

University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill

Field Education Program 2020-2021

Frequently Asked Questions

HOURS and SCHEDULE

1. When is the first day of field education?

The official first day of field education is Wednesday, August 19, 2020. However, we recognize that some students and agencies may not yet be ready to begin field education on this date due to COVID-19. We expect that each student and field instructor/task supervisor match will negotiate the start date of field and the student schedule in concert with their assigned field faculty member. More information about this year's schedule for field education can be obtained here: [Field Education Calendar](#)

2. Can students begin their field placement early?

Specialization year students may begin their field placement after August 1, if:

- The field instructor agrees and is prepared to accept an early start.
- The student has completed all Student Field Placement Agreement Requirements (SFPA) and has signed the SFPA in the UNC-School of Social Work (SSW) Information System (SSWiS).

3. How many field education hours do students need to complete for this academic year?

For academic year 2020-2021, the UNC Field Education Program requires that Generalist year students complete a minimum of 400 hours of field education and Specialization year students complete a minimum of 500 hours of field education. We do understand that some agencies may require that students complete more hours due to student stipends or other factors. We also know that some students may choose to complete additional hours which is acceptable to us. Students who plan to complete more than the minimum number of hours should document this on their Learning Agreement and Competency Evaluation (LACE). More information about hours in field for this academic year can be obtained here: [Field Education Hours](#)

4. What if the student does not complete the required number of hours of field education at the end of each semester?

Students who do not complete the required number of hours at the end of each semester will receive a grade of Incomplete (I) which will change to a final grade once the hours are complete.

5. When is the earliest a student can complete their field placement?

Students may finish their field placement no earlier than March 5, 2021.

6. Will the field education program still have “leave” hours for students?

In past year’s students have been able to take 2-3 days of leave from field education each semester. However, because the number of field education hours for this year has already been reduced, no leave hours are available.

7. Will there be alternative opportunities to accrue field hours?

Yes. We understand that some students may start their field placements late or that there may be an interruption in their ability to accrue field hours due to illness or other factors. Therefore, the Field Education program has created the *Field Education Lecture Series: Research and Evaluation in Practice* which will enable students to especially develop Competencies 4, *Engage in Practice-Informed Research and Research-Informed Practice* and 9, *Evaluate Practice with Individuals, Families, Groups, Organizations and Communities*. Additionally, the Field Education program is establishing some other trainings that will be available during the fall, spring, and summer semesters. Students may accrue up to 20 field hours/semester by participating in these events if their field instructor approves the student’s participation. Registration information will be available in mid-late August.

8. Will students be completing their field placement hours remotely or in-person?

Due to the fluidity of the COVID-19 virus we understand that agency service delivery is being provided remote, in-person or a hybrid of the two. We also recognize that this may change over the course of the academic year. In general, we will expect students to work as the social workers in the agency are working. For example, if a field instructor is working part of their time remotely and part of their time in-person, we would expect for the student to be doing the same, unless they have been provided accommodations through Accessibility Resource and Service (ARS).

9. Are students required to complete a field placement?

Students are not required to participate in a field placement if they do not feel it is safe to do so. However, the Council on Field Education requires that students complete a minimum of 900 hours of Field Education prior to matriculating with an MSW. Therefore, graduation requirements remain the same. If students wish to delay the start of their field placement, they may request to complete a block placement during the summer. Students are encouraged to discuss questions and concerns with their assigned field faculty member, plan of study advisor, the Assistant Dean of Field

Education and/or the Associate Dean of Student Affairs to determine what options might be available for their given situation.

10. How will Field Education Courses SoWo 520, 521, 820, 821 be graded this year?

Due to the impact of the coronavirus on field placements, all placements for the 2020-21 academic year will use a simplified grading system.

“3” Pass (P) – Students demonstrating overall competence at the Emerging Competence, Competence or Superior Competence level will receive a grade of P.

“2” Low Pass (L) – Students demonstrating overall competence at the “Limited Competence” level will receive a grade of L.

“1” Fail (F) – Students demonstrating overall competence at the “Not Competent: level will receive an end of semester grade of F.

Responsibility for assigning the grade belongs to the field faculty member.

11. How will Field Faculty conduct their field visits with students and agencies?

Currently, Field faculty plan to conduct all visits remotely.

FIELD INSTRUCTORS/TASK SUPERVISORS

12. Will the Field Office provide training to Field Instructors/Task Supervisors about providing remote supervision?

Yes. We have developed an asynchronous training on best practices for providing remote field instruction. More details about this training will be announced in the coming weeks.

13. As a new Field Instructor/Task Supervisor how will “New Field Instructor/Task Supervisor Training” be delivered this year?

All new Field Instructors and Task Supervisors are expected to complete this XX training prior to working with a student. This year, the training will be delivered asynchronously via xxx modules. A training announcement with information about registration will be sent to you by xxx date.

COVID-19

14. What training will students have on COVID-19?

All students will be required to complete the following required COVID-19 Training prior to beginning their field placement **in-person**.

[Hand washing and hand hygiene](#)

[COVID 19 training](#)

[Personal Protective Equipment \(PPE\) Donning and Doffing](#)

(COVID 19 training – please look through the information provided at this site and take the trainings relevant to your field placement setting.)

