



Angelo State University

College of Liberal and Fine Arts

Department of Psychology, Sociology, and Social Work

Social Work Program

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Internship Handbook

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Overview of the Social Work Program

The Bachelor of Social Work (B.S.W.) Degree

The purpose of the social work profession. Per the Council on Social Work Education (CSWE, <http://www.cswe.org/CSWE/>; 2008), “The purpose of the social work profession is to promote human and community well-being. Guided by a person and environment construct, a global perspective, respect for human diversity, and knowledge based on scientific inquiry, social work’s purpose is actualized through its quest for social and economic justice, the prevention of conditions that limit human rights, the elimination of poverty, and the enhancement of the quality of life for all persons” (p. 1).

In Texas, social work practice is defined as “the application of social work theory, knowledge, methods, ethics, and the professional use of self to restore or enhance social, psychosocial, or biopsychosocial functioning of individuals, couples, families, groups, organizations, or communities” ([Texas Occupations Code, Chapter 505, 2005](#)).

The B.S.W. degree description. The B.S.W. degree curriculum at Angelo State University is designed to prepare generalist social work practitioners to work in a variety of areas including, but not limited to, child, adolescent, and family services; health/mental health; criminal justice/corrections; gerontology/aging; and in a variety of social service organizations in the community. An emphasis is placed on the ecological perspective, providing students with an understanding of the reciprocal relationship between the person and environment.

The nature of generalist social work practice. As stated above, the B.S.W. curriculum at Angelo State University prepares generalist social work practitioners and uses the ecological perspective as the theoretical foundation of generalist practice. Generalist social work practice includes the provision of social work services with individuals, couples, families, groups, organizations, and communities. Regardless of the area (e.g., child and family welfare, corrections, health/mental health, aging, etc. . . .) or level of practice (i.e., micro, mezzo, or macro), social workers seek to promote social and economic justice and to improve functioning of individuals, couples, families, groups, organizations, and communities. Social work practitioners support individual self-determination and respect the dignity and worth of all people regardless of their age, disability, color, race, ethnicity, family structure, gender, sexual orientation, culture, national origin, religious preference, socioeconomic status, etc. . . . Social work practitioners advocate for those who have experienced various social problems that cut across cultural groups such as poverty; crime and victimization; oppression; discrimination; mental illness; substance abuse; chronic physical illness; physical, emotional, or sexual abuse; and neglect. However, given the breadth of the social work profession, social work practitioners also work with those who may not have experienced such social problems. Regardless of population served, social workers recognize their legal and ethical responsibilities to clients and provide competent social work services. It is to this end that the B.S.W. program at Angelo State University strives to educate a future generation of social work practitioners.

The [Texas State Board of Social Worker Examiners](#) (2008) defines the practice of Baccalaureate Social Work as “the application of social work theory, knowledge, methods, ethics and the professional use of self to restore or enhance social, psychosocial, or biopsychosocial functioning of individuals, couples, families, groups, organizations and communities. Baccalaureate Social Work is generalist practice may include interviewing, assessment, planning, intervention, evaluation, case management, mediation, counseling, supportive counseling, direct practice, information and referral, problem solving, supervision, consultation, education, advocacy, community organization and the development, implementation, and administration of policies, programs and activities. A LBSW recognized for independent practice may provide any non-clinical baccalaureate social work services in either an employment or an independent practice setting. A LBSW recognized for independent practice may work under contract, bill directly for services, and bill third parties for reimbursements for services. A LBSW recognized for independent practice must restrict his or her independent practice to the provision of non-clinical social work services” (pp. 20-21).

The nature of social work education. Social work education is based in the liberal arts and consists of a structured and integrated curriculum and applied experiences that are designed to train practitioners to competently apply social work values, theories, and methods to the various social problems encountered by individuals, couples, families, groups, organizations, and communities. Indeed, social work education is academically and personally challenging, but rewarding. The Social Work Program at Angelo State University is designed to support the mission of Angelo State University, and reflect the mission and charter of the social work profession by conforming to the standards set forth by the Council on Social Work Education (CSWE) and the National Association of Social Workers (NASW).

The B.S.W. program mission statement ([EP 1.0](#), [EP B2.2](#)*). The mission of the Social Work Program at Angelo State University is to provide quality social work education, based on the knowledge, values, and skills of the social work profession, and professional development opportunities for students who desire to promote the social, psychosocial, or biopsychosocial functioning and well-being of individuals, couples, families, groups, organizations, and communities via generalist social work practice.

* Reflects the Council on Social Work Education's [CSWE] Educational Policy [EP]

The values of the B.S.W. program ([EP 1.1](#)). The Social Work Program at Angelo State University supports the core values of the social work profession, reflecting the six value elements of the [National Association of Social Workers' Code of Ethics](#) and two additional value elements from the CSWE that include: 1) service; 2) social justice; 3) the dignity and worth of the person; 4) the importance of human relationships; 5) integrity; 6) competence; 7) human rights; and 8) scientific inquiry. These values provide the foundation for the mission and goals of the Social Work Program and our social work curriculum (CSWE, 2008).

The B.S.W. program goals ([EP 1.0](#), [EP B2.2](#)). The Social Work Program provides a rigorous curriculum grounded in the liberal arts, using sound teaching practices, to promote: 1) the knowledge, values, and skills used in social work that can be applied across settings and diverse populations; 2) critical thinking skills; and 3) ethical and competent social work practice consistent with the mission and objectives of the social work profession. To this end, the goals of the Social Work Program include:

- to prepare entry-level, generalist social work practitioners to provide ethical and competent services utilizing the knowledge, values, and skills of the social work profession ([EP 2.1.1 - EP 2.1.10d](#));
- to equip students with critical thinking skills that are essential in the contemporary social service environment ([EP 2.1.3](#));
- to prepare students for continued graduate work in social work or related disciplines ([EP 2.1.1 - EP 2.1.10d](#)); and
- to maintain a reciprocal relationship with social work practitioners, groups, and organizations in the community ([EP 1.2](#)).

