



1900 W. 50th St | Marion, IN 46953 | p: 800-621-8667

# **Field Instructor Guide to Field Education Activities and Roles**

David King, MA, MSW, LMSW - Director of Field Experiences  
James Long, ThD., MSW - Associate Professor of Social Work

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## Welcome

Thank you for serving as a Field Instructor for an Indiana Wesleyan University (IWU) MSW student. We are glad to have you on the team, offering your knowledge, expertise and practice wisdom to students during this crucial time in their program. Your service to the profession and students in this way is invaluable to the profession and to the development of social workers.

We hope this manual provides helpful information and guidance as we partner in field education. Please feel free to also contact us with questions, concerns, issues or just for support at any time during your teaching experience. Your faculty liaison is also available for you throughout the practicum experience.

We look forward to working with you on behalf of MSW students.

*David King and James Long*

## Student Practicum Years and IWU Faculty Subject Matter Experts

### Generalist Year

Students in the standard track MSW program at IWU must complete two practicums as part of the MSW program. The generalist year is the first practicum year focusing on developing general social work skills and practice behaviors. Students in their generalist year are often newer to social work and are at an earlier stage of professional development. Generalist Field Seminar courses are designed to expose students to basic concepts and practices needed in field practice and to ensure they meet foundation social work competencies.

James Long, MSW, ThD is the IWU subject matter expert for the Generalist Year curriculum and provides oversight, training, and support for adjunct faculty and liaisons teaching generalist year field seminars including SWK 560, SWK 561, SWK 562 and SWK 563. James can be reached at [James.Long2@indwes.edu](mailto:James.Long2@indwes.edu)

### Advanced Practice Year

Students in the second year of the standard MSW program or who are advanced standing students with a current BSW degree complete the advanced practice year practicum. The advanced practice year, although similar in course structure to the first year, focuses on a higher level of social work knowledge, skills, values and behaviors and has a clinical emphasis throughout the curriculum. Through the advanced practice practicum and field seminars, students will look to apply theories of trauma, grief and loss, cognitive behavioral treatment, family systems theory and addictions in practice. Students will also learn and apply a developmental lens for engaging, assessing, intervening and evaluating progress with clients. Students are expected to have achieved basic social work competencies and to be prepared to begin practicing at an advanced level at the start of the advanced practicum. By the end of the advanced year, practicum students should be ready for professional masters level social work practice.

David King, MA, MSW, who is also the Director of Field Education, is the IWU subject matter expert for the Advanced Practice Year curriculum and provides oversight, training, and support for adjunct faculty

teaching advanced year field seminars including SWK 666, SWK 667, SWK 668 and SWK 669. David can be reached at [David.King2@indwes.edu](mailto:David.King2@indwes.edu) or 734-657-8717.

## **General Information**

### **IWU Manual for Field Instruction**

The IWU Manual for Field Instruction is included in the Field Instructor welcome materials before the student begins completing hours at your agency. The Manual covers all official policies and procedures regarding the IWU MSW Field Education program. Please consult the manual for more detail on roles, rules and responsibilities of all relevant parties or contact the Director of Field Education, David King at [David.King2@Indwes.edu](mailto:David.King2@Indwes.edu) if you have additional questions.

### **Faculty Liaisons**

IWU Faculty Liaisons are also Field Seminar Instructors for the student completing his or her practicum. Faculty Liaisons meet with students bi-weekly via video cohort conference meetings to review progress and learning at their agency sites.

Field Instructors should receive an initial contact from the Faculty Liaison within 2 weeks of the start of the practicum, introducing him or herself and providing contact information for any questions or issues that arise. Faculty Liaisons should meet with you and your student at least two times during the practicum to answer questions, discuss progress or address concerns.

### **Field Instructors verses Task Supervisors**

Field Instructors who hold an MSW degree and have at least 2 years of post-graduate experience are required by accreditation to provide official supervision of students during practicums. Therefore, Field Instructors are required to meet with students regularly and officially review and sign all required documentation such as time logs, records of supervision, process recordings, learning contracts, evaluations and observations.

