



# Curriculum Guide for Field Education

Twenty-First Edition

# Curriculum Guide for Field Education

Boston University School of Social Work  
Field Education Department

[www.bu.edu/ssw/academic/msw/field/index.shtml](http://www.bu.edu/ssw/academic/msw/field/index.shtml)

Twenty-First Edition

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**The Boston University School of Social Work Field Education Department does not discriminate against any individual on the basis of race, color, religion, sex, age, national origin, physical or mental disability, marital, parental, veteran status, or sexual orientation as defined by Massachusetts law.**

## **BOSTON UNIVERSITY SCHOOL OF SOCIAL WORK**

### **MISSION, GOALS, AND OBJECTIVES**

The Boston University School of Social Work is part of a large urban university and is concerned with urban problems and their effect on people. Subscribing to the priorities of the profession of social work, the School of Social Work has adopted the following mission:

“The Boston University School of Social Work (BUSSW) is committed to education which furthers social and economic justice in the urban environment and strives to incorporate this commitment into its programs and activities. The School is especially concerned with empowerment of all oppressed groups. BUSSW recognizes the ever-changing demands on the profession and strives to meet them through the highest quality of teaching, scholarship, research, practice, and political action.

BUSSW’s aim is to educate professional social workers who will become leaders in a complex, diverse, and multicultural society. They will possess the knowledge and the skills to address the needs and potentials of individuals, families, groups, organizations, and communities. The School offers an integrated program of study, including clinical and macro social work methods. It emphasizes the engagement of personal and community strengths as fundamental to the understanding, treatment, and prevention of individual and social problems.”

In accord with its mission, the School has developed five major goals; the first two focus on objectives related specifically to the MSW program.

<b>Goal 1</b>	<b>To educate outstanding social work practitioners in an intellectually rigorous environment so they can integrate and apply clinical and macro practice methods in urban settings and diverse communities.</b>
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#### **Objectives:**

#### **MSW students will demonstrate:**

- Objective 1.** Critical thinking skills in the context of social work practice.
- Objective 2.** Foundation-level clinical and macro social work practice skills that are based on ecological, strengths, and assets perspectives.
- Objective 3.** Advanced-level clinical or macro social work practice skills that build on foundation learning.
  - 3a)** Ability to apply multiple theoretical frameworks and empirical research.
  - 3b)** Ability to demonstrate differential use of self.

- Objective 4.** Knowledge and practice skills that incorporate the social work profession's values, and ethical principles and standards.
- 4a) Knowledge about the social work profession's values, and ethical principles and standards.
  - 4b) Ability to apply the social work profession's values, and ethical principles and standards in practice.
- Objective 5.** Ability to practice effectively in urban settings with diverse populations.
- 5a) Knowledge of the influence of multiple group membership in professional practice.
  - 5b) Self-awareness skills with regard to power, privilege, and multiple group membership.
  - 5c) Ability to apply these perspectives in order to practice without discrimination.
- Objective 6.** Knowledge of oppression and discrimination and ability to apply advocacy and social change skills that promote social and economic justice.
- 6a) Knowledge of the effects of oppression and discrimination on individuals, families, groups, organizations, and communities.
  - 6b) Knowledge of strategies for combating discrimination and oppression.
  - 6c) Advocacy and change agent skills in the promotion of social and economic justice.
- Objective 7.** Knowledge of historical and contemporary issues in the social work profession.
- 7a) Knowledge of history and development of the social work profession.
  - 7b) Knowledge of contemporary issues in the social work profession.
- Objective 8.** Knowledge of human behavior theories supported by empirical evidence and ability to apply this knowledge in practice.
- 8a) Knowledge of empirically based theoretical frameworks that explicate human behavior and development across the life span.
  - 8b) Knowledge of empirically based theoretical frameworks that explicate behavioral interactions among individuals and within the context of families, groups, organizations, and communities.
  - 8c) Ability to apply this knowledge in practice.
- Objective 9.** Knowledge and skills in social policy assessment, analysis, and implementation.
- 9a) Knowledge about social welfare policy and service delivery systems.
  - 9b) Skills related to the assessment, analysis, and implementation of social policy.

- Objective 10.** Knowledge and skills in scientific inquiry, research methods, and empirical analysis.
- 10a)** Knowledge about scientific inquiry, research methods, and empirical analysis.
  - 10b)** Skills related to scientific inquiry, research methods, and empirical analysis in order to evaluate social work practice.
- Objective 11.** Ability to use supervision and consultation effectively.
- 11a)** Awareness of how one’s own experiences, attitudes, and values influence the helping process.
- Objective 12.** Skills to work effectively within organizations and service delivery systems.
- 12a)** Skills in working effectively within organizations and service delivery systems to achieve professional goals.
  - 12b)** Skills in promoting organizational and systems change that will benefit clients, communities, agencies, and service systems.
  - 12c)** Skills in communicating effectively to achieve professional goals.

<b>Goal 2</b>	<b>To provide professional opportunities for social work students in a variety of sectors and settings.</b>
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**Objectives:**

**MSW students will have opportunities to:**

- Objective 1.** Pursue a dual degree with Boston University’s Schools of Public Health (MSW and MPH), Education (MSW and EdM/EdD), and Theology (MSW and MTS/MDiv/DMin).
- Objective 2.** Participate in a certificate program in family therapy, behavioral medicine, or human service management.

## **THE MSW PROGRAM**

The educational program is organized in a two-year full-time or three- or four-year part-time course consisting of class and field education leading to the degree Master of Social Work. Part-time programs are available at the Charles River (Boston) campus, in northeastern Massachusetts, and at two locations in southeastern Massachusetts. Students who have earned a BSW from an accredited program and who meet other criteria may be admitted to the Advanced Standing program, a one-year program of study leading to the MSW.

The School is committed to educating social workers who have excellent skills and know how to practice within a social policy and social change context. Boston University School of Social Work graduates work not merely as “therapists” or “activists” but as professionals who understand and consider the broad implications of social welfare. Our graduates are open and ready for innovation and change, and possess the knowledge and skills required to meet the needs of individuals, groups, communities, and organizations.

The Boston University School of Social Work has a strong commitment to recruit students who have encountered barriers to higher education because of race or ethnic background. The School offers professional training to Asian-Americans, African-Americans, Latinos, Native Americans, and members of other underrepresented groups so that they can assume leadership positions in the community. Coursework and field education, located in diverse community agencies, combine to provide excellent learning experiences.

## **THE GOAL OF FIELD EDUCATION**

The major goal of the field education experience is to prepare students for competence in social work practice. Through field education, the student translates theoretical concepts and principles and research evidence into practice, applying these to work with individuals, families, groups, communities, and organizations who are consumers or planners of service. Specific learning objectives for field education are outlined on pages 34–41.

The field education program also serves as a channel for communication between educators and practitioners, which enhances the likelihood of each group meeting its goals successfully.

## **A GUIDE TO THIS GUIDE**

This document is designed to:

1. Identify the roles and responsibilities of the School, the agency, the field instructor, and the student in the field education experience;

2. Outline Field Education Department policies and procedures that relate to the field education experience; and
3. Identify foundation skills to be acquired by all students and the advanced skills required for each of the social work method concentrations.

This in turn will:

1. Direct the development of student assignments within the agency.
2. Help increase the congruency and integration of classroom and field content.

***Note:** All Field Education forms can be obtained from the Field Education Department (hard copy) or from the Field Education web page: [www.bu.edu/ssw/academic/msw/field/index.shtml](http://www.bu.edu/ssw/academic/msw/field/index.shtml). The Curriculum Guide is also available online at [www.bu.edu/ssw/academic/pdfs/field/curriculumguide.pdf](http://www.bu.edu/ssw/academic/pdfs/field/curriculumguide.pdf).*

## **AN OVERVIEW OF FIELD EDUCATION**

Field education is done concurrently with practice method courses. Total number of hours in the foundation placement is 480; total number of hours in the advanced placement is 720. The placement for advanced standing students is 720 hours. Traditionally, foundation placements are on Thursday and Friday and advanced placements are on Monday, Tuesday, and Friday. In some cases, students arrange alternative schedules that might include evenings or blocks of time on different days. See **Placement Options** on page 6. Any alternative schedule must meet with agency approval and cannot conflict with the student's class schedule. These arrangements should allow for the student to participate in the "life of the agency," e.g., staff meetings, case conferences, and inservice training. Most placements run from mid-September through early May. Some school settings may require students to extend their placements until the middle or end of June and follow a different schedule from that of the School of Social Work.

Students in foundation placements are assigned to settings that enable them to acquire a broad understanding of the field of social work, to recognize and use generalist principles and concepts, and to select intervention methods for meeting individual, group, family, and community needs based on a careful and comprehensive assessment process. Students in foundation placements are expected to have assignments working with individuals, families, and groups, and in macro practice. Advanced students are assigned to field agencies that foster development of knowledge and use of intervention skills consistent with the method of social work in which they have chosen to concentrate.

