



**WESTERN  
ILLINOIS  
UNIVERSITY**

Department of Health Sciences and Social Work

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Bachelor of Social Work (B.S.W.)

FIELD PRACTICUM MANUAL

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Rev. August 2019

## **FORWARD**

This manual has been prepared for the purpose of assisting students, faculty, and agency field instructors in understanding the objectives, policies, and procedures governing field practicum instruction for the Bachelor of Social Work degree in the Department of Health Sciences and Social Work at Western Illinois University.

Katherine E. Perone, Dir. of Field Education

## **RIGHTS RESERVED**

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## **ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS**

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## **INTRODUCTION**

This manual was prepared as a guideline for undergraduate field education. Field Education is the signature pedagogy for social work education. This field instruction manual provides information about the educational objectives, policies, and learning guidelines the Social Work Program at Western Illinois University established for the field education component of the BSW curriculum.

The purpose of social work education is to prepare competent and effective social work professionals who are committed to enhancing human well-being and helping to meet the basic human needs of all people. Social Work has particular concern for the needs and empowerment of people who are vulnerable, oppressed, and living in poverty (from Preamble of the NASW Code of Ethics). Undergraduate social work education is considered a professional educational program and field instruction is a key component of this educational process. It provides the student with the opportunity to apply knowledge, values, ethics, and practice skills to enhance the functioning of individuals, families, groups, organizations and communities.

The purpose of field education is to provide students the opportunity to integrate the theoretical and conceptual frameworks learned in the class with social work field practice experience. Field education provides generalist social work practice opportunities for students to demonstrate mastery of the 2015 CSWE EPAS nine core competencies and set of behaviors which describes the knowledge, values, skills, cognitive and affective processes that foster professional generalist social work practitioners.

### **History of Social Work at W.I.U.**

Social Work became a part of the curriculum in the Department of Sociology, Anthropology and Social Work in the early 1970s. Lillian Snyder, along with the many other sociology faculty, worked hard to develop courses and student interest in the Social Work emphasis, which would prepare the way for the University to offer the B.S.W. degree. WIU received approval from the Board of Governors of State Universities to offer the Bachelor in Social Work degree in 1988. In 1996 the Social Work Program at WIU was accredited by the Council on Social Work Education (CSWE). The Department of Social Work became an individual department in 1997. In 2004, the department moved to the College of Education and Human Services. In 2014, the department merged with the Department of Health Sciences to create the Department of Health Sciences and Social Work.

## **VISION, MISSION, GOALS, AND OBJECTIVES**

### **Social Work Program Vision**

Consistent with the university's vision, the Social Work Program strives to provide the very best undergraduate social work education in the United States.

### **Social Work Program Mission**

Consistent with the university's and the college's mission, the Social Work Program's mission is "to prepare competent generalist social workers committed to responsible and ethical practice, and dedicated to serving as advocates for a more socially just society." This mission is appropriate to professional social work education as defined in the Educational Policy section on Purposes, is appropriate to the baccalaureate level of social work education that we provide, and is consistent with the university's mission. The social work program is one of many integral pieces of the total academic program by which the university and the college carry out their missions.

### **Social Work Program Goals and Objectives**

## **SOCIAL WORK CARES**

Many students first entering the social work program identify "helping people" as their reason for choosing social work as a major. This caring attitude is essential for social workers, but does not make

one a social worker. The acronym **CARES** was created to describe the characteristics of a social worker that all students should aspire to be: Competent, Advocate, Responsible, Ethical, and Service-Oriented. Students will build on this caring attitude through course work, professional development, personal growth, community service, and the field practicum to become professional social workers.

### **BSW Program Goals/Objectives**

1. To educate students who are **Competent** to practice at the generalist BSW level, through a curriculum built on the nine core competencies.
2. To instill in students their duty to be **Advocates** who challenge injustice and actively promote the dignity and worth of all people.
3. To produce graduates who are **Responsible** professionals who act with integrity.
4. To prepare graduates who behave in an **Ethical** manner, continuously conscious of the implications their actions have for their clients, coworkers, and profession.
5. To develop **Service-oriented** citizens engaged in their community who contribute to finding solutions for local, regional, and global issues.

## **SOCIAL WORK CURRICULUM**

### **Liberal Arts Perspective**

The social work curriculum is based on a strong liberal arts perspective that enriches the student's understanding of the person-in-environment context of social work practice. Study includes content about cultural heritage, critical thinking, and expressions of culture, as well as determinants of human behavior and social problems.

### **General Education Requirements**

Social work majors at Western Illinois University are required to complete the General Education requirements as specified for the Bachelor of Social Work Degree. The academic advisor assists students regarding recommended courses from which social work majors may choose to fulfill the requirements. The courses are chosen with the intent of providing students with a broad background in the liberal arts upon which the social work foundation courses will be built.

Each student should consult the edition of the University Undergraduate Catalog that governs her/his particular program of study.

### **Generalist Social Work Practice**

The Social Work Program at Western Illinois University prepares the student for generalist practice at the baccalaureate entry level of the profession. Baccalaureate social workers may become employed by a variety of agencies and must be prepared to perform a variety of roles in any particular practice situation. Using the ecological systems perspective, the generalist practitioner applies theoretical knowledge, employs a repertoire of professional roles, and uses appropriate research and evaluation tools, in order to intervene at the appropriate systems levels. Within the framework of professional values, the generalist social worker facilitates desired change in the functioning of systems of all sizes, including individuals, families, groups, organizations, and communities, in order to enhance human well-being (Refer to the BSW Student Handbook for additional information).

The purposes of social work practice as specified in the Educational Policies and Accreditation Standards of the Council on Social Work Education have been identified by the program as the basis for developing program outcomes. These purposes include:

1. To promote human and community well-being.
2. The quest for social and economic justice.
3. The prevention of conditions that limit human rights.
4. The elimination of poverty.
5. The enhancement of the quality of life for all.

Since social work is a self-regulating profession, students must acquire the knowledge and skills necessary and appropriate to professional social work practice. The social work curriculum prepares students to work with diverse populations including minority populations, different ethnic groups, women, gay/lesbian/transgender, and other oppressed populations. The social work student learns to apply knowledge and skills of the profession in different settings to different population groups, and to different problem areas in the field of social work practice.

The National Association of Social Workers Code of Ethics (See [naswdc.org/pubs/code/default.asp](http://naswdc.org/pubs/code/default.asp)) guides those involved in professional social work practice, and is included as a part of the curriculum. The core values that inform social work practice are designated in the Code as 1) service, 2) social justice, 3) dignity and worth of the person, 4) importance of human relationships, 5) integrity, and 6) competence. The social work profession advocates for respect for the dignity and uniqueness of the individual, for the right of clients to self-determination in regard to decision-making and lifestyle, for respect for client confidentiality, for advocacy and social action for the powerless, for focus on family and for accountability. These values mean that social workers provide services within the context of the client's values and lifestyle, helping clients to change those behaviors which interfere with coping and that the client wants to change, except where there is danger to the client or others. Social workers see the involvement of clients in choosing services and contracting for desired services as empowering to the client or client group.

