



To: Incoming First Year, Full-Time MSW Students
From: Rebecca B. Brigham, MSW
Date: June 16, 2020
Re: Field Practicum Planning Procedures

Welcome to the School of Social Work and the Field Education Program! 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 in a real-world setting. As you can imagine, the COVID-19 pandemic has impacted our typical field planning processes. We recognize that you are waiting to learn whether SSW courses will convene in-person or remotely this fall. As soon as this information is available, we will share it with you. We are planning, though, to deliver field education in-person as much as possible. Despite these challenges, we are doing everything in our capability to move forward with your field learning.

Your first field placement, the Generalist Practicum, provides you with opportunities to develop generalist social work knowledge and skills through placement in a selected community agency. In this placement, it is intended that you experience a range of direct practice opportunities with individuals, families and groups, and also have opportunities to understand and work within an organization and community.

Two courses constitute the Generalist Practicum: *SoWo 520, Social Work Practicum I (fall)* and *SoWo 521, Social Work Practicum II (spring)*. During the Generalist Practicum, students are in the field approximately 200 hours each semester depending on the length of the academic calendar. Associated with these courses is a required *Field Seminar, SoWo 523 (fall) and SoWo 524 (spring)*. Seminar meets for 2 hours every other Friday, 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. Information regarding registration for field seminar and your fall courses will be sent to you later in the summer.

Currently, the field education team is assessing our community partners to find out if they are prepared to accept MSW student learners in this new environment. While many agencies continue to plan to work with our students, some are not able to accept a student as planned. Some agencies are delivering all of their services remotely; others are only working in person. It is expected that service delivery will ebb and flow over the next year as the COVID-19 pandemic evolves. In general, most agencies will expect to work with students either remotely or in-person as the social workers in the agency are working.

In addition to placements in agencies, we are strategizing ways to create learning opportunities in new or project-based formats. We understand that some students may feel safe and ready to attend field

in-person while others might not. **As a program we will work with you regarding this decision.** We are working to more fully outline what options will be available and the safety protocols we will put in place for MSW student learners. This information is forthcoming and will be shared as soon as it is finalized.

Despite the unknowns of the year ahead, please know the School of Social Work is committed to your educational experience. We want to ensure that we can arrange placements that are appropriate to the goals of the program and incorporate your learning needs and interests as much as possible. While there are many unknowns that remain, to get started we are asking students to complete the Generalist Practicum Planning Guide to the best of their ability by **June 15**. We will do our best to help work with you and this placement guide will help us in this process. As the summer moves along, field placements will become filled which is why we want to get started as soon as possible.

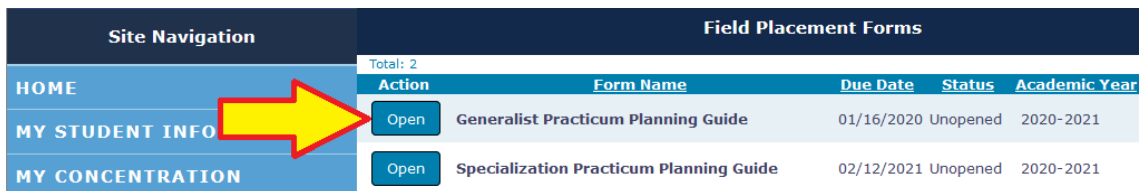
1. Complete a Generalist Practicum Planning Guide (GPPG) (Please note: Do not use the Internet Explorer browser when using SSWiS).

The Generalist Practicum Planning Guide provides the field education faculty with information regarding your placement interests and any additional considerations that we should know about when placing you in a field agency. To the best of your ability given this unique time, please be as specific as possible when completing the guide. The better you are able to articulate your social work interests, the more readily we will be able to match your interests to an agency setting that willing and able to host student learnings in this new COVID-19 era. We recommend that you set aside 20 to 30 minutes to complete your planning guide. Please follow the directions below:

- a) Go to the School of Social Work Information System (SSWiS) at <https://ssw.unc.edu/sswis>.

On the image that states, “Students & Faculty,” click the green “login” button and sign in using your ONYEN ID and password. (If you have not previously created your ONYEN ID and password, directions are here: <https://gradschool.unc.edu/admissions/admittedstudents.html>)

- b) In SSWiS, on the left-hand navigation menu, click on “Field Education.” On the submenu that appears, click on “My Field Documents.”
- c) You will now see two planning guides, one for your Generalist year and one for your Specialization year. For your “Generalist Practicum Planning Guide,” click on the “Open” link to the right of the Guide’s Form Name, as indicated below.