The core competencies of the B.S.W. program. The core competencies (as taken directly from the Council on Social Work Education's 2008 [Educational Policy and Accreditation Standards](#)) of the Social Work Program at Angelo State University, Department of Psychology, Sociology, and Social Work include:

1. Identify as a professional social worker and conduct oneself accordingly. Social workers:
 - advocate for client access to the services of social work;
 - practice professional reflection and self-correction to assure continual professional development;
 - attend to professional roles and boundaries;
 - demonstrate professional demeanor in behavior, appearance, and communication;
 - engage in career-long learning; and
 - use supervision and consultation.

2. Apply social work ethical principles to guide professional practice. Social workers:
 - recognize and manage personal values in a way that allows professional values to guide practice;
 - make ethical decisions by applying standards of the National Association of Social Workers Code of Ethics;
 - tolerate ambiguity in resolving ethical conflicts; and
 - Apply strategies of ethical reasoning to arrive at principled decisions.

3. Apply critical thinking to inform and communicate professional judgments. Social workers:
 - distinguish, appraise, and integrate multiple sources of knowledge, including research-based knowledge, and practice wisdom;
 - analyze models of assessment, prevention, intervention, and evaluation; and
 - demonstrate effective oral and written communication in working with individuals, families, groups, organizations, communities, and colleagues.
4. Engage diversity and difference in practice. Social workers:
 - recognize the extent to which a culture's structures and values may oppress, marginalize, alienate, or create or enhance privilege and power;
 - gain sufficient self-awareness to eliminate the influence of personal biases and values in working with diverse groups;
 - recognize and communicate their understanding of the importance of difference in shaping life experiences; and
 - view themselves as learners and engage those with whom they work as informants.
5. Advance human rights and social and economic justice. Social workers:
 - understand the forms and mechanisms of oppression and discrimination;
 - advocate for human rights and social and economic justice; and
 - engage in practices that advance social and economic justice.
6. Engage in research-informed practice and practice-informed research. Social workers:
 - use practice experience to inform scientific inquiry; and
 - use research evidence to inform practice.
7. Apply knowledge of human behavior and the social environment. Social workers:
 - utilize conceptual frameworks to guide the processes of assessment, intervention, and evaluation; and
 - critique and apply knowledge to understand person and environment.
8. Engage in policy practice to advance social and economic well-being and to deliver effective social work services. Social workers:
 - analyze, formulate, and advocate for policies that advance social well-being; and
 - collaborate with colleagues and clients for effective policy action.

9. Respond to contexts that shape practice. Social workers:
- continuously discover, appraise, and attend to changing locales, populations, scientific and technological developments, and emerging societal trends to provide relevant services; and
 - provide leadership in promoting sustainable changes in service delivery and practice to improve the quality of social services.
10. Engage, assess, intervene, and evaluate with individuals, families, groups, organizations, and communities.
- a. Engagement. Social workers:
- substantively and affectively prepare for action with individuals, families, groups, organizations, and communities;
 - use empathy and other interpersonal skills; and
 - develop a mutually agreed-on focus of work and desired outcomes.
- b. Assessment. Social workers:
- collect, organize, and interpret client data;
 - assess client strengths and limitations;
 - develop mutually agreed-on intervention goals and objectives; and
 - select appropriate intervention strategies.
- c. Intervention. Social workers:
- initiate actions to achieve organizational goals;
 - implement prevention interventions that enhance client capacities;
 - help clients resolve problems;
 - negotiate, mediate, and advocate for clients; and
 - facilitate transitions and endings.
- d. Evaluation. Social workers:
- critically analyze, monitor, and evaluate interventions.

Overview of the B.S.W. curriculum. There are a total of 120 semester hours required for the B.S.W. degree. These hours are divided into groups that include: the academic major, other requirements, and advanced elective courses. Some courses are required to be advanced (3000 and 4000 level courses) while others can be from lower division selections (1000 and 2000 level courses). A minor in the B.S.W. program is not required.

While the B.S.W. degree program at Angelo State University focuses on generalist social work practice, with the careful selection of advanced elective courses through the academic advising process, and with the proper internship placement, students can effectively build skill sets in the following areas that reflect faculty expertise:

- children, adolescents, and families;
- criminal justice/corrections;
- gerontology/aging;
- health/mental health; and
- social/community development.

These skill sets increase student expertise in specific substantive areas of practice, may help them obtain employment in these areas of practice, and/or prepare them for more concentrated graduate study. It is recommended that students discuss such options with their assigned academic advisor. See page 301 of the [University Undergraduate Catalog](#) for the social work program curriculum.

Philosophy of the Internship Program: Social Work’s Signature Pedagogy

Signature pedagogy. According to the CSWE, field education or the social work internships, is the signature pedagogy of the social work profession. The CSWE EPAS states, “Signature pedagogy represents the central form of instruction and learning in which a profession socializes its students to perform the role of practitioner. Professionals have pedagogical norms with which they connect and integrate theory and practice.⁴ In social work, the signature pedagogy is field education. The intent of field education is to connect the theoretical and conceptual contribution of the classroom with the practical world of the practice setting. It is a basic precept of social work education that the two interrelated components of curriculum—classroom and field—are of equal importance within the curriculum, and each contributes to the development of the requisite competencies of professional practice. Field education is systematically designed, supervised, coordinated, and evaluated based on criteria by which students demonstrate the achievement of program competencies” ([CSWE, 2008, p. 8](#)).

⁴ Shulman, L. S. (2005, Summer). Signature pedagogies in the professions. *Daedalus*, 52-59.

