

Field Placement Interview Tip Sheet

Before the interview ...

- Research the agency:
 - Look at the agency's website,
 - Search the news for recent happenings involving the agency.
- Plan to wear professional attire:
 - Dress like you're going to a job interview.
- Create a respectful voicemail message on your primary phone. If your phone plays a song while the caller waits for you to answer, be sure that the lyrics of the song are respectful.
- Create an e-mail address that is professional. Generally, e-mail addresses that have your first name initial and last name are easiest for people to work with. Make sure this is the e-mail address on your resume!
- Practice Your Interviewing Skills & Prepare Questions:
 - Introduce yourself in a professional manner,
 - Establish rapport with the interviewer,
 - Prepare the main points you want to communicate about your skills, experiences, and interests,
 - Practice out loud with a friend or in front of a mirror.
- Re-visit why you are interested in a social work degree and what makes you "ready" to enter the profession.
- Bring a copy of your resume on nice paper– They may not need it, but it demonstrates professionalism.
- Review the Code of Ethics for Social Workers. The ethical standards highlight some of the important values of our profession such as the dignity and worth of a client and the importance of human relationships. You will want to reflect these values in these interviews.

During the interview ...

- Please do not chew gum! Pay attention to any other "fidgety" characteristics you may have and work to minimize them.
- Do not bring your cell phone in with you. Sometimes people don't realize their natural tendency to check their cell phones, even during interviews. Also, cell phones that are set to vibrate still make noise and pull your attention away from the interview. If you don't have it with you, you won't encounter these distractions.
- Be yourself and be honest. Sometimes, in the quest to "stand out," students may push too hard and risk giving an impression that they are aggressive, think they "know it all," or do not appear open to learning more. You will want to balance readiness to enter the field with a willingness to be a student and learn from everyone who is in the agency.
- Use concrete examples to highlight your skills and experiences.
- Be respectful and courteous with each person you come in to contact with at the agency. Social service agencies have specific roles and needs for all of their staff and volunteers and they value their contributions to the overall mission. If you are not polite or respectful of someone in the agency (regardless of their direct involvement in your field placement), it will have an impact on whether or not you are accepted at that site.

- Do not ask about agency mission and general services. It is expected that you have done your research prior to going to the agency. Instead, ask more specific questions about programs and services that demonstrate that you have done some research.
- It is okay to be nervous during the interview and it is okay to not know some answers to their questions. Sometimes it is easier to just let them know that you are nervous ... it helps break the ice for you and for them. They remember being in your shoes; don't worry if you start to stumble over yourself.

Sample Questions to Ask ...

- What field programs and services are available to students?
- Are there opportunities to work with a variety of cultural groups and populations?
- What types of experiences will student interns be exposed to? What are some examples of student assignments?
- What experiences and personal characteristics does your site look for in an intern?
- Are there regular opportunities for student supervision, feedback, and support?
- Are there health tests or background checks required prior to beginning? Who is responsible for the costs?
- What are the hours of operation and what are the expectations regarding the student's schedule?
- What do you find most rewarding about being a social worker in this agency?
- MSW Concentration Students - Take care in how you ask questions relating to the Integrative Project. If the agency senses that you are more interested in the project than the placement itself, they will not accept you.

Sample Questions an Agency Might Ask ...

- Tell me about yourself.
- What educational opportunities are you seeking in this field placement?
- Why are you interested in this field placement?
 - Note: If you are sent on an interview to an agency that was not your top choice, it is not wise to say "because the Field Coordinator told me to come here" in response to this question.
- What previous experiences do you have that make you a competitive candidate for this field placement?
 - Agencies understand that many students have not yet worked in the field. If you do not have previous experience, then speak to your knowledge, skills, and abilities that are relevant to the site. Remember, your volunteer work is considered experience.
- When you work with clients, what are some things that you look for in your first few meetings with them? If you don't have client experience, it is okay to say what you *would* do.
- What are your strengths? What are your areas for improvement?
- Taking classes and completing your placement hours can be difficult, describe your support system and how you would mobilize it should you find yourself struggling during the school year? What do you do to keep yourself healthy?
- Prepare yourself for future oriented questions such as:
 - What are your long-term career goals?
 - Where do you see yourself five years from now?