Field Education Continuity Plan for Disruption of Field Placement Activities
Field Education Strategies for Remote Competency Development

The St. Louis Field Education Collaborative has developed a plan to address temporary disruption to students' social work field placements due to national or local events such as communicable diseases, natural disasters, and/or civil unrest. The recommendations align with recommendations from peer institutions across the country. Special thanks to University of North Carolina, Denver University, and University of Michigan for sharing their work.

If students are advised by their agency, supervisor, government, and/or University to not attend their field placement, or if safety concerns identified by the student warrant a temporary disruption in field placement, students should immediately consult with their Field Advisor/Field Liaison.

This is meant to address short term field placement disruptions, with a maximum of 30 days. If the field placement stoppage continues beyond a 30-day period, a review will be conducted by the Office of Field Education to determine the most appropriate response to support students in completing their field placement requirements.

Field Instructors and Task Supervisors should assign students off-site alternative field learning activities that the student may complete in the event of a temporary field disruption. Examples of alternative field learning activities are listed below.

Alternate Learning Activities by Competency

Competency 1: Demonstrate Ethical and Professional Behavior

- Appropriate and timely use of email, virtual supervision, and communication during uncertain times
- Develop new work plan, including due dates, for written products to be submitted to field instructor while working remotely
- Select a standard in the NASW Code of Ethics. Reflect in writing on differences or points of tension between the Code and agency policy/procedure and/or services.
- Read literature on the Code of Ethics and write a summary about how it applies to social work practice
- Review ethics-related case study identified by FI/TS or field faculty, OR reflect on personal experience regarding ethical quandary in field and respond in writing to factors that must be considered
- Review history of NASW Code of Ethics. Reflect on its evolution to address gaps. Identify specific areas where gaps remain
- Review an ethical decision making model (sample: https://www.naswma.org/page/100/Essential-Steps-for-Ethical-Problem-Solving.htm)

and use this to analyze an ethical dilemma from your agency
- Identify Ted Talks, YouTube videos and podcasts related to social work practice. Write about personal reactions and how your learning applies to agency ethical and professional practice

Competency 2: Engage Diversity and Difference in Practice

- Utilize self-reflection to think about personal identities and biases may show up in practice
- Apply a diversity and difference in practice lens through research and writing to current projects
- Read and write a reflection on current literature related to diversity and difference
- Write a reflection looking at how your own intersecting identities impact your work and relationships within the field agency and with client/community groups being served
- Review the NASW Code of Ethics standards related to oppression, discrimination and marginalization. Suggest improvements
- In writing, identify the unique cultural composition of the client population served by the agency. Identify ways in which the agency meets the needs of the client population and identify how this could be improved
- Research, identify, and complete an online training focused on a population served by the agency. Identify how this information could be used to better advocate for the needs of this population in practice
- Identify Ted Talks, YouTube videos and podcasts related to social work practice. Write about personal reactions and how your learning applies to diversity and difference in practice

Competency 3: Advance Human Rights and Social, Economic, and Environmental Justice

- Complete writing assignment about strategies that promote social justice and human rights considering agency mission and practice
- Create list of ways the agency could advocate for social, economic, environmental justice and human rights in the agency's work
- Review advocacy agency website that you would like to learn more about and write a summary of how their work could impact the work completed by your agency
- Research a human rights issue of interest and write a summary how human rights organizations are working to ameliorate the condition
- Identify Ted Talks, YouTube videos and podcasts related to social work practice. Write about personal reactions and how your learning applies to advancing human rights

Competency 4: Engage in Practice-Informed Research and Research-Informed Practice

- Research and write evaluation of articles that inform agency's practice
- Continue research pertaining to current projects
- Develop focus group question or survey instruments related to a need in the agency

- Develop research questions that emerge from work with the client system and agency setting. Discuss with FI and or Field Faculty member and identify resources that inform (or answer) the research question.
- Research potential grant opportunities and/or prepare aspects of the grant writing.

Competency 5: Engage in Policy Practice

- 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 agency
- 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 agency
- Organizational Policy Review: review agency policies with suggestions/recommendations where appropriate (ex- safety policies, diversity policies, use of social media, utilization of technology, etc.)

Competency 6: Engage with Individuals, Families, Groups, Organizations, and Communities

- Attend virtual meetings utilizing teleconferencing applications that can be accessed via computer, tablet, and/or telephone; provided teleconferencing applications meet any agency requirements regarding HIPPA and/or confidentiality.
- Reflect in writing about how personal experiences, beliefs and identities impact your relationships in field
- Plan and participate in remote meeting, support group, or other intervention
- Review literature related to culture and cultural humility and write about how it impacts your work in the agency and how services are delivered

Competency 7: Assess Individuals, Families, Groups, Organizations, and Communities

- Research assessment instruments used by agencies who offer similar services
- Create an assessment instrument (survey, focus group questions, interview questions) to better understand community/client needs
- Review case study for strengths, challenges and systemic factors impacting the clients and/or client group

Competency 8: Intervene with Individuals, Families, Groups, Organizations, and Communities

- Review effectiveness of evidence-based practice models and discuss ways that model could be implemented in field placement agency
- Review case study for strengths, challenges and systemic factors impacting the intervention and or implementation of the intervention

Competency 9: Evaluate Practice with Individuals, Families, Groups, Organizations, and Communities

- Assess agency process for seeking client feedback and make recommendations for improvement
- Review literature on termination of relationships within the workplace setting (with agency staff, community partners, clients, etc.)
- Think about and plan discussions for terminations with task groups, community members/clients, and agency staff considering current circumstances
- In writing, identify the structures in place for evaluating the agency's outcomes. Compare and contrast this evaluation mechanism with structures in place for similar agencies (in other counties, states, countries).