15. Will students be required to do symptom checking for COVID-19?

Students who are completing their field placement in-person will be required to submit confirmation that they have checked for COVID-19 symptoms daily on an electronic log. These students will be required to begin symptom checking 14-days prior to beginning their field placement in-person and every day (including weekends) until their field placement ends. Students are expected to have a personal thermometer for symptom checking.

Students who are working fully remote are not required to complete the symptom checker. **Definitions of *fully remote* and *in-person* are below.**

***Fully remote* – No aspect of your field placement (e.g. orientation, training, supervision and staff meetings or work with clients) is taking place in-person.**

***In-person* – Some or all aspects of your work (e.g. orientation, training, supervision meetings, staff meetings and/or work with clients) will take place in-person. This includes providing remote services to clients when the student is performing this service from an agency-based setting.**

If the status of the field placement changes from fully remote to in-person over the course of the academic year, the student must begin the symptom checker 14 days prior to beginning their work in-person.

16. How do I access the UNC SSW symptom checker for COVID 19?

You may bookmark the link for the symptom checker: [SSW Field COVID-19 Daily Symptom Checklist](#) OR by signing into SSWIS: <https://ssw.unc.edu/sswis>. The link to the Symptom Checker appears at the top of the home page.

17. Do I have to use UNC SSW Symptom Checker if my agency is requiring me to use theirs?

Yes. If your agency requires that you complete a symptom checker, you must also complete the UNC SSW Symptom Checker. As the University and the SSW has obligations to both students and the agencies that they are placed in we must also be aware of each student's symptom status and work with the student to ensure that all necessary individuals are appropriately notified (This policy has been changed effective 8/12).

18. I am in an employer-based placement. Do I need to complete the UNC SSW Symptom Checker 14-days prior to beginning my field placement?

No. As you are already working in your agency, you may begin your field placement. However, you must begin the SSW symptom checker immediately.

19. I forgot and missed a day with the UNC-SSW Symptom Checker. What should I do now?

We are all human and miss things sometimes – not to worry. You should start up the symptom checker again once you realize that you have missed it.

20. Will students have Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) available to them?

Yes. The UNC-SSW will provide 2 masks/week and 1 personal face shield to students who are completing their field placement **in-person**. Additionally, each student is provided 5 masks to give to clients who do not have one. Agencies may prefer for students to wear PPE which they provide. This is completely acceptable. You may request additional PPE to be mailed to you here:

https://forms.office.com/Pages/ResponsePage.aspx?id=T9WzWMkW00KvCB_KvQlWZlfpzGpKJNOppoNF_1YvipUMjl3NldQTkNDTks3QU1NVUJKU0s5RUszOS4u

21. Are students required to wear PPE and utilize other public health measures?

Yes. All students who are working **in-person** must wear a face mask (a face shield is not sufficient), maintain physical distancing when possible and perform hand-hygiene regularly. Students are expected to follow UNC-CH, Health Care Universal Precautions when they are working with a client who is unable/willing to wear a mask. In this situation students must wear a face mask AND a face shield. [Universal Precautions Eye Protections.](#)

22. What should I do if I encounter a situation in my field agency where I feel unsafe?

Your physical safety and the safety of your clients is a priority. If you encounter any situation where you feel unsafe, you should remove yourself from that situation while also being mindful of the safety of your clients. Once you become safe you should notify your field instructor/task supervisor and assigned field faculty member of the incident and make a plan with them for next steps. Additionally, due to non-compliance with state, local and agency policies and general public health guidelines, you may encounter individuals who are not wearing a mask. Please see questions 20 and 21 above for more information regarding PPE that is available for you and the requirements for wearing it.

23. Does UNC-CH have a process for monitoring student exposure to COVID-19?

If students are concerned about a possible exposure to COVID-19 they are required to **immediately** notify their field instructor/task supervisor and their assigned field instructor. Students who are eligible for UNC-CH Campus Health Services are required to also notify Campus Health for advice regarding quarantine and testing.

24. Do students sign an agreement stating that they will follow COVID-19 required practices and protocols?

Yes. All students in a field placement are required to sign a Student Field Placement Agreement in SSWiS. A sample of the document can be obtained here: [Student Field Placement Agreement](#). The document that you will sign appears under “My Documents” in SSWiS and will be signed electronically.

25. The Student Field Placement Agreement is not appearing under My Documents in SSWiS. Why not?

The Student Field Placement Agreement will not appear until you have been matched with an agency.

26. My placement agency had different public health standards than UNC. Which standards do I need to follow?

You must follow whichever standards are higher.

27. How will students who are working remotely ensure confidentiality with clients?

Students will be required to use their agency’s approved telehealth platform for meetings with clients, co-workers, and community partners. If their field instructors prefer it, students may also request a HIPPA Compliant Zoom account by contacting the SSW Information Technology (IT) program: citu@listserv.unc.edu

28. Who should I communicate with for additional assistance?

If you have been assigned a member of the field faculty, please contact them for assistance. If you have not been assigned an advisor or you are unsure who to contact you should contact Rebecca Brigham, Assistant Dean of Field Education at brigham@email.unc.edu or Denise Dews, Assistant Director of Field Education at ddews@unc.edu. The contact information for the field faculty and administrative support, Carol Ann Hincy, can be obtained here: [Field Education Program Contacts](#).