SPECIALIZED PRACTICE
FIELD PLACEMENT PROCESS & TIMELINE

(For Students in Field I in Spring 2020)

PREPARATION
In planning for the Specialized Practice placement, be aware of the following materials available on the website:

1. **MSW Student Manual**

2. **Fields of Practice and Focused Learning Opportunities Document**
The document describes the fields of practice and provides examples of some of the placement agencies. Focused learning opportunities are described, and Faculty Coordinator contact information for each program is provided.

3. **Specialized Practice Process Checklist**
The document provides a brief overview of the placement process and important dates in a worksheet format.

4. **Specialized Practice Field Placement Questionnaire**
The online questionnaire, completed by the student, helps the Field Learning Team and the Faculty Advisor recommend placement options based on educational interests, fields of practice, type of setting, populations, and other relevant information you provided. This is a very important document because it is one of the tools used by the Field Learning Team for placement selection - it is your input into the placement selection process. Thus it should be completed carefully and thoughtfully. *Complete the section on Focused Learning Opportunities if you are interested in participating in a program.* Please ensure all address and transportation information is accurate and specific. If there are special concerns or personal issues, concisely articulate them. Remember, this document is not sent to agencies; it is only used by the Field Learning Team and, if applicable, the Focused Learning Opportunity Faculty Coordinator.

Upload resume when completing the Specialized Practice Field Placement Questionnaire. This resume will be shared with agencies.

PLANNING / INFORMATIONAL MEETINGS

**Planning Meetings: Faculty Advisor–Student**
The Faculty Advisor sets up individual, face-to-face meetings with you in February. You *must come prepared* with an up-to-date resume (which will be sent to the Specialized Practice placement agency).
This meeting gives you and your advisor the opportunity to discuss areas of practice, learning needs, and placement options. It should be noted there are a variety of market and student-driven factors that influence placements including: fluctuations in agencies, market demands that affect the number and types of placements being offered, agency skill requirements (e.g., language), competition between the area schools for placements, programmatic changes or cancellation of internships within agencies, available certified field instructors, enhancement of professional development, and the agency not accepting a student based on a perception of mismatch.

The deadline for submission of your online placement questionnaire and resume is March 1, 2020. Any change after this date (e.g., if you move, necessitating a placement in a different geographical location) may delay the placement process. In addition, your Faculty Advisor will complete and submit a student summary to the Field Learning Team.

PLACEMENT SELECTION, MATCHING, & CONFIRMATION

The Field Learning office works throughout the year to select diverse placement agencies and generate new placement sites. Students may recommend agencies to the Faculty Advisor, who will share this information with the Field Learning Team. New agencies will be contacted about the possibility of becoming a placement site. This process must be handled by the Field Learning office for many reasons, including determining if the agency meets the school’s educational requirements. Students are not to contact agencies directly to arrange their own placement or schedule appointments with agencies to inquire about new placements. Keep in mind if an agency is selected that a student recommended, there is no guarantee that placement will go to the student who suggested it.

It is also important to note that students cannot be placed in an agency where there is a dual relationship. This includes, but is not limited to, situations where a friend or relative works in the agency, or the student or someone close to the student has received services in the agency.

Once agencies are selected as placement sites and recommendations have been made by the Faculty Advisor, the Field Learning Team evaluates potential matches based on numerous factors including your identified learning needs, social work-related experience, agency availability, and agency requirements and expectations.

When a match has been made, you will get a call from a member of the Field Learning Team with internship site information. In most cases, you will then contact the agency’s Educational Coordinator to schedule a confirming meeting (similar to an interview). Following the confirming meeting, the agency will contact the Field Learning office with impressions of the student-agency match. Most students match well and are confirmed by the agency. If a student rejects a field placement: For Specialized Practice students (who can prioritize placement choices) a rejection of a placement will trigger an automatic meeting with the Field Learning Office and only one additional opportunity will be offered, with the potential for delay in being placed. Once confirmed in a placement, a student cannot request a change.
If an agency rejects a student: A meeting with the Field Learning Office and student will be held if there are two successive rejections (barring unusual circumstances) and at the discretion of the Field Learning Office, the student may be permitted to interview one additional time only with recommendations. If the 3rd placement meeting results in a rejection, the student’s situation will be reviewed by a School committee.

Upon your acceptance by the agency, the Field Learning office confirms the placement and notifies you by email during the summer.