Purpose of the internship program. The purpose of the internship in social work education is to provide opportunities for students to *apply social work knowledge, skills, and values* learned in the classroom to real-life situations with clients “in the field”. Students are able to observe the benefits and challenges of working within various organizational settings with diverse client populations. Students are supervised by a professional social worker or related degreed individual in the agency (the Field Instructor) and by field faculty (Field Education Director) at the University. This dual perspective is intended to facilitate the *integration* of classroom learning with agency-based practice, and to provide support to students as they engage in this dynamic process. Additionally, field agencies often benefit from the presence of a social work intern; however, the primary focus of the internship is on the learning process for the student.

Philosophy of the internship program. The Social Work Program at Angelo State University utilizes the ecological perspective as the theoretical foundation of generalist practice. Generalist social work practice includes the provision of social work services with individuals, couples, families, groups, organizations, and communities. This perspective is reinforced through the knowledge, skills, and values content taught in the social work courses. The

Generalist Intervention Model^{*}, which may be employed with all clients (individuals, couples, families, groups, organizations, and communities) is defined below.

^{*} Kirst-Ashman, K. K., & Hull, G. H. (2009). *Understanding generalist practice* (5th ed.). Belmont, CA: Brooks/Cole.

1. Engagement
2. Assessment
3. Planning
4. Implementation
5. Evaluation
6. Termination
7. Follow-up

Students are encouraged to further develop their critical thinking skills which enable them to apply this model regardless of the setting or context of practice.

Goals of the Field Education Program

The primary goal of field education is to provide students with opportunities to apply generalist social work knowledge and develop skills which reflect the profession's values and ethics with clients at all levels (micro, mezzo, and macro). The following are the goals of the field education program:

1. to help students apply social work knowledge, skills, values, ethics to enhance the well-being of people through supervised generalist practice experiences;
2. to help students utilize social work knowledge, skills, values, and ethics in a supervised generalist practice experience in order to ameliorate the environmental conditions that negatively impact the client and the client's ecology;
3. to enable students to utilize appropriate research methodologies in order to evaluate the effectiveness of their own intervention, agency, and programs within ethical guidelines, and to use practice knowledge to inform research;
4. to enable students to work effectively with diverse client groups, especially populations vulnerable to discrimination and oppression;
5. to facilitate the professional socialization process by encouraging the demonstration of professional behavior and the application of social work values and ethics;

6. to help students assess their potential for graduate education in social work, and allied fields, and advanced social work practice through feedback from social work field instructors and faculty;
7. to help students develop self-awareness through the process of intervention at all levels (micro, mezzo, and macro) of practice;
8. to enable students to utilize professional oral and written communication skills appropriate to their field setting; and
9. to enable students to use professional supervision to enhance learning and practice skill.

The Internship Organizational Structure

Structure and Design of the Internship

The field education component of Angelo State University's Social Work Program requires two semesters of an Internship (SWK 4371 Social Work Internship I and SWK 4372 Social Work Internship II), consisting of a total of 500 hours. Students must complete 250 hours during Internship I and 250 hours during the Internship II semester at the same agency, or at a different agency. The ability to allow students the freedom to choose a secondary placement is in place to expose the student to the breath of social work practice. Also, this flexibility is to allow the program to meet the needs of students and the community social and human service agencies that provide an internship opportunity for our students. Social Work Internship I will require the student to acquire a minimum of 20 hours per week of internship experience over a period of 12 weeks; additionally, 15 hours of class instruction is counted towards their 250 total hours for Social Work Internship I. Social Work Internship II will require the student to acquire approximately 18 hours per week of internship experience across 14 weeks; additionally, 15 hours of class instruction is counted towards their 250 total hours for Social Work Internship II. The 15 hours of class instruction in Social Work Internship I and Internship II is designed to assist the student in transitioning into their internship, integrating classroom learning with the practice setting, developing their learning contract, and providing an opportunity to process weekly internship experiences. Students will submit a weekly journal summarizing their internship experience from the prior week to share during the classroom time. This will allow students an opportunity to express any success and any difficulties they have experienced at their internship placement.

The two components of the internship experience consist of a total of 500 clock hours including: a) the internship at an assigned approved agency, studying and practicing under the supervision of a professional social worker (or, when necessity dictates, a related degreed professional) for a total of 470 clock hours; and b) 30 clock hours of class instruction to assist in professionally preparing the student for the internship experience integrating theoretical and conceptual information to the practice setting, and to facilitate the creation and development of the student's learning contract.

Administration of the Internship Program

The Social Work Program Field Education Director has the overall responsibility for directing the Field Education Program. The Social Work Program Field Education Director is responsible for: the development, utilization, and evaluation of field placement agencies; screening and placement of potential internship students; development, implementation, and evaluation of internship field policies, development of data bases and reporting systems; evaluation of internship program activities; development and evaluation of field instructor training; monitoring students' progress in the field, and the coordination of faculty which interface with various aspects of the field education program in collaboration with the Social Work Program Director.

Specific responsibilities of Social Work Field Education Director. The Social Work Program Field Education Director functions as a link between the university, the student, and the field agency. The Field Education Director monitors and evaluates students' progress and performance in the field and assumes primary responsibility for assigning students' grades for the semester in SWK 4371 Social Work Internship I and SWK 4372 Social Work Internship II. The specific responsibilities of the Social Work Field Education Director include:

1. teaching and facilitating a three semester hour Social Work Internship I class and a three semester hour Social Work Internship II class which processes the students' experiences in the field, integrating theoretical and conceptual information with the practice setting fostering the implementation of evidence-informed practice;
2. monitoring and evaluating the students through weekly assessments of students' work in the field (reflected in journals or written summaries and time sheets); the appropriateness of the students' job descriptions and learning contracts; individual visits at the agencies with the students and Field Instructors (at least twice, and more if necessary); and overall review of the students' performance in the field as reflected in the verbal and written evaluation processes;
3. providing support and training to Field Instructors and agencies in the effective use of supervision with field students, through an four hour annual orientation;
4. participating in faculty meetings related to curriculum development; coordination, assessment, screening and review of field students; and other planning issues; and
5. communicating with the social work faculty on students' progress in their field agencies, including any problems, issues, or concerns which need to be addressed by the field program.

