

# **Bachelor of Social Work Program**



**Field Manual  
SWK 450 and 460  
2019-2021**



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October 7, 2019

Field Instructors and BSW Students,

Welcome to the St. Augustine College Field Instruction Program! This manual includes important information on the field program including:

- The policies and objectives of the BSW field instruction experience at St. Augustine College
- The guidelines under which field instruction is managed
- The responsibilities of the student, field instructor, field director, field liaison, and College

The BSW program at St. Augustine College (SAC) is constantly growing and evolving in order to better meet its students' needs. While every attempt will be made to keep this document updated with the latest information, there may be times when there could be a lag between changes in the policies and practices of the program and their publication in the manual.

Please, do not hesitate to contact me with questions, concerns, or comments regarding the content of this manual or any other aspect of field instruction.

We look forward to working with you,

Field Director: Position vacant in Fall 2019. TBA in Spring 2020

Field Liaison Fall 2019- Dr. A. Clark Dubois, [ACDubois@prof.staugustine.edu](mailto:ACDubois@prof.staugustine.edu)

Chair BSW Program- Dr. Marcia Pantell, [Mpantell@staugustine.edu](mailto:Mpantell@staugustine.edu)

St. Augustine College  
Bachelor in Social Work Program

## **The Council on Social Work Education Standards**

The Council on Social Work Education (CSWE), in its educational policy for Baccalaureate Degree Programs in Social Work Education, states that:

The purpose of social work education is to prepare competent and effective professionals, to develop social work knowledge, and to provide leadership in the development of service delivery systems (Educational Policy 1.1)

CSWE also states that:

. . . . “is an integral component in social work education which is anchored in the mission, goals, and educational level of the program.” It is critical that the student work closely and in a timely manner with the BSW field director in order to develop the best possible plan for successful completion of the program requirements. (CSWE Educational Policy 1.1)

The field practicum at SAC is based upon the curriculum policy of the CSWE. The practicum is an essential element of the BSW program at SAC. Field instruction includes a variety of experiences that will enable the student to grow in his or her understanding of the values and roles of the generalist social work practitioner. These experiences take place in a variety of settings across the continuum of micro, mezzo, and/or macro generalist social work practice. The student’s knowledge base will deepen and the student will begin to integrate theory with practice under the guidance and example of the field instructor.

## **Learning Objectives**

The purpose of the BSW field practicum is to help the student to integrate knowledge and master non-clinical, general social work practice skills that are consistent with the Social Work competencies and the SAC Social Work program objectives as they become rooted in community and social service practice. Through direct face-to-face client experiences and with the guidance of the field instructor, the student strengthens a professional sense of self as a generalist practitioner. At the end of both field courses, SWK 450 and 460, the field instructor will evaluate the student on each of the practicum objectives below which have been elaborated on in the student's learning contract with the agency.

### Field Practicum Learning Objectives

1. Students demonstrate ethical and professional behavior.
2. Students engage diversity and difference in practice.
3. Students advance human rights and social, economic, and environmental justice.
4. Students engage in practice-informed research and research-informed practice.
5. Students engage in policy practice.
6. Students engage with individuals, families, groups, organizations, and communities.
7. Students assess individuals, families, groups, organizations, and communities.
8. Students intervene with individuals, families, groups, organizations, and communities.
9. Students evaluate practice with individuals, families, groups, organizations, and communities



Student Objectives

In addition to the required field practicum objectives, the student will establish several of their own individual learning objectives within the context of general social work practice. The student will self-evaluate their own work at the end of the practicum on their ability to master these self-selected objectives at a beginner's level general social work practice. Practice sites are selected based on their ability to provide an experience that meets BSW program objectives with as much breadth as possible while respecting the individual interests of the student.



## **General Requirements and Guidelines for Field Instruction**

Students complete three courses in field practicum instruction. The third course, SWK 470, is taught in the classroom while the other two courses are in the contracted agency:

- SWK 450 - Field Instruction I (210 hours)
- SWK 460 - Field Instruction II (210 hours)
- SWK 470- Integrative Seminar

Number of hours: The student will complete a total of 420 hours in field at the same agency. Student contracts with the agency for the specific number of hours per week.

Schedule: The student and field instructor will come to an agreement about the specific days and times the student will be expected to be present at the site. The number of hours recorded does not include the half hour taken for lunch or dinner which is mandatory when students work 8 hours or more per day.

SWK 470 – The Integrative Seminar is a class taken at the same time the student is in field. Students complete assignments connecting coursework taken to their field experiences, and also learn from the field experiences of other students.

The following describes the two options for field:

### **A. Standard Two Semesters Option**

For the standard option, students complete field in two semesters. Students should plan to be present for at least 2 full workdays each week at their field instruction site. The seminar class is taken either in the Spring or Summer semester.

Fall/Spring (August- May) = 15 hours/week

Spring/Summer (January- August) = 18 hours/week

Summer/Fall (June- December) = 18 hours/week

Exceptions to the two day a week schedule depend on the consent of the agency and field director and may be made to offer a wider range of experiences, or to accommodate a student who cannot decrease hours at their full time paid job while doing the field practicum (if the exception can be made without compromising the field experience).

### **B. The Block Field Option**

A block placement/field practicum takes place when a student completes both field courses as well as the Integrative Seminar (SWK450, SWK460, and SWK470) in one semester. This option is only available during the Spring and Summer semesters.



Spring (January- May) = 28 hours/week for 15 weeks.

Summer (June- August) = 35 hours/week for 12 weeks.

## **Field Requirements and Identifying a Field Placement Site**

### **Student Requirements**

Students complete their field placement at the end of the BSW program. To be eligible for field, students must first demonstrate the following:

- A cumulative G.P.A. of 2.75 or above
- Successful completion of all general education requirements
- Successful completion of all social work courses, except 450, 460 and 470 (students with a G.P.A. of 3.0 or above will be allowed to take one upper level social work course while completing their internship)
- Successful completion of a minimum of 20 elective hours
- Attend a Pre-field meeting with the Field Director or Field Liaison, and complete an online test about field requirements

### **Pre-Field Meeting**

Students should plan to attend a pre-field meeting 2 semesters prior to starting field when they are notified of the date for that meeting. The pre-field meeting generally last two hours and may be offered in-person or as a webinar. Students may also request a 1:1 appointment with the Field Director or Field Liaison for additional help. During the pre-field meeting, students will learn about:

- Criteria for admission to field instruction
- Field requirements
- Student learning objectives
- The requirements for agency and Field Instructor selection (see next page)
- The search process and the agencies that might match their interests.
- How to complete the required paperwork for field and the deadlines for the contract.



