

## IX. 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, including field orientation;
- Completion of criminal background check and other required paperwork of the agency (as applicable);
- Signed *Student Field Placement Agreement* (completed prior to beginning field placement);
- Completion of applicable *Field Education Planning Guide*.

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

Every effort is made to match the student 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 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.

#### 1. Placement Matching – Foundation Students

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 are notified of their field placement match via email.

#### 2. Placement Matching – Concentration Students

Students requesting a concentration placement are required to complete and submit the Concentration Planning Guide online to the Field Education Office. Students are assigned a placement manager, generally the student's assigned foundation field faculty member and/or seminar leader, (in W-S this is the Coordinator of Field Education) who takes primary responsibility for providing leadership to and guiding the student through the placement process. 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 final choices on the Concentration Planning Guide.

The Field Education faculty meets as a team (in W-S the Coordinator of Field Education) and reviews each student's choices. 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 that is needed. Students are notified of their placement match via email.

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.

#### 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 with information regarding the student, including the student's resume. At the same time the student will also be notified that a placement assignment has been recommended to the field instructor/task supervisor. Information will be provided to the student on 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 W-S, the Coordinator of Field Education) of the outcome, Chapel Hill and Triangle 3-year MSW program students, must submit their respective Confirmation Form online. If after the interview the student decides that he/she has concerns about the proposed educational experience at the placement, the student should contact the Field Office immediately 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 placement assignments have been made, they must schedule a meeting with the Field Education Director before additional placement assignments will be considered.

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; the student 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 will be pursued by the Field Office.