Field Instructors are not required however to be on site at all times that the student is present at the agency or to provide daily oversight and task supervision. If needed, additional staff at an agency can be assigned as a task supervisor for the student to provide guidance, training, feedback, etc.

### **External Field Instructors**

If a student is completing a practicum at an agency where there is not an MSW with the appropriate experience on site, he or she may have an external Field Instructor who fulfills this role. If you are a functioning as an off-site Field Instructor you will need to communicate and coordinate with the agency task supervisor as needed throughout the field practicum, especially before signing off on evaluation documents. The Field Instructor, as the official MSW supervisor, is accountable for providing oversight of all social work competencies and documents demonstrating competency and practicum hours completed. Agency based task supervisors may sign off on any field documents completed at the agency but all documents must also be reviewed and signed by Field Instructors before final submission by the student.

### **Individual / Group Supervision**

The IWU MSW program requires that the Field Instructor meet individually with the student regularly throughout the practicum to provide individual feedback and guidance. Records of Supervision however may reflect supervision received in either a group or individual context and Field Instructors may use a combination of approaches to provide supervision for students at the agency. Regardless of the supervision context however, Field Instructors should sign all Student Records or Supervision to verify that supervision occurred.

### **Problems / Concerns with Students**

If any questions or concerns arise regarding a student during the field practicum, please reach out to the Faculty Liaison immediately for assistance. Additional information and guidelines regarding student concerns or issues is also provided in the Manual for Field Instruction.

### **Expectations of Student Hours and Time at Field Site**

Over the course of the 32-week practicum, Students in the generalist year practicum are expected to complete an average of 12 hours a week at their site to meet a final total of 400 hours. Students in the advanced practicum year are expected to complete an average of 15.5 hours per week to meet a final total of 500 hours. With permission from you as the Field Instructor, students can complete more or less than the average number of hours per week but are expected to be at the field agency weekly unless approved by the agency and the faculty liaison. Students are also expected to stay on track with their field hours overall be completing 100 hours every eight weeks during the generalist year and 125 hours every eight weeks during the advanced practice year. If students are ahead or behind in their hours at these check-in points, they should work with you as the Field Instructor to keep things on track.

Students are permitted to begin their practicums up to 10 days before the beginning of their first field class and to end up to two weeks before the end of the final field class as needed and agreed to by the Field Instructor. Students must complete all required assignments and documents before leaving their field agency to successfully complete the program.

## **Key Field Assignments**

### **Activities at Field Sites**

MSW students are expected to engage in a variety of activities at the agency including indirect and direct activities working with individuals, families, groups, organizations and the community. Students should not be performing busywork or activities unrelated to development of social work competencies outlined in the learning contract. Students are expected to spend more than half of practicum hours engaged in direct service related activities to maximize their skills development in working with clients, groups and communities.

### **Learning Contracts**

Students are required to prepare and submit a learning contract identifying proposed activities for their practicum experience by the end of week four for each practicum year. Students should identify at least one activity for each behavior listed under the 9 CSWE competency categories in the contract. Activities

should be written as goals with target timeframes for completion and indicate what evidence there will be of completing the activity.

Students receive and may use the sample learning contract for ideas and should meet with you as their field instructor to identify activities that are specific to the agency. Students may also ask to arrange a meeting with faculty to discuss ideas as needed. Students should keep their final portfolio in mind when writing practicum activities and identify activities that can be used as meaningful evidence of their learning later on.

Learning contracts are considered living documents and students will be asked to update them at least one time every eight weeks to ensure that they reflect the reality of what they have accomplished at the field agency. Students should *strikeout* any activities they eliminate and indicate dates of new activities added or completed when updating learning contracts.

