

FAQs for 3-Year Students¹

MSW Program - School of Social Work

San José State University

Internship

1. How many hours are required for my first year of internship?

For 3-year students, field internship begins in the second year of the program. The field placement requires two days per week for a minimum of sixteen hours a week. The total field placement hours are 240 hours for each semester, total of 480 hours for the academic year. Students must be in their placements on Tuesday/Wednesday or Thursday/Friday during regular business hours.

2. Can I choose my own internship the first year?

No. The program takes responsibility for placing students for all first year internships and you will not be placed in your field of practice (i.e., your specialization) during this initial year. You will be placed in an internship related to your field of practice in your second year of internship. This is so students are exposed to two different social work areas to broaden your professional experience.

3. Can I request my internship be at my current employment agency the first year?

Yes, you may request this. However, there is no guarantee that this request will be granted because your employment agency must fulfill all the CSWE and School criteria in order for it to qualify as an appropriate field education setting. If this request is granted, your internship placement needs to be in a different department, with totally different responsibilities from your usual position, and overlap with your job duties. You will need to complete a petition with the Field Education Director and meet necessary requirements.

4. How can I receive the Pupil Personnel Services Credential (PPSC)?

Students need to apply in the first year for this program and cannot be placed in a school placement the first year of internship. Your school placement will be in the second year of internship. Please also see #2 above. If you are placed in a school setting in your first year of internship (i.e., you did not initially choose school social work as your field of practice) and then decide to switch specializations to obtain your PPSC, you must contact your FFL, the PPSC Coordinator, the MSW Program Coordinator and Graduate Advisor, and the Field Education Director immediately in order to request this switch.

5. How many hours are required in the second year placement?

Students are required to spend three days per week in the placement for a minimum of 24 hours a week. The total field placement hours are 360 placement hours each semester, totaling 720 field placement hours. Students are required to be at their placements on Wednesday, Thursdays, and Fridays during regular business hours.

6. Am I required to take Social Work practice courses while taking the internship?

Yes. You are required to take these classes concurrently with your field placement.

¹ This handout was originally developed by the Summer 2006 ScWk 223 class and has since been modified by SWGSA and the School of Social Work. We thank the students for initiating this idea and generating support for their colleagues.

7. Can I begin my internship during the summer before my final year?

Yes, if there are available resources. You can request to begin your internship early in the summer session prior to your final year of study and ending in the final semester of the program. You are required to complete 16 hours a week. Students need to file a petition with the Field Education Director and be enrolled in both the summer internship course and a social work practice course. These courses are subject to availability.

8. Am I able to choose my second year internship placement?

Students are heavily involved in the selection of their second year internship placement. Students submit their top three choices to their FFL. You are responsible to contact these agencies to set up interviews when instructed by your FFL. Your FFL will give you all necessary contact information. Although there is no guarantee that you will get your top choice given an appropriate match with student qualifications and the agency's criteria, almost all students are placed within an agency on their selection list.

9. What if I am sick and unable to attend my internship?

Students are expected to telephone the agency and make-up all time missed. All absences over three days should be reported to the Faculty Field Liaison.

10. How do I ensure my hours have been met?

Students must keep track of their own hours and submit them to their FFL by the end of the academic year.

11. Can I change my internship days?

You need approval from our Faculty Field Liaison before you change these days, and you must make sure that hours of internship do not conflict with your other required coursework.

12. What if I have questions about Field?

Contact your FFL first, and then if needed contact the Field Education Director.

13. What are the requirements for the Title IV-E Child Welfare Training Program?

Most students must be in the full-time MSW Program. These students agree to become employed in a California county public child welfare agency for two years upon graduation in return for a stipend received during school. A 3-year work-study option is being investigated.

14. What are the requirements for the Mental Health Initiative Program?

Students must be in the Health/Mental Health field of practice and be full-time. However, some flexibility has been given to 3-year students taking a "full-time" load in their final year of the MSW Program. These students agree to become employed in a California county public child welfare agency for one year upon graduation in return for a stipend received during school. Contact the MHIP coordinator for more information.

