

Plan Now

Preparing for Your Field Education Experience



UNIVERSITY OF
TEXAS
ARLINGTON

SCHOOL OF SOCIAL WORK

Purpose: Why Field?

- Field presents a hurdle that other courses do not. Although you create a degree plan for all of your courses, your field placement demands a different time commitment.
- ***Remember: this is a practicum.*** You will be in a professional setting developing the essential skills of social workers. Depending on the type of placement you need (undergraduate, graduate, for example), you must be prepared to spend somewhere between 16 and 40 hours per week in your assigned agency or working with your Field Instructor.
- Once you decide to enter the social work program, please begin to strategize how you will add the necessary field hours to your already-busy life. Typically, agencies do not offer internship hours exclusively in the evenings or on weekends. A few agencies offer flexible times, but ALL require some availability during the work week.
- We understand that accommodating your field experience requires commitment and sometimes sacrifice. However, field is the “signature pedagogy” of social work education (Council on Social Work Education) because it transforms you into a professional.
 - It is essential to your education.
 - It is the springboard for your career.
 - It is the pathway to your life's work.

Personal Assessment:
Please complete the following exercise
to evaluate your current
responsibilities.



Academic Classification

I am a:

- BSW Student:** Your field placement will account for 18 credit hours.
- Foundation MSW student** (you **do not** have a BSW degree): Your field placement will account for 8 credit hours.
- Advanced Standing MSW student** (you have a BSW degree): Your field placement will account for 8 credit hours.

Split vs. Block

I plan to take field as a:

Split Placement:

(16 hours/week commitment for 2 consecutive semesters
(Fall/Spring))

(22 hours/week commitment during Summer semester)

Block Placement:



(32 hours/week commitment for 1 semester (Fall/Spring))

(44 hours/week commitment during the Summer
semester)

- If I am in the BSW program, I understand that I must have the block option approved by my academic advisor first and that I cannot do a block placement in the summer.

Work

During my internship, I plan on also working:

- Full-time  ___ hrs/week
- Part-time  ___ hrs/week
- I will not be working during my internship.

Family obligations

I have family obligations.

No → Total= 0 hours

Yes → Partner _____ # hrs weekly

Child(ren) _____ # hrs weekly

Extended family _____ # hrs weekly

Family
– Special needs
(i.e. disability,
illness, aging) _____ # hrs weekly

These obligations require a total of _____ hrs per week.

Other Classes

I am planning on taking other classes while in field:

No

Yes

SOCW_____ 3hrs + study time

SOCW_____ 3hrs + study time

SOCW_____ 3hrs + study time

SOCW_____ 3hrs + study time

These obligations require a total of _____ hrs per week.

Social/ Volunteer

I have social/volunteer obligations:

No → Total= 0 hours

Yes

- Social: (clubs, groups, etc.) _____ # hrs weekly
- Volunteer _____ # hrs weekly

These obligations require a total of _____ hrs per week.

A flowchart diagram starting from the 'Yes' checkbox. A horizontal arrow points from 'No' to 'Total= 0 hours'. From 'Yes', a vertical line descends, then a horizontal arrow points to the right, branching into two sub-categories: 'Social: (clubs, groups, etc.)' and 'Volunteer'. Each sub-category has a horizontal arrow pointing to a blank line followed by '# hrs weekly'. A final horizontal arrow points from the bottom of the vertical line to the text 'These obligations require a total of _____ hrs per week.'

Health Issues

I have health restrictions:

No → Total= 0 hours

Yes

Ex: Cannot exceed ____ hours per week

Time for health care appointments, etc. _____ hrs weekly

These obligations require a total of _____ hrs per week.

Wellness/ Self-care

I am committed to a scheduled workout routine or other wellness/self-care activity:

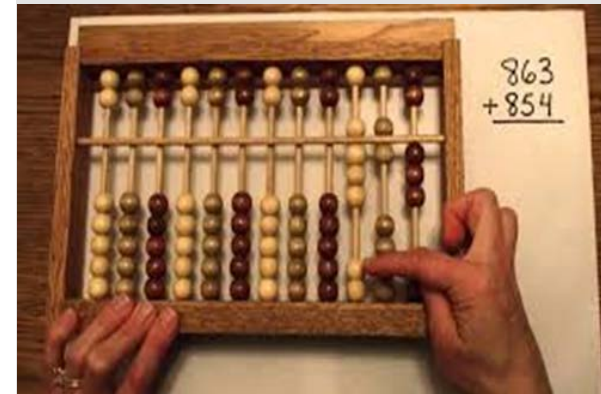
No

Yes

Total= 0 hours

_____ hrs weekly

Time to add it all up!!



