

Interruption of Practicum Protocol: Tulane University School of Social Work

Field Education Strategies for Remote Competency Development

Tulane University School of Social Work (TSSW) students **are expected to report to their agency and continue to complete field hours** unless advised not to by their agency, field instructor or school. Students are reminded of our ethical responsibility to clients and our community and rely on the [NASW Code of Ethics](#) to guide our practice. See standard 6.03 Public Emergencies: Social workers should provide appropriate professional services in public emergencies to the greatest extent possible.

Procedures

TSSW has developed a plan to address temporary disruptions to students' social work field placements due to national or local events such as communicable diseases and natural disasters. If students are advised by their agency, supervisor, and/or school to not attend their field placement, or if they are ill and safety concerns warrant a temporary disruption in field placement, students should **immediately** consult with **BOTH** their Tulane Field Liaison and their Agency Field Supervisor(s).

This policy is meant to address short-term field placement disruptions, with a maximum of 14 to 30 days. Tasks for each competency, questions for consideration, and a sample plan have been provided at the end of this document. If the field placement stoppage continues beyond a 14-day period, the TSSW Office of Field Education will determine the most appropriate response to support students in completing their field placement requirements.

The Field Liaison will contact the Field Instructor/Task Supervisor and student via Zoom or phone to discuss strategies for remote tasks. The Field Liaison will provide the student with information regarding the process for the approval of an individualized work plans (see below). The Field Liaison should assess the student's: 1) rationale for working remotely; 2) individual circumstances; 3) agency location and 4) circumstances of the field instructor/task supervisor, and 5) the length of time associated with the request.

In efforts to fulfill the intern's hour requirements and educational competencies during temporary field placement stoppages, we are providing **alternative field learning activities** that can be completed off site. Field instructors and agency task supervisors may also come up with other activities or trainings in addition to the ones provided. All activities must be approved by the field instructor or the field liaison **if the field instructor is unavailable**. See the alternative learning activities below.

When possible the student and field instructor will set up a schedule for daily task management (as appropriate) and weekly supervision using Zoom or teleconferencing.

The student will send an email to their field instructor or the field liaison, if the field instructor is unavailable, at the beginning of their remote workday and at the end of the day with what they accomplished along with the time they worked.

Students are to report to their agency once the agency reopens and/or they are symptom free during their next assigned field day.

Site visits **may be completed virtually** for on campus students who are unable to attend field.

Alternative Learning Activities

Competency 1: Demonstrate Ethical and Professional Behavior

- Use email, virtual supervision, and communication appropriately and in a timely manner 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. The University of Buffalo School of Social Work has an extensive list of podcasts and can be found at <http://socialwork.buffalo.edu/resources/our-podcast-series-insocialwork.html>. Write a brief reflection about personal reactions and how your learning applies to agency ethical and professional practice and discuss during the scheduled remote/virtual supervision session.

Competency 2: Engage Diversity and Difference in Practice

- Utilize self-reflection to think about personal identities and biases may show up in practice and write a brief reflection on how you will address these issues.
- 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. The University of Buffalo School of Social Work has an extensive list of podcasts and can be found at <http://socialwork.buffalo.edu/resources/our-podcast-series-insocialwork.html>.

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

- Complete brief writing assignment about strategies that promote social justice and human rights considering agency mission and practice.

- Guided by policies you have explored in courses, 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 or book 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.
- Review agency policies with suggestions/recommendations where appropriate (ex- safety policies, diversity policies, use of social media, utilization of technology, etc.).
- Complete CiTi training.
- Create an IRB application in preparation to evaluate a program (at your agency).

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.

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

- Attend virtual meetings.
- 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.
- Develop written materials for clients and community, develop handouts/flyers/brochures that explain informed consent, voting rights, SNAP eligibility.

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.

- Review assessment procedures for trauma informed care (<https://learn.nctsn.org>) and contrast them to assessment procedures at your agency.
- Evaluate the appropriateness of the assessment instruments used by the agency based on the clients served (i.e. cultural relevance, literacy).

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.
- Complete online trainings on evidenced based interventions:
 - NASW, Louisiana Continuing Education (i.e. student members)
 - Psychological First Aid, Skills for Psychological Recovery, 12 Core Concepts for Understanding Traumatic Stress Responses in Children and Families, etc. <https://learn.nctsn.org> & <https://www.nctsn.org/treatments-and-practices>. The National Traumatic Stress Network offers over 300 free trainings with CE certificates. Submit the CE certificate as verification of successfully completing the training.
 - NAADAC Webinars: <https://www.naadac.org/webinars>
 - Suicide Risk Factors and Warning Signs (Free, 1 hour): www.co.train.org (Course ID 1080982)
 - The Center for Disease Control offers online training <https://www.cdc.gov/learning/index.html>
 - The National LGBT Health Education Center has free trainings. <https://www.lgbthealtheducation.org/>

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).
- Begin to draft a proposal for a program evaluation of the field placement agency.

Important Questions to Consider

- Does the student have access to the technological means (computer/reliable Wi-Fi) to work remotely?
- Does the agency have a plan for continuing service delivery if their employed social workers must work remotely? If so, what is the plan, and can students participate in 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 a field visit, if needed?

- 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 “2” (Meets Expectations) on every competency? If not, which competencies still need to be developed and what opportunities can be developed to assist them in meeting competencies?
- Currently, is the student at risk for receiving an unsatisfactory grade for the course? (If so, should we consider a grade of Incomplete for this student, instead of working remotely? Given the student, agency and field instructor circumstances, how viable would a plan of receiving an Incomplete and continuing in field be?)

Sample Plan

1. 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. See Plan for Interruption of Practicum Due to Disaster.
2. Student submits final individualized work-plan to field liaison and field instructor/task supervisor. Work plan is approved in writing by field liaison.
3. Individualized work plans:
 - a. Must prioritize tasks where the student needs to develop competence
 - b. Should each have a task to include:
 - i. a written component/product so that competence and work completion is demonstrated
 - ii. approximate time frame
 - iii. number of hours expected for completion
4. Students will send written products to field instructor/task supervisor and field liaison.
5. The field liaison will monitor completion of the work plan and renegotiate, as needed.

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 encouraged 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.

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