It is the primary responsibility of the student to identify a preferred field placement site. The field liaisons and field director provide students with guidance needed during the search process. A brief list of agencies will be provided to students based on their interests. Students are encouraged to pursue field instruction at one of the sites on the list, as most of them are known to meet the criteria for the program and previous students have had positive experiences at those sites. However, students are welcome to seek out other opportunities at other sites not on the list.

While searching for a field placement, students should regularly keep the Field Director or Field Liaison informed of their progress or barriers they are facing during the process. Students should also keep in mind that they are in competition for field placements with students from all other Chicago area BSW & MSW programs and some psychology bachelor programs also; therefore, an early start in setting up interviews is critical to success.

### **Field Instructor and Agency Requirements**

Field Instructors and agencies must provide the following to be accepted as a social work field placement site at St. Augustine College:

1. Provide a primary field instructor with an MSW (from an accredited school of social work) and 2 years post-graduate experience or a primary field instructor with a BSW (from an accredited school of social work) and 3 years of experience including supervisory experience.
  - a. The primary field instructor must meet twice a month (minimally) with the student for one hour each, and must assume responsibility for the student's work which includes signing the student's evaluations and timesheets.
2. New field instructors must agree to participate in an orientation session arranged by the Field Director or Field Liaison.
3. The agency must provide the students with learning opportunities where they can demonstrate all 9 practicum objectives and experience at all levels of practice. These opportunities must be provided exclusively through in-person contact with clients and constituencies. Simulated experiences are not permissible. (CSWE Standard 2.2.4)
4. The agency must have a service philosophy that is in line with the mission of the social work profession

Proctoring alternatives. Agencies may offer the assignment of a proctor, (or non-social worker) with a BA or MA and experience in the field, for student daily administrative guidance/supervision. This is done with the approval of the program Field Director when there are not sufficient social workers in an agency that could supervise a student on a daily basis. However, the agency must still be able to provide a primary and legal supervisor for the student who is a social worker with a diploma from an accredited social work program with experience in the field. The proctor is not a substitute for the

primary supervisor's minimum required time with the student and/or their evaluation of the student.

If the agency does not meet field instruction site requirements, the student will need to continue the search for another site.

### **Interviewing for Field**

Students should consider selecting up to three agencies to interview for field instruction. Interviewing at 2-3 agencies allows the student to assess which agency will provide the most desirable learning experience.

The student should prepare for these interviews in the same manner she/he would prepare for a job interview. This includes appropriate attire and bringing a professional resume. If students do not have a professional resume, students can contact the Career and Transfer Center at 773-878-3357 or 773-878-3960. The center offers resume workshops and interviewing skills.

Communicating with potential agencies- It is important for students to inform potential field supervisors if the student is interviewing at other agencies. Students must not formally accept a learning contract from an agency until the student has decided on that placement agency and the BSW Field Director has approved it. Once they have accepted a field agency offer of a field placement they should not continue interviewing and then request to change agencies. This would deprive other students of an opportunity for a placement and is not professional practice.

Students should communicate during the interview that they are expected to do all 420 hours of fieldwork in the same agency under the same primary field instructor, and that one learning contract will cover both SWK 450 and SWK 460.



### **Field Instruction in Student's Place of Employment**

Field instruction in a student's place of employment is possible only if it can be verified that the student will be able to receive a field instruction experience which is substantially and qualitatively different from the work experience that the student has had at the agency. The field instruction must be in a different division than the student's paid employment and the student's field instructor (and proctor if needed) must be different than the supervisor(s) for the student's paid employment. Students who are interested in pursuing this type of arrangement must communicate this to the field director during the Pre-Field Meeting in order to determine whether this arrangement can be considered. Appendix E: Field Instruction in Student's Place of Employment must be submitted to the field director prior to developing a learning contract. Final approval will not be given until Appendix E, and the learning contract is completed by the agency and student, reviewed and signed by all parties including the field director.

### **Deadlines to Submit Field Paperwork**

Students should plan to submit completed and signed field paperwork, including the field contract, by these dates:

If starting field in the Fall: second week in August

If starting field in the Spring: end of November

If starting field in the Summer: second week in April

If paperwork is submitted after these dates, the program cannot guarantee the student will be able to start field the following semester. Late paperwork will not be accepted after the first day of class for the semester in which the student will register for the first field course (SWK 450). See the next section for further instruction.

### **Registering and Starting the Field Practicum**

Students may not register for SWK 450, SWK 460 and/or SWK 470 until their learning contract and a memorandum of agreement are completed in full and signed by the SAC field instructor or Chair, Agency Primary Supervisor, and student. The Integrative Seminar, SWK 470, must be taken during one of the semesters in which they take SWK 450 or SWK 460.

Students may not begin the field practicum until the learning contract is signed by the field director and she/he is officially registered for the field course.

## **Information for Students in Field**

### **Supervision**

The use of supervision as a means to self-knowledge and improvement of one's effectiveness as a generalist social work practitioner should be considered a priority during the field experience. Through ongoing supervision (scheduled meetings and discussions with the field instructor and proctor) the student's identity and abilities as a social worker should emerge and solidify. Each student needs to be open to such activity and understand that ongoing development of one's own awareness and abilities are an integral part of one's effectiveness and satisfaction as a social work practitioner.

### **SAC Confidentiality Statement for Students Completing Internship**

While students are completing internship, practicum or observation hours, they will have access to personal information for clients/patients or children. Students are expected to uphold the confidentiality of clients/patients/children and employees while in the field. This includes properly storing client/patient or children's files at the agency, protecting the identity of individuals served at the agency/organization, and limiting discussions of clients/patients/children to employees of the agency/organization and classroom discussions for educational purposes only. Students are expected to follow confidentiality laws/ethical codes related to their field of study (for example the Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act (HIPAA), the Social Work Code of Ethics, and the National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC) Code of Ethics) in situations below:

- during classroom discussions, the identity of patients/clients/children should be protected. This includes not using identifiers such as name and address.
- students should never take client/patient or children's files outside of the agency, photograph or store them on personal electronic devices, or gain access to client/patient files from a home or SAC computer,
- students should not use their personal cell phones or email or SAC email to contact agency clients to protect client and intern confidentiality.
- students are expected to know and follow any confidentiality policies and procedures that the agency follows such as those for agency accreditation.
- Students should follow the social work code of ethics technology requirements and should never use personal or SAC facebook to communicate with clients.

### **E-mail Policy**

The official form of communication for St. Augustine College for any college related correspondence is the St. Augustine e-mail. However, during practicum, some agencies assign students an agency email to conduct agency business. The agency e-mail must be used according to the policies of the agency to communicate with clients and staff of the agency.

### **Professional Liability Insurance Coverage**

St. Augustine College provides limited liability insurance for students in field instruction. The field agency may also have liability insurance for students and supervisors and this should be stated on the field agreement when this is signed. Students who would like more information about this should

contact the field director.



