

**MSW Field Education Manual**  
**Academic Year: 2024–25**

MSW program offered by [Bluffton University](https://www.bluffton.edu) and [Goshen College](https://www.goshen.edu)



**Mission:** Shaped by Anabaptist-Mennonite tradition and the social work profession’s core values of social justice, service, the importance of human relationships, integrity, competence, and the dignity and worth of every person, the Master of Social Work (MSW) program’s mission is to prepare students for specialized practice in mental health with an emphasis on anti-racism and anti-oppressive practices, and integration of spirituality.

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**Welcome to the MSW Field Education program  
at Bluffton University and Goshen College!**

We hope you find this *MSW Field Education Manual* useful as you move through the field education program. Navigate around this *Manual* by clicking on links and searching for keywords. Reach out to the MSW Field Education Director and faculty field liaison with questions and feedback.

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**Students, field education agency personnel, and MSW program field education personnel can locate field education-related files on Moodle.**

**Land acknowledgement statement:** We acknowledge that the territories on which Bluffton University and Goshen College stand are that of Shawnee, Potawatomi, Delaware, Miami, Peoria, Seneca, Wyandot, Ojibwe, and many other Indigenous peoples. With gratitude, our MSW program honors these lands and the people who have stewarded them throughout the generations. We commit to continuing to learn how to be better stewards of the lands we inhabit.

## Brief Overview: MSW Program

The MSW program is offered by [Bluffton University](#) (Bluffton, Ohio) and [Goshen College](#) (Goshen, Indiana). The mission of the MSW program is:

Shaped by Anabaptist-Mennonite tradition and the social work profession's core values of social justice, service, the importance of human relationships, integrity, competence, and the dignity and worth of every person, the Master of Social Work (MSW) program's mission is to prepare students for specialized practice in mental health with an emphasis on anti-racism and anti-oppressive practices, and integration of spirituality.



The MSW program prepares students for mental health practice at the individual, family, group, organization, and community levels. The MSW program also focuses on anti-racism and anti-oppressive practices, and the integration of spirituality.

The MSW program consists of 57 credit hours (19 3-credit hour courses), and can be completed in 2 to 4 years. Students with a bachelor's degree in social work (BSW) from an accredited program may be admitted at the advanced standing level which reduces the program requirements to 30 credit hours (10 3-credit hour courses) and can be completed in 1 to 2 years.

### MSW Program

Student's undergraduate degree	# of credit hours	Admittance Level	Length of time to complete
Undergraduate degree other than BSW from any accredited institution	57	Foundation	2–4 years
BSW from a CSWE-accredited program within the last 10 years	30	Advanced standing	1–2 years

The MSW program is offered online with synchronous (Zoom) and asynchronous (self-directed) elements and in-person options.

Course content is provided through recorded micro lectures and podcasts and assigned online resources and textbook readings with frequent group and individual Zoom sessions with instructors and students. Course assignments invite students to engage in in-person exchanges with instructors, other students, community professionals, and organizations, as possible based on geographic location. Field education placements are primarily in person.



Learn more about the MSW program through its webpages ([Bluffton University](#) and [Goshen College](#)).

### Brief Overview: Social Work Accreditation



The MSW program was approved by the states of Indiana and Ohio, and their respective regional councils of the Higher Learning Commission in the fall of 2022. The MSW program offered through Goshen College and Bluffton University is working toward accreditation through the [Council on Social Work Education \(CSWE\)](#), following the [2022 Educational Policy and Accreditation Standards](#).

The accreditation [timetable](#) includes benchmark reports and commissioner visits, with the goal of accreditation in 2026. We received candidacy for our program in February 2024. According to [CSWE](#), “Students admitted during or after the academic year in which the program is granted candidacy will be recognized as having graduated from an accredited program, once the program is fully accredited.”

Bluffton University and Goshen College are fully committed to achieving accreditation. CSWE is also committed to assisting programs in reaching accreditation.

Students are responsible for researching the licensure requirements for the state (or other geographic location) in which they plan to practice and to discuss these requirements with their academic advisor.

[CSWE](#) requires that accredited social work programs adopt their outcomes-oriented approach to curriculum design using the following nine competencies. The academic courses offered by the MSW program are designed to cover these competencies from the dimensions of knowledge, skills, values, and cognitive and affective processes.

#### **9 competencies:**

Competency 1: Demonstrate ethical and professional behavior.

Competency 2: Advance human rights and social, racial, economic, and environmental justice.

Competency 3: Engage anti-racism, diversity, equity, and inclusion in practice.

Competency 4: Engage practice-informed research and research-informed practice.

Competency 5: Engage in policy.

Competency 6: Engage with individuals, families, groups, organizations, and communities.

Competency 7: Assess individuals, families, groups, organizations, and communities.

Competency 8: Intervene with individuals, families, groups, organizations, and communities.

Competency 9: Evaluate practice with individuals, families, groups, organizations, and communities.

## Brief Overview: MSW Field Education Program

As the “signature pedagogy” for social work education, field education provides students the opportunity to apply knowledge, values, skills, and cognitive and affective processes in a real practice setting, with supervision and support. Upon completion of field education, we expect students will be able to achieve the nine [competencies](#) of the Council on Social Work Education (CSWE).



MSW students complete two field education placements for a total of 900 hours. The generalist practice field education placement consists of 400 hours at one field education setting and is completed near the conclusion of the generalist practice courses. The second field education placement consists of 500 hours at one field education setting and is completed near the conclusion of the specialized practice courses. These things as well as field education course prerequisites are shown in the table below.

