



# **Bachelor of Science in Social Work**

## **Field Education Manual**

***College of Social and Behavioral Sciences***

University of Phoenix

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## Introduction

Welcome to Social Work Field Education!

As Field Director for the Social Work program, I am thrilled to partner with you in your field education journey. Field Education serves as the signature pedagogy of Social Work Education, intended to be the opportunity where students to weave the theoretical foundations learned in the classroom, into their practice as a professional. Through field education, students learn many critical skills and valuable tools to think and act ethically in collaborating with our field team, site supervisors, and expert faculty.

Students begin to practice these opportunities as they relate to the Council on Social Work Education's (CSWE) competencies within the Educational Policy and Accreditation Standards (EPAS). These standards guide the College throughout the development of all curricula within the program and are intentionally applied within the field setting.

This field manual should serve as a resource and guide to students and field instructors involved in Field Education. We hope you will find all the content and information you need here in order to be successful in this experience. If you have any questions or concerns, the first point of contact for students and faculty instructors is the assigned Field Faculty as described in this field manual. We are grateful for the opportunity to lead you in Field Education and for your commitment to the process, as this is an expression of your commitment to lifelong learning in our profession. We look forward to partnering with you on your journey and transformation!

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## Section I

### Mission Statement of the BSSW Program

The mission of the Bachelor of Science in Social Work program is to empower students to develop into effective, ethical, culturally aware social workers who advocate for social change and promote resilience in a rapidly evolving global environment. Graduates will be prepared to apply knowledge, skills, and social work values to enhance the lives of diverse individuals, families, organizations, and communities.

### Role and Purpose of Field Education

The Field Education component in the BSSW is designed to connect the theoretical and conceptual contributions of the classroom environment to experience in a practice setting. Under the supervision of a qualified Social Work professional and assigned faculty, students are empowered to implement knowledge, theory, and concepts hands-on within a social work agency.

During the BSSW program, each student completes Field Experience in either two 15-week Field Education Experiences in Field Education I (SWRK/405) and Field Education II (SWRK/420), or in a single 15-week block placement (SWRK/425). These courses have been strategically placed within the program to allow for scaffolded application of previous course content. Students do not begin Field Education until the appropriate prerequisites have been met. Each of these courses includes assessments which will measure proficiency in all nine competencies of the Council on Social Work Education (see objectives below) and will include a minimum of 400 hours total. These hours provide students with the opportunity to practice the knowledge, values, skills, and cognitive and affective processes of generalist practice, demonstrating competency and preparedness as generalist practitioners.

Coursework students complete during their Field Education phase is designed to provide faculty mentorship and guidance throughout the field education process. Collaborative learning experiences are expertly facilitated by the Field Faculty to allow students to effectively process their individual fieldwork experience. Students will actively engage in the classroom process, which includes case presentations, opportunities to give and receive both supportive and constructive feedback, and space to process challenges and progress and use role-playing and self-disclosure to further develop skills in self-awareness, self-regulation, and critical thinking.

While serving at the chosen agency, students are monitored directly by an agency supervisor and supervised by their UOPX faculty member. Field Education courses provide opportunities for students to serve individuals, families, and group clients in

community settings. Students are evaluated based on criteria by which students demonstrate the Social Work Competencies in the field setting.

## Objectives

Field Education prepares each student by achieving the following objectives:

- Students integrate classroom learning within the practice setting of field education.
- Students are prepared for professional Social Work practice in various systems and settings, and with diverse client populations.
- Students have the opportunity to use Social Work knowledge, skills, values, professional behaviors, and ethics in their professional practice.
- Students practice skills and interventions within micro, mezzo, and macro settings as they relate to generalist practice.
- Students demonstrate proficiency in the bachelor-level CSWE Social Work Competencies as outlined in the Educational Policy and Accreditation Standards (EPAS)

## BSSW Candidates follow the 2022 EPAS

- Competency 1: Demonstrate Ethical and Professional Behavior
- Competency 2: Advance Human Rights and Social, Racial, Economic, and Environmental Justice
- Competency 3: Engage Anti-Racism, Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (ADEI) in Practice
- Competency 4: Engage in Practice-Informed Research and Research-Informed Practice
- Competency 5: Engage in Policy Practice
- Competency 6: Engage with Individuals, Families, Groups, Organizations, and Communities
- Competency 7: Assess Individuals, Families, Groups, Organizations, and Communities
- Competency 8: Intervene with Individuals, Families, Groups, Organizations, and Communities
- Competency 9: Evaluate Practice with Individuals, Families, Groups, Organizations, and Communities

## Program Accreditation

University of Phoenix's Bachelor of Science in Social Work Program is accredited by the Council on Social Work Education's Commission on Accreditation.

Accreditation of a baccalaureate or master's social work program by the Council on Social Work Education's Commission on Accreditation indicates that it meets or exceeds the criteria for the assessment of program quality evaluated through a peer-review process. An accredited program has sufficient resources to meet its mission and goals and the Commission on Accreditation has verified that it demonstrates compliance with all sections of the Educational Policy and Accreditation Standards.

Accreditation applies to all program sites and program delivery methods of an accredited program. Accreditation provides reasonable assurance about the quality of the program and the competence of students graduating from the program.

For more information about social work accreditation, you may contact [Accreditation](#).

# Field Education

## Field Education Courses

Field Education courses are designed to provide a complementary experience between the classroom and the field by providing students the opportunity to debrief with peers, review any challenges, discuss commonalities, and receive reinforcement from their instructor and peers. Grades for field education will be evaluated based on a combination of the following:

- Achievement in demonstrating CSWE competencies in the field setting
- Adherence to the NASW Code of Ethics, the University of Phoenix Student Code of Conduct, and the Professional Standards
- Scores on all assignments and coursework
- Evaluations and feedback from agency representatives
- Culmination of all other field outcomes and determined by the Field Faculty

Students must earn a B or better in Field Education courses in order to proceed to the next course in the sequence. A grade of B- is not accepted and students may repeat the course no more than once if the minimum grade is not earned.

