



1. Some students who work 40 hours a week need to keep working full time. How realistic is that?

Students working 40 hours a week may not be able to complete the field placement requirement of the program unless some adjustment is made in their work schedule.

Students are required to have a well varied educational experience. While some agencies have evening and/or weekend hours, these tend to be limited. In some settings, placement hours during evenings/weekends may not allow you to maximize your learning in areas involving the community. You will be required to complete some hours during the traditional Monday through Friday business day time.

The field placement is not just about completing hours but about having a solid educational experience. For example, being at a residential setting on weekends when very little is happening does not meet the definition of an educational experience. The student must be present at a time when meetings and activities are happening and staff, including the MSW Field Instructor, are present. The majority of agencies cannot provide this opportunity on weekends or during the evening.

A place of employment field placement, provided that the agency is large enough and has multiple programs, may provide optimal learning opportunities for employed students.

2. What is the role of the Field Planner?

The Field Planner works with students through the orientation and assists students to find a great field placement. Students will work closely with their field planner to learn the requirements of their field placement experience, as well as the process to find and secure an internship site. To optimize your outcomes, students are expected to engage weekly in the field planning orientation.

3. When does field planning begin?

Planning officially begins about four (4) months (one semester) prior to starting field. Students begin the field planning process by engaging in the non-credit bearing Orientation to Field Education. Students will be field planning while simultaneously enrolled in academic courses. Students can reach out to the Associate Director of Field Education to get more information regarding the process.

4. What is the first step in the field planning process?

Traditional students will begin with the Orientation to Field Education in their foundation year. Students in their advanced year will also be expected to complete a field planning course. They will work with a field planner in both courses. Students will need a web-cam, headset, and scanner for this course.

5. How is grading done in Field Planning and in Seminar Classes?

Orientation to Field Planning for foundation year and advanced year placements is a non-credit course. While student's do not pay for field planning, this should not underestimate its importance in your social work education. Field planning helps to prepare you for success at your placements.

At WSSW, it is imperative students are aware that while you are in field placement, students are also enrolled in practice courses and in seminar courses. These courses are designed to support you while in placement. Therefore, these courses are intertwined for grading purposes. In other words, if you fail one part of field education (fieldwork, practice, or seminar), you fail all of them. It is vital that you communicate with your student support coordinator, field advisor or practice instructor the moment you begin to fall behind. We are all available to support you.

At WSSW, for both practice and seminar classes, a grade of a Y is given to the student at the end of the first semester (as long as the student is in good standing). The letter grade of Y indicates that these courses

(practice and seminar) are two semester course sequences and students do not earn full credit until the successful completion at the end of the second semester.

6. Are students able to select their own field placement and MSW Field Instructor?

It is the student's responsibility to find his/her own field placement and MSW Field Instructor contingent upon Wurzweiler School of Social Work approval. The student's Field Planner will work closely with each student during this time to help secure the best fit for field placement.

If you are a student in the NY Metro area, please speak with your field planner as your process is different. Students residing in the NY Metro area or certain areas of Canada CANNOT search for their placement on their own. Organizations expect the school to be the first point of contact. Please consult with your field planner immediately if you reside in NY Metro; do not contact agencies on your own.

7. What else has to be completed in that time period?

Once a student has found a field placement site, there are several documents that must be completed and uploaded to the course, as well as having a virtual meeting with the organization to finalize placement. All of this will be outlined in your orientation to field planning.

If all of the forms have been submitted and approved, it is during the final meeting where the placement will be officially approved. Sometimes the forms need to be edited after this meeting, in which case the placement may be conditionally approved until all of the paperwork is completed and accepted.

8. How many agencies should students interview with?

In order to make a sound educational decision that meets the expected learning goals, students are required to interview with at least two (2) agencies so that they can compare and contrast settings.

9. Can a student get paid for his or her placement?

A limited number of agencies do offer students a stipend or a paid internship. Students also have the opportunity to do their placement at their place of employment if certain criteria are met (See Place of Employment (POE) criteria and Paid Internship options in the Field Education Manual). We encourage students to ask about stipends at the time of their interview.

10. How many hours per week are students expected to be at their placement?

A traditional generalist (1st) year field placement lasts 30 weeks (two, 15-week semesters), done at the rate of 20 - 22 hours per week. You will need to complete a total of 600 hours over the duration of your placement (in two semesters). The one hour of weekly field instruction (with an MSW with 3 years post graduate experience) is included in your total time. The same amount of hours and field instruction are required during the student's specialization (advanced) year. If you reside in the Tri-State area, your Field Instructor must also be SIFI (Seminar in Field Instruction) certified.

Students spend at least 10-11 hours per week in direct practice with clients. The rest of the time includes 1 hour for field instruction, up to 3 hours for writing process recordings and agency documentation, and time for case conferences and staff meetings.

11. Can students set their own schedule at the placement?

The student and the agency work together to identify a schedule that meets both of their needs. Internship hours must include program times when primary interventions occur, and the student is able to attend staff/team meetings. Note: residential programs typically use evenings and weekends as "downtime", in this example an internship which was 100% evening hours and weekends would not be approved.