### **SOCIAL WORK MAJOR REQUIREMENTS**

To be accepted as a Social Work major and a candidate for the Bachelor of Social Work degree, students must satisfy the following requirements:

1. Complete SW 100 or transfer equivalent with a final grade of C or better. Complete, be registered in, or have a plan of study in place for BIOL 100, ENG 180, PSY 100, and SOC 100
2. Have a minimum GPA of 2.00 overall
3. Complete the Social Work Program application materials and have a personal interview with a member of the Social Work faculty (See application materials for further information).
4. Be accepted on the basis of the application process by the Social Work faculty. If the application is denied, the student has the right to appeal to the chairperson. The program will consider the appeal as a committee of the whole.
5. Meet the University and program General Education course requirements for graduation
6. Obtain a grade of C or better in every graded SW course
7. Achieve a minimum 2.5 grade point average for all SW courses prior to enrolling in the practicum course, SW480.
8. Earn a minimum 2.50 SW grade point average at the conclusion of SW 480.
9. Demonstrate professional knowledge, values, and skills after formal admission to the program and throughout the practicum. Failure to do so may result in dismissal from the program.
10. Complete 100 volunteer or work hours in the social services field, as described in the application materials. Students will not be able to successfully complete SW440 without completion of 100 volunteer hours prior to SW440.
11. Successfully complete an evaluation of professional practice behaviors in SW315 and SW440 to continue enrollment in the Social Work degree program.

In addition to the University and College requirements, the core courses for the Bachelor of Social Work Degree include the following:

SW 100	Introduction to Social Work .....	3 hrs.
SW 212	Human Behavior & the Social Environment (HBSE) I .....	3 hrs.
SW 213	Human Behavior & the Social Environment (HBSE) II .....	3 hrs.
SW 312	Social Work Research Methodology .....	3 hrs.
SW 313	Social Work Research Statistics .....	3 hrs.
SW 315	Generalist Social Work Practice I .....	4 hrs.
SW 325	Social Welfare Policy .....	3 hrs.
SW 316	Case Management .....	3 hrs.
SW 380	Social Justice & Diversity .....	3 hrs.



SW 415	Generalist Social Work Practice II .....	3 hrs.
SW 425	Generalist Social Work Practice III .....	3 hrs.
SW 440	Pre-Practicum .....	1 hr.
SW 480	Generalist Social Work Practicum .....	13 hrs.
SW Electives	.....	<u>6 hrs.</u>
TOTAL:		54 S.H.

There is no provision for the granting of academic credit for past work or life experience in lieu of required social work courses.

## **SOCIAL WORK CURRICULUM AREAS**

The Social Work curriculum is based on a liberal arts perspective. This perspective is developed in the General Education requirements and the specific liberal arts courses required for the BSW, including English 180, Biology 100, Sociology 100, and Psychology 100. The Social Work curriculum incorporates the nine core competencies as outlined in the Council on Social Work Education 2015 Educational Policy and Accreditation Standards (EPAS). Competency-based education is an outcome performance approach to curriculum design. Competencies are measurable component behaviors that are comprised of knowledge, values, skills, and cognitive and affective processes. The goal of the outcome approach is to demonstrate the integration and application of the competencies in practice with individuals, families, groups, organizations, and communities. Listed below are the nine core competencies and practice behaviors, universal to all social work practice.

### **Competency 1 : Demonstrate Ethical and Professional Behavior**

Social workers understand the value base of the profession and its ethical standards, as well as relevant laws and regulations that may impact practice at the micro, mezzo, and macro levels. Social workers understand frameworks of ethical decision-making and how to apply principles of critical thinking to those frameworks in practice, research, and policy arenas. Social workers recognize personal values and the distinction between personal and professional values. They also understand how their personal experiences and affective reactions influence their professional judgment and behavior. Social workers understand the profession’s history, its mission, and the roles and responsibilities of the profession. Social Workers also understand the role of other professions when engaged in interprofessional teams. Social workers recognize the importance of life-long learning and are committed to continually updating their skills to ensure they are relevant and effective. Social workers also understand emerging forms of technology and the ethical use of technology in social work practice.

Social workers:

- 1.1 Make ethical decisions by applying the standards of the NASW Code of Ethics, relevant laws and regulations, models for ethical decision-making, ethical conduct of research, and additional codes of ethics as appropriate to context;
- 1.2 Use reflection and self-regulation to manage personal values and maintain professionalism in practice situations;
- 1.3 Demonstrate professional demeanor in behavior; appearance; and oral, written, and electronic communication;
- 1.4 Use technology ethically and appropriately to facilitate practice outcomes; and
- 1.5 Use supervision and consultation to guide professional judgment and behavior.

### **Competency 2: Engage Diversity and Difference in Practice.**

Social workers understand how diversity and difference characterize and shape the human experience and are critical to the formation of identity. The dimensions of diversity are understood as the intersectionality of multiple factors including but not limited to age, class, color, culture, disability and ability, ethnicity, gender, gender identity and expression, immigration status, marital status, political ideology, race, religion/spirituality, sex, sexual orientation, and tribal sovereign status. Social workers understand that, as a consequence of difference, a person’s life experiences may include oppression, poverty, marginalization, and alienation as well as privilege, power, and acclaim. Social workers also understand the forms and mechanisms of oppression and discrimination and recognize the extent to which a culture’s structures and values, including social, economic, political, and cultural exclusions, may oppress, marginalize, alienate, or create privilege and power.

Social workers:

- 2.1 Apply and communicate understanding of the importance of diversity and difference in shaping life experiences in practice at the micro, mezzo, and macro levels;
- 2.2 Present themselves as learners and engage clients and constituencies as experts of their own experiences; and
- 2.3 Apply self-awareness and self-regulation to manage the influence of personal biases and values in working with diverse clients and constituencies.

### **Competency 3: Advance Human Rights and Social, Economic, and Environmental Justice**

Social workers understand that every person regardless of position in society has fundamental human rights such as freedom, safety, privacy, an adequate standard of living, health care, and education. Social workers understand the global interconnections of oppression and human rights violations, and are knowledgeable about theories of human need and social justice and strategies to promote social and economic justice and human rights. Social workers understand strategies designed to eliminate oppressive structural barriers to ensure that social goods, rights, and responsibilities are distributed equitably and that civil, political, environmental, economic, social, and cultural human rights are protected.