### SWRK/405 Field Education I

This is a 15-week course requiring at least 200 hours of Field Education, or an average of 12-15 hours per week committed to a field placement site. This course provides students an opportunity to integrate and apply their generalist practice theories within field education. Students will be required to demonstrate knowledge, skills, values, and affective and cognitive dispositions learned in previous courses. Field education will be a combination of classroom activities, field supervision, and agency activities. In addition to the field work, students will attend a seminar (online students must meet weekly online course requirements) for faculty supervision and evaluation of student demonstration of Social Work Competencies. (3 credits). This course may not be taken as Directed Study.

### SWRK/420 Field Education II

A continuation of Field Education I, this course provides 15 additional weeks of supervised generalist practice within the community. This course requires at least 200 additional hours, or an average of 12-15 hours per week, committed to a field placement site. Seminars are provided to offer support and supervision of student activities during a student's Field Education (online students must meet weekly online course requirements). This course offers a continuation of agency-based hours necessary to



demonstrate increased Social Work knowledge, skills, values, and affective and cognitive dispositions. (3 credits) This course may not be taken as Directed Study.

## **SWRK/425 Field Education Block**

This is a 15-week accelerated Field Education course which is a combination of Field Education I and Field Education II, where all classroom activities and hours are completed within one 6-credit course. The course requires a minimum of 400 hours or an average of 26-30 hours per week within a field placement site. This course provides students an opportunity to integrate and apply their generalist practice theories within field education. Students will be required to demonstrate knowledge, skills, values, and affective and cognitive dispositions learned in previous courses. Field education will be a combination of classroom activities, field supervision, and agency activities. In addition to the field work, students will attend a seminar (online students must meet weekly online course requirements) for faculty supervision and evaluation of student demonstration of Social Work Competencies. (6 credits). This course may not be taken as Directed Study.

## **Field Education Hours**

Field Education courses are an essential component of the program. Students must complete the minimum required hours for each Field Education course. The hour requirement is set as a minimum of 400 hours, but we encourage students and field instructors to instead focus on the competencies and objectives being met. The agencies provide rich and diverse opportunities which the University believes teach the Social Work competencies and allow demonstration of the essential knowledge, skills, values, and affective and cognitive dispositions in a hands-on environment. Exposure to the many aspects of Field Education can provide students with valuable real-world experience.

In addition, it is important for students to fulfill the coursework that occurs in the Field Education course(s). This sequence creates a developmental progression of academic proficiency and professional competency.

If students miss two or more days in the field, they risk falling behind in coursework and losing consistency within the agency. We strongly recommend that if a student has any absence greater than seven days, they pursue a leave of absence with the University. In addition, meeting with our Disability Resources department is advised to develop an accommodation if necessary. An Incomplete grade may be assigned in consultation with the Field Director.

Some agencies require a mandatory orientation or training that must be completed prior to beginning placement hours. A maximum of twenty-four (24) hours can be credited for training per course and must be approved by the field instructor and Field Faculty prior

to the training. Students should not have client contact prior to or without University liability insurance, which becomes effective on the first day of a student's field education course. See section III of the Field Manual for more information on the required liability insurance.

If a student is placed within a school social work setting, students must follow the host district calendar for holidays, closings, and breaks. If school is not in session, students are not permitted to have contact with clients. For that reason, it is important to discuss school calendars with the Field Placement Coordinator and Field Instructor to be sure minimum hour requirements can be met.

## Completing Field Education Hours Prior to Week 15

Field Education agency hours and classroom hours are intended to provide a complementary experience by giving students the opportunity to debrief with peers, review any challenges, discuss commonalities, and receive reinforcement from their instructor and peers. Field Education is designed with the agency and coursework synchronized. For this reason, it is important that students attend both aspects until the end of the course. Students may not bank hours to end field education early, or before Week 15. The hour requirement is set as a minimum number of hours, but we encourage students and field instructors to instead focus on student attainment of objectives and demonstration of competencies.

Students must receive an acknowledgment from the Field instructor before officially concluding the relationship with the agency. Appropriate professionalism and termination with any client contacts should also occur. Students are then required to maintain attendance for any remaining University of Phoenix course time/classroom sessions.

## Field Education Tasks

Field experiences typically occur within social service agencies, although there is flexibility in the organization if the placement provides learning activities that align with CSWE competencies. This includes remote learning opportunities when in-person contact with the population is limited or restricted. Examples of common social work or social welfare agencies include the following:

- Domestic violence/sexual assault programs
- Aging or end-of-life care facilities
- Child protection services
- Disability services
- Schools
- Non-profit organizations

Examples of bachelor-level tasks during field placement include the following:

- **Micro (Individuals)**
  - Non-clinical intakes
  - Needs assessments
  - Case management
  - Resource referral
- **Mezzo (Families, Groups)**
  - Family supportive services
  - Psycho-educational groups
- **Macro (Organizations and Communities)**
  - Community and/or political advocacy
  - Research projects
  - Program development
  - Community partners collaboration
  - Community outreach
  - Social policy initiatives

Social Work is a diverse profession and there are many directions to take your field experience to develop generalist practice skills. Students are encouraged to focus on the population or service they intend to pursue following graduation to gain greater exposure and experience with that population. The field experience is meant to give students practical experience to better prepare them for their careers, so it is important to select an agency that can provide skills and networking opportunities to explore job prospects.

## Preparing for Field Education

A Field Education Preparation Workshop is required midway through the BSSW program. This point in the course sequence allows for adequate time to prepare for the documentation, processes, and clearances needed for a successful placement experience. The Field Education Preparation Workshop is self-paced and provides students with all the information they need to prepare for their Field Education experience. In this workshop, students will explore the purpose of and requirements for field education, identify the steps in the field education placement process, review the documents required and the system to submit them in, and review safe practices that are expected while in the field. Additional resources are provided to support students throughout the experience including resume samples, interviewing tips, and various tutorials from Career Services. Access to this workshop will be made available to students in their coursework, accompanied by outreach from their Field Placement Coordinator to initiate Field Education planning.

