



College of Social Work

Interruption of Field Practicum: Continuity of Operations Plan (COOP) for Emergency Preparedness V 03.11.2020

The College of Social Work's Field Education Office at the University of South Carolina has established the following Continuity of Operations Plan for Field Education Courses (Field COOP) which includes a procedure and protocol to address disruption to students' social work field practica due to public health, unusual inclement weather, and civil emergencies. In the event that a field practicum is disrupted under the above stated conditions, the Field Education Office is prepared to offer field seminar classes online (through Adobe Breeze and Blackboard). Additionally, given that field practicum courses require students to complete supervised practice-based hours (up to 264 hours each semester) through "in-person" contact, the following plan should be followed.

According to the Council on Social Work Education (CSWE) and guidance for field activities provided by CSWE on March 10, 2020:

1. Current Commission on Accreditation (COA) interpretation of *Accreditation Standard 2.2.4* allows "in-person" contact to be accomplished through digital technologies.
2. The required 400 hours of field experience for baccalaureate programs and the minimum of 900 hours for master's programs in *Accreditation Standard 2.2.5* cannot be waived since they are related to licensing requirements in many states. Note that simulated practice situations may supplement the student's education, but not replace required field experience hours (AS 2.2.5, [2015 EPAS Interpretation Guide](#)).

In reference to A and B, the College of Social Work at the University of South Carolina must ensure that demonstration of social work competencies is through in-person contact, which refers to interpersonal interactions with clients and constituencies, and may include the use of digital technologies (AS 2.2.4, [2015 EPAS Interpretation Guide](#)). The EPAS allow for technology-based social work practice (e.g., telehealth, telework, phone contact with colleagues, clients, and constituents, remote access to platforms and projects, etc.).

Field instructors are asked to work with students to allow/support telework. For example, students can complete client case/paperwork on a secure server, call into meetings, work on projects from home (See Appendix A: Projects by Competency), engage in professional development activities (See Appendix B: Professional Development Opportunities), and meet virtually with their field instructor via phone, zoom, facetime, or Skype. Of course, these opportunities may not replace all required field hours that may be missed, yet perhaps can serve to close the gap.

Protocol for Implementation for Field Practicum

Ultimately it is the responsibility of the College of Social Work at the University of South Carolina to make decisions and accommodations about risk management, safety, the educational requirements of students, including field practicums (AS 2.2.7). Given CSWE Standards discussed above, the following protocol shall be followed by field liaisons, field instructors, and students.

1. **If classes are canceled** in the event of a public health/communicable disease crisis, students will not be required to attend their field education site in-person. If students are able to complete internship responsibilities remotely with field instructor approval, this is allowed. The College of Social Work at the University of South Carolina Field Education Office will provide an alternative assignment to replace a maximum of up to 16 required field education hours, if they are needed by the student and depending on the cancellations. Assignment(s) will be sent out the Monday of the week classes are canceled and not before.
2. **If classes continue during a crisis and are moved online or are expected to move online**, students and field instructors are required to meet (virtually) and to complete the Field COOP Addendum to Learning Contract provided in Appendix C: Field COOP Addendum to plan for completion of field hours during in the event of an emergency and to be in compliance with CSWE. A clear and comprehensive plan should be devised that identifies use of digital technologies (if applicable) and is clear about the student's physical location while completing field hours accrued through work with clients. This plan will be coordinated remotely through use of digital technologies and is expected to be completed as a first step to engaging in approved. Additional instructions include a carbon copy for the Field Instructor. Also, the Field Instructor should be sure to include the student's address if sending projects and activities.
3. Students and field instructors are required to submit a completed FIELD COOP addendum to the Field Liaison. A student must receive approval in writing from the field liaison (via email is fine).
4. Once approval is received, the student is required to upload the FIELD COOP to Blackboard under the appropriate assignment tab. Dr. Reitmeier and assigned liaisons will be monitoring these and sending out emails for missing contracts or addendums.
5. Field Liaisons in concert with Dr. Reitmeier will monitor completion of the FIELD COOP and negotiate, as needed. Field liaisons will determine appropriateness of visit modality, but can three-way call, zoom or use other digital technologies to conduct liaison visits. Field liaison forms have been updated to include method of connection.

Please contact Melissa Reitmeier at 803.777.5293 mcreitme@mailbox.sc.edu if you have any other questions.