<b>MSW Field Education Courses</b>			
<b>Course</b>	<b>Prerequisites</b>	<b># of field education hours</b>	<b>Field education seminar</b>
SOWK 570 Generalist Field Education I	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● SOWK 500, 510, 530</li> <li>● MSW program approval</li> </ul>	200	Meets 7 times
SOWK 571 Generalist Field Education II	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● SOWK 520, 540, 550, 560, 570 (all P/C)</li> </ul>	200	None
SOWK 670 Specialized Field Education I	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● SOWK 605, 620, 630 (all P/C)</li> <li>● MSW program approval</li> </ul>	250	Meets 7 times
SOWK 671 Specialized Field Education II	SOWK 640, 650, 660, 670 (all P/C)	250	None

P/C = prior to or concurrent

The MSW program assesses the student’s readiness for field education and places the student in an approved field education setting. Each student prepares and follows a learning contract that is organized around CSWE’s nine [competencies](#); this learning contract is also the basis for assessing the student’s efforts and skills in field education. While in field education, students receive weekly supervision from an approved field education instructor, receive support from a faculty field liaison, and participate in seven field education seminar classes with other students.

Upon completion of SOWK 570 Generalist Field Education I, SOWK 571 Generalist Field Education II, SOWK 670 Specialized Field Education I, SOWK 671 Specialized Field Education II, the faculty field liaison receives the field education instructor’s assessment ratings and comments and then communicates the student’s course grade

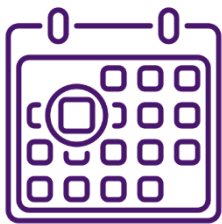
to the Field Director, granting credit/no credit. Assessment ratings are based on the student's efforts and skills as outlined in the learning contract. Students must earn credit in all field education courses.



Learn more about the MSW field education program through its webpages ([Bluffton University](#) and [Goshen College](#)). More resources are available to enrolled students and field education personnel through Moodle, the MSW program's learning management platform.

## Roles and Responsibilities: Student

### Student preparation for a field education placement



The student's preparation for field education begins when they meet with their academic advisor and place field education courses on their plan of study. The student engages in more specific preparation for field education in the 3 to 4 months prior to the semester in which they are enrolled in a field education course (SOWK 570 or SOWK 670) utilizing the steps and timeline below.

### Timeline and Process of Matching an MSW Student and a Field Education Setting/Instructor

When*	Activity
14 weeks before	1. The student meets with their academic advisor to review their plan of study, including their intended semester(s) to enroll in field education (SOWK 570 or SOWK 670).
12 weeks before	2. The MSW Field Education Director communicates with approved field education settings inquiring about their ability to accept a field education placement as well as level of student (generalist or specialized) and type of placement (consecutive or block).
12 weeks before	3. The student completes a field education application and emails it to the MSW Field Education Director along with a copy of their current plan of study.
10 weeks before	4. The student meets one-on-one with the MSW Field Education Director for field education advising, including the student's academic and professional readiness for field education. The MSW Field Education Director hears the student's field education setting preferences, including what the student hopes to learn, their areas of interest, and their desired type of organization and geographic location.
8 weeks before	5. The MSW Field Education Director selects a potential field education setting for the student and notifies the student and the potential field education instructor by email.

### Timeline and Process of Matching an MSW Student and a Field Education Setting/Instructor

When*	Activity
8 weeks before	6. The student emails their resume to the potential field education instructor and requests an interview.
6 weeks before	7. The student interviews with the potential field education instructor in person, if possible, and notifies the Field Education Director if the placement match has been made with the field education agency.
4 weeks before	8. The field education instructor and student each notifies the MSW Field Education Director that they accept the proposed field education placement. (Likewise, the field education instructor and/or student may notify the MSW Field Education Director that they do not accept the potential field education placement. If so, return to Step #5.)
3 weeks before	9. The MSW Field Education Director emails the field education contract to the student and field education instructor. They each sign and return it to the MSW Field Education Director.

\*In relation to the first day of the semester in which the student enrolls in SOWK 570 Generalist Field Education I or SOWK 670 Specialized Field Education I.

#### Student participation in a field education placement

MSW students may complete field education in a consecutive or block placement. In a consecutive placement, the student completes all field education hours in one placement over two consecutive semesters (no break in between). In a block placement, the student completes all field education hours in one placement and in one semester.

A student in a consecutive placement completes field education over two consecutive semesters in one field education setting. They participate in 1 hour of supervision from their field education instructor each week throughout the placement. In their first semester of field education, generalist and specialized students participate in seven 1-hour field education seminar classes on Zoom to discuss various topics related to field education (e.g. safety, boundaries) and to discuss all aspects of field education. Field education seminars are led by the faculty field liaison.



During the very beginning of the field education placement, the student prepares their learning contract in dialogue with their field education instructor and faculty field liaison. The learning contract is central to all field education activities, including supervision and the student's course grade. The MSW program provides a learning contract template ([generalist](#) and [specialized](#)), including social work [competencies](#) and practice behaviors, and guidance for assigning student performance levels. The MSW program also

provides a list of required and sample learning activities, organized by competencies, for generalist and specialized students in field education.

Within the first 60 hours of their field education placement and in conversation with the field education instructor, field education director, and faculty field liaison, the student briefly describes activities they expect to do while in field education for each practice behavior in the learning contract. Students adapt required learning activities provided by the MSW program to their field education placement and learning priorities. Students may also adapt the sample learning activities provided by the MSW program or create additional ones, based on opportunities at their field education placement and their learning priorities. Activities in the learning contract must be approved by the field education instructor and MSW faculty field liaison within the first 60 hours of the student's field education placement in order for the student's field education hours to be counted from that point forward.