A dedicated Field Placement Coordinator will be assigned to each student to prepare for field education courses. The Field Placement Coordinator's role is to support students

and provide resources and guidance to ensure a positive Field Education experience. The Field Placement Coordinator can help students locate and select an agency, complete required paperwork on time, and assist in locating resources that will help students succeed in Field Education.

## Placement Process

Students work with a dedicated Field Placement Coordinator (FPC) to prepare for field placement courses. The FPC's purpose is to provide students with support and resources to ensure a positive Field Education experience. The FPC can help students locate and select an agency. A list of possible Social Work agencies is available through our database and options will be discussed during scheduled check-ins with each student. Students may also recommend agencies that provide social services within their communities, and these recommendations will be vetted by the Field Placement staff for suitability. The agency approval process can take 4-6 months after formally applying for a placement.

Students, Field Faculty, field instructors, and field administrators will use the third-party software to access hour logs, agency lists, evaluations, and other field-related documents. Students will begin to access this resource as a part of their coursework, and their Field Placement Coordinator will be in touch to assist with registering for a software account and other documentation necessary to initiate the placement process. Information and resources to become familiar with the software will be provided by their Field Placement Coordinator. Students should not register for an account in the software platform until they are prompted to do so within their coursework.

Students must have appropriate supervision throughout Field Education. A qualified "field instructor" will have:

- A BSW or MSW degree from a CSWE-Accredited program
- At least 2 years of post-graduate experience
- Availability to provide at least one hour per week of supervision

The field instructor will help monitor students' demonstration of professional conduct and provide feedback on the student's performance in practice. Additional roles and responsibilities for Field Instructors are detailed in the sections below. The proposed Field Instructor at the placement site will be reviewed for fitness and confirmed by the Field Department.

The University enters into contractual agreements (called Affiliation Agreements) with Field Education sites. These agreements clarify expectations and seek to ensure students have rich training and supervision experience. A list of sites at which students have previously served is made available to students early in the program, and students are encouraged to make careful decisions regarding the selection of Field Education

sites. Students sometimes receive employment opportunities in the settings where they have completed their Field Education placements, although this is not guaranteed. If the student is already a current employee of the agency, the student must perform new duties under a separate Field Education supervisor in order to gain new professional experience and prevent a professional conflict of interest. Students in this scenario are required to complete an “Employed Practitioner Agreement” detailing separate responsibilities, supervision, and schedules, approved by the agency and the Field Department in advance of the course.

In most cases, Field Education hours will be volunteer hours. However, if a Field Education agency offers a student payment for hours worked, Field Education policies do not prohibit the student from accepting the offer.

After the student reviews the agency examples in the database, the system will guide the student through the process necessary for agency and field placement approval with support from the Field Placement Coordinator. The average processing time for final agency approval is three months; however, if a student chooses an agency with an existing Affiliation Agreement (located in the database), processing times may be shorter.

Students will meet with a Field Placement Coordinator to discuss potential placement options and review the requirements necessary before beginning placement. Scheduled check-ins are designed throughout the program to review processes with students and monitor their preparation for field experience. Note that a student’s work/home schedule may require adjustments to effectively meet site requirements and attain the minimum 400 Field Education hours. Reminder: Students must fully research the qualifications (e.g., criminal background check, immunizations, drug screening, etc.) for working at their site of choice with the Field Placement Coordinator to ensure they meet those qualifications.

Students are responsible for contacting the agency at which they wish to serve directly. Additional support and recommendations to facilitate this process are provided within the Field Education Preparation Workshop, which is required mid-way through the program. This workshop is self-paced and provides students with the information they need to prepare for their Field Education experience. Students will explore the purpose of and requirements for field education, identify the steps in the field education placement process, review the documents required and the system to submit them in, and an overview of safe practices while in the field. Additional resources are provided to support students throughout the experience including resume samples, interviewing tips, and various tutorials from Career Services. Access to this workshop will be made available to students in their coursework, accompanied by outreach from their Field Placement Coordinator to initiate Field Education planning.

## Final Site Approval

University of Phoenix Field Placement Coordinators will work with the agency to ensure the agency meets all requirements for final approval. Students will be notified by their respective Field Placement Coordinator once full approval has been received. After receiving this approval, students will be approved to schedule the Field Education course.

A representative from the Field Education department will complete a site visit of the participating agency in person or remotely. The first visit will be scheduled for no later than the end of the first month of the Field Education session to establish roles and responsibilities. The second visit will be scheduled near the end of the session to ensure all competencies are being met. Additional visits are scheduled as needed. Typically, a Field Faculty member completes these visits, however, another member of the Field Department team may substitute in times of need.

NOTE: The BSSW Program is only offered in select states. If at any point in the program you move to another state, your ability to continue in the program could be impacted. You must immediately update your current address with the University whenever a change occurs. You must contact your Academic Advisor to ascertain the effect on your program. You are encouraged to contact your Academic Advisor upon contemplating an address change to understand the effect of the change on your ability to progress in the program.

## Eligibility

To be eligible for Field Education, students must have fulfilled the appropriate course prerequisites. Students should refer to the prerequisites and contact their Academic Counselors if they have questions as to whether they have fulfilled the requirements.

## Criminal Conviction and/or Unethical Behavior

In order to complete the Bachelor of Science in Social Work program, students are required to complete Field Education in an agency or facility offering social work services. A representative from the Field Education Department will communicate with students in advance of their field placement to discuss the required documentation. Most social service agencies will require a series of clearances to be completed in order to be approved for placement at their sites. Each state and/or agency will have varying requirements, such as child abuse clearances, state-specific clearances, FBI fingerprint clearances, health assessments, drug screenings, valid driver's licenses, etc.

We strongly encourage all students to prepare for these clearances and background checks as they enter their program. It is important to determine whether there may have

anything in their backgrounds that may disqualify them from field placement at an agency or facility before undertaking this program as it would prevent them from completing the BSSW program if they are not able to participate in field education.