Social Work Community Advisory Committee

The Social Work Community Advisory Committee works in concert with the Social Work Program in evaluating the policies and procedures for the internship experience as well as the overall social work program. The committee also provides an additional link and a valuable resource between the Social Work Field Education Program and the community. Based on the members' expertise, it may also provide input into the development of new internship sites and the review of existing sites. The committee may also provide input on training needs or other appropriate issues related to field instruction.

Agency-Based Field Education: Field Agencies and Internship Instructors

Internship agencies provide students the opportunity apply classroom knowledge to real problems of client systems of all sizes. Students, in turn, provide agencies the opportunity to bring new ideas and challenges to service delivery. To become affiliated with the Angelo State University Social Work Program, agencies must meet the following criteria:

1. the agency's philosophy of service should be compatible with the philosophy, values, and ethics of the social work profession; the primary purpose of the organization (or program) must be to address human needs;
2. services provided by the agency must be appropriate for undergraduate, generalist social work practice and there must be a sufficient caseload of clients (and work) for students to gain "hands on" experience;
3. there must be availability of appropriate supervision, namely at least one staff member who is licensed for social work practice in Texas and/or, has a BSW or MSW, to serve as the Field Instructor for the student. A staff member with a related degree or related role can serve as the Field Instructor with the Social Work Field Education Director or other Angelo State University social work faculty member providing supervision when necessity dictates;
4. agencies must support the field education process by providing release time for Field Instructors to carry out field instruction responsibilities and to attend field-related meetings;
5. agencies must provide students with adequate work space, office supplies, access to a telephone, transportation or travel reimbursement for travel required by the agency and information regarding transportation policies and liabilities, and access to client and agency records appropriate for the learning experience;
6. agencies should not engage in discriminatory practices in the hiring of personnel, the acceptance of students, or the provision of services to clientele regardless of race, color, national origin, gender, disability, age religion, or sexual orientation; and

7. agencies must agree to participate in various processes of the field program, including field orientation, periodic field agency updates, interviews with prospective field students, and communication with the field faculty.

Contact regarding a student intern may be initiated by the university or the agency. The affiliation process begins with a telephone conversation between the agency and the Social Work Field Education Director to determine that the agency meets the above stated criteria. If the agency is appropriate as an internship site, an agency application form, a biographical data form for the field instructor(s), and a contract setting forth the agreement with the university are sent to the agency. The Social Work Field Education Director reviews the completed forms and upon approval of the agency as a field placement site, and Affiliation Agreement is signed by authorized representatives of both the agency and the university.

Because Angelo State University students come from such a widespread geographic base, the university is working to have contracts with a large number of field agencies in order to best meet the needs of the social work internship students. Depending upon the number of students in internship and their geographic preferences, some agencies may not have students placed with them every semester. However, all active field agencies will receive an Agency Profile Form to be updated every two years in order to provide the Social Work Field Education Director with current information.

Responsibilities of Field Agencies

As an approved field agency, affiliates are committed to the educational process of the social work students. Through agency experiences and supervision, students have the opportunity to learn and become socialized into the profession. Agencies are expected to provide designated field instructors and other resources stated in the criteria for agency selection. Field agencies are asked to work cooperatively with the Social Work Program (and the Social Work Field Education Director) in creative problem-solving and efforts to enhance the learning experience for field students. As an approved affiliate with the ASU Social Work Program, agencies agree to:

1. Participate in the pre-placement process, which includes completing an interview with the prospective field student and providing an assessment of the appropriateness of a respective student for that agency;
2. provide opportunities for students to participate in agency programs and activities which will enhance the students' learning experience;
3. appoint appropriate personnel to serve as field instructors and provide the necessary agency support for field instructors to provide necessary supervision and attend field orientation and training provided by the University as well as participate in all other field-related functions (supervision, evaluation, conferences, etc.);

4. provide students the use of facilities necessary to successfully complete required field assignments, including office space, office supplies, access to a telephone, and access to client and agency records appropriate to the learning experience;
5. inform the Field Director as soon as possible regarding staff or organizational changes which affect the field placement; and
6. work in partnership with the Field Faculty to maximize the field education of social work students.

Selection of Internship Instructors

The Field instructor plays one of the most critical roles in the educational process of the field practicum. In order to be approved by the University as a Field Instructor, an agency employee should meet the criteria listed below. Exceptions to any of the following criteria must be granted by the Social Work Field Education Director.

1. BSW or MSW degree from an accredited social work program;
2. current social work license from the state of Texas (LBSW or LMSW);
3. at least one year work experience, including at least six months of employment at the field agency;
4. ability to supervise and instruct undergraduate social work students;
5. acceptance of the generalist social work model and the educational philosophy of ASU's Social Work Program;
6. commitment to work cooperatively with Field Education Director and the field education program; and
7. demonstrated professional social work values, knowledge, skills, and behaviors in relation to clients, agency co-workers, and with social work interns.

There may be unique situations when agencies do not have a B.S.W. or M.S.W. available to directly provide field supervision, but they do have qualified professionals with the interest, expertise, and ability to provide supervision of social work tasks. Such individuals will be identified as "Task Supervisors," and will be eligible to provide direct oversight of the daily educational activities of the field student. Task Supervisors must be approved by the program's Social Work Field Education Director based upon their educational background, values and ethics compatible with the social work profession, supervisory ability, and understanding of social work education and practice principles, and work experience. Students working under a Task Supervisor will be provided with social work supervision through an assigned B.S.W. Field Instructor from another program within the assigned agency, another agency, or from the ASU Social Work Faculty. The Task Supervisor and Social Work Field Education Director will work

collaboratively in designing student assignments, guiding student activities, and evaluating student performance.

