

**School of Social Welfare  
Health Sciences Center  
Stony Brook University**

**FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS ABOUT GRADUATE FIELD  
EDUCATION**

**1. How will it be decided where I will be placed in a field education setting?**

Decisions regarding individual placements are made within a broad context. The learning needs of each student and the placement opportunities available must be considered. Knowledge about each individual student's needs is matched with knowledge of the agency and the field instructor. Incoming students attend a field placement planning meeting prior to the beginning of the fall semester. Following the assessment of a variety of factors including the student's interests, background, education, and previous experience, field education faculty makes contact with a prospective agency/field instructor. The student visits the agency and meets with the field instructor or coordinator. Then the student, field education faculty, and prospective agency/field instructor engage in determining the "fit" of the placement.

**2. Can I do my field internship at my current place of employment?**

Students who use their place of employment for placement are considered as enrolled in Pathway II. The evaluation of suitability for Pathway II is conducted after the student's admission to the School. Students requesting use of this option for Field Education must:

- Have three years of full-time social work agency experience acceptable to the School within the five years prior to admission to the School;
- Have been supervised for a minimum of three years by a social worker who holds an M.S.W. from an accredited school of social work, or the student must have completed a minimum of 32 credits in our program with a minimum of 2 semesters in field placement (minimum of 8 credits) and have 2 years of acceptable social work experience including supervision by a social worker who holds an M.S.W. from an accredited school of social work; and
- Have graduated with a Bachelor degree at least 3 years prior.

If the student's eligibility for Pathway II has been established, agency and student must submit supporting documents for final approval. A student may **not** use their current job as their field placement but may be given different tasks and

assignments then their current job responsibilities for their graduate field placement. These documents must outline a 14-hour per week educationally sound experience with a licensed M.S.W. field instructor who is not the employment supervisor.

Students may use a paid employment setting in a specific agency for only one year. Advanced Standing students may not use a paid employment setting for Field Education.

### **3. Can I arrange my own placement?**

Students do not make the initial contact with agencies, as all placements are coordinated centrally through the Office of Field Education.

### **4. Are there any placements that offer a stipend or paid internships?**

The availability of stipends or paid internships varies from year to year but over the past five years they are minimal. While the School of Social Welfare encourages agencies to offer stipends to students, agency funding is often restricted and although the amounts vary, they are often limited. Students may discuss this issue at the summer placement planning meeting.

### **5. What is the availability of an all evening or weekend placement?**

Field placements are agency-based and much of the work is done during the day. For example, agency staff meetings and linking with other agencies to advocate for client system needs are important aspects of field learning; these activities often occur during day hours. Students who are restricted in their day availability are encouraged to utilize evening or weekend hours for their classes and to provide day slots for placement. Students should be prepared to offer at least partial day availability for field placement.

### **6. Will I need a car?**

Nassau and Suffolk Counties are not served by a comprehensive public transportation system. A limited number of settings are available on campus or within easy access of the Stony Brook campus. We cannot guarantee that the type of agency requested will be accessible by public transportation. Students without cars may have to compromise their interests to be accommodated locally or near their homes or be willing to use public transportation which could add substantial amount of time to travel. Students without cars may need to adjust their schedules to utilize public transportation. If you have requested a placement within the New York Metropolitan area you do not need a car but can take public transportation.

### **7. How far will I have to travel to placement?**

We understand that time is precious and every effort will be made to arrange a feasible commute for students. In general, we attempt to place students within

geographical proximity to their homes. Although some of our students have chosen a longer commute to obtain their first choice in setting, we consider a 45-minute – 1 hour commute feasible. Many of our placements are arranged under this time frame.

**8. How many placements may I have during my two years within the School of Social Welfare?**

Students are placed in one setting for each year of their education. Students may not be placed in the same setting for both years of their training.

**9. How many hours will I need to spend in field placement?**

The MSW Field Education year of the School of Social Welfare begins in September and continues through mid-May. The academic year is divided into two semesters. Each semester a student is required to spend 14 hours per week in field placement. This constitutes 4 credits per semester. Some agencies require 21 hours per week; in order for our students to have access to these settings, students must comply with these hours. A twenty-one hour a week placement constitutes 6 credits per semester. Advanced Standing students (Pathway II students) are required by the School of Social Welfare to complete 21 hours per week of field education. All graduate students complete 33 weeks of field education during the academic year. Students attend field placement during the month of January although they may not be in classes for the majority of that month.

If you have additional questions, feel free to contact the Office of Field Education @ 631-444-2143, or [sswfieldoffice@stonybrook.edu](mailto:sswfieldoffice@stonybrook.edu) .