All students in foundation placements attend an Integrative Field Seminar designed to support the field placement experience. The seminar for on-campus students meets monthly during the academic year. The seminar for off-campus students is scheduled periodically throughout the program. Topics covered in the seminar include: the learning contract, recordings, and evaluation as learning tools; the supervisory relationship; legal and ethical issues in practice; and working in culturally diverse settings and communities.

When students choose one of the specialization or certificate programs offered at the School (Clinical Practice with a Macro sub-specialization, Clinical Social Work and Behavioral Medicine, Family Therapy, Group Work, Gerontological Social Work, Human Service Management, Trauma), their advanced placement will need to meet specific criteria. The same may be true of students in the dual-degree programs.

While geographic considerations are factored into placement assignments, students can expect to travel up to an hour each way to get to and from the agency.

## **PLACEMENT OPTIONS**

### A. Standard Concurrent

The standard concurrent placements run from mid-September through the first week in May. Generally, students in first-year placements are in the field two days/week (16 hours), and students in second-year placements are in the field three days/week (24 hours). In some cases, students arrange alternative schedules that might include evenings or blocks of time on different days. Any alternative schedule must meet with agency approval and cannot conflict with the student's class schedule. These arrangements should allow for the student to participate in the "life of the agency," e.g., staff meetings, case conferences, and inservice training.

This concurrent placement arrangement is used by the majority of full-time and some part-time students. In some situations, part-time students in the advanced year in field education may opt to start their two-semester placement in January or May and continue through August or December respectively. Students interested in exploring this variation of the concurrent placement should first meet with their faculty advisor and request an approved, modified program plan to ensure that all of their academic course requirements can be met under this arrangement.

### B. Summer Block

The summer block option may be available (subject to enrollment) to part-time students for their first-year placement. Students are in placement 32 hours/week for fifteen weeks from mid-May through the end of August. The Introduction to Methods courses are offered at the Charles River Campus concurrent with the summer block placement and are required of students who choose this program.

To be considered for a summer block placement, students must meet the following criteria:

- 1) two years of continuous work and/or field placement experience in a social service setting;
- 2) 3.0 GPA on admission;
- 3) 3.0 average in courses graded at the time of request for summer block.

C. Modified Block

Second-year students may do their placements in a block format of 28, 32, or 36 hours/week for 26, 22.5, or 20 weeks, respectively, as long as the concurrency requirements of method courses are met.

D. Twelve-Month Extended Placement

(January–January, May–May, September–September)

In the extended placement option, students may complete their advanced-year field placements over twelve months. Consistent with the requirements for all the options, students must spend a minimum of 16 hours/week in placement and can begin only in January, May, or September. Again, students choosing this option need to arrange their academic course schedule so that they take their major methods courses concurrently with their field placement. Students choosing this option will be required to pay tuition for three semesters of Field Education.

E. Employer Agency

The Field Education Department recognizes that some students are employed in agencies which can provide them with excellent learning experiences while the students continue their employment at the agency. The employer agency option enables students to do **one of their two placements** at their employing agency as long as specified conditions are met. An employer agency placement is *not* a situation in which a student gets credit for work experiences. It *is* a field placement with an educational focus that happens to be in the student's place of employment.

The criteria for employer agency placements are:

- the agency and field instructor meet the basic requirements for all field placements outlined in the “Criteria for Field Instructors and Agencies.”
- the field placement time at the agency (16 hours for first [foundation] year and 24 hours for second [advanced] year) is spent in a different department, unit, or program of the agency than that in which the student is employed.
- the field instructor is someone other than the supervisor to whom the student is accountable for their work assignment.
- the student assignment is substantively different from the work assignment in terms of client population served, interventions used, and skills developed.

Agencies wishing to develop employer agency placements for students need to complete an Employer Agency Proposal form which can be obtained from the Field Education Department.

All employer agency proposals must be approved by the Field Education Department before the start of the placement.

Advanced Standing students are not eligible to do employer agency placements.

## Some Further Comments

- The Field Education Department and the Off-Campus Program Directors are available to discuss individual student's needs regarding field placement structure. **Students are expected to complete the majority of their field placement time during regular weekday business hours. Some agencies require or are able to offer limited evening time for the placement.**
- Students choosing any option other than the standard concurrent model should clarify tuition and registration arrangements with the Registrar.
- Students who are interested in developing field placements in agencies with which the School is not currently affiliated should discuss their interest with a member of the Field Education staff before contacting the agency.

## **THE AGENCY ROLE IN FIELD EDUCATION**

Education for social work is the primary function of the School; service is the primary function of the agency. The agency's role in the educational process is predicated on its primary function of service and complements the basic educational objectives of the School.

### A. Field Instructors

Field instructors are qualified staff members selected by agency administrators and approved by the School. Students must receive a minimum of two hours each week of formal supervision. One hour each week must be individual supervision provided by the primary MSW\* field instructor. The second hour may be provided by an approved secondary supervisor and/or may be provided in a group supervision format. All secondary supervisors must be approved by the Field Education Department. Students in extended (12-month) placements are required to have a minimum of 1.5 hours of supervision per week. At least one hour must be provided by the primary MSW field instructor. For block placements, students are required to have 2.5 hours of supervision, 1.5 hours of which must be individual with the primary MSW field instructor. In addition to time spent with students, field instructors are expected to read students' recordings, attend meetings and seminars, and consult with School representatives. **New field instructors are required to participate in a twenty-hour seminar that examines the content and process of field instruction, and that further orients the field instructor to the curriculum and philosophy of the School.** All field instructors are invited to participate in other seminars and workshops offered to them by the School. Other field instructor benefits are described on page 10.

Many agencies assign a contact person who is responsible for coordinating student placements with the School and for funneling information between the School and the agency. The contact person may also be a field instructor, although this is not always the case.

\*MSW not required for advanced-level **Macro** students

The following specific criteria guide the selection of field instructors:

1. Master's degree from an accredited school of social work (not required for advanced-level **Macro** students).
2. Minimum of two years, relevant full-time, supervised post-MSW experience.
3. LICSW (or equivalent for agencies outside Massachusetts) is preferred for field instructors in advanced clinical placements. An LCSW is required for field instructors who supervise students in clinical placements. Exceptions may apply in some state and municipal agencies.
4. Sufficient term of employment at the agency to ensure familiarity with agency policies and procedures and availability to meet student's needs.
5. Agreement to act as field instructor on a continuing basis during the academic year or full placement period.
6. Commitment to:
  - a. provide two hours of supervision per week. A minimum of one hour of individual supervision per week must be provided by the primary MSW field instructor. A second hour of supervision must be provided to the student and can be given by either the primary field instructor or another qualified professional either individually or in a small group (staff meetings do not qualify as supervision). See Section A, page 8 for supervision requirements for students in extended (12-month) and block placements. It is the responsibility of the primary field instructor to ensure both the quality and quantity of all supervision.
  - b. provide time for reading student materials, holding informal conferences and meetings, and consulting with School representatives.
  - c. use recordings as a teaching tool in supervisory conferences. (See section on "Recording as a Learning/Teaching Tool," p. 20.)
  - d. develop a written educational contract with the student.
  - e. provide appropriate assignments for the student at the start of the placement.
7. **Field instructors who are acting as primary supervisors to MSW students for the first time are required to participate in a seminar that examines the content and process of field instruction. Prospective primary field instructors who are unable to participate in the seminar may not be considered even though they meet all the other criteria listed above. Social workers who have served as the primary field instructor for MSW students from another school are not required to take the course but may do so if they wish.**

8. If the field instructor and the student have had a pre-existing professional or social relationship, this information should be shared with the Field Education Department so that the appropriateness of the placement can be determined.
9. The field instructor must be willing and able to evaluate the student's practice on a continuing basis and provide written evaluations consistent with the School's calendar and deadlines.
10. Field Instructor Benefits:
  - a. Use of Boston University library facilities.
  - b. One tuition-free continuing education workshop\* provided by Boston University School of Social Work Professional Education Programs in the academic year in which they supervise. Field instructors should be aware that two tuition-free slots will be held in each workshop, so we recommend early registration for the workshop in which the benefit is to be used. As in previous years, if two field instructors work with one student, only one continuing education benefit applies.
  - c. Participation in continuing education seminars and workshops offered by the Field Education Department and the New England Consortium of Field Education Directors (NECON).

B. Expectations of Agencies

Agencies are expected to support the mission, goals, and values of the social work profession and the learning objectives of Boston University School of Social Work.

To ensure the student's learning in the field, the agency is expected to provide the student with the following:

1. A sufficient number and variety of assignments to support the progression of student learning. We expect students to become involved in practice activities within two weeks of the start of the placement.
2. An orientation to the agency's total program and its relevant communities.
3. An orientation to the agency's safety policies and procedures and ongoing support to ensure safety in the field.
4. An orientation to legal and ethical issues specific to the agency's mission and programs.
5. Adequate work space and access to telephones, computers, records, etc., to fulfill the requirements of the agency and School.

