

Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ)

Field Education Department Responses for MSW Interns During the COVID-19 Pandemic

Due to the impact of the COVID-19, many of you have questions about current and future placements, field education protocols, and your commitment to clients and internship sites. This FAQ will provide you with answers to common questions to help you navigate this unique and unprecedented period in your MSW matriculation.

Q. May I work in-person at my internship site if my Field Instructor gives me permission or directs me to do so?

A. No. Your safety is our first priority, and social distancing reduces the risk of infection transmission. According to the Centers for Disease Control and the World Health Organization, the virus is a pandemic with worldwide impacts. We need to do our part to prevent the spread of this infection. At this time, the field department is **suspending in-person field activities until May 2nd, 2020, although this timeline is subject to review and revision.**

Q. How will I continue to provide service for my internship agency and the clients I serve?

A. It is imperative that you dialogue with your Field Instructor about alternative activities you can perform remotely to continue your education and provide support to your clients. As social workers, we must adjust and adapt to this changing environment by answering email promptly, communicating through telephone or virtual means with Field Instructors, and collaborating on new work plans that could include enhancing skill sets in online technologies. Because you are expected to meet with your Field Instructor weekly, you should discuss how individual and/or group supervision will proceed through digital technologies such as Zoom, FaceTime, or other mobile social messaging apps. Finally, you are encouraged to utilize multi-media applications to meet with clients that honor agency protocols and meet confidentiality standards.

Q. What clinical trainings can I participate in that will count toward my field hours?

A. In addition to those your Field Instructor may have already identified, the field department will provide online resources from multiple websites that offer opportunities to develop new mental health skills. Your Field Instructor will need to approve any training you complete in order for it to count toward field hours and your learning objectives.

Q. How will my hours be monitored and tracked?

A. In addition to any reporting system you have set up with your Field Instructor, hours will be tracked and monitored using the Field Practicum Log that will be part of the Remote Learning Plan provided to you by your Field Faculty Liaison. During this time of remote work, communicate professionally with your Field Instructor, meet deadlines, turn in required RLT's and clinical notes on time, and follow agency protocols.

Q. How can I complete Reflective Learning Tools (RLTs) if I am not seeing clients?

A. To maintain continuity of care, the first goal is to connect with your clients as your agency allows and as approved by your Field Instructor via teleconferencing protocols. In addition to their prior presenting problems, clients may be struggling with social, emotional, economic, and physical challenges of life, and the COVID-19 pandemic creates additional stressors related to potential medical, social and financial strains. If you are unable to meet with clients remotely, consult with your Field Instructor to develop a work plan that could include online social worker/client vignette trainings, role-playing between interns or between the Field Instructor and student, or other creative clinical learning options, including on-line trainings. Because eight (8) RLTs are still required for the spring semester, the Practicum Reflective Learning Tool for Groups (Mezzo) and the Reflective Learning Tool for Macro activities are available and could be utilized during this time.

Q. Will students have to make up field hours after the temporary suspension?

A. Despite the current restriction of in-person field activities, students are expected to accrue the requisite number of hours for the semester via approved remote field activities. Students should work with their Field Instructors and Field Faculty Liaisons to identify remote learning opportunities in order to meet school hour and competency requirements.

Q: What do I do if my field placement closes or otherwise prematurely ends my internship experience?

A. Contact your Field Faculty Liaison immediately to discuss and problem solve. As mentioned previously, the field education department will provide online engagement opportunities to supplement your individual learning plan.

Q. Can students who will be matched with agencies for summer semester field placements (VAC) and fall semester placements (OPC) schedule virtual or phone interviews?

A. Yes. The in-person field restriction applies to all students and agencies, including agency interviews, until further notice.

Q. If I am having challenges in securing hours, utilizing remote learning opportunities, accessing my Field Instructor, or addressing any other concerns, who should I contact?

A. Please contact your Field Faculty Liaison right away to discuss and problem solve.