



SOCIAL WORK FIELD PROGRAM AGENCY INVITATION

Thank you for your interest in working with Thomas University and the Social Work Program! Our student interns enter the Field Program anticipating a year of practical learning experiences, something that can only happen with agencies that are willing to assist. By the end of the field experience interns will leave your agency with the CSWE Accredited BSW degree! As you consider our program and as you consider interviewing our students please take a few minutes to consider the following information.

When your agency partners with Thomas University, our collaboration is formalized with a *Memorandum of Understanding*. This agreement explains the rights and responsibilities that all parties assume for the duration of field placement and is signed by University and Agency administrators.

The next step for placement with an agency involves an interview between student and agency. Interviews are scheduled at your agency or via Zoom. Much like a job interview, you will have an opportunity to decide if an intern candidate is a good fit; likewise, the intern will have an opportunity to find out if their practical learning experience will be maximized.

Once you and the student agree that placement is appropriate, the *Placement Agreement* is reviewed and signed. The placement agreement includes the days of the week that the intern will work in your office – with you or a designated staff member serving as the “Field Instructor” – so that 200 hours are completed in each of the two semesters (Fall & Spring). A semester is approximately 15 weeks in length, so most students work an average of 13-14 hours per week in field. Before students begin working in your agency, they are required to have liability insurance coverage through the NASW and to provide a copy of the policy to the Agency and University.

The learning experience in the field is structured during the first few weeks that the student arrives there (beginning in the Fall term), where you, the intern, and the assigned Thomas University Field Coordinator compile a *Learning Plan*. The learning plan assists all parties (you, the student, and the university) in defining what tasks must be successfully completed by the student. BSW-level competencies defined by the Council on Social Work Education (CSWE) are paired to very specific tasks that you develop with the student intern, so that by semester’s end professional social work skills can be measured.



Because the field experience involves an evolving progression of training and skill development, communication is occurring at many levels. Student interns are enrolled in a concurrent weekly seminar at the university with their field coordinator. Field Instructors and student interns meet for one hour of supervision each week to review student activities and progress in professional development. This hour is part of the student's weekly internship hours. Each semester, the field coordinator will meet at least once onsite or via Zoom with the field instructor and the student intern to discuss progress, concerns, and goals for a satisfactory experience. Evaluations of the student are completed online at the midterm and end of term each semester. All documents and forms are in the *BSW Field Manual* along with policies and procedures. The site visits mentioned here are a minimum; field coordinators are available as needed by phone, Zoom, or additional site visits. Cell phone numbers and email addresses are provided to each field instructor to answer any questions or concerns that may arise in the course of the placement. A *Timeline* serves as a guideline for planning site visits and completing evaluations.

Finally, all of us in the Social Work Program are aware of the time commitment you make when you decide to provide the field experience to prepare our interns to enter our profession. We cannot say enough, how grateful we are for your dedication and support in helping our interns to transition from student to social worker!

If you have questions or if there is anything that we can do to assist you in deciding whether to serve as a field instructor, please let us know. We look forward to working with you!

Regards,

Susan Fowler

Susan Fowler, Ed.D, LCSW
Field Director
Thomas University Social Work Program
(229) 226-1621, ext. 1025
sfowler@thomasu.edu