

BACHELOR OF SOCIAL WORK PROGRAM

**SOCIAL WORK
PRACTICUM
MANUAL
2023-2024**

BACHELOR OF SOCIAL WORK

SCHOOL OF SOCIAL SCIENCE AND HUMAN SERVICES

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Welcome to the practicum component of the Bachelor of Social Work Program at Ramapo College of New Jersey.

The social work profession identifies practicum as its signature pedagogy. As such, field education is the framework in which students are socialized to the profession of social work and learn to function as social workers. Practicum is designed to enable students to apply and integrate theoretical concepts, knowledge and practical skills learned in the classroom.

This manual is designed to help field instructors and students understand the social work program, its philosophies, policies and curriculum. We hope it will answer most of the questions you have and that it will help make the practicum experience one that is exciting and productive for both the student and field instructor.

This manual contains general and curricular information about Ramapo College and the School of Social Science and Human Services. The outcome objectives, curriculum, and procedures of the Baccalaureate Social Work Program are described as well as curriculum, policies, and procedures for the practicum component of the program. The Educational Policy and Accreditation Standards (EPAS) of the Council on Social Work Education are included.

The Field Instructor is a vital person in the practicum experience who works as a team member with the faculty. The field instructor is a participant in the educational process and is therefore called by the title of instructor, rather than supervisor.

This manual is the program's official reference and procedural guide for social work students, program faculty, agency field instructors, and agency task supervisors. It is subject to periodic revisions to reflect program improvements. Your feedback on the program is welcome in the form of evaluations contained in this manual and as participants in the broader community of social workers.

The college faculty and administration recognize that the field instructor role requires an expenditure of time, patience, and a commitment to furthering the profession. Yours is a valued contribution to the quality and excellence of the social work program at Ramapo College of New Jersey.

Kindest Regards,

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Table of Contents

Field Education Team	5
Ramapo College's Mission	6
Social Work at Ramapo College: Mission & Goals	6
Educational Policy and Accreditation Standards: Competencies and Practice Behaviors	8
The Program's Conception of Generalist Social Work Practice	8
Practicum Program	9
Practicum Curriculum	9
Practicum Program Structure	10
Practicum Program Policies	10
Practicum Process: Placement, Assignments, and Supervision	11
Responsibilities in Practicum Education	16
Criteria for Selecting Agencies	19
Criteria for Selecting Field Instructors	19
Placing and Monitoring of Student Placements	20
Maintaining Field Liaison Contacts with Agencies	22
Field Instructor Orientation and Training	22
Field Instructor Input into the Program	23
Student Orientation to Field Placement	23
Developing Practicum Tasks and Assignments with Students and the Learning Contract	25
Evaluation — Assessment of Field Outcomes	26
Endings	28
Student Performance Issues	29
Probation	32
Termination	33
Appendix A	34

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Note that the Social Work Program at Ramapo College is in the process of transitioning the term “field” to “practicum” when referring to the signature pedagogy of social work education.

Ramapo College's Mission

Ramapo College of New Jersey is a comprehensive institution of higher education dedicated to the promotion of teaching and learning within a strong liberal arts based curriculum, thus earning the designation "New Jersey's Public Liberal Arts College." Its curricular emphases include the liberal arts and sciences, social sciences, fine and performing arts, and the professional programs within a residential and sustainable living and learning environment.

Organized into thematic learning communities, Ramapo College provides academic excellence through its interdisciplinary curriculum, international education, intercultural understanding and experiential learning opportunities. These four emphases, supported by global partnerships established in Europe, Africa, Asia, South America, the Caribbean, and several Native American tribal communities, have become central themes in Ramapo College's excellence in the teaching and learning continuum.

Ramapo College is committed to maintaining strength and opportunity through diversity of age, race, gender, sexual orientation, ethnicity, and economic background among faculty, staff, and students. Ramapo College is a selective institution committed to providing equal access to under-represented populations. Barrier-free, the College maintains a continuing commitment to persons with disabilities.

Ramapo College provides a rich living and learning environment through almost 100 student organizations, intramural sports, and intercollegiate athletics. The College maintains a strong positive and economic impact on the surrounding communities by partnering with area communities, corporations, schools, service organizations, and governmental entities, while sharing its intellectual and cultural resources and its facilities. Ramapo College of New Jersey is committed to providing service and ethical leadership through international understanding and the creation of 21st century partnerships.

Social Work at Ramapo College

The Social Work Program, initially accredited by the Council on Social Work Education in 1979 (retroactive to 1977), has in many ways been at the vanguard in serving the college's mission. Its interdisciplinary approach, as exemplified by the program's ecological systems perspective, is central to the social work curriculum and consistent with the academic organizing principle of Ramapo College. The Social Work Program offers students a course of study that goes beyond the limits of single academic disciplines or subject areas to achieve an integrated understanding of problems facing individuals, groups, families, organizations, and communities in the contemporary world. The integration of liberal arts content with social work knowledge, values, and skills is the bedrock of the social work curriculum. The program's strong emphasis on cultural diversity, social work values and ethics, social and environmental justice, critical thinking, and service to clients and community agencies are exemplary illustrations of the College's mission.

The Social Work Program's preparation of its graduates to be competent, committed, and culturally sensitive practitioners able to serve diverse population groups is consistent with the

College's mission of promoting intercultural education. Social work field internships with agencies in the region serve Haitian, Vietnamese, Korean, Japanese, Chinese, and Russian immigrants, Latino and African-American communities, and the Ramapough Indians. These are among the most well developed intercultural experiential learning opportunities at the College.

Incorporation of content on the physical environment into the social work curriculum and the development of macro practice practicum placements with an emphasis on confronting environmental problems are compatible with the College's mission of promoting sustainability. The social work program faculty considers the physical environment an important social welfare issue. New Jersey has one of the nation's heaviest concentrations of the federal Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) Superfund sites and a majority of the state's waterways are too polluted for fishing and swimming. Minority communities are often the ones most at-risk. The Ramapough Indians, a Native American community living in close proximity to the college, have been victimized by corporate toxic dumping. Opposing environmental racism is a crucial social justice issue, and confronting environmental problems is an essential part of the program's commitment to addressing the well-being of at-risk populations and minority communities.

The Social Work Program has also contributed to the college's mission of serving the external community by training competent social work professionals for employment in social service, educational, and governmental institutions, and by sponsoring special events that provide educational opportunities to the social service community.

The Mission of the Bachelor of Social Work Program

The Social Work Program's principal mission is to prepare students for beginning level professional generalist social work practice in a culturally diverse society and an increasingly global environment. Central to this mission is preparing students for a profession dedicated to assisting individuals, groups, families, and communities in their quest for well-being. The program is committed to teaching students to work for the development of a society which promotes equality, justice, respect for human diversity, and adequate sustenance for all of its members. The program seeks to train and encourage its students to be active, personally and professionally, in taking leadership roles in addressing social problems and challenging social, economic, and environmental injustice. The program is committed to developing students' skills in culturally competent social work practice, research, social service and social policy formation, and political advocacy in order to further this mission.

The Goals of the Bachelor of Social Work Program

1. To prepare undergraduate students who are firmly grounded with an interdisciplinary liberal arts education, social work values and ethical standards, an understanding of the social work profession's history, purpose, and philosophical tenets;
2. To prepare students with the necessary competency skills for generalist beginning level professional social work practice with individuals, families, groups, organizations, and communities in a culturally diverse society;
3. To prepare students with the knowledge, values, and skills to be competent social work professionals who can effectively advocate for the development of social policies and

- social service delivery systems that improve the well-being of client systems;
4. To prepare students to advocate, personally and professionally, for the alleviation and eradication of social problems, and to promote global social, economic, and environmental sustainability.

Educational Policy and Accreditation Standards: Competencies and Practice Behaviors

In 2015 the Council on Social Work Education's (CSWE) competency-based education framework moved from a model of curriculum design focused on content and structure to one focused on student learning outcomes. The nine competencies are a subset of the overarching Educational Policy and Accreditation Standards (EPAS). Our curriculum, including our practicum program, is organized around the EPAS as mandated by CSWE. In doing so, Ramapo College maintains education standards in keeping with CSWE accreditation. The BSW program at Ramapo College has adopted CSWE's competencies, practice behaviors, and advanced generalist practice behaviors. These can be found on the program's [website](#).