A Field Placement Coordinator will discuss this process and advise on which clearances should be applied based on the state of residence and site preferences. This process will need to be finalized in advance of beginning field education hours at the agency. It is the student's responsibility to check the requirements to determine whether a criminal conviction and/or unethical behavior as defined by the [National Association of Social Workers Code of Ethics](#), may prohibit completion of the Field Education courses. We do not retain copies of these documents within our department. These documents will be shared between the student and the site only.

Students are responsible for retaining the results of any clearances to prove compliance with agency policies or field education purposes when requested. The costs associated with these clearances are the student's responsibility. If a criminal conviction or unethical behavior occurs while the student is enrolled in the program, the student will be referred to the college's Professional Standards process to determine the appropriate course of action. Please refer to the Acknowledgment of Previous Criminal and Unethical Behavior in the Program Manual for additional information about student expectations.

Agencies may also require random drug screening(s), and students must be willing to participate and give permission for the necessary personnel to review the results. If the student fails these screens, the student will not be accepted at that specific agency and may not be placed until the next term. If a student fails a screening during a field placement, the student will be removed from the agency and not placed in another agency for the remainder of the term. An automatic professional standards referral will follow.

Students who are disqualified from direct contact with vulnerable populations for any reason, (an example of a disqualifier would be a felony conviction), will find it highly unlikely they will be able to fully participate in field education. For that reason, we cannot guarantee a placement for students with criminal histories. Students must disclose a prior felony or misdemeanor charge prior to interviewing with an agency. If a student fails to inform the Field staff of a charge or conviction, the student will be dismissed from placement and/or the program. If your record has become an issue during the BSSW program, you must communicate this in written form to the Field Director immediately.

## Section II

### Safe Practices

#### Safety in Field

Field Education is an opportunity for students to practice the skills learned throughout the curriculum in a social work setting under the supervision of a qualified Field Instructor. It is important that students have an enriching educational experience in the field but also one that is safe.

Social workers engage with a wide range of populations, and depending on the placement, students may encounter clients with a history of violence, mental illness, and/or substance abuse. Students may also work with clients who live in unsafe neighborhoods or have increased crime rates. However, dangers also exist in communities with resources and services in place to reduce risks, so it is important to remain vigilant in the field regardless of the setting or population.

#### Home Visits

Some agencies will include home visits with clients. These can be intimidating situations, and you must always remain supervised. Students are NOT permitted to be in a client's home without the supervision of an agency representative.

#### Safety Policies and Procedures for Home Visits

If services are to be provided at a client's home instead of at an agency's location, clinic, hospital, or care facility, the agency agrees to implement formal policies and procedures to protect the safety of the student's educational experience. These policies include student training on safety protocols, check-in and check-out procedures, client screening processes, permission to use mobile phones, and the accompaniment of an agency supervisor to all in-home service sessions. Under NO circumstances should students provide in-home services without an agency supervisor being physically present. Before starting any agency-related assignments or home visits, the agency must provide written policies and procedures on safety protocols. Students must also sign a statement acknowledging that they've received a copy of the agency's written policies and procedures as well as notice of the applicable training that will be provided to the supervising University faculty member. The agency is responsible for any claims or damages brought by any student, client, or a third party arising out of in-home service care. Additional information is provided in the agency Affiliation Agreement.



## Safety Guidelines

### Physical Safety

- Follow the health and safety protocols of the location at which you are engaging in fieldwork.
- Client services may be located at an agency's location, clinic, hospital, care facility, or at a client's home. Students may **ONLY** make home visits when supervised by the Field Instructor.
- Discuss your schedule clearly with your field instructor and remain punctual. If you are late or missing this could indicate an issue.
- Make sure another agency representative knows where you and your supervisor will be, when you will leave, and when you expect to return to the office. Maintain a log of where you will be and when so you can track home and community visits.
- Familiarize yourself with the agency building and any exits in the event of an emergency.
- Have an agency ID or any codes, badges, or clearances you may need as you represent the agency. Do not enter any areas that are restricted to you.
- Introduce yourself to each client clearly. Let them know who you are and why you are working with them.
- Remain calm, present, and aware during client interactions.
- If you are working with a client and their demeanor changes or they seem under the influence, disoriented, or on high alert, remove yourself from the situation.
- Dress comfortably and appropriately for the community or setting. You will need to look professional, but wear clothing that will help you remain safe in the field.

### Transportation Safety

- NEVER transport a client in your personal vehicle.
- You are responsible for getting to and from your field placement site. Transportation time cannot be counted toward your total hours.
- If you use your personal vehicle as part of the field experience, have enough gas and emergency roadside information on hand. Prepare as best as possible if you live in an area where inclement weather may be an issue. Leave valuable items in the trunk of your car.
- Use your judgment to determine where it is safe to park and if you feel safe entering or exiting the building alone.

### Privacy & Technology Safety

- Keep emergency phone numbers (including your Field Instructor or other agency staff members) on hand, and make sure your phone is charged.

- DO NOT use your personal phone to call clients. If it is necessary to communicate with clients in the field, the agency should provide a cell phone.
- Be careful about self-disclosure – it's easy for clients to learn a lot about you with just a little bit of information.

## Safety Roles and Responsibilities

### Students

Students play an important role in remaining safe in the field. Students should always remain supervised by a field instructor or accompanied by another agency representative throughout the field experience. Assess the environment for any risks and comply with the safety protocols in place with the agency. Have a safety plan in place prior to beginning placement. Minimize safety risks whenever possible.

Trust your instincts, if you feel unsafe, remove yourself from the situation. Then, when you are in a safe place, be in contact with your Field Faculty to discuss the situation.

### Agencies

The agency also plays an important role in keeping students safe in the field. Each agency should prepare students with information about their safety protocols and policies. If students do not receive this information or training, request this prior to seeing clients, and notify the Field Faculty member.