### **Student Safety**

The memorandum of agreement signed by agency and school asks agencies for assurance that orientation will be provided for activities undertaken and to keep students and clients safe. When beginning their placement, students and supervisors should review safety procedures and discuss with the primary field instructor the agency safety policies and guidelines so that they are not at-risk of harm or placed in potentially dangerous situations. Students who believe that their placement jeopardizes their personal safety, or that of the clients they work with, need to speak with the primary field instructor first and review agency safety procedures. If needed a student safety plan is to be written and presented to the field liaison or field director at SAC. If the field instructor fails to develop a safety plan with the student in a reasonable period of time to prevent risks and minimize harm then the student should contact the field director as soon as possible to solve the problem.

Home visits are a regular part of some field placements. Agencies are expected to take appropriate measures to ensure the safety of students during home visits. Students are not permitted to make home visits by themselves in the first field semester (or first 210 hours). The same safeguards provided to staff must be provided to students. However, in some cases students may need additional support and security provisions. The primary field instructor and the field director/field liaison should be consulted if safety is a concern.

### **Mandated Student Reporting**

Mandated Reporters of Child Abuse and Neglect The Illinois Abused and Neglected Child Reporting Act (ANCRA), has been amended in 2012 to include "personnel of institutions of higher education." Accordingly, all individuals employed and/or appointed by the College, including but not limited to faculty, staff, student employees, and volunteers are considered Mandated Reporters of child abuse and neglect. This means that all employees have a duty to immediately report or cause a report to be made whenever they have "reasonable cause to believe that a child known to them in their professional or official capacity may be abused or neglected." St. Augustine College employees have a legal obligation to immediately report or cause a report to be made to the Illinois Department of Children and Family Services (DCFS) at (800) 25-ABUSE, or (800-252-2873).

Students in the Social Work program are mandated reporters of child abuse and neglect whenever they have reasonable cause to believe that a child known to them through their student participation in field placements, internships and teaching placements in social service agencies, health care facilities and child care/school settings, may be abused or neglected.

Social Work students in field placements are not required to obtain permission to file a report of child abuse or neglect, however they are strongly advised to seek and document professional consultation about what constitutes reasonable cause", "abuse", or "neglect" above. from the primary supervisor and/or by contacting the anonymous DCFS reporting hotline. This may assist in making an informed, legal, and ethical decision about the course of action to take.



### **Sexual Harassment and Discrimination**

SAC is committed to the values and laws that promote freedom from harassment and discrimination. Appendix A of this manual is the *SAC Harassment Policy for Students in Field Instruction*. Students must read the policy, be aware of what constitutes harassment, and to sign the manual agreement stating that they have read and understand the policy.

Furthermore, St. Augustine College follows the provisions of the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) and Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973. Such provisions also apply to students seeking and participating in field instruction. Students who believe they are experiencing discrimination should notify the field director or other appropriate representative at SAC immediately.

### **Holidays and Vacation**

In general, students are to follow the academic calendar and are exempt from field instruction related work during academic holidays and any other holidays in the agency calendar. However, due to the extended college break between December and January, each student and field instructor will negotiate a schedule at the start of the field practicum that will respect student and client/agency needs during that time. Breaks, holidays, and vacations must be stated in the learning contract. A scheduled student vacation during internships, or a three-to-six week break may be impractical or even harmful to the client/agency. Students should be open and flexible as this matter is decided. However, it is reasonable for the student to receive a minimum two-week vacation during this time period if the agency provides such opportunities to agency professionals, or to interns over the winter academic calendar break.

#### Holidays and Vacation times Observed in the Academic Calendar

- Labor Day
- Thanksgiving Break (Thursday-Sunday)
- Winter Break (5-6 weeks: December-January)
- Spring Break and Easter Break (week prior to Easter)
- Fourth of July

### **Sick Time and Extended Absences and failure to complete the second field course according to the contract.**

Students are required to notify their primary field instructor (and proctor when applicable) in the event of an absence. Students have to make-up the time lost regardless of the reason for the absence (i.e., student illness). In the event of extended illness or other situations which prevent the student from fulfilling their 420 hour time commitment responsibilities for SWK 450 and SWK 460, the student must notify both the school and field instructor(s) in writing as quickly as possible so that services for agency clients can be continued. A meeting may be held with the student, field director, and field instructor(s) in order to determine whether the student will be allowed to return to their field placement. It is expected that students will complete both field courses without interruption at the same agency. Students are not considered ready for graduation unless all 420 hours required for both field courses are completed according to the student-agency learning contract. An exception can be

made if agency supervisor and field director at SAC are notified in writing of an intent to delay the second field course (SWK 450) and documentation of the need to delay the second course is provided and accepted. Students have one semester normally to complete an incomplete course grade but they are expected to reapply to the College and the BSW program if inactive for more than one year. In the case of field placements they may have to repeat the entire field placement if they are not able to complete the second course of field at the same agency with the same supervisor as initially contracted. Students who are aware of pregnancy and expect a delivery date during the field practicum should notify the field agency and the field director of that when the student learning contract is completed and before field hours begin.

