

Subject: Preview: GSSW Field Update: COVID-19- March 17, 2020

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From: GSSW Field Education Office

To: Elizabeth O'Hara



UNIVERSITY of
DENVER

GRADUATE SCHOOL OF SOCIAL WORK

GSSW Field Update

COVID-19

Dear Community Partners,

We write regarding an update on the Field Education Program at the Graduate School of Social Work at the University of Denver.

The University of Denver has recently cancelled all in-person classes and moved all classes to the online format through the duration of Spring Quarter. We have also heard from several of you, that due to Coronavirus (COVID-19), many agencies have been temporarily closing. We have taken great care to evaluate all the available evidence and guidance from infectious disease experts and public health agencies. We know you are all doing the same and making difficult decisions for your own agencies, staff, and clients.

In the interest of the health and safety of you, our students, and the clients and communities that you serve, the Graduate School of Social Work is **requiring that all field placement activities take place remotely from March 18th through April 17th, 2020**. We will send another message re-evaluating the situation closer to this date.

We sincerely regret the disruption that this temporary decision may cause, but feel this is the most prudent course of action at this time. We have tremendous respect for all of our field partners and place the highest value on our collaboration.

Please refer to the following details regarding remote learning activities and how GSSW will support you and our students during this unprecedented time.

Agencies that are willing/able to supervise remote learning activities:
Students have been instructed to **work with their agency supervisors to identify remote learning activities immediately.**

Here are some tips to help make this transition as smooth as possible:

- Schedule a time to meet with your student via Zoom to discuss remote learning activities, after students return from Spring Break (March 30th).
- Ask your student to look over the [example remote learning activities](#) that GSSW has compiled. This list will be updated periodically.
- Students in consultation with Agency Supervisors, should use the [Remote Learning Activity Tracker](#) to develop a plan for remote activities. .
- Please consult with your GSSW Field Liaison if you need support in identifying alternate learning activities that can be completed remotely.
- Students should use the [Remote Learning Activity Tracker](#) to log all of their remote hours that they complete. Both you, the Agency Supervisor, and the GSSW Field Liaison will need this to verify hour completion on your final evaluation.
- Schedule weekly Zoom supervision calls with your student.

Agencies that are NOT willing/able to supervise remote learning activities:
Please contact your GSSW Field Liaison no later than Friday, March 27th.
 GSSW Field Liaisons will work with students to devise and oversee remote learning activities, **temporarily**. We will re-assess all situations after April 17th.

We are committed to working with students who are graduating in June so that they will still be able to fulfill their graduation requirements in a timely way. We are also hopeful that in-person field learning will resume in the near future.

If you have any questions about this process, please contact your GSSW Field Liaison.

Reduction of Student Hours in Field Placement

Because of how COVID-19 has impacted agency closures and students' engagement in their field placements, we have **reduced the required field hours** for current field placements to:

- **Foundation Year Students: 400 Hours total** (regular requirements are 480 hours)
- **Concentration Year Students: 500 hours total** (regular requirements are 600 hours)

It is the students' choice to elect to complete reduced field hours for current placements. If students prefer to complete hours in full, they are welcome to do so.

We have asked students to please be in communication with their Agency Supervisor and their GSSW Field Liaison if choose to complete the reduced field hour requirements.

- Students must discuss with their Agency Supervisor how and when they will

- ethically terminate with their clients and transfer agency responsibilities.
- All students must have demonstrated proficiency in all required field competencies before ending their field placement. Students must discuss with their Agency Supervisor and their GSSW Field Liaison if they are able to end their placement or if more time is required to demonstrate competency.
 - All students must receive a passing final field evaluation before ending their field placement.

Our Commitment to You

Please know that we have given this decision very serious thought and consideration. Our goals are to follow public health science, ensure continuity of learning and service, and support individual well-being. We understand and sincerely regret the disruption this decision is likely to have on your agency and vulnerable clients and critical projects, potentially at a time when you need our partnership most. Assessing all factors, we made this decision with heavy hearts knowing that it was not without consequence. This is a challenging and uncharted time, and we appreciate your resilience.

Our aim is to resume regular field placement practices as soon as possible. We will do our best to continue communicating with you in a clear and timely manner as we decide how and when to move forward with field placements for GSSW students.

Stay well,
Aneesha, Leslie, and Amanda

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