It is expected that safety protocols will be in place within the agency. Topics to discuss during the field instructor's site orientation include emergency procedures, out-of-office site visit protocols, weapon policies, crisis intervention, transportation policies and insurance, sexual harassment/discrimination policies and procedures, emergency procedures, and contacts.

The safety planning will vary depending on the population served. For example, if the agency provides anger management services, the clients may have a history of violence. If it is in a medical setting, clients may be in an agitated state or have aggressive behavior. Be mindful of the risks associated with each population served and identify ways to reduce risks while working with them. Ask to attend any training offered by the agency to de-escalate situations or minimize risks in the setting.

### Field Instructors

It is expected that field instructors will share the safety protocols in place within the agency during their site orientation. Topics to discuss include emergency procedures, out-of-office site visit protocols, weapon policies, crisis intervention, transportation

policies and insurance, sexual harassment/discrimination policies and procedures, emergency procedures, and contacts.

If student placements include home visits, specific expectations must be outlined, and students must be accompanied by a supervisor at all times.

NOTE: Under NO circumstances should the student terminate the field placement alone. If a student does not follow the official process for addressing issues in placement, we cannot guarantee a secondary field placement option to allow the student to continue the course. Therefore, if the student suddenly leaves field placement prematurely, they risk having to re-take the course entirely with a new agency, delaying the expected date of graduation.

## Assessing Situations for Risks

### How Do I Assess Situations for Potential Risks?

Use your judgment when examining your environment, researching client history, and seeking input from colleagues. You can reduce your safety risks in the field by planning ahead with these elements.

#### Environment

Risks are present in the agency, community, a client's home, and any other field setting. You will want to determine the setting and identify which potential risks may be relevant in that situation. For example, if you are in an office setting, you may want to consider the safety measures in place in terms of parking (location, lighting, security cameras), areas of the office that are restricted, or the exit plan if an emergency occurs in the building. You will also want to consider things like your seating arrangements with clients in an office setting and ensure you have a clear path to the door in the event of an emergency. It is best to avoid closed-door meetings with clients for the safety of everyone involved. Also, consider if you have items in the office that could be used as a weapon.

If you are in a client's home, position yourself closest to the door and do not enter the home with anything more than you absolutely need; if you have to remove yourself quickly you won't have time to gather up items. Think through each part of your physical environment in the setting and ways you can keep yourself safe if the need arises.

#### Client history

Before meeting with a client, it is important to gather as much historical information about their case as possible. Look for any incidents of aggression, mental health concerns, or other behaviors that could indicate a risk. You must be supervised at all

times, but if you feel uncomfortable, speak with your field instructor prior to engaging with the client.

### **Colleague Input**

Your colleagues and field instructor will be able to provide a great deal of support and advice in assessing safety. They will have experience in the protocols of the agency, including how to respond to incidents directly and in documenting them appropriately.

## **Student Expectations and Responsibilities**

Students are responsible for the following in relation to the Field Education courses:

- It is the responsibility of the student to acquire a signed Field Education Learning Contract with the agency. The agreement provides clarity around students' educational tasks to be completed in placement and the expectations from the agency's perspective.
- It is the student's responsibility to set goals for the experience with Field faculty and field instructor input. These goals must correspond to the nine CSWE Social Work competencies.
- It is expected the student will perform any agreed-upon duties while supervised by the agency supervisor and/or Field Instructor.
- Students are expected to remain professional and ethical at all times. Please reference the Professional Standards for expectations.
- Students are required to attend supervision meetings, as well as engage in weekly participation in the classroom.
- Students are required to record and maintain a timely log of their Field Education activities within the software system. Logs are to be completed and approved weekly and should provide details of objectives and competencies accomplished at the agency. These logs provide an official record and running total of student completion of the Field Education hours required for the program.
- Field Education courses must be passed with a B or better.

## **Resolving Issues within Field Placement**

If an issue arises in field placement, students are expected to immediately discuss this with their Field Faculty so that steps can be taken in a timely manner. The Field Faculty will work with the student and/or Field Instructor to coach through potential solutions. If no resolution can be achieved, the Field Faculty will consult the Field Director and develop a plan. If these are unsuccessful, a meeting will be scheduled with the Field Director. If necessary, the BSSW Program Director will be consulted to discuss options such as an academic performance review, a placement change, grievance procedures, etc.

Under no circumstances should the student terminate the field placement alone. If a student does not follow the aforementioned process for addressing issues in placement, a secondary field placement option for the student to complete the course's requirements may not be possible. Therefore, students who do not follow this procedure risk having to re-take the course entirely with a new agency and delay graduation.

Students who are dismissed from placement on the basis of ethical concerns (behavior incongruent with the NASW Code of Ethics), will be referred to the Field Director for review. Failure to meet these expectations may result in failure of the course, immediate removal, or other action taken by the department. Please refer to the Professional Standards process for guidance.

## **Requirements for Field Placements within Employment Settings**

Field Education provides an opportunity to expose students to populations and agencies they may be interested in working with after graduation. Under certain circumstances, an agency may be willing to provide a unique and different environment for a student employee to achieve Field Education goals within the agency. This environment must be separate from the employee's normal duties, occur during specified times (that do not conflict with employment hours), under different supervision, and be discussed and approved at all levels (the agency and Field Department). Completion of the Employed Practitioner Agreement is required prior to the start of Field Placement. This form can be obtained by the Field Placement Coordinator assigned to the student or provided within the Field Education Preparation Workshop. Submission of this form does not guarantee your placement will be approved by the Field Education office.

Employment-based settings must meet high educational standards, and considerable pre-planning is required, including the following:

- Completion of the Employed Practitioner Agreement at a minimum of six months prior to field placement start date. Final approval of your proposal will be made by the Field Department.
- Students must demonstrate that the proposed placement tasks will meet educational goals, including the CSWE Core Competencies, within an undergraduate generalist practice area.
- All field placement duties and learning activities must be separate from employment roles. Students must outline their intended responsibilities and specific time allotments.
- A separate supervisor is available as separate supervision is required for employment and field placement. The supervisor must have a BSW or MSW degree from a CSWE-Accredited program and a minimum of two years post-graduation experience.
- One hour per week minimum is reserved for the supervisor and student to meet.