The Program's Conception of Generalist Social Work Practice

The Ramapo Social Work Program conceives of generalist social work practice as the ability to conduct ethical social work practice with client systems of various sizes in a culturally diverse society. The program uses the ecological systems framework to inform the practitioner of the relational and transactional dynamics between individuals, groups, families, organizations, and communities within their immediate social and physical environments, and within the larger society. Generalist practitioners should possess the ability to employ the problem solving model in providing both direct and indirect services based on the needs of the client system. The problem solving model, which emphasizes initial client system contact, assessment, development of an intervention plan, implementation, evaluation, and termination is a useful construct applicable to client systems of all sizes. Yet, to be effective, utilization of the problem solving model with all types of client systems requires the employment of a wide range of social work theories and techniques that must be mastered.

The program's unifying educational principle is the belief that generalist social work practice is best realized through an understanding and integration of the ecological systems framework with the problem solving model. Because generalist practice requires intervention at numerous entry points between persons and their environments, the ecological systems framework, combined with employment of the problem solving model, promotes a comprehensive assessment of client problems, and the selection of appropriate strategies for intervention.

Generalist practice also requires commitment to promote a just and humane society for all of its members. It is essential that social workers maintain a commitment to social, economic, and environmental justice. Furthermore, it is mandatory that social work values and ethics serve as the principal guide for social work practice, and social workers be responsible for critically evaluating their practice in relation to them.

The Social Work Program teaches students the variety of roles and broad range of skills required in generalist practice. Manifest throughout the social work curriculum is an emphasis on the commitment to promote a just and humane society for all of its members. The curriculum

emphasizes that social workers cannot effectively contribute to this goal if they practice in a political and socio-cultural vacuum. A strong curricular emphasis is placed on teaching cultural diversity and the nature of the political economy. Advocacy for equal justice and economic democracy is central to the task of acquiring needed resources and services for client systems. Students are taught to promote equal access for all people to resources and services, and strive to make social institutions more humane and responsive to human needs. Central to competent generalist practice is an understanding of social work values, the dynamics of human behavior and the social environment, cultural diversity, the forms and mechanisms of individual and institutional discrimination and oppression, serving populations-at-risk, the importance of research informing practice, and a commitment to the struggle against social, economic, and environmental injustice.

Practicum Program

Ramapo College's BSW program strives to connect the theoretical and conceptual contributions of the classroom with the applied world of the practice setting. Together, they foster student integration of learning. Recognizing practicum as the profession's signature pedagogy, the social work curriculum is organized around the nine core competencies and their associated practice behaviors. These are demonstrated in class and practicum. Theory and practice are not dichotomized, but rather are closely interwoven. Students complete three terms of practicum. During these terms, classroom assignments from *Social Work in Agencies and Communities*, and *Theory and Practice I and II* are intricately linked to the practicum experience, thereby fostering students' recognition of the integral relationship between classroom theories and practice. Classroom learning influences student work/performance in the field, where additional learning occurs. Learning in practicum is subsequently brought back to the classroom to continue the looping process of student development. It is essential to understand the concrete role each course has in making the connection to the real-world setting.

Practicum Curriculum

Social work majors take three practicum courses; **Social Work in Agencies and Communities, and Theory and Practice I and II**. Each of these courses focuses on a different aspect of social work practice.

Pre-Professional Course

Social Work in Agencies and Communities - The placement in this course, which occurs during the junior year, focuses on social work intervention with macro systems. Students are assigned to a wide range of agencies in which social work is practiced. Practicum focuses on helping the student to develop skills to work with communities and organizations.

Professional Courses

Theory and Practice of Social Work I and II - The placement in this course, which occurs during the senior year, focuses on social work intervention with micro systems (individuals, families and small groups). Students are assigned to a wide range of agencies in which social work is practiced. Sharing of experiences in class helps students to learn about practice in many settings. An in-depth examination of student practice, values and skills occurs during supervision. The student is expected to function as a practitioner. The student is in the same

placement for 200 hours for each of two semesters for a total of 400 hours.

Practicum Program Structure

Practicum, developed by the social work program, consists of three semesters of placements included in the social work practice courses. The first, *SWRK 329 Social Work in Agencies and Communities* is a pre-professional course taken during the student's junior year. In addition to class work students are placed in an 100-hour, participant-observation placement designed to begin the professional socialization process. In this practicum students are introduced to the social service agency as the setting for social work practice. This offers students a beginning experience with the helping process, and the opportunity to interact with staff and agencies through macro social work practice. It enables us to determine if students can relate to clients as well as agency rules and supervision.

Generalist practice is addressed in two practica that are integrated with the professional social work practice courses. Over a two-semester period students are placed in practicum for two days a week (typically), 200 hours each semester, for a total of 400 hours. These practica provide students with the opportunity to engage in supervised, generalist social work practice utilizing theory, skills, social work values, and professional knowledge acquired in the professional foundation courses. Concurrent classes facilitate a constant exchange between classroom and practice knowledge.

In *SWRK 425/426 Theory and Practice of Social Work I & II*, taken during the senior year, students are placed in practicum settings where they intervene with micro/mezzo systems of individuals, families, and small groups.

Practicum Program Policies

1. Students should not be expected to miss class for practicum assignments.
2. Early in the placement the student and Field Instructor should negotiate the student's schedule during the college winter break (one month during December and January). Students should be allowed at least two weeks for vacation.
3. Students should be informed at the beginning of the year if the agency cannot allow the student to take off the whole winter break.
4. Special vacation schedules should be negotiated at the beginning of the semester, or as soon as the issue is identified.
5. Students should inform the Field Instructor of an unexpected absence due to illness first thing in the morning on that day.
6. Students are placed in different agencies for each of their two placement experiences in order to help them to gain a broad view of social work.
7. It is possible for students to use their employment for one of their placements only if the job functions are social work related, the student is able to perform a **new job** or a **change in work focus/department and client population** in the employment setting, and an acceptable Field Instructor, and not the supervisor, provides supervision (see **Employment Based Placement Proposal** for guidelines and application).
8. Some agencies may choose to offer a monetary stipend to students. Students are expected

- to abide by the regulations and stipulations set forth by the agency in these cases. Students are expected to notify the Director of Field Education when stipends are offered.
9. If a serious problem arises, placements may be changed during the course of a semester, only after the Field Instructor, student and field liaison are involved in an attempt to remedy the situation.
 10. Grades are assigned by the faculty member teaching the course attached to the student's placement based on consultation from the Field Instructor and the practicum evaluation.
 11. It is expected that students will participate in the end of semester/year assessment of the student's work via a discussion of the evaluation between the student and Field Instructor, before the evaluation is completed and mailed to the school.
 12. The final evaluation must be signed by the student and Field Instructor.
 13. Students are expected to follow the **NASW Code of Ethics** regarding professional agency behavior.
 14. Students are expected to abide by the confidentiality requirements set forth by the program.
 15. Students in Theory and Practice I and II are expected to complete a total of 8 Process Recordings per semester. Process recordings should be submitted according to the following schedule:

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● September - 2 ● October - 3 ● November - 2 ● December - 1 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● January - 1 ● February - 2 ● March - 3 ● April - 2
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 16. Students are expected to abide by the **Practicum Education Calendar** to the best of their ability. This includes ending practicum placement hours by the approved earliest end date of that semester. Hours (including excess hours) are unable to be transferred from one agency to another.
 17. Students are to be mindful that agencies have the right to their own policies regarding the COVID-19 vaccine. Vaccination status may become a factor in determining student placements during individual placement interviews.

