

## **Employed Social Worker (ESW) Option**

### **Intent of ESW Option**

The Employed Social Worker (ESW) option was developed as a way to encourage people who are employed within social service agencies to pursue a social work degree. This option allows the employer to make a substantial contribution to an employee's education. The employer retains the student-employee in the agency setting, but releases him or her from their job duties for a field placement in the agency while still paying their salary. Hence, this program is intended for long-term and highly valued employees who are likely to make a continued commitment to the agency/community.

An ESW field experience must always be different from the student's job in order to qualify as a field placement. **An ESW is not an option for students admitted into the MSW advanced standing program.**

ESW placements are available to BSW and MSW students. MSW students may complete one field placement in their place of employment as an ESW, the other placement must be in a different agency. The student's employer, the School of Social Work, and the student will work together to assure that the following conditions are met.

### **Structure of an ESW Field Placement**

- The student must be released from their job responsibilities and reassigned to a different program or unit for their field placement. The student must be paid for at least 8 hours (up to the full 16 hours) of this release time per week. If the organization releases the student for less than the full 16 hours per week required for the field placement, the student contributes the remaining hours. This allows the student to be perceived and treated as a learner rather than an employee during field hours.
- The field instructor and the work supervisor must be different people and agency personnel must agree that the student's internship performance will not influence their employment evaluation.
- Field placement activities must be substantially different from the student's

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regular work responsibilities, compatible with the social work practice curriculum, challenging, and contribute to social work skill development.

- Employing organization must continue to pay the student employee for hours worked as well as for hours released for field.
- BSW field instructors are required to have an MSW degree or a BSW degree and two years of post-degree work experience. MSW field instructors are required to have an MSW and two years post-MSW work experience.

**Application/Approval Procedures**

The student, in consultation with the employer, completes the Employed Social Worker Options and the appropriate Field Placement Application, and returns them to the field education office, or if in one of the distance programs, to the site coordinator (see instructions on application for due date). Both applications are available on the student web center. Please note that the director or program manager of the employing agency must sign the application.

The application is reviewed and a field team member arranges an on-site meeting with the student, the work supervisor, and the field instructor, to negotiate the placement and assure that all parties understand and approve the ESW arrangement.