

### **e) Employment-Based Field Placement**

The SSW makes available the option of field placement where students are employed, with particular attention paid to the student's learning opportunities. For maximum educational growth, it is important that students be exposed to a range and diversity of practice experiences to support their professional development process. Proposals for Foundation-Generalist or Specialized-Advanced placements in a student's place of employment will be considered on a case-by-case basis. The agency and student must be able to create and support an educationally based field learning experience as defined below. Students will indicate their interest in exploring an Employer-Based Placement in Tevera as part of their Student Field Experience Application. After discussing with the field office, students will work with their employer to develop an Employer-Based Proposal that outlines how the student will meet the social work competencies and supervision requirements in their work setting. When this proposal is completed and approved by the student, employment supervisor, field instructor, and field office, it is uploaded into Tevera to be kept as part of the student's placement documentation.

It is encouraged that Regular Standing students do one of the field placement experiences at a site other than their place of employment. For example, if a student has done their Foundation-Generalist placement at their place of employment, it is preferred that their future placements are completed within a non-employer-based setting. Due to the nature of the program, WV Title IV-E students will complete their placements with the WV DHHR.

The following policies regarding employer-based field placements are in accordance with the Council on Social Work Education (CSWE) Accreditation Standards and are designed to help recognize the role transition that is expected of employees who are engaging in employer-based field experiences in these circumstances.

1. Proposed field instruction assignment must be appropriate to the level of education that the student is pursuing and meet curriculum requirements.
2. The agency employs qualified social work staff, meets the established criteria for affiliated agencies in the program, completes the Application and Review Process, and has, or agrees to enter into an Affiliation Agreement with the University.
3. An individual who meets the criteria to be an approved Field Instructor is available to supervise the placement activities. When possible, this person is not be the student's current employment supervisor. In cases where the field instructor is also the employment supervisor, supervision for field education learning must be separate from supervision time for employment. If off-site, or from another program within the placement agency, the proposed placement Field Instructor must be approved by all parties involved in the placement. All persons who will be supervising the student's placement activities are strongly encouraged to complete the SSW field instructor training.
4. Student field assignments and employment tasks may be the same and counted toward required field hours if the tasks have clear links to the social work competencies, including any competencies added by the program, and their related behaviors.

5. The agency must provide written endorsement of the rationale of the student's proposal, and agreement with the SSW's goal of providing a professional educationally-based learning experience, rather than performing needed tasks for the agency. The student, their employer supervisor, the Field Instructor, and Field Office must all agree to the proposed arrangement and provide their signatures before the proposal will be accepted. See appendix F.
6. Site visits will be conducted between the employer, field instructor, and field team representative as part of the approval process. This provides an opportunity to discuss the dual roles of learner and employee and to establish communication expectations with the employment agency about any potential issues that could impact the student's learner role.

Excluded Employer-based placements include:

- Agencies owned and/or operated by student's relatives, either by birth or marriage
- Agencies whose sole purpose is for the employment and coordination of independent contractors for time limited services
- Student's privately-owned businesses and/or consulting practices
- Agencies that are under investigation or have been sanctioned for fraudulent or unethical activities by their accrediting bodies

The following examples illustrate employer-based field education settings that would need close consideration and discussion:

- The agency and agency staff are very small making it difficult to distinguish employee and student roles.
- The student has worked for the agency for a considerable period of time with no experience elsewhere
- Conflicts of interest would exist between the student and the proposed supervisor
- Potential conflicts of interest or dual relationships exist (e.g. more than one student in the Social Work program works at the agency, requests an employer-based placement, and is in a supervisor/supervisee relationship with the other student)

### **a) Employment Offers or Changes**

Should the student be approached about accepting employment at the agency during the field placement, the student should immediately contact the Field Office to discuss the potential implications to their placement. The student is expected to complete field requirements as planned; the field office can help the student navigate any changes that might impact requirements. Students who are considering accepting employment within their field placement agency will be required to complete an employer-based proposal to determine how the new role as employee will impact their internship role. Employer based proposals are reviewed on a case by case basis.

If the student is in an employer-based placement and is offered the opportunity to transfer to a new job with the current or a new employer, the student and/or the Field Instructor shall consult with the Faculty Field Liaison to assess how this will impact the placement goals.

If a student is an employer-based placement and their employment ends for reasons beyond the student's control, they must notify their field faculty liaison promptly. The field office will assess the circumstances and work to find a resolution which may include continuing the placement while no longer an employee, changing placements, or an academic review, depending on circumstances leading to this change.

If a student begins a new job before the scheduled placement start date, they may submit a proposal to use the new work site, as an employer-based placement. If a different placement site has already been finalized, the student must request approval from the Field Office to be released from this commitment.

Students who have already started their field placements in another setting, and then secure employment in a site where they would like to propose an employer-based placement, must have the approval of the original placement site to be released from their commitment. Changing placement sites due to job changes may only be done with approval from the Field Office. This is a matter of professionalism and continuity for the current placement site and clientele and should be considered the same as having to provide a professional resignation notice.