

FOUNDATION SEQUENCE

Overview of Foundation Sequence

Foundation Sequence Goals

Foundation Sequence Objectives

Foundation Sequence Field Placement Goals and Objectives

The Foundation Sequence Field Placement

- **Field Hours**
- **Extended-Study Student**
- **Field Laboratories**
- **Field Seminars**

FOUNDATION SEQUENCE

OVERVIEW OF FOUNDATION SEQUENCE

The first year of the M.S.W. program, called the foundation year, serves two major purposes. First, it provides students with a wide range of knowledge and skills necessary for M.S.W. level professional practice. Second, the foundation curriculum prepares students for course work in the program's two advanced concentrations, interpersonal practice (IP) and policy, planning, and administration (PP&A).

The eight courses in the foundation impart knowledge and skills that are relevant to students regardless of the advanced concentration they choose. Thus, courses are carefully crafted to ensure that students obtain a level of generalized knowledge and skills necessary for practice in a variety of social work agencies; intervention at the micro, mezzo, and macro practice levels; social work with individuals, families, groups, organizations, and communities; problem-solving with clients experiencing such social problems as poverty, family violence, mental illness, and physical challenges; and practice with special populations (e.g., racial/ethnic minorities, women, persons with disabilities).

Agencies that provide field placement opportunities for M.S.W. students in the foundation sequence have tasks that are of interest to the student, are congruent with their learning objectives, and are compatible with the educational objectives of the foundation sequence. Agencies are also committed to helping social work students develop or augment a beginning level of professional competence in keeping with individual student's capabilities and potential.

FOUNDATION SEQUENCE GOALS

Students will acquire a broad base of social work knowledge and develop requisite analytical and practice skills in social welfare policy, human behavior and the social environment, social research, social change, and social work practice.

FOUNDATION SEQUENCE OBJECTIVES

As a consequence of completing the foundation, students will be able to demonstrate the following:

- Conduct reflective practice, develop and articulate reasons for practice decisions, and generate alternative intervention strategies as needed
- Practice within the values and ethics of the social work profession and with an understanding of and respect for the positive value of diversity
- Develop an awareness of how personal feelings, thoughts, attitudes, values, and experiences influence practice
- Maintain the mutuality of worker-client system and demonstrate a willingness to explore, learn and grow through interactions with client systems
- Assess the psychosocial impact of oppression and discrimination and empower clients by mobilizing and enhancing their strengths and resources to resolve problems and reduce oppression.

- Understand the histories of social welfare, and the profession of social work, and appreciate the profession's unique commitment to social justice
- Apply the principles and techniques of generalist social work practice in intervening with individuals, families, groups, organizations, and communities
- Use a theoretical framework to understand the interactions among individuals and between individuals and social systems (i.e., families, groups, organizations, and communities)
- Apply knowledge of bio-psycho-social variables to interpret human growth, development, and behavior relative to the broader environmental context. The broader environmental context is understood to encompass social, cultural, historical, political, and economic forces
- Analyze the impact of social policies on client systems, workers, and agencies and engage in intervention strategies that facilitate socially just policies and practices within human service systems and the larger community
- Seek out, critically consider, integrate, and apply relevant professional literature to practice
- Evaluate the effectiveness of their own professional practice through reflection, consultation, supervision, and the application of formal systems
- Communicate effectively with colleagues and members of the community to build networks and engage in collaborative processes for decision-making
- A commitment to professional development by seeking out and using consultation and supervision, through participating in professional associations, and by keeping abreast of the professional literature
- Assess organizational structure (formal and informal) and function effectively within the parameters, strengths and constraints of the agency
- Evaluate organizational and/or program effectiveness and advocate for improvements in order to enhance service delivery and client functioning.

The faculty will develop and implement educational methods and practices that achieve foundation objectives by participating in the following:

- Providing curriculum organization and structure for the necessary foundation content of graduate social work education
- Being responsive to the continuities and discontinuities of social work knowledge and skills in the continuum from the undergraduate social work curriculum to the graduate concentrations
- Preparing students for advanced graduate study and professional social work practice in interpersonal practice and policy, planning, and administration

These outcome and operational goals and objectives provide guidance in the development of specific goals and objectives for each of nine foundation courses.

FOUNDATION SEQUENCE FIELD PLACEMENT GOALS AND OBJECTIVES

Field education strives to address and create opportunities for students to develop a working knowledge of the social work profession while integrating values and skills. Through the field placement, the student is given the opportunity to test out skills and theories taught in the classroom. Differing from the classroom, however, the learning is more directive, immediate, and personal. It is an active process with emphasis on

participation. The opportunity is provided for the student to deepen, extend, and apply foundation knowledge. The goals of the field placement are as follows:

- Provide the student with the ability to apply problem-solving methods, perform social work service roles, conduct interviews, analyze organizational structure and policy, and use supervision effectively
- Provide the student with knowledge and understanding of the structure of social work agencies and social service systems, agency policies, staff, and client system groups, social problems that warrant intervention, and the professional culture of the field of social work
- Provide opportunities for the student to assume responsibility for productive tasks within the agency
- Provide the student with opportunities to observe, identify, and shadow social work role models in various professional roles in the agency and community
- To help the student assess his/her interest in and suitability for a career in social work or another helping profession
- To develop student direct practice skills and knowledge of community resources.