\*The benefit does not apply to the Postgraduate Certificate Programs.

6. **Reimbursement for expenses involved in rendering agency services, e.g., home visit travel costs.**
7. Adequate insurance coverage for students who are expected to use personal vehicles for agency purposes and who do not have their own insurance coverage for this type of activity.
8. Access to staff, committee, and seminar meetings when appropriate.
9. Use of selected agency records (appropriately disguised to ensure client and agency confidentiality) for class assignments.
10. Use of agency consultation resources when appropriate.
11. Adequate time so that the field instructor can meet the School's criteria for working with a student.

### THE STUDENT IN THE AGENCY

#### A. Hours and Sick Leave

The School recognizes that policies and procedures vary from agency to agency. Students are expected to adhere to their assigned agency's personnel practices, policies, and procedures. They are expected to adhere to the same workday hours as the professional social work staff in the agencies. Students are expected to make up time missed for illness, lateness, or other personal reasons. Protracted absences (more than two consecutive weeks) will be reviewed on an individual basis by the field instructor and the faculty advisor. In those cases in which disruption of the field experience due to repeated or protracted absence is determined to interfere with student learning and/or services to clients, a decision regarding the student's continuation in the field placement will be made in accordance with the Problem Resolution and/or Status Review process outlined in this guide. Requests for time off for religious observance and professional conferences should be assessed on an individual basis, and arrangements to make up such time should be made in accordance with clients' service needs and the student's learning needs.

#### B. Vacations

Student vacations should be taken according to the School of Social Work calendar unless otherwise negotiated with the field instructor and documented in the student's learning contract. In some cases, an agency may be closed for religious or local holidays, and in those settings, students may take those days off as well. In some school settings, students will be required to adapt their vacations to the school calendar. In all cases, students should arrange their schedules to ensure that they meet the required number of hours for the field placement (480 for foundation placement; 720 for advanced placement).

C. Disclosure of Student or Trainee Status

In accordance with Massachusetts State Law, ch. 214 (the Patients' Bill of Rights, May 1979), the Massachusetts NASW Board of Directors made the following recommendation in December 1980, and the Boston University School of Social Work requires:

“...that social work students identify themselves as trainees/students/interns to patients/clients either verbally or through the use of name tags except in emergency situations where it is clinically contraindicated as determined by student and supervisor. Student's status should be clearly designated in signing notes in the record.”

The Boston University School of Social Work further recommends early disclosure of the length of student availability when possible.

D. CORI Check

Most agencies require **CRIMINAL OFFENSE RECORD INVESTIGATION (CORI)** of social work interns. The individual agencies are responsible for conducting these checks and will discuss the process with the intern. In the case of a positive CORI, the placement may be denied. Students who have any concerns about undergoing a CORI can discuss these with a member of the Field Education Department or their faculty advisor. Placement options will be limited for students who have a record of felony conviction. Many employers and state licensing boards also have policies regarding criminal histories which may limit employment and licensure options.

E. Health Information

In some settings, (e.g., hospitals, clinics, schools) interns may be required to show evidence of inoculations or other health records. Most of this documentation is also required by the University for admission. In certain instances where additional inoculations are required for the internship (e.g. Hepatitis B) students may obtain the inoculation from their own health care provider or from the University Student Health Services for a fee.

### THE SCHOOL ROLE IN FIELD EDUCATION

A. Placement Policy and Procedures

The Field Education Department is responsible for arranging the field placements of all students. Students should not contact an agency directly without approval from the Field Education Department. Similarly, agencies that are interested in requesting the placement of a particular student should contact the Field Education Department. Such requests from agencies are given careful consideration and are met whenever feasible and consistent with the Field Education Department's educational assessment of the student.

INCOMING STUDENTS: The placement process for incoming full-time students occurs during the late spring and summer months. Placements are made based on a review of the following information by the Field Education staff:

1. Student's Admissions Application—Primary variables include past experience, future career goals, agency location, and availability of transportation.
2. Student Placement Form—A form completed by the student indicating field interests and career goals.
3. Student Résumé
4. Agency Placement Form—The number and year of the students the agency can accommodate, specific characteristics of students who would benefit most within that setting, programs and clients/consumers served, and potential student assignments.

Students are encouraged to share with the Field Education Department any information which might be important in making a field placement assignment. The Field Education Department assumes that this information may be shared with prospective agencies unless the student indicates otherwise. Routinely, the Field Education Department sends a copy of the student's résumé to prospective field placements.

Placement assignment is confirmed only after the student has been interviewed by the prospective agency. In most cases, this occurs before school begins in September.

CONTINUING STUDENTS: Continuing students entering the foundation placement complete the Placement Form in an Advising Seminar group.

For continuing students entering the advanced (second) placement, the process begins in the December session of the Integrative Field Seminar with a description of the placement process. Discussion of professional development goals and agency options also takes place. Simultaneously, students and their advisors meet to do an educational assessment and develop an agency profile. Students then meet individually with a member of the Field Education Department professional staff to narrow down the agency options.

The Department uses relevant information as the basis upon which the placement assignments are made. Continuing students will interview with agency personnel after the Field Education Department has assigned them to a placement. Again, the assignment will be confirmed after the student and agency personnel have been able to meet together. Prior to the start of the advanced placement, a copy of the student's final foundation field evaluation is sent to the new agency.

If at any time after the student has been assigned to the agency, the agency or the student raises questions regarding the placement, the situation is reviewed by the Field Education staff and the parties involved. In some situations, a Problem Resolution meeting (see pages 15–16) may be convened to facilitate the decision-making process. On occasion, the Field Education

Department will replace the student in a different setting. **When a field placement is changed, it may be necessary for the student to extend the placement beyond the normal ending date to accommodate the agency's need and/or to meet field education learning objectives.**

B. Faculty Advising

The purpose of advising is to assist each student in taking advantage of and succeeding in the educational opportunities available at the School and in the field. Each student in the field is assigned a faculty advisor. In some instances, faculty advisors are assigned to agencies rather than individual students. In other cases, the same advisor will be assigned to a student for both years of field placement.

Faculty advisors at the Boston University School of Social Work are either members of the full- or half-time faculty and administration or are hired to serve as faculty advisors on a part-time basis. Their responsibilities include the following:

1. Academic Advising

- Provides advice about course selection and sequencing, primary method choice, and career options;
- Serves as resource when a learning problem develops or is identified;
- Serves as a reference for students applying to dual-degree programs;
- Facilitates process when the student changes status to part-time, requests a leave of absence, or withdraws from school.

2. Field Liaison (for students in field placement)

- Serves as liaison between School and agency;
- Consults with the student and field instructor (agency supervisor) about assignments, learning contract, evaluation, etc.;
- Serves as the student's advocate in ensuring that the School's expectations of the agency are being met;
- Serves as troubleshooter, problem-solver and mediator in the event that a problem in the field placement experience is identified;
- Visits the agency at least once each semester to meet with the student and field instructor(s) to assess progress toward goals;
- Works with students in planning for advanced-year placement;
- Recommends grade for Field Education course.

3. General Resource

- Can serve as sounding board, referral source, and general support regarding personal problems or life issues that arise while the student is in school, e.g., health, family, financial, housing, workload, etc.

Students are contacted by their advisors during the first few weeks of school. Advisors will also be in touch with the agencies during this time to make sure that the field experience is progressing as it should. Each student meets individually with his/her advisor during the early part of the semester to assess how his/her program is progressing and to address the student's beginning questions or concerns.

If students have any questions about or problems with their field placements, these should be discussed with the faculty advisor before they are brought to the Field Education Department. If a problem or question arises before the advisor has contacted the student, the student should feel free to contact the advisor immediately.

## C. Problem Resolution

### 1. Definition of Problem Resolution

Problem Resolution is a problem-solving and mediation process utilized when a concern in some part of a student's educational experience has not been resolved directly by the parties involved. A Problem Resolution meeting can be initiated by the faculty advisor, the student, or any other member of the School faculty or administration. If a student believes that s/he has been discriminated against by a faculty member, field instructor, or staff member, s/he can request a Problem Resolution meeting.

There is a multi-step process for responding when concerns arise.

- a. Instructor or field instructor and student meet to address the concern. If the concern remains unresolved,
- b. the faculty advisor discusses the concern with the people involved. If the concern remains unresolved,
- c. a Problem Resolution meeting is held. If the concern continues to be unresolved,
- d. either a follow-up Problem Resolution meeting is held or a request is made to the Dean for a Status Review (see following section on Status Review process).

### 2. Setting Up a Problem Resolution Meeting

When a Problem Resolution meeting is to be held, a small group of relevant individuals is convened by the appropriate BUSSW administrator or faculty advisor. The group may include the following: the student, the faculty advisor, the field instructor and/or classroom teachers (if directly involved in the problem), and faculty and administrators considered to have helpful information about the problem under discussion or about the student in general (e.g., Director of Student Services, Field Education or Part-Time Programs staff). Students may invite someone (often another student) to accompany them to the Problem Resolution meeting. This person's role is to support the student during and after the meeting and/or to observe

the Problem Resolution process; this person does not actively participate in the meeting. The chair will review this person's role when introducing those present at the meeting and is also available to respond to any questions about the role before the meeting. In the event of an allegation of discrimination, a group of relevant individuals is convened by the Associate Dean for Academic Affairs.