Responsibilities of Internship Instructors

Field Instructors engage in the dual role of agency practitioner and social work educator. Since the primary goal of field instruction is social work education rather than agency service, the teaching role of the Field Instructor is critical. Conversely, the primary task of the field student is that of learning rather than serving.

The specific responsibilities and duties of the Field Instructor include:

1. **Pre-placement interviews and assessment of prospective students.** Field Instructors are asked to meet with a prospective student to discuss what an internship at their agency would entail and to assess the student's appropriateness for that setting. Field Instructors are expected to complete a post-interview evaluation form, which provides feedback for placement decisions.
2. **Orientation of internship students.** Field Instructors are responsible for orienting the assigned field student to their agency. For example, students need to learn about the agency's mission, policies and procedures, expectations regarding work rules, dress codes, and supervision. The most effective form of orientation is participatory; therefore, rather than relying on manuals to orient the student, Field Instructors are encouraged to discuss relevant policies and allow the student to observe first-hand the way in which business is conducted by the agency.
3. **Establishing a learning contract and job description.** Field Instructors are expected to work with the assigned field student in the development of a learning contract and job description for their internship. Input from the Field Instructor is critical to the identification of realistic and appropriate expectations for the placement. Ongoing communication with the student about roles, responsibilities, duties, and accountability during the internship can be facilitated by these instruments.
4. **Supervision of internship student.** Field Instructors shall provide at least one hour per week of direct supervision. While most field instructors spend much more time than this each week working directly with students, there is a need for a designated time strictly set-aside for discussing and processing the student's learning needs, identifying strengths and areas for work, updating learning goals, and giving feedback on the student's performance.
5. **Serve as a professional role model.** Field Instructors should reflect and model professional social work values, skills, and behavior. Students are keenly aware of how their field instructor interacts with clients, co-workers, and other community contacts. Field Instructors should be open to discussing questions the students may have regarding different communication styles and contexts, agency politics, and balancing "real life" dynamics compared to text-book ideals.

6. **Provide appropriate learning experiences:** Field Instructors should structure the students' learning experience in such a way that students are exposed to a wide range and variety of opportunities, including but not limited to direct client contact, agency staffing and staff meetings, board meetings, community meetings, and court hearings. Students should be increasingly challenged in their role and involvement as the semester progresses, beginning with observational roles and working towards direct responsibility for specific experiences intake, intervention, and group facilitation. In addition, the Field Instructor is responsible for coordinating the student's involvement with other agency staff that function in various roles.
7. **Evaluation of the student:** Field Instructors should provide the students with ongoing feedback regarding his or her work and progress. The evaluation process includes completion of the evaluation form at mid-semester and the end of the semester. The Field Instructor is responsible for completing the form and discussing it with the student in conjunction with the Social Work Field Education Director's field visits during the semester. The field instructor may elect to have the student complete a self-evaluation as well in order to compare perceptions. Regardless of the format chosen, the Field Instructor should regard the evaluation as an integral part of the field instruction process and critical component to the student's learning experience.
8. **Participation in the internship experience:** Field instructors are expected to attend internship orientations provided at the beginning of each semester. In addition, input and participation from field instructors is appreciated in order to continue to upgrade and enhance the internship experience, the curriculum and the entire social work program.
9. **Communication with social work field education Director:** Field Instructors should contact the social work field education Director as soon as possible should problems arise in the field setting. In addition, field instructors are asked to communicate with the Social Work Field Education Director regarding any agency changes which may impact the placement.

While there is no monetary compensation for serving as a Field Instructor for the university, Field Instructors do receive 0.5 Continuing Education Units (CEUs) for social work licensing requirements for each semester they supervise an intern, with a maximum of 1.0 CEUs per calendar year for field supervision

Expectations for the Social Work Internship as a Learning Experience

The internship is the highlight of the student's social work education, and is considered the "signature pedagogy" in social work education by the CSWE ([CSWE, 2008](#)). The university is dependent upon community agencies to carry out this component of the learning process. Because social work is a practice-based profession, the student learns by doing, not from being told how to do it. By working under the supervision and instruction of a competent professional social worker, students can initially observe the skills and processes and then begin to demonstrate their own ability to provide social work services.

The internship should provide opportunities for students to integrate classroom learning and skill development through closely supervised social work practice in a variety of situations. Rather than teaching a specialized approach to working with a given population, emphasis should be on generalist practice implemented in a specific setting. Therefore, students are able to translate the knowledge and abilities gained in one agency to any other setting.

The internship should allow the student to engage in both short-term and long-term client contact, a range of client situations, varied practice approaches, and diverse agency activities. While there are many societal changes that are influencing the service delivery system (such as managed care systems, increased specialization, professional liability, accreditation standards, etc.), the internship continues to offer a somewhat insulated experience where the emphasis and priority should be on maximizing the student's learning opportunities. Field Instructors need to become increasingly creative and flexible in structuring the placement for their assigned student in order to ensure the student is able to receive the fullest range of experiences – perhaps even allowing the student to become involved with other agencies or programs in order to fulfill this need.

As stated previously, the internship is a mechanism for students to become socialized to the profession. Internship students can indeed be a wonderful resource to community agencies and bring a wealth of energy, enthusiasm, and commitment with them to the internship experience. However, the primary focus should always be on the student's learning.

Teaching Methods Used in the Social Work Internship

Since Field Instructors are typically agency practitioners, each may have an approach to field instruction based on their individual educational background and experience. Field Instructors should be sensitive to the diversity of learning styles and characteristics of field students and should utilize the most appropriate approach for the particular student. The following methods are listed as suggested tools for field instructors to utilize to meet the educational needs of their field students.