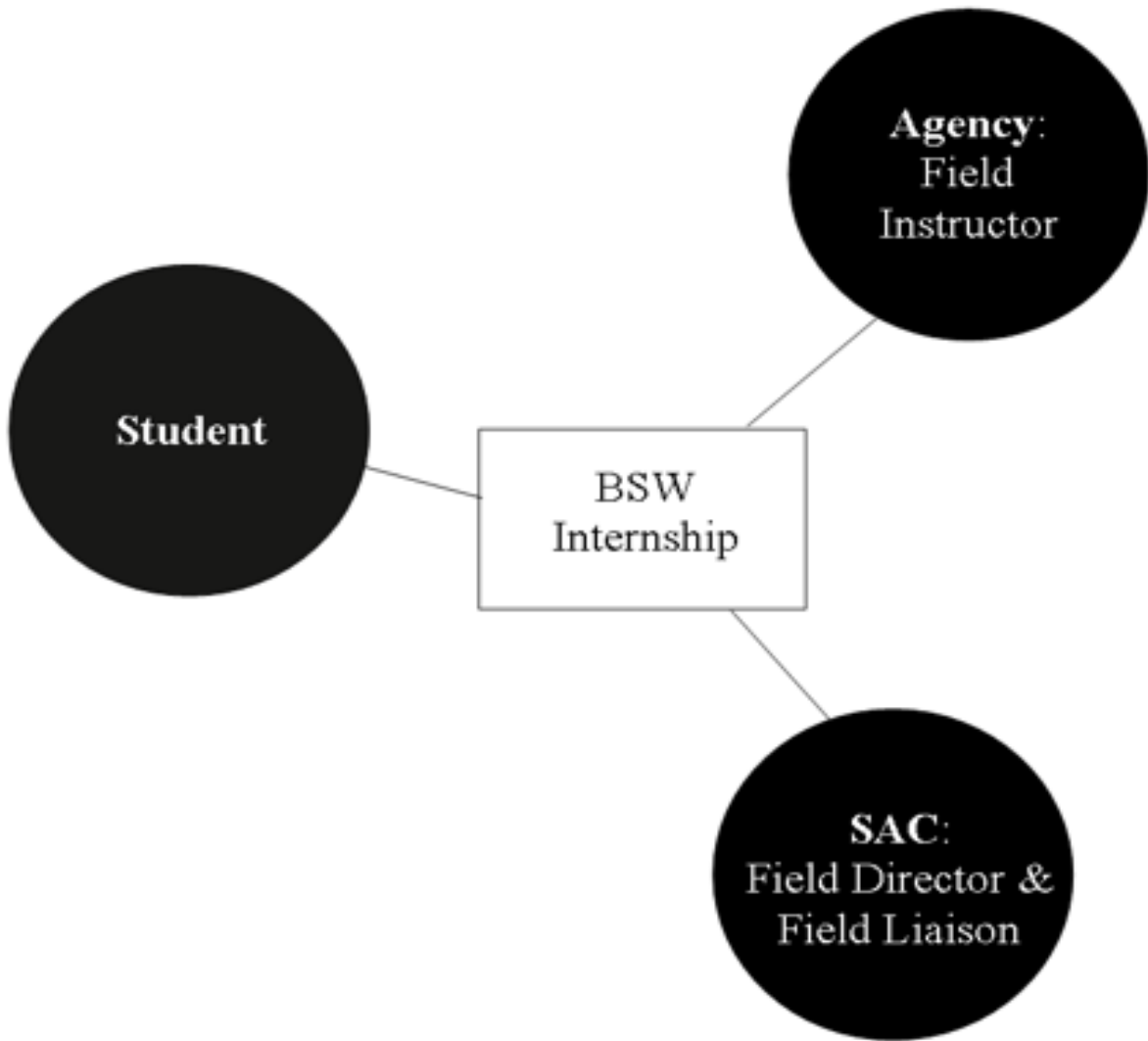
### **Unpredicted Agency or Field Instructor Changes**

Changes in field instructor and field site are discouraged (and rare) since the agency has invested time in orienting and training students. Students are expected to do all 420 hours at the same agency. If a situation occurs that results in the need to change field instruction sites, or if the qualified field instructor becomes unavailable, the BSW field director must be notified immediately by the student and agency. The field director will review all paperwork from the previous placement to determine how many hours the student needs to complete at the new placement.

If the contracted primary field instructor becomes unavailable during internship, and while the student is completing their hours, and if the student is unable to change the field instruction site, then the BSW field director and the agency will collaborate to locate a qualified alternate primary field instructor within two weeks to supervise the student for the remainder of the internship. Some agencies may be permitted to contract with an outside qualified social work supervisor. If no qualified agency supervisor is available within two weeks, then the college will assume responsibility and provide a qualified BSW program instructor/social worker to be the primary supervisor. (Standard 2.2.9) The agency is responsible for arranging immediately for a qualified daily administrative proctor for the student. This person is expected to be given agency supervisory time to collaborate with the SAC Program instructor on the agency's procedures and policies in addition to the general BSW social work practice expectations. If the unexpected change occurs during the first 210 practicum hours then a visit with the agency should occur at least twice after that and more frequently if needed to stabilize and monitor the practicum experience for all.

### **A Collaborative Approach**

The successful field experience depends on the collaborative efforts of all parties: the student, the agency and the school.



## **Descriptions of Roles and Responsibilities**

### **St. Augustine College Roles and Responsibilities**

#### Field Director

St. Augustine College assumes overall responsibility for the administration of the BSW field instruction program and policies through the BSW field director. The BSW field director reports directly to the BSW program chair or program who also provides coverage in the event of the field director's absence. The BSW field director must have sufficient administrative time granted to assume this responsibility if they are teaching courses at the same time. The field director may supervise and delegate work to a qualified BSW program field liaison (described below) when additional program staff are needed to manage the size of the field enrollment and this is authorized by the program chair. The field director carries the primary responsibility for arranging qualified general practice placement sites, approving qualified field instructors, orienting primary field instructors, maintaining timely communications, information tracking system, and providing support for the field instructors and students while planning and working in placements. The field director is responsible for creating and implementing tools for evaluation to assess student learning and to ensure quality field experiences.

The field director reviews for completeness and signs all learning contracts prior to students registering for and starting field. While the student is in field, the field director responds within 48 workday hours to student or field instructor communications by phone, email, or appointment to consult and problem solve about any situation that arises in relation to the field placement. It is respectful and best practice for students and primary field instructors discuss the field problems together prior to involving the field director since direct communication can resolve many issues. The field director will be available should further consultation or BSW program intervention may be indicated.

The field director responsibilities include:

- Early identification, communication, tracking, and advising of students as they approach eligibility to start the field practicum approximately two semesters in advance of their readiness.
- Identifying and developing relationships with potential new field sites
- Orienting new field instructors to social work evaluation methods, contract completion, and program expectations for students.
- Assuring each field site is visited and (recording form kept of visit) at least once during the first 210 hours of the field practicum and as needed or requested after that.
- Withdrawing a field site when deemed necessary and informing the BSW program chair.
- Interviewing and recommending hiring to the Program Chair of field liaisons, providing evidence of need for approval of field liaison positions.
- All electronic and/or paper records pertinent to field instruction are maintained by the field director.
- Performing any other duties deemed relevant to the success of the placement site, the well-being of the student, their clients, and the BSW program.
- Maintain students' rights and responsibilities, and academic information as described in the Field Manual and St. Augustine Catalog
- Update the field manual and assure it is synced with the BSW program manual

- Reviewing and maintaining CSWE field standards and collaborating on BSW program policies and the CSWE self-study for accreditation.
- Assuring students in field are covered by SAC liability insurance policies.

The field director has a minimum education of a master's degree in social work and two years of post-MSW experience in social work practice. The field director has a full-time appointment in the social work department. Minimally 25% of the field director's assigned time is dedicated to providing educational and administrative leadership for the field program.

### Field Liaison

Students may be assigned to work directly with a field liaison by the field director when the program enrollment indicates this need. The assigned field liaison acts as the primary St. Augustine College contact for advising students and their field instructors regarding field related issues. Many duties of the field director above may be delegated to the field liaison. The field liaison's primary role is to provide support, feedback, monitoring, and guidance to students and field instructors prior to and during the field experience. The field liaison reports to and is supervised by the field director for this appointment.