Additional Activities That May Meet Multiple Competencies

Trainings for Agency: develop trainings that will benefit the agency (ex- self-care, ethics, etc.)

Groups/Workshops for Clients: develop curriculum for future implementation with clients (ex- life skills, grief, trauma, domestic violence, etc.)

Written Materials for Clients or Community: develop handouts/flyers/brochures (ex- explain voting rights, informed consent policies, etc.)

Community Networking/Resource Development: teleconference with various service providers, participating in resource mapping, and develop a list of resources for clients with services offered, referral process, etc.

Complete online trainings: complete assigned trainings and provide a certification of completion and/or a short written reflection and/or prepare a presentation to disseminate knowledge gained. Examples may include topics such as:

Suicide Risk Factors and Warning Signs (Free, 1 hour): www.co.train.org (Course ID 1080982)
Building Resiliency: Supporting Youth Affected by Trauma and Community Violence
https://learn.nctsn.org/course/ind ex.php?categoryid=44 Each free recorded webinar presentation is 1.5 hrs.

Field Instructors and Task Supervisors may come up with other activities or trainings, in addition to the ones listed on this page. All activities should be pre-approved by their agency supervisor.

Confidentiality and the Use of Technology

All students must comply with relevant laws, regulations, ethical standards, and organizational policies to ensure the confidentiality of clients. Students and agencies are encourages to utilize the standards listed in the [Technology in Social Work Practice](#) guide to inform their use of technology. While each agency should develop their own protocols around the use of technology and confidentiality, the following best practices should be followed by all students:

Take reasonable steps to maintain appropriate boundaries when using personal phone numbers or other electronic communication. For example, consider temporarily hiding your caller ID when making outgoing calls, through your phone's settings.
Position web cameras so that others can only see your face- all visible confidential data should be removed from camera view.
Conduct all sensitive conversations in a private space. Be mindful of the potential for family members or bystanders to overhear any portion of your discussions.

Common Process For Documenting Plan for Disruption of Field Placement Activities

1. Student contacts field faculty to request the option of working remotely for some or all of their remaining field placement hours. Field Faculty hears concerns and provides student with information regarding the process for the approval of individualized work plans (see below). Field faculty should assess the student's:
   - Rationale for working remotely as this time
   - The student's individual circumstances
   - The agency where the student is placed and circumstances of the field instructor/task supervisor
   - The length of time the student is requesting

2. Field Faculty contacts field instructor/task supervisor (this could also be a three-way call with student/FF and FI/TS) to discuss the student request. Field Faculty provide consultation on possible ideas of tasks for individualized work plans.

   Field Faculty should assess (in no particular order):
   - Based on the individual student circumstances, how long does the student believe they will need to work remotely?
   - How many hours does the student need to complete the course?
   - 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 a rating of "4" (Competent) on every competency? If not, which competencies still need to be developed? At this time, is the student at risk for receiving an overall score of "4" for the course? (If so, should we be considering an incomplete for this student, instead of working remotely? If so, given student, agency and field instructor circumstances, how viable would a plan of Incomplete be?)
   - Does the agency have a plan for continuing service delivery if their employed social workers must work remotely? If so, what is the plan?

- Is it possible for the student to continue to engage with agency services, current clients/work product teams, remotely?
- What is the plan for the student to continue to receive weekly supervision from the field instructor/task supervisor?
- How will the student terminate relationships with clients/work groups, if needed?
- What will be the plan for completing the final field visit? Competency assessment?

3. Student and field instructor meet (face-to-face or remotely) to agree on an individualized work plan using the suggested tasks. Priority should be given to tasks where competence needs to be developed.

4. Student submits final individualized work-plan to field faculty member and field instructor/task supervisor. Work plan is approved in writing by field faculty member.

5. Individualized work plans, must:
   - Prioritize tasks where the student needs to develop competence
   - **Each task** should include:
     - a written component/product so that competence and work completion is demonstrated
     - approximate time-frame
     - number of hours expected for completion

6. Students will send written products to field instructor/task supervisor and field advisor/liaison
   - It is not my expectation that field faculty review and/or grade every product. Only that you check that each agreed upon task has been completed and written product submitted
   - Students should document how many hours they spent completing the task

8. Field faculty monitor completion of the work plan and renegotiate, as needed.