Field education hours can include any activities which enhance the student's social work competence, including field education instructor supervision, agency orientations and trainings, and field education seminar. Field education hours include simulated practice situations (e.g. avatars, actors) only as part of initial training and in a real practice setting. Field education hours are accrued at each of the five system levels (individuals, families, groups, organizations, communities) based on what is available at the field education setting and the students' professional areas of interest. Field education hours accrued are not necessarily evenly distributed across the five system levels.

The student keeps an hour log throughout their field education placement. The student discusses the hours log with their field education instructor during weekly supervision as well as with their faculty field liaison during their two to three visits each semester. The student stores the hours log in a Google file that is shared with the field education instructor and faculty field liaison for easy access and ongoing monitoring. The faculty field liaison ensures the number of hours required is completed prior to communicating the student's grade.


The student, faculty field liaison, and field education instructor meet every 4 to 6 weeks to discuss the student's progress and performance on completing the activities outlined in the learning contract, and to remedy any difficulties or barriers. The schedule for monitoring and supporting a student in a consecutive placement is shown in the two tables below—one for the first semester, and the other for the second semester.





A student in a block placement completes field education in one semester. They participate in a minimum of 1 hour of supervision from their field education instructor each week throughout the placement. Students in their first semester of field education at both the generalist and specialized levels participate in seven 1-hour field education seminar classes on Zoom to discuss various topics related to field education (i.e. safety, boundaries) and for Q&A on all aspects of field education. The field education seminar is led by the faculty field liaison.

During the very beginning of the field education placement, the students prepare their learning contract in dialogue with their field education instructor and faculty field liaison. The learning contract must be approved by the faculty field liaison for the student to count field education hours beyond the first 60 hours. The student, faculty field liaison, and field education instructor meet every 3-4 weeks to discuss the student’s progress and performance on completing the activities outlined in the learning contract, and to remedy any difficulties or barriers.

**Schedule for Block Field Education Placement**

Activity	Week														
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	
Student and field education instructor meet for supervision	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	
Field education seminar for students on Zoom	✓		✓		✓		✓		✓		✓		✓		
Student prepares cover sheet and learning activities on learning contract*	✓	✓													
Student, faculty field liaison, and field education instructor meet to discuss learning contract		✓				✓					✓		✓		
Student notifies faculty field liaison that learning contract assessment is complete							✓							✓	

\*The learning contract must be completed by the student and approved by the field education instructor and faculty field liaison within 60 hours in order for the student to continue tracking field education hours.

While in a field education placement, a student can look forward to engaging in the work of the agency as agreed upon in the learning contract. Field education implies that the student assumes an active role in learning and developing knowledge and skills. Students can expect to be given greater responsibilities and opportunities as they

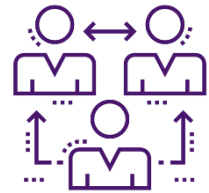
demonstrate their capacity to handle responsibility and as they develop their practice skills.

The student develops a working knowledge of the goals, policies, structure, program, and services of the field education setting. Their activities should include:

1. Interviewing and interacting with service and administrative staff.
2. Attending and participating in staff meetings.
3. Reviewing agency documents.
4. Observing and participating in agency committees concerned with services to the community.
5. Participating in referral processes and collaborating with other community agencies in those processes.
6. Participating in community meetings relevant to their agency and/or its community.
7. Becoming familiar with the community context of the agency and the population(s) they serve.
8. Applying the planned change method and process with client systems of varying sizes.

As part of day-to-day responsibilities during field education supervision, the student should plan on:

1. Interacting respectfully with clients and staff of the agency, and community members of the agency. Congruent with the [social work profession's value of dignity and worth of the person](#), social workers strive to “treat each person in a caring and respectful fashion, mindful of individual differences and cultural and ethnic diversity.”
2. Refraining from cell phone use while participating in field education hours. The student should talk with their field education instructor about the agency's cell phone and social media policies and follow these policies.
3. Setting and following a typical schedule for field education hours (for example, Mondays and Wednesdays from 9:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m.). As possible, the student is encouraged to participate in significant activities that do not occur on regular field education days. The student should follow the holiday schedule of the agency which may mean putting in field education hours when the MSW program is on break, like term and mid-term breaks. The student should be in regular communication with their field education instructor about their day-to-day schedule, especially in regard to any absences or needing to arrive late or leave early. The student keeps a record of their hours on the field education hour log and keeps this log up-to-date.
4. Participating in weekly supervision with their field education instructor to discuss field education activities, agency services, and community needs. The student should readily communicate with their field education instructor with problems and questions.
5. Meeting regularly with the faculty field liaison. The student should initiate contact with the faculty field liaison with problems and questions.



6. Arranging their own transportation to and from the field education setting and, if needed, to and from home visits and other community settings.
7. Arriving on time for all scheduled appointments at the agency.
8. Acting and dressing in the manner of a professional social worker as defined by the standards of the field education setting.
9. Participating in the field education evaluation process.
10. Abiding by the community standards of the student's enrolling institution, [Bluffton University](#) or [Goshen College](#).

### Generalist practice field education hours

The student enrolled in generalist field education courses (SOWK 570 and SOWK 571) completes a total of 400 hours at one field education placement. Either credit or no credit is assigned after the first 200 hours for SOWK 570, and after the second 200 hours for SOWK 571.



The student's schedule of field education hours is generally consistent each week (for example, Mondays and Wednesdays from 9:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m.). The student's field education hours follow the field education site's calendar, not the academic calendar. In general, the student's field education hours continue through semester breaks, fall break, spring break, and other academic breaks. The student negotiates their field education schedule with their field education instructor and is in communication with their faculty field liaison about their field education schedule.