Social workers:

- 3.1 Apply their understanding of social, economic, and environmental justice to advocate for human rights at the individual and system levels; and
- 3.2 Engage in practices that advance social, economic, and environmental justice.

### **Competency 4: Engage In Practice-informed Research and Research-informed Practice**

Social workers understand quantitative and qualitative research methods and their respective roles in advancing a science of social work and in evaluating their practice. Social workers know the principles of logic, scientific inquiry, and culturally informed and ethical approaches to building knowledge. Social workers understand that evidence that informs practice derives from multidisciplinary sources and multiple ways of knowing. They also understand the processes for translating research findings into effective practice.

Social workers:

- 4.1 Use practice experience and theory to inform scientific inquiry and research;
- 4.2 Apply critical thinking to engage in analysis of quantitative and qualitative research methods and research findings; and
- 4.3 Use and translate research evidence to inform and improve practice, policy, and service delivery.

### **Competency 5: Engage in Policy Practice**

Social workers understand that human rights and social justice, as well as social welfare and services, are mediated by policy and its implementation at the federal, state, and local levels. Social workers understand the history and current structures of social policies and services, the role of policy in service delivery, and the role of practice in policy development. Social workers understand their role in policy development and implementation within their practice settings at the micro, mezzo, and macro levels and they actively engage in policy practice to effect change within those settings. Social workers recognize and understand the historical, social, cultural, economic, organizational, environmental, and global influences that affect social policy. They are also knowledgeable about policy formulation, analysis, implementation, and evaluation.

Social workers:

- 5.1 Identify social policy at the local, state, and federal level that impacts well-being, service delivery, and access to social services;
- 5.2 Assess how social welfare and economic policies impact the delivery of and access to social services;
- 5.3 Apply critical thinking to analyze, formulate, and advocate for policies that advance human rights and social, economic, and environmental justice.

### **Competency 6: Engage with Individuals, Families, Groups, Organizations, and Communities**

Social workers understand that engagement is an ongoing component of the dynamic and interactive process of social work practice with, and on behalf of, diverse individuals, families, groups, organizations,

and communities. Social workers value the importance of human relationships. Social workers understand theories of human behavior and the social environment, and critically evaluate and apply this knowledge to facilitate engagement with clients and constituencies, including individuals, families, groups, organizations, and communities. Social workers understand strategies to engage diverse clients and constituencies to advance practice effectiveness. Social workers understand how their personal experiences and affective reactions may impact their ability to effectively engage with diverse clients and constituencies. Social workers value principles of relationship-building and inter-professional collaboration to facilitate engagement with clients, constituencies, and other professionals as appropriate.

Social workers:

- 6.1 Apply knowledge of human behavior and the social environment, person-in-environment, and other multidisciplinary theoretical frameworks to engage with clients and constituencies; and
- 6.2 Use empathy, reflection, and interpersonal skills to effectively engage diverse clients and constituencies.

### **Competency 7: Assess Individuals, Families, Groups, Organizations, and Communities**

Social workers understand that assessment is an ongoing component of the dynamic and interactive process of social work practice with, and on behalf of, diverse individuals, families, groups, organizations, and communities. Social workers understand theories of human behavior and the social environment, and critically evaluate and apply this knowledge in the assessment of diverse clients and constituencies, including individuals, families, groups, organizations, and communities. Social workers understand methods of assessment with diverse clients and constituencies to advance practice effectiveness. Social workers recognize the implications of the larger practice context in the assessment process and value the importance of inter-professional collaboration in this process. Social workers understand how their personal experiences and affective reactions may affect their assessment and decision-making.

Social workers:

- 7.1 Collect and organize data, and apply critical thinking to interpret information from clients and constituencies;
- 7.2 Apply knowledge of human behavior and the social environment, person-in-environment, and other multidisciplinary theoretical frameworks in the analysis of assessment data from clients and constituencies;
- 7.3 Develop mutually agreed-on intervention goals and objectives based on the critical assessment of strengths, needs, and challenges within clients and constituencies; and
- 7.4 Select appropriate intervention strategies based on the assessment, research knowledge, and values and preferences of clients and constituencies.

### **Competency 8: Intervene with Individuals, Families, Groups, Organizations, and Communities**

Social workers understand that intervention is an ongoing component of the dynamic and interactive process of social work practice with, and on behalf of, diverse individuals, families, groups, organizations, and communities. Social workers are knowledgeable about evidence-informed interventions to achieve the goals of clients and constituencies, including individuals, families, groups, organizations, and communities. Social workers understand theories of human behavior and the social environment, and critically evaluate and apply this knowledge to effectively intervene with clients and constituencies. Social workers understand methods of identifying, analyzing and implementing evidence-informed interventions to achieve client and constituency goals. Social workers value the importance of inter-professional teamwork and communication in interventions, recognizing that beneficial outcomes may require interdisciplinary, inter-professional, and inter-organizational collaboration.

Social workers:

- 8.1 Critically choose and implement interventions to achieve practice goals and enhance capacities of clients and constituencies;
- 8.2 Apply knowledge of human behavior and the social environment, person-in-environment, and other multidisciplinary theoretical frameworks in interventions with clients and constituencies;
- 8.3 Use inter-professional collaboration as appropriate to achieve beneficial practice outcomes;
- 8.4 Negotiate, mediate, and advocate with and on behalf of diverse clients and constituencies; and
- 8.5 Facilitate effective transitions and endings that advance mutually agreed-on goals.

## **Competency 9: Evaluate Practice with Individuals, Families, Groups, Organizations, and Communities**

Social workers understand that evaluation is an ongoing component of the dynamic and interactive process of social work practice with, and on behalf of, diverse individuals, families, groups, organizations and communities. Social workers recognize the importance of evaluating processes and outcomes to advance practice, policy, and service delivery effectiveness. Social workers understand theories of human behavior and the social environment, and critically evaluate and apply this knowledge in evaluating outcomes. Social workers understand qualitative and quantitative methods for evaluating outcomes and practice effectiveness.

Social workers:

- 9.1 Select and use appropriate methods for evaluation of outcomes;
- 9.2 Apply knowledge of human behavior and the social environment, person-in-environment, and other multidisciplinary theoretical frameworks in the evaluation of outcomes;
- 9.3 Critically analyze, monitor, and evaluate intervention and program processes and outcomes; and
- 9.4 Apply evaluation findings to improve practice effectiveness at the micro, mezzo, and macro levels

### **Social Work Values and Ethics**

Integrated throughout the curriculum are issues of social work values and ethics. All majors are required to read the NASW Code of Ethics as part of the major application and are provided a hyperlink to a copy of the code of ethics in the Field Practicum Manual. These ethical standards are readily available for use in social work classes; and students are assisted in developing an awareness of their personal value systems as well as in analyzing potential conflicts with client values and/or social work values. Case examples are utilized in class and field to demonstrate application of ethical principles.