12. How can the student prepare himself or herself for the placement interview?

Students begin to prepare for their interviews during the field planning orientation. Students may work closely with their field planner to prepare for interviews.

13. Should students bring a resume and references to the interview?

Yes. Students work on their resumes as an assignment during the field planning orientation. It is recommended that students bring their resume, names of references (in case asked), the final paperwork needed, and the learning objectives.

14. What is the difference between the Field Planner, Field Advisor, and MSW Field Instructor?

Field Planner:

- Member of the YU WSSW Field Education Faculty
- Assigned to students by the school to provide assistance and support around field planning
- Teaches the Orientation to Field Education (both for generalist and advanced years)
- Assists students prior to entering field placement and works with students to solidify and ultimately approve field placements.

MSW Field Instructor:

- MSW social worker identified in the community who is responsible for the student's education in the field
- Meets with students for 1 hour a week for field instruction
- Works with students to develop the learning contract
- Attends 2 virtual field visits
- Provides feedback on process recordings
- Evaluates the student's performance based on the successful completion of all the learning competencies and objectives in the learning contract and recommends a grade to the seminar instructor.
- Is the student's advocate/supporter at his/her field placement

Field Advisor:

- Member of the YU WSSW faculty including adjunct faculty members
- Is the instructor of the Seminar Class
- Acts as liaison between the school and the placements
- Conducts virtual (online) field visits with the placements
- Determines the student's final grade for Field Placement
- Is the student's additional advocate/supporter during the field placement

15. Must the MSW Field Instructor be licensed?

The YU Wurzweiler School of Social Work requires that the MSW field instructor be a graduate of an accredited school of social work, have three years post-master's experience, and to hold an MSW level social work license. If you reside in the Tri-State area, your Field Instructor must also be SIFI (Seminar in Field Instruction) certified. Some states, territories or countries may have additional requirements specific to Field Instructor credentialing. It is a required assignment in the field planning orientation that students find out if their state, territory or country has additional requirements.

16. What can students expect in the placement interview?

The interview process varies from agency to agency. The university and agency are generally interested in making sure there is a good fit. As a result, the agencies will be asking questions to ensure that this is the right place for the student. They will also be looking for students to play an active role in the interviewing process, so it is important for students to be prepared and show an interest in the agency. Students should prepare for the interview by gathering as much information about the organization and its services as possible. This is a part of the field planning process and the Field Planner is available to guide the student through this.

17. What if the person with whom the student interviews is not the person who can be the MSW Field Instructor?

The MSW Field Instructor plays such an essential role in the student's education, thus it is extremely important for the student to meet with the person who will serve as your field instructor. If there is not an opportunity during the interview, we strongly encourage students to ask to meet the person before making a final decision. The Field Instructor will be meeting with students for 1 hour of weekly field instruction. S/he will also be responsible for evaluating the successful completion of all the learning objectives outlined in the learning contract. It is critical that students feel comfortable working with their Field Instructor. It needs to be a good 'fit' to maximize learning.

18. What if a student really likes the agency but the agency doesn't have an MSW available to be a Field Instructor?

There are situations where an agency would provide an excellent education for a student but, for a variety of reasons, does not have an MSW on staff. In these cases, your field planner will work with the Associate Director of Field Education and provide one for you. The student will also receive day-to-day supervision from an identified staff member at the agency. This person is not required to have any particular credential. This person is the on-site supervisor. Since both the off-site MSW Field Instructor and the on-site supervisor are responsible for the student's educational experience, it is extremely important for there to be good communication between the two. It is an expectation that the off-site MSW Field Instructor and the on-site supervisor collaborate monthly (at a minimum). This collaboration can occur virtually, by phone or in person.

19. Is there anything that needs to be done after the interview?

Before ending the interview, the student and the agency should be clear about the next steps. Be sure to ask when you can expect to hear back from the agency. It is also nice to send a follow-up email or thank-you note of appreciation for their time.

20. Will a criminal background check and/or fingerprints be required by the agency?

This is an important question to ask at the time of the interview, as many agencies that provide field placement opportunities for students require a criminal background check. If a criminal background check indicates a conviction, it may prevent a student from securing a field placement. A conviction may also negatively impact the student's ability to get a social work license. It is recommended that students contact the Social Work Licensure Board in the state, territory or country they plan to practice in to get more information regarding the licensing requirements.

21. Will the placement require the student to have certain immunizations?

Some agencies require certain immunizations/tests. This should be determined at the time of the interview.

22. Does the student have to pay for background check, fingerprinting, immunizations, etc. if the placement requires these?

It depends on the agency. Some will assume the responsibility, while others ask the student to pay. It is important to ask at the time of the interview.

23. Will the placement expect students to transport clients, and if so, will students have to use their own car?

This depends on the agency. It is important to ask these questions at the time of the interview.