The field liaison will

- Engage and develop positive working relationships with both students and field instructors
- Field liaisons are an ambassador for the BSW program and SAC and provide general program and college information to agencies.
- Assist students in identifying an appropriate field sites where they can learn general practice program objectives.
- Identify and gather information on new agencies interested in having BSW general practice field placements.
- Collaborate with field instructors to identify and record appropriate learning experiences for students that meet practicum objectives as described on the field contract.
- Coordinate and complete a field site visit with each student and her/his field instructor preferably during the first 210 hours, at a time that is convenient for the field site.
- Be knowledgeable of students' rights and responsibilities, and academic information as described in the Field Manual and St. Augustine Catalog
- Respond, within 48 work hours, to all questions and concerns of students and field instructors
- Communicate (and complete additional site visits as needed) with student or field instructor to resolve perceived problems arising within the field setting. Consult quickly with the field director on issues of potential harm to students, staff, or clients in order to identify an appropriate resolution.
- Communicate to the field director the strengths, resources, concerns, and challenges of agencies to meet the educational needs of students.

- Collect and review for completion, all field paperwork and document progress on the tracking logs that are hard copy and/or electronic. Notify field director of student readiness to register for field.



Site visits to field agencies

The field liaison or field director will conduct one site visit per student minimally while the student is in field. The purpose of the site visit is to observe, support students' progress in the field instruction environment, and support the work of the field instructors. Whenever possible, site visits are scheduled during the first 210 hours of the placement by appointment and during a time convenient to primary supervisors when students are also regularly scheduled to be at the agency.



## **Agency Roles and Responsibilities**

### Primary Field Instructor

The requirements to be a Primary Field Instructor have been described earlier in the section on Field Instructor and Agency requirements. Primary field instructors should be dedicated to the social work profession with a commitment to education and to their own professional development. The role of the field instructor is crucial to the success of the student's experience in field instruction. It is expected, in addition to having the necessary social work credentials and experience, that the agency which employs the field instructor will allow sufficient release time for him/her to provide regularly scheduled supervisory and field instruction duties according to the field contract.

As an educator, the field instructor serves as a guide or mentor, challenger, source of support, role model, and a transmitter of knowledge and experience. This is done not only by word, but by example. The primary field instructor facilitates the students learning experience so that the student can take advantage of a broad range of social work activities in the agency and community as well as interdisciplinary experiences that prepare the student for practice. The primary field instructor provides ethical guidance and mediates these experiences to help students gain confidence in their role as a social worker at the same time.

The field instructors (and non-social work proctors) have the central role in the student's development during field. Through regularly scheduled meetings (minimally two hours per month), they utilize social work methods to engage and challenge the student in supervision. Case presentations, process recordings, audio and video recordings, direct observation, and documentation of worker-client meetings as well as assigned readings and literature searches with discussion can be used in supervision.

When SAC approved agency proctors are used for administrative supervision in addition to a social work field instructor, the primary field instructor must assure that the values and ethics of the social work profession are taught and that the learning experience builds the student's confidence in their social work role within the agency by helping them integrate the knowledge base of social work with their practice experience. In order to support this, the proctor should be familiar with social work professional goals. The primary field instructor must have twice per month social work supervision (one hour each) minimally with the student while the proctor may provide daily assistance and guidance. Throughout the year the field instructor assists the student in identifying the student's strengths and limitations as they learn to practice social work. The student should grow in self-knowledge, integrate theory with practice, and understand better the relationship between personal and professional experience.

Field Instructors and practicum sites that are unable to offer an adequate learning experience are selected out by the school and the students as both participate in evaluating the student's learning experiences at the agency.

### **Student Roles and Responsibilities**

SAC students in field instruction are adult learners whose participation and communication in field instruction is expected to be active and assertive. Previous adult work experience will assist many students in their initial experiences of fieldwork. With the assistance of the field instructor, the student will grow in greater awareness of her/his professional identity and skills.

Students demonstrate their active participation by coming prepared with questions for their field instructors, by initiating ideas for learning and improving service to clients, by sharing their experiences honestly and openly with the field instructor, and listening to feedback. Activity of this kind ensures that the student will grow in confidence and effectiveness. Adult learning and training is a life-long process, and as such, supervision can be the most valuable aspect of the field instruction experience. It lays the groundwork for future professional development.

All assignments and written work at the agency are to be completed according to agency time expectations. Students will be punctual, dress appropriately, and abide by all agency/site procedures and policies. During orientation to the site, students need to learn the essential policies and methods related to practice, such as abiding by the NASW Code of Ethics, confidentiality, professional behavior, liability and risk management. Finally, by assuming responsibility for themselves, students model a behavior that can be supportive, therapeutic, and healing for their clients.

It is important that each student understand that their role as a learner is primary and critical to the success of field instruction. For example, students who show a lack of interest, lack of initiative, an inability to work with clients and field instructor, or an inability to integrate theory and practice will have difficulty successfully completing the internship. Students should not be expected to replace the agency staff in providing necessary agency services such as translation services for clients, as they are not trained as qualified language interpreters, and this goes beyond the learning requirements for the field practicum. Students are responsible to follow the NASW code of ethics just as professional social workers are. They need to respect the hours and dates of service agreed to in their contract and should not abandon the agency or clients they serve without appropriate written notification of supervisors and the college field director.

#### **Active Student Participation**

During Field Education, students should:

- ✓ Ask Questions
- ✓ Listen
- ✓ Be on Time
- ✓ Respect Policies
- ✓ Act Ethically and Professionally
- ✓ Anticipate Risks
- ✓ Take Initiative

## **Policy for Grades in SWK 450 and 460**

The only possible grades for a student in field instruction are A, B, or F (Fail). The student evaluation is completed collaboratively by the field instructor and student. The evaluation covers student English writing and communication, student initiative and skills, and each of the practicum objectives. There should be evidence in the SWK 460 evaluation that the student has improved their performance since SWK 450.

### **Who gives me my grade?**

The field director is responsible for final decisions regarding the awarding of grades and other significant decisions regarding the student's role at the placement (i.e., withdrawal, change of site, etc.). The primary field instructor must evaluate the student using the evaluation form and grading system provided by the school. She or he recommends a grade which is then reviewed by the field director. In most cases the field director's grade will be the same as the one given by the primary field instructor. A written explanation is provided to the student and field instructor by the field director if a difference occurs. As with all grades there is a system for grade appeal in the program and at the college. (BSW program manual, Student Appeals)

### **Evaluation of Student's Communication Skills**

The field instructor's evaluation of the student includes an evaluation of the student's skills in writing, reading, and oral communication. It is neither necessary nor desirable that any difficulties in this area wait to be addressed until the end of the semester. If the field instructor believes that the student is lacking in one of these areas, the field liaison or field director should be contacted as soon as possible. The field liaison or field director will meet with the student and field instructor and, if needed, a plan will be made that addresses the student's needs (i.e., extra reading, coursework, etc.).