### **Diversity**

Also integrated throughout the curriculum is the issue of diversity. From the perspective of each course, content is presented and case examples are discussed that illustrate the importance of a social worker being sensitive to a variety of characteristics of a potential client population. Diversity characteristics such as race, ethnicity, national origin, class, gender, sexual orientation, religion, family structure, marital status, culture, political orientation, physical or mental ability, and age, are discussed and related to understanding human behavior, differential assessment, values and ethics, practice, and non-discrimination. Additional exploration on how societies and their cultures' structures may oppress, discriminate, create or enhance power is included in the Social Justice and Diversity course.

### **Populations-at-Risk and Social ,Economic and Environmental Justice**

Growing out of the emphases on values and ethics and diversity is the concern to identify populations that are at particular risk and to promote social and economic justice. Persons such as people of color, women, gay/lesbian/transgender persons, children, elderly, and persons with disabilities are particularly at risk for discrimination and oppression. Social work as a profession grew from the roots of social justice and continues to promote both case and class advocacy when issues of oppression and discrimination are identified. Raising awareness at all levels including global issues and encouraging opportunities for action are a part of the overall socialization and education of social work students. Particular emphasis is included in HBSE, Social Justice & Diversity, policy, practice, and field courses.

### **Social Welfare Policy and Services**

Social Workers will need to work with the plethora of social policies developed by national, state, and local governments. The social policy course is designed to familiarize students with the history and development of social welfare services in the United States. Students learn about the various local, state and federal programs, how they are developed, funded and implemented. Policy issues that affect various client populations are studied and analyzed. Evaluation of policy and social welfare service delivery systems is also learned through this course.

### **Human Behavior and the Social Environment**

The courses related to the H.B.S.E. sequence are designed to help students understand the biological, psychological, and social factors which contribute to the coping mechanisms of various client populations, individuals, families, households, groups, organizations, and communities. Content includes empirically based theories and knowledge that focus on the interactions between and among individuals, groups, societies, and economic systems. Effects of

diversity, including race, ethnicity, culture, national origin, class, gender, sexual orientation, religion, family structure, marital status, culture, physical or mental ability, age, or political orientation, are also included. Students learn that many factors must be taken into consideration when attempting to understand human behavior and when planning appropriate interventions in practice situations.

### **Social Work Practice**

The social work practice sequence, in conjunction with the case management course, is designed so that students will learn intervention methods for all levels of the social system. Students will apply systems theory as a framework for intervention, and to other theories which have techniques that are relevant to social work practice. Practice content focuses on strengths, capacities, and resources of client systems and implementing empirically based interventions.

### **Research**

The research sequence is designed to help students obtain the skills and knowledge necessary to develop and use various qualitative and quantitative evaluation techniques in social work practice and to acquire research methodology for the purposes of being able to study practice issues and program effectiveness objectively. Empirical research is used throughout the curriculum to supplement textbook materials. An agency-based, applied in-service project is an integral graded requirement of the field practicum.

### **Field Practicum**

The semester prior to field semester, students take a Pre-Practicum course to prepare for field practicum. This course highlights the necessary skills to deal with a diverse population, preparing the student to provide social work in agencies that deal with people of various socioeconomic, racial, and ethnic backgrounds, gender, age, developmental disabilities, physical impairments, and others who need social work services. Content includes resume preparation, investigations of agency placement opportunities; overview of ethical, safety, liability issues; and the role of participants as adult learners. Students also gain an understanding of the learning plan's connection to evidence based practice behaviors and coursework. Assignments which measure student outcomes for field readiness include resume writing, interviewing, ethical case study, personal self-assessment activity and paper, field of practice research, and final exam.

As the signature pedagogy of social work education, field education serves to connect theoretical foundations learned in the classroom with social work field practice. The Field Practicum and Seminar are designed to help the students integrate the knowledge, skills, and values learned in the social work foundation courses with actual practice in an agency situation. Field education provides generalist social work practice opportunities for students to demonstrate mastery of the ten core competencies and 41 practice behaviors. To foster the implementation of evidence-informed practice and measure learning outcomes, the social work practicum and practicum seminar assignments provide outcome measurements to assess student competency. These measurements include the learning plan, agency evaluation of the student, and practicum seminar assignments. The Field Practicum and Seminar are designed, supervised, coordinated, and evaluated on the basis of criteria by which students demonstrate the achievement of program objectives and professional competencies.

## **SOCIAL WORK PRACTICUM OBJECTIVES**

Through successful completion of this course students will be able to:

1. Demonstrate Ethical and Professional Behavior
2. Engage Diversity and Difference in Practice
3. Advance Human Rights and Social, Economic, and Environmental Justice
4. Engage in Practice-informed Research and Research-informed Practice
5. Engage in Policy Practice
6. Engage with Individuals, Families, Groups, Organizations, and Communities
7. Assess Individuals, Families, Groups, Organizations, and Communities
8. Intervene with Individuals, Families, Groups, Organizations, and Communities
9. Evaluate Practice with Individuals, Families, Groups, Organizations, and Communities

## DEFINITION OF TERMS

**Agency Field Instructor:** The agency person responsible for supervision and evaluation of the social work practicum student's educational experience while the student is assigned to the agency.

**Director of Field Education:** The person on the W.I.U. Social Work faculty who is responsible for coordinating the field education of the students in the Social Work B.S.W. Program.

**Generalist Social Work Practicum:** Practice experience with individuals, families, groups, communities and organizations.

**Practicum:** The field internship or practical experience which students must have in an agency in order to graduate with a B.S.W. from the Social Work Program

**Practicum Student:** The W.I.U. social work student who is enrolled in SW 480 which involves supervised placement in an agency for a semester.

**Seminar Instructor/Field Liaison:** The university faculty person responsible for conducting the seminar and maintaining contact with the agency and student during the actual field placement.

## FIELD EDUCATION WEBSITE AND ACCESSIBILITY OF FORMS

The Social Work Program has a website which includes a field education link. This link provides students and field instructors' access to field education forms, the BSW field practicum manual, approved practicum agencies and a field education grant opportunity. The field education website address is:

[http://www.wiu.edu/coehs/health\\_sciences/social\\_work/practicum.php](http://www.wiu.edu/coehs/health_sciences/social_work/practicum.php)

Field education forms available to access include the practicum application, special permission request, field setting preferences, practicum learning plan, statement of insurance coverage, statement of understanding, waiver and release of liability, process recording, student evaluation of practicum agency, student evaluation of social work program, time sheet and weekly log templates, agency and field instructor profiles, orientation checklist and student graduation information. The forms can be downloaded in a PDF or Microsoft Word format from the field education webpage.