- The student cannot be placed in the agency during a new-hire probationary period set by the agency.
- Students must agree to release employment information as relevant to the field placement if any performance issues arise. If a student is terminated or resigns from their place of employment during the term, the field placement will be immediately suspended, and a member of the Field Placement team will work with the student to determine the next steps and/or replacement. If the student is terminated on the basis of ethical concerns (behavior incongruent with the NASW Code of Ethics or the Program's Professional Standards) this will escalate to the Field Director for review.
- If approved, the placement must, as with traditional placements, be available for two consecutive courses (both Field Education I and Field Education II) or the entirety of Field Education Block. If the proposed employment-based placement is not approved, the student will work with a Field Faculty or Field Placement Coordinator to be reassigned outside of the employment setting. This placement option will meet all competencies, practice behaviors, and guidelines. For this reason, considerable pre-planning is necessary to have options before the course begins.

## Roles and Responsibilities

**Table 1. Field Experience Overview**

<b>Field Experience Component</b>	<b>Component Requirements</b>
Minimum Hours Required	Field Education I and Field Education II Minimum 200 hours per course Approximately 13-15 hours per week, for 15 weeks each course  OR  Field Education Block Minimum of 400 hours Approximately 26-30 hours per week, for 15 weeks
Assignments	Learning Contract Journal (1/week) Supervision forms Evaluations
General Tasks	Generalist Social Work practice (individuals, families, groups) including micro (client), mezzo (groups), and macro (communities and organizations).
Credentials for Supervision	BSW or MSW from a CSWE Accredited program and 2 years of post-graduate experience

## Student

While in placement, within the agency, or in the classroom, students are expected to conduct themselves professionally and ethically. Specifically, students are responsible for the following:

- Adhere to appropriate procedures of application to field placement including completion of all materials and referral steps.
- Present oneself as professional in behaviors, dress, and mannerisms while in placement.
- Be familiar with and abide by the expectations, policies, and procedures set forth in the Field Manual and Program Handbook.
- Be familiar with, and abide by, agency policies and expectations, the NASW Code of Ethics, the University of Phoenix Student Code of Conduct, and the Professional Standards. Failure to meet these expectations will be reflected in course grade(s) and/or may result in immediate removal from the placement.
- Manage time and schedules to accommodate field placement consistently each week and ensure this schedule will meet the minimum requirements each week.
- Commit to achieving all requirements within the field course, including all assignments and regular supervision. Complete course assignments outside of field placement unless otherwise arranged with the field instructor.
- If there are interruptions to weekly supervision, students will notify the Field Faculty.
- In the event of an absence or delay, the student must notify the field instructor. Students must notify their Field Faculty if the absence will extend beyond one day.
- Resolve problems appropriately or as specified in the BSSW Field/Program Manual in a timely manner to avoid affecting performance.
- Share field course information with the field instructor or agency personnel.
- Take an active role in the learning experience. Come to field prepared and willing to integrate theory and practice. Actively participate in the development of all course-related documents, including the learning contract and evaluations, and be mindful of the time necessary for consultation and to obtain the signatures of various parties.
- Maintain a time log in the software system which accurately reflects time served in field placement. Ensure that it is submitted on time and approved by the field instructor and Field Faculty.
- Do not transport clients in your personal vehicle. Do not share your personal phone number with clients or conduct agency business on your personal phone.
- Only use your personal cell phone during placement in times of emergency unless otherwise arranged with your Field Instructor.



## Field Faculty

The role of the Field Faculty (or Field Education Faculty) is to ensure consistency in expectations while the placement occurs. This person is a resource for the student and field instructor, and a point of contact between the agency and the University. The Field Faculty role is held by a faculty member who leads the facilitation of the Field Education course(s). At any time, the Field Faculty can request immediate removal of the student from the placement based on the student's behavior or performance if continuing in the placement risks the quality of service delivered to clients. Field Faculty are responsible for the following:

- Conducting site visits with the agency representative(s) and student at minimum once per course, or more as needed, to assess student progress and appropriateness of placement.
- Be a mediator for any problems or ethical dilemmas that occur in placement and be available as a professional advisor to the field instructor and student throughout placement.
- Receive, review, and provide appropriate feedback to all field-related materials, including but not limited to learning contracts, evaluations, timesheets, journals, etc.
- Assign student grades based on the culmination of assignments, achievement of CSWE Competencies, evaluations, feedback from agency representatives, and other field outcomes.
- Respond to all inquiries (student, agency, administration) in a timely manner.

## Field Instructor

This role provides a significant contribution to the development of our BSSW graduates. The Field Instructor is a qualified employee of the agency responsible for services delivered. At any time, the Field Instructor can request immediate removal of the student from the placement based on the student's behavior or performance if continuing in the placement risks the quality of service delivered to clients. In this case, immediate communication with the Field Faculty is expected.

In order to become familiar with the policies, procedures, and expectations of the Field Instructor role at University of Phoenix, a brief Orientation is made available by the Field Placement Coordinator and is a self-paced, asynchronous module. This Orientation is a resource and provides instructions on the appropriate ways to relay student progress in the field. Weekly meetings (or "supervision") are required to orient the student to the agency, answer questions, provide direction, and ensure Social Work ethical standards are being met. The weekly meeting/supervision should also be used to review student learning objectives (relating to CSWE competencies) and provide opportunities to meet them. Supervision must occur for a minimum of one hour each week, and clearly address the student's role, tasks, responsibilities, and maintenance of the workload.



Questions, concerns, and/or successful experiences should be discussed in the weekly meeting/supervision.

In keeping with expectations set by CSWE, we require that all field instructors hold a minimum of a Bachelor of Social Work degree from a CSWE-accredited institution, and two years of post-graduate experience in their chosen field.