### Generalist Practice Field Education Hours

Type of placement	Description	# hours/week	Aim
Consecutive	SOWK 570 in 1 <sup>st</sup> semester SOWK 571 in 2 <sup>nd</sup> semester (no break in between)	14 hours/week x 30 weeks = 420 hours	13–15 hours/week
Block	SOWK 570 and SOWK 571 in 1 semester	29 hours/week x 14 weeks = 406 hours	28–30 hours/week

### Specialized practice field education hours

The student enrolled in specialized field education courses (SOWK 670 and SOWK 671) completes a total of 500 hours at one field education placement. Either credit or no credit is assigned after the first 250 hours for SOWK 670, and after the second 250 hours for SOWK 671.

The student's schedule of field education hours is generally consistent each week (for example, Mondays and Wednesdays from 9:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m.). The student's field education hours follow the field education site's calendar, not the academic calendar. In general, the student's field education hours continue through semester breaks, fall break, spring break, and other academic breaks. The student negotiates their field education schedule with their field education instructor and is in communication with their faculty field liaison about their field education schedule.

**Specialized Practice Field Education Hours**

<b>Type of placement</b>	<b>Description</b>	<b># hours/week</b>	<b>Aim</b>
Consecutive	SOWK 670 in 1 <sup>st</sup> semester SOWK 671 in 2 <sup>nd</sup> semester (no break in between)	17 hours/week x 30 weeks = 510 hours	16–18 hours/week
Block	SOWK 670 and SOWK 671 in 1 semester	36 hours/week x 14 weeks = 504 hours	34–36 hours/week

**Safety**

Student safety is paramount in field education. The MSW program implements a myriad of avenues for safeguarding students' safety, as described below.



Responsibilities of the MSW Field Education Director for implementing student safety protocols:

1. Ensure that MSW students enrolled in a field education course(s) are covered by a professional liability insurance policy during their duration of student's field education experience.
  - a. Bluffton students: Prior to the start of field education, students enrolled through Bluffton University are required to assume personal responsibility for individual malpractice insurance coverage for the duration of field placement through the NASW Insurance Trust, with minimum limits of \$1,000,000 per occurrence and \$3,000,000 in the annual aggregate. The MSW Field Education Director gains evidence of Bluffton-enrolled students' policies and keeps up-to-date information on file.
  - b. Goshen students: Professional liability is provided and oversight is maintained through Goshen College for students enrolled through Goshen College.
2. Formulate a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) to be signed by the MSW Field Education Director and the field education setting, and ensure that it outlines liability coverage for students.
3. Require field education settings evidence their policies and procedures for the safety of employees and student interns, and keep this information up-to-date and on file.
4. Ensure that each field education setting with a student placement has an up-to-date MOU on file (updated once a year).
5. Include modules on safety protocols in field education orientations for students and for field education instructors along with resources for seeking help, if needed.
6. Ensure that up-to-date safety protocols are listed and described in the *MSW Field Education Manual* along with resources for seeking help, if needed.
7. Ensure that safety protocols are referenced in course syllabi for field education, along with resources for seeking help, if needed.

8. Ensure that community standards that address policies and procedures to ensure the safety of all students of enrolling institutions ([Bluffton University](#) and [Goshen College](#)) are accessible to students through the *MSW Field Education Manual* as well as through other means (e.g., course syllabi, *MSW Student Handbook*).
9. Ensure that enrolling institutions' programs that are available to assist students, including counseling and Title IX offices are accessible to students and listed in the course syllabi and *MSW Student Handbook*.
10. Work with institutional offices of accessibility (at Bluffton University and Goshen College) to ensure the learning needs and safety of students who need accommodations can be met. Communicate these things with the faculty field liaison and field education instructor, as needed, and within the bounds of confidentiality.
11. Access, adapt, and/or prepare a Field Education Safety Risk Assessment Tool, including but not limited to items such as liability insurance, safety protocol, reporting protocol, mandated reporting of abuse and other criminal activity, transportation, discrimination and harassment, and physical and mental health facilities within the vicinity of the field education setting. Require field education settings to complete this checklist prior to each placement of a student. Provide copies of this complete tool to the faculty field liaison and student along a list of available resources, including but not limited to institutional counseling offices, and physical and mental health facilities and services in the vicinity of the field education setting.
12. Respond promptly to safety violations or concerns and ensure students are safe and have needed resources available to them. Communicate with faculty field liaison and field education instructor, and with the MSW Program Director, if deemed necessary.
13. Develop contingency/continuity plans to prepare for times of disruption to the learning environment in partnership with enrolling institutions (Bluffton University and Goshen College).
14. Do not place students in field education settings where safety protocols are not in place or where safety concerns or violations have not been adequately addressed. Safety factors include but are not limited to physical, emotional, and sexual concerns.

Responsibilities of the field education setting and instructor for implementing student safety protocols:

1. Discover if liability coverage is available to MSW students placed in their organization, and communicate this to the MSW Field Education Director and to students placed in their organization.
2. Provide evidence of their policies and procedures for the safety of employees and student interns to the MSW Field Education Director.
3. Sign an MOU with the enrolling institution each year they have a student placed with them.
4. Provide evidence of safety procedures to a student receiving field education at their setting and discuss these safety procedures with the student within the first 2 weeks of the student's placement.



5. Respond promptly to safety violations or concerns and ensure students are safe and have needed resources available to them. Communicate any concerns to the faculty field liaison (and the MSW Field Education Director, if deemed necessary).