Bilingual Students: Although being bilingual may be considered an asset, a student's field practicum grade should not be affected by her/his level of Spanish language comprehension. Bilingual fluency and competency is defined as the ability to speak, read, and write in more than one language. For most Spanish native speakers (or other native language speakers), variations in their ability to perform native language skills in all three language areas equally is expected and depends on personal educational history. BSW students who are native speakers vary in English abilities but are expected to have at least an early college level ability to read, write, and speak in English. Professional language terminology may however be continuing to develop, and SAC field students are all there as learners in the profession. They cannot be expected to know immediately all the necessary professional vocabulary, interviewing techniques, paperwork, writing protocols, etc in more than one language. The student and agency will be better served by understanding that field instruction is a learning process for all social work skills including professional English and/or bilingual communications, and that the field instructor is available to guide and assist the student in learning professional communications as well as other skills.

### **Managing Poor Performance Prior to the Semester Field Evaluation**

In the event that a student is demonstrating an inability to meet the requirements of field instruction and the learning contract, the field liaison or field director should be contacted as soon as the need arises and the following actions are taken:

- a meeting will be arranged with the student, field instructor(s), and field liaison/field director
- goals for improvement and support are established that must be evaluated by all above and met within 2 weeks.
- The student and field instructor meet again after a two week period and document progress on these goals.
- Student and field instructor continue to meet and document progress on goals at two week intervals until the next formal field evaluation, unless it is determined prior to that the problem has persisted without progress and could result in problems or harm for the agency and/or clients. This and efforts to assist the student, should be documented clearly by the field instructor and the field instructor will share documentations with the field director until the matter is resolved. In some cases there may be transient difficulties that can be easily corrected such as catching up on paperwork or studying a procedure manual. In other cases the difficulties could be more difficult to correct (see below).

### **Early Suspension or Termination of Field Placement Due to Major Performance Problems**

If a student has engaged in conduct that renders the student unfit to remain at field instruction, the student will be either suspended or terminated immediately from the field placement. The following steps are followed when this is necessary:

#### First:

The primary field instructor shall suspend the student from her/his duties at the site and notify the SAC field director or college administrator immediately of this. As much as possible, student rights of due process shall be respected (see below). However, immediate action may be necessary in order to protect clients, the integrity of the placement site, and SAC.

Reasons for immediate suspension may include unethical or damaging behavior such as sexual activity with clients, theft, substance abuse, violation of confidentiality or agency policies, violence or threats of violence, socializing with clients or other dual relationships, extreme lack of judgment in field work, inability to fulfill responsibilities, inability to engage clients, falsifying information on a background check, failing a drug screen required for the agency, and insubordination. Serious mental instability that interferes with safety of performance of duties and may require evaluation for immediate treatment.

#### Second:

Once the field director has been contacted, appropriate action will be taken, including the process necessary to protect the student's right of due process. Students who have engaged in unethical or dangerous behavior are also subject to dismissal from the social work program pending the decision of the Vice President of Academic Affairs and the Chairperson of the Department of Social Work. Students dismissed by the social work program under these conditions may not re-apply for field placement or the social work program until a plan of remediation is made and satisfied in full. They may however appeal the decision for dismissal according to the due process procedures of St. Augustine College and the BSW Program.

### **Due Process Policy / Procedure**

Students who are dismissed from the field practicum and wish to appeal this decision should follow the policy and procedure described below which also appears in the Social Work *Program Manual* and the *SAC School Catalog*.

### **Termination or Suspension from Field Placement**

The primary field instructor can request that the student be suspended or terminated from the field placement course any time that no progress is made on a plan of correction, or when there is a major problem and potential for harm or unethical behavior. The field director and primary field instructor then meet, with the student if possible, to discuss suspension or termination and the implications for the students continued status in the BSW program. Students terminated or suspended from a field course receive a grade of "F" (IE below A or B for field courses) for the course they are currently completing (SWK 450 or SWK 460). INC grades are not a substitute for poor performance and are managed differently. (See INC grades below) Because field work in an agency requires due diligence to prevent harm on the part of the College and Agency, the student may not continue in the second field course (SWK 460) if they have an F grade in (SWK 450). They may also be required to repeat the first field course SWK 450 AND SWK 460 in a new agency after receiving an F grade. SWK 470 (the field seminar) may also need to be repeated, depending on how far into the field course the student is and the nature of the problems.

When students are unable to demonstrate the ability to succeed in a plan for safety or improvement, and professional behavior or conduct is in question in the opinion of the field director and/or primary supervisor, then "professional readiness" to work reliably and safely under supervision must be reviewed and determined at the college.

When major problems or lack of 'professional readiness' is a concern during field placement the student is suspended immediately and the procedures stated in the BSW Manual are followed for a written plan for remediation, support, and timeframe. The Chair of the Social Work Program will notify the VP of Academic Affairs, review the written statements received, and set up a meeting with the student within 1-2 weeks.

When the student is not available and the meeting is not possible, or could be unsafe, a written plan for

remediation should be provided to the student within 2 weeks. The plan should include:

1. The evidence needed to demonstrate that the problem is resolved. (Depending on the seriousness of the problem or safety issues involved, a student can be suspended, or terminated from BSW coursework, or field placement, and may be required to provide evidence of professional therapy or treatment and resolution of potentially harmful symptoms before readmission to the BSW program or completion of further coursework or fieldwork.)
2. A timeframe for implementation of the plan.
3. A list of resources available to support the student.

If the student fails to comply with the plan for remediation within the specified time period they fail the field placement but can appeal. Depending on circumstances failing a field placement could also result in termination from the BSW program. Students who re-apply for the program (or field placement) after a termination need to meet requirements for reapplication after an inactive period and will need to provide the evidence requested to demonstrate professional readiness. Student appeals are described below. (BSW Manual)

#### **Agency Procedures after a Suspension or Termination from Field Placement**

The procedure above details the process for suspension or termination from field placement and the appeals procedure. After the field director and primary field instructor and student (when possible) meet to discuss the student's inability to meet the terms of the remediation plans and suspension or termination from field there is a process to follow. Immediately following the meeting, the student will be escorted by the field liaison/field director to the student's workspace for any necessary cleaning up of the space and/or to pack up any personal items. Any keys to the offices or agency, ID cards, or loaned agency property must be returned to the agency and documented. The field instructor will submit to SAC the student's field evaluation with an F and marks the learning objectives not met (without the student's signature, if necessary).

#### **Student Appeals** (as stated in the BSW Manual)

Any student has the right to appeal grades, a BSW program termination, sanctions, or program suspension decision beginning with the department's due process procedure.

The College also provides the right to a fair hearing for each student who is disciplined or sanctioned during her/his time as a student at St. Augustine College (See Severe Disciplinary Action in the SAC Catalog).

