

UNIVERSITY OF MARYLAND
SCHOOL OF SOCIAL WORK

FIELD INSTRUCTION MANUAL

FALL 2004 – SPRING 2005

BACCALAUREATE SOCIAL WORK PROGRAM
UNIVERSITY OF MARYLAND, BALTIMORE COUNTY

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**UNDERGRADUATE SOCIAL WORK PROGRAM
University of Maryland, Baltimore County**

FIELD INSTRUCTION CALENDAR

FALL SEMESTER 2004

September 1	Orientation at UMBC for Mon/Wed Students
September 2	Orientation at UMBC for Tues/Thurs Students
September 6	Labor Day Holiday ▾ No Field Instruction
September 7	First Day in Agency for Tues/Thurs Students
September 8	First Day in Agency for Mon/Wed Students
October 4	Learning Contracts Due to Field Director
October 18-22	Mid-Term Evaluation Week
October 22	Mid-Term Evaluations Due to Field Director
November 25-26	Thanksgiving Holidays ▾ No Field Instruction
December 6-10	Final Evaluation Week
December 13	Last Day in Field for Mon/Wed Students
December 14	Last Day in Field for Tues/Thurs Students
December 15	Final Evaluations Due to Field Director

**UNDERGRADUATE SOCIAL WORK PROGRAM
University of Maryland, Baltimore County**

FIELD INSTRUCTION CALENDAR

SPRING SEMESTER 2005

January 3	Field Instruction Begins for Mon/Wed Students
January 4	Field Instruction Begins for Tues/Thurs Students
January 17	M. L. King, Jr. Holiday B No Field Instruction
February 4	Learning Contracts Due to Field Director
March 14-18	Mid-Term Evaluation Week
March 18	Mid-Term Evaluations Due to Field Director
March 21-25	Spring Break B No Field Instruction
May 10	Last Day of Field for Tues/Thurs Students
May 11	Last Day of Field for Mon/Wed Students
May 9-13	Final Evaluation Week
May 13	Final Evaluations Due to Field Director

I. INTRODUCTION

Field placement is a challenging, growth-producing, and sometimes complicated experience. For those new to field instruction, questions of all types may arise - specific questions such as the policy regarding holidays and more global questions such as "What is it that they expect of me?" This manual is published to help students and field instructors deal with both types of questions. We ask you to read it, keep it handy, and refer to it as needed.

II. EVOLUTION OF THE PROGRAM

The undergraduate program began on the UMBC campus in September, 1969. At that time, the School of Social Work, in cooperation with the Division of Social Sciences at UMBC, developed a combined major in Sociology and Social Work.

In March 1971, the UMBC Senate voted to separate the Social Work major from Sociology and make Social Work a full major to be offered in conjunction with any other major available on the campus. In February, 1988, the UMBC Senate established Social Work as an independent major in its own right.

In 1970, the School of Social Work, together with UMBC, began a collaborative program with Coppin State University (CSU) for students interested in pursuing a social work degree. Coppin State University is located at 2500 West North Avenue in Baltimore City, about eight miles from the UMBC campus. Students may take social work courses on either the CSU or the UMBC campus. They complete all other academic requirements and receive their degrees from their home college, either CSU or UMBC. The UMBC/CSU programs are fully accredited by the Council on Social Work Education.

In September, 2001 UMBC began to offer the Bachelor of Arts in Social Work Program at the Shady Grove Center in Montgomery County in partnership with the Universities at Shady Grove.

III. DESCRIPTION OF THE PROGRAM

The UMBC Undergraduate Social Work Program is an integral part of the University of Maryland Baltimore, School of Social Work which provides a continuum of professional education including baccalaureate, master's, and doctoral degrees. Students completing the baccalaureate program are awarded a B. A. degree in Social Work and are entitled to take the State of Maryland Examination to become licensed as Social Work Associates.

In accordance with CSWE accreditation standards, the UMBC Social Work Program is designed to prepare students for "*generalist practice*" at the beginning level.

Generalist practice refers to a comprehensive, multidimensional approach to assessment and intervention that draws from a variety of intervention models and theoretical perspectives to address the problematic interactions between persons and external systems within the environment in a variety of practice settings across various fields of practice.

The generalist perspective of UMBC's Social Work Program is based, conceptually, on a liberal arts foundation in the humanities, social and natural sciences, and an ecosystemic model for understanding the interrelatedness of person and environment.

Another integral aspect of the generalist perspective is a focus on client strengths. Students learn that assessment and intervention efforts will focus not only on problem areas but also on client strengths. That is, our students recognize that as generalist practitioners, they will capitalize on and cultivate resources that exist within their clients and within the clients' environment.

A. COURSE WORK

The Social Work Major consists of 40 core credits. In addition to the required social work courses, students must complete:

- a) five other courses required of the social work major but not taught in the social work department,
- b) all of the general education requirements of the university, and
- c) a major, minor, or approved plan of study in another discipline of the student's choosing.

1. Core Courses:

SOWK 240 Information Technology in Social Work [1]

This course offers a beginning preparation in the use of technology for communication, data collection, and electronic research in human services. Students have the opportunity to work with computer and library services. Emphasis is on gaining a beginning knowledge of the use of information technology, an introduction to the "Information Highway," and an appreciation for the rapidity with which it is changing service delivery. **Note:** Course is graded and a prerequisite for field instruction.

SOWK 260 Introduction to Social Welfare, Social Policy, and Social Work I [3]

This course is the first social policy course required of all social work majors. The course provides an overview of the historical development and contemporary forces that have shaped the social welfare system in the United States. The course examines the relationship between the social welfare system and the problems and issues addressed by social services, and the role of the professional social worker in areas of service such as aging, child welfare, health and mental health, income maintenance, and services to women and minorities. In addition, the course offers opportunities to meet with practitioners in the field to understand the diverse populations served. **Note:** This course is a prerequisite for field instruction.

SOWK 360 Social Welfare, Social Policy and Social Work II [3]

This is the second required social policy course for social work majors. The course examines the current American social welfare system with attention focused on the major public-and private-sector programs operating on the national, state, and local

levels, programs such as income maintenance, housing and homelessness, health and mental health, children, families, and aging services. **Prerequisite:** SOWK 260.