Responsibilities of the faculty field liaison for implementing student safety protocols:



1. Inquire with the field education instructor and student to ensure that the student has received documentation and explanation of safety procedures within the first 2 weeks of the student's placement.
2. In visits to the field education setting, re-visit and discuss the Field Education Safety Risk Assessment Tool.
3. Discuss safety protocols in field education seminar associated with the first half of the generalist and specialized practice field education courses, including items in the Field Education Safety Risk Assessment tool along with awareness of burnout, compassion fatigue, and transference. One field education seminar assignment is for students to read the chapter on safety (chapter 4) in Larkin, S. (2023). *A field education guide for social workers: An integrated approach* (2<sup>nd</sup> ed.). Cognella Academic Publishing. The NASW 2013 booklet on safety is also included as a resource on the syllabi for all field education courses.
4. Be available and accessible to students in field education placements, paying special attention to any safety violations or concerns.
5. Respond promptly to safety violations or concerns and ensure students are safe and have needed resources available to them. Communicate any concerns to the MSW Field Education Director. Also, be in regular communication with the field education instructor, especially in regards to any safety concerns or violations.

Responsibilities of the student for implementing student safety protocols:



1. Bluffton students: Prior to the start of field education, students enrolled through Bluffton University are required to assume personal responsibility for individual malpractice insurance coverage for the duration of their field education placement. Become a student member of NASW and obtain [professional liability coverage](#) through the NASW Insurance Trust, with minimum limits of not less than \$1,000,000 per occurrence and \$3,000,000 in the annual aggregate. Provide evidence of this insurance coverage to the MSW Field Education Director.

Goshen students: Professional liability is provided and oversight is maintained through Goshen College for students enrolled through Goshen College.

2. Read and take careful note of documentation and explanation of safety procedures as provided:
  - a. In the field education setting; e.g., in manuals and orientations.
  - b. In the *MSW Field Education Manual*.
  - c. In course syllabi.

- d. In community standards provided by enrolling institutions (Bluffton University and Goshen College).  
Ask questions of the field education instructor and faculty field liaison, as needed.
3. Complete readings and other assignments associated with field education. Attend and complete assignments given in Field Education Seminar. For example, read the chapter on safety (chapter 4) in Larkin, S. (2023). *A field education guide for social workers: An integrated approach* (2<sup>nd</sup> ed.). Cognella Academic Publishing. The NASW 2013 booklet on safety is also included as a resource on the syllabi for all field education courses.
4. Be attentive to physical and emotional self-care. Communicate to the field education instructor and faculty field liaison anything that may be unsafe or trigger a trauma response and do what is possible to minimize exposure to these triggers. Seek counseling, as needed, to care for self, and to maximize learning and efficacy of services in the field education setting.
5. As promptly as possible, report any safety concerns or violations to the field education instructor and faculty field liaison. Others available for assistance include other staff at the field education setting, the MSW Field Education Director, their academic advisor, a counselor at their enrolling institution.

### **Roles and Responsibilities: MSW Field Education Director**

The MSW Field Education Director is an MSW faculty member who provides oversight for all field education activities.



The responsibilities of the MSW Field Education Director include the following:

1. Lead and implement the MSW field education program to maximize learning opportunities for MSW students and upholding the social work profession and social work values and ethics.
2. Create MSW field education policies and forms.
3. Keep all MSW field education policies and practices up-to-date, including updates to the *MSW Field Education Manual*, webpages, and forms.
4. Communicate with the MSW Program Director and MSW faculty and staff about field education.
5. Collaborate with MSW Program Director on preparing accreditation files.
6. Identify potential field education settings. Inquire with academic advisors to learn the geographic locations of students who have field education coming up on their plans of study.
7. Approve field education settings and field education instructors.
8. Prepare, facilitate, and monitor the status of annual field education instructor orientations/trainings.
9. Communicate with students who have field education coming up on their plans of study about field education processes and responsibilities.
10. Approve students' field education applications.



11. Match students to potential field education settings, and facilitate the matching process in advance of the semester in which the student enrolls in a field education course.
12. Invite, facilitate, and lead student field education orientations.
13. Implement evaluations of field education personnel, field education settings, and field education instructors. Analyze and report on data. Discuss with MSW Program Director.
14. Assist the faculty field liaison and students with completing their field education-related responsibilities and being available for problem-solving, as needed.

The MSW Field Education Director may be the same person as the faculty field liaison and may facilitate field education seminar.

### **Considerations when matching students with field education placement settings**

When funding is available from an employer or other source, a student may be paid for field education hours. The MSW Field Education Director can be creative in advocating and seeking out options for students to receive paid field education placements.



As the “signature pedagogy” for social work education, field education offers a unique opportunity for students to practice new knowledge, skills, values, and cognitive and affective processes in a real world setting with support. While students are allowed to complete their field education placement in their place of employment and/or in a setting where they have previously completed a field education placement, we hope students take the opportunity in their field education placement to work with populations, programs, or settings that are new to them and enhance their learning.

### **Employment-based Placements (EBP)**

An MSW student may complete their field education placement in an organization where they are employed if the following criteria are met and evidenced:

1. The field education placement offers opportunities for the student to engage in learning activities that are related to all competencies, professional behaviors, and a variety of practice levels.
2. The field education setting and field education instructor meet all the requirements of the field education program at Bluffton University and Goshen College, including the qualifications of the field education setting and instructor, the receipt of weekly supervision, and the use of the learning contract to guide learning and assessment.
3. If the field education instructor is the same as the student’s employment supervisor, the student receives field education instruction in addition to and separate from their employment supervision.

