

## Student Hours

Students are in their placements between Labor Day and the end of the first week in May. Because of this, the Field Experience/Practicum Course is a full 35 weeks long. Therefore, the student “time in the course” typically looks and feels different from a traditionally structured course taken in a classroom. When students start in the Fall, they remain in the same placement until the end of the academic year (the completion of the Spring semester). This means that there is no “course ending” in December or “course beginning” in January.

To manage the required hours and course length, students and Field Instructors are expected to work together to set both a weekly (micro) schedule and a broader full academic year schedule.

The weekly schedule reflects which days of the week and what hours the student is expected to be in the placement, the day and time of supervisory meetings, and the days and times of any regularly scheduled agency meetings students are expected to attend (i.e., staff meetings 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 placement experiences. In other words, the relationship and services to those who receive support from the student’s placement agency (“clients”) must always be a priority. Practically speaking, this means students should not assume that they have no placement responsibilities during school breaks (especially the longer winter break) unless this agreement has been *explicitly* made during the scheduling process. The scheduling process is a required component of the co-creation, by students and Field Instructors, of the Learning Agreement (contract) assignment for the year.

Additionally, students will participate in monthly field seminars with their Faculty Field Liaisons. These will be scheduled at the beginning of each

semester within each liaison/student group. The seminars are 1½ hours each and can be counted as a part of the student's total minimum required field hours for each semester.

More specific guidance:

1. Undergraduate students, Foundation year MSW (FMSW) students, and Specialized Practice year MSW (SPMSW) students complete a minimum of 450 hours in the field between September and May. Specialized Practice Advanced Standing (SPMSW AS) students complete a minimum of 600 hours.
2. Some placement sites may require more hours than the Field Education 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 schedules of staff and supervisors within the organization. Evening and weekend hours are an exception, not the rule, and must be approved by the Faculty Field Liaison and Field Education Coordinator.
5. The identified Field Instructor must be on site during most of the student's hours; for the hours that this is not the case, another staff person must be identified for the student as a primary support.
6. The hours in the student's placement field must allow time for the student to participate in organizational practice with staff from across the agency.
7. The hours in the field must allow for work with primary collaborators in the community during their work hours.
8. 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.
9. Students make up any regularly scheduled time that they miss. In other words, there is no built-in allowance for sick or vacation time—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 days from placement, the

student and Field Instructor immediately notify their Faculty Field Liaison. Unless otherwise approved by the Field Education Coordinator, students make up time they have missed within the semester. If a student misses considerable lengths of time, they can make arrangements 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 of the Faculty Field Liaison, Field Instructor, and student.

10. 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.
11. 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.
12. While occasionally there will be important learning opportunities related to placement that take place during a student's regularly scheduled classes, students may not be required to miss class in order to attend a field meeting or event.
13. Students complete their hours no later than the Friday after the last day of classes in May. At the same time, students are expected to be working in the agency at least until the last day of classes (also in May). If a student finds that they "have enough hours" and would like to end early, they must make a formal request which must then be approved by the Field Instructor and the Faculty Field Liaison. In other words, students may not "work ahead" of their approved schedule just so they can finish their placement weeks ahead of time.
14. That said, 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, knowing (and accepting) the fact that they may not ever need to use these hours.
15. Students may not count commuting time to/from their placement sites towards their overall required hours.