We ask that our field instructors do the following:

- Participate in orientation and training sessions offered by the Field Department.
- Become familiar with the BSSW department mission, goals, and program objectives as well as CSWE competencies.
- Be available to supervise a student in practice throughout the field placement courses, including assessment and evaluation.
- Orient the student to the agency, including all relevant policies and procedures (specifically safety) and agency expectations.
- Work with our students to complete all field-related materials, including, but not limited to learning contracts, evaluations, and timesheets. We also ask that they provide students with a minimum of one hour of weekly supervision and feedback on performance.
- Engage with the Field Faculty to ensure all program, agency, and student needs are being met.
- Inform the Field Faculty immediately if the student's level of performance is marginal and work with the student to support the student's success.

## Documents and References for Field Education

Resource documents, such as information to prepare for Field Education can be found in the BSSW Program's [Library Guide](#). In order to view the materials, you must be logged in with your student credentials.

## Section III

### Affiliation Agreements with Organizations

The University enters into an affiliation agreement with each organization/agency students are placed. The agreement outlines responsibilities and protections for each party involved and must be completed prior to students starting within the organization.

### Liability Insurance

Students are required to obtain and maintain professional liability insurance throughout field placement, which will be confirmed by their Field Placement Coordinator and Field Faculty prior to the start of Field Education. The National Association for Social Work provides professional liability insurance for students at a reduced cost. Please visit the site and plan to have insurance prior to the start of your first field education course. Please be mindful of the start and end dates for your policy and ensure your insurance is current throughout your field education courses until the end of the last field education course. You may obtain professional liability insurance through the NASW. Please [click here](#) for details.

The University provides general liability insurance for students while performing the duties and responsibilities of field education. Insurance is effective for the academic term only and under no circumstances should a student have contact with clients prior to the first day of the course. Students are not permitted to transport clients in their personal vehicles as part of their field education. In the event there is an agency-provided vehicle available, the student must provide their driving record information and proof of an active driver's license. An orientation for use of agency-provided vehicles is expected to review any associated policies/procedures. The agency should provide liability insurance and accident coverage for agency-provided vehicles, and the University will not be responsible for injuries to students, clients, or personnel.

### Safety and Risk Management

University of Phoenix prioritizes student safety while engaging in Field Education. Through a pre- placement orientation to Field Education, basic safety measures are discussed, and we expect students to take appropriate precautions in placement. It is also expected that Field Instructors will share the safety protocols in place within the agency during their site orientation. Topics to discuss include emergency procedures, out-of-office site visit protocols, weapon policies, crisis intervention, transportation policies and insurance, sexual harassment/ discrimination policies and procedures, emergency procedures, and contacts. Specific expectations must be outlined if student placements include home visits, and students must be accompanied by a supervisor at all times. A cell phone, provided by the agency, must be made available while

completing supervised home visits. Safety training content will be reviewed by the Field Placement team prior to site approval.

University of Phoenix will share our safety and risk management policies during Student and Field Instructor training and must be acknowledged by both parties through the Learning Contract. Should any issues or concerns arise, it is the students' and/or field instructor's responsibility to communicate with the Field Education staff.

## Select University Policies

University policies related to non-discrimination, harassment/violence, sexual harassment, Title IX and VAWA protections, and other related policies are available in the [Academic Catalog](#).

The University of Phoenix [Campus Safety Policies](#) and Annual Security Report also provides additional information regarding definitions of prohibited conduct, counseling, and assistance resources available to all members of the University community. To learn more, visit the [University Campus Safety](#) website.

## Supplemental & Professional Standards

Candidates in Social Work programs leading to certification or licensure in Social Work at University of Phoenix are subject to greater scrutiny because of their anticipated interactions with clients and others in the community. These degree candidates participate in one or more field placements, practicums, and/or internships as part of their academic program. As prospective social workers, candidates are expected to represent the University as professionals and adhere to the ethics and standards of their profession, irrespective of where the conduct may occur.

The Social Work Program adheres to the broader social work community's ethical standards, as reflected in the National Association of Social Workers (NASW) Code of Ethics as well as the additional professional standards put forth by the Social Work Program administration. The University of Phoenix Social Work program has structured coursework to meet the Council on Social Work Education's (CSWE) Educational and Policy Assessment Standards (EPAS).

The Supplemental & Professional Standards address a candidate's affective attributes and disposition to be a Social Worker. A candidate's ability to satisfactorily meet Professional Standards is a matter of ongoing academic judgment made by faculty, university staff, and university management. Refer to the BSSW Program Handbook for a complete listing of the University of Phoenix Professional Standards for BSSW students.

## Process

Candidates' professional dispositions, measured through demonstration of affective and cognitive behaviors, are formally and informally evaluated periodically throughout the program. Students who fall below standards in a particular area may be referred to the Program Director or designee to meet and develop a remediation plan to assist the student in order to meet standards. Any candidate who receives one or more referral(s) will be coached, remediated, or withdrawn from their program, as appropriate. However, the process is intended to be supportive in that it provides students with an opportunity to receive additional coaching and assistance from the administrator aimed to facilitate the student's efforts to meet standards. Unless a student has knowingly caused a client harm or violated sexual, financial, or privacy boundaries, this process only culminates in withdrawal from the program when other avenues have been exhausted.

The Supplemental & Professional Standards referral process, including appeal options, are discussed in more detail in the BSSW Program Handbook.

NOTE: Candidates who are separately charged with violating the Student Code of Conduct are subject to the policies, procedures, and sanctions for processing these charges. However, a charge under the Student Code of Conduct may also be the basis for a referral on separate grounds under these Professional Standards. Similarly, an observation under the Referral Process may be the basis for a Student Code of Conduct charge.

## Social Media and Professional Communication

Students who use social media (Facebook, Twitter, etc.) and other forms of electronic communication (blogs, wikis, etc.) must be mindful that social networks are not private and consider how their communication may be perceived by clients, colleagues, faculty, and others. Students are expected to refrain from sharing material that could be considered inappropriate for a professional social worker in training. It is advised that students manage their security settings to the most private levels and avoid posting information or photos that contain sensitive information or which could jeopardize their professional image. Client material or information should never be referred to in any form of social media, including any information that may identify clients or compromise their confidentiality in any way.