The student must submit an *Employment-based Placement (EBP)* application including the signatures of the potential field education site representative and the potential field

education instructor, to the MSW Field Education Director at least 8 weeks prior to the beginning of the student's field education placement.

The student submitting an EBP application, must also complete the field education setting application, with the addition of items related to:

1. The student's employment supervisor versus field education instructor. The student provides a narrative explaining how the internship and employment are co-located or co-occurring and roles of supervisor and/or identified field education instructor.
2. The student's employment responsibilities compared to their field education placement activities, including how they will overlap and be differentiated from each other.
3. The student's employment hours and wages/salary compared to their field education hours and wages/salary, if applicable.
4. How potential conflicts of interest will be addressed. For example, the student may wear a distinguishing name badge when they are engaged in activities related to their employment as compared to their role as a student.



The MSW field education program at Bluffton University and Goshen College may allow students' assignments and employee tasks to qualify as field education hours when those tasks are directly linked to the nine competencies as well as included in the learning contract and discussed with the field education instructor.

The application is reviewed and approved or denied by the MSW Field Education Director in consultation with the MSW Program Director.

### **EBP changes and endings**

If the student's employment changes or ends through no fault of the student, the MSW Field Education Director will work with the student to secure a revised or new field education placement. If the student's employment changes or ends due to the student's unethical or other behavior while engaged in employment or field education activities, the MSW Field Education Director will decide next steps in consultation with the MSW Program Director which may include the student receiving a "no credit" grade in the field education course.

## **Roles and Responsibilities: Faculty Field Liaison**



The faculty field liaison is an MSW faculty member who assists and supports the student and field education instructor with all field education activities, including the development and implementation of each student's learning contract, and communicating the student's course grade.

The responsibilities of the faculty field liaison include the following:

1. Assist the student and field education instructor in creating learning activities for the student's learning contract.

2. Approve the student's learning contract (must be done within the student's first 60 hours in field education).
3. Meet regularly with the student and field education instructor (in person, when possible) to discuss the student's progress and performance on completing the activities outlined in the learning contract.
4. Work with the student and field education instructor to remedy difficulties or barriers that come up with the student's field education placement.
5. Ensure the agency has appropriate safety policies and practices; checks in with the student about any safety issues and concerns.
6. Schedule and implement joint agency site visit (in-person or virtual) conferences with the student and field education instructor.
7. Initiate periodic phone contact, as necessary, with the field education instructor.
8. Review the student's log of field education hours.
9. Participate in student and field education instructor orientations.
10. Teach/facilitate the field education seminar on Zoom.
11. Communicate the student's course grade of credit/no credit to the MSW Field Education Director based on ratings and written comments provided from the student and field education instructor in the learning contract.
12. Complete the field education setting/instructor evaluation form.

The faculty field liaison may be the same person as the MSW Field Education Director.

### **Roles and Responsibilities: Field Education Setting and Field Education Instructor**



The field education setting is a not-for-profit, for-profit, governmental, and/or faith-based agency or organization that has been approved by the MSW Field Education Director to provide field education for an MSW student. Through the approval process, the agency provides their address, mission, type of organization, services, populations served, safety policies and procedures, commitment to social work values and ethics, and ability and intent to provide a learning environment and learning opportunities for an MSW student.

The field education instructor is usually an employee of the field education setting. Through the approval process, this person must show their eligibility to be a field education instructor including the MSW degree, at least 2 years of post-MSW work experience, their commitment to social work values and ethics, and their ability and intent to provide a learning environment and learning opportunities for an MSW student. During the specialized field education experience, students may need to have supervisors with additional clinical experience and licensure to provide oversight of tasks that are clinical in nature.

The field education instructor's responsibilities include the following:

1. Complete the field education instructor orientation prior to the beginning of the student's placement. The orientation has two parts: 1) Watching orientation recordings pre-recorded by the MSW Field Education Director, including email

verification to the MSW Field Education Director that they have done this; and 2) Participating in a live (synchronous), group Zoom session with other field education instructors, facilitated by the MSW Field Education Director. Each field education instructor is required to do these two things a minimum of once each year in which they have a student(s) placed with them.

2. Provide and ensure learning opportunities for the student at the field education setting.
3. Provide the student with a minimum of 1 hour of supervision (in person, if possible) each week including support and connections to other MSW courses. Discuss learning contract activities and assessments of the student's performance during these supervisory sessions.
4. Ensure the student is aware of safety policies and procedures of the agency. Discuss safety with the student regularly in supervision, and ensure the student is safe in all field education activities.
5. Provide ratings and written notes on the learning contract in response to the student's performance in field education.

### **Alternate and optional field education instructor roles**

The MSW Field Education Director is responsible for identifying an eligible field education instructor for each student (see eligibility above). With approval of the MSW Field Education Director and the field education setting, the field education instructor may be a person not employed by the field education setting. This person must meet all the qualifications and fulfill all the responsibilities of a field education instructor as described above. The field education setting is responsible for any remuneration for a field education instructor.

If a field education instructor cannot be identified in the field education setting or community, and another suitable field education setting cannot be secured, the MSW Field Education Director or faculty field liaison will provide the needed supervision and assessments for the student. This supervision of the student will be provided above and beyond the field education seminar.

If a field education instructor becomes unavailable (e.g., promoted, transferred, takes an extended leave) and another field education instructor in the field education setting or community cannot be identified, the MSW Field Education Director or faculty field liaison will provide the needed supervision and assessments for the student. This supervision of the student is provided above and beyond the field education seminar.