APPENDIX A: POSSIBLE PROJECTS BY COMPETENCY

This Appendix aims to help you determine where a student may be in developing mastery in their generalist practicum. Ask your self as a field instructor and student:

- 1.) What is the current assessment of student progress? If an assessment of the student's competencies were to be completed today, would the student receive an acceptable rating on every competency? If not, which competencies still need to be developed?
- 2.) Learning contracts/Addendum should prioritize tasks where the student needs to develop competence. **Each task** should include:
 - i. a written component/product so that competence and work completion is demonstrated
 - ii. approximate timeframe
 - iii. number of hours expected for completion
 - iv. how this informs the "in-person" contact with your field constituency population

Examples of possible projects are listed below but you are free to determine your own based on agency function.

Competency 1: Identify as a Professional Social Worker and Conduct Oneself Accordingly

- Appropriate and timely use of email, virtual supervision, and communication during uncertain times
- Identify how one sets the stage for remote telework and what clients see in your space, etc. What is professional, what is not and why?
- Develop new learning contract or complete addendum, including due dates, for written products to be submitted to field instructor for remote work
- Identify Ted Talks, YouTube video's and podcasts related to social work practice. Write about personal reactions to this emergency circumstance and how your learning applies to organization ethical and professional practice
- How would you do things the same or differently (and how would you pay for it) when disaster strikes.

Competency 2: Apply Social Work Ethical Principles to Guide Professional Practice

- Select a standard in the NASW Code of Ethics. Reflect in writing on differences or points of tension between the Code and organizational policies/procedures and/or services, especially as it relates to emergency preparedness, planning and implementation.
- Review ethics-related case study identified by the Field Instructor/Task Supervisor or field liaison, OR reflect on personal experience regarding ethical quandary in field and respond in writing to factors that must be considered (this emergency for example)
- Review an ethical decision making model (used in seminar class) (sample: <https://www.naswma.org/page/100/Essential-Steps-for-Ethical-Problem-Solving.htm>) and use this to analyze an ethical dilemma from your organization, including how decision may have been made regarding preparing for currency emergency situation resulting in remote interning or an altered plan of internship

Competency 3: Apply Critical Thinking to Inform and Communicate Professional Judgements

- Conduct a literature review on a specific topic relevant to field practicum and field instructor's choice that helps work with clients (ex- effectiveness of an intervention, how interruption of services impacts mental health or economic stability, etc.)
- Create an assessment instrument (survey, focus group questions, interview questions) to better understand community/client needs in general or for this current emergency situation.
- Develop project or curriculum to address current crisis or a project/curriculum for future implementation with clients (ex- life skills, grief, trauma, domestic violence, etc.)

Journal Article

<https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/full/10.1080/08841233.2014.909917>

Marleen Milner & Terry Wolfer (2014) The Use of Decision Cases to Foster Critical Thinking in Social Work Students, *Journal of Teaching in Social Work*, 34:3, 269-284, DOI: 10.1080/08841233.2014.909917

Competency 4: Engage Diversity and Difference in Practice

- Utilize self-reflection to think about personal identities and biases that may show up in practice or even in this specific instance/ public crisis

- Read and write a reflection on current literature related to diversity and difference and how this crisis is impacting your client population. Write a letter to the editor, etc.
- Write a reflection looking at how your own intersecting identities impact your work and relationships within the field organization and with client/community groups being served
- Review the NASW Code of Ethics standards related to oppression, discrimination and marginalization. Suggest improvements based on the goals of the organization and the populations it serves

Competency 5: Advance Human Rights and Social, Economic, and Environmental Justice

- Complete writing assignment (defined by your FI) about strategies that promote social justice and human rights considering organizations mission and practice. How is your organization doing this during this emergency situation? How are you participating? What is the role of a social worker in times like this?
- Create list (identify many options that are feasible) of ways the organization could advocate for social, economic, environmental justice and human rights in the organization's work and in relationship t the current emergency.
- Assess where messaging should be placed about the current crisis for your organization and turn into your field instructor. How will you advance tights of your constituency during this time? What would be your role? How will you assist the organization and the field instructor? Or research a human rights issue of interest and write a summary how human rights organizations are working to ameliorate the condition
- Planning Ahead for 2020 Elections and Census, identify plans for increased education and accessibility for your constituency. This could include any of the following:
 - Running a Voter Registration Drive at Your Non-Profit
 - Staying Nonpartisan: Rules for 501(c)(3) Nonprofit Organizations
 - Voter Engagement Strategies for Voters with Disabilities
 - Getting Your Issue on the Ballot
- Help with public education about staying healthy
- Contact clients to inform them of any changes to regularly scheduled services
- Create lists of referrals to other community resources their clients may need
- Work on projects or plans for future events or initiatives
- Craft awareness efforts via placement's social media accounts
- Compose advocacy writings to elected officials about issues and legislation the organization is connected to/populations they serve

Competency 6: Engage in Research-Informed Practice and Practice-Informed Research

- Research and write evaluation of articles that inform organization's practice related to current emergency situation
- Continue research pertaining to current projects from home
- Draft/write a grant from home as identified by your field instructor
- Develop focus group question or survey instruments related to a need in the organization or to better address current emergency situation for your field practicum organization
- Develop research questions that emerge from work with the client system and organization setting during this emergency. Discuss with Field Instructor and or Field Liaison and identify resources that inform (or answer) the research question.

