DEFINING ROLES IN FIELD EDUCATION: FIELD INSTRUCTOR AND TASK SUPERVISOR

“The quality of the field instructor is the most significant factor affecting student’s satisfaction with the field placement…” (Fortune and Abramson, 1993)

Role of Field Instructor: Has primary responsibility for student’s learning in the field placement to reinforce the student’s identification with the purposes, values, and ethics of the profession of social work; to foster the integration of empirical and practice-based knowledge; and to promote the development of professional competence (Council on Social Work Education). The Field Instructor is responsible for weekly, reflective supervision with the student to work towards achieving student’s learning goals and competencies.

Role of Task Supervisor: A Task Supervisor may be designated by the Field Instructor to assume specific responsibilities for a student’s learning on a particular assigned task, project, or experience. The Task Supervisor does not replace the Field Instructor, and must work in collaboration with the Field Instructor to ensure that the student’s learning goals are being met and regular feedback is provided.

FIELD INSTRUCTOR

Assumes the primary role of instructor and supervisor, and commits to understanding the role of student as learner

Creates with student learning experiences that integrate social work theory, research, and practice; and documents learning objectives and tasks on SSA’s Learning Agreement (educator role)

Provides support to student as (s)he critically analyzes his/her strengths and areas for growth (support role)

Monitors student in developing competent practice skills in accordance with agency’s policies, best practices, and NASW Code of Ethics (administrator role)

TASK SUPERVISOR

Provides secondary field instruction to student on a specific task, project, or assignment as delegated and monitored by the Field Instructor

Responsible for the day-to-day, on-site guidance for specific project, or task

Collaborates with field instructor in integrating assignments provided by task supervisor into student’s overall learning experience

Provides constructive feedback to student on specific tasks undertaken with task supervisor
**FIELD INSTRUCTOR**

- Provides a minimum of one hour of scheduled supervisory time weekly to confer about and reflect on field assignments.
- Responsible for orienting student to agency personnel, procedures, documentation requirements, safety issues, etc.
- Provides ongoing, constructive feedback on the student’s performance and completes all written quarterly evaluations.
- Consults with SSA Field Liaison regarding learning plans, performance issues, and connections between field work and course work.
- Recommends grade for student in the practicum.

**Qualifications:**

- For Clinical Placements: Has a Masters Degree in Social Work and is a licensed clinical social worker (LCSW) with at least 3 years of post-masters experience.
- For Social Administration Placements: Has a Masters Degree in Social Work or a related degree (e.g. MPH, MPP, MPA, etc.) with at least 3 years of post-MA experience. Must have an understanding of the social work perspective.
- Exceptions to above may be reviewed by Director Of Field Education.
- Attend Field Instructor Training.

**TASK SUPERVISOR**

- Keeps field instructor informed of student’s progress on projects undertaken with task supervisor.
- Provides input to the quarterly evaluation of the student in collaboration with primary field instructor and student.
- Meets with primary field instructor, student, and SSA field liaison as needed.

**Qualifications:**

- While a Masters Degree in Social Work is not required for task supervisors, (s)he must work in a related discipline and have an understanding of the social work perspective. The task supervisor typically has expertise in an area that expands a student’s learning opportunities.