**MSW SPECIALIZED PRACTICE YEAR FIELD PRACTICUM APPLICATION**

**TRANSFER STUDENTS**

University of Vermont

Graduate Social Work Program

**Specialized Practice (SP) Year Field Primary Objectives:**

Your SP Field Placement must have learning opportunities that will enable you to meet the Specialized Practice Year’s transformative social work objectives by the year’s end. This means that your placement must provide the opportunity for advanced and transformative social work practice. You can find the course objectives in the course syllabus (SWSS 390), under the “Syllabi” tab, as well as the advanced practice behaviors associated with these objectives in the SPMSW Final Evaluation (under the “Students” tab in “Evaluations”), both located on the [Department of Social Work’s Field Education](http://www.uvm.edu/cess/socialwork/field) website.

**Matching Process**

Once you turn in this application, you will meet individually with the Field Education Coordinator or their designee where together you will identify Field Instructors and placements potentially of interest. The Field Education Coordinator will provide you with contact information for these Field Instructors, with whom you will then connect to schedule interviews and wait for a placement “offer(s)”. Once a mutually agreed-upon placement decision has been reached (the Field Instructor has confirmed their interest and intent to supervise you, and you have accepted this offer), you will write a Letter of Confirmation to formalize your intent to complete your internship at that particular site. You can find a Sample Letter of Confirmation under the “Forms” tab of the [Department of Social Work’s Field Education](http://www.uvm.edu/cess/socialwork/field) website. **The goal is for you to confirm a field placement by April 15 to begin accruing Field hours in late August.**

**Field Hours**

Field is a year-long-course (September through May) and therefore the student’s “time in the course” typically looks and feels differently than a traditionally structured class taken on campus. When students start in the Fall, they remain in the same placement until the end of the Spring semester; this means that there is no “course ending” in December or “course beginning” in January.

To manage the required hours (450 over the course of the academic year) and course length, students and Field Instructors are expected to work together to set both a weekly schedule as well as a broader one for the full academic year. The weekly schedule reflects which days of the week, and what hours, the student is expected to be in the placement, including supervisory meetings and regularly scheduled agency meetings students are expected to attend (e.g., staff or treatment team meetings). The full academic year schedule reflects which weeks the student will begin, end, and have time away from the work. Because each agency has unique needs, provides unique services, and has unique hours of service delivery, these scheduling agreements will differ from student to student. Above all, the most important scheduling decisions consider the professional manner in which students begin, take time away from, and put closure to their field experiences. In other words, the relationship and services to those who receive services from a student’s placement agency (“clients”) must always be a priority. Practically speaking, this means a student should not assume that they have no field responsibilities during school breaks (especially the longer winter break) unless this agreement has been explicitly made during the negotiated scheduling process.

More specific guidance:

1. MSW students complete a minimum of 900 hours over two years, or, as noted above, 450 hours each academic year, in the field between September and May of each respective academic year.
2. Some field sites may require more hours than our field program’s minimum. In these cases, students must be made aware of this prior to accepting the placement.
3. Students schedule consistent blocks of time in their agency each week so as to complete their hours within 2-3 days.
4. Student hours reflect the “normal business hours” of the agency. Evening and weekend hours are an exception to the rule and must be approved by the faculty liaison and field education coordinator. The rationale for this expectation is that the student’s experience as “member of the agency community” is significant to social work practice skill development. And therefore, it follows that if the student is not consistently interacting with other agency personnel within the agency culture, they miss out on integral learning opportunities.
5. Students either develop their own way to document their hours on a weekly basis or use an agency process to do so. Regardless of the mechanism used, it is students’ responsibility to track the number of hours completed for the duration of their time in field.
6. Students make up any regularly scheduled time that they miss; there is no built-in allowance for sick or vacation time and students must complete the required hours regardless of the reason for missing. In case of illness or unavoidable absence, the student informs the agency as soon as possible. If the student has an absence of three or more consecutive “field” days, the student and Field Instructor immediately notify their Faculty Field Liaison. Unless otherwise approved by the Field Education Coordinator, students make up any missed time within the same semester. If considerable lengths of time are missed, arrangements can be made to make up time before the beginning of the next semester, but only as a result of a meeting that leads to a written plan and approval by the student, Field Instructor and Faculty Field Liaison.
7. There may be occasions when it is necessary for students to perform overtime work. When these situations do arise, students will plan for and take compensatory time off in a balanced and professional manner.
8. Any on-call or crisis duty must be pre-approved by the Faculty Field Liaison and the Field Education Coordinator. No student is to be on call during class time.
9. While occasionally there will be important field opportunities scheduled during a student’s regularly scheduled class, students may not be required to miss class in order to attend a field meeting or event.
10. Students complete their hours no later than the Friday after the last day of classes in May and are expected to be working in the agency at least until then. If a student finds that they “have enough hours” and would like to end early, the student must make a formal request of the Field Instructor and Faculty Field Liaison, which must be approved by both as well as the Field Education Coordinator. In other words, students may not “work ahead” of their approved schedule just so they can finish the field course weeks ahead of time. Part of the rationale for this is that students’ Practice class curricula are interdependent with students’ Field Experience, thus, students’ ending significantly early would be out of sync with their Practice coursework.
11. Students should not be discouraged from working additional hours for the purposes of planning for unexpected absences; students should only be aware that they may not need to use these hours for successful completion of field. For example, some students choose to carry a balance of 15 - 20 hours with them throughout the year as a back up. They do this knowing (and accepting) the fact that they may not ever need to use these hours.