The student submits a written appeal to the Chair of the BSW Program describing:

1. Their understanding of the specific violation that they were sanctioned for
2. An assurance statement that demonstrates their knowledge and ability to comply with the relevant social work competencies and ethical standards for entering and working within the social work profession.
3. A description of what they consider a fair and ethical (according to NASW code of ethics) alternative to the discipline they received.

An appeals committee is formed to review the decision. The three member committee is made up of:

1. A BSW resident faculty member/advisor of the department selected by the chair
  2. The Chair of BSW department
  3. One of the following:
    - a. A senior BSW student of the department who is in good standing and who is selected by the student
    - b. An adjunct BSW professor selected by the student
- The appeals committee meets within one month of receiving the appeal to review the documents and may ask to discuss the situation with the student (may be delayed during the months of June and July).
  - The appeals committee will give a written response to the appeal within 2 weeks of their final meeting and this is sent to the student and to the Vice President of Academic Affairs.

Students may further appeal any severe consequences such as program suspension or termination to the Vice President of Academic Affairs who may request a College Disciplinary Committee to be formed according to the procedure for a college disciplinary committee in the SAC Catalog

The student will not return to the field placement until the matter of professional readiness is demonstrated and after one year of inactivity they may be automatically terminated from the BSW program.

“Students who reapply for the program after such termination will still need to provide the evidence requested to demonstrate professional readiness at the time of reapplication before they can be readmitted. If they have been inactive for 5 years they may be asked to repeat coursework.” (BSW Manual)



### **Reapplication Procedure for a Failed Field Placement Grade**

The student may re-apply for a new field placement in writing in order to repeat the field placement that they have failed. This re-application must be made within one year after failing the placement. The student may not repeat the field program more than one time The department chair and the field director (minimally) will review the new field application and make a decision within 2 weeks of receiving the re-application from the student. In the re-application, the student will write a letter that provides information about the specific steps they have taken that will enable them to succeed in finishing the program. The letter should address the issues identified as causes for the previous failure of field and provide evidence of professional readiness to succeed in original field termination documents. Re-admission to the field program is then contingent upon the written agreement of the Field Director, Chairperson of the BSW program and the Vice President of Academic Affairs. If the reapplication is denied the student still has up to one year from the original date of failure to improve the plan for finishing and reapply again. If the plan is not accepted within one year the student is dropped from the BSW program.

### **Receiving the Grade of “Incomplete” in Field**

Incompletes are not used as a substitute for failed performance. If a student’s attendance and performance have been good but due to unusual circumstances the student is unable to complete the practicum prior to the date at the end of the semester when grades are due, the field director may assign a grade of incomplete. This can occur because of a brief interruption in the placement due to illness, or due to a previously agreed on (in the field contract) exception on the date field is to end, in the regular scheduling of hours to accommodate student needs. Whatever the reason, students must understand that incompletes can reduce the amount of financial aid available to finish any remaining courses (ex. SWK460 and 470, and electives). Students are forewarned about this possibility and it is the student’s responsibility to assure that hours are completed and all evaluations are turned in before the last week of the semester so that grades can be filed on time with the registrar. An incomplete that is not resolved by the end of the following semester will result in an automatic F just as with other courses at the college.

### **Withdrawal from Field Instruction Courses or Inability to Complete the 420-hour Field Contract**

Students who are unable to finish the entire 420 hours (SWK 450 and SWK 460) field instruction in good standing due to unforeseen personal circumstances and who wish to withdraw from the placement, rather than take an incomplete, must contact their SAC field liaison and the SAC field director immediately. Under no circumstances is a student to abandon her/his placement agency without having first notified the following persons and provided immediate contact information for them to respond if at all possible: the primary field instructor and the BSW field liaison or BSW field director because of the ethical issues that a sudden leave can present. The BSW field director will enter a grade of SW for the student for a field course they are in the midst of completing and will withdraw them from the course at SAC after documenting the reason. A student who wishes to withdraw will have to repeat that semester and may have to repeat the full 420 hours of internship.

Students who give appropriate notice of the intent to delay starting the second field course, SWK 460 should discuss with both field supervisor and SAC field director whether it is possible to begin at a later date with the same supervisor at the same agency. This discussion must take place as soon as possible after the written request to delay. If the delay is longer than one year the student will need to reapply to the college, the program, and field placement and will need to repeat all 420 hours of field placement and the field seminar. If the delay is longer than 5 years other major courses may need to be repeated also.

Students who withdraw without written notifications and permission may receive the grade of WF, and will be not be able to graduate from the SAC social work program. They may however, be able to change majors, or transfer many social work courses passed to another institution or social work program.

## **Appendix A: Harassment Policy for Students in Field Instruction**

In keeping with the spirit and the intent of federal and state law, SAC strives to provide a comfortable work and study environment. We are committed to an environment that is free of discrimination and harassment based on race, color, religion, age, sex, national origin, disability, or any other protected status. Offensive or harassing behavior will not be tolerated against any student, client, or employee of SAC and the placement site. This policy will be extended to all persons at SAC and the placement site. In addition, those in a supervisory or managerial position will be responsible for taking proper action to end such behavior in their work areas.

In an effort to prevent sexual harassment and other forms of harassment from occurring, this policy against harassment will be communicated to every student of SAC in field instruction. No student is exempt from this policy.

Offensive conduct or harassment that is of a sexual nature, or based on race, color, religion, age, sex, national origin, disability, or any protected status is prohibited. This includes but is not limited to:

- physical action, written or spoken, language and graphic communications
- any type of physical contact when the action is unwelcome or unwanted by the recipient
- expectations, requests, demands or pressure for sexual favors
- slurs, jokes, posters, cartoons and gestures

Any such offensive conduct will be considered a prohibited form of harassment when any or all of the following are true:

- there is a promise or implied promise of preferential treatment or negative consequence regarding decisions or status at the placement site
- such conduct has the effect of creating an intimidating or hostile or offensive environment, or unreasonably interferes with a student's work performance at the site
- a third party is offended by the sexual conduct or communications of others

Harassment is also considered a form of student misconduct. Disciplinary action, up to and including termination from field instruction, will be taken against any student engaging in this type of behavior.

Anyone who believes that she or he is being discriminated against because of harassing behavior (for example, other students or workers being given special treatment for sexual favors) is encouraged to report it. Anyone who feels she or he is being harassed should make an immediate report of the harassment. Any SAC representative (e.g., the field instruction field director) aware of this behavior yet who takes no action to end it is also subject to disciplinary action.

Complaints should be made to the field instruction field director or any human resources personnel at SAC and/or at the field site, with whom the student feels comfortable in discussing this type of problem. All complaints will remain as confidential as possible. Complaints made in good faith will in no way be held against a student. Under no circumstances will a student be penalized for using this policy.