1. Assign, evaluate, and discuss process recordings.
2. Review and discuss case documentation.
3. Allow student to observe the field instructor's client interaction and discuss such interactions.
4. Directly observe the intern's client interactions and discuss such interactions.
5. Videotape client interactions (individual, couple, family, group, and so forth).
6. Conduct role plays with the intern.
7. Allow the intern to observe and participate in agency staff meetings.
8. Ask the intern to visit other agencies to gather information.
9. Arrange for the intern to participate in various staff roles (receptionist, intake worker, therapist, direct-care staff, administration, etc.).
10. Assign films and readings and discuss their relevance with the intern.

The above are just a few suggested teaching methods. Field Instructors should feel free to utilize other approaches, which are effective for them.

The Social Work Internship: Integrating Theory with Practice

Requirements for Student Admission to the Internship

Students entering the internship must be fully admitted to the social work program and have completed all prerequisites with a grade of “C” or higher in all social work classes and pre-major classes. They must have a GPA of 2.5 in the major and a 2.0 overall, and must have completed the application process for the internship experience. Students are encouraged to become members of NASW to obtain affordable malpractice insurance (1m/3m policy coverage) and have reliable transportation. All social work interns must purchase their own malpractice insurance and provide evidence of such to the social work field education director prior to beginning their internship experience.

Students who have successfully completed their university required core education requirements and prerequisite social work courses must attend an internship orientation, and submit an application for the internship by the designated deadline.

Summary of Procedures for Student Placement into an Internship

The following steps describe the sequence of events for placement in the internship:

1. eligible students attend an orientation for internship;
2. students complete and submit an internship application by the specified deadline; which will include a ranking of desired placement opportunities, with requests for specific agencies;
3. social work field education director reviews the applications for eligibility and completeness;
4. the social work field education director determines tentative internship assignments for all students who are approved for placement and notifies students and agencies in writing;
5. students schedule and complete interviews with assigned agencies;
6. students and field instructors submit interview evaluations to the social work field education director;
7. the social work field education director confirms and finalizes assigned placements and notifies students and Internship agencies;
8. alternative placements are made at the request of students or field instructors following the initial interview if necessary; and
9. prior to the beginning of internship, an orientation is provided to all field instructors.

Monitoring of students during the internship experience will be conducted by the Field Education Director. The Field Education Director will make observe and monitor the students during the one hour a week class time scheduled for Internship I and Internship II. There are no Field Liaisons to communicate with due to the limited number of qualified social workers in the community. This also always for the Field Education Director to reinforce the social work values and ethics, when there is not a social worker (BSW or MSW) employed at an agency.

Sequence of the Internship Experience

The following describes a general overview of experiences, which are appropriate for most field students:

Orientation of agency. As specified under responsibilities of the Field Agency and Field Instructor, students should receive adequate orientation to the agency and its services. This phase should include tours of the facility, introductions to staff, overview of the agency (particularly for large agencies with multiple programs), overview of the relevant agency procedures and services to clients, and specific expectations of the agency (such as parking, dress code, work schedules, etc.). This information is best transmitted in a personal or interactional process rather than simply reading agency policy and procedure manuals.

Orientation/Observation of client services. By the third week of field, students should be involved in opportunities with clients. This may include sitting in on intakes, conduct intakes directly, observe agency staff as they conduct social assessments or social histories, observing group sessions, sitting in on staffing or treatment team meetings, etc. As the student completes the orientation phase, they should have developed a good understanding of the agency's procedures for working with clients, documentation, and the organizational structure.

Provision of services to clients. Because undergraduate students are being prepared for generalist practice, there should be opportunities for extensive client contact, a range of client situations, varied practice approaches, and diverse agency activities/assignments. It is expected that the placement should include the following: working one-on-one with clients to assess their needs and determine resources to meet these needs; working with people in families and groups; participation in staffing; documentation or a case records; research, assessment, or intervention within an agency setting and community or committee work. Students should be given as much direct responsibility as they are capable of and comfortable with.

Conclusion of placement. Students should address the conclusion of their placement with clients, co-workers, and the field instructor. The termination process should include evaluation of clients' progress and accomplishments, providing for follow-up or aftercare, summarizing and evaluating their own learning and performance, and addressing feelings regarding termination. Because the end of the semester typically comes "so quickly," this phase is often overlooked as a part of the internship process. Attention to this time should be given by both the student and the field instructor.

General Expectations, Responsibilities, and Requirements for the Internship

Internship students are expected to assume responsibility for their own learning, for self-evaluation, communication with co-workers and supervisors, providing critical feedback regarding the field placement, completing the required hours, adhering to their job description, and fulfilling their learning contract. Part of the learning experience which takes place during the internship is experiencing the frustration which may occur when working in an organization structure, working with different personalities, or working under a supervisor (the Field

Instructor) who may not be what the student thinks he or she should be; therefore, students are expected to demonstrate maturity and utilize good communication and problem-solving skills when encountering challenges in the placement. *The most difficult situations do not usually involve clients; they involve agency staff.* Consequently, learning to effectively operate within an agency is an important part of the internship experience.

Hours. Social Work Internship I consists of 250 hours. This averages out to 20 hours per week. Social Work Internship II consists of 250 hours, which averages out to 20 hours per week. Both placements may or may not be completed at the same agency. Students are required to record completed hours on official time sheets, which must be validated with the original signature of the field instructor each week. Students can work out a schedule of days and times they will be in field at the agency, with the approval of the field instructor. However, students are not to work less than four-hour segments and should work during regular agency office hours. The internship student should generally work during the same schedule or shift as the field instructor; therefore, if a Field Instructor typically works weekdays, 8:00 am to 5:00 pm, then the social work student should not regularly work evenings or weekends if there are no alternative social workers on duty during these times.

