Beginning Field Experience – SW 181

Wartburg College

Social Work Department

The **Beginning Field Experience** course is a 3 ½ week (125-hour) observation/field placement designed to give students some initial exposure to social work practice settings and populations. It is geared specifically to students who are exploring social work or related professions as an academic major or career.

# ***Key Learning Objectives***

1. Gain a basic exposure to the structure of a social service agency: its goals, clientele, funding sources, and services.
2. Recognize how a social service agency interacts with its social environment; how it works with other agencies and community resources.
3. Interact, under supervision, with diverse social service consumers, while providing limited services on their behalf.
4. Gain a basic understanding of one’s potential for future professional practice.

## Course Parameters and Expectations

The placement should be a minimum of 125 hours at an agency. Students are typically in placement 7 hours per day, 5 days per week for 18-19 days. Students are expected to spend an additional minimum of 15 hours using an online discussion forum and engaging in related activities (wellness, observing at another agency, etc).

Students should have opportunities to observe and interact with social workers and/or other human service professionals. While it is unrealistic to expect students to engage in professional practice in such a short placement, they should have opportunities to observe and interact with the agency’s clients in some capacity.

The agency should provide a staff person to supervise the student’s field experience and conduct a final written evaluation on forms provided by Wartburg College.

Students will be responsible for maintaining a record of their time spent in placement and submitting this documentation to their assigned faculty liaison. Timekeeping is not the responsibility of the agency.

A Wartburg College Social Work Department professor will maintain contact with the student and her/his assigned agency supervisor throughout the placement to serve as a resource and to intervene if any problems arise.

Many agencies require background checks as part of the approval process. Background checks will be conducted by Wartburg and the fee charged to your student account. Please be absolutely honest about any prior issue when agreeing to the background check.

Questions about the **Beginning Field Experience** should be directed to:

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