**COVID-19**

While all remote assignments do count towards students’ required field hours, students should assume their internships will be in-person unless otherwise noted. **Students should make the Field Education Coordinator aware of any limitations to or concerns about providing in-person services due to COVID-19 at the time of Field Application submission.**

**Transportation**

Most field sites require some form of transportation not only to and from the field site but may also require the use of a car during the field day. [The field policy](https://www.uvm.edu/sites/default/files/Locations%20of%20Field%20Placements%20and%20Distance%20From%20Campus.pdf) states that we will not place you more than one (1) hour of driving distance away from campus unless specifically requested by the student. **Students should make the Field Education Coordinator aware of any preferences for, limitations to or concerns about transportation to/from your field site at the time of Field Application submission.** Please note that without transportation, your options for placement will be extremely limited.

**Criminal Records**

Students may be required by their field agency to complete a criminal record or background check with both state and federal law enforcement. If requested to do so, students will need to complete this check in order to have their placement confirmed. Most agencies pay for this process, however some do not. If this is the case, the student will be expected to incur the expense.

It is quite possible that students who have a criminal record, will not be accepted for an internship with some, if not most, or even any, of our approved field placements. Students who do have a record are, therefore, encouraged to talk with the Field Education Coordinator about this *as soon as they begin their field application process*. This allows the student to consider how they may ethically enter into the placement process regarding past convictions. Please note that **ALL students with a criminal record are required to discuss this with their matched field placement personnel prior to accepting any field placement offer**. Therefore, this must happen no later than April 15th of the Spring prior to Fall enrollment in Field.

The Field Coordinator will make reasonable efforts to match the student successfully with a field agency; however, the Department of Social Work cannot guarantee that students with a criminal record will be able to enroll in the required field experience course. This will prevent students from being able to earn their MSW degree.

**Resume**

Please attach an up-to-date resume, including all social work -employment, internship experiences or volunteer experiences. This resume will be sent ahead of time to potential Field Instructors. More specific guidance about this can be found below.

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University of Vermont

Graduate Social Work Program

Name:

Address:

E-mail:

Telephone:

**Check one:** Full-time  Part-time

**Inquiry**

1. When reflecting on your foundation year social work field placement(s), what experiences changed how you saw yourself as a social work practitioner and how? This is an invitation for you to share some specific details about the actual placement, but please focus more intentionally on your unique professional development stories.
2. Please share your ideal vision for a Specialized Practice Year field placement. Include what you hope to learn, what kind of setting you would like to learn in, and/or with what population you would like to work.

Please also include additional information or special factors you would like the Field Education Coordinator to consider. This includes COVID-19 and/or transportation limitations/concerns, criminal record, etc. as well as anything else that feels pertinent to share. (Please keep comments brief, 200 words max.)

**Release of Information**

I agree that the information I provide in this application and my current resume is a true and accurate representation of myself and my experiences. This application and current resume may be shared as needed with UVM Social Work faculty and prospective Field Instructors to facilitate field planning.

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Student Signature Date

**Please attach a copy of your CURRENT RESUME (please send resume as a .docx or .pdf; save file as Lastname, Firstinitial. Resume”) and email this application to** [**jean.sienkewicz@uvm.edu**](mailto:jean.sienkewicz@uvm.edu)**.**

**Jean Sienkewicz**

**Field Education Coordinator**

[**jean.sienkewicz@uvm.edu**](mailto:jean.sienkewicz@uvm.edu)