

April 4, 2020

Dear GSS Community,

I pray this message finds you safe and healthy. Over the past few weeks, members of the GSS community - students, faculty, staff, alumni, and agency partners - have all worked hard to adjust to our current extraordinary and extreme circumstances. Each day brings to us new questions and unexpected challenges often requiring rapid decisions and resource mobilization. To each challenge, our community has responded with impressive commitment and creativity. I am inspired by your resilience and your humanity.

On March 9th, we began sending updates on the School's responses to the COVID-19 crisis. Below is the most current COVID-19 update from GSS. We will continue to send updates updates for as long as necessary.

Thank you for your selfless efforts and your patience as we navigate this unprecedented crisis together.



Be well,

DMcPhee

Debra M. McPhee, Ph.D., Dean

FORDHAM/GSS OPERATIONS

Fordham University and the Graduate School of Social Service will be ***closed from Thursday, April 9th through Monday, April 11th*** in observance of the Easter Holy Holiday. Regular hours and operations will resume on Tuesday, April 12th.

COMMENCEMENT POSTPONED

The 2020 Fordham University Commencement and diploma ceremonies have been postponed until it is safe to bring together our graduates, their families, and the campus community. Fordham regrets this set of circumstances and promises to reschedule as soon as we are assured by the CDC and state authorities that it is safe to do so. ([Read full details in Father McShane's message](#)).

GSS Graduates - Please be on the lookout for communication regarding a special virtual celebration of our 2020 graduates.

STUDENT HEALTH

In the event of illness, GSS will do everything possible to assist students and their families. Any GSS student who has tested positive for the Coronavirus is asked to contact the GSS Office of Student Services at 212-636-6606.

FIELD EDUCATION

On March 12th, Field practicum responsibilities were suspended for all students through April 5th. GSS did not arrive at this decision lightly. We realize that this step has been disruptive to our agency partners, to clients, and to our students' progression in Field. It was only after extensive consultations and careful consideration that we concluded that suspension was the best way to protect the health and safety of all involved.

GSS is committed to preserving the integrity of the learning process for all students, including Field Education and to prevent any serious interruptions in student's academic

progress, for particularly for those who are on track to graduate this year.

GSS has revised a number of key policies in alignment with the temporary policy changes issued by the Council on Social Work Education and the New York State Department of Education. **Currently, we are in the process of developing alternative Field assignments tailored to meet the needs of our BASW and MSW students.**

GSS COVID-19 FIELD EDUCATION CONTINGENCY PLAN

1. In areas of the country where COVID-19 shelter-in-place regulations remain active, all GSS ***face-to-face* Field placements have been suspended** for the remainder of the semester. Alternative Field assignments are being developed and implemented for any student who has not yet completed all of their Field requirements (9 credits).
2. Between Monday, April 6th and Friday, April 17th, all students will receive communication from the GSS Field Department recommending an individualized Field completion plan. Students are asked to closely monitor their email/phone voice messages and respond in a timely manner.
3. GSS has reduced the required number of Field practicum hours from 1200 to 900. Students who *have successfully demonstrated all required practice competencies* and who have completed the revised Field hour requirements, will not be obligated to return to their Field placement after April 5th.
4. For students who have not met all Field requirements, GSS is developing specific alternative assignments. This may include remote/virtual client work depending on the capacity of the student's specific Field agency and/or new opportunities with community partners. Fordham's Field Education Contingency Plan is designed to ensure students have the opportunity to continue their engagement in social work practice, successfully demonstrate the nine required social work practice competencies, and complete any remaining Field hour requirements.

Student Specific Field Contingency Plans:

- **BASW** - As of April 5, all BASW students who have completed **400 hours** of Field practicum and who have successfully demonstrated acquisition of all required practice competencies, will be considered as having met their BASW Field Education requirements. ***Please note:*** a student's University account

must be clear of all financial holds in order to receive the full nine (9) course credits for Field.

- **Foundation/Generalist** - As of April 5th, all Foundation/Generalist year students who have completed **450 hours** of Field practicum and who have successfully demonstrated acquisition of all required practice competencies, will be considered as having met their Foundation/Generalist year Field Education requirements. ***Please note:*** a student's University account must be clear of all financial holds in order to receive the full nine (9) course credits for Field.
- **Advanced/Specialist** - As of April 5th, all Advanced/Specialist year students who have completed a total of **900 hours** of Field practicum and who have successfully demonstrated acquisition of all required practice competencies, will be considered as having met their Advanced/Specialist year Field Education requirements. Students can combine Field hours successfully completed during their Foundation/Generalist year with hours successfully completed during their Advanced/Specialist year to reach the total 900-hour requirement. ***Please note:*** a student's University account must be clear of all financial holds in order to receive the full nine (9) course credits for Field.
- **Advanced Standing** - As of April 5th, all Advanced Standing students who have completed a total of **900 hours** of Field practicum and who have successfully demonstrated acquisition of all required practice competencies, will be considered as having met their Advanced Standing Field Education requirements. Students can combine Field hours successfully completed during their BSW or BASW degree with hours successfully completed during their GSS Advanced Standing year to reach the total 900-hour requirement. ***Please note:*** a student's University account must be clear of all financial holds in order to receive the full nine (9) course credits for Field.

Students are encouraged to contact their current Field Advisor to discuss any questions or concerns.