A. Recruitment

The School has access to some of the most qualified Field Instructors available to any school in the Southeast. More than 500 qualified social workers comprise the pool of potential Field Instructors. Because of geographic location, agency priorities, space restrictions, and the periodic need for a sabbatical, not every Field Instructor will be available in a given year. In November of each year, the School solicits information about prospective field sites and Field Instructors.

B. Information about Field Resources

The Field Team utilizes a database that lists placement sites. The database describes the client population, usual presenting problems, typical social interventions, and customary practice methods at each site. It also lists potential Field Instructors and their qualifications. Students and their Advisors use this database in considering field placement preferences. Before requesting a specific field site, final year students are encouraged to consult with other faculty and with students who were formerly placed in that agency.

C. Requests for Field Assignments

Entering full-time and advanced standing students are placed in field sites by the Field Team, which reviews their application materials and field planning guides and may conduct personal interviews. Students in part-time programs begin field practica in their second year of study. Faculty in the off-campus distance education programs work with the Field Team in assigning students to sites in the areas served by the distance education program.

Students planning their Foundation or Advanced Standing placement begin by completing the Foundation or Advanced Standing Planning Guide available on the Field Education Database. Students planning their Concentration placement begin by reviewing available resources, using the field education database. With their advisors and concentration representatives, students clarify their learning needs, styles, and career goals, and they review potential field opportunities. Then they prepare the Concentration Placement Planning Guide, indicating their top three preferences of available field sites. These preferences must be consistent with their choice of concentration. The Field Team matches students to an available field site and notifies students of their assignment.

In researching possible field placements, students may not contact field placement sites or potential field instructors/task supervisors directly. All contacts must be initiated by the Field Education faculty.

The field office recommends that students make their field placement choice based on their social work interests and future career goals and not on the proximity of the field placement location. Students are expected to accept field placements within a 60 mile radius of their designated program. Students who prioritize proximity of the field placement may severely limit their field placement options. Depending on resources, the field office may not be able to accommodate these requests.
Students are matched with one field placement site at a time. Students are not permitted to interview field instructors in multiple sites, concurrently, and then make a selection. By following this procedure, we prevent students from unfairly competing with each other and protect agencies from being inundated by students seeking interviews. Should a student wish to decline a field placement match, either prior to or after the interview, they must contact their assigned field advisor or the designated field education office first.

After the assignment is made by the Field Team or distance education program faculty, students visit their assigned agency and interview with their proposed Field Instructor. Students should prepare for the interview as if it were an interview for employment. The placement is not confirmed until the Field Instructor and the student agree that the match is compatible.

Students are responsible for securing transportation to their field placements regardless of location. As there is limited public transportation in North Carolina, students must have access to transportation to reach their field placements. It is to the student’s advantage to have a personal vehicle. Many of our local communities are small and have few resources for field placements; therefore, not having a personal vehicle will severely limit the field placement options. Unfortunately, the field education program can not consider the costs of vehicle maintenance, insurance and gas in field placement matches.

Field placement sites offering field placements solely during the evening or weekend hours are rare and sometimes nonexistent. Therefore, the School of Social Work is under no obligation to provide such placements. Students generally need to plan to be available for placement during normal fieldwork site business hours and during times when their field instructor is working and available to the student. Part of the training experience involves participating in the life of the agency, attending regularly scheduled meetings and other field placement site activities.

MATCHING PROCESS POLICIES AND PROCEDURES

The Field Education Office takes responsibility for making assignments to field practicum settings. Assignments are made in consultation with prospective Field Instructors.

Students requesting a foundation placement are required to submit the Foundation Planning Guide online 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 requesting a concentration placement are requested to complete and submit the Concentration Planning Guide online to the Field Education Office. Concentration students are referred to placements with different agencies and supervisors than they had during their first year. Student matches are made with consideration for the type of learning experience and supervision need.

During the Concentration matching process it is possible that more than one student is 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 (skill level, professional experience, age, maturity of the student, requirements for languages other than English, etc.), how well the placement fits with the career goals of the student; the strength of the student’s foundation placement; duplication of prior employment or foundation 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.

Every effort will be made to assure that each student has experience with a variety of populations, opportunity to develop a range of skills and roles, and exposure to different settings.

At the point of referral, the Field Education Office will send the agency a contact form via email and instructions on how to access the student’s planning guide online. At the same time the student will receive a referral form via email. This referral form will instruct the student to contact the potential Field Instructor to schedule an interview to assess the appropriateness of the match.

Students will be matched with one agency at a time. A student must decline that placement prior to being matched elsewhere. Students may not refuse a placement assignment, for non-educational reasons, after the Field Education faculty have determined that the agency offered to the student for the pre-placement interview is the best possible match for the student.

After the placement interview, the student and Field Instructor are requested to advise the Field Education Office of the outcome by submitting their respective Confirmation Form online. If after the interview the student decides that he/she is concerned about the match, the student should contact the Field Office immediately to discuss their interview experience and their rationale for wanting to decline the match. A maximum of two placement matches will be considered, based on the rationale for the rematch and the availability of resources. If the field instructor decides to decline the match, he/she should contact the Field Education Director immediately.

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 Advisor, the Field Director and the Associate Dean for Academic Affairs. The purpose of the meeting will be to assess and address the problem(s) and assist the student in correcting them. On occasion, the student may be referred to the Committee on Students.

Once a student has made a commitment to an agency it is expected that he/she will complete their field placement in that agency. However, if at any point during the process, the student determines that he/she will not be going to a field placement as planned, or is not a good match for the agency, shall contact the Field Education Office. Once this has been discussed with and agreed upon by the
Field Education faculty, the student shall notify the agency to which the referral was made. This must be completed before a referral to another agency can be pursued by the Field Office.

All students must complete the following requirements prior to being admitted into 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 Jumpstart! Program, including field orientation;
- Completion of criminal background check and other required paperwork of the agency (as applicable);
- Signed *Student Statement of Agreement* (completed prior to beginning field placement)
- Completion of applicable *Field Education Planning Guide*. 