



INTERNSHIPS IN AGING PROJECT

SCHOOL OF SOCIAL WELFARE

UNIVERSITY AT ALBANY
State University of New York

All Internships in Aging Project (IAP) field placements feature at least one rotation.

What is a rotation?

- A rotation is a meaningful learning opportunity that will increase students' skills in an area that is different from the skills developed in the main site. It is not a "drive by" or a shadowing experience. It allows students to actually practice the skills.
 - We utilize a field instructor at the main site and task supervisor (or supervisors) at rotation sites.
 - In addition to the rotation, IAP students can shadow or briefly experience another setting or skill without necessarily practicing independently to enhance exposure to another setting or problem.
- Rotations may involve actual moving from one agency or department to another or they may involve different experiences on different projects or areas within one agency.
- It is very important for the field instructors to highlight the different skills gained in each rotation. Students at a single site often have difficulty recognizing one rotation as separate from the other, and highlighting these differences helps the student to see the benefits of the rotation. The field instructor should also frame/situate the added experience in the context of the full placement goals before the rotation occurs and process the learning with the student in supervision after the rotation to help the student integrate the rotation experience into the bigger picture of the placement and the student's development.
- What should students get from each rotation?
 - Experience that is not provided at main site.
 - The aging competencies can be used to delineate what skills are being developed and what areas the student needs to work on. <http://www.cswe.org/File.aspx?id=25445>
 - Or think about training a social worker that any one of us would like to hire – what does the student need to become that perfect candidate for the job?
 - The rotation might allow the student to see an alternative way of addressing aspects of aging.
 - The rotation should also enhance the student's resume or help the student get a clearer view of what they do and don't want for work.

What makes a successful rotation?

- Task supervisor should be clear about what skills students should gain at their site.
- Field instructor and task supervisor (and student) develop learning agreement together at one meeting.
- Identifying a joint project the student can work on that involves both agencies (or departments) is often a way to bridge two agencies. For example if a student is placed in both a chapter of the Alzheimer's Association and a hospital, the student may help to organize a CNA training workshop at the hospital on assisting people with dementia.
- Completing the first evaluation together (if not all evaluations).
- The field instructor is ultimately responsible for the student's learning and needs to assume and exercise that authority.
- A sense of working *together*, even if at different sites.
- Field instructors continue to meet with students throughout the year and can discuss work at the rotation site – maybe not specifics of the work but what skills they are learning and how they fit into the aging field or into the student's professional development.
- Direct communication between the field instructor and the task supervisor is very important – via phone, email, in person. This helps the student to feel everyone is in synch, and the student does not feel caught between different expectations, etc.

IAP is part of the Geriatric Social Work Initiative which was begun by the John A. Hartford Foundation. The national program is called the Hartford Partnership Program for Aging Education (HPPAE). The HPPAE is administered by the Council on Social Work Education. For more information on HPPAE, visit: <http://www.cswe.org/CentersInitiatives/GeroEdCenter/Initiatives/77873.aspx>.