Current Obligations

Add up all of the totals in the previous slides. This is your overall total hours already occupied in your life.

TOTAL

(A week = $24 \times 7 = 168$ hours)

What's left for your field experience?

Can you meet the hours needed?

Yes  Great!!

No  Now what??

Night & Weekends

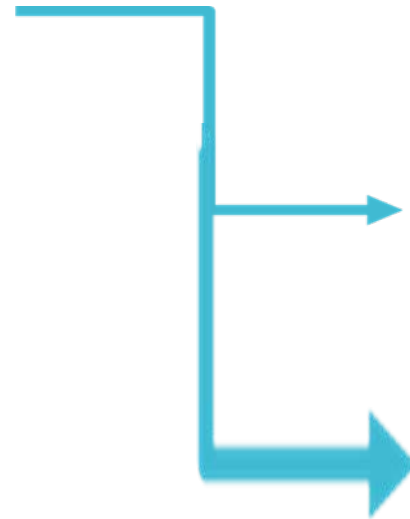
I will need to accrue all/some of my field hours at night or on weekends:

No



Great! We are affiliated with over 400 agencies in the DFW area and beyond, most operating only during regular business hours.

Yes



I understand that I **CANNOT** fulfill all of the required field hours in the evenings and weekends.

I understand that I must find at least one business day during regular business hours to be at my field placement.

You may be thinking, "This seems impossible- How will I balance it all??"

Please take the time to go through each aspect presented and think about how you will balance your field placement with other life responsibilities. These are just suggestions and ideas to get you thinking how to creatively rearrange your time.



Rearranging
your
schedule

Ack!!! How can I make my schedule work??

Let's Take a **closer** look!



Rearranging your schedule: Work

What are ways I can propose a more flexible work schedule?

Make up time during nights and weekends:

- No  0 hours gained
- Yes  Hrs/Weekly _____

Use vacation time:

- No  0 hours gained
- Yes  Hrs/Weekly _____

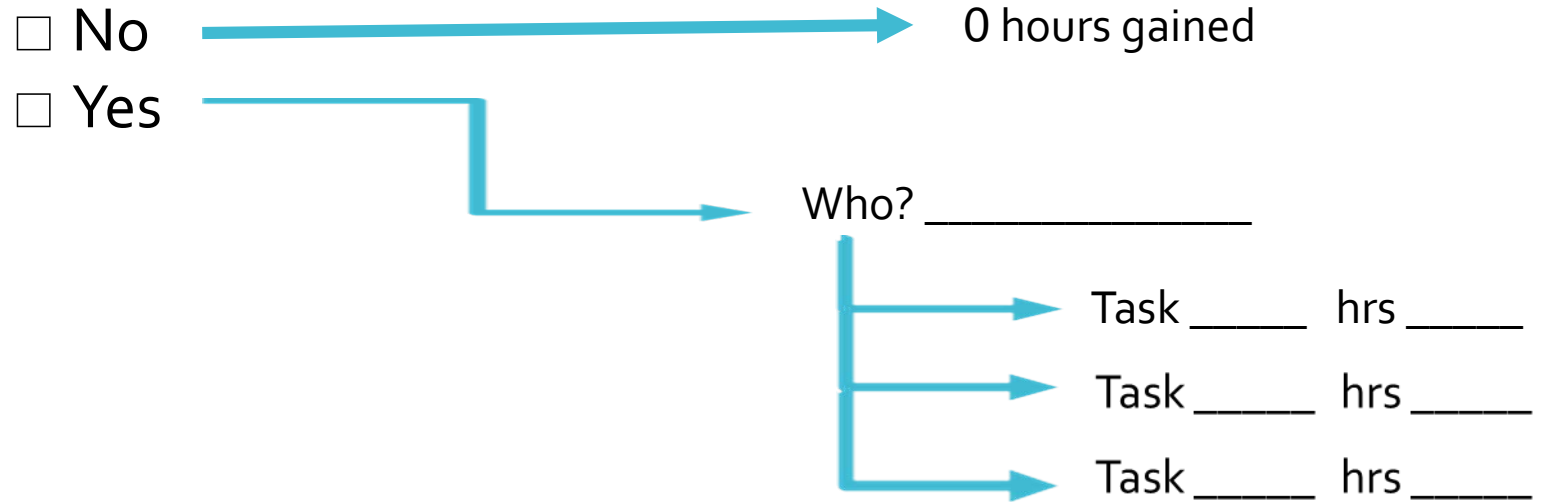
Ask boss for ideas:

- No  0 hours gained
- Yes  Hrs/Weekly _____

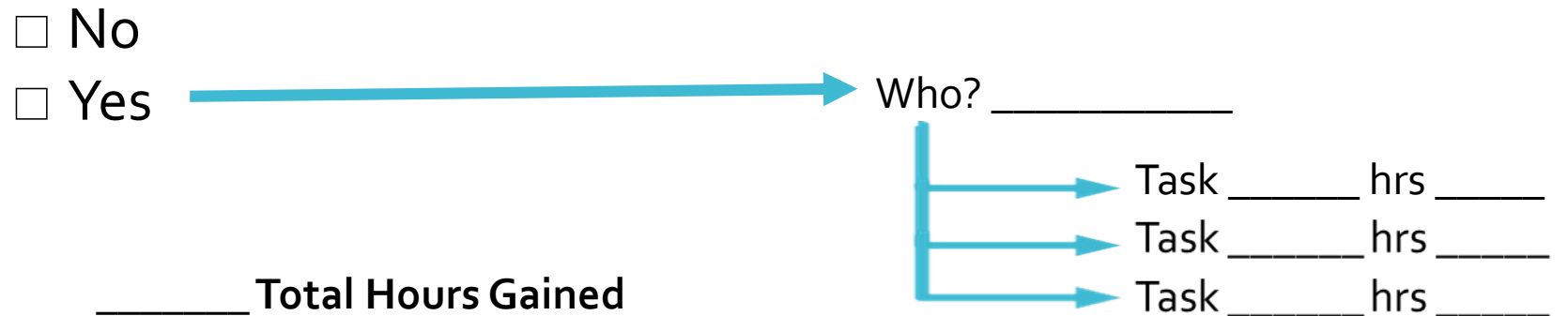
_____ Total Hours Gained

Rearranging your schedule: Family Obligations

Family: I need help! Can I ask a family member to take on some of my tasks or pay someone to help?



Can I ask family members to be more independent in certain tasks (i.e. making dinner)?



Rearranging your schedule: Other Classes

Think- Will your class load be manageable in addition to your field placement?

No or I'm not sure

Yes

Can you accept a
different graduation
date (an additional 4.5
months)?

No

0 hours
gained

Which class(es)
can I defer?