The following should be reviewed and incorporated into all students' learning contracts. These are designed to help students:

- Integrate and apply theory, knowledge, and skills derived from the professional foundation courses and electives
- Develop awareness of their individual skills, values, and areas for further growth
- Apply social work values and ethics to practice using the NASW Code of Ethics as a guide
- Develop sensitivity to the special needs of women, minorities, and other disadvantaged groups
- Apply the problem-solving framework to social work practice with individuals, families, groups, organizations, and communities
- Use supervision effectively
- Evaluate individual interventions as well as agency services
- Develop an understanding of the organization of health and human services in a community in terms of their functions and the community forces which affect their delivery
- Become aware of issues regarding safety in the field placement

THE FOUNDATION SEQUENCE FIELD PLACEMENT

Field Hours

The field placement courses, Social Work 6710 and Social Work 6720 are taken concurrently with the practice courses Social Work 6610 and Social Work 6620. Students receive three (3) credits for each field course. Students begin field placement in the fall and continue through the spring semester (September-April).

The School of Social Work requires that a minimum of 428 hours be completed for the academic year working approximately 16-hours per work week. Field lab hours and seminar and do not count towards required field hours. The idea is to log approximately 16 hours per week to allow for a full range of learning experiences, overtime, which should go until the end of the semester. It is important for these learning

experiences to build over the course of each semester. Students are encouraged to log a few additional hours to cover an unexpected absence or an illness, but the bulk of the required hours must be logged continuously and contiguously over the course of the semester(s).

*M.S.W. Foundation full-time Field Placement Hours**

CSWE requires M.S.W. foundation students to log 428 hours per academic year. Student field hours, in concert with the field laboratories, breaks down as follows:

Fall

Weeks 1-2	Attend lab only	0 hours
Weeks 3-8	Attend lab and start field placement 12 hours per week (6 x 12)	72 hours
Weeks 9-14	Attend field placement 16 hours per week (6 x 16)	<u>96 hours</u>
		168 Total Fall

Spring

Weeks 1-15	Attend field placement 16 hrs per week (15 x 16)	240 hours
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168 hours available in fall + 240 hours available in spring = 408 hours

428 CSWE required, so **an additional 20 hours need to be made up over the course of the academic year.**

*M.S.W. Foundation extended study Field Placement Hours**

CSWE requires M.S.W. foundation students to log 428 hours per academic year. Student field hours in concert with the field laboratories breaks down as follows:

Fall

Weeks 1-2	Attend lab only	0 hours
Weeks 3-8	Attend lab and start field placement 16 hours per week (6 x 16)	96 hours
Weeks 9-14	Attend field placement 16 hours per week (6 x 16)	<u>96 hours</u>
		192 Total Fall

Spring

Weeks 1-15	Attend field placement 16 hours per week (15 x 16)	240 hours
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192 hours available in fall + 240 hours available in spring = 432 hours

CSWE requires 428 total hours

****The total number of hours per semester may vary depending on the number of weeks available in each semester. Students will be required to make up any hours needed to satisfy the CSWE requirements.***

The faculty liaison, through contact with the field instructor, monitors fieldwork time. Students, at times, may also be asked to attend their field placements during the University breaks for a few hours so that client relationships are maintained. This is decided between the student and their field instructor. Some activities outside the agency may be counted as field hours if approved by the field instructor and faculty liaison; examples include attending Legislative Education and Advocacy Day or attending a conference on a topic related to work in the field agency. A sample time log can be found in Appendix H.

Extended-Study Students

Extended-study students who are employed particularly need to be aware that they should commit an average of 16 hours per work week to their field placement

in the second and third year of their program. Completing both the field placements is a huge commitment and needs upfront planning by the student and his/her employer. This means that students need to start working with their employers early on to develop a plan to change their work schedule by either dropping the number of hours they will work during the week or utilizing vacation time so that the field hours can be accomplished during the work week. Without the ability to work this out with an employer, it is basically impossible for an extended-study student to complete the M.S.W. program. It is very rare to find a field placement agency that is able to provide learning opportunities and supervision for a student in the evenings and on the weekends.

Field Laboratories

In addition to an agency-related orientation coordinated by the field instructor, students are introduced to the field education program in a series of **eight (8) required field education laboratories** which are scheduled for 2.5 hours each and conducted by the faculty liaison during the fall semester. During these sessions, the faculty liaisons familiarize and orient students to the general nature of the program and field education through discussion of program, agency, and faculty expectations. The field labs focus on teaching communication skills, enhancing group cohesiveness, interviewing skills, the development of a field placement learning contract, and socializing students to the social work profession. Techniques such as attending, reflection of feelings, clarification, and summarizing are presented through modeling, supervised role-playing, peer feedback, and may include video and audio taping. The field lab also includes a beginning and basic introduction to safety issues in the field which includes awareness, assessment, and interventions in potentially risky situations. The training is didactic as well as experiential. Refer to the chapter in this manual on student safety.

Field Seminars

M.S.W. foundation students also participate in three (3) seminars which are scheduled by the faculty liaison during the first-year field placement. **Students are required to attend all scheduled seminars.**

The seminars focus on the students' field experiences and provide a forum to discuss their placement with their peers and the faculty liaison. There are also opportunities to discuss the integration of their field experience with other foundation courses that they are taking or have completed. Seminar assignments may include written and oral work. Usually the first seminar is held towards the end of the fall semester, the second early in the spring semester, and the third towards the end of the spring semester.