Practicum Process: Placement, Assignments, and Supervision

PLACEMENT - Throughout the year, the Director of Field Education communicates with agencies that are potential practicum placement sites. Information about the agency is obtained via telephone contacts, visits or written material. Each agency is assessed for its appropriateness for one of the Social Work Program's three practicum placement courses, or two placements. A student's first placement coordinated by the field education department is associated with SWRK 329 *Social Work Practice with Agencies and Communities*. The second placement is associated with SWRK 425 and 426 Theory, Practice, and Field I & II. For this professional placement, students will remain in the same agency throughout the duration of the academic year. If a third placement is granted for special circumstances, hours are unable to be transferred due to the inability to perform effective evaluation. The field education department is not responsible for facilitating more than three placements for each individual student. Prior to the beginning of each semester faculty are informed of available agencies. Agencies better suited for internship

programs in other College majors (Psychology, Women's Studies, Gerontology, Service Learning or Cooperative Education) are referred to the relevant faculty/staff.

ASSIGNMENTS - Student assignments will differ depending on the focus of the course, the agency, and according to specific student learning needs.

SUPERVISION – There are two types of supervisory sessions: task or educationally oriented supervision. The student and Field Instructor may meet together several times during the week. One form of supervisory session is related to task completion. Someone should be available to the student, at most times, as problems and/or emergencies arise. These sessions can be with the Field Instructor or another staff person.

The supervisory session, which is educationally oriented, is between the student and the Field Instructor. It should be at a regularly scheduled time specifically set aside without planned interruptions. The Field Instructor and student should agree on the format of the conference and come prepared to discuss relevant issues. These conferences should not only focus on task matters but should address student growth. Field Instructors should have the student turn in some form of written, audio or visual recording depicting the student's work prior to the supervisory conference. Two Process Recordings monthly are mandatory for students in *SWRK 425/426 Theory and Practice of Social Work I and II*. If the Field Instructor feels that the student is having difficulty in the supervisory conference and/or is showing evidence of poor quality of work, the appropriate field liaison should be contacted.

SWRK 329 Social Work Practice with Agencies and Communities

PLACEMENT - The field education department reaches out to students registered for the course as early as possible to guide the process of completing the *Practicum Placement Application* (made available in the BSW Program acceptance letter) and securing a placement. **Students initiating the placement process with SWRK 329 must have applied and been formally accepted into the Bachelor of Social Work Program.** The field education department coordinates placement interviews with the students and contacts potential agencies to determine availability. Students then have a confirming interview with agency personnel. It is expected that the student will be accepted by the agency unless there are major problems identified at this interview. If students have a specific agency in mind, students are required to complete an **Agency Information Form** to provide the Field Department with appropriate contact information prior to or during the placement interview.

ASSIGNMENTS- The focus of the placement in this pre-professional course is to introduce students to the agency base of practice and to enable them to gain some experience and begin to feel comfortable interacting within the macro system. Students are expected to learn professional work habits, to keep regular hours, and complete assignments.

Students come to this course with diverse backgrounds and experiences with clients and agencies. Some students have never worked in any kind of setting before, while others bring considerable life experience which may include social service volunteer or paid work. Therefore, the placement assignments should be related to the level of prior student experience. "Starting where the student is" should be the guiding philosophy.

Assignments are aimed at developing advocacy and organizing skills:

- Arrange and organize public meetings and demonstrations;
- Direct outreach activities;
- Sustain the organization – preparing leaflets, mailing, fund raising;
- Learn decision making and power structure of the organization;
- Apply community organization methods;
- Chart the decision making process and power structure of the community being addressed;
- Program Planning;
- Social Policy Analysis;
- Program Evaluation; Research;
- Community Planning;
- Lobbying;
- Grant Writing;
- Other agency administration tasks;
- Attend and testify at legislative forums;
- Attend and testify at public forums;
- Address the relevant power structure;

SUPERVISION- Students in Agencies and Communities do not require formal clinical supervision. The focus of supervision for students in the pre-professional placement, is on helping the student to understand the agency system, the client system, and his/her reactions as a helping person within the profession of social work. Socialization to the work world and the profession should be the main emphasis, rather than extensive practice skill development. Supervisory conferences are primarily task oriented. The field instructor and/or other agency staff member should be available at most times for questions and problems. The field instructor should be available to the student periodically for more formal conferences. These conferences should focus on the student's adjustment to the placement, the appropriateness of the student's performance, the value and ethical issues being raised, the student's level of responsibility, and making the practicum experience relevant to conceptual material. Supervisory sessions should be more frequent if the student is having a problem or if the field instructor has concerns about the quality of the student's work. In addition to focusing on the student's adjustment to the agency, development of work habits, and task accomplishment, supervision should include:

- How to identify the power structure in the community;
- A discussion of practice of the organization's structure, auspices, goals and objectives;
- Focus on the specific organizing techniques utilized by the agency
- Focus on development of social policy/planning skills;
- Understanding the community being addressed;
- Practicing how to organize or advocate for a client system;
- Recognizing the ethical and value conflicts which arise in the course of organizing

- practice;
- On-going assessment of the quality of the student's work and critique of the student's intervention(s);
- Focus on how community organization methods and macro practice skills are applied in diverse social, cultural, and political settings; and
- Methods with which to make needed changes in the agency and organization to make it more responsive to clients' needs.

SWRK 425 & 426 Theory and Practice of Social Work I and II: Practice with Individuals, Families and Small Groups

PLACEMENT - The process for placement of the student begins in the spring semester of the student's junior year. The student is interviewed by the Director of Field Education who will then refer the student to a field coordinator for placement. Student interests as well as special considerations are identified during this interview and potential placements are discussed. The field department contacts specific agencies based on the student's needs. The student is assigned to an agency during the late spring or early summer. The student is expected to contact the agency for an appointment and then notify the field coordinator as to the results of that meeting. If students have a specific agency in mind, students are required to complete an **Agency Information Form** to provide the Field Department with appropriate contact information prior to or during the placement interview.

ASSIGNMENTS - This course provides the major experience for students for learning micro practice skills. They are expected to engage in direct practice with different client populations. This does not mean that we expect them to be using advanced skills in sophisticated counseling, but they should have experiences working with individuals, families and groups.

The student is viewed as a part of the agency and attendance at staff meetings, in-service training programs, and clinical team meetings should be expected of the student if these meetings are held on the days the student is in practicum.

The course, which runs concurrently with the placement, focuses on the problem-solving model of the helping process. Students are expected to apply the following concepts to their work with client systems in their placement:

- Engaging with client system - preparatory empathy;
- Identifying the problem;
- Data gathering — social history;
- Making an assessment — summarizing and understanding causation while also considering alternate intervention plans;
- Developing an action or intervention plan;
- Contracting with the client system;
- Intervening — in an array of social work roles including:
- educator, enabler, advocate, broker, counselor, and case manager;
- Evaluating the interventions;
- Identifying literature and research studies which justify the intervention method chosen;

and

- Ending with the client system.

In order for students to experience the "helping process" with a client system, it is necessary for part of their assignment to be working with an "ongoing" client, an individual, family, or group experience which extends for several months. It should be understood that at the beginning of the semester the student may not have the skills to be intervening with many clients.

By the end of the first month, students may be able to identify assignments that they can recognize as "theirs," in addition to the continued observation of other functions throughout the agency. Student assignments are determined collaboratively with the field instructor, taking into consideration the student's level of preparedness and comfort. In order for the student to complete the Case Study assignment in Practice I he/she should be assigned an individual case as early in the semester as possible. In this course, also, if the agency practice is such that the needs of the clients necessitate more advanced skills than are held by the students, we encourage use of a team of an experienced worker and a student. In this case the student works on a part of a case or assists in a group or family intervention.

Some of our students have an increased level of perception of their skills and inappropriate conceptions of how clients make changes in their lives. They may feel disappointed that they are not doing "counseling" and have to be helped to understand the wide range of interventions utilized by social workers.

SUPERVISION - It is expected that the field instructor has an M.S.W. and at least two (2) years of social work experience. Where necessary, supervision may be shared between an educational supervisor who is the M.S.W. Field Instructor Supervisor and a Task Supervisor. Supervisor and/or Field Instructor should be available for questions and/or problems. Formal supervisory conferences should be held weekly for a minimum of 45 minutes to one hour. Student and field instructor should come to that conference prepared to discuss the student's work. The development of an agenda at the beginning of each session can be helpful in accomplishing the goals of the student and Field Instructor.