Students should not complete their internship hours any earlier than two weeks prior to the end of the semester. If a student does complete their internship hours two weeks before the end of the semester, he or she is expected to continue to attend required minimum hours at the agency for the time period.

Learning contract and job description. All field students are expected to develop learning contracts and job descriptions as a part of their Internship. This assignment is to be done by the student with input from the field instructor. The learning contract should reflect mutually-agreed upon learning goals for the semester. The job description should realistically reflect the duties and responsibilities of the field student at the agency. Both of these documents will be utilized as a part of the evaluation process with the Social Work Field Education Director.

Weekly summaries or journals. Students are expected to maintain documentation regarding their weekly field experiences. Regardless of the format, the student is responsible for completing a written description and assessment of their work at the agency every week.

Internship Evaluation Process

By student. The student is expected to assume responsibility for evaluation as a part of his or her professional development and growth. The three tools, which are utilized to guide the student in developing evaluation skills, include: the learning contract, the performance evaluation of the student, and the evaluation of the field agency. The learning contract allows the student to establish measurable goals and use this format to facilitate supervisory conferences and self-evaluation. The student completes a self-evaluation by completing the same mid-term and final evaluation form as the Field Instructor. This is not a process, which is “done to” the student, but is done with the student. The student should critically assess his or her performance and discuss self-perceptions along with those expressed by the Field Instructor. The student is

also asked to complete an evaluation of the Field Agency and Instructor at the end of the semester. This provides feed back to the Social Work Program and the Field Agency regarding the field site and allows the student to have input into improving the quality of future placements at this agency.

By field instructor. Field Instructors are encouraged to regard the evaluation forms and process as a tool for supervision as well as a measurement of progress. The Field Instructor and student should complete the field evaluation form at mid-semester and at the end of the semester. Many Field Instructors find it helpful to complete the evaluation with the student or by asking the student to rate themselves and compare it with the Field Instructor's rating. Attention should also be given to evaluating how well the student has performed according to his or her job description and the learning contract. The evaluation form consists of measurements that address the CSWE 10 core competencies and 41 practice behaviors.

The Social Work Field Education Director will visit each student at his or her agency at least twice during the semester, usually at the mid-term and final evaluation. This will provide an opportunity for the Field Education Director to visit with the Field Instructor or student, to address particular concerns which need to be addressed.

Field Instructors are asked to use the evaluation form to rate students on their performance as objectively as possible. Often, field instructors who have a good relationship with the student are reluctant to give critical feedback or to give anything but the highest of ratings. However, it is essential that even students who perform exceptionally well in the field are challenged to grow in new areas. Field Instructors are also asked to provide a recommended grade at the end of the semester. While the recommended grade may affect the grade assigned by the Social Work Field Education director, other factors such as participation and performance in field seminar are also taken into consideration before the final grade is determined.

By the social work field education director. The social work field education Director is continually assessing and evaluating students based on information from the students' journals, assignments, participation in field seminar, and feedback from field instructors. The social work field education Director is responsible for determining the final grade for the semester based on performance both in the field and in the classroom. However, the assigned grade is not as significant as the learning and growth, which takes place for the student during the field.

General Internship Policies

Completion of Hours and Attendance

Students are expected to complete a total of 500 hours to satisfy the requirements for both Social Work Internship I and II. This is about 20 hours per week on average during both Internships. Specific work schedules are to be worked out between the student and the Field Instructor. If the agency requires training or in-service hours, up to 40 hours may be counted towards the internship hours. If training occurs before the semester begins, permission from the Social Work Field Education Director should be granted in advance. Travel time to and from the

field agency may not be counted towards the students' field hours, but travel which is incurred during the placement is appropriate to be included such as home visits, travel to other offices of agencies, and so forth.

Students are responsible for accurately documenting their hours, with signed verification from their Field Instructor. Students are expected to demonstrate professional work habits, such as being punctual and regular in work attendance. In the event a student must be late or absent from their regularly scheduled field hours, he or she should call their Field Instructor. Excessive tardiness or absences are considered a serious problem and may necessitate a conference with the Social Work Field Education Director.

If students must miss their regular internship hours, they may schedule make-up time with the approval of their Field Instructor. If a student gets seriously behind on their hours due to circumstances beyond their control (illness, personal emergency, death in the family, etc.), they should discuss this with the Social Work Field Education Director in order to develop an outcome that is in the best interest of the agency, university, and student. Students may not, typically, receive an incomplete for an internship course. If the required hours or assignments are not completed by the end of the semester, students will receive an "F" and be expected to repeat the internship experience (usually at another agency). Exceptions to this policy are made for only the most extenuating circumstances and must be approved by the Social Work Field Education Director. If a student is not satisfied with the action taken by the Social Work Field Education Director, the student may appeal the decision to the Social Work Program Director.

Change of Internship Placement

The Social Work Field Education Director should be contacted if problems arise in the placement. Most concerns can be resolved through a conference with the Social Work Field Education Director, student and Field Instructor. Changes in the field placement are only made when agency changes dictate the termination of the placement (programs closing, field instructors leaving the agency, etc.) or when problems between the student and the placement are determined to be irreconcilable by the Social Work Field Education Director. If circumstances necessitate a change in placement, the Social Work Field Education Director should be contacted as soon as possible to make alternative arrangements for the student's placement. Hours may be transferred for the initial placement to the new placement, with the approval of the Social Work Field Education Director.