Competency 7: Apply Knowledge of Human Behavior and the Social Environment

- Identify and write about the theories at work (and informing policy development-comp 8) and our countries response to the current emergency situation.
- Identify theories that help us understand the varying reactions by the public, officials, politicians, etc. to the emergency event. How do we respond as an organization and with what theory do we most identify? Why or why not?

Competency 8: Engage in Policy Practice to Advance Social and Economic Well-Being and to Deliver Effective Social Work Services

- Connect clients to Medicaid/Medicare or other affordable healthcare plans
- Propose revisions to organization policies and procedures about safety
- Explore local, state and federal policies that impact organization and/or the affected community, write summary
- Write a policy brief

- Write a letter to the editor about a policy issue impacting your organization
- Complete an analysis of a political candidate's plans for policy change
- Read social work voting toolkit (<https://votingissocialwork.org/#>) and develop a plan for implementation within the organization

Competency 9: Respond to Contexts that Shape Practice.

- Develop a proposal to enhance the quality of organization services with full regard for the organization's role in the community, the organizational context of the organization, existing resources, and staff morale
- Utilize the media and community forums to stay abreast of political, economic, social, and environmental trends that impact client services as such with current emergency event
- Develop or revise a community resource guide; create new one due to current event

Competency 10: Engage, Assess, Intervene, and Evaluate with Individuals, Families, Groups, Organizations, and Communities

- Attend virtual meetings
- Telehealth/intern with clients, supervisors, and engage in meetings as required
- Plan and participate in remote meeting, support group, or other intervention
- Reflect in writing about how personal experiences, beliefs and identities impact your relationships in field
- Review literature related to culture and cultural humility and write about how it impacts your work in the organization and how services are delivered
- Assess organizational process for seeking client feedback and make recommendations for improvement
- Review literature on termination of relationships within the workplace setting (with organization staff, community partners, clients, etc.)
- Think about and plan discussions for terminations with task groups, community members/clients, and organization staff considering current circumstances
- In writing, identify the structures in place for evaluating the organization's outcomes. Compare and contrast this evaluation mechanism with structures in place for similar organizations (in other counties, states, countries).

APPENDIX B: PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT OPPORTUNITIES

The following is a list of virtual professional development opportunities that field instructors may give students permission to complete in order to assist them in their organization

Content Area: Disaster Preparedness and Safety

National Center for Disaster Preparedness – Columbia University – Columbia Regional Training Center

<https://ncdp.columbia.edu/practice/training-education/online-face-to-face-training/> - - Students can set up a free account to access any of the trainings below for free online.

- [PREP 1108](#) - Preparedness Wizard
- Learn about disaster preparedness and create an emergency preparedness plan for you and your family, based on the risks you are most susceptible to. You will get a personalized report customized to your needs. (Updated: June 2011)
- [PREP 1109](#) - The Future of Global Health
- Dr. Laurie Garrett, Senior Fellow for Global Health and the U.S. Council on Foreign Relations, speaks about "The Future of Global Health." Dr. Garrett provides a broad framework for society's response to pandemic threats by discussing funding for global health, as well as the impact of the environment and population growth. (Created Aug. 2011)
- [PREP 2106](#) - Looking Ahead: Mitigating the Health Consequences of Future Disasters
- Dr. Nicole Lurie, Assistant Secretary for Preparedness and Response, U.S. Dept. of Health and Human Services, discusses the unprecedented investment that has been made in the science of public health preparedness and medical countermeasures since September 11th, 2001. She addresses the ways we can better mitigate the consequences of future disasters and provides 5 mitigation strategies that all public health agencies should consider. (Created: September 2011)
- [PREP 2107](#) - Negotiating Issues Related to Pandemic Influenza Preparedness
- John E. Lange, Director of the Global Health Program of the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation, and former U.S. Ambassador to Botswana, discusses virus sample sharing and access to vaccines among different nations. He notes that pandemic threats are not just health issues, but rather a burden on every sector of society. He asserts that community mitigation measures - that governments will need to employ in the first months of a pandemic - are an essential element in any pandemic response. (Created August 2011)
- [PSY 1901 / VUL 1804](#) - Human Dimension to Disaster Recovery
- Dr. Irwin Redlener, Principal Investigator of the Columbia Regional Learning Center, describes how improved coordination of intelligence services, enhanced detection of biological agents, and better infrastructure capacity can enable the public health sector to work more effectively. He also talks about the need for mobile medical care, electronic medical records, and further preparation for medical healthcare facility evacuations. (August 2011)
- [VUL 2805](#) - The Public Health Impacts of a Catastrophic Hurricane and Flooding: Voices from Katrina
- Employing a Hurricane Katrina case study and multiple resources, including voices from senior public health officials from Louisiana and Mississippi, this engaging webinar, presented by Dr. David Abramson, prompts emergency planners to consider critical elements to planning for and responding to large scale emergency events.