SOWK 388 Human Behavior and the Social Environment I [3]

This course examines theory, research and practice issues of human development within the bio psychosocial context of mutually influencing personal, family, community, and societal systems. Emphasis is placed on understanding the relevance and use of theory for practice, and how diversity in race, ethnicity, culture, gender, sexual orientation and socioeconomic circumstances contributes to and influences personality development as well as the systems within which this takes place. The course content covers normal life-cycle development from infancy through childhood from the perspective of ecological systems theory. **Note:** This course must be taken prior to beginning field work. **Prerequisite:** PSYC 100 and human biology.

SOWK 389 Human Behavior II [3]

In the context of the same framework and variables described in Human Behavior I, this course covers normal life-cycle development from adolescence and young adulthood to later adulthood. **Prerequisite:** SOWK 388.

SOWK 397 Social Work Methods I: Introduction to Practice [3]

This course provides knowledge, skills, and values needed for beginning social work practice. Emphasis is placed on communication skills and the beginning stages of the problem-solving process. Special attention is given to the significance of human diversity for interpersonal helping. **Prerequisite:** Junior status, SOWK 260 and an overall GPA of 2.50 or better. **Note:** This course must be taken prior to beginning field work.

SOWK 480 Field Instruction I [6]

Students are assigned to a social service agency and participate in the delivery of social work services. **Prerequisites:** SOWK 240, SOWK 260, SOWK 397, SOWK 388 with a grade of "C" or better in each course, senior standing, an overall minimum GPA of 2.50, and permission of the department. **Note:** Must be taken concurrently with SOWK 481. Grading is Pass/Fail only. Offered only in the fall semester. Students who drop SOWK 481 must also drop SOWK 480.

SOWK 481 Social Work Methods II: A Generalist Approach to Practice [3]

This course presents a conceptual framework of social work intervention and covers the common elements of social work practice. It combines development of the ecological perspective with the problem-solving model and the development of basic social work skills. Students are introduced to concepts and skills relevant for intervention with clients with particular emphasis on case management and crisis intervention. Students are also introduced to interventions with the environment on behalf of clients. **Prerequisites:** SOWK 397, senior standing, and permission of the department. **Note:** Must be taken concurrently with SOWK 480. Available in the fall semester only. Students who drop SOWK 480 must also drop SOWK 481.

SOWK 482 Field Instruction II [6]

Students continue participation in the delivery of social services with increased practice responsibility. **Prerequisites:** SOWK 480, SOWK 481 with a grade of "C" or better, and permission of the department. **Note:** Must be taken concurrently with SOWK 483. Available in the spring semester only. Pass/Fail only. Students who drop SOWK 483 must also drop SOWK 482.

SOWK 483 Social Work Methods III: Selected Intervention Strategies, Research and Evaluation. [3]

This course emphasizes change strategies which pertain to family treatment, group work and community organization. Research findings pertinent to selected problems in social functioning are identified, analyzed, and applied to practice. Approaches to the evaluation of the student's own practice are presented. **Prerequisites:** Completion of SOWK 480 and SOWK 481 with a grade of "C" or better. **Note:** Must be taken concurrently with SOWK 482. Available spring semester only. Students who drop SOWK 482 must also drop SOWK 483.

SOWK 470 Social Work Research [3]

This course deals with problem formulation, data collection and analysis, and presentation of research findings and conclusions. Attention is paid to classic and recent studies and to the application of research to social work knowledge and practice. **Prerequisites:** Junior standing and an approved course in statistics. The following courses currently may be substituted for SOWK 470 at UMBC: AFAM 30I, SOCY 300, POLI 400 and PSYC 332.

1. Other Required Courses for the Social Work Major:

Introduction to Psychology	Introduction to Sociology	Human Biology
Introduction to Statistics	Economics or Political Science	

2. Elective Courses:

As part of the core course requirements, social work majors are required to complete three credits of upper-level social work electives. The following courses are currently approved as electives within the social work major:

SOWK 311 Introduction to Field Experience in Social Work [3]

This course offers the opportunity to observe the delivery of social services within selected agencies. Students are assigned to an agency for beginning experience in examining how social work services are provided. Field work experience is combined with seminar instruction. **Prerequisite:** SOWK 260 **Note:** Open to all students. Recommended for social work majors. May be repeated for credit. Grading is Pass/Fail only.

SOWK 377 Women and Social Policy [3]

This course explores the impact of social welfare programs and policies upon women's lives, examines the assumptions and values that have gone into the formulation of these policies, and discusses alternative approaches to dealing with women's concerns. Topics include women's economic circumstances, women and violence, traditional and alternative social services for women, and agendas for reform. **Note:** Also listed as WMST 377.

SOWK 386 Problematic Family Functioning [3]

This course covers family structure and its functioning in contemporary American society; the relation of culture, values, social class to parental roles, child-rearing practices, and family relationships; and application of theory in the development of programs and services for dealing with special family problems. **Prerequisite:** SOWK 388 or consent of the instructor.

SOWK 387 Policies, Programs, Services for Children [3]

This course presents the current situation in services for children as well as a historic perspective on the development of our society's perception of children's needs. It attempts to go beyond the traditional definitions of child welfare as an institution and encompasses consideration of a social welfare system for children which would include family policy advocacy, programs to enhance socialization of children, helping services and services to surrogate families. Selected intervention techniques appropriate for work with children are presented and skills are developed. **Prerequisite:** SOWK 260 or consent of the instructor.

SOWK 390 Special Topics in Social Welfare [3]

This course provides students with the opportunity to examine at an advanced level a selected issue in the social welfare field such as case management with vulnerable populations. This course will draw on basic understanding of concepts available through other courses in the social sciences. **Note:** Repeatable for credit. **Prerequisite:** Six hours in the social sciences.

SOWK 393 Services for the Aged: Social Work Intervention and Policy Issues [3]

Major intervention, policy, and service issues in working with older clients and their families are presented. This course is designed to provide an introduction for students who are interested in the field of aging. **Prerequisites:** SOWK 260 or consent of the instructor.

SOWK 395 Alcohol Problems and Alcoholism [3]

This course is designed to provide a basic comprehensive overview of the major issues related to the use of alcohol. Special effort will be made to provide a balanced view of the major concepts, theories, policies, and research regarding alcohol and alcoholism.