We believe it is important for students to prepare and submit written documentation prior to and in preparation for the supervisory conference. Therefore, a total of 8 Process Recordings are required per semester submitted according to the following schedule: **September - 2, October - 3, November - 2, December - 1, January -1, February - 2, March - 3, April - 2** Field instructors are expected to review this material prior to the supervisory conference. In class, the student may discuss process recordings. The field instructor will be asked to comment on the process recordings that the student writes and turns in as classroom assignments. Process Recordings should be used to help students verbally assess their own practice.

In addition to focusing on student adjustment to the agency, development of work habits, and task accomplishment, supervisory sessions should include:

- The value and ethical issues presented in the course of practice,
- The student's feeling and reactions to the client problems,
- The integration of theory and practice,

- The development of interviewing skills,
- Role playing of complicated situations,
- On-going assessment of the quality of the student's work, and
- Critique and suggestions on the student's intervention(s).

Responsibilities in Field Education

Mutual Responsibilities

The Ramapo College Social Work Program, the agency, and the student each have responsibilities in carrying out the objectives of the field component of the curriculum.

Responsibilities of the College Social Work Program

1. Selection of the student to be placed at the agency is based on the student's education needs and interests as determined by the social work faculty in consultation with the student.
2. Coordinate placements for students not to exceed three individual placements (for special circumstances). Students are entitled to two unique placements for each of the academic years of the program. One placement will be associated with SWRK 329 and the second placement will be associated with SWRK 425 & SWRK 426. If a third placement is granted for special circumstances, hours are unable to be transferred due to the inability to perform effective evaluation.
3. Provide whatever relevant student background is required by the agency (background, educational needs, interests and aptitudes.)
4. Inform the agency of the school's schedule.
5. Conduct a class session to teach basic human behavior and social work practice knowledge and values necessary as a base for the practicum.
6. Provide a Field Liaison to monitor student progress at the agency. Annual virtual field site visits will be conducted. If there are concerns that warrant in-person field visits, the field department will conduct these as necessary. Field Liaisons will perform **Check-In** phone calls once per semester. Otherwise, contact will be maintained via email, phone calls or through Webex.
7. The field liaison is available to consult with the Field Instructor when the student is having problems in the field placement
8. The Director of Field Education is available for help in problem solving when the Field Liaison is not.
9. Provide the field instructor with appropriate course outlines.
10. Provide the evaluation form to be completed by the field instructor and the student.
11. Meet with the student periodically on campus to assess student progress and/or problems.
12. Provide three meetings/seminars annually for Field Instructors for the purpose of program orientation, teaching supervisory skills, and encouraging agency and field instructor input into the social work curriculum.

13. Provide a Field Manual stating the objectives, policies, procedures, and content of the curriculum and practicum.
14. Determine and assign the final grade for each semester of the practicum. The grade is based on the student's performance in meeting the course's expected educational outcomes and the individual learning goals as reflected in the field instructor's written evaluation.
15. Provide General Liability Insurance while in practicum placement courses.

Responsibilities of the Agency

1. Provide assignment and learning experiences which will enable the student to achieve practice competencies.
2. Accept students for placement on a non-discriminatory basis. The agency retains the right to reject individual students who cannot function in the agency's program.
3. Provide resources and facilities for carrying out assignments, office and desk space, a telephone, and supplies.
4. Reimburse student for expenses incurred while on agency business, such as home and agency visits, group activity supplies, etc.
5. Provide student with a Field Instructor with a MSW degree from an accredited school of social work.
6. Provide an alternate supervisor if the Field Instructor is to be absent from the agency on a field placement day.
7. Provide a minimum of 45 minutes to one hour, weekly, of individual supervision focusing on the professional growth and development of the student as well as on agency assignments.
8. Student should be oriented to the agency's structure, function, services, and personnel
9. Assign field placement hours so they do not interfere with class times.
10. Facilitate the student's integration of classroom knowledge with field practice.
11. Notify the Field Liaison, as soon as possible, of any problems in student performance or in meeting expectations, and working collaboratively on their resolution.
12. Provide ongoing feedback and evaluation to the student, and guide the student in development of her/his capacity for self-evaluation.
13. The student and Field Instructor should negotiate the student's vacation schedule for the college's winter and spring breaks. During the winter break (one month during December and January) students should be allowed at least two weeks for vacation.
14. Engage the student in a formal evaluation conference at the end of each semester assessing the student's performance, strengths and weaknesses, and provide a direction for future professional growth and development.
15. Complete a written evaluation of the student's performance at the end of each semester. Share the final evaluation for signature with the student.
16. Participate in workshops, seminar/meetings held on the college campus for orientation and training of field instructors.

Responsibilities of the Student

1. Use the field experience as a positive opportunity for professional growth and development.
2. Respect the confidential nature of the case materials they are working on. Clients are not to be discussed with friends, family, or in the dormitories. Cases, appropriately disguised, may be discussed in social work classes, where all students will treat, as confidential, all information presented by others
3. Know and utilize the social work **Code of Ethics** as a base for interactions with client systems, agency personnel, and the community. Sexual harassment of students by agency personnel, and of clients by students is a violation of the Code of Ethics and the law.
4. Act in a responsible and professional manner.
5. Dress appropriately according to the nature of the practicum setting and per guidelines from the field instructor or agency policy.
6. Follow assigned work hours. Call the agency immediately if you will be delayed.
7. Call the agency if you are unable to report to work.
8. Assume responsibility for self-direction of learning.
9. Assess your knowledge and skills in social work, and identify with your field instructors the assignments and tasks which will help you develop the necessary competencies.
10. Prepare written material to complete a contract with your field instructor.
11. Accept responsibility for management of workload and completion of assignments.
12. Read and abide by agency procedures and practices for service provision, working hours, lunch, and breaks.
13. Do not schedule placement hours which interfere with classes at school.
14. Negotiate vacation time with your field instructor the **first week of placement**.
15. Be available and prepared for regular individual and group supervision by reviewing the previous week's work, writing recordings when according to the submission schedule, and prepare questions and issues for discussion in session.
16. Participate fully in activities planned for students including conferences, visits with other agency personnel, seminars, etc.
17. Keep standard agency recordings. Student's whose writing skills do not meet the standards needed by the agency are expected to get tutoring. Faculty will help the student to arrange this.
18. Participate in the completion of the **End of Semester Evaluation** of your progress by preparing input for the evaluation conference that includes a self-assessment of your work.
19. Students have a responsibility to the clients served by the agency. This includes the responsibility to treat the information received in a confidential and respectful manner and to be sensitive about personal feelings.
20. Students are expected to abide by the **Practicum Education Calendar** to the best of their ability. This includes ending placement hours and completing all assignments by the approved earliest end date of that semester. Hours (including excess hours) are unable to be transferred from one agency to another.

Criteria for Selecting Agencies

A wide range of agencies is utilized for placements taking into consideration student interest, level of skill required, and geographic location. Agencies are selected based on their ability to provide students with breadth, range, and a variety of learning experiences; generalist social work practice; willingness to provide staff resources for appropriate supervision; and commitment to cooperative efforts with the program's standards for selecting field agencies as articulated in the **BSW Student Handbook** and this BSW Practicum Education Manual.

Selected agencies must:

- Be willing to execute a written agreement with the social work program;
- Be committed to supporting undergraduate social work education;
- Be committed to social work values and support the *NASW Code of Ethics*;
- Be willing to involve student workers as an integral part of their staff;
- Be willing to permit their field instructors to attend joint meetings/seminars with the social work faculty;
- Be willing to provide the student with a field instructor who holds the MSW degree and two years post-MSW degree experience, preferably at the placement agency;
- Allow the field instructor enough time to meet with each student for a minimum of 45 minutes to one hour a week in individual supervision;
- Allow the field instructor enough time to prepare for supervision and to complete written evaluations of student growth and performance;
- Provide space for the student to hold interviews/meetings with clients, and a desk and telephone space for paper and collateral work;
- Be willing to accept students for practicum placement without discrimination on the basis of race, color, gender, age, creed, religion ethnic or national origin, physical challenges, or sexual orientation;
- Provide programs and services appropriate for beginning level, generalist, professional social work practice, that provide students with service delivery assignments appropriate to the specific practicum course;
- Provide students with an opportunity to work with clients from diverse backgrounds;
- Understand that continuation of the placement is based on positive evaluations from students and field liaisons in previous years.