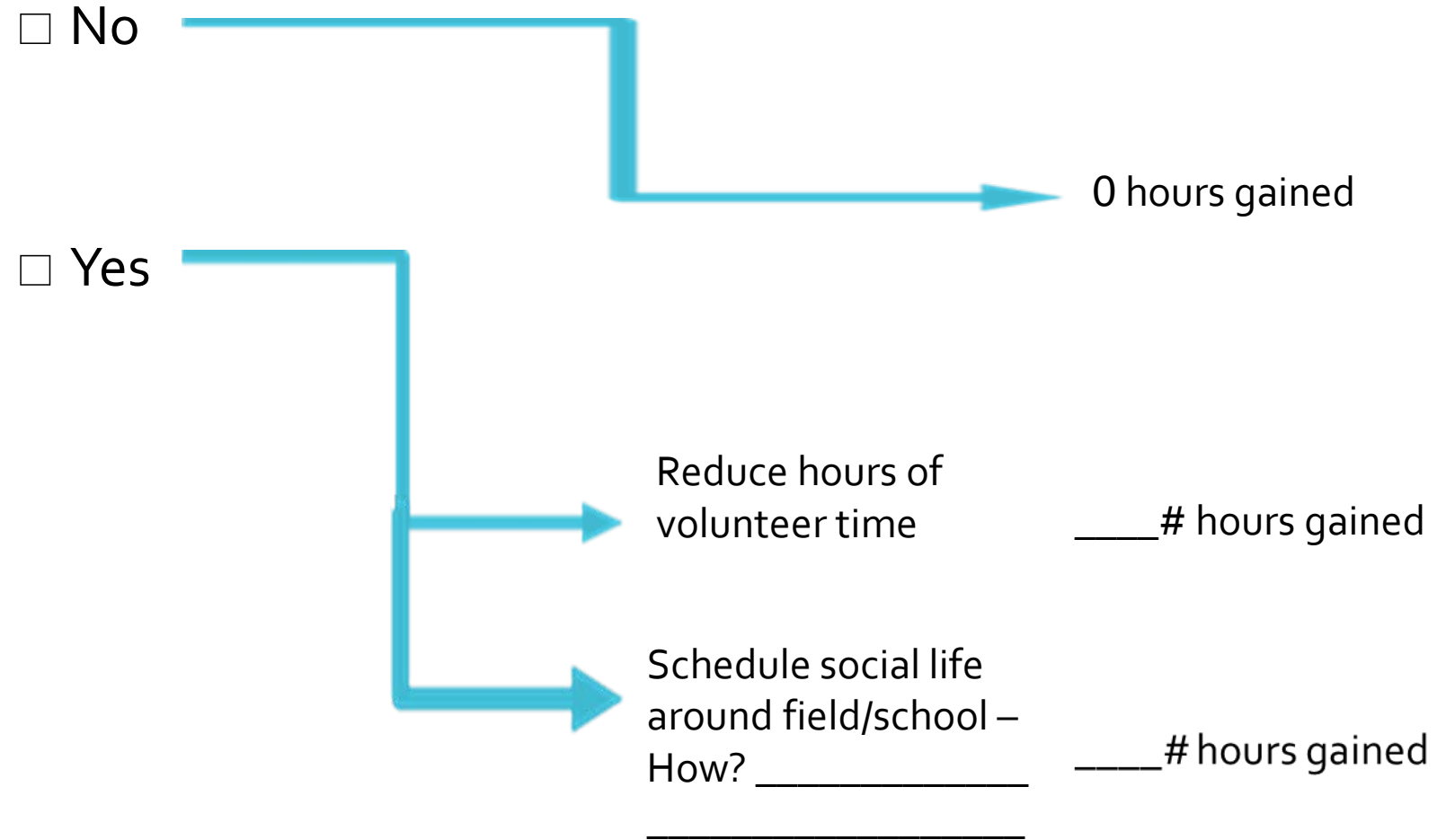
SOCW _____ + study time

SOCW _____ + study time

____ Total hours gained

Rearranging your schedule: Social/ Volunteer

Can I be more flexible here?

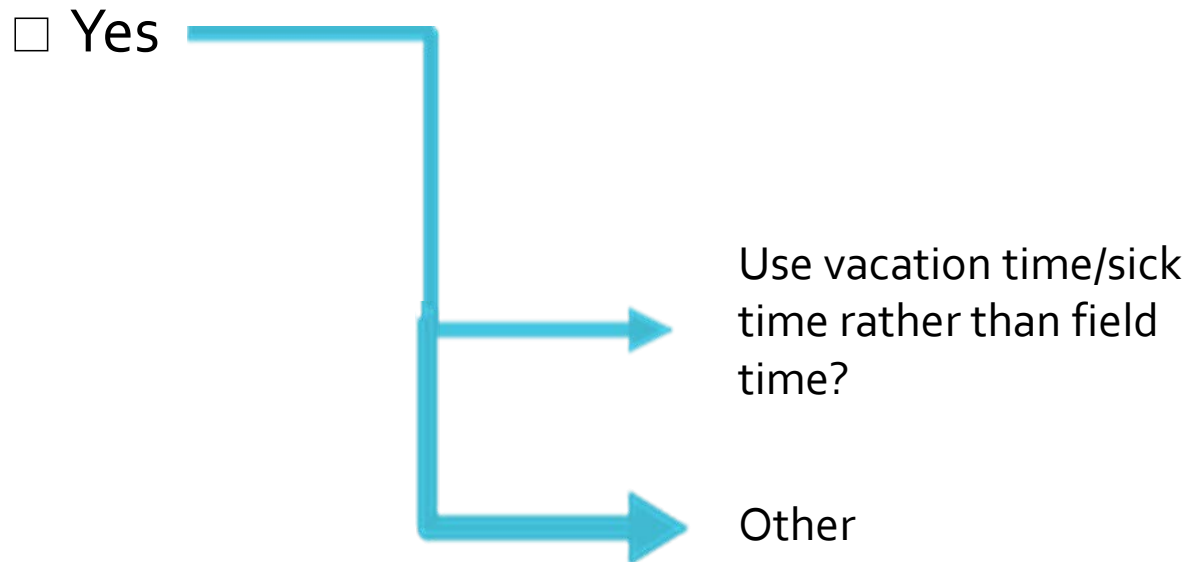


____ Total hours gained

Rearranging your schedule: Health Restrictions

Can I change appointments without compromising my health?