Emphasis is given to the effects of problem drinking on family members, especially children. The relationships between alcohol abuse and other health and social problems are examined. The course also provides information regarding the use and abuse of selected other drugs.

SOWK 499 Independent Study [1-3]

This course presents an opportunity for in-depth study of a particular social welfare or social work problem. It ordinarily requires a substantial research effort and a major paper. **Note:** A proposal must be submitted and permission must be obtained before registration. Repeatable for credit. For students completing honors Independent Study, up to six credits may be given. **Prerequisite:** Permission of the instructor.

Other Elective Courses:

SOWK 255 Psychology of the Black Experience [3]
SOWK 271 Introduction to Community Involvement [3]
SOWK 350 Psychology of Racism [3]
SOWK 385 Basic Social Planning [3]

B. SECOND AREA OF CONCENTRATION

Social work majors at UMBC are also required to complete a second area of concentration of at least 18 credits (a major, a minor, or an approved theme of study) toward fulfillment of the requirements for the Bachelor of Arts in Social Work degree.

C. ADVISING

Students have an assigned faculty advisor in the social work department for help with scheduling, registration, general education requirements, etc. Students are encouraged to contact their advisor early in their educational experience to plan their course of study. Advisors are available for consultation if problems arise in any aspect of the student's educational experience. Besides speaking with their faculty advisor, students are encouraged to talk with their field instructor, faculty liaison, and classroom instructors as appropriate about career questions or problems arising within class or field work.

D. FIELD INSTRUCTION

The undergraduate major is based on a generalist versus a specialist model in its orientation to training and practice. The generalist method of social work practice follows an orderly, systematic procedure that is appropriate for work with individuals, families, groups, organizations, and communities. The unit of attention is chosen by considering the system needing to be changed. The basic problem-solving method generally consists of sequential stages, including engagement, data collection, assessment, intervention, evaluation, and termination. Each phase of the helping process is discussed in detail in the Social Work Methods courses.

In order to provide students with preparation for a beginning level of practice, agencies selected as field placement sites should be able to provide students with the opportunity to work both directly with clients and indirectly on their behalf. Agencies in which students are placed may have a variety of primary missions, including the delivery of services to individuals, groups, families, or neighborhoods or the coordination of services. Departments of Social Services, general hospitals, psychiatric hospitals, community service agencies, and community mental health programs are examples of agencies often used for field instruction.

An attempt is made to recognize individual student needs and interests and to match them with educationally sound field instruction settings. Students are required to participate in the field placement process by identifying their own learning needs and career goals and to join with the field instructor in identifying strategies for achieving the expected educational outcomes provided in the learning contract. Learning contract guidelines are provided for this purpose. (See Appendix B.)

Field instruction provides the student with experience in functioning as a social worker. Learning by doing is the central concept. The objective is to enable the student to apply the concepts, theories, and techniques learned in class, while working with diverse people and problems. Field instruction is always taken concurrently with a Social Work Methods course. Each student's performance in field work is evaluated by the field instructor at the mid-point and the end of each semester within the framework of the established learning contract. Evaluation forms are provided for this purpose. (See Appendix C.)

E. ELIGIBILITY FOR FIELD INSTRUCTION

Students are responsible for becoming familiar with the requirements of the social work major as contained in the UMBC Undergraduate Catalog.

To qualify for a field placement, students must:

- a) have completed SOWK 240, SOWK 260, SOWK 397, and SOWK 388 with a grade of "C" or better in each course;
- b) have achieved a cumulative GPA and a GPA in the major of at least 2.50 by the end of the spring semester that precedes the fall field placement (note: calculation of the overall GPA is not based on UMBC grades alone but on a combination of transfer grades and UMBC grades; transfer grades for internship courses will be treated as a "pass" as opposed to a letter grade since UMBC offers field work courses on a pass/fail basis only); and
- c) be planning to graduate within three semesters of beginning field work.
- d) be in good academic standing. Students who are on academic probation, suspension, or dismissal are ineligible for field.

In addition to meeting the above prerequisites for field instruction, students must have the explicit permission of the social work faculty before they may be assigned a field placement. Near the end of each spring semester, faculty approve or deny permission to

those students who have submitted an application, resume, and "Profile of Experience and Learning Needs" by the announced deadline for fall semester field placements. Field application materials may be reviewed and downloaded by accessing the Social Work Department's Homepage at www.umbc.edu/socialwork. Students who are denied permission to enter field work are notified either by the Assistant Dean for Undergraduate Field Instruction or by the student's faculty advisor. Routine course-advising authorization to preregister for SOWK 480 and SOWK 481 should not be interpreted as the prerequisite faculty approval to participate in the Field Instruction and Methods II courses since preregistration occurs almost two months prior to the faculty's review of field placement applications.

Field work starts only in the fall and continues through the spring semester. Students must be in field work during the Winter Session. There are no fees or registration required for the Winter Session, but students must continue their work with clients and their field placement assignments during January; otherwise a break from mid-December to late January would be too long away from field instruction obligations.

Field Instruction and Social Work Methods are linked courses. Students cannot take one course without taking the other; if students drop either Field Instruction or Methods, they must also drop the linked course.

Field placements are made in a variety of agencies and organizations where students participate actively in the delivery of social services. Students are placed in an agency with the expectation that they will remain in the same agency for the entire academic year.

The amount of time required in field work is 16 hours per week. Most students arrange a two-day per week schedule, usually on a Monday-Wednesday or a Tuesday-Thursday pattern. Students set their own field days according to their schedule of classes and other personal considerations such as employment and/or family obligations.

The specific hours of field instruction are set by the field placement agency according to the hours that the agency's social work department is open for business. Most social service departments in our region operate from 8:00 to 4:30 or from 8:30 to 5:00. Because few qualified field instructors are available other than during the normal business hours, the Social Work Department at UMBC will not arrange evening and weekend field placements.

The actual field placement assignments take place for most students during the summer. Students are notified of their agency assignment by letter and are requested to arrange a preplacement interview with the prospective field instructor. The screening interview will give students the opportunity to meet the field instructor, see the agency, be informed about the kinds of assignments and learning experiences offered by the agency, and ask questions about general or specific expectations the field instructor may have of students.