Agencies not already in partnership with Ramapo's Social Work Program may be interested in taking on interns. These agencies have access to an **Agency Interest Form** through the Field Education **website** which notifies the Field Education Department of their interest.

Criteria for Selecting Field Instructors

Field instructors are selected on the basis of having the following qualifications:

- An earned MSW degree from an accredited School of Social Work for supervision of students in *Theory and Practice of Social Work I & II*.
- A minimum of two years of post-MSW social work employment and demonstrated competence in social work;
- A minimum of one year's work experience in the placement agency;
- An interest in teaching and providing regular supervision to a student;
- A commitment to BSW education;
- An ability to serve as a field instructor for the full length of the practicum (one or two semesters as warranted);
- Formal training in supervision techniques or prior supervisory experience is highly recommended but not required;
- Willingness to participate in supervisory training;
- Willingness to allocate a minimum of 45 minutes to one hour weekly for face to face or virtual supervision with the student, time to prepare for supervisory sessions, time to work with the student to prepare the educational contract, and time to complete the evaluation; and
- Understanding that continuation is based on positive evaluations from students and field liaisons in previous years.

Placing and Monitoring of Student Placements

The process for placing students in the pre-professional placement, associated with *SWRK 329 Social Work in Agencies and Communities*, begins as students receive the letter advising them of their acceptance into the social work program. The acceptance letter contains instructions on how to access the Practicum Placement Application and how to secure time to meet with the placement coordinator. The application for practicum asks students to describe previous social service internship and employment experiences. Their interests for client populations for placement are elicited. Students are asked to re-read the **NASW Code of Ethics** and attest with their signature an agreement to practice within the guidelines of the code. They are informed that many agencies require criminal background or fingerprint tests. In addition they sign a statement allowing the practicum faculty and staff to talk with potential field instructors about them. The Practicum Placement Application also encourages students to review the list of practicum sites that have been used years prior. The practicum list includes the web sites of any agency if available. Student placements will be coordinated by the field education department following the completion of Practicum Placement Application and meeting with the Director of Field Education. After a careful review of the student's application for practicum and resume, the field coordinator taking into consideration areas of practice or client populations that interest the student and geographic or other personal issues which might influence the choice of placement, assigns an internship. Students are not promised a specific agency, and they are informed that the placement will be finalized prior to the beginning of the fall semester.

The process for placing students in the professional placement associated with *SWRK 425 Theory, Practice, and Field I* is similar to that of the placement process of *SWRK 329*. Upon successful completion of *SWRK 329*, students are oriented to not only professional practicum placement, but the field department's online placement monitoring system, **Tevera**. Following

the meeting, students are invited to enroll in the platform. The platform establishes a fee subject to change which is directly charged to the student's bill. Once these tasks are complete, students are eligible to meet with the Director of Field Education/ Field Coordinator for a placement interview. The interview process for both the pre-professional and professional placements have similar standards and take into consideration the students' interests and needs.

In regards to the placement process, agencies which have been used in the past are contacted first. When new agencies are needed either because of student request for a specific population or for geographic reasons, wherever possible, agencies are visited to assess its ability to provide the appropriate experience and practicum instruction. If students have a specific agency in mind, students are required to complete an **Agency Information Form** to provide the Field Department with appropriate contact information. After contact has been made, the agency is provided information about the internship programs. New agencies will be prompted to sign an **Agency Affiliation Agreement** with the Social Work Program. New agencies with an assigned student are invited to attend Field Instructor Orientation held every Fall semester.

Once an agency is identified for a student, the student is notified on Tevera and instructed to contact the agency to schedule an interview. The agency too is informed of the assignment via Tevera. The student and field instructor are given a time frame within which to hold the interview and to report back to the field department. It is expected that unless there is a major problem the placement will be finalized. If the student is unsuccessful during the interview process with the agency, the field education department will attempt to coordinate a second interview with a different agency. The field education department has the right to deny a third interview considering the inability of the student to secure a placement. No further placement coordination will occur beyond three attempts for each student.

The prime responsibility for monitoring student placements is that of the field liaison who maintains contact with agency field instructors or task supervisors. Throughout both placements in SW Agencies & Communities, and *Theory and Practice I & II*, students present their placements in various formats. Students are encouraged to use their practicum experiences as examples of the topics discussed in class. Written assignments, such as the "Case Study", and "Group Development/Group Analysis" in *Practice I & II*, respectively, address students' work with clients. Monitoring also takes place via Tevera and the individual contacts the field liaison has with students at the college and agency visits with the student and field instructor. The **Learning Contract**, completed early in the semester is discussed at the agency visit to determine if the student and field instructor are utilizing the planned assignments and working on the identified objectives. Field liaisons conduct at least one site visit per academic year. **Check-in** phone calls are performed once per semester in order to complete the check-in form to evaluate progress and professional performance. Throughout the academic year the Director of Field Education requests updates from the field liaisons regarding potential problems at the agencies. The Director of Field Education has the opportunity via contacts at the field instructor orientation and training sessions to learn about student progress at agencies.

Maintaining Field Liaison Contacts with Agencies

Student placements at agencies are monitored by the field liaison, adjunct faculty field liaisons or

the Director of Field Education. Each Fall the field liaisons are reminded in writing of the policies related to practicum contacts. A site visit will be conducted if the agency or field instructor is new to the BSW Program or if there are concerns that warrant a field visit. Field Liaisons will evaluate the student's progress of completing field education requirements and overall professional performance by means of a check-in phone call once per semester. Otherwise, contact will be maintained via email, phone calls or through Webex. Contact between the field liaison and the field instructor is to enable the field instructor to ask questions about the school, the course, or their role as a supervisor which might not be appropriate for discussion in front of the student. The field liaison is responsible for:

- Interpreting the BSW curriculum for the individual field instructor;
- Training Field instructor in supervisory techniques as needed;
- Assuring that the educational focus of the placement is maintained;
- Assuring that time expectations and practice assignments are appropriate and, when not appropriate assisting the field instructor in developing other assignments;
- Participating in the development of the student's practice goals and objectives, and the **Learning Contract**;
- Reviewing the student's **process recordings**;
- Evaluating student progress and professional performance through **check-ins** at least once per semester.
- Assessing the communication between the student and field instructor and, where problematic, facilitating problem solving;
- Responding to problems raised by the student, field instructor, or as identified by the liaison;
- Assessing the experience provided by the agency and transmitting that information to the Director of Field Education via formal or informal mechanisms;
- Asking for consultation from the Director of Field Education if problems remain unresolved between the student, field instructor, and liaison;
- Informing the Director of Field Education of problematic agencies and/or field instructors; and
- Bringing student field problems to the Social Work Convening Group meetings.

