

FIELD EDUCATION

Overview

Field education is an integral part of the academic preparation of the baccalaureate program in social work. The field practicum and bi-weekly integrative seminar provide a vital learning experience in professional practice.

The field education component of the B.A.S.W. program is operated independently of, but in close collaboration with, the Graduate School of Social Service's field work department. This decision is based on the social work program's intention to maintain the program's distinct identity and objectives and to address the specific needs of undergraduate students.

The program expects its field agencies to adhere to policies on nondiscrimination, affirmative action, disability, and sexual harassment. Agencies that do not adhere to such policies will not be used as field placements.

The responsibility for field placement location and coordination is that of the B.A.S.W. field coordinator. However, there is a great deal of cooperation and consultation between the program and the field work department of the Graduate School of Social Service. For example, undergraduate and graduate faculty and administrators communicate often during the process of developing new field placements to avoid confusing agencies and duplicating efforts. If one program cannot accommodate a request for students, they share the placement opportunity which is then investigated for appropriateness for the other program.

Field instructors have an M.S.W. degree and at least two years of post-master's experience. First time field instructors who supervise program students are expected to attend the Seminar in Field Instruction (SIFI) that is offered each year by the Graduate School of Social Service. This seminar, focusing on how social workers can effectively take on the new role of field instructor, is taught by social work program faculty and staff.

The primary purpose of the program's field experience is to provide students with the opportunity to engage actively in generalist practice that complements and reinforces classroom learning. Students are engaged in every stage of the process, from preparing for entry into the field to their evaluation of the practicum experience. The field component enables the student to demonstrate his/her investment and competence in social work practice.

The setting for field education is a social service agency. The B.A.S.W. field coordinator and field supervisor work closely to plan learning opportunities that meets the educational needs of the individual student and the objectives of the program. Field education settings represent a cross section of social work practice in the greater New York metropolitan region and reflect a wide range of social service programs.