Prior to interviewing the student for screening purposes, the field instructor will be sent a letter informing her or him of the name of the student assigned to that agency for field instruction and a copy of the student's resume and profile of experience and learning needs.

After the preplacement interview, the field instructor is requested to return to the school a "Field Instruction Agreement Form" to indicate whether or not the student has been accepted for field instruction. Students are invited to contact the Assistant Dean for Undergraduate Field instruction after the interview if they have any problems or reservations regarding their assigned placement.

Two half-day orientation or training seminars are provided for new and returning field instructors in late August on the UMBC campus. The first seminar deals primarily with helping students to become learners in field instruction and to become acclimated to the agency. The second session emphasizes helping students to get started with their first clients or other assignments. An overview of the undergraduate social work curriculum is provided so that field instructors will know what information our students are taught prior to and concurrent with field instruction. Experienced field instructors who wish a "refresher" course are always invited to attend either or both orientation sessions. Three Category I CEU credits are awarded for attendance at each of the new field instructors' training seminars.

F. PROFESSIONAL LIABILITY INSURANCE

Students engaged in field instruction are required to purchase professional liability insurance through the group plan offered through the University of Maryland School of Social Work. All students are billed for the insurance premium (about \$20.00 per year) through the UMBC Accounting Office.

A brief description of the plan is provided below:

1. Individual limits/coverage apply to each insured of: \$1,000,000 per incident/
\$3,000,000 annual aggregate.
2. Legal fees and other related defense costs are covered even if a claim is without merit.
3. Master Policy Format: Coverage will apply individually under a master scheduled policy on file in the administrative office of the graduate school.
4. Exclusions:
Coverage does not apply to:
 - a. professional activities not a recognized part of the academic training or without approval of the school authorities;
 - b. acts in conflict with state, federal, or municipal laws.
5. Reporting of Claims Incidents:
The policy requires a written narrative description of the sequence of events including the names, addresses, and telephone numbers of those associated with the alleged act or omission. The original is to be forwarded to the program administrator and one copy retained by the insured.

IV. THE FIELD INSTRUCTION DEPARTMENT

The field instruction component of the Undergraduate Social Work Program at UMBC consists of the Assistant Dean for Undergraduate Field Instruction, Field Coordinator for the Shady Grove Program, the field liaison faculty, and agency-based field instructors. Should problems arise around the field experience, the field liaison should be contacted to help in its resolution.

The faculty liaison will carry out regular, planned exchanges with the field instructor regarding the expected educational outcomes and curriculum of the social work major, regarding the student's performance in field work, and regarding developments in the field setting that affect student learning. Unless otherwise indicated, the faculty liaison will make a minimum of two visits to the field placement agency per academic year. Discussion may focus on the learning contract developed during the first month of each semester, process recordings, evaluation of the student's performance in field work, the experiences of the field instructor in the teaching role, and/or other issues that arise over the course of either semester.

V. UNDERGRADUATE PROGRAM ADVISORY COMMITTEE

To ensure relevance to practice, the Undergraduate Social Work Program has an Advisory Committee composed of field instructors, student representatives, alumni, and other social work professionals from various community agencies. The Committee assists faculty in reviewing and developing the undergraduate curriculum, especially as it pertains to field instruction.

VI. GOALS OF FIELD INSTRUCTION

The field experience supports the objectives of the undergraduate program by its choice of participating agencies, by the specification of required educational experiences through the learning contract and student evaluation forms, and by the provision of orientation and training for field instructors. Field Instruction is an integral part of the curriculum, and it is designed to engage the student in supervised direct and indirect service activities, providing practical experience in the application of the theory and skills acquired in all the foundation areas.

Placements are made in a variety of agencies and organizations in which students participate actively in the delivery of social work services. Agencies are expected to accept the validity of a generalist approach to practice and to provide students with opportunities to work both directly with clients and indirectly on their behalf, using a range of intervention strategies. A variety of learning experiences are expected for all students. Each student's field assignment is expected to include practice opportunities that will develop the following basic competencies which are required of all graduates of the program:

1. Practice within the values, ethics, and historical tradition of the social work profession

2. Understand the distinctive characteristics of diverse populations as well as the nature of oppression and discrimination and the implications these have for their practice with client systems of all sizes
3. Utilize a bio-psycho-social, strengths-based perspective to guide their assessment and intervention efforts with client systems of all sizes
4. Critically evaluate and apply the theoretical and empirical knowledge and skills of generalist social work to their practice with client systems of all sizes
5. Use appropriate professional communication skills with client systems of all sizes, colleagues, and the community
6. Demonstrate self-awareness and professional use of self in their practice with client systems of all sizes
7. Utilize information technology to enhance their effectiveness as social work professionals
8. Recognize the impact of social policies and agency structure and function on client, workers, and the delivery of social work services
9. Advocate, through professional and political means, for programs, services, and policies that promote economic and social justice and enhance the well-being of their clients and others in need of assistance
10. Identify learning needs and participate in activities that enhance their skills as social work professionals

Development of these competencies is reinforced in the course work taken by students at the same time as field instruction. While the bulk of student assignments are within the agency, special learning opportunities may be provided in related settings.

VII. ASSIGNMENTS

The following is a guide for developing specific student assignments and should serve as a guide in developing the learning contract. It would be ideal if students could have all of the following experiences during the course of their two semesters.

- ! Four to six assignments in direct work with individuals and/or families. The exact number should be related to the complexity and duration of the assignments and may vary with other agency requirements.
- ! One or more group assignments in which the student has some direct leadership responsibility. These groups may have a variety of purposes, such as education, increasing socialization, provision of environmental support, social planning or change, task identification and accomplishment, problem solving, and decision making. Student involvement could include, but is not limited to,

leading or co-leading; developing a proposal for a group work service; observing and analyzing a group process such as a multi disciplinary team, staff meeting, or 12 step support group.

