

Winthrop University – Department of Social Work

Guidelines for a “Traditional Model” Employment-based Field Placement

The option to utilize a student’s current employment site as a field placement setting can be beneficial in making social work education possible for working students and increase the level of professional resources within an agency. In order to facilitate students’ ability to complete their field placements at their place of employment, the department must have a way to ensure that the focus of field is student learning. Additionally, students need to be cautious when seeking an employment-based field placement because termination from either the job or internship position could jeopardize the other (especially if the student is new in their current position of employment).

A formal request for an employment-based field placement is initiated by the student in consultation with the field faculty during the field placement plan meeting/discussion. An application for an employment-based field placement must be completed and submitted to the field office as part of the student’s field placement process. However, completion of the paperwork is not a guarantee of approval of the request.

Employment-based field placements may be considered when the following criteria are met:

- With the “traditional” employment-based field placement, the internship responsibilities/learning activities must be different from the student’s regular job role and duties. This usually means that the agency is large and diverse enough to provide these new opportunities for a student. This also might make it extremely difficult for a student to have an employment-based field placement for more than one field experience (generalist and specialized).
- The learning activities for field will allow the student to achieve the course competencies and behaviors (generalist or specialized). All competencies have to be addressed/applicable for field placement sites to be approved.
- The agency meets the requirements to serve as a field placement site, and has a field instructor and/or task supervisor who meets the department’s requirements.
 - For BSW students, field instructors must have either a BSW or MSW degree from a CSWE accredited program and at least 2 years post-graduate experience.
 - For MSW students, field instructors must have an MSW degree from a CSWE accredited program and at least 2 years post graduate experience.
 - All field instructors and task supervisors must be willing and able to complete Winthrop University Department of Social Work field instructor training.
 - All field instructors and task supervisors must be employed by the agency for a minimum of 6 months, allowing them to be in a position to take on the teaching and supervision responsibilities for a student.
- The field instructor and/or task supervisor must be someone other than the student’s regular work supervisor, reducing any potential conflicts of interests and allowing the student to be vulnerable in their role as a student while developing their MSW competencies. Other conflicts of interest that could prevent the student from completing an employment-based field placement would include the student being an agency supervisor or director, or the student having family members or close friends in positions of authority within the agency.