### **Process Recordings**

Students submit a total of 8 process recordings over the course of the practicum. Students may submit either individual or group process recordings to meet the assignment requirement. Students are encouraged to submit at least one group process recording during the practicum. A group process recording can be a clinical meeting, team meeting, committee or community meeting. Process recordings should be thorough and demonstrate meaningful reflection on the questions and prompts included in the template. Students should include information regarding the use of specific skills and theories in their documentation, explaining why they are using the skills and theories based on the case material provided. As the practicum continues, students should demonstrate higher levels of critical thinking and skill in process recordings and grading should reflect these higher expectations. Students are required to have their Field Instructors review each process recording and provide feedback on their interactions with clients or groups, use of theory, values, interventions, etc.

### **Observation of Student Practice**

Students are required to be observed in their direct practice one time during each field seminar. To complete the assignment, the observer can be any master's level clinician at your agency and does not have to be you as the Field Instructor or an MSW, although this is preferred. If the observer is not the Field Instructor or an MSW, the student must still request that the MSW Field Instructor review, provide additional feedback and sign off on the observation form.

### **Records of Supervision**

Students must submit records of supervision a total of 20 times during each field seminar. The record of supervision must include a description of content discussed in supervision in at least one area from each main heading of hand, head, and heart identified in the supervision form and must also include comments from the Field Instructor regarding strengths and areas of growth to receive full credit. Records of supervision should read like minutes from the supervision meeting with students recording guidance, feedback, and instructions provided to them as well as any needed background information. Content should also include next steps students can or have been instructed to take in each area discussed during supervision. Follow up steps may include instructions from the supervisor or may be the next steps the student can decide to take to continue to improve in the area.

## **Journals**

Students typically complete 1-2 journal assignments during each field seminar reflecting on specific areas of their practicum experience. Journals are submitted as 1-2 page APA papers in their courses. Field Instructors may also request that students complete journals or written summaries of projects, research, or reflections to help improve learning or as evidence for the field instructor or follow up and learning for specific activities. Students should include specific activities such as these in their learning contracts to ensure completion.

## **Completing Seminar Assignments at Practicum Sites**

The purpose of the MSW program field seminar classes that students take while also completing their field practicum is to ensure that students are completing activities and assignments that are directly applicable to their practice in the field and that will help them develop the nine required CSWE core competencies. As a result, students are encouraged to include many field course assignments as activities in their learning contracts, tailoring them to their specific agency populations and circumstances as they are able. Activities students are encouraged to include in their learning contract to address one or more competency areas include process recordings, practice observations, records of supervision, journaling as it pertains to learning, growth or research in a competency area and specific course papers where students are asked to apply course material to specific clients or activities at their site. Students can also add such activities to the learning contract as a living document as they are completed, connecting the assignment to specific competency and behavior areas. When included in the learning contract, these activities can also be used later as evidence of their competency development when submitting the final portfolio.

In addition to including relevant course assignments in the learning contract, to help manage time, students are also encouraged to use practicum time at their agency to complete the learning contract and other written work from course assignments directly related to their agencies or clients such as those described above. Students should seek approval from their agency field instructor or task supervisor regarding the possibility of blocking off time each week for this purpose and is at the discretion of the agency Field Instructor.

## **Virtual Site Meetings between Agency and IWU Faculty**

### **Mid Practicum Site Meetings**

Two times during the field practicum experience (approximately week 15 and 30) students will arrange for a meeting between their agency Field Instructor and their Faculty Liaison / Seminar Instructor to review the learning contract, answer questions the agency may have and review student progress. The student should reach out to you as the Field Instructor two to three weeks beforehand to find a suitable time to arrange this meeting.

The agenda for the *mid practicum* meeting is to check in on progress with the learning contract, discuss any questions or concerns from the agency or student, identify priorities for the second half of the practicum and review the mid-practicum evaluation process and expectations.

The agenda for the final practicum meeting is to review the practicum experience, identify and reinforce student strengths and identify priorities for continued learning as the student moves ahead.