Site Navigation		Field Placement Forms				
HOME	MY STUDENT INFO	MY CONCENTRATION	Total: 2			
Action	Form Name	Due Date	Status	Academic Year		
Open	Generalist Practicum Planning Guide	01/16/2020	Unopened	2020-2021		
Open	Specialization Practicum Planning Guide	02/12/2021	Unopened	2020-2021		

- d) By clicking on “Open,” you will now be able to complete this guide using the provided text fields, checkboxes and radio buttons.

- e) **Signing your form:** When you have completed your planning guide, sign by clicking on the “Sign” link at the very bottom of the form. Be sure to click the “Save” link again.



If you need help with this process, using the left hand navigation bar, click on Help and follow the associated directions.

2. Provide your resume to the Field Education Office

All field faculty, instructors and task supervisors are provided with access to their assigned student’s resume via SSWiS. You may provide them either with a resume that you have previously written or create one for this purpose. (Below are some suggested guidelines for creating a resume) Once your resume ready to be shared, follow the steps below to upload it to SSWiS.

Resume Writing Guide: Your resume is your field instructor’s first introduction to you. Below is one way your resume can be organized.

- Personal data: Name, address, phone, email address
- Educational experience: Institutions and the dates you attended. List degrees, majors and minors.
- Work/Volunteer experience: Provide a brief (2-3 lines) job description with beginning and ending dates. Identify paid positions and those positions in which you had MSW supervision.
- Special skills or attributes
- Professional affiliations, certifications or licensures, and honors

Uploading your resume to SSWiS: To provide us with an overview of your background and experience, please upload a current resume to the SSWiS site.

- a) Using the same web address, ONYEN and password sign onto the SSWiS site.
- b) Using the left-hand navigation menu, click on “My Student Information.”
- c) Click on the “Student” tab.
- d) Click on the “Upload” link (see the screen capture below) and identify your resume file.
- e) Click on the “Save” link to save your uploaded file. (If you do not save your file, it will not be stored in SSWiS.)

Student | Contacts | Field Placements | Plan Of Study

General Information

SSWS Display Name: Sarah Joy

Résumé:

[If you are experiencing problems uploading your résumé, please use the [Firefox browser](#).]

To change your name (including your preferred name) and contact information below, please use [ConnectCarolina](#). (After your ConnectCarolina information changes, SSWIS will be updated within 24 hours.)

Preferred Name: First Name: Sarah Joy | Last Name: | Middle Name:

E-Mail: sj@unc.edu

Mailing Address: [13 Flo Road](#)
[Durham, NC 27002](#)

Phone numbers

|

3. A few additional things to note:

- Most field placements such as hospitals, school systems and child welfare agencies require students to participate in a criminal records check and/or drug screens. Records checks are either run by the Field Education Office and results provided to the agency or they are run directly by the agency. Once your placement has been determined and if the agency requires the records check, you will receive an email from Carol Ann Hincy, Office Manager (chincy@email.unc.edu), informing you how to complete the records check process using the vendor, Certified Background Inc. If the records check will be conducted by the agency, your field instructor will inform you of the procedures. If you have any questions about this process, please contact Ms. Hincy.
- Other types of screenings including verifications of vaccinations, TB tests, flu shots and drug screens may be required by your agency, at your cost. Once you have been matched for a placement you will be notified of these additional Human Resources requirements.
- You will be placed in an agency that builds on but does not duplicate previous human services experience.
- **Students may not contact any potential field placement sites or field instructors independent of our process.** By July 20, it is our goal for you to receive a match notification email from us directing you to contact your field instructor/task supervisor for an interview.
- Typically, students are expected to accept field placements within a 60-mile radius of Chapel Hill, and it is their responsibility to secure transportation to these sites. However, given that some transportation systems are not in operation, this may pose a significant challenge. In addition, some agencies require that students have a vehicle to make visits to clients' homes and attend meetings. Unfortunately, not having access to a personal vehicle may limit your field placement options. Some of you may be remaining in a location other than Chapel Hill or the surrounding areas given the pandemic. If this is the case, this is an important conversation to have with your field faculty member.
- Many of the email service providers available (Google, 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 very important 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 https://onyen.unc.edu/cgi-bin/unc_id/services to set up your email account.

4. Once we have received your Generalist Practicum Planning Guide (GPPG) and resume I will assign a field faculty member to contact you to arrange for an interview via telephone or Zoom. You can expect to hear from them by July 14, 2020. This will help us review your GPPG, understand your educational and career goals and will give you an opportunity to ask questions.

We know this summer has already been a turbulent one and we are trying to keep things on track as best as we can to ensure a positive learning experience for the fall. Everyone at the School and in Field Education program is 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 Denise Dews, Associate Director of Field Education, at ddews@unc.edu.