The field education setting and field education instructor may identify a task supervisor to assist the student in their day-to-day field education activities. The task supervisor is an employee of the agency who has day-to-day contact with the student, is very familiar with the services of the agency, has the needed knowledge and expertise, and is in regular communication with the field education instructor. The task supervisor should be familiar with field education expectations and have a copy of the student's learning contract, but does not necessarily participate in field education instructor orientation. If possible, the task supervisor should attend meetings with the student, field education

instructor, and faculty field liaison. The task supervisor supplements but does not fulfill the role of field education instructor.

## Assessment of Students' Efforts and Skills in Field Education

The learning contract is central to all field education activities, including supervision and the student's course grade. The MSW program provides a learning contract template ([generalist](#) and [specialized](#)), including social work [competencies](#) and practice behaviors, and guidance for assigning student performance levels.



Within the first 60 hours of their field education placement and in conversation with the field education instructor and faculty field liaison, the student briefly describes activities in the learning contract that they expect to do while in field education in relation to the competencies and practice behaviors. Activities in the learning contract must be approved by the field education instructor and MSW faculty field liaison within the first 60 hours of the student's field education placement in order for the student's field education hours to be counted from that point forward.

The field education instructor assigns ratings to the student's level of competency at the end of each field education course. The field education instructor may discuss ratings with the student, but the field education instructor solely assigns the ratings and the faculty field liaison communicates these ratings to the MSW Field Education Director.

- SOWK 570 Generalist Field Education I
- SOWK 571 Generalist Field Education II
- SOWK 670 Specialize Field Education I
- SOWK 671 Specialized Field Education II

### Rating Descriptions

The following guidance is provided in the learning contract instructions and discussed in student and field education instructor orientations for assigning student ratings. Rating levels are based on students' efforts and skills, and whether further development or improvement is needed.

#### 3 Exceeds competency:

Generalist field education: Student demonstrates knowledge, values, skills, and cognitive and affective processes that **incorporate complex and diverse situations**. The student shows **consistent growth, exceeds expectations** of an emerging social work professional and **takes initiative with self-learning and use and integration of supervision**. Student takes **full responsibility for their learning**.

Specialized field education: The student demonstrates knowledge, values, skills, and cognitive and affective processes **in response to complex and diverse situations**. The student shows **consistent growth, exceeds expectations** of a social work professional, and **takes initiative with self-learning and use and**

**integration of supervision.** The student takes **full responsibility for their learning.**

**2 Meets competency:**

Generalist field education: Student demonstrates knowledge, values, skills, and cognitive and affective processes that are **consistent and effective**. Student is **actively engaged** in the field education experience. Student shows ability to **function independently** with the appropriate supervision and support.

Specialized field education: Student demonstrates knowledge, values, skills, and cognitive and affective processes that are **consistent and effective**. Student is **actively engaged** in the field education experience. Student shows ability to **function independently** with the appropriate clinical supervision and support.

**1 Competency emerging:**

Generalist field education: With guidance and observation, the student **demonstrates beginning or growing ability** to apply the practice of knowledge, values, skills, and cognitive and affective processes of a social worker professional. The student needs continued practice but is beginning to function **semi-independently** with the appropriate supervision and support.

Specialized field education: With guidance and observation, the student **demonstrates beginning or growing ability** to apply the practice of knowledge, values, skills, and cognitive and affective processes of a social worker professional. The student needs continued practice but is beginning to function **semi-independently** with the appropriate clinical supervision and support.

**0 Does not meet competency:**

Generalist field education: Student **demonstrates minimal competency, little knowledge, or skill, limited and/or inconsistent understanding** of essential knowledge and/or professional growth or change. Student **rarely demonstrates efforts** to improve performance or takes initiative in the learning process. There are concerns related to the student's knowledge and/or practice behaviors.

Specialized field education: Student **demonstrates minimal competency, little knowledge, or skill, limited and/or inconsistent understanding** of essential knowledge and/or professional growth or change. Student **rarely demonstrates efforts** to improve performance or takes initiative in the learning process. There are concerns related to the student's knowledge and/or practice behaviors.

### **Assessment of Student Performance in Field Education**

With the assistance of a field education instructor and a faculty field liaison at the beginning of their field education experience, the student prepares a learning contract based on expected learning activities organized around the nine social work competencies. The student adapts the required and sample tasks provided by the MSW

program to the field education placement. Learning activities are organized around the competencies and are contextual to the field education setting and the student's knowledge, interests, and skills.

The field education instructor assigns ratings to the student's level of competency at the end of each field education course. The field education instructor may discuss ratings with the student, but the field education instructor solely assigns the ratings and the faculty field liaison communicates these ratings to the MSW Field Education Director. For each of the nine competencies, the field education instructor provides a short narrative that names specific examples and supporting evidence of how the student engaged in activities towards the given competency rating. The student offers a self-assessment rating and comments, but grades are based only on the field education instructor's ratings.

The student's knowledge, values, skills, and cognitive and affective processes are assessed at the competency level utilizing the following rubric (see description of ratings above):

- 3 Exceeds competency
- 2 Meets competency
- 1 Competency emerging
- 0 Does not meet competency



The student must attain a rating of 1 or higher for each of the nine competencies in order for the faculty field liaison to grant them "credit" for SOWK 570 Generalist Practice Field Education I and SOWK 670 Specialized Practice Field Education I. (The field education instructor will prepare an action plan for students who attain a rating of 0 or 1 with the goal of raising the student's score by the end of field education.)

The student must attain a rating of 2 or higher for each of the nine competencies in order for the faculty field liaison to grant them "credit" for SOWK 571 Generalist Practice Field Education II and SOWK 671 Specialized Practice Field Education II.

