July 24, 2020

Dear Advanced Year BUSSW Students,

We hope this letter finds you all well and healthy! We are reaching out to provide you with an update on what the field education department has been doing to prepare for your 2020-2021 academic year field placement. As we all are experiencing the COVID-19 pandemic and adapting to new ways of life, we understand the level of concern that some of you may be experiencing regarding timely communication about Fall field placements. We know you likely have a number of questions about what to expect as you enter your advanced year field placement. Our goal here is to provide you with a brief overview and hopefully answer some of the broader questions that many of you have.

As of today, there are still many unanswered questions. The field education staff, BUSSW faculty, and administrators at BU and SSW are continuously working on plans that will best support students’ academic, field education and overall safety as we start the Fall semester. We know that even our best prepared plans may be overridden by COVID-19 changes in federal and state guidelines.

Over the past three months, the field education office has been reaching out to agency partners on a continuous basis to confirm field placements. During this time, we have also hosted and attended meetings with field partners, and stayed in touch via email and by phone to collect pertinent information regarding Fall 2020 field placement assignments and COVID-19 adjustments.

As we embark on the final eight weeks prior to the official start of the Fall semester, we’d like to update you on several key areas:

**Field Agency Match Letters**

- Match letters are the second to last step in the overall confirmation of your placement. The Match letter this year has been adjusted to include a COVID-19 Agency Agreement form that addresses state and federal safety guidelines. Match letters were sent to all confirmed field placement agencies and field instructors.
- We are in the process of responding to any agency questions, concerns, and COVID-19 field placement adjustments regarding Fall placement confirmations.
- As we conclude this process, we will have a better understanding of each field agency’s changes in structure, work style, and any additional accommodations or resources needed for students as a result of COVID-19. As we receive this information, we will pass it along to you as necessary.

**Confirmation Letters/Packets**

- Confirmation letters/packets are the final step in the field placement confirmation process. These packets are typically emailed to field agencies and instructors in mid to late August.
- As a result of COVID-19 there will be some changes to this process:
  - Once we review and approve the Agency Agreement forms from agencies/field instructors, we will email a confirmation packet to you and the field instructor that will include a COVID-19 Student
Attestation form. This form will need to be completed by you and uploaded to the BUSSW Sonia database prior to the start of field placement.

Field Agency Orientations and Trainings

- Some of you have already been in communication with your placement site regarding intern orientations or trainings that take place during the months of July and August. This is not a practice that is adopted by all sites; if your site has this as a standard practice you would have been already informed. Some sites may decide to implement this as a practice due to COVID-19; if so, you will have direct communication with either your field instructor or the field education department or both.

BUSSW Field Readiness Training

- The BUSSW Field Readiness Training was developed over the past spring and summer, largely as a response to the significant disruptions the COVID-19 pandemic caused in student field placements. There is no mistaking that this pandemic has changed the landscape of the traditional field placement/education model, as well as some aspects of social work practice. Schools of social work across the country are working hard to create and implement programs that will prepare students for the many changes they will likely encounter in the field this Fall.
- Advanced year students will access this training through Blackboard, and are required to take the Telehealth module prior to starting their field placements.

Current Students Entering Field Placements Information Sessions

- We will host a series of Field Education Information Sessions for all current students entering into their field placement in late summer or Fall ’20. Below is a list of dates and Zoom links for each event. We encourage all current students entering or continuing with field placement to attend.
  - August 12, 2020- 6:30pm
    [https://bostonu.zoom.us/j/5523626366](https://bostonu.zoom.us/j/5523626366)
  - August 21, 2020- 12pm
    [https://bostonu.zoom.us/j/5523626366](https://bostonu.zoom.us/j/5523626366)
  - August 26, 2020 (Macro Focus)- 4pm
    [https://bostonu.zoom.us/j/5523626366](https://bostonu.zoom.us/j/5523626366)
  - September 3, 2020- 8:30pm
    [https://bostonu.zoom.us/j/5523626366](https://bostonu.zoom.us/j/5523626366)

Last, and most important, all of the staff of the BUSSW Field Education department thank you for your patience and flexibility. We have all been navigating in uncharted waters and we anticipate that we will encounter even more new challenges and difficulties along the way. Please know that we are working around the clock to preserve the integrity of your field education experience.

If you have any questions, concerns, or would like to discuss your field education options, please email me denita@bu.edu.

Stay safe and we well!

Denita Johnson
Assistant Dean for Field Education