It is expected that students will block any client access to the student's social networks. Students should critically evaluate any material that is posted regarding the agency or could compromise professional relationships.

## **Frequently Asked Questions about the BSSW Field Education Program**

### **How do I obtain a field unit and a field placement?**

Approximately 6 months prior to the start of Field Education, students will complete an online Field Education Preparation Workshop. This workshop will review material regarding field education, including roles and responsibilities, expectations in field placement, and an overview of the field placement sites (e.g., agencies, programs) with which the University is currently affiliated. Each approved site will provide generalist practice opportunities for the development, integration, and application of the key competencies as established by CSWE. Students will be prompted to follow the proper procedures for communicating with the populations/agencies they wish to pursue for field placement. Every student placement is individualized, and a Field Placement Coordinator will work directly with the student to establish a placement that will achieve the CSWE EPAS competencies. Students will outline assignments, activities, and goals to achieve these competencies after collaborating with their Field Instructor and within the Learning Contract.

### **How much time do I spend at field placement?**

If students complete the Field Education I and Field Education II-course sequence, they must acquire a minimum of 200 hours per course which includes their field placement and seminar. This averages about 13-15 hours per week (for 15 weeks) in field placement. Students remain in the same field placement for 2 courses. In the Field Education Block single course option, students complete a minimum of 400 hours in field placement and seminar. This averages 26-30 hours per week for 15 weeks.

### **How many credits are the field placement and integrative seminar?**

If BSSW students register for two Field Education courses, Field Education I and Field Education II, each course is 3 credits. If electing the single course option Field Education Block, this course is 6 credits.

### **Can I be exempted from part of the field placement if I have prior experience?**

In keeping with CSWE's standards, a minimum of 400 hours is required to obtain a BSSW degree. No prior experience can waive this requirement.

## **Is a caregiver/criminal background check required for field placement?**

Yes. Each state requires a caregiver/criminal background check for those working with vulnerable populations. Communicate with your Field Placement Coordinator for timeline recommendations and additional information on the process and policies on background checks. If you are disqualified from direct contact with vulnerable populations for any reason, for example, students who have felony convictions, it would be highly unlikely you will be able to fully participate in field education. For that reason, we cannot guarantee a placement for students with these criminal histories. If your record has become an issue during the course of the BSSW program, you must communicate this in written form to the Field Director immediately.

## **Are employment-based field placements available?**

Field Education provides an opportunity to expose students to populations and agencies they may be interested in working with after graduation. Under certain circumstances, an agency may be willing to provide a unique and different environment for an employee student to achieve Field Education goals within the agency. Completion of the Employed Practitioner Agreement is required prior to the start of field placement.

## **Do I need a vehicle for field placement?**

We do not vet placements based on their access to public/other means of transportation. Of course, for the sake of convenience, having access to a personal vehicle will make traveling to and engaging within the agency easier. Students are not permitted to transport clients in their personal vehicles. If you have concerns about transportation, please communicate this to your Field Placement Coordinator and we will work with you to seek a solution.

## **What do I do if I have questions, issues, or concerns about my field placement?**

If an issue arises in field placement, students are expected to immediately discuss this with their Field Faculty so that steps can be taken in a timely manner. The Field Faculty will work with the student and/or Field Instructor to coach through potential solutions. If no resolution can be achieved, the faculty will consult the Field Director and develop a plan. If these are unsuccessful, a meeting will be scheduled with the Field Director. If necessary, the BSSW Program Director will be consulted to discuss options such as academic performance review, placement change, grievance procedures, etc.

Under no circumstances should the student terminate the field placement alone. If a student does not follow the aforementioned process for addressing issues in placement, we cannot guarantee a secondary field placement option to allow the student to continue the course. Therefore, the student risks having to re-take the course entirely with a new agency and delay graduation.

## **Is the field course graded or pass/fail?**

Field Education courses are assigned letter grades. Students must earn a B or better in order to proceed to the next course in the sequence. A grade of B or below will not meet the requirement. The grade reflects the performance within the agency, measured within the Learning Contract, as well as the seminar. Grades are assigned by the Field Faculty after consulting with the Field Instructor/agency supervisor. Through the Final Field Evaluation, the Field Instructor/agency supervisor will reflect on the student's achievement of competencies, as well as their professional development through client interaction.

## **Questions?**

If questions arise, students are instructed to contact their Academic Counselor and/or Field Placement Coordinator. We are happy to help and wish you success in the Field Education portion of your program!

## CSWE Core Competencies

(CSWE) released the 2022 Educational Policy and Accreditation Standards (EPAS), which includes nine competencies.

### CSWE Competencies (2022):

- Competency 1: Demonstrate Ethical and Professional Behavior
- Competency 2: Advance Human Rights and Social, Racial, Economic, and Environmental Justice
- Competency 3: Engage Anti-Racism, Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (ADEI) in Practice
- Competency 4: Engage in Practice-Informed Research and Research-Informed Practice
- Competency 5: Engage in Policy Practice
- Competency 6: Engage with Individuals, Families, Groups, Organizations, and Communities
- Competency 7: Assess Individuals, Families, Groups, Organizations, and Communities
- Competency 8: Intervene with Individuals, Families, Groups, Organizations, and Communities
- Competency 9: Evaluate Practice with Individuals, Families, Groups, Organizations, and Communities



## References

Council on Social Work Education. (2014, February 25). Internships, Department of Labor regulations, and social work field education: Setting the record straight. Retrieved from

<https://www.cswe.org/getattachment/Accreditation/2014-02-25AnnouncementreDOLandField-EF.pdf>

Council on Social Work Education. (2022). 2022 Educational Policy and Accreditation Standards. Retrieved from

<https://www.cswe.org/accreditation/policies-process/2022epas/>