Field Instructor Orientation and Training

Orientation begins with the agency or program director at the time the Director of Field Education or the BSW Field Coordinator makes initial contact with the agency. Further discussion occurs either via telephone or visits that the Director of Field Education makes to the agency. Approximately two to three programs for field instructors are held on campus annually. The purposes of these sessions include:

- Orientation for new field instructors or experienced instructors who are new to Ramapo College,
- Ongoing training in supervisory issues, and
- General social worker in-service training

The first orientation is held during the beginning of the semester. Field instructors are introduced to faculty and provided with an overview of the Social Work Program where practicum expectations and policies are described. Information about courses, class assignments, the fieldwork portfolio, and reading materials are presented and methods for orienting the student to the agency are discussed. Field instructors are given guidance in helping students to identify learning goals and objectives, and in completing the **BSW Learning Contract**. Instruction is provided to field instructors outlining specific content from the Theory and Practice I & II curricula; for example, Evidence Based Practices and Family Psycho-Education are reviewed. Time is provided to allow field instructors to share their ideas for student assignments. This serves two purposes. First, it helps field instructors to understand the range of possible practicum experiences for students. Second, it enables field liaisons to identify agencies where there may be potential problems with assignments. Two other field instructor training sessions are held throughout the year. Each focuses on an aspect of supervising students such as evaluating the student or differential supervision based on type of student (traditional age, older student, learning disabled student), or issues addressing the evaluation of practice. There have been annual sessions on using single system research to evaluate practice. These sessions not only teach or refresh field instructors in its use, but also facilitate helping students use single system designs. Field instructors are also invited to attend a wide range of presentation teleconferences, and workshops held at the college serving their continuing education needs. Attendance at these events has been consistently good.

Field Instructor Input into the Program

There are several mechanisms for ensuring Field Instructor input into the program. At the end of each academic year, the Director of Field Education sends Field Instructors the **Field Instructor Evaluation of the Program** survey. This evaluation is discussed further in the evaluation section of the practicum manual.

At each on-campus orientation and training session, Field Instructors are asked for feedback regarding students, the field office, and field liaisons. Time is allotted to discuss field instructors' concerns about the program. The program also receives feedback from field instructors through the field liaison process and frequent interchange between field instructors and the Fieldwork Director.

Student Orientation to Field Placement

ON CAMPUS

Prior to the start of the semester, or during the first two weeks of the semester the student will be asked to attend an orientation to field placement. This may be conducted during class time (Social Work in Agencies and Communities) or in place of practicum placement days (Theory and Practice of Social Work I). In this orientation the purpose of practicum, behavior expectations, an overview of Tevera, and social work supervision are discussed. Students also have a chance to discuss their concerns about the placement. Expectations for the first few days in placement are explained.

IN THE FIELD

Students arrive at placement both eager and anxious about this new experience. The experience the student has during the first few days of placement sets an important tone for the year. As social workers, we are familiar with expectations of agency based practice, but students have had little experience with this type of work. It is important that students are oriented to the agency as soon as they begin their placement.

Orientation and preparation for orientation takes place prior to the student beginning at the agency, during the first week and throughout the semester. Some of the issues that should be addressed in the orientation process are:

PRIOR TO STUDENT COMING TO AGENCY

- Determine which office, desk space and telephone student will use;
- Stock desk space with supplies;
- Determine which clerical person is available for student work;
- Make list of agency staff and relevant phone numbers available;
- Determine the first day the student will begin;
- Assure that field instructor will be present and very available in agency on the day the student begins;
- Circulate memo to staff informing them of student's arrival;
- Develop a written schedule for the formal orientation sessions;
- Collect agency related reading material to make available to the student during the first few weeks of placement. Appropriate material should include agency brochures, annual reports, procedural and personal manuals, professional articles written about your type of agency and the client population;
- Make sure student has directions to the agency and knows where to park for the day.

THE FIRST FEW DAYS

- Meet student as s(he) arrives at agency;
- Introduce student to clerical and receptionist staff;
- Arrange for key supervisory staff or administrators to meet with the student;
- Introduce student to staff - This could be an ongoing process. Meeting too many people the first day could be overwhelming;
- Tour agency - During the first week tour the key parts to which the student will be relating. Later on in semester the student should tour the whole agency;
- Develop a list of abbreviations, symbols, and technical terminology peculiar to your setting;
- Give student a listing of agency holiday schedule;
- Provide map of agency, city and county (especially if student is expected to make home visits);
- Discuss dress code and other agency rules of behavior;
- Show students how to obtain supplies and how to use the phone, copy machine etc.;
- Establish a schedule of tasks, meetings, and expectations of student and field instructor

- for the first two weeks;
- Provide instructions for completing agency statistical reports, sample forms, outlines for recordings and dictating equipment;
 - Meet with student several times during the first week or two. Inform the student of the person that s(he) can go to for questions in your absence. If you will be out of the office during the student's day at the agency assign a person to look out for the student;
 - Arrange for student to observe each step that the client goes through with the agency. Observe what each staff person does and how each relate to the other;
 - Meet with student to discuss potential assignments, process of supervision and expected student preparation for supervision (recordings);

ONGOING ORIENTATION

- Provide student, via reading material or interviews with administrators, with information on history of agency, organizational structure, funding sources, budget, policies and programs, and organizational chart;
- Have student visit community agencies which are utilized by your program;
- Share a bibliography of programmatically relevant readings;
- Allow student to participate in staff or clinical team meetings; and
- Allow students to observe an agency board of directors or advisory board meeting.

Developing Practicum Tasks and Assignments with Students and the Learning Contract

In order to help the student and Field Instructor focus on the educational purpose of the practicum experience, students in the senior year and above are expected to execute a learning contract between the student and Field Instructor. The student's and Field Instructor's responsibilities to each other and the student's learning goals and experiences are spelled out and signed by both. An additional purpose of the student-Field Instructor contract is to provide a model for student-client practice contracts.

The **Learning Contract** has several components. The first includes the names of the student, agency, and field instructor. The expectations of the student in terms of work days and time are then defined. The general programs of the agency in which the student will work and types of clients are listed. Day and time of supervision and expectations for preparation for the supervisory session are detailed. Tasks and assignments, which should be accomplished during the internship, the learning opportunities the student will have to reach this goal, and the evidence of accomplishment are spelled out. Tasks and assignments are geared towards the practice behaviors that pertain to one of nine EPAS competencies.

The Social Work program at Ramapo College is aligned with EPAS competencies and practice behaviors which all students in our program are expected to master by the end of their specific placement. But to treat all students the same is to overlook individual student needs. Therefore, the learning contract developed for the student needs to consider both the general expectations and their level of skill. As in social work practice, we start where the student is.

During the student's first few weeks at the agency, both the student and the field instructor should be developing an assessment of the knowledge and skills of the student. At this time the student

has limited ideas about their learning goals or about professional expectations. They have thoughts about the kinds of clients they might like to work with, and many have highly exalted images of what they will be able to do with clients. They have unrealistic expectations for the kinds of changes they will help clients make in their lives. In addition, they have little experience with differentiating objectives from general goals.

Evaluation — Assessment of Field Outcomes

Evaluation of student strengths, limitations and progress is a significant component of the role of the field instructor. It is one that is frequently troublesome for social workers.

Where the social worker is encouraged to be non-judgmental, the teacher must be able to specify quality through grades. The Field Instructor must attempt to be both at the same time. Even though the field instructor is not the person who assigns the letter grade, the assessment material provides the support for the grade assigned by the faculty member. The student, as well as the field instructor, feels anxious about the evaluation process which is why we frequently put it off until the last minute. Evaluation at the last minute defeats an educational purpose.

Ongoing Evaluation

The purpose of evaluation is to give direction to learning. Through evaluation, the student learns how to do a task correctly and works towards achieving learning objectives. In order for evaluation to serve this learning purpose, it cannot be done in a once a semester conference focused only on assessment. Evaluation should be an ongoing process. It begins the first day of placement and ends with the end-of-the-year or semester documentation of the student's achievements and need for future growth.

In order to evaluate the student's growth or lack of growth it is necessary to have a baseline of data about the student's skills at the beginning of placement. The Learning Contract is therefore an important tool to utilize early on. It can serve as part of the base for the ongoing and end of semester discussions regarding growth. Student self-awareness is necessary to enable him/her to participate in the evaluation process. Field Instructors must be aware of the practicum course objectives in addition to the individual student's objectives. Student progress and professionalism are also evaluated once per semester through field liaison check-in phone calls for the completion of the **check-in form**.