Classes

15. How many classes/units will be taken in the 1st year of the 3-year program? Can you break that down into semesters?

In the 1st year of the 3-year program, you will be taking four classes: two classes per semester. As of the Fall 2009 semester, these classes are usually held Monday and Wednesday evenings.

16. How many classes/units will be taken in the 2nd year? Can you break that down into semesters?

In the 2nd year of the 3-year program, you will be taking six classes: three classes per semester including your field internship. However, two classes are on location at SJSU and the third class in each semester is your practicum class, which will be done at your placement site/internship (see more specific information below). As of the Fall 2009 semester, these classes are usually held Monday and Wednesday evenings with field on Tuesdays/Wednesdays or Thursdays/Fridays.

17. How many classes/units will be taken in the 3rd year? Can you break that down into semesters?

The final year of the 3-year program is the same as the final year of the full-time program. In the 3rd year of the 3-year program, you will be taking a total of nine classes: five in the first semester and four in the second semester. However, again, one of the classes in each semester is the field practicum, which will be done at your placement site/internship. The remaining classes will be held at on-site at SJSU. These classes are usually held Monday and Tuesdays mornings through evenings with field on Wednesdays, Thursdays, and Fridays.

18. How many total classes will be taken throughout the program? Can you break that down into units?

Nineteen (19) classes will be taken throughout the program for a total of 54 units. Do note however, the practicum classes will take place at your placement site/internship.

19. What about the Summer? Can I take classes in the Summer to lighten the load?

Make sure to check the schedule as soon as it comes out because only certain classes are offered in the Summer. For example, some people were able to take a class during the Summer prior to their final year, thus only having to take 4 classes the first semester of the 3rd year of the 3-year program. Of course, one of the classes is the practicum, thus you only end up having to take three classes on campus. Again however, it is all dependent on what classes are offered during the Summer. Also, make sure the classes offered are the ones you need to take in regards to your field of practice or specialization. In times of limited resources, summer course offerings become extremely limited.

20. Are all the classes I take in the 2nd and 3rd year actually inside of the classroom?

No. Your practicum class will be done while you are at your placement site/internship (please see other questions in this section).

21. What are those field education classes?

Ah! Those are your practicum classes. The practicum is your internship. You will receive training at the placement site. They are not necessarily harder or easier compared to other classes; it depends on your ability to learn and apply the professional skills essential to social work practice. For these classes, in addition to your training and work with clients, there are certain forms you must complete and submit including a community project and process recordings, Field Instructor Evaluation of the student, Field Instructor Evaluation of the Field Program and Student Evaluations. Your grade is determined by your performance in internship and reported in the forms you and your FI and FFL have to submit.

Also note that you will have field training seminars periodically in the semesters you are enrolled in field education courses, which are SJSU in-class seminars approximately once a month.

22. What is ScWk 298?

This is the Special Project class taken to assist your “big” project: the capstone independent research project. In the 3rd year of the 3-year program, you will be supervised by your ScWk 298 professor to help you propose, conduct, and complete an applied investigation related to your area of interest integrating what you have learned in the MSW Program.

23. Where can I find a list of the classes I have to take throughout the program?

Please consult your MSW Student Handbook for a full outline of the curriculum and course descriptions.

24. Are classes available at certain times only?

In the first two years of the 3-year program, classes are on Monday and Wednesday evenings. However, you must check the schedule as each semester changes. Although foundation courses are offered in the daytime, these are reserved for full-time students.

Also see #17 above. The final year of the 3-year program is the same as the final year of the full-time program. In the 3rd year of the 3-year program classes are usually held Monday and Tuesdays mornings through evenings. Please plan accordingly as there is limited flexibility.

25. Do I have to remain with the same cohort throughout the entire program?

Yes, but you can request switches with the MSW Program Coordinator and Graduate Advisor. Cohorts are a nice way to bond with other students and get to know the program, however, you may request to take classes when they are available and fit into your schedule. In times of limited resources, these options are severely limited. You are not required to remain with your cohort when you reach the 3rd and final year of the 3-year program as you and your cohort will have enroll in different courses according to your field of practice or specialization.