The chair of the Problem Resolution meeting or faculty advisor will talk with the student in advance of the meeting to review the purpose of the meeting and to respond to the student's questions and concerns about the process.

### 3. Notice of the Meeting

A notice of the Problem Resolution meeting is sent to all participants of the meeting and is accompanied by a Problem Statement written by the faculty advisor or chair. The Problem Statement summarizes the problem as presented by the various parties, and an overview of the student's academic and field history at the School. Typically, the student's classroom instructors are asked to provide feedback about the student's classroom performance. In a case of alleged discrimination, the documentation is prepared by the Associate Dean for Academic Affairs.

### 4. The Problem Resolution Meeting

In general, the goals of the meeting include:

- a clearer understanding of the concerns and the contributing factors;
- identification of strategies and steps to ameliorate the situation;
- goals to be reached;
- who will take responsibility for each specific step;
- criteria for assessing the extent to which the concern(s) or issue(s) has been resolved;
- dates by which goals are to be met or issue(s) reconsidered.

***In most cases, the group will agree on the direction to be taken. If there is disagreement about the desired outcome, the following options are available: 1) after additional data or consultation has been obtained, a follow-up problem resolution meeting will be held; or 2) a Status Review hearing will be requested (See Step D.4, page 18). In cases of alleged discrimination the group may recommend that the matter be brought to the attention of the Dean.***

### 5. Follow-up

In situations where goals and a plan have been established but progress toward identified goals has not been made or new issues emerge, another problem resolution meeting may be convened, or a request for a Status Review may be made to the Dean.

6. Written Summary of the Meeting

The faculty advisor or chair of the meeting will write a summary of the meeting, outlining the group's understanding of the concerns, the goals to be reached, respective responsibility for reaching the goals, the criteria for assessing that the concern has been resolved and the dates by which goals are to be met. Only those people who have responsibility for implementing or monitoring the resolution of the concerns will receive a copy of the summary.

7. Confidentiality and Record Keeping

In order to insure confidentiality in the Problem Resolution process, all written material distributed to meeting participants will be destroyed upon completion of the recommended steps. This information is not shared with others without the student's knowledge.

D. Status Review

In a Status Review, a decision is reached concerning the student's status as a master's degree candidate. A Status Review will be initiated immediately if the possibility of plagiarism is involved, if a student receives an "F" in a required course, or if a student is unable to meet the 3.0 GPA requirement in order to graduate. **A student graded "F" in a required course cannot continue in the program until the situation has been reviewed by the Status Review Committee.**

In addition, after learning problem(s) have been identified in the advising process, and after the Problem Resolution process has been exhausted, it may be concluded that adequate progress has not been made in resolving the problem(s). Deliberations involving a wider range of people, information, and ideas are then necessary, and the question of the student's ability to remain in school and function satisfactorily should be considered and answered. At this point the Status Review process shall be initiated.

1. The Status Review Committee shall consist of four (4) faculty members, one of whom shall serve as Chair, and two (2) students elected or appointed by the Student Organization. If the Student Organization fails to elect or appoint representatives to the Committee, the Dean shall appoint two (2) students. Two (2) alternate student representatives shall be elected to serve in appropriate circumstances.

The Chair and student representatives do not have voting rights. The remaining three faculty members make the final decision.

In the event that a faculty member has a conflict of interest, the Chair will appoint an alternate faculty member.

2. The Committee, acting as a whole, shall have the power to devise and promulgate operational guidelines for its functioning that are consistent with the policies described here.

3. The student's faculty advisor, the classroom instructor, or an appropriate administrator is responsible for initiating the Status Review process.
4. The person initiating the Status Review shall ask the Dean to convene a Status Review process through a written letter/memorandum spelling out problem areas. Thereupon the Dean shall notify the student (through letter mailed "Return Receipt Requested," unless other arrangements have been discussed) and the Chair of the Status Review Committee who shall arrange a time for the meeting. The Chair will prepare a written notice with accompanying materials. This notice is sent to the student in advance of the meeting with copies sent to the other participants.
5. The Status Review Chair will arrange to meet alone with the student prior to convening the Status Review meeting to hear the student's perspective on the problems which prompted the request for the Status Review.
6. Upon receiving notice, the student has the following options:
  - a. To appear personally before the Committee and participate fully in all deliberations other than decision-making;
  - b. To give written notice of his/her intent not to contest the assertions in the Status Review notice to him/her, but to present a petition to the Committee requesting a particular outcome;
  - c. To decide whether or not student representatives shall be a part the Committee hearing his/her case, and if so, which of the permanent members or alternates shall serve. This decision shall be communicated to the Chair of the Committee prior to the meeting;
  - d. To bring before the Committee any persons who might present valuable additional information on the matters described in the Status Review notice, or serve as an emotional support to the student, subject to a decision by the Chair that each of these individuals has an appropriate role to play. This request shall be communicated by the student to the Chair, with a brief description of the role each person would play and the information each would provide; and/or
  - e. To request the disqualification of a Committee member on the grounds that such person is likely to be biased. This request shall be made to the Committee Chair outlining the reasons for the request. The Chair shall rule on the merits of the student's request.
  - f. In the event the Chair's objectivity is challenged, the ruling shall be made by the Dean.

7. All communications shall become a part of the official meeting record. Any ruling of the Chair against the student with respect to the above options shall be a part of the written record.
8. In no case may the student's faculty advisor or other person initiating the process be part of the Committee deciding the matter under review. However, they may participate fully in the procedure up to the point of final decision-making.
9. The Committee and the student shall have in advance of its deliberations sufficient written material to illuminate the student's situation. This shall consist of the material prepared in the Problem Resolution process (if held), any supplemental material, and materials which the student chooses to submit.
10. The Committee shall seek to maximize sharing of information and points of view within its deliberations in order to allow every participant full expression of views, and to consider all possible alternative courses of action. Careful regard will be given to confidentiality outside of the Committee. All members of the Committee will assess the situation from an objective stance on the basis of the information presented.

Once the presentation of information and discussion are complete, the Committee members deliberate in private and a final vote is taken by a written ballot. A majority vote will prevail. The decision shall be communicated in writing to the student and the Dean. It is expected that the Committee will arrive at one of three possible decisions:

- The student has made satisfactory progress toward the resolution of problem(s) and is removed from the Status Review process.
- The student has not made satisfactory progress but there is a reasonable likelihood he/she can do so, if certain specified steps are taken (including leave of absence).
- The student has not demonstrated the capacity to function adequately as a social worker and will be asked to leave the School.

All decisions of the Committee will be considered final, subject only to the use of the Appeal process by the student.

11. The student may appeal the decision of the Status Review Committee but there are only two grounds on which the appeal can be made:
  - a. Violation of due process, or
  - b. Massive new information pertinent to the student's situation is available.

Such an appeal must be made in writing to the Dean no later than one month following the Committee's decision. The Dean shall make all decisions about an appeal and shall engage in whatever activities are deemed necessary to implement such decisions.

## EDUCATIONAL ELEMENTS OF THE FIELD PLACEMENT

The field instructor plays a key role in the professional education of the social work student. The field instructor, who has the closest and most continuous relationship with the student, serves as both a role model and a teacher.

An early focus of field instruction with the student should be on the educational assessment, which incorporates the student's knowledge, skills, strengths, and areas for growth into a formulation of learning goals and a learning plan. The educational assessment is based on a review of previous education and work history, an evaluation of learning style and learning phase, an understanding of the student's professional goals, cultural factors which influence both the student's approach to learning and the agency context, and identification of the strengths and challenges with which the student approaches the identified learning tasks.

It is important for the field instructor to be aware of his/her characteristic teaching style, knowledge, skills, strengths and limitations, and cultural perspective, as these will influence transactions with the student. The field instructor may be called upon to develop new approaches to the teaching tasks to meet the learning needs of individual students.

### A. The Learning Contract between Field Instructor and Student

The School expects each field instructor and student to develop a written learning contract that defines the student's educational and professional goals and the role the field placement will play in helping the student achieve these goals. The School uses a standard Learning Contract which should be completed by the field instructor and student collaboratively within the first four to six weeks of the placement. A signed copy should then be sent to the faculty advisor for review and approval. The learning contract can be reviewed regularly and revised to accommodate changes in learning goals, circumstances in the agency, or logistical considerations, such as schedule changes.