## PRACTICUM ELIGIBILITY

Students in the Bachelor of Social Work Degree Program must complete a semester of Practicum, which requires a minimum of 450 hours of social work experience in an agency. The Practicum involves assignment to an agency full time and includes a seminar on campus, usually scheduled every other Friday afternoon. Screening and monitoring students for readiness for field and subsequent completion of the Social Work Program is an ongoing process that includes the following evaluation points:

1. Admission to the University
2. SW 100: Introduction to Social Work
3. Formal declaration as Pre-Social Work major
4. Application to Social Work major
5. Monitoring through advising each semester
6. Completion of all pre-requisites
7. Application to Field
8. SW 440: Pre-Practicum
9. Successful completion of field and seminar

To qualify for the Social Work Practicum and Seminar, students must meet the following requirements:

1. Been accepted as a major in the Social Work Program
2. Senior standing
3. Completion of English 180, Biology 100, Psychology 100 and Sociology 100

4. Complete 100 volunteer or work hours in the social services field. Students will not be able to successfully complete SW440 without completion of 100 volunteer hours **prior** to SW440
5. Cumulative grade point average of 2.50 on a 4 point scale in the major
6. Have completed all courses for the social work major with a minimum of a C grade
7. Have completed the Practicum Application and all other requirements of SW 440: Pre-Practicum
8. Being within 20 credit hours of completion of degree requirements
9. Have consent of the Director of Field Education

Students should confirm with their academic advisor that they have met all the requirements for the practicum and for graduation. **Application for Social Work Practicum form must be typed and completed prior to meeting with Academic Advisor.**

### SPECIAL PERMISSION REQUESTS

While this Manual outlines the usual guidelines and procedures for field education, the Program recognizes that a student may encounter personal circumstances that may warrant a special permission request. For students who meet all the regular requirements, the Director of Field Education will notify the academic advisor who will enter special permission into the university computer system so the students can register for SW 480. All other requests for special permission must be submitted to the Director of Field Education in writing by the student. Examples of situations requiring a written request for special permission include:

1. Request for placement at agency of employment
2. Request to supplement primary placement with expanded experience at a secondary agency
3. Request for agency placement outside of approved geographic area
4. Request approval of new agency not currently included on approved agency list

Special permission requests should be submitted to the Director of Field Education on a Special Permission Request form which is located on the practicum webpage. Additional documentation may be attached as needed. **The request should be submitted as early in the planning semester as possible, preferably in conjunction with the Application for Practicum, so it can be given proper consideration.** Special Permission requests at the end of a semester for a new agency may not be approved due to travel considerations. Certain requests may require faculty review or department chairperson approval in addition to approval by the Director of Field Education.

### APPROVAL CRITERIA FOR PRACTICUM

The following criteria will be utilized in approving a student for a field practicum:

1. Minimum of 2.50 GPA in Social Work
  - a) For students with the minimum GPA or below during the semester preceding the practicum, a determination of approved GPA will have to be made after grades are issued for that semester.
  - b) A grade of C or better in each Social Work course
  - c) Being within 20 credit hours of completion of degree requirements
  - d) Completion of Social Work Major Admission Progress
2. Demonstrated readiness for professional agency behavior
  - a) Completion of SW 440 requirements per due dates
  - b) Complete 100 volunteer or work hours in the social services field, as described in the application materials. Students will not be able to successfully complete SW440 without completion of 100 volunteer hours **prior** to SW440
  - c) History of timeliness in completion of assignments in prior courses  
A Pre-Practicum Improvement Plan may be initiated if necessary
  - d) History of excellent class attendance, punctuality, and participation

- e) Demonstrated respect for peers and faculty and potential clients
  - A Pre-Practicum Improvement Plan may be initiated if necessary
- f) Registration for SW 480 must be completed before the end of SW 440, except in cases of 1.a) above.
  - A Pre-Practicum Improvement Plan may be initiated if necessary
- g) Completion of individual interview with Director of Field Education

3. Completion of placement arrangements

- a) Timely agency interviews
- b) Acceptance by agency
- c) Student notification to Director of Field Education regarding agency preference
- d) Approval of agency by Director of Field Education (may require site visit)
- e) Approval by Director of Field Education of any Special Permission Requests submitted

### **PRACTICUM REQUIREMENTS**

Students will meet the following minimum expectations in fulfilling the practicum:

1. The WIU social work program uses a block model for practicum. The practicum is completed over the course of one semester. Students must complete both field and seminar requirements. The integrative seminar is a course which provides opportunities for discussion and is a part of the practicum experience. **Practicum students are required to attend seminar classes.**
2. The course requires a minimum of 450 field hours over a minimum of 15 weeks and participation in a bi-weekly seminar class for 13 credit hours. The practicum will generally involve a 32-hour work week in an agency setting. Students may not begin practicum more than one week prior to the beginning of the semester except in a school setting and may **not** terminate placement more than one week before the end of the semester.
  - a) Field hours are those hours spent providing direct service to clients or engaging in agency activities which support direct service or in agency activities assigned by the agency field instructor. Agency work-related travel time may be considered as field hours. Travel to and from home and meal breaks are considered personal time and cannot be counted as field hours.
  - b) Students who are assigned specific on-call shifts by the agency outside of regular work hours and are called out for practicum experience may negotiate with the seminar instructor/liason for a percentage of those hours to be counted toward the required field hours. The maximum number of hours allowed is 112.50.
  - c) Absences due to illness or emergencies must be made up. Students are expected to follow the agency work and holiday schedule unless otherwise negotiated with the agency.
  - d) The agency will not schedule the student on the practicum seminar session dates.
  - e) Students placed at agencies without a social work degreed supervisor either in Macomb or at a previously approved agency will be expected to meet regularly with a faculty supervisor in addition to the seminar sessions.
  - f) If the required hours are not completed by the end of the semester, the student should expect a grade of Incomplete (I) until the completed hours are documented.
3. Students will develop an individualized learning plan in conjunction with the agency field instructor that is relevant to the practicum agency experience.
  - a) Learning activities are to address the nine core competencies including but not limited to, acquisition of knowledge, development of skills, cognitive and affective dimensions, awareness of community resources, utilization of supervision, commitment to professional values, and developing an understanding of the agency.
  - b) The learning plan should provide a guide and timeline for the semester, and will be reviewed during faculty liaison visits and at times of performance evaluation.
4. Seminar requirements may be in addition to or integrated into the individualized learning plan. The agency field instructor is expected to facilitate the information gathering and completion of these requirements, but



is not obligated to provide time or clerical support for these assignments. It is the student's responsibility to plan ahead for the completion of assignments by the due dates. The exact nature of these assignments may vary by semester, but generally they will address:

- a) Analysis of the agency's mission, funding, structure, services, clientele, staffing, supervision, evaluation and accountabilities, and community involvement.
  - b) Process recording of client interviews.
  - c) Agency In-Service project
  - d) Case Study
5. Students are expected to submit bi-weekly time sheets along with weekly activity and introspective logs. The seminar instructor/liaison will respect the privacy of the logs; however, the student may choose to share the logs with the seminar group and/or with the agency field instructor.