24. If a student is working in a social service agency, can those hours count as field time?

No field credit can be given for work hours. At times, there may be a possibility to complete a field placement at the student's place of employment (POE). Students need to discuss this with their Field Planner and review the place of employment criteria. (See Place of Employment (POE) and Paid Internship criteria in the Field Education Policy Manual.)

25. If a student has a new job in an agency, can this be counted as a field placement?

Students cannot use their job, new or existing, as their field placement. Please see the Paid Internship criteria for more information on paid internship options. (This can be found in the Field Education Manual.)

26. Will the placement require students to attend an orientation or training prior to working with clients?

All agencies are asked to provide some type of orientation for their students. This is an important question to ask at the time of the interview. Orientation/training required by the agency is counted as field hours.

27. Do MSW Field Instructors need to be paid for field instruction time?

Under no circumstances does a student ever pay for field instruction time.

28. How do students ask about safety training?

The school considers safety an important issue to be discussed in the field placement. It is definitely appropriate to ask about safety training at any point during the interview or field placement itself. In the event that a student feels the agency is dismissing the concern, the student needs to notify the Field Planner and/or Seminar Instructor immediately. The school requires each student to complete a safety contract at the beginning of each placement.

29. Can students use their former therapist, family member, close friend, or current supervisor as an MSW Field Instructor?

Under no circumstances will the School of Social Work approve a Field Instructor who has a personal, familial, or prior therapeutic relationship with a student.

30. Can students begin their field placement without having completed all of the required courses?

The short answer is no. Students must complete or be enrolled in required courses for their generalist year before beginning their generalist year placement. Students must complete or be enrolled in advanced/specialization year courses before beginning their advanced/specialization year placement. The pedagogical rationale is that the coursework is designed to inform and support the student in the field. Students are expected to put into practice that which they have learned about in the classroom while in field placement.

31. When is the Field Planner contacted or the Field Advisor?

If the student is currently field planning, the student should contact their Field Planner. If the student is in field seminar, they should contact their Field Advisor. If there are questions about field during a time where the student is not actively field planning or in field placement, the Associate Director of Field Education should be contacted to assist with any questions.

32. What if a student can't find an agency on his or her own?

All students work closely with a Field Planner and receive support and direction every step of the way. In the event a student cannot secure a placement in the allotted time, he/she will work with their student support coordinator to modify their academic course plan. They will then continue to field plan with the field planner and begin field internship the following semester.

33. Can a student do both placements at their place of employment ?

In order for students to have an educationally diverse field practicum experience, students are strongly discouraged from having both placements at the same organization. Students work closely with their Field Planner in order to find the best fit.

34. Can field hours be completed on nights and weekends at agencies that are open 24 hours?

Yes, although this can occur, students will need to review the list of activities with their field planner to be sure it meets objectives for either a foundation or advanced year placement. Students do need to plan on being at their placement for a minimum of at least 4-6 hours during regular business hours. Students also need to plan on attending the agency's staff meeting. Final approval of any field placement proposal needs to occur by the Field Planner.

35. Can the field placement be done during the summer?

There are three times students enter field placement during the academic year. They are: January, May and September. Placements run for 30 weeks over the course of 2 semesters.

36. What is the field planning process like? What are the requirements?

Students will be required to complete assignments in the orientation to field planning, be in weekly communication with their field planner, and contact 5-7 organizations per week to secure a practicum site. *If you reside in NY Metro/Toronto/Montreal, DO NOT contact agencies on your own.

Field Planners are responsible for helping students secure a field placement. They work closely with the students to ensure that the placement site offers an educationally sound generalist or advanced/specialization year experience.

37. Can students get paid for their field placement hours?

Yes, students can get paid for field placement, however, regular full or part-time employment hours can never be counted towards the required amount of internship hours.

38. What is the number 1 reason a student cannot find an agency?

Students who live in close proximity to other large schools of social work sometimes have difficulty securing a placement due to local universities having exclusive agreements with the agencies, only accepting students during certain semester cycles, or competition with MSW students from other programs. Students who also reside in very rural areas may also have limited options for field placements.

It is strongly recommended that when students do reside in an area with other local schools, they work even more closely with the Field Planner.

39. Does the amount of hours in field placement meet licensure requirements?

Students will complete an assignment in the field orientation seminar specific to internship hours required by their state, territory or country. These hours do not count towards licensure, however, some licensing boards require a minimum number of hours in field practicum to obtain initial credentialing as an MSW.

40. Can placements be done overseas?

Yes, however, no matter where the placement is located, it must meet all objectives.

41. Can placements be done on military bases?

Yes, however, no matter where the placement is located, it must meet all objectives.

42. How will field benefit students in their specific interests within social work?

The goal during field practicum is to integrate and apply what has been learned in academic courses. It is about honing skills and solidifying knowledge, both of which are applicable to any population the student chooses. It is also required by The Council of Social Work Education (CSWE).

43. How many agencies should I anticipate contacting before finding a placement?

We recommend contacting 5-7 agencies per week as it may take this many to secure 2 potential interviews. It is important to be persistent in your search.

*If you reside in NY Metro, Toronto or Montreal, do not contact agencies on your own. Please consult with your field planner.