- ! Participation in staff meetings and case conferences, including appropriate presentations by the student.
- ! Opportunities to participate in research as part of the practice experience. This could include, but is not limited to, information gathering and presentation, case studies, literature review, or needs assessments.
- ! Participation in activities related to the formulation and evaluation of agency policies, such as board meetings or staff committees.
- ! Resource mobilization using the community as well as the agency in serving the client.
- ! Involvement in the network of social agencies serving the clientele of the field placement agency.
- ! Collaboration and consultation with other staff.
- ! Appropriate recording to meet agency requirements for records, summaries, referrals, etc. and the school's requirement for process recording.

VIII. AGENCY-SCHOOL RELATIONSHIPS

Field instruction necessitates close cooperation among the agency, the field instructor, the school, and the student. Each has a share in the development of a learning contract which establishes the parameters of these relationships. Each also plays a role in the ongoing assessment of the field instruction experience.

The prime requirement of an agency affiliated with the school is commitment to active participation as a partner in professional social work education. This involves an acceptance of the basic objectives of the school's educational program and a readiness to invest time and effort in work with students, the school, and its faculty.

The workload for agency-based field instructors is requested to be adjusted to assure adequate time to meet the learning needs of students. The agency considering affiliation with the school should assess both its capability to assume the obligations involved and the advantages to be derived from the affiliation. A substantial agency investment is inherent in assuming the responsibility for students. (See Appendix L, Criteria for Selecting Agencies and Field Instructors)

The school has found it to be educationally advantageous to place two or more students in the same agency, whenever possible. Two students generally do not take much more time because most of the supervision may be conducted jointly if both students are in the agency on the same field days. A valuable dimension often is added to the experience when two students are learning together, and they usually

feel less isolated than lone students. It is also desirable to provide students with opportunities for learning experiences with social work colleagues, other than the field instructor, and with staff from other disciplines.

A. EXPECTATIONS OF FIELD AGENCIES/ FIELD INSTRUCTORS

1. The agency should be able to provide an appropriate variety of learning experiences at beginning level practice for students. (See Appendix D for a copy of the "Training Agreement with Field Placement Agencies.")
2. The agency will provide the physical facilities necessary to accommodate students. These include desk space, facilities for privacy in interviewing and tutorial instruction, resources for necessary travel including reimbursement for home visits if students use their own cars, and provisions for dictation and other essential clerical services.
3. Agency recommended, university approved field instructors must have an M.S.W. degree plus two years post-master's degree practice experience, including at least six months in the agency of field instruction. Field instructors must be present in the agency on a regular basis at least half of the time (eight hours per week) that the students are in the agency for field work. ACSW, licensure in Maryland, and membership in CSWE are encouraged but not required at the undergraduate level. Field instructors must send a resume to the Assistant Dean for Undergraduate Field Instruction at the time they are accepted as field instructors.
4. Field instructors will interview their prospective students prior to the actual confirmation of the placement. If there is question regarding the student's suitability for the agency or vice versa, the matter will be resolved jointly by the field instructor, the student, if appropriate, and the Assistant Dean for Undergraduate Field Instruction.
5. New field instructors must participate in the seminars provided at the beginning of each academic year. Attendance at other educational seminars and workshops offered to field instructors during the school year is voluntary.
6. It is important that field instructors be willing to commit themselves to the following:
 - ! adhere to the ethical responsibilities pertaining to education and training in practice settings, as outlined in section 3.02 of the NASW Code of Ethics (see Appendix A);
 - ! become familiar with the UMBC field curriculum (see Appendix C for a copy of the Field Instruction Curriculum and Student Evaluation Form);
 - ! orient students to both the service delivery system and the population served: the orientation will include a personal safety plan for the student;

- ! develop learning opportunities in relation to the curriculum and to make specific assignments in consultation with the student and, in some cases, with the faculty liaison;
- ! involve the student in completing the learning contract at the beginning of each semester (see Appendix B for a copy of the “Field Instruction Learning Contract”);
- ! communicate any problems in meeting the learning contract objectives to the student first and then to the school liaison if necessary;
- ! require students to complete process recordings on a regular basis, preferably at least one every other week with written feedback provided from the field instructor. (see Appendix E for a copy of “Process Recording: A Tool for Student Education.”)
- ! provide at least one hour weekly tutorial instruction and provide clear feedback to the student on an ongoing basis about his/her performance;
- ! evaluate the student's performance at the mid-term and final of each semester (the Evaluation Form is provided in Appendix C);
- ! permit the student to attend monthly meetings with the faculty liaison as part of field instruction.

B. EXPECTATIONS OF THE SCHOOL

1. The school's field instruction staff will consult with the agency field placement coordinator, department head, or field instructor in the placement process in an effort to provide an appropriate match of student and agency.
2. The school will maintain ongoing communication with the agency through the field work program. This function will be carried out by the liaison faculty and will usually include two visits to the agency during the academic year.
3. The faculty liaison will become familiar with the nature of the field experience within the particular agency.
4. The field program will provide prompt assistance in dealing with all concerns which the agency may have in relation to the field placement.
5. As available, the school will provide feedback to the field instructors as to the student's evaluation of the field experience. (Refer to Appendix K to see a copy of the Evaluation Form.)
6. The school will invite participation by field instructors on appropriate university committees.

7. There will be a two-way review and evaluation of the field experience at the end of the year by the school and the agency.
8. As resources permit, the school will provide additional educational supports for field instructors such as special seminars, consultations with classroom faculty, short-term loan of textbooks, etc.
9. The school will explore ways in which it can engage agency-based field instructors in implementing the overall educational program of the school.

C. EXPECTATIONS OF STUDENTS

1. Students accepting a field placement must take seriously their commitment to their clients, their field instructor, the agency, and the school. It is expected that students will conduct themselves in a professional manner in their interactions with staff and clients. Students should refer to the NASW Code of Ethics for clarification and guidance (Appendix A) and the Academic and Professional Integrity Code (Appendix M).

Students should take special note in the Preamble of the Code of Ethics which states that “the code is relevant to all social workers and social work students, regardless of their professional functions, the settings in which they work, or the populations they serve.” Accordingly, the student should:

- ! become familiar with the NASW Code of Ethics in fulfillment of its fifth stated purpose which is to socialize “practitioners new to the field to social work’s mission, values, ethical principles, and ethical standards” (Code Preamble, Appendix A);
- ! maintain high standards of personal conduct in the capacity or identity as social worker;
- ! strive to become and remain proficient in professional practice and the performance of professional functions;
- ! regard as primary the service obligation of the social work profession;
- ! act in accordance with the highest standards of professional integrity and impartiality;
- ! respect the privacy of clients and hold in confidence all information obtained in the course of professional service;
- ! adhere to commitments made to the field placement agency;
- ! uphold and advance the values, ethics, knowledge, and mission of the profession.