### **SELECTION OF PRACTICUM AGENCIES AND AGENCY FIELD INSTRUCTORS**

The setting for field instruction is an agency which promotes social work generalist practice learning opportunities. The agency supplies the resources needed for students to engage in social work practice, including office space, secretarial support, equipment, and supplies. It also makes professional staff resources and supervision available for student learning. Students then serve the clientele of the field agency.

The agency is perceived as a social system, in which the students become members both as students and as future practitioners. They must relate to the essential sub-systems including clients, administrative personnel, educational personnel, practitioners, aides, and support staff.

Teaching is done by an agency field instructor who is designated by the agency. The agency is selected because of recognized interest in professional standards of practice, an interest in cooperating with the Social Work Program, and a commitment to making resources available for educational purposes. Practicum agency sites are restricted to an 80-mile radius surrounding Macomb or, under special circumstances, areas outside the 80-mile radius. Site approval visits will be conducted by the Director of Field Education for all first time placements and for sites with significant changes in supervision prior to confirmation of student placement. Agencies are requested to complete Practicum Agency and Field Instructor profile forms each semester in which they provide a practicum site.

#### **Agency Qualifications**

Criteria for the approval of an agency for field practicum include the following:

1. Agency commitment to provide services to clients, as demonstrated by adequate and stable resources including professional personnel.
2. Agency mission and practice that is not in conflict with the program's mission and objectives.
3. Agency willingness to provide qualified supervision, approved time for instruction of students, continuity of field instructors, and support of field instructors participation in field orientations/trainings.
4. Agency willingness to make available direct service and observational opportunities for students, such as client cases, groups, agency or community projects, and attendance at pertinent agency and community meetings.
5. Agency interest in participation in student research and in-service project.
6. Agency willingness to support educational activities as outlined in the student's learning plan and required by the practicum course syllabus.
7. Agency provision of adequate office/work space, clerical support, and business travel reimbursement for students, when possible.
8. Agency interest in working with the WIU Social Work Program and a commitment to social work education.

#### **Agency Field Instructor Qualifications**

The agency designates the professional who will serve as field instructor for the student intern. The Social Work Program reserves the right to accept or withhold acceptance of the candidate as field instructor. The agency field

instructor is requested to complete an Agency Field Instructor Profile form each semester s/he supervises a practicum student.

Criteria for selecting agency field instructors include:

1. Social Work degree. (If a Macomb or current approved agency supervisor meets other requirements for approval but has not completed a social work degree, the Director of Field Education may approve and arrange for supplemental social work supervision to be provided by MSW social work faculty.)
2. Social work licensure is preferred.
3. Commitment to social work values as outlined in the NASW Code of Ethics.
4. Demonstrated practice competence, as indicated by agency designation as field instructor and/or professional resume, including at least 2 years post BSW or MSW practice experience.
5. Interest in social work education, including the ability to conceptualize theory and practice and to teach and model generalist social work skills.
6. Commitment to student learning, including scheduled, weekly supervisory sessions, support of the student's individualized learning plan, advocacy for arranging learning experiences, and support for required seminar assignments.
7. Willingness to work with the WIU Social Work Program in fulfilling requirements for the field practicum, including collaboration with the Director of Field Education and field liaison and attendance at field instructor educational sessions/trainings.

If such a person is not employed by the host agency, arrangements may be made with another supervising agency, with another qualified social worker, or with the Social Work Program (only available for Macomb or current approved agency sites) to provide this educational component on a regular basis.

### **FIELD INSTRUCTION ORIENTATION/TRAINING AND ONGOING DIALOG**

Orientation and trainings are held at designated times throughout the academic year on campus for agency field instructors. All agency field instructors are requested to attend. An online webinar or one-on-one training is provided to agency field instructors not able to attend on campus trainings. The purpose of the orientation and trainings is to educate agency field instructors on the policies and procedures of the practicum and provide an overview of social work education with an emphasis on the W.I.U. BSW program. Topics included in the orientation/trainings include connecting the Social Work Program's mission and vision to generalist practice in social work education, linking CSWE core competencies and practice behaviors to field, the integration of coursework to field, the practicum process, responsibilities, practicum requirements, policies, procedures and expectations as field instructor, supervision, student evaluation process, practicum seminar expectations and assignments, and handling difficult situations with the student. An additional orientation/training addressing the learning plan process is also provided to the field instructors at least twice a year. After each training, field instructors complete a survey to communicate orientation/training strengths and opportunities to improve. Ongoing dialogue with field instructors is provided through the field education committee, continuing education workshops, field education website, practicum placement process, e-mail communication, site visits and telephone contact.

#### **Field Education Committee**

The field education committee provides a bridge between agency field instructors, faculty, staff and students. The purpose of the committee is to enhance the relationship between Western Illinois University Social Work Program and field practicum agencies. The Field Education Committee functions in an advisory capacity to the Field Education Director. The Field Education Director serves as committee chairperson. The committee will provide support, feedback and input to the Social Work Program and Field Education Director regarding field practicum. The committee meets twice a semester and as needed. The committee members include the Field Education Director, social work faculty, field instructors from diverse practice areas, and ad hoc members.

## **RESPONSIBILITIES OF W.I.U. SOCIAL WORK PROGRAM**

The practicum placement is a vital part of the education of undergraduate social work students. The Social Work Program is committed to working closely with the social service agencies that provide the field sites for the student practicum. The Social Work Program:

1. Will be responsible for selection and approval of agencies involved in the practicum program.
2. Will provide ongoing education and monitoring of students' performances for the purpose of insuring that students develop a professional social work focus for their practicum experiences and ethical standards such as confidentiality, self-determination, and respect are understood and maintained by the student.
3. Will provide the agency with essential and useful information about the Social Work Program and Practicum requirements including overall objectives, the curriculum plan, accreditation standards, and the Code of Ethics.
4. Will be responsible for the final grade which the students receive for their Practicum experience. Grades will take into consideration the agency evaluation of the student, grades on assignments, and participation in the Practicum Seminar.