University of South Carolina College of Social Work Field Educator Training Series

https://sc.edu/study/colleges_schools/socialwork/partner/field_educator_ceu_series/index.php

Trainings include;

- Crisis Management and our Community Resources
- Behavioral Health and Disasters: Planning for Recovery

University of South Carolina – Center for Teaching Excellence Community Response to an Active Shooter Training

https://www.sc.edu/about/offices_and_divisions/cte/events_calendar/video_archives/active_shooter.php

Content Area: Voting & Census

Nonprofit VOTE - <https://www.nonprofitvote.org/category/webinars/>

Students can access free webinars on;

- Planning Ahead for 2020 Elections and Census
- Running a Voter Registration Drive at Your Non-Profit
- Staying Nonpartisan: Rules for 501(c)(3) Nonprofit Organizations
- Better Voter Engagement Strategies for Voters with Disabilities
- Getting Your Issue on the Ballot

Content Area: Non-Profit Management

Nonprofit Ready - <https://www.nonprofitready.org/courses>

Students can set up a free account to access webinars and resources about fundraising, grant writing, non-profit leadership, starting a non-profit, non-profit finance, etc.

Content Area: Direct Practice Interventions

MUSC – Trauma Focused CBT Training Course- <https://tfcbt2.musc.edu/>

Free if students register and select the box that says *I certify that I have a master's degree or higher in a mental health discipline, or that I am currently enrolled in a graduate training program in a mental health discipline.*

University of South Carolina College of Social Work Field Educator Training Series

https://sc.edu/study/colleges_schools/socialwork/partner/field_educator_ceu_series/index.php

Trainings include;

- Having Conversations that Matter
- Framing Social Work Interventions from Positive Psychology and the Strengths Perspective: Implications for Meaningful Change
- Animals and Social Work: An Overview of Emerging Practice and Trends
- Black Mental Health & HIV/AIDS – At the Intersections
- The Importance of Interprofessional Training and Teamwork for Social Workers
- Understanding and Managing Microaggressions

Content Area: Social Justice

National Association of County and City Health Officials

<https://members.rootsofhealthinequity.org/user/register>

Roots of Health Inequity

This course contains five units that present different aspects of social justice as it relates to public health. Each unit provides an in-depth look at a specific topic by using interactive maps and timelines, slideshows, resource libraries, videos and interviews with practitioners.

OTHER

Other examples of professional opportunities include but are not limited to allowing students to complete webinars, a DSM review, informational interviews with partner organizations, shadowing others in organization, etc.

APPENDIX C: FIELD COOP LEARNING CONTRACT ADDENDUM
(Will be available via RedCap and link sent out separately)

Date:

Student Name:

Student Status: BSW

MSW Foundation

MSW Advanced Practice

Field Instructor Name:

Field Liaison Name:

Organization:

Physical Address:

Reachable cell phone:

Email address:

1. Does the organization have a plan for continuing service delivery if their employed social workers must work remotely? If so, what is the plan?
2. Does the student have access to the technological means (computer/reliable Internet) to work remotely?
3. Is it possible for the student to continue to engage with organization services, current clients/work product teams, remotely? If so what services
4. Based on the individual student circumstances (safety first) and nature of the organization’s work, does the student believe they will need to work remotely? What is justification? (e.g., they are sick, high risk)
5. What is the plan for the student to continue to receive weekly supervision from the field instructor?
6. How many hours are needed to complete the field education course or how many hours is the student in jeopardy of losing due to the emergency?
7. What tasks will be completed by competency remotely? (See examples in Appendix A and B) Field COOP Addendum Learning should prioritize tasks where the student needs to develop competence. Each task should include:
 - a. a written component/product so that competence and work completion is demonstrated
 - b. approximate timeframe
 - c. number of hours expected for completion
 - d. how this informs the “in-person” contact with your field constituency population

Competency	Remote task	Timeframe	# of hours	How does this inform “in-person” contact

8. How will the student terminate relationships with clients/work groups, if needed?
9. What will be the plan for completing the final field visit with the liaison?
10. What will be the plan for completing the final evaluation?