*If the field instructor and student have had a pre-existing professional or social relationship, this information should be shared with the Field Education Department, so that the appropriateness of the placement can be determined.*

### B. Recording as a Learning/Teaching Tool

**The Field Education Department requires the use of recording as a teaching and learning tool in the field education experience.**

1. Definition: Recordings refer to detailed written accounts of professional interactions, and include the following components:

***Written by the student:*** goals and proposed interventions (written in advance of the contact); the verbal and nonverbal content of the interaction in verbatim form; the student's observations, assessment, and plans for future interventions; student's self-reflection, including feelings, barriers, successes, concerns, conclusions; questions for supervision.

**Written by the field instructor:** comments, questions for discussion in supervision, suggestions about alternative interventions, feedback regarding growth in skills over time.

2. Purposes: Recordings have a number of educational and administrative purposes including: 1) serving as an indicator of the level of the student's knowledge and skills; 2) serving as an indicator of the student's perception of the interaction and his/her own interventions; 3) encouraging the student to sort and remember important information about his/her practice; 4) encouraging the student to self-reflect about his/her developing professional skills; 5) providing an opportunity for the student to apply theory and empirical evidence to his/her practice; 6) encouraging the student to plan ahead; 7) serving as a tool for evaluating the student's progress over time; 8) keeping the field instructor informed of the student's activities; 9) providing a framework for supervisory conferences.

Field instructors and students are encouraged to use a format that accommodates the student's learning needs, goals, style and the practice in the agency.

For **Clinical practice assignments**, the most common form of recording is the process recording, a written account of the interaction between student and client(s). All process recordings include goals and plans for the session; the content of the interview, including student's interventions; the student's impressions, reactions, observations, and assessment; plans for the next session; questions for supervision. Students will most often record face-to-face sessions with clients. It is also useful for them to record telephone or in-person contacts with family members, colleagues, or professionals in other settings. These provide opportunities to examine interactions and use of self in other contexts and professional roles. Examples of process recording outlines are available online at [www.bu.edu/ssw/academic/msw/field/index.shtml](http://www.bu.edu/ssw/academic/msw/field/index.shtml).

For **Macro practice assignments**, the most common form of recording is the process analysis. This is typically a weekly journal entry that follows and analyzes the processes through which project goals and objectives are formulated and attained. Student observations and interpretations regarding the ways that power dynamics and the use of differential leadership skills influence goal achievement and task completion are typical themes in each entry. Similar to clinical process recordings, process analyses provide an opportunity for students to integrate their observations of an activity with self-reflection focused on their professional development. However, macro practice process analysis is different from clinical process recordings in that it is not a comprehensive verbatim account of what took place. It is also different from written work products, e.g., surveys, grant applications, minutes of meetings, work plans, reports, evaluations, etc. However, these written products often serve as the basis for process analysis as students describe and reflect on their experiences, accomplishments, learning needs and skill levels as product developers, project leaders, and social change agents. An example of a process analysis outline is available online at [www.bu.edu/ssw/academic/msw/field/index.shtml](http://www.bu.edu/ssw/academic/msw/field/index.shtml).

### 3. Recording Policies

- Students in foundation placements are required to write two recordings per week. Students in advanced placements are required to write two recordings per week. Students in extended (12-month) field placements may reduce to one per week after the first semester based on an educational assessment of the student's level of skill by the field instructor and faculty advisor. Students in block placements are required to write three recordings a week. Recording expectations should be specified in the student's Learning Contract.
- Recordings are in addition to documentation required by the agency for its own records or files.
- Some time should be allotted in the student's schedule at the agency to work on recordings although students may need outside time to complete the recordings.
- Students should be informed of and adhere to the agency's policies regarding removal of case records and recordings from the agency premises.
- Recordings should be sufficiently disguised to protect the confidentiality of clients or consumers.
- Recordings should be destroyed at a point in the student's internship when they no longer serve their educational usefulness (end of contact, end of semester, end of placement). This should be done in compliance with state law and agency policy.
- Other forms of recording—e.g., audiotape, videotape, log—can be very useful learning tools, but do not serve the same educational or supervisory functions as written recordings. These forms of recording may be used in addition to, but not in place of, written recordings.
- Examples of different models of recordings are available from the Field Education Department or on the Field Education web page, [www.bu.edu/ssw/academic/msw/field/index.shtml](http://www.bu.edu/ssw/academic/msw/field/index.shtml). Field instructors may also choose recording formats with which they are familiar and which are appropriate to the type of assignment and the student's learning goals and needs.
- **Failure to adhere to the policies and procedures regarding recordings may lead to the convening of a Problem Resolution meeting and/or may be reflected in the student's grade in Field Education.**

In addition, please note that teaching recording skills is primarily the responsibility of the field placement, although this learning is supported and reinforced in methods courses.

### 4. Guide for Disguise of Confidential Practice Material, e.g., Process Recordings, Case Records, Meeting Minutes, Group Recordings

Students and field instructors should ensure that agency documents and recordings are de-identified in accordance with HIPAA regulations. Agencies are expected to provide students with the same training provided to employees regarding HIPAA regulations related to the specific setting. In settings which are not covered by

HIPAA, students are expected to protect client confidentiality in accordance with professional practice standards. This includes but is not necessarily limited to the following:

- Delete any reference to agency name and/or worker names.
- Change client names (first and last) and initials.
- Delete any reference to address or any information specifying geographical area, such as street names, businesses, or hospitals.
- Delete any information that would enable identification of clients, agencies, or agency personnel.

C. Assignments

The Field Education Department expects students to become involved in supervised independent practice activities within the first weeks of field placement. Early work with clients, groups, committees, or projects allows students to begin the process of integration of learning from class and field and it enables field instructors to begin the educational assessment of the student.

Foundation-year students are expected to spend half of their placement time in independent practice activities—e.g., face-to-face contacts with clients, preparation for practice activities, family meetings, team meetings and case conferences around their clients, participation in committee or community group meetings, resource development, telephone contacts, and recruitment for groups. Advanced-year students should spend two-thirds of their time in this way. The remaining hours for all students include time for supervision, inservice trainings, administrative meetings, documentation, and recordings. Any questions regarding sufficiency of assignment load should be addressed with the faculty advisor.

Assignments are based on consideration of service needs, the student's skill development and learning goals, and in some cases recognition of the student's personal and professional experiences that may influence the learning process.

D. Field Education Portfolio

All students are required to create a Field Education Portfolio in which they keep material related to their learning in the field.

1. The purposes of the portfolio are:
  - to provide organized evidence of field education learning
  - to ensure that the student has copies of the learning contract and evaluations from both field placements
  - to ensure that the student is meeting process recording or process analysis requirements

2. Each student will keep a three-ring binder with the following material:
  - Syllabus for the Integrative Field Seminar (for foundation students)
  - A copy of her/his learning contract
  - Agency material (e.g., orientation, workshop or seminar outlines) that describes learning experiences in the setting
  - Process recordings or process analyses, appropriately disguised
  - Field instructor evaluations from both semesters
  - For clinical students, copies of two psychosocial assessments, appropriately disguised (can be from clinical course or agency assignments)
  - Any other evidence of projects or activities in which student played a role and which demonstrates their learning. Examples could include group curriculum used by student in leading a group, outline and handouts from a workshop designed and run by student, material developed for a community education project, grant proposal, press release, etc.
  - Assignments from classroom courses that relate specifically to the student's field placement (MP 759 assignment) or Task Force reports (WP 701).

E. Evaluation and Feedback

Field instructors are responsible for evaluating the student's performance at the end of each semester. Evaluation forms are available from the Field Education Department or on the Field Education web page. The content of the evaluation is consistent with the Learning Objectives for Field Education and should be reviewed and incorporated into the student's learning contract. By the end of the foundation practicum, students are expected to demonstrate an ability to practice a majority of the foundation learning objectives (as designated by scores of 3 and 4 on the field instructor's evaluation of the student). By the end of the advanced practicum, students are expected to again demonstrate mastery of relevant foundation practicum objectives, and advanced learning objectives specific to their method concentration (Clinical or Macro), as evidenced by a majority of scores of at least 4.

We believe that evaluation should be an ongoing process, and that the student and field instructor should regularly give feedback to each other regarding the field education experience. Students and field instructors should discuss any concerns as they emerge, and not just at the formal evaluation time. Student participation in the evaluation process is required and the mechanism by which this will take place should be negotiated early in the placement.

Students have the opportunity to complete an assessment of their placement at the end of each semester. This information is reviewed by the Field Education Department and is one tool used to monitor the field experience. Students' assessments of their placements are kept in agency files which are available to all students to read. In addition, students and field instructors have the opportunity to evaluate their experience with the faculty advisor.

F. Grade for Field Education

Field Education is graded on a Pass-Fail basis. The grade is recommended by the faculty advisor in consultation with the field instructor(s). Students must complete the entire placement in order to receive credit and a grade for the course.