### **Director of Field Education**

The Director of Field Education is a faculty member of the Western Illinois University Department of Health Sciences and Social Work who works in collaboration with the department chairperson and social work program coordinator. The Director of Field Education is responsible for maintaining high standards of education and coordination of field instruction.

Specific responsibilities include:

1. Recruitment and approval of field practicum sites and agency field instructors.
2. Orientation and training of new agency field instructors.
3. Identifying training needs for agency field instructors and field issues which should be addressed by the school.
4. Ensuring that agency field instructors and agencies meet the Program standards as outlined in the manual.
5. Preparing the student for the field practicum, including the SW 440 Pre-Practicum course.
6. Coordination of student placements and managing any changes in field placement.
7. Resolving concerns and problems related to field instruction.
8. Administering the program according to the policies described in the Field Practicum Manual.
9. Assigning of seminar instructors/liaisons to proper agencies and coordinating and supporting field liaison activities.
10. Maintaining field practicum records.
11. Planning innovations which will enhance the practicum instruction program.
12. Overseeing revisions and updates to the Field Practicum Manual.
13. Serve as Chair of the Field Education Committee.

### **Seminar Instructor/Field Liaison**

Seminar Instructor/Field Liaisons are faculty of the W.I.U. Social Work Program who serve as the link between the Director of Field Education and the agency field instructors. In some cases, the Director of Field Education also functions as a seminar instructor/liaison. The seminar instructor/liaison is the program representative to the field instruction agency and is expected to serve both as consultant to the field instructor and advisor to the student.

In the capacity of seminar instructor/liaison, the faculty member is directly responsible to the Director of Field Education who has overall responsibility for the field program. Specific liaison responsibilities include:

1. Teaching the integrative seminar for assigned practicum students and providing feedback to the students regarding their seminar performance.

2. Meeting with the student and the field instructor at least once during the semester to review the learning plan and evaluate the student's progress. In addition, the Field Liaison is responsible for maintaining ongoing contacts with the agency field instructor.
3. Consulting with the agency field instructor in developing learning goals and objectives.
4. Dealing with special student learning or performance problems.
5. Obtaining and reviewing midterm and final agency evaluations of the student.
6. Monitoring the student's conduct in accord with university and program standards.
7. Informing and consulting with the Director of Field Education about field-related problems that may require intervention.
8. Assist in informing the agency of the department's expectations regarding the content and structure of field instruction and aiding the agency and the agency field instructor in planning and implementing this content.
9. Communicating with agency field instructors about the school's curriculum and any changes in the program.
10. Reviewing the student's evaluation with the agency field instructor and the student, in accordance with the program's educational expectations.
11. Obtaining required evaluation forms and time sheets from the agency and student and submitting them to the Director of Field Education.
12. Grading all assignments required in SW 480 Social Work Practicum and Seminar and submitting course grades.

### **RESPONSIBILITIES OF THE AGENCY**

Agencies and agency field instructors must be committed to offering quality learning experiences. Agencies are expected to meet the criteria for approval and to provide for education in social work related activities consistent with those of the W.I.U. Social Work Program. Agencies are expected to be committed to offering quality learning experiences and to be willing to provide for regularly scheduled supervisory conferences. The agency is expected to provide suitable workspace, clerical support, supplies, telephone, and computer access commensurate with the student's assigned responsibilities.

#### **Responsibilities of the Agency Field Instructor**

The agency field instructor holds the primary responsibility in the agency setting for the educational and administrative supervision of the student intern. These responsibilities include:

1. Becoming familiar with the objectives, content, policies and procedures of the field education program and the BSW social work curriculum.
2. Interviewing prospective students for field placements unless someone else in the agency is delegated to do so and providing feedback to the Director of Field Education about which students are acceptable.
3. Meeting the Social Work Program requirements, including conferring with the seminar instructor/liaison, participating in agency field instructor orientation/trainings, and providing written midterm and final evaluations of student performance.
4. Orienting the student to the agency, its services, and its clientele.
5. Assessing the educational needs of the student, assisting in development of learning goals, and assigning activities and learning experiences in order to develop social work skills.
6. Advocating for the student to gain access to learning experiences within the agency and the professional community.
7. Overseeing any activities in which the student is assigned to work with other professional staff.
8. Provide weekly, scheduled supervision as protected time for teaching and evaluation.
9. Supervise and provide constructive feedback regarding the delivery of services by the student within the policies and procedures of the agency.
10. Help to integrate the student's theoretical knowledge and previous experience with the student's present practice in the agency.

11. Provide an educational climate that challenges the student to expand their professional knowledge, skills, and values.
12. Assist the student in self-assessment regarding personal and professional strengths as well as areas for further development.
13. Keep the seminar instructor/liaison informed about the student's progress.
14. Provide feedback to the Social Work Program regarding the academic preparation of students and the functioning of the field program.
15. Report any agency changes which affect the field placement or the student's learning.
16. Sign and return all Field Education related documents.
17. Alert the Director of Field Education, Field Liaison of safety issues.
18. Serve as a role model for ethical, competent social work practice.
19. Meet with the Field Liaison at least once during the semester, and more often if needed.
20. Complete an online evaluation of the field education program and the Field Liaison.

### **RESPONSIBILITIES OF THE STUDENT**

#### **In the Site Placement Selection Process**

Every effort is made to consider each student's preferences in selection of agency sites. It is the responsibility of the student to be informed of the procedures and to comply with the time constraints for entering the Practicum.

1. Students are responsible for reviewing their course of study with their advisor to determine their readiness for planning their field practicum. Students with an incomplete in a social work class will not be able to interview at an agency until a letter grade is submitted.
2. Students enroll in the Pre-Practicum course (SW 440) where they are informed of the procedure for setting up the practicum, the criteria for site selection and other pertinent information. The purpose of this class is to assess the students' readiness for the practicum, to orient the students to the practicum program, discuss the students' career interest and field placement possibilities, and to complete preparations for the practicum.
3. Students are to review possible agencies and locations as provided by the office of the Director of Field Education.
4. Students prepare application materials during the Pre-Practicum course.
5. After consultation with the Director of Field Education, students are responsible for completing interviews with at least three agencies. It is the student's responsibility to ascertain the agency's field instructor's credentials for supervision.
6. After the interviews are completed and confirmation forms have been returned by the agencies, students indicate to the Director of Field Education their preferences of practicum locations.
7. Placement will be finalized only after the Director of Field Education has completed contact with an agency, has the completed practicum agreement, and after completing a site visit, if necessary, for site approval. **Students should be aware that selecting a new agency that requires a site visit may delay confirmation of placement. Students should also be aware new agency site visits will not be completed after week 13 of a semester.**
8. Students are responsible for any background checks and or health-related tests requested by potential practicum agencies.
9. Students are responsible for notifying the Director of Field Education of any issues which may hinder a practicum placement. Lack of notification may result in termination of the social work program.

