

***Boston University School of Social Work  
Field Education Department***

**Agency Requirements and  
Field Instructor Qualifications and Expectations**

The Boston University School of Social Work chooses agencies for student internships which support the mission of the social work profession through the work they do and the communities they serve. Both the agency and the field instructor (agency supervisor) play critical roles in the professional education of social work students. Field instructors demonstrate their commitment to the profession's knowledge, values and skills through their competent and ethical practice and through their supervision and support of students.

**I. Agency Requirements**

1. Select and assign field instructors.
2. Provide time and support so that the field instructor can meet the School's requirements for working with a student.
3. Provide to the student an orientation to the agency which includes the following:
  - COVID-19 Policies and Protocols
  - mission, vision, values, programs, and communities served
  - general policies and procedures
  - safety policies and procedures
  - documentation requirements
  - legal and ethical issues.
4. Provide adequate work space and access to telephones, computers, agency email, databases, records, etc., to fulfill the requirements of the agency and School. Inform the student of agency Human Resources requirements, such as documentation of immunizations, background checks, etc.
5. If possible, reimburse student for expenses involved in rendering agency services, e.g., home visit travel costs.
6. Provide opportunities for student participation in staff, committee, and seminar meetings when appropriate.
7. Allow use of selected agency material for class assignments (appropriately disguised to ensure client and agency confidentiality).
8. Provide agency consultation resources when appropriate.
9. Review and agree to our [Policy Regarding Intern Use of Vehicles for Agency Business](#).

**II. Field Instructor Qualifications**

1. Master's degree from an accredited school of social work (or a Master's degree in a related field for advanced/second year **Macro** students).

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2. Minimum of two years, relevant full-time, supervised post-MSW experience.
3. LCSW is required. LICSW (or equivalent for agencies outside Massachusetts) is preferred for field instructors in advanced 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 the student's needs.
5. Competence in social work practice related to the agency setting, population, and focus of work.
6. Current Resume with Social Work License Number listed

### **III. Field Instructors Expectations**

1. Provide a sufficient number and variety of assignments to support the progression of learning and development of competencies. Students are expected to become involved in practice activities within two to three weeks of the start of the placement.
2. Agree to act as field instructor on a continuing basis during the academic year or a full placement period.
3. Boston University School of Social Work requires two hours of weekly supervision:
  - a. A minimum of one of those hours must be individual face- to-face, closed door supervision focused on the student's learning and professional development provided by the primary MSW field instructor. Although administrative issues are a component of supervision, the educational and supportive aspects of field instruction should be the primary focus of the individual supervision hour. The student is practicing under the auspices of the agency and the field instructor's license so it is important that there be enough time to discuss the student's work. This individual hour of supervision can include:
    - role plays
    - discussion of process recordings/analyses
    - attention to ethical dilemmas
    - application of relevant theories and research that are raised through the work that the student is doing
    - other activities that help the student develop and achieve competence.
    - observation of the student's professional activities and immediate feedback from the field instructor can also be incorporated into this hour of supervision.
  - b. The second hour of required weekly supervision can be provided more flexibly in the context of the agency culture and an assessment of the student's learning needs. The second hour can be provided by someone with an MSW, another related Master's degree, a Ph.D., or by a Bachelor's level staff person with expertise and program responsibility. All secondary supervisors must be approved by the BUSSW Field Education Department. Possible formats include:
    - Individual supervision provided by the primary MSW field instructor

- Several shorter interactions with the primary field instructor (e.g., after client contacts, on the way to home or auxiliary site visits)
  - Individual supervision provided by the secondary supervisor
  - Group format such as group or dyad supervision, or clinical or other team meetings focused on the participants' practice and learning rather than administrative issues;
- c. Supervision should be described in the student's learning contract including format, who will provide the supervision, and days and times that supervision will take place.
4. Meet and consult with student's advisor and other school representatives as necessary.
  5. Use recordings/analyses as a teaching tool in supervisory conferences. [See Recording/Analyses as a Learning/Teaching tool.](#)
  6. Develop a written educational contract, Learning Contract, with the student.
  7. Evaluate the student's practice on a continuing basis and provide written evaluations consistent with the School's calendar and deadlines.
  8. **Field instructors who are primary supervisors for MSW students for the first time are required to participate in a seminar that examines the content and process of field instruction and is taken concurrently with student's placement. The seminar is taught by a field education staff person at BUSSW or at one of the other New England schools of social work. It can also be taken in an online format. See [Seminar for New Field Instructors](#). 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.**
  9. 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.

#### IV. Field Instructor Benefits

1. Networking and support with other BUSSW field instructors in our Spring Appreciation Breakfast/Workshop which provides CECs and is offered at no cost.
2. One tuition-free continuing education workshop provided by the [Boston University School of Social Work Professional Education Programs](#) (PEP) in the academic year in which they supervise. Online workshops offered by BUSSW PEP are included. Only two tuition-free slots will be held in each workshop, so early registration is recommended. If two field instructors work with one student, only one continuing education benefit applies.

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