2. Students are expected to conform to the working hours, dress codes, rules, regulations, and policies of the field work agency and to spell these out in a working agreement with the field instructor, as appropriate.
3. Students will be flexible in the schedule of their hours at the agency when the demands of client service require it. If regular evening hours are a condition of the field placement agency, such a requirement must be clarified and agreed upon by the student before field instruction begins. If students are going to be late for field work or need to be absent on an unscheduled basis, they must notify their field instructor in a timely manner. Students are advised to call their field instructor personally, if at all possible, rather than have a third party make the call. Speaking directly with the field instructor, as opposed to leaving a message, allows the student to inform the field instructor of any appointments that either must be canceled or covered by another student or social worker during the student's absence. Normally an unscheduled absence must be reported within 20 minutes of the time that the agency opens.
4. If difficulties arise in the placement, the student has the responsibility to discuss them first with the field instructor. If the situation is not resolved, the student should inform the faculty liaison. If the problem persists, the student should contact the Assistant Dean for Undergraduate Field Instruction.
5. Students will prepare written material and/or audio- or videotapes to be used for instruction. The exact form of this material is to be determined with the field instructor and may be a combination of process recording, tapes, progress reports, assessments, summary recordings, etc. The use of process recordings is particularly emphasized and encouraged by the school as a learning experience for the students. (See Appendix E for guidelines regarding process recordings.) Appropriate written materials are expected to be shared with the faculty liaison as an indication of the student's performance in the generalist social work role.
6. Students are expected to attend meetings scheduled with the faculty liaison as a regular part of field instruction. Attendance at monthly field seminar meetings is mandatory.
7. Because Social Work Methods II and III are designed to be taken concurrently with field instruction, students are expected to attend all classes in order to learn sufficient theory and skills to support the decisions students make in field work with and on behalf of their clients. Students who drop field work or Methods must also drop the linked course. (See Appendix F for Classroom Policies and Requirements of the Social Work Department at UMBC.)

D. LEARNING CONTRACTS

A learning contract is an agreement for learning activities. Essentially it is a series of statements about what the student and field instructor will do in the field setting to achieve specific learning objectives.

In social work field education, learning contracts have been used extensively as a means of improving performance and satisfaction of field instruction for students and field instructors by 1) reducing the subjectivity and ambiguity of field instruction goals, objectives, experiences, and evaluations and 2) allowing students to be more self-directed and responsible in determining their learning needs, locating information and learning resources, and critiquing their own performance. The underlying premise is that a student learns better and more willingly when he or she participates in designing a learning plan.

The Council on Social Work Education (CSWE) mandates educational outcomes or learning objectives for all baccalaureate and masters social work programs. (See the “Educational Policy & Accreditation Standards” which can be downloaded from the CSWE web site, www.cswe.org or on file in the social work department.) The CSWE expected educational outcomes have been incorporated into the UMBC social work program’s field instruction learning contract. Regardless of the field placement setting, all students are expected to acquire the same set of knowledge, values, and skills. The learning objectives statements are general and should be individualized to the specific student and agency.

Accordingly, field instructors and students are asked to familiarize themselves with the stated learning objectives and then identify assignments, teaching/learning strategies, and resources needed to accomplish each expected educational outcome within their particular field placement setting. In completing the learning contract, field instructors and students should identify outcome measures, i.e., how to demonstrate that each expected outcome has been attained. Finally a time line or target date should be established for accomplishing each learning objective. Multiple learning assignments, resources, and outcome measures may be arranged or stipulated for each educational objective. In other words, there may be several assignments or learning resources that will facilitate achieving a single objective, and there may be several ways to measure whether an expected outcome has been realized.

Using the Field Instruction Learning Contract form provided by the UMBC social work program (Appendix B), students and field instructors are required to negotiate an individualized learning contract at the beginning of each semester and send a written copy to the Assistant Dean for Undergraduate Field Instruction. The assistant dean will forward the learning contract to the student’s faculty liaison.

The learning contract does not replace the student evaluation form but is to be used in conjunction with it. The expected educational objectives listed in the learning contract serve as the bases for evaluating the student’s performance during the academic year. It may be helpful for students and field instructors to read the field instruction evaluation form before beginning to work on the learning contract. Familiarity with the “Field Instruction Curriculum and Student Evaluation Form” (Appendix C) will bring the purpose of the learning contract into greater clarity.

During the fall semester, the field instructor may need to be more active in helping some students understand the purpose and construction of a learning contract. By the spring semester, all students should be capable of identifying gaps in their learning that need to be addressed, devising strategies to be incorporated in their renegotiated learning contracts, and submitting them to their field instructors for input and approval.

IX. STUDENT PERFORMANCE PROBLEMS IN FIELD INSTRUCTION

Academic and field performance is a critical indicator of the student's readiness to assume professional responsibilities. Since field instruction is an essential requirement for the major, the student must earn a passing grade in both semesters of field instruction in order to complete candidacy for the Bachelor of Arts in Social Work degree.

A. ACADEMIC COMPETENCE

Academic credit for both field and the core social work curriculum is given only to students whose course work meets minimally acceptable performance standards and conforms to professional standards of ethical behavior and conduct. The program adheres to the University's "Academic Integrity" policy described elsewhere in the manual.

B. PROFESSIONAL COMPETENCE

In the field, students must demonstrate professional conduct, relationship skills and behavior consistent with the values and ethics of the profession. Students are expected to adhere to the NASW Code of Ethics. Issues related to conduct, relationship skills and behavior may or may not be included in the student's Learning Contract, but will be considered as factors in field grading and continuation.

