

**EMU School of Social Work
Field Program
Tips for Social Work Field Placement Interviews**

Before the interview:

- Research the agency: look at the website and read about the programs or services they provide.
 - Practice your responses to sample interview questions [See Sample Interview Questions] and prepare 2-3 questions to ask at the interview.
- Write professional emails to the agency contact to: Schedule your interview, confirm the address/location of the interview, to ask how many copies of your resume you might need to bring [this is not always required], ask if you need to bring anything else to the interview.

As you write your email, remember:

- Do not assume you can call them by their first name--they will let you know if that is OK when you meet
- Do not assume you should use Ms., Mr., Mrs. etc. unless the Field Office provides you with such titles. Instead, address the person by their first and last name (see email sample below) until you learn the preference of the contact.
- Use your emich email address.
- Check your spelling and grammar.
- Read your email aloud and consider how it will sound to the reader. If possible, have someone review it.
- Wait for the agency to respond. Agencies can take several days to respond to your email.

Sample Email:

Dear Jessica Smith,

I am a BSW student at Eastern Michigan University and I am interested in a field placement with "Agency A." I was referred by the field office and I am writing to ask if I can schedule an interview with you for a field placement experience. Please let me know what information I can provide you. I look forward to hearing from you.

*Thank you,
[Your name]*

- Plan what you are going to wear ahead of time to make it easier on the day of the interview. Plan to wear something that helps you to feel that you look your best. Remember that some settings prefer attire that is not too casual. Once you have your attire ready, make sure it is washed and free of wrinkles for your interview. If you need support in finding interview clothes, you can look at these resources:
<https://julieslist.homestead.com/ClothingResources.html>

- Start gathering what you need to bring to the interview:
 - Printed copy of cover letter and resume
 - Writing paper and pen
 - Contact information and directions
- Plan out how you will get there so that you can avoid transportation issues on the day of the interview as well as avoid traffic or other issues that could prevent you from arriving on time. Sometimes it is helpful to take a “test drive” to see where to park or to map out the bus route.

On the day of the interview:

- Get ready early.
- Double check that you have everything that you need to bring to the interview before you leave your home:
 - Copies of cover letter and resume
 - Writing paper and pen
 - Contact information and directions
- Leave early to avoid any unforeseen circumstances (traffic, parking lots full, etc.).
- Before you leave or when you get to the agency, take a minute and practice 1 or 2 mindfulness exercises (e.g. deep breaths, positive affirmations, guided imagery).
- Be on time! If you are going to be late, call your contact agency as soon as possible and estimate your new arrival time.
- Prior to walking into the agency, make sure your phone is on vibrate.

During the interview:

- Avoid chewing gum or having anything in your mouth so you can speak loudly and clearly during the interview.
- Feeling nervous is expected during an interview and often feeling nervous presents itself as rocking in your chair, shaking your leg, wringing your hands, etc. Try some different techniques to get your nervous energy out without anyone noticing: wiggling your toes in your shoes or squeezing muscle groups.
- If you are unsure of a question, ask for clarification or for the interviewer to repeat themselves.
- Take your time! Make sure not to speak too fast, it is okay to take a second to think about the question before answering.
- Make appropriate eye contact.
- Remember that you are not speaking with a friend or a family member--you want to speak with respect and choose your words carefully. Sounding overly casual can set the wrong impression.
- Be honest.
- Show interest in the agency and the work they do for the community.
- Before you leave, make sure to thank staff for their time and the opportunity to interview at their agency.

Virtual interviews:

- Make sure you check your internet connection before logging on.
- Confirm the time/day of the interview and make sure you have a link for the meeting the day before.
- Keep your sound and your video on during the interview.
- Make sure you are in a quiet, well lit space.
- Dress appropriately.
- Do not have other windows open (email, games, etc.) to cause distraction during the interview.

After the interview:

- Follow up with the organization/those that were involved in the interview to thank them for their time. This can be done via email. Make sure to write the email and send it the next day.

Sample Email:

Dear _____,

Thank you for the opportunity to interview at “Agency A.” I enjoyed meeting with you and learning about “Agency A’s” programs and services. I am particularly interested in [insert something that stuck out to you here]. Please let me know if you have any other questions and I look forward to hearing from you.

*Sincerely,
[Your name]*