## **APPENDIX B: Field Placement Paperwork Checklist**

The following is a schedule of when field placement paperwork should be turned in to the field liaison or field director by the student.

### **Prior to Starting Field**

- Signed *Students with a Felony Conviction* policy (Appendix C)
- Signed *Manual Agreement* (Appendix D)
- Signed *Learning Contract & Release of Confidential Information*
- Signed *Memorandum of Agreement* (if we do not have a current agreement)
- Copy of Field Instructor's BSW or MSW Diploma (if this is the first time the field instructor is working with St. Augustine College)

### **Last week of SWK 450**

- All timesheets signed by Field Instructor adding up to 210 hours
- Signed *Mid-Evaluation*

### **Last week of SWK 460**

- All timesheets signed by Field Instructor adding up to 420 hours
- Signed *Final Student Evaluation* (completed and submitted online)
- Signed *Agency Evaluation*
- Signed *Final Student Evaluation Addendum*



## **APPENDIX C: Students with a Felony Conviction**

Students in the St. Augustine College BSW program are prepared for generalist social work practice. As part of the program, students complete a field practicum (internship) under formal supervision in a social service agency. Some of these agencies require that student interns undergo a formal background check before being accepted as an intern. A felony conviction for which the sentence has been served does not need to be a barrier to completing a BSW internship or a future career in social work. In some cases rehabilitative programs may have provided valuable life experience that will transfer to the practice of social work. For many the experience of rehabilitation has resulted in increased skills and empathy for others, as well as the motivation to extend the learning from life experience and rehabilitation to others.

However, a student with a felony conviction may find that the opportunities in the social work field are limited. For example, social workers often serve vulnerable populations and therefore social service agencies have a responsibility to minimize the risk of harm for these populations. This may result in policies that include not hiring persons with a felony conviction. Some states may also refuse to license, as a social worker, those graduates with some types of felony convictions. Additionally, being convicted of a felony while being a student at St. Augustine may affect a student's ability to start the field practicum, secure a field placement, or in some cases graduate from the BSW program.

Students are encouraged to inform the BSW field director, the chair of the BSW program, and potential field practicum sites if they have been convicted of a felony. The BSW program may be requested to let potential field practicum sites know that a potential intern has a past felony conviction, and the nature of the conviction, so that appropriate internship activities can be planned and protection of vulnerable individuals assured. This honesty may decrease the number and kinds of field opportunities that students are eligible to do in the field practicum.

A student's disclosure of a felony conviction will be kept confidential. However, depending on the field placement, St. Augustine may be required to share the information with the internship agency. Prior to SAC sharing any information regarding a felony conviction with outside agencies, a release of information must be signed by the student allowing the school to share the information.

Evidence of the nature of the charges should be provided to the BSW program at the time of program application and prior to field placement, in order to advise the student appropriately regarding field placement agencies and career options. If felony charges occur while the student is in the BSW program, the student is required to immediately provide evidence about the nature of the charges and may be suspended from the BSW program until information is received to assure safety.

The social work program will make every effort to help students select and obtain a field placement to complete the BSW program. However, the program cannot guarantee a field placement for students with a felony conviction. The BSW program will provide support to the student while she/he is

searching for a field placement. It is the student's responsibility for locating an appropriate field placement and seeking out the support provided by the BSW program while finding a field placement. Students cannot get the BSW degree without completing the required field practicum.

Students who have had past felony convictions are advised to seek legal help to have their felony record expunged if possible because of the barrier it can create.

**BSW Restrictions**

- Students who are awaiting trial for a felony charge, and those currently serving time under house arrest for a felony, are not eligible to start the field practicum until the trial is completed or the sentence is served and documentation of fulfillment of the sentence is provided by the court. It may be difficult for students convicted of a felony to locate internships that will accept them. See expungement of records above. Faculty will provide reasonable assistance however cannot guarantee a field placement to finish the BSW program.
- The student must grant permission to the school to receive copies showing the nature of the charges and the terms of parole for students still mandated to see a parole officer for a felony charge. A release of information form can be requested by the Social Work Department.
- Because all St. Augustine College sites offer childcare, individuals that are registered as sex offenders will not be admitted into the program.

Please check the box that best answers each statement below:

I have been convicted of a felony.

Yes      No

I am currently involved in a case where felony charges have been brought against me.

Yes      No

I have been convicted of a crime that requires that I be registered as a sex offender.

Yes      No

Your signature below indicates that you understand and agree to the above policy regarding students with a felony conviction.

Student signature: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Student Name Printed: \_\_\_\_\_

Student ID: \_\_\_\_\_



**APPENDIX D: Manual Agreement**

Students, after reading this manual, please sign and return this page only to the field director as part of your initial learning contract.

Dear Student,

Your signature indicates the following:

1. I am responsible for knowing the contents of this document
2. I understand and will abide by the NASW Code of Ethics while in field instruction
3. I understand and will abide by the Sexual Harassment and Discrimination Policy described in this manual.
4. I understand that failure to abide by the NASW Code of Ethics or Sexual Harassment and Discrimination Policy may result in your suspension or dismissal from the social work program.
5. I understand that I cannot start my field placement until the contract is signed by the Field Director at St. Augustine College.

**Student signature** \_\_\_\_\_ **Date** \_\_\_\_\_

**Student Name Printed (clearly)** \_\_\_\_\_

**APPENDIX E Form: Field Instruction in Student’s Place of Employment**

Field instruction in a student’s place of employment is possible only if it can be verified that the student will be able to receive a field instruction experience which is substantially and qualitatively different from the work experience that the student has had at the agency. The field instruction must be in a different division than the student’s paid employment and the student’s field instructor (and proctor if needed) must be different than the supervisors for the student’s paid employment. Approval to pursue an internship at a student’s place of employment will not be given until this form is reviewed and signed by the field director.

Student Name \_\_\_\_\_ ID \_\_\_\_\_

**Job Position of Student**

Job Title \_\_\_\_\_ Circle: part time or full time  
 Name and Title of Supervisor \_\_\_\_\_ Division of Agency: \_\_\_\_\_

Description of Main Job Responsibilities and Population Served


Work Schedule for Student’s Job

Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday	Sunday

**Internship Position**

Internship Primary Social Work Field Instructor

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Credentials: \_\_\_\_\_  
 Job Title: \_\_\_\_\_

Internship Proctor (non-social work staff, if applies)

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Credentials: \_\_\_\_\_  
 Job Title: \_\_\_\_\_

Division of the Agency of Intern’s Responsibilities and primary population served


Work Schedule for Student Internship

Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday	Sunday

I agree that the above information is true to the best of my knowledge.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature of Student

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature of Employment Supervisor

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature of Internship Field Instructor

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature of SAC Field Director