A student's inability to meet specified standards signifies that a student is not adequately or appropriately performing at the level expected of an undergraduate social work student. The following presents examples, but not a complete list, of behaviors that may constitute professional incompetence:

1. The inability to establish and maintain constructive and appropriate interpersonal relationships with clients and agency personnel.
2. The inability or failure to engage in tasks associated with field work, such as making referrals, engaging in phone calls, making home visits, etc.
3. The inability to accept constructive feedback from field instructors, liaisons and other faculty, and/or an inability to make changes recommended by this feedback.
4. Failing to adhere to the time schedule for the placement hours.
5. Consistent lateness in meeting deadlines to complete work.
6. Rejection by two agencies during the field placement process for reasons related to appropriateness or readiness for placement.

C. ETHICAL BEHAVIOR

The NASW Code of Ethics is the cornerstone of determining and guiding ethical behavior for social workers and students, and adherence to these ethical standards is a

requirement and standard for the program. All students are provided with a copy of NASW Code of Ethics Overview as well as the web site for NASW where the complete text may be found. Discussion about the code occurs in all social work classes. The following behaviors are examples, but not a complete list, of behaviors, which constitute a violation of the NASW Code of Ethics and which could result in dismissal from the program.

1. Engaging in sexual activities with clients.
2. Participation in dishonesty, fraud, deceit, or misrepresentation.
3. Exploitation of clients for personal advantage.

In addition, a conviction for a felony offense while in the program is an example of misconduct which may result in termination from the program. Any deficiency in academic or non-academic performance or behavior problem in the field will be brought to the student's attention by the field instructor, faculty, academic advisor and/or field personnel (field coordinator, assistant dean, liaison) as soon as it has been observed. In this way, the student, with the assistance of the field instructor and other faculty, will have an opportunity to initiate timely corrective steps when appropriate.

D. ROUTINE PROCESS FOR ONGOING COMMUNICATION AND PROBLEM SOLVING

All parties involved, student, field instructor and field personnel, are responsible for identifying issues and concerns in the field and are expected to conduct informal direct communication between relevant parties when appropriate. It is expected that many problems are quickly addressed and easily resolved in this manner.

Student Responsibilities: It is the student's responsibility to notify as soon as possible both the field instructor and the field liaison of any placement or performance concerns.

Field Instructor Responsibilities: The field instructor is responsible for ongoing observations of student performance in client and staff transactions and in written documentation. The field instructor is expected to meet on a regular basis with the student to discuss his/her performance and to share this information with the liaison. These meetings must include a discussion of student's strengths and progress as well as any potential or noted problems in skill development, job performance, ethical considerations, or any other relevant issues. A written and verbal midterm assessment is provided both semesters to the student to provide performance feedback before the formal written evaluation is completed and discussed at the conclusion of each semester of field placement. The field instructor may provide constructive feedback to the student at any point if she or he is concerned about the student's performance

Field Liaison Responsibilities: The field liaison monitors the student's progress through the student's participation in field seminars, in individual conferences, by reviewing the student's process recordings and evaluations during agency field visits or other contacts with the student and field instructor. When problems in the placement occur, the field liaison may assist the student in determining how to address the

problem directly, may serve as a sounding board for the field instructor before he/she deals directly with the student, or may refer the student to additional resources to facilitate the student's ability to meet the performance standards of the field placement. The field liaison will be actively involved in problem solving activities related to the student's performance.

Assistant Dean for Field Instruction: The assistant dean is responsible for administering and overseeing all aspects of the field program. This includes promoting and maintaining collaborative partnerships between human service agencies and the school; working with agency personnel and field staff to improve the quality of field placements; organize and conduct training for field instructors; advise students and faculty concerning field issues; interpret field education policies and procedures and working with faculty liaisons to manage field related concerns. In addition, the assistant dean may also serve as a field liaison with individual students, may teach seminar classes and perform other field liaison functions.

E. GUIDELINES FOR STUDENT PERFORMANCE PROBLEM SOLVING IN FIELD EDUCATION

Problem-solving steps in the process of resolving deficiencies in the students' field performance are modeled after the intervention techniques students are commonly taught.

1. Problem identification by student, field instructor, field liaison, assistant dean or faculty advisor.
2. Discussion of the problem, issues, or concern by those immediately involved until
 - a. the issue is resolved, or
 - b. a plan to address the problem is agreed upon and implemented, or
 - c. there appears to be no workable solution.
3. If no workable solution is found, the field liaison becomes more involved. The field liaison may consult with the student, the field instructor, or both and suggest they meet. The process continues until
 - a. the issue is resolved, or
 - b. a written plan to address the problem is agreed upon and implemented, or
 - c. there still appears to be no workable solution.
4. If there is still no workable solution, the field liaison consults with the assistant dean and subsequently schedules a meeting with the student and field instructor.

This meeting is usually at the field site. The assistant dean is notified of the meeting.

The process continues until

- a. the issue is resolved, or
- b. a written plan to address the problem is agreed upon and implemented, or
- c. a solution cannot be facilitated.

5. If there is still no workable solution, the field liaison schedules a meeting with the assistant dean, the student, and, where appropriate, other parties. The associate dean is notified of the meeting. The process continues until
 - a. the issue is resolved, or
 - b. a written plan to address the problem is agreed upon and implemented, or
 - c. a solution cannot be facilitated.

6. If a mutually agreed upon solution cannot be facilitated, the department chair (associate dean) is notified. The department chair, assistant dean, and liaison may engage in further problem solving activities. The process continues until
 - a. the issue is resolved, or
 - b. a written plan to address the problem is agreed upon and implemented, or
 - c. a solution cannot be facilitated.

7. If no solution is agreed upon, a decision to terminate the field placement may be recommended. Termination of a field placement cannot occur unless the appropriate steps of the problem solving process have been utilized.

F. TERMINATION FROM THE FIELD

If a student is terminated from the field or does not receive a passing grade, a report, which includes written statements from both the agency and field liaison, will be completed by the assistant dean and placed in the student's file. This report shall include a recommendation regarding further placement options. The student *may* be offered an opportunity to repeat her or his field experience, after demonstrating that he/she has addressed the concerns leading to the original field termination or failure. Under no circumstances is an undergraduate student allowed to retake any portion of the field sequence more than once.