### **VALUES AND ETHICS**

Professional social work practice is guided by social work values and ethics. Students are expected to understand their personal values as well as those of the profession and to examine the application of these values in their work with clients, consumers, agencies, and colleagues. In addition, students should be helped to identify and sort out, in an open atmosphere, value and ethical dilemmas that emerge in their work and in the larger agency context, and to make thoughtful decisions with appropriate supervision regarding social work practice in these situations. The faculty advisor is also available to consult with the field instructor around ethical and value issues that evolve in the student's experience at the agency. Field instructors should refer to the NASW and other relevant codes of ethics, and to the state licensing laws in their discussions with students about ethical behavior.

Students should also be informed of the relevant legal aspects of practice within the particular agency setting. Examples include, but are not limited to, confidentiality and its exceptions, duty to warn, mandated reporting, informed consent, definitions of malpractice, and record-keeping. In situations where legal issues are involved, students should be given appropriate supervision, administrative sanction, and access to and support from legal expertise.

### **BEHAVIORAL STANDARDS FOR SOCIAL WORK STUDENTS**

Becoming a social worker involves acquiring knowledge and skills as well as demonstrating attitudes and values that are congruent with professional standards. Attention to these standards will be paid by faculty responsible for evaluating students' classroom performance, by field instructors, faculty advisors, and other agency personnel responsible for evaluating field performance, and by administrators and others with whom the students interact within the School of Social Work community.

Social work students are expected to adhere to the following standards in the classroom, field, and within the larger Boston University School of Social Work community:

- Behavior: in interactions with faculty, administrators, staff, agency personnel, clients/consumers, and other students, act in accordance with the mission of the Boston University School of Social Work, and the goals and standards of social work as outlined in the NASW Code of Ethics, e.g., commitment to social and economic justice, client self-determination, integrity, human dignity and human diversity ([www.socialworkers.org/pubs/code/code.asp](http://www.socialworkers.org/pubs/code/code.asp)), the Boston University Code of Student Responsibility ([www.bu.edu/lifebook/university-policies/policies-code.html](http://www.bu.edu/lifebook/university-policies/policies-code.html)), the Boston University School of Social Work Academic Standards, and the Boston University School of Social Work Sexual Harassment Policy and Procedures.

- Self-awareness: openness to new ideas, differing opinions and feedback from others, and integration of these into professional and student roles and performance; an understanding of the effect of one's statements and behaviors on others; the ability to modulate one's behavior to promote a productive professional environment and appropriate relationships; a willingness to examine one's beliefs, values and assumptions and change one's behavior to ensure ethical professional practice
- Academic: critical evaluation and application of knowledge and research findings to professional performance; classroom participation that promotes academic freedom, complies with guidelines for respectful classroom behavior, complies with instructor's directives, and allows for course instruction and participation of all students
- Interpersonal: interpersonal skills needed to relate effectively to students, faculty, school personnel, agency staff, clients, and other professionals; these include compassion, empathy, integrity, respect and consideration, reliability, and responsibility for one's own behavior
- Self-care: the ability to engage in appropriate self-care and seek resources and/or treatment for medical and emotional problems that interfere with academic and professional performance
- Appropriate use of existing channels of communication (e.g., faculty advisor, classroom instructors, department chairs, Boston University School of Social Work administrators, field instructors) and procedures for addressing problems and concerns at the School of Social Work as outlined in the *Student Handbook: Ways and Means* and *The Curriculum Guide for Field Education*.

Failure to act in accordance with these standards may result in suspension or termination from Boston University School of Social Work. In addition to any sanction imposed by the University's Dean of Students, a student who has been found guilty by the University's Dean of Students for a violation of the University Code of Student Responsibilities is subject to suspension or termination by the Boston University School of Social Work Dean following the procedures of the Boston University School of Social Work Status Review. If in the judgment of the Boston University School of Social Work Dean, interim steps are appropriate, pending the determination of a matter by Status Review, the Dean may impose such interim conditions, which may include an interim suspension from courses and/or field placement.

## ADDITIONAL FIELD EDUCATION POLICIES

### A. Sexual Harassment Policy and Procedures

Boston University is committed to the principle that no employee, student, or applicant for employment or admission should be subject to sexual harassment. The University strives to provide workplaces and learning environments that promote equal opportunity and are free from illegal discriminatory practices, including sexual harassment.

Sexual harassment is a violation of federal and state laws and University policy, as is retaliation against any individual who in good faith files a complaint of sexual harassment or cooperates in the investigation of such a complaint. Upon receipt of a complaint of sexual harassment or retaliation, Boston University will undertake a fair and thorough investigation, with due regard for the rights of all parties. Every reasonable effort will be made to protect the confidentiality of the parties during the investigation. After an investigation, any person who is found to have sexually harassed or retaliated against another will be subject to discipline, up to and including termination of employment and, if a student, expulsion from Boston University.

#### 1. Definition of Sexual Harassment

Sexual harassment is defined as sexual advances, requests for sexual favors, and any other verbal or physical contact of a sexual nature, whether intentional or unintentional, where:

—an individual's submission to or rejection of the conduct is made, either explicitly or implicitly, a term or condition of employment or of status in a course, program or activity, or is used as a basis for an employment or academic decision; or,

—the conduct has the purpose or effect of unreasonably interfering with an individual's work performance, academic performance, or educational experience, or of creating an intimidating, hostile, humiliating or offensive working, educational, or living environment.

## 2. Examples of Conduct Which May Constitute Sexual Harassment

It is not possible to list all circumstances that might constitute sexual harassment. In general, sexual harassment encompasses any sexually related conduct which causes others discomfort, embarrassment, or humiliation, and any harassing conduct, sexually related or otherwise, directed toward an individual because of that individual's sex. Such conduct is subject to this policy whenever it occurs in a context related to the employment or academic environments, or if it is imposed upon an individual by virtue of an employment or academic relationship.

A determination of whether conduct constitutes sexual harassment is dependent upon the totality of the circumstances, including the pervasiveness or severity of the conduct. The Massachusetts Commission Against Discrimination lists the following as examples of conduct that may constitute sexual harassment:

- Unwelcome sexual advances—whether they involve physical touching or not;
- Sexual epithets, jokes, written or oral references to sexual conduct, gossip regarding one's sex life, comment on an individual's body, comment about an individual's sexual activity, deficiencies, or prowess;
- Displaying sexually suggestive objects, pictures, or cartoons;
- Unwelcome leering, whistling, brushing against the body, sexual gestures, or suggestive or insulting comments;
- Inquiries into one's sexual experiences; and
- Discussion of one's sexual activities.

In order to constitute sexual harassment, conduct must be unwelcome. Conduct is unwelcome when the person being harassed does not solicit or invite it and regards it as undesirable or offensive. The fact that a person may accept the conduct does not mean that he or she welcomes it.

While we recognize that field instructors and other agency personnel are not employees of Boston University, and students are not employees of the agency, the School of Social Work is committed to the protection of all parties in the field education process from sexual harassment. Accordingly, we advise all agencies to apprise students of their policies regarding sexual harassment and to discuss agency procedures for reporting incidents of sexual harassment.

### 3. Procedures

A student who believes s/he has been sexually harassed by a field instructor, other agency employee, or client should contact the Assistant Dean for Field Education to discuss the situation and to determine what steps should be taken regarding his/her status at the agency. The Assistant Dean for Field Education, in consultation with the University's Equal Opportunity officer, will investigate the complaint. This investigation could involve discussions with the field instructor, other relevant agency personnel, and the person alleged to have committed the harassment. It should be noted that the investigation may be restricted by the limited jurisdiction the School has over the agency. In addition, the student may have rights to have a complaint filed with and investigated by the agency itself or appropriate governmental agencies.

At the conclusion of the investigation, the Assistant Dean for Field Education and the student will make a judgment regarding the student's status at the agency:

- a. The agency has satisfactorily addressed the complaint, and the student is willing to remain in the placement.
- b. The agency has satisfactorily addressed the complaint, but the student should be placed in another setting.
- c. The agency has not responded satisfactorily, and the student should be placed in another setting.
- d. The complaint of sexual harassment is unfounded, and further investigation into the situation is warranted.

Where a complaint against an agency or its personnel is found to be justified, the agency's response and corrective action will also be taken into account by the School in determining whether that agency will be used for future placements.

If a complaint of sexual harassment is made by a client or agency employee against a student, the School will invoke the above procedure and will cooperate with any additional steps taken by the agency. The School's goal in such a situation would be to work collaboratively with the agency toward a mutually acceptable outcome. The School recognizes the agency's right to terminate the placement of any student who has violated the law and agency policy.

## B. Drug and Alcohol Policy

Below is a modified version of the Boston University “Policy on Illegal Drugs and Alcohol.”<sup>1</sup> Specific statements relevant to professional social work education have been added.

Boston University’s alcoholic beverage policy is in accord with the laws of the Commonwealth of Massachusetts at all times. However, the University’s standards of personal conduct substantially exceed the minimum expectations of civil law and custom. Students found in violation of University alcohol policy or engaging in misconduct related to the abuse of alcohol, whether on or off campus, will be subject to disciplinary action under the Code of Student Responsibilities, and prosecution. Boston University also enforces the Massachusetts underage drinking law, and state and federal drug laws.