No → 0 hours gained



_____ Total hours gained

Rearranging
your
schedule:
Wellness/
Self-care

Workouts:
Can I flex this time?

- No → 0 hours gained
- Yes
 - AM ____ hours
 - PM ____ hours

Can I switch to a different type of exercise? (workout DVDs at home, etc.)

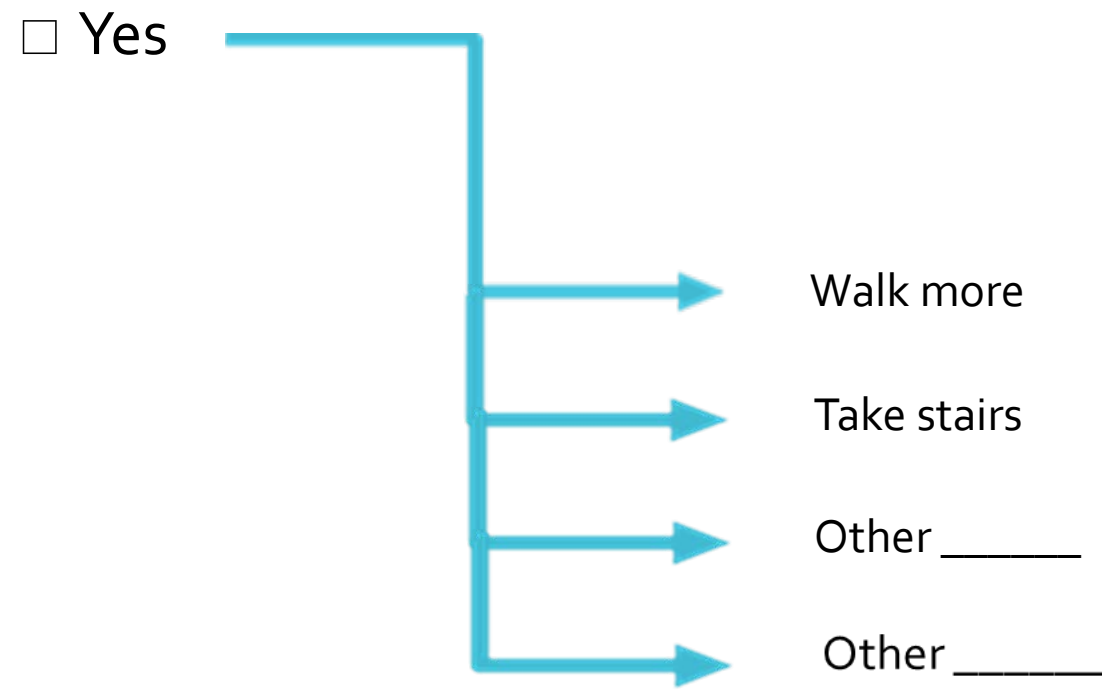
- No → 0 hours gained
- Yes
 - What? _____

_____ Total hours gained

Rearranging
your
schedule:
Wellness/
Self-care
(con't)

Can I incorporate exercise at work & field?

No → 0 hours gained



_____ Total hours gained

OVERALL WAYS TO
REDUCE STRESS &
GET THE MOST OUT OF
YOUR FIELD PLACEMENT



Maximizing Your Educational Experience

Things I can do to reduce my own stress during field:

- Keep a workable, realistic schedule.
- Understand that field is a limited period of time. "This too shall pass."
- Insist that my family/friends provide the support they promised.
- Keep my health (emotional, mental, physical) my priority.
- Stay up-to-date concerning my field obligations so that I can maintain a feeling of control.
- Use the field experience as the capstone of my career.**
- Understand that I am building my professional reputation and resume.**
- Keep my expectations of all that I can manage realistic.
- Reach out to my field liaison before a small problem becomes a big problem.

Now that you've taken a closer look at your obligations, what is your plan now?

- Work
- Family
- Other classes
- Social/
Volunteer
- Health issues
- Wellness/
self-care

- I have now cleared my schedule to devote the necessary time and energy to be successful in my field practicum.
- I hereby verify that I have completed this exercise.

Please note: You are NOT required to turn this into the Field Office, this exercise is simply for your benefit.