If the conclusion is reached that the student is unable to meet minimal performance standards in the field related to professional competence, ethical behavior and conduct, or is otherwise unsuited to the profession, the faculty advisor will advise the student of the options available. These options include the following: 1) dropping the course, 2) retaking the course at a later time, 3) selecting another major, 4) withdrawal from the university, 5) termination from the social work program.

X. EVALUATION AND GRADING OF STUDENT PERFORMANCE

An ongoing evaluation process is the key element for the student and field instructor in the mutually critical examination of the field experience. It is the process by which the student and field instructor monitor the student as a developing social work professional. The Learning Contract and the Field Curriculum and Evaluation forms provide the specified educational objectives against which the student is evaluated. Weekly tutorial conferences between field instructor and student help in appraising the student's performance, progress, and learning needs.

The program stipulates that twice during each semester there be a formal review of the student's performance and identification of further learning needs and objectives. It is important that the evaluation be based on the student's actual performance in field work rather than on his or her potential for future practice. The field instructor should complete the midterm assessment and final assessments of each semester on the same evaluation form so that the school will have a clear assessment of the student's growth. The mid term assessment in the fall semester is a requirement. However, the field instructor does not need to submit a formal midterm evaluation form in the spring semester unless there are specific concerns about the student's ability to complete the internships with a passing grade.

The school uses a pass-fail grading system for field instruction in the belief that students will be freer without the pressure of letter grades to risk and test their interactions with both the client system and their field instructors. The school retains responsibility for assignment of the field work grades. The field instructor is asked to evaluate the student's performance without making a written recommendation for a grade. The faculty liaison in consultation with the field instructor will assign the grade as pass or fail. Students must pass both Field Instruction I (SOWK 480) and Social Work Methods II (SOWK 481) in the fall semester in order to be eligible to continue in both Field Instruction II (SOWK 482) and Social Work Methods III (SOWK 483) in the spring semester.

A. PROCEDURES FOR REVIEWING AND APPEALING GRADES

The University of Maryland, Baltimore County has established procedures for reviewing and appealing grades. A copy of the "Procedure for Review of Alleged Arbitrary and Capricious Grading" is located in the front part of the UMBC Faculty/Student Telephone Directory and in Appendix G of this manual. The grade-appeal policy applies to field instruction grades as well as to classroom grades. The procedures for appealing are designed to provide students with a means for review of course grades alleged to be arbitrary and capricious. Students should first attempt to resolve such grievances informally, normally by consulting first with the faculty liaison who assigned the grade, then with the department chair, and finally with the Dean of the School of Social Work. See Appendix G for a complete description of the grade-appeal procedures and time lines.

XI. FIELD INSTRUCTION SCHEDULE

All students are in field work during the fall and spring semesters and the January Winter Session. Students must complete 16 hours weekly of field time, usually on a Monday/Wednesday or Tuesday/Thursday schedule. When possible, students keep the same hours as those kept by the field instructor. Variations, when necessary, should be worked out by the field instructor and student with the approval of the faculty liaison or the Assistant Dean for Undergraduate Field Instruction. Student participation in field during the Winter Session does not require registration or additional payment of fees or tuition.

A. HOLIDAY

Students are entitled to observe their own religious holidays without making up the time. Absences for religious observance should be cleared in advance with the field instructor.

Agency holidays are observed by the students in the field. Students observe regular school holidays, i.e., Thanksgiving, the Christmas recess, Martin Luther King, Jr.'s Birthday, and Spring Break. In State of Maryland agencies, students are not entitled to be off on "floating holidays," but they do get off on state holidays when the agency's social work department is closed. The field instruction calendar at the front of this manual outlines school holidays for students. Students are permitted to attend jury duty without being required to make up the missed time if the jury date occurs on a field work day.

B. UNSCHEDULED ABSENCES

Students are expected in the field on a regular schedule and are expected to notify the field instructor promptly in case of an unexpected absence. Students must make up the time they miss from field work except for religious holidays and jury duty. In the role of social worker, students are important to their clients and the agency's dependable delivery of service. Unscheduled absences can be disruptive to clients, field instructors, and the operation of the agency. A pattern of missed time can seriously devalue the student's overall performance no matter how effective he or she may be when present in field instruction and could be grounds for dismissal from the field placement agency.

C. SNOW DAYS

In the event of an agency closing due to inclement weather, students are to abide by the decisions of their field placement agency, not the school. In other words, if the field placement agency is open for business, the student must attend field work even though classes may be canceled at UMBC.

If a student is unable to get to an open agency during inclement weather, the absence is considered unplanned and must be made up by the student. Field instructors are encouraged to adopt a "liberal leave" policy for students who cannot make it to the agency because of snow.

XII. FIELD INSTRUCTION EXPENSES

Students pay their own transportation costs to and from the agency. Agencies are asked to pay transportation costs required by field assignments and such other petty cash expenses which students may incur in the course of carrying out field assignments, whenever possible. Students must follow agency procedures regarding reimbursement.

Health insurance is required of all students enrolled in the field program. Students may obtain their coverage through family or individual plans. Any illness which requires medical attention or hospitalization during field placement is the responsibility of the student and his/her family.

XIII. ELEMENT OF RISK

Students need to be aware that when working with a disturbed population and in some social service environments, there is an element of risk related to violent behavior and other problems. Students should review their field placement agency's policies regarding safe procedures for making home visits. When students have concern for their safety or the safety of others in relation to particular clients or circumstances, they should discuss these concerns with their field instructor in order to determine the best course of action. If concern for safety persists, students should discuss the situation with their faculty liaison or the Assistant Dean for Undergraduate Field Instruction. Students are not expected to nor should they take extraordinary or unnecessary risks in the course of their field work. (See Appendix H for "Suggested Precautions to Follow in Making Home Visits.")

XIV. CONCLUSION

Field placement is often the most meaningful part of the social work curriculum for students. It is challenging because it represents a real test of skill, commitment, and knowledge. It is the time when students first assume professional responsibility for intervening in other people's lives.

While recognizing that field placement may have its agonizing moments, the UMBC faculty wishes that it will be a satisfying experience for all those who are a party to it. Hopefully it will provide direction, confidence, and a great increase in skill. It may be a lot of things, but one thing it is unlikely to be is irrelevant. Few students ever forget their first client or their field instructor.