



Field Placement Disruptions: The CIA Approach

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The placement process involves thoughtful collaboration between field departments and affiliated agencies; students are offered thorough orientation and a careful matching process including interviews with field faculty, as needed, and with the selected agency. Nevertheless, field placement disruptions—when a student’s placement ends for an unexpected or unplanned reason—are inevitable in field education. Disruptions in field placements should be based on objective criteria: the field department’s learning plan and evaluation forms reflect the required competencies, and the agency’s Human Resources offices specify criteria for skills and behaviors in professional practice. Disruptions are also a process requiring careful reflection. At the University of Akron, we developed the CIA process to help address field placement disruptions: **Clarifying** the various aspects of the problem, assessing the **Impact** on student, field instructor and agency, and attending to the **Affective** aspects of the process.

Clarifying includes several questions:

- What is the intern’s developmental level? (Can the problem be attributed to the student’s initial anxiety? How did the intern function in the previous placement?)
- How does the intern function in other contexts, like the classroom?
- Is there information about the field instructor or agency that negatively influences the situation?
- What has the field liaison done to consult in this situation?
- What support services have been offered to the intern? How were they received?

Questions about the **Impact** of disruption on the intern’s learning and on the agency:

- How does the disruption affect the intern’s progress in school? (replacement, extra time in field, leave of absence, termination, etc.)
- How does the disruption affect the intern’s academic schedule?
- What is the intern’s financial status, and how is it affected by the disruption?

- What is the impact of the disruption on the placement agency?
- Has the intern written or identified a plan for how a subsequent placement (if allowed) will be more successful?

Questions about the **Affective** response to the disruption:

- What is the intern's affective response? (sadness, anger, relief, etc.)
- How does the intern understand the disruption? (Does she accept her responsibility? Is she crippled by a sense of failure? Does she blame others?)
- Can the field liaison support the intern in the "good cop" role?
- What is the affective response of the field instructor? (sadness, self-blame, relief, etc.)

The CIA approach has several benefits in the process of field placement disruptions. It makes the disruption a teachable moment for the intern and field instructor, supporting both through a process that is challenging and sometimes painful. It contributes to a fair result by due process.. It encourages collaboration between the school's field education department and its affiliated agencies. While field placement disruptions can be difficult, the CIA approach makes them a manageable developmental experience.