified via email (**see word of caution**) with instructions on how to contact the potential field instructor to schedule an in-person or telephone interview. Please schedule and complete this interview as soon as you receive notification of your assignment. This interview is very important--it will give you and the field instructor an opportunity to discuss mutual expectations and plans for the practicum and to confirm the appropriateness of the placement. The interview should be approached professionally, as you would a job interview. Our Field Instructors are unpaid; they volunteer their time and effort as a support to the social work profession. Therefore they have the choice to accept or decline a student based on the interview.

8. Once the interview has occurred, you and the field instructor will complete the online confirmation form by accessing your web page, and clicking on **Confirmation of Placement**. On page 2 enter the date of your interview and whether you accept or decline the placement. On page 3 click in the box next to your name to sign the confirmation. Click **Continue** at the bottom. If both you and the field instructor accept the placement, a final practicum confirmation form will be emailed to you. Should you decline the placement, you will need to provide substantial evidence to the field office about why this placement will not meet the learning goals of the Foundation Practicum. Please contact me at 919-962-6532 or brigham@email.unc.edu prior to declining the placement.

9. Please note that some field placement agencies, such as hospitals, school systems, and child welfare agencies, require that students participate in criminal records checks and/or drug screens. If you have questions regarding these procedures, please contact me.
10. You are responsible for securing transportation to your field placement. As there is limited public transportation in North Carolina, you must have access to transportation to reach your field placement and complete your assignments. The Chapel Hill/Carrboro Communities are small and have few resources for field placements; therefore, you should plan on traveling within a 60 mile radius of the School for your field assignment.
11. Do not forget to register for the appropriate section of SoWo523, *Field Education Seminar*, as described in your course registration materials.

Our success depends on meeting scheduled deadlines and your cooperation is appreciated. **Please call or email Jean Livermore at the Field Education Office at 919-962-6529 or jlivermo@email.unc.edu if you have questions or need additional information about this process.**

One last word of caution: Many of the search engines available (Yahoo, MSN, EarthLink, etc.) do not allow our emails and attachments to be opened by you or may not even deliver our emails. It is imperative that you open and **use** your UNC email account exclusively while you are a student at the School of Social Work. We are a paperless system, and most of our communication is via email. Once you have your PID#, go to www.onyen.unc.edu to set up your email account.

Have a great summer; we are looking forward to meeting you and working with you. Should you need assistance with any of the above information, please feel free to contact me (contact info above) or Jean Livermore, Associate Director of Field Education, at 919-962-6529 or jlivermo@email.unc.edu.