#### **In the Agency**

The Social Work Program regards the student as an adult learner, capable of identifying her/his learning needs and shaping the educational process. This philosophy is exemplified by the student's responsibilities within a field assignment.

1. Students are responsible for setting learning activities to work on during their Practicum experience and for developing a Learning Plan with the help of their agency field instructor.

2. Students are to participate in weekly supervisory conferences with the agency field instructor, preparing an agenda, presenting material representative of work, sharing reactions to and questions about the practicum experience, and advising the field instructor of new learning needs.
3. Students will participate in selected agency activities (e.g., staff meetings, conferences, in-service training, committee work) when these are not in conflict with the campus-based seminars.
4. Students are responsible for actively participating in evaluation of their progress.
5. Students are to contact their Faculty Liaison and Director of Field Education if problems arise in the agency setting that cannot be resolved between the student and the agency field instructor.
6. Students should obtain agency approval for the use of any case material or records outside of the agency and maintain accepted standards of confidentiality.
7. Students should inform the agency field instructor of classroom assignments that relate to field instruction, sharing material when relevant, and gathering information for seminar discussions.
8. Students should confer periodically with the seminar instructor/liaison about learning experiences and any problems and/or concerns related to the practicum assignment.
9. Students are responsible for keeping track of hours worked at the agency on the Practicum Time Sheet and for getting the Time Sheet approved and signed by the agency field instructor and submitted to the seminar instructor/liaison.
10. Students are responsible for carrying out all assignments during their Practicum.
11. Students are responsible for contacting the Field Liaison/Director of Field Education of any issues such as accidents, misconduct, etc.
12. Students are required to abide by the NASW Code of Ethics.
13. Students must report any incidents that present safety or security issues that impact field placement learning.
14. Students are required to read the Field Practicum Manual and utilize it as a resource guide during the practicum experience.
15. Students are expected to attend the required practicum seminar classes.

Practicum students are expected to observe all regulations and standards of conduct required of professional workers in that agency, including prompt notification to the agency field instructor regarding any unavoidable tardiness or absence. It is expected that students will dress appropriately for the agency setting or dress code. It is expected that they will be on time at the agency. It is expected that they will demonstrate social work values and ethics in the performance of their agency assignments. Failure to act in accordance with such professional conduct may incur dismissal from the agency, the practicum, and the social work program.

## EVALUATION

### **Agency Evaluation of the Student**

Agency Field Instructors must engage in assessing the student's level of functioning upon entering field placement. This is done in collaboration with the student and is integral to the development of the learning plan. The Agency Field Instructor and the student determine what the student must learn at the agency and what the best way of learning is. Reviewing with the student what information and criteria are used in evaluation may aid in the development of the plan and developing goals and objectives to guide learning.

It is expected that the agency field instructor will review and discuss the written midterm and final evaluation with the practicum student and provide a copy to the student. Students should be given the opportunity to ask questions about the evaluation. The practicum student must receive a satisfactory evaluation from the agency field instructor; however the final grade received is awarded by the seminar instructor/liaison. An individualized link to the midterm and final evaluation will be e-mailed to each field instructor on a predetermined date. A letter with the predetermined dates will be sent to each field instructor prior to the beginning of the practicum semester.

Additional evaluation tools are utilized in the Social Work Program to assess each agency and the Social Work Program. These evaluation tools include the student evaluation of the agency, the field liaison evaluation of the agency, the student evaluation of the Social Work Program and the agency's evaluation of the Social Work Program.

## **Evaluation of the Agency**

At the end of the practicum semester, each student evaluates his or her placement experience using the student evaluation of the agency form accessible on the social work website. To assess field setting effectiveness, field liaisons also evaluate each assigned agency at the end of the semester. The information is evaluated to assess strengths and opportunities for improvement.

## **Evaluation of the Social Work Program**

At the end of the practicum semester, each student evaluates the Social Work Program using the Student Evaluation of the Social Work Program form accessible on the social work website. Each appropriate agency primary field instructor also evaluates the Social Work Program using the online Agency Evaluation of Social Work Program instrument. The information is evaluated to assess strengths and opportunities for improvement.

## **POLICIES AND PROCEDURES FOR FIELD PRACTICUM**

### **Plan for Supplementary Social Work Supervision**

In the event that an agency is approved for a practicum placement because of the quality of experience available for the student, but the agency is not able to provide a supervisor who also has a social work degree, the WIU program will provide supplementary social work supervision. This option is only possible for agencies in Macomb, former approved field instructors or current approved agencies. Supplementary social work supervision will be provided according to the following general plan:

1. The faculty field liaison will meet regularly with the student in addition to the field seminar.
2. The supervisory sessions will consist of two components:
  - A. The student will be given the opportunity to identify current issues in the field placement warranting additional social work supervision. Concerns that have general interest may be addressed to the professor either individually or via the supervision group. Sensitive issues should be addressed to the professor individually.
  - B. Client case reviews will be discussed, highlighting the social work issues and perspectives involved. Case reviews are not intended to substitute for or supersede agency supervision. Significant discrepancies in case supervision should be promptly addressed directly with the agency field instructor.
3. Supervisory emphasis of each session, demonstrated by the case reviewed and without duplication of planned seminar topics, will include:
  - A. Session 1: Getting started
    1. From classroom to field
    2. Orienting to the agency
    3. Supervisory expectations
    4. Discussion of Learning Plan & Core Competencies 1 & 2-struggles/successes/additional activities
  - B. Session 2: Person-in-environment assessment
    1. Assessing the client from a social work perspective
    2. Presenting the social work component in agency case staffings
    3. Discussion of Learning Plan & Core Competency 3-struggles/successes/additional activities
  - C. Session 3: Client self-determination
    1. Applying principles of self-determination in a case situation
    2. Identifying potential risks when supporting the client's choices
    3. Dealing with personal feelings and conflicts in values
    4. Discussion of Learning Plan & Core Competency 4-struggles/successes/additional activities
  - D. Session 4: Confidentiality and the right to privacy
    1. Applying ethical and legal standards in a case situation

2. Consideration of agency policies versus the client's rights
  3. Sorting out "need to know" information regarding communication and documentation
  4. Discussion of Learning Plan & Core Competency 5-struggles/successes/additional activities
- E. Session 5: Micro-Mezzo-Macro intervention
1. Developing/evaluating a social work intervention plan according to generalist social work principles
  2. Prioritizing intervention strategies for maximum effectiveness
  3. Identifying relevant mezzo and macro systems – resources and gaps
  4. Learning Plan & Core