The faculty field liaison communicates the student's course grade based on the field education instructor's ratings as shown in the learning contract. The grading system for all field education courses is credit/no credit. Students must earn "credit" in all field education courses. Students earning "no credit" are required to repeat the course; the MSW Field Education Director determines whether a new field education setting or instructor is required.

## Glossary of Field Education Terms

**Block placement:** The student completes all field education hours in one field education setting and in one semester.

**Consecutive placement:** Student completes all field education hours in one field education setting over two consecutive semesters (no break in between).

**Employment-based placement (EBP):** An MSW student may complete their field education placement in an organization where they are employed if they provide evidence that they meet the criteria for an EBP.

**Field education:** The “signature pedagogy” for social work education. Learning opportunity for the student to apply the knowledge and skills to a real-world setting under the support and supervision of a field education instructor and with the support of a faculty field liaison.

**Field education advising:** Student meets one-on-one with the MSW Field Education Director at least one time to discuss the student’s academic and professional readiness for field education, and to hear the student’s field education setting preferences, including what they hope to learn, their areas of interest, and their desired type of organization and geographic location.

**Field education instructor:** A field education instructor must have earned an MSW from an accredited program; have at least 2 years of post-MSW work experience; and commits to provide learning opportunities, support, and supervision to a student.

**Field education instructor application:** As part of the field education setting application, a potential field education instructor submits evidence of their MSW from an accredited program and at least 2 years of post-MSW work experience and commits to provide learning opportunities, support, and supervision to a student.

**Field education instructor orientation:** Prior to a student’s field education experience beginning at a field education setting, the field education instructor is required to engage in two orientation activities: 1) watch orientation recordings pre-recorded by the MSW Field Education Director, including email verification to the MSW Field Education Director that they have done this; and 2) a live (synchronous), group Zoom session with other field education instructors, facilitated by the MSW Field Education Director. Each field education instructor is required to do these two things a minimum of once each year in which they have a student(s) placed with them.

**Field education placement:** An MSW student is assigned to do their field education hours at a field education setting and complete their hours over two semesters (consecutive) or one semester (block).



**Field education setting:** A not-for-profit, for-profit, governmental, and/or faith-based agency or organization that has been approved by the MSW Field Education Director to provide field education for MSW students. An agency representative completes a field education setting application, which includes information on the agency and the potential field education instructor, and a signed Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with Bluffton University or Goshen College. Students need pre-approval to complete field education at their place of employment.

**Field education setting application:** A representative of a potential field education setting submits an application. The field education setting application asks for the following information:

1. Organizational information, including their address, mission, type of organization, services, populations served, and safety policies and procedures.
2. Their ability and intent to provide a learning environment and learning opportunities for an MSW student.
3. The employee(s) who qualifies to be the field education instructor. The application asks for evidence of this person's MSW from an accredited program and at least 2 years of post-MSW work experience, and their commitment to provide learning opportunities, support, and supervision to a student. (If an employee is not available, the organization will need to find and secure another individual who meets the requirements to be an MSW field education instructor.)
4. Signature of an organizational representative.

**Field education setting and instructor evaluation form (by the student):** At the conclusion of an MSW student's placement in a field education setting, the student completes an evaluation of the field education setting and the field education instructor. This evaluation form is a combination of open- and close-ended items to assess the degree to which the field education setting and field education instructor provided an effective learning experience and environment for the student.

**Field education setting and instructor evaluation form (by the faculty field liaison):** At the conclusion of an MSW student's placement in a field education setting, the faculty field liaison completes an evaluation of the field education setting and the field education instructor. This evaluation form is a combination of open- and close-ended items to assess the degree to which the field education setting and field education instructor provided an effective learning experience and environment for the student.

**Hours:** Amount of time the student spends on learning activities in the field education placement.

**Learning contract:** The learning contract is central to all field education activities, including supervision and the student's course grade. The MSW program provides a learning contract template ([generalist](#) and [specialized](#)), including social work [competencies](#) and practice behaviors, and guidance for assigning student performance levels.

**Moodle:** The MSW program at Bluffton University and Goshen College utilizes Moodle as its learning management system. All MSW students, faculty, and approved field education settings and instructors have access to a Moodle course designated for generalist and specialized field education. This field education course on Moodle contains all the information associated with field education including links to orientation recordings, field education seminar, this *MSW Field Education Manual*, contact information for the MSW field education program staff and all approved field education settings and instructors, and all forms.

**Student field education application:** The student completes a field education application showing their academic and professional readiness for field education.

**Student field education hour log:** The student tracks and records their hours in field education on a spreadsheet that is shared on Google Drive.

**Student orientation for field education:** Students watch pre-recorded (asynchronous) recordings to learn about field education. Students also engage in a group live (synchronous) session with the MSW Field Education Director. This must be completed during the semester prior to the student beginning field education hours.

**Task supervisor:** The task supervisor is an employee of the agency who has day-to-day contact with the student, is very familiar with the services of the agency, has the needed knowledge and expertise, and is in regular communication with the field education instructor. The task supervisor should be familiar with field education expectations and have a copy of the student's learning contract, but does not necessarily participate in field education instructor orientation. If possible, the task supervisor should attend meetings with the student, field education instructor, and faculty field liaison. The task supervisor supplements but does not fulfill the role of field education instructor.

**Field education seminar:** Students participate in seven weekly, 1-hour group field education seminar classes by Zoom to discuss various topics related to field education (i.e. safety, boundaries) and for Q&A on all aspects of field education. The field education seminar is led by the faculty field liaison.