Removal of Student from an Internship Placement

A student may be removed from the internship agency at any time by request from the Field Instructor and/or agency for unprofessional conduct or for significant lack of progress in achieving internship learning objectives. If a student's performance is deemed unsatisfactory, the Field Instructor should contact the Social Work Field Education Director immediately. This contact is needed in order that a conference can be arranged between the student, the Social Work Field Education Director and Field Instructor. The Social Work Field Education Director also may remove a student from the field for unprofessional conduct or lack of progress or participation. The grounds for removal for of a student from field may include, but are not

limited to: failure to abide by the *NASW Code of Ethics*; attempts to harm oneself or someone else; repeated tardiness or absences at the agency; repeated changes in scheduled field hours without approval; and/or other behavior that is incompatible with accepted professional conduct. The final decision to remove a student from their internship will be made, after consultation with the social work faculty, by the Social Work Field Education Director, with documentation from the Field Instructor or agency, and may be based on objective and/or subjective professional judgment. If the student is not satisfied with the decision of the Social Work Field Education Director, the student may appeal the decision to the Social Work Program Director.

Supervision of Student Activities and Work

Students shall not be left alone in the agency without professional staff supervision. Leaving students alone or in charge is not an appropriate situation for students. Internship students, no matter how competent or skilled do not yet have the required credentials for assuming staff responsibilities. It is also inappropriate for students to make home visits alone without their supervisor or other staff.

Safety Issues

Internship agencies should be aware of safety issues related to the activities of the internship student. Students should not be expected to engage in any activity where there are safety concerns. Students should be thoroughly oriented to the agency's policies and procedures to ensure their health and safety during their internship experience.

Malpractice/Liability Insurance

Students have coverage for malpractice liability purchased through an independent company or NASW. The student must provide proof of such malpractice insurance, at the 1 million/3 million level, coverage prior to beginning their internship experience.

The Provision of Credit for Life Experience, Work Experience, and Prior Internships

Students will not be given any academic credit, including credit towards the Internship experience, for prior work or life experience, as stipulated by the CSWE.

Internship at Place of Employment

As a general rule, Internship students shall not be placed in agencies where they are currently employed. It is the student's responsibility to disclose such information to the Social Work Field Education Director during the application process. Experience has shown that when a student is doing an internship and employed at the same agency, the educational focus is severely limited. Any exceptions to the policy must be approved by the Social Work Field Education Director in consultation with the program faculty. The stated criteria which must be met for an exception to be granted is as follows: a) student must have a different supervisor for internship than employment supervisor; (b) student must engage in internship hours at different

times and/or days than employment hours; and (c) student must be assigned to a different department for internship than employment.

Night and Weekend Placements

Most traditional social service agencies do not have qualified supervisory staff available during non-traditional hours. While the social work faculty is sensitive to students' scheduling needs, students should be aware that no evening or weekend hours will be approved that compromise the programs' educational objectives or the quality of the student's internship experience. If an agency provides adequate and appropriate supervision during non-traditional hours, a student may schedule up to eight hours with approval from social work field education Director.

Travel and Mileage Reimbursement

It is the student's responsibility to secure reliable transportation to and from the internship. It is also their responsibility to provide their own automobile liability insurance coverage for agency-related travel. Reimbursement for agency-related expenses, such as travel compensation should be the responsibility of the agency and should be congruent with the agency reimbursement policies and rates for regular staff. The agency policies and procedures for the travel compensation should be discussed with internship students as a part of their orientation. It is the responsibility of the field instructor and agency to verify that the student's vehicle insurance coverage is adequate for the job required before allowing the student to engage in agency activities involving transportation.

Holidays

Students are entitled to observe holidays as designated by the university and their internship agency. However, if a student's regularly scheduled hours occur on a holiday, they are still responsible for completing those hours on another day. Students should communicate the university's holiday schedule to their field instructor and make plans accordingly.

Sick Days

If students are unable to attend internship due to personal illness or the illness of a dependent family member, they should contact their field instructor and assume responsibility for rescheduling any appointments or work requirements. The student shall make up any missed hours at a time agreed upon by the student and field instructor. If the student's absences exceed 24 hours or three full internship days, the student should notify the Social Work Field Education Director and propose a plan to remediate the time missed.

Conflicts of Interest

Students, Field Instructors, field agencies, and social work faculty should all be aware of potential conflicts of interests. Internship students and Field Instructors, particularly, should make known to the Social Work Field Education Director any potential conflicts of interest.

Internship students shall not be placed at agencies where relatives or family members are employed or serve on the board of directors without the approval of the Social Work Field Education Director

Requests for Documentation

The social work faculty or field agencies may request that students applying for internship or participating in the internship experience provide documentation regarding their physical or mental health, drug or alcohol use, or provide information for a criminal background check. Such information may be requested if required by the agency or when it is deemed necessary to ensure the well being of the social work student and/or clients in the field. Decisions related to the information obtained will be made on an individual basis.

Accommodation for Students with Disabilities

Angelo State University is committed to the principle that no qualified person shall, on the basis of disability, be excluded from the participation in or be denied the benefits of the services, programs, or activities of the university, as required by the *Americans with Disability Act of 1990*. However, Angelo State University does not waive the published degree requirements for students. To the extent practical, the faculty and administration will make reasonable accommodations to assist qualified individuals with disabilities meet their degree requirements, consistent with the applicable provisions of Texas statutes. The social work program will work with students and other support services to enable a student to work towards a successful internship experience. It is recognized that students may choose not to disclose a disability. In such cases, the student shall not receive special accommodation in class or for field work if the disability is to known to the university or its faculty.

Nondiscrimination Policy

The social work program at Angelo State University is committed to a policy of nondiscrimination. No person shall be excluded from participation in, denied the benefits of, or be subject to discrimination under any program or activity sponsored or conducted by Angelo State University, on any basis prohibited by applicable law, including, but not limited to, race, color, national origin, religion, sex, or disability.

Grievance Procedures

The Social Work Program's *Student Handbook* details students' rights and explains complaint and grievance procedures. Social work students have the right to appeal course grades and adverse decisions relating to the Social Work Field Education Program according to the appeal process outlined in the Social Work Program's *Student Handbook*.

Forms