It is important for the Field Instructor to share his/her perceptions about the student's practice in weekly supervision. Students should not be surprised at the end of a semester with a comment about poor quality of work, which has not been previously discussed. Students need to have support for the things they are doing well, in addition to specific problematic areas. The feedback to the student should be specific. During the beginning stages of practicum, the Field Instructor and student should discuss how on-going and end of semester evaluation would take place. Expectations for performance and for supervisory conferences should be spelled out verbally and also put in writing in the Learning Contract. For example: Will the Field Instructor expect the student to write process recordings or make audio tapes of client sessions as the way the Field Instructor will assess student's interviewing skills?

Practicum Site and Placement Evaluation

Practicum sites are evaluated by the student, the faculty liaison, and the Director of Field Education. Each assesses the agency and field instructor based on its consistency with program objectives. The student and field liaison evaluations of agencies are completed early enough to allow planning for the next year and making adjustments as needed. The **BSW Student Evaluation of Practicum Site** includes questions related to program objectives such as the knowledge base of the field instructor, and his/her ability to help the student integrate theory and practice, the ability of the agency to offer experiences with clients from a variety of cultures, agency practice consistent with the NASW *Code of Ethics*, and the compatibility of the placement with the course objectives. Field liaisons also have the opportunity to evaluate the agency during their site visits. Students are also asked to complete the **Student Evaluation of Field Department**, evaluating their experiences with the field education department, including the practicum placement process and ongoing support throughout the academic year.

Field Instructors are asked to evaluate the placement process, quality of practicum materials produced by the program, quality and usefulness of Field Instructor orientation sessions, performance of the Faculty Field Liaison, and effectiveness of the practicum evaluations in assessing students' work. A second area of evaluation asks questions about the program's preparation of students for placement in terms of appropriate knowledge, social work values and ethics, and communication skills. A third section of the survey asks Field Instructors to assess how well they feel our students are meeting program objectives. In addition, field instructors are encouraged to raise issues of concern and make suggestions for change.

End of Semester Evaluation

The end of semester formal evaluation, or the **Assessment of Foundation Practice Behaviors**, is not the role of the Field Instructor alone. This is a shared process. If more than one staff member is involved with the student, then those people should participate in the evaluation process. Students should play a significant role in this evaluation process.

1. Share blank copies of the evaluation format with involved colleagues and the student. Field instructors should receive the evaluation form on Tevera at least one month before the end of the semester giving the Field Instructor, other staff and the student time to review and prepare.
2. The Field Instructor and student should prepare their thoughts and comments separately. Both should think of examples of the student's practice to support the assessment of their strengths and weaknesses. The field instructor should not formally complete the final copy before the conference with the student.
3. Field Instructor and students should schedule a conference to discuss the evaluation at a time separate from the usual supervisory session. A minimum of an hour and a half will be necessary to complete the discussion. Do not allow interruptions during this meeting.
4. Field Instructors and students should contribute to each point on the evaluation. While it is the field instructor who completes the final evaluation, the student's self-assessment and comments should be considered. Be open to making changes in the evaluation where there is evidence to do so.

5. During this conference, implications for future growth and learning objectives should be discussed. If this evaluation is conducted during the middle of a year-long course, then the evaluation should be used as the basis for a new or revised learning contract. If this evaluation were at the end of the year it could be the time to discuss the type of reference the field instructor would write.
6. The Field Instructor should have the final evaluation completed online and electronically “signed”. It should then be shown to the student for the student's “signature”. The field instructor should have the final evaluation completed online and electronically “signed”. It should then be shown to the student, who will counter-sign the evaluation in Tevera. Once the student co-signs the evaluation, this will serve as proof that the student has reviewed and accepts the formal evaluation.
7. The evaluation should be submitted on Tevera as outlined in the directive email sent to the field instructor ahead of time.
8. If the student disagrees strongly enough with points made on the evaluation the student has the right to append a written statement.

Links to the evaluation tools for both pre-professional and professional placements are included below. For the pre-professional placement associated with SWRK 329 *Social Work Practice with Agencies and Communities*, students are assessed on the development of professionalism and ability to work within an agency. Field instructors receive the **evaluation for the pre-professional course** via email. For the professional placement associated with SWRK 425 and 426 *Theory, Practice, and Field I & II*, students are assessed on the abilities and expectations outlined in CSWE’s nine competencies pertaining to student learning outcomes and practice behaviors. This evaluation tool (**Assessment of Foundation Practice Behaviors**) is delivered to field instructors electronically via Tevera and follows the structure of the end of semester evaluation listed above.

Endings

The Student with the Agency

Ending the practicum experience is as important an issue to consider as is the beginning of the placement. The manner in which ending of the placement is handled is important for the student personally, and also serves as a model for how the student could handle endings with client systems. The student will be dealing with feelings about ending with their clients, the agency, and the Field Instructor. Senior students will also be facing the loss of role as student and will be confronting graduation, graduate school, job hunting or assuming other adult roles. During the last two to three months of the semester student reactions to these endings should be discussed in supervisory conferences.

The themes involved in worker (student) - client endings are similar to those involved in student-Field Instructor endings. Field Instructors often have as difficult time (if not more) with endings as do students. Lack of attention to discussion of student-agency-Field Instructor ending issues because of Field Instructor's time problems or anxiety provides a negative role model for student endings with client systems.

The process of ending with client systems involves the assessment of the client's growth and

changes made. So too with students, the ending of the field placement should involve a mutual discussion of the experience. Identifying the types of assignments, and supporting the areas of positive change will help to maintain the student's growth.

Formal recognition that the student is leaving the agency is meaningful. During the last week or day of placement the Field Instructor, and/or agency staff with whom the student has been involved, should in some way show signs of gratitude for the student's efforts during the year. This does not need to be a major expression, but the student does appreciate this.

Student Performance Issues

Performance issues will be addressed in the following manner:

- Student performance will be reviewed in supervision. Performance problems will be clearly identified (orally or in writing) by the agency field instructor and/or field liaison. Specific examples of problem area and recommendations for improvement will be made (if applicable), and consequences of failure to meet expectations will be communicated to the student in a timely manner.
- At any time during the internship, a single event or if problem behaviors persist and/or are serious, the field instructor will contact the field liaison for a consultation. The student also must advise the field liaison if he/she has concerns about the internship and/or the field instructor. The student will also advise the field liaison if there are concerns about performance issues raised from feedback received from the agency field instructor.
- The field liaison will offer guidance to the student and/or agency field instructor by telephone, Webex, or in person. If a visit to the agency is needed in addition to the annual site visit, this meeting may include separate time with the student and with the agency field instructor. The field liaison will also conduct check-in phone calls once per semester.
- Based on the discussion with the field liaison, a written **Success Plan** to outline performance improvement, will be developed jointly by the student, field liaison and agency field instructor and signed by all parties, with copies distributed. Consequences for the noncompliance will be included.
- Midyear and final evaluations must demonstrate improved performance to pass the course.
- Poor performance or a single event, which may place clients at risk, is unprofessional or unethical may result in a termination, at any time from the internship. The agency supervisor and the field director make this decision jointly. As agencies supervise students voluntarily, it is the right of any agency to terminate an internship with no prior notice if they feel they can no longer work with the student.
- If the student's performance does not meet minimum expectations by the due date of the final evaluation, the agency field instructor will complete the narrative portion of the evaluation specifying the reasons for the students' failure to meet expectations, and the quantitative portion would clearly indicate the inadequate or unsatisfactory areas of performance.

