Block Placements in Field Education

The block placement provides for field education as a stand-alone experience, separate from course work. The block placement expands the opportunities for students to have an in-depth learning experience in diverse settings, both international and domestic. Students who have successfully completed Field Education 602 may be allowed to complete their Field 603 and / or their Field 604 as a block in the summer or at another time.

The advantage of the block model is that it frees students from formal course work in order to participate full-time in an agency setting. This not only provides for a very intense field learning experience, but it also allows for field placements outside the greater Cleveland area.

In electing the block placement model, the full time student commits him or herself to an agency for a minimum of 32 hours per week for ten and a half weeks, or until the student has accrued the required 336 hours that comprise a field period. Students in the Intensive Weekend program may be allowed to accrue additional field hours. All Requirements and rules of Field Education as indicated in the Field Education Manual remain the same; including, but not limited to, the requirement for supervision by a qualified Field Instructor, participation in the field conference, and completion of learning contract and evaluation.

This option is available to full time students, Advanced Standing- 18 month students, and joint degree students. Students in the weekend format must demonstrate that it is feasible to continue to work and do their coursework while completing increased hours in the field.

In order to be considered for a block placement, the student must consult with his or her field faculty advisor and academic advisor and submit an application. The application must specify a clear educational rationale as to how a block placement will contribute to the student’s learning, and address how the student will assure that there is integration of content from advanced coursework into the field experience. In consultation with the academic advisor, the student must develop and submit a revised Pattern of Enrollment. The student must also consult with the MSASS financial aid office to determine how a block placement may impact both financial aid and the field stipend. See the attached application form for a further specification of requirements.

While a block placement offers many opportunities, students who have completed block placements in the past caution that it is a complicated process that requires a great deal of self-initiative and that the student must shoulder additional responsibility for assuring that his or her learning needs are met. One student reported her experience as follows.....

I had the opportunity to use block field placement during my MSASS career. Because of my dual masters degrees in social work and bioethics, I had to be mindful of how to plan my pattern of enrollment so as to get all of my required classes in a way that would be conducive to both my learning needs and opportunities. I chose to complete 603 Field Education during the summer, which meant squeezing the normal field hours and requirements into a shorter time frame.……. Doing my 603 field placement was actually a much larger undertaking that I originally had thought. Because I
was not following the normal pattern of field and thus was not taking the accompany classes for 603 that guide the learning objectives, I found myself doing quite a bit of extra outside work to assure that I was gaining the knowledge and skills necessary to work in the field. This also required a lot of flexibility and extra education by my field placement and myself. Block field placement was helpful in creating the needed time for other semesters, but it was a far larger commitment than I had expected.

If you wish to pursue a block placement, please consult with both your academic and field faculty advisors as well as with the Financial Aid Office to develop your proposal. The Application for Block Placement which must include the signature of your academic advisor along with a revised Pattern of Enrollment must be received in the Field Education Office by April 1, 2011 in order to be considered for the upcoming academic year.

For further information, please consult with your field faculty advisor.