26. What about the cohort schedule? Do I have to follow it every year? (For example, if my classes in the 1st semester are Monday/Wednesday, do I have to take all of my classes on Monday/Wednesdays?)

Yes, this is to help keep section sizes as balanced as possible not only for the benefit of students, but also the professors teaching the classes. However, you may request switches with the MSW program Coordinator and Graduate Advisor (please see #25 above).

27. Can I do any classes on-line?

No. Unfortunately at this time that is not an option at San Jose State.

28. Will I be able to continue working full-time or even part-time during my internship?

Truly, this is a difficult question. There is no policy prohibiting work while attending school. However, given the School's professional standards and limited resources, students may have to reprioritize life activities in order to finish their degree.

If your job is flexible with the hours you can work, then continuing to work full-time the first year of your internship may be possible. However, you must also remember classes will more than likely be two nights a week which will cut down on your opportunity to work. Also, in working full-time you may spend a lot of your evenings either going to school or working, or, waking up very early to make up hours at work. Therefore, it can be very trying. Working part-time is more manageable although less rewarding financially. In the second year of the internship, a full-time job will probably be impossible to do. Since you will spend 3 days in your internship and going to school as well, you are left with very little time to work in between. A part-time job may be possible however, as with the first year, you will need a flexible schedule and you will spend a lot of time either catching up in the evenings, mornings, or weekends.

In times of limited resources, all students should expect to be flexible since the School and university will have fewer options. For example, you may have to take your series of courses at times inconvenient for you because of the available course schedule.

29. What about the fees (tuition)? Since I am a 3-year student they must be lower, right?

Unfortunately, at this point in time, fees are only lower during the first year. This is because you are taking two classes or less equaling no more than 6 units, the limit set for 3-year students by SJSU. In the 2nd and 3rd years, although you are not a "full-time" student according to the MSW Program, you will be taking more than two classes (i.e. more than 6 units) and therefore, you will be paying fees (tuition) as if you are a full-time student. Please note that the Bursar's Office does not currently accept all major credit cards. Check the Bursar's office web site for more information.

30. When do I sign up for classes?

In the first and second year of the 3-year program, spaces are reserved for you, although you should enroll as soon as your Cohort is assigned. For your final year, it is important to sign up as soon as possible as certain classes might fill up quickly and you might have to select a certain schedule to meet your needs. Therefore, make sure to check the "MySJSU" website (through the SJSU website) in order to find out your enrollment date. Sign up during this period. If you miss the date, you will have to sign up during the open enrollment period. Finally, make sure to pay your fees (tuition) on time as you will be dropped from all of your classes if you fail to do so. This will also lead to a financial penalty.

31. Any final advice?

Yes. Prepare for many challenges and try to keep a positive attitude throughout your education in the 3-year MSW Program. Unfortunately, 3-year students sometimes face additional logistical barriers. Many offices and services are not accessible in the evenings. This will include access to offices such as the Bursar's Office, the Social Work office, and a number of campus services students who attend during the day have access to. Also, orientations, internship fairs, and other activities are currently held during the day. In summary, expect to have to take some time off from work in order to access a number of services or information. The MSW Student Handbook is a good starting point for basic information. If you have suggestions or concerns, the Social Work Graduate Student Association is also an available avenue. And, you can contact your faculty advisor or the Graduate Advisor.

SURVIVING AND THRIVING!!!

- Take care of yourself
- Know your limits
- Ask for help from your loved ones. Don't be superwomen/man
- Let go of unrealistic expectations
- Find support from family, friends, students etc.
- Keep a positive attitude about school, work and home
- Laugh as often as you can
- Find ways to relax. Go for walks and exercises
- Stay connected with other students and exchange phone numbers
- Meet your advisors and ask your professors for help
- Put your work schedule in order
- Set a specific study time
- Keep track of your assignments
- If available, taking summer classes might lighten the load down the road
- Consider starting your final-year internship in the summer
- Monitor your academy records on MySJSU
- Have fun and build life long relationships with fellow students

(Adapted from list provided by Jane R. Schwickerath, 3-year MSW student, class of 2007)