The agency field educator has the option of recommending a grade of "I", Incomplete to the

Office of Field Education on the evaluation form. The College will determine what grade to assign for the students' final grade. If the grade of "Incomplete", is assigned the following will occur:

- If the student is demonstrating significant progress in the identified problem areas of performance, but has yet to obtain the goals set, an "I" grade may be assigned and the student would remain in that internship for a period of time specified by the agency field instructor and the field liaison. If the student consistently completes satisfactory work at the end of the specified time, a grade change will be submitted, changing the "I" to a letter grade. Students may also receive an "I" if they have not completed the necessary hours for their Field Education course due to absences. In these cases the student, agency field instructor and field liaison reach an agreement about how the hours will be completed before the grade is changed to a letter grade.
- In some cases, it may not be appropriate for the student to remain in the same internship. The student would complete the internship at a different agency to be determined by the Office of Field Education. A second internship would be contingent on disclosure of the student's performance problems and a copy of the last evaluation form will be provided to the new potential field instructor. The Office of Field Education reserves the right to not offer a second internship based on student performance issues and/or the student's refusal to allow the College representatives to share information about the termination with the new internship agency. If the student is assigned to a new internship after earning an "Incomplete" in the first internship, the student will be required to complete the full number of hours required for the course. There are exceptional cases of illness where a physician has documented a reason for hours missed or in cases where there were extenuating circumstances at the internship, and the Office of Field Education will negotiate with the student "credited hours" from the first internship. The student may need to re-register for the related course. The Office of Field Education in consultation with the professor of the related course, may assign a failing grade, based upon the recommendation and documentation of the agency field instructor. This grade and the subsequent termination from the internship are based on the student's performance, which has violated policies of the agency, Ramapo College's Social Work Program, and/or any standards set by the NASW Code of Ethics. In these situations a student must:
- Complete a typed written request for another internship stating their reasons and responsibility for failure in the prior internship, along with how they plan to resolve problem area. (ex: attend a seminar on ethical dilemmas, boundary setting, etc.). This request is submitted to the Director of Field Education within 60 days from the date of the termination. The Director of Field Education reviews the letter and all pertinent information jointly with the BSW Convener. If it is decided that the student will be offered another internship, there would NOT be a grade change of the original "Incomplete" and the entire internship MUST be retaken, with no credit given for previous hours in an internship. The student must re-register for the full credit hours of the course and be responsible for the identified tuition.

At times the College may determine that it is in the best interest of the student not to immediately re-enter another internship. In these cases it may be recommended by the Director of Field Education and the BSW Convener that the student complete certain tasks in order to document

the appropriate resolution of difficulties which may have inhibited their performance in the internship. Examples of such actions are taking a course in ethics, engaging in individual or group therapy for a specified period of time, etc. Any recommendation made will be in writing to the student with specified completion dates. The Social Work Program reserves the right to deny a student a second or third internship based on student performance issues and other pertinent information.

The student has the right to appeal this grade. The grade appeal will be in accordance with College regulations and Social Work Program policy. Students will not be permitted to register for any social work courses until the grade appeal process for a field education course is complete.

At any point during the above mentioned interventions being executed, it may be deemed necessary by the Director of Field Education and the BSW Convener, for the student to be reviewed by the *Academic and Field Review Committee (AFRC)*.

The purpose of the *Academic and Field Review Committee (AFRC)* process is to review and provide a nature of problems or issues concerning students enrolled in the BSW program at Ramapo College. The problems or issues include matters related to academic and field education performance, and professional practice ethics and behavior.

If during the coordinating of placements, a student attends two interviews with two different agencies and does not get accepted by either agency, the *Academic and Field Review Committee (AFRC)* must explore the cause(s) for said student not being accepted, before the field department considers coordinating a third possible field placement for the student.

Procedures for AFRC

1. Referrals of concerns that come to the attention of the AFRC are to be made to the student's Field Liaison or Faculty Advisor who, in turn, notifies and consults with the appropriate program and site directors and the referring faculty member about the referral.
2. The result of the consultation will be a determination as to whether to initiate the AFRC process. The individual making the original referral will be notified of that decision.
3. When the decision is to initiate the AFRC process, the Faculty Advisor contacts the AFRC Chair and the student to inform them that an AFRC hearing will be convened.
4. The AFRC Chair will meet with the student and provide information regarding the AFRC process, what to expect from a hearing, and who will attend. The Chair will inform the student that he or she has the right to exclude the student member from the hearing and that the exercise of that right must be made in writing to the Chair.
5. The hearing will be convened by the Chair as soon as it can be arranged. The Hearing Panel will consist of the Chair, two faculty panelists, and one student panelist (unless the student undergoing review requests that a student panelist not be included).

If any student receives a failing grade on their practicum evaluation, or is released from their placement after all of the above mentioned interventions and procedures have been executed, the final grade for that correlated practicum course cannot be higher than a "D."

Probation

Students may be placed on probationary status in the Social Work Program for both academic and non-academic reasons. Occasionally the program will grant admission to a student who the faculty believes has good potential to be an effective social worker but who has not met the minimum 2.75 GPA requirement. Students admitted to the program on academic probation must comply with the following provisos:

- The student agrees to engage in remedial work as stipulated in his/her acceptance letter.
- During the student's first semester in the program he/she must complete all social work courses and practicum with a minimum grade of B in each course.
- Individual instructors will monitor the progress of probationary students enrolled in their classes and discuss with that student his/her progress on an ongoing basis.
- The student's advisor is kept apprised of the student's progress as well.
- In the event that the student has failed to make appropriate progress or failed to meet other conditions of his/her acceptance by the end of their first semester in the program, he/she may be subject to termination from the program.

Any student admitted into the social work program, on or off probationary status, whose GPA falls below 2.75 is subject to being placed on academic probation or terminated from the program depending on the level of his/her performance. If the student is placed on probation he/she must raise his/her GPA to 2.75 within one semester or face the possibility of termination from the program. The faculty holds the right to grant one additional semester of probationary status to a student.

A student may be placed on probation or terminated for non-academic reasons. These reasons include:

1. A breach of the NASW Code of Ethics.
2. A breach of a practicum agency's policies.
3. Documented chemical or alcohol dependency that impairs the student's ability to meet program requirements.
4. A hostile or resistant attitude towards learning or supervision.
5. Inappropriate or disruptive behavior towards colleagues, faculty, and/or staff at school or at the placement.
6. An inability to carry out one's assignments in an agency setting.
7. Behavior that is emotionally or physically damaging to clients.
8. Chronic absenteeism.
9. Conviction of a felony during one's course of study in the program.
10. Repeated failure to demonstrate an ability to work effectively with client systems.
11. Academic dishonesty.

In the event that a student is placed on probation for one of these non-academic reasons, the student will be given a written explanation of this action, remedial procedures to comply with if appropriate, and a time limit within which to remedy the problem. The faculty holds the right to recommend termination from the program rather than probation depending on the severity of problem.

Termination

If a student's academic or non-academic performance is deemed unsuitable for continuation in the program, the BSW Convener will convene a meeting of the social work faculty to review the student's academic record and other relevant materials. If the faculty votes to move forward with terminating the student from the program the following procedures are followed:

1. The Convener, after consulting with social work faculty, informs the student verbally and in writing that he/she is being terminated from the Social Work Program. The letter to the student will include reasons supporting this action and make the student aware that he/she has the right to appeal this decision.
2. If the student chooses to appeal, he/she must make this request in writing to the Convener within two weeks of receiving the Convener's letter.
3. Following the student's request for an appeal, the Convener will arrange a hearing before the social work faculty where the student may present whatever pertinent materials and arguments are deemed necessary for his/her defense.
4. After hearing the student's appeal and re-examining pertinent information such as the student's academic work, practicum performance, and/or behavior, the faculty will vote to sustain or reverse its original recommendation.
5. The Convener will inform the student in writing of the social work faculty's decision. In the event that the decision remains negative, the student is informed of his/her right to appeal this decision in writing to the School's Dean.
6. In the event of an appeal, the School's Dean will confer with the student and the Convener, jointly or independently as he or she sees fit, to review all evidence relating to the case, and render a decision either affirming or overruling the decision to terminate. If the Dean renders a decision that affirms the faculty's decision to terminate the student from the program, the student is so notified in writing and informed that he/she has the right to appeal the Dean's decision to the Provost. Conversely, the Convener has the right to appeal the Dean's decision if it is one which overrules the social work faculty's decision to terminate the student from the program. In either case, a request for an appeal to the Provost must be made in writing. The Provost or his/her designated officer will confer with the student and the Convener, review pertinent information, and render a final decision.

Students are made aware of the Social Work Program's probation, termination, and appeal procedures through the program's advisement process and the **[Social Work Student Handbook](#)**.

Appendix A

Ramapo College Anti-Discrimination Policy

<https://www.ramapo.edu/affirmation/complaint-processing-forms/>