

**CSWE Commission on Accreditation Response to the
NADD Subcommittee Report on Field Education
June 12, 2020**

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The CSWE Commission on Accreditation (COA) supports the NADD Subcommittee on Field Education recommendations as noted below through May 31, 2021 as a temporary response to the COVID-19 pandemic. These are flexible options to help programs remain in compliance with accreditation standards during the pandemic. These options are within the purview of each program to determine whether the options will be implemented according to each program's mission and goals. These NADD Subcommittee recommendations will also be considered as the COA moves toward the drafting and release of the 2022 EPAS.

Specific guidance includes:

Recommendation 1 – Employment-based Field

Can the employment count toward field practice hours?

Yes: It is already acceptable in the current COA interpretation of the standards for student learners to be able to have their place of employment serve as their field placement setting provided that programs can ensure that the employment-based setting provides opportunities for the student to engage as a learner and opportunities for the student to fulfill field education requirements. Programs must also ensure field education supervision of students either through a separate qualified supervisor or by the program assuming responsibility for reinforcing a social work perspective. In extenuating circumstances, students may have the same field instructor as employment supervisor with different supervision times.*

During the COVID-19 pandemic, through May 31, 2021, field hours in a student's place of employment may be counted toward required field hours. Temporarily, student field assignments and employment tasks may be the same and counted toward required field hours *as long as* the tasks have clear linkages to the nine social work competencies and their concomitant behaviors as well as any competencies added by the program.

The COA trusts that each program will do, professionally and ethically, what is best for them and their students as they develop these contingency/continuity plans.

We reiterate our support and respect for the autonomy and diligence of programs to provide accommodations and flexibility for their students in extenuating circumstances.

Recommendation 2 – Broader Definition of Platforms for Remote Learning

What platforms for remote learning are acceptable?

The COA supports program discretion in selecting remote platforms and simulations that can be used to meet field education hours. Given the changing and dynamic landscape of remote practice, COA supports simulation and other innovations that will provide remote learning opportunities that enable students to meet field education requirements.

As long as programs are able to show that they are helping students learn and demonstrate the competencies, the COA will be flexible in its acceptance of the platforms utilized. We reiterate COA support and respect for the autonomy and diligence of programs to provide accommodations and flexibility for their students in the current extenuating circumstances. **This response reflects the flexibility already available to programs in the 2015 EPAS.**

Recommendation 3 – Consideration of Other Activities That Can Count as Field Hours Other Than Only Field Seminar

Can simulations count as field hours outside of field seminar?

Yes: In March 2020, the COA expanded the accrual of required field education hours to include field seminar hours and simulations that occur in field seminar classes. COA will now extend approval to include field seminar activity conducted in portions of practice classes.

During the COVID-19 pandemic, through May 31, 2021:

Programs have the discretion to identify where, when, and how field-based seminars and field simulations are to be counted toward field hours. The COA supports program discretion in determining the curricular location of field seminar and field simulation content. In some instances, field seminars are distinct and separate classes. In other instances, field seminar activity may be included in portions of practice courses. As long as programs are able to show that field seminar activity and field simulations are designated as field education in helping students learn and demonstrate the competencies, the COA will be flexible in its acceptance of a wide range of simulations.

Recommendation 4 – pertaining to a position statement from CSWE on legal issues, safety, and PPE and recommendation 5 pertaining to elevating the Council on Field Education to a Commission.

While the COA had a thoughtful discussion about these recommendations, they determined these are outside the purview of the COA, and respectfully refer NADD to CSWE leadership for these discussions.

The CSWE accreditation staff will update the COVID-19 FAQ's and Field Guidance on the CSWE website to reflect these extended flexibilities.

*AS 2.2.11; AS 2.2.4; AS 2.2.5; AS 2.2.7; AS B/M2.2.9; *EPAS 2015 Interpretation Guide*