## **Student Evaluations during the Practicum**

### **Professional Performance Evaluations – pass/fail**

During the 1<sup>st</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> Field Seminars of each practicum year, students are required to submit a professional performance evaluation from their Field Instructor during the last week of the course. The performance evaluation covers a variety of areas of professional behavior to ensure students are acting in a mature and responsible fashion at the agency. Professional performance evaluations are mandatory and must be submitted in the course to pass regardless of their overall grade in the class. Performance evaluations are also pass/fail, requiring the student to achieve the scores designated in the assignment to pass the class.

If, as a Field Instructor, you have concerns about a student based on his or her performance or performance evaluation, please contact your Field Liaison for the student immediately for follow up.

### **Social Work Competency Evaluations – pass/fail**

During the 2<sup>nd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> Field Seminars of each practicum year, students are required to complete the mid-practicum and final practicum competency evaluation. Competency evaluations cover the 9 Council on Social Work Education (CSWE) competency areas and behaviors specific to the generalist or advanced practice years. Students will arrange a meeting with their Field Liaison and agency Field Instructor before completion of the competency evaluation to review progress and answer any questions.

Field Instructors complete the evaluations and MUST include a score for each identified behavior area underneath each competency section. Submission of competency evaluations is mandatory, and failure to submit the evaluation will result in the student failing the seminar.

If you have concerns about any student based on his or her competencies or evaluation please contact your Field Liaison for the student immediately for follow up. .

### **Final Field Portfolios**

Students submit items for a field portfolio in the final seminar for each practicum year. Portfolio items for competency one are submitted week one, competency 2, week two, etc. Portfolio items document evidence of learning or practice for one or more behaviors in the designated competency area listed in the learning contract from the student's time at the practicum site. Students should primarily use activities from the learning contract as evidence for their portfolio and may also use assignments from the field seminars that intersect with their practicum site as portfolio items but should not use assignments from other MSW classes. For each portfolio submission students also submit a rationale statement (template provided in the course) explaining why and how the evidence submitted is proof of their learning. Portfolio rationales should be well written and clearly and meaningfully connect the learning activity to the competency and one or more of the listed behaviors.

Field Instructors can assist students in identifying items to use in their portfolios but are not required to review or sign off on portfolio items.

Below is an overview of key assignments requiring the involvement of the Agency Field Instructor.

### MSW Program Onsite Field Assignments

*\*Students will take initiative to remind field instructors of assignment specific dates according to the course syllabus as they are due.*

Assignment	Frequency / Due Date	Who Completes	Signed by
Initial Learning Contract	Due 4 <sup>th</sup> week of placement	Student and Field Instructor	Student and Field Instructor
Student Supervision / Record of Supervision	5 for every 8-week Field Seminar (20 total during practicum)	Student	Student and Field Instructor
Process Recordings	2 per Field Seminar (8 total)	Student	Student / Reviewed with Field Instructor
Clinical Observation of Student	1 per Field Seminar (4 total)	Field Instructor or Designated Masters level clinician completes observation.	Field Instructor and /or Master's Level observer. Reviewed with Field Instructor.
Mid Practicum Site Meeting	By week 13	Faculty Liaison, Field Instructor and Student	N/A
Mid-Point Learning Contract Review	By week 16	Field Instructor	Student and Field Instructor
Final Practicum Site Meeting	By week 29	Faculty Liaison, Field Instructor and Student	N/A
Final Learning Contract / Field Evaluation	By week 32	Field Instructor	Student and Field Instructor

Thank you for your commitment to social work students and the profession by contributing your time and expertise to student learning. We are especially thankful for your willingness to partner with Indianan Wesleyan University in this endeavor.

We look forward to working with you and are here to support you and respond to any questions or concerns you may have as quickly as possible so please let us know how we can help. We hope your experience with IWU and our MSW students will be positive as we pursue excellence in social work field education.