Boston University neither permits nor condones the possession, use, or sale of illegal drugs and narcotics. Violators are subject to University disciplinary procedures, as well as criminal prosecution under state and federal laws. Conviction for drug-related offenses in any jurisdiction may affect a student’s eligibility for federal, state, or University financial aid.

Boston University recognizes that alcoholism, drug addiction, and substance abuse may represent illnesses or conditions that require professional counseling, assistance, or treatment. Faculty, students, and staff with problems related to or stemming from alcohol or other substance abuse or dependency are encouraged to make use of the services provided through the University or other resources. However, neither addiction nor substance abuse is an excuse for any member of the University community to violate the rights of others, or for neglecting or inadequately handling academic or job-related responsibilities.

### 1. Standards of Conduct

The unlawful possession, use, or distribution of illicit drugs or alcohol by any student or employee on University property or in conjunction with any University activity, including internships, is prohibited. Social work interns have a professional obligation articulated in the NASW Code of Ethics, to “not allow their own personal problems, psychosocial distress, legal problems, substance abuse, or mental health difficulties to interfere with their professional judgment and performance or to jeopardize the best interests of people for whom they have a professional responsibility.”<sup>2</sup>

### 2. Disciplinary Sanctions

The University will impose disciplinary sanctions on students and employees who violate University standards of conduct. In addition, students or employees who violate public law may be subject to criminal prosecution. Conviction may result in fines, imprisonment, and revocation or loss of eligibility to receive federal funding (such as grants and financial assistance) and other privileges.

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<sup>1</sup> “Safety on Campus 1999–2000.” Boston University Police Department.

<sup>2</sup> NASW Code of Ethics, Section 4.05(a), 1996.

University-imposed discipline may include sanctions up to and including expulsion of a student or termination of employment, in addition to referral for criminal prosecution. Disciplinary sanctions may include participation in a treatment, counseling, or other approved rehabilitation program.

C. Safety Policy and Procedures

The Boston University School of Social Work Field Education Department has adopted the following policy and procedures regarding the safety of student interns in the field. This policy has been created in recognition of the fact that physical vulnerability of professional social workers and violence in the lives of clients are current realities. While social workers may be more aware of these issues in inner-city areas, we believe issues of safety are relevant in all communities and settings.

1. Policy

- a. The School is responsible for providing all students and faculty advisors with general written information about safety in the field, and about its Safety Policy and Procedures.
- b. The School faculty will address safety issues as they relate to the content of lectures and discussions in the classroom.
- c. Each agency is responsible for orienting student interns to the safety policies and procedures of that setting. Such orientation should include, but not be limited to, discussion of safety issues in the community, within the agency building(s), and with particular clients prone to violent behavior. Security of personal belongings should be covered. Procedures for the student(s) to follow in the event of a safety or security problem should be reviewed.
- d. Students should not be forced to engage in assignments in which they feel physically at risk. The agency should make the same accommodations to ensure students' safety as they make for staff. If a student's concerns about safety begin to interfere with the learning process, the faculty advisor should be contacted to facilitate exploration of the concerns.

2. Procedures

- a. If an incident occurs in which a student is personally threatened or hurt, the field instructor, agency contact person, or agency director should contact the Assistant Dean for Field Education immediately to discuss what actions the agency and School should take to ensure the student's physical and emotional well-being.
- b. The Assistant Dean for Field Education will document the incident and the steps taken to address it and will meet with the student and faculty advisor to

assess the student's readiness to return to the field, the need for replacement, and any other issues relevant to the situation.

### 3. Safety Tips for Students in the Field

The following are guidelines and suggestions that may be helpful to students, field instructors, and faculty advisors as they consider the particular safety issues in their settings. Specific steps taken by students or agency personnel will obviously have to be determined by the individual situation, the nature of the setting, etc.

#### a. Agency Protocol

It is important for students to know the agency safety and security protocol for office and home visits with clients. In the absence of formal policies, the field instructor and student should discuss any issues related to safety and security in the setting.

#### b. Security of Belongings

All students in the field are expected to have a secure place to keep handbags and other belongings while at placement. It is preferable that the space be one that can be locked, and could be in a desk drawer or filing cabinet. It is best not to leave handbags and other personal articles visible and unattended, even in an office with the door closed.

Valuables should not be brought to placement settings. Items of value should not be left in cars, and should not be placed out of view just prior to leaving a vehicle.

#### c. Safety Issues Related to Working with Clients

When working with clients, it is important to remember that the treatment process often makes people feel vulnerable and may challenge their usual coping mechanisms. With some people, this can contribute to problems with impulse control and can raise issues of safety for the client, the social worker, and others.

There may be times when students work with individuals who have difficulty with reality testing, dealing with overwhelming emotions, and controlling their anger. Some of them may be prone to violence and may possess a weapon. Other clients may be intoxicated, high on drugs, in withdrawal, or may have other medical or neurological disorders. Again, we would like to emphasize that students consult with agency field instructors regarding preparation for and handling of specific situations that are potentially difficult or threatening, such as medical emergencies, suicide or homicide risks, potential abuse of others, and the presence of weapons.

d. Safety Tips for Office Meetings

If a student will be meeting with a client with whom the student does not feel safe, it is important to discuss the situation fully with the agency field instructor. When considering the location of the meeting, it might be helpful to think about what is in the room, whether there is more than one exit, and where each person might sit. It may also be helpful to think about whether to include someone else in the meeting and what to wear. When discussing the time of the appointment, it can be helpful to think about whether or not many people are around at the time being considered for the meeting. Also important to discuss is the plan for backup and assistance in the event that the client becomes agitated.

e. Safety Tips for Travel by Car

When a student is traveling by car to an agency or to home visits, it is advisable to know where he or she is going and to look at a map before driving to unfamiliar areas. In general, remember to be alert, and to lock doors and close windows.

f. Safety Tips for Travel by Foot or Public Transportation

When traveling by foot or public transportation, it is advisable that students carry the least amount of valuables with them as possible. Money, license, keys, and other essentials might be carried in a pocket. If a handbag carried under the arm is grabbed, it is best to let go of it. It is helpful to dress in comfortable clothes that are loose fitting, and to wear sturdy, flat walking shoes. It is also helpful to be alert, and to walk with a purpose, as if one has a clear destination. One should be aware of people in the immediate area, without staring or maintaining eye contact.

g. Safety Tips for Home Visits

It is important to know something about the client prior to the home visit. If there is a question of safety, plan accordingly with field instructors. It might be decided that meeting at a neutral place or going with another worker is the appropriate plan. It is helpful to stay alert and to think about what to wear, which room to meet in, and where to sit.

4. Post-Incident Protocol

If an incident occurs in which a student is personally threatened or hurt, the field instructor, agency contact person, or agency director should contact the Assistant Dean for Field Education immediately to discuss what actions the agency and School should take to ensure the student's physical and emotional well-being.

The Assistant Dean for Field Education will document the incident and the steps taken to address it, and will meet with the student and faculty advisor. Together, they will assess the student's readiness to return to the field, the need for replacement, and any other issues relevant to the situation.

Other points for consideration with field instructors and faculty advisors include:

- a. What immediate follow-up needs to occur? Is the client still potentially dangerous to him or herself, or to others? Who needs to be notified?
- b. What other steps need to take place (e.g., psychiatric/psychological evaluations)?
- c. How is the student feeling, and what support does he or she need? Debriefing is essential when all risk factors have been addressed. The student must be kind to him or herself and respond to his or her own needs. What supports do the agency and the School offer after a traumatic incident? What support system does the student have? It might be helpful to consider brief supportive counseling.
- d. What documentation needs to be done as quickly as possible for the agency?
- e. What documentation does the School require?

#### D. Professional Liability Coverage for Students

Students at the Boston University School of Social Work are covered for professional liability while participating in a curriculum-related activity while under the authorization or direction of the University. This insurance provides coverage for Boston University students while they are participating in the field placement program. A certificate of insurance evidencing coverage will be forwarded upon request.

## **FIELD EDUCATION LEARNING OBJECTIVES**

### **Introduction**

The Boston University School of Social Work educates social work practitioners who possess the knowledge and skills to address the needs and potentials of individuals, families, groups, organizations, and communities using clinical and macro practice methods. The integrated program of classroom and field education emphasizes the engagement of personal and community strengths to understand, prevent, and resolve individual and social problems, particularly in urban and diverse communities. The Boston University School of Social Work is committed to education which furthers social and economic justice in the urban environment. This urban mission emphasizes empowerment of oppressed groups, leadership that strengthens urban communities, and the unique capacities and challenges of urban settings with diverse populations. Students should have the opportunity in their

field placements to gain knowledge and skills that will prepare them to practice in accordance with the mission.

The School's MSW program learning objectives guide the sequencing, content, and structure of both the classroom and field curricula. The following field education learning objectives outline the essential social work values, knowledge, and skills that students are expected to demonstrate in their work with clients and consumers. Both field placements incorporate all of the curriculum areas—social work practice, human behavior in the social environment, social welfare policy, research, ethics and values.

Students come to both placements with a range of educational, internship, and work experiences and some may require a more sustained introduction to the social work profession and to their professional roles and activities. However, by the end of both placements, all students are expected to have developed competence in the majority of the following learning objectives.

## **SOCIAL WORK IDENTITY WITHIN THE SOCIAL WORK PROFESSION**

### **Agency Context**

The student is expected to:

1. ***understand the agency*** mission, history, organizational structure, policies and programs, and community.
2. ***understand*** the agency as it reflects ***U.S. social welfare history, policies, and priorities.***
3. ***understand and identify with the role of urban social work in the agency*** including the profession's potentials and limits in the agency context.
4. ***understand the assets and capacities*** as well as the needs of the geographic and membership community/ies served by the agency particularly in urban settings.
5. understand and foster a ***productive role for the agency*** in the community/ies.

### **Values and Ethics**

The student is expected to:

1. be aware of her/his ***own value orientations, particularly regarding urban populations and communities.***
2. be familiar with the values and ethical standards of social work, including the ***NASW Code of Ethics*** and practice within that framework.

3. identify *competing values and ethics* that result in dilemmas both in her/his own practice and in the larger agency context.
4. demonstrate behavior consistent with the values of the profession and *resolve ethical dilemmas* in consultation with field instructors, colleagues, faculty members, and other professionals whose expertise and authority are available.
5. be responsible for *her/his ethical conduct* and for the *quality* of her/his practice.

### **Diverse Populations**

The student is expected to:

1. recognize the influence of *his/her cultural identities* on his/her perception of and approach to working with people who are both similar and different.
2. identify and value *differences and similarities* in values, experiences, beliefs, strengths, and needs of diverse groups of people.
3. *discuss with a field instructor* this awareness of self and others to enhance practice.
4. take into account *race, ethnicity, socioeconomic class, age, gender, sexual orientation, physical ability, and religion.*
5. assess *policies, procedures, and practices* of the agency as they relate to *accessibility, availability, and appropriateness* for the diverse populations served by the agency.

### **Social and Economic Justice**

The student is expected to:

1. assess the influence of *oppression and economic injustice* on clients, organizations and communities, social policies, and the availability and quality of resources, with special emphasis on urban environments.
2. identify, develop, and implement *goals and strategies* to promote social change and economic justice.
3. base his/her practice on *empowerment of clients, groups, organizations, and communities.*

## THE STUDENT AS SOCIAL WORK INTERN

### Professional Behavior

The student is expected to:

1. ***form and maintain professional relationships*** (e.g., demonstrate the ability to collaborate, function within a team, work within the organizational structure, appropriately address conflicts).
2. demonstrate appropriate ***professional behavior*** (e.g., appropriate dress, punctuality, attendance, time and workload management, completing School-required recordings and agency documentation in a timely manner as required).
3. act in accordance with the directives of the ***field instructor and/or other agency personnel in positions of authority***.
4. act in accordance with the School's ***Behavioral Standards*** as outlined in the ***Curriculum Guide for Field Education***.

### Supervision

The student is expected to:

1. ***share responsibility*** with the field instructor for developing educational goals consistent with those set by the School.
2. ***actively participate in supervision*** by sharing challenges, questions, and accomplishments, and by being self-reflective about her/his professional development.
3. use supervision to discuss and apply ***awareness of self and others*** with particular emphasis on issues related to ***social and economic justice and cultural diversity***.
4. use a ***range of learning tools*** (e.g., School-required recordings, role plays, discussion, audio and video recording).
5. be open to ***feedback from field instructor***.
6. give ***thoughtful feedback to field instructor*** about supervision.

### Critical Thinking

The student is expected to engage in critical thinking by:

1. integrating knowledge from ***multiple sources***, including coursework, relevant research and agency resources.

2. *analyzing, synthesizing, and evaluating* points of view, biases, completeness, and empirical validity.
3. taking into account *personal values, beliefs, assumptions, and their impact* on one's practice.
4. *developing decision-making and implementation strategies* for practice based on the steps described above.
5. *transferring relevant knowledge and skills* learned from each assignment to successive assignments.
6. facilitating consumers'/community members' identification of *issues for change* based on their priorities and *developing goals and strategies* for accomplishing their agendas.

### **Communication**

The student is expected to:

*demonstrate verbal, written, and electronic communication skills* appropriate for professional practice (e.g, with clients, consumers, colleagues, and field instructor).

### **FOUNDATION PRACTICE SKILLS**

The student is expected to:

1. develop *purposeful professional relationships which are characterized by conscious and differential use of self* with clients, consumers, communities, and organizations.
2. *demonstrate the following practice skills* within an urban social framework (i.e., values and ethics, professional role, cultural diversity, social and economic justice):
  - a. engagement
  - b. assessment
  - c. contracting
  - d. intervention
  - e. mutual evaluation of practice
  - f. termination

3. use a *strengths-based perspective, a systems framework, and an ecological model of practice.*
4. utilize *empirically based and other theories of human behavior and life-span development* in their professional practice.
5. In *interactions with individuals and families:*
  - a. demonstrate *empathy, respect, warmth, and authenticity.*
  - b. explore by asking *relevant and well-formulated questions.*
  - c. observe and make note of *nonverbal behavior.*
  - d. enable client(s) to recognize *available choices* and make decisions about alternatives.
  - e. facilitate client's use of *external resources and concrete services,* and when appropriate, advocate directly.
  - f. understand and work with a *range of client's feelings and expressions of emotion.*
  - g. appropriately provide *information and knowledge.*
  - h. facilitate timely and appropriate *termination.*
6. In *work with groups,* the student is expected to:
  - a. *articulate the purpose of the group* as defined by the agency, the group worker, and the members.
  - b. use the appropriate *group work model* based on agency mission and group members' goals and needs.
  - c. understand and consider factors related to *group composition* in forming and working with groups.
  - d. *prepare group members* for participation in the group (e.g., discussion of group purpose and structure, confidentiality, protection of individual, and group interests).
  - e. arrange for *adequate space, programming supplies, and equipment.*
  - f. create an atmosphere of *acceptance and trust.*
  - g. *establish goals* with the group as a whole, and with individuals, if appropriate.

- h. develop and implement a *range of activities and techniques* consistent with group purpose and type.
  - i. apply knowledge of *stages of group development*.
  - j. if *co-leading a group*, work collaboratively to plan and review sessions with co-leader and group supervisor.
7. In *work with communities and organizations*, the student is expected to:
- a. demonstrate skills in *identifying and analyzing different types and models* of communities and organizations.
  - b. utilize an *assets approach* to communities with particular emphasis on undervalued groups and urban communities.
  - c. recognize how indigenous *community resources and members* are involved in the helping process.
  - d. demonstrate an understanding of *power relationships* in communities and organizations including different leadership styles.
  - e. apply the principles of *empowerment, capacity enhancement, and participatory democracy* to community and organizational analysis and interventions.
  - f. understand and utilize the elements of a *planned change framework* to:
    - (1) identify and define *issues and goals for change based on an analysis of data gathered from multiple sources*
    - (2) conduct a *force field analysis* to assess change potential and pitfalls
    - (3) build a base of *support for planned change*
    - (4) *develop and implement strategies and tactics* to maximize support and overcome resistance
    - (5) evaluate *progress, effects, and outcomes*.

### ADVANCED PRACTICE SKILLS

Students in the advanced field placement concentrate in either Clinical or Macro Practice and a majority of their assignments should reflect their area of concentration. In addition to mastering new skills, advanced students are expected to demonstrate increased independence and initiative in their assignments and in supervision.

Some students may concentrate in Clinical Practice with a Macro sub-specialization. Students may also choose to focus their studies in one of the MSW certificate or specialization programs (Clinical Social Work and Behavioral Medicine, Family Therapy, Group Work, Gerontological Social Work, Human Service Management, Trauma).

Field education guidelines for method specializations:

- Clinical Practice with Macro sub-specialization: 15–20% of the student's assignment should include a substantive macro practice project with field instruction that incorporates a macro practice framework.
- Clinical Social Work and Behavioral Medicine Certificate: the student should have the opportunity to develop knowledge and skills related to the behavioral aspects of complex illnesses and disorders such as Alzheimer's, the addictions, HIV/AIDS, and mental illness.
- Family Therapy Certificate Program: the student's assignment should include clinical practice with families, with field instruction that incorporates a family systems theoretical framework.
- Gerontological Social Work: the student's assignments should focus on services and programs for older adults and their families.
- Group Work Specialization: the student should work with at least two groups in a leadership or co-leadership role with field instruction that incorporates group work theory.
- Trauma Certificate Program: the student should have the opportunity to practice with clients who have experienced significant trauma with field instruction that incorporates a trauma theory perspective.
- Management Certificate: the student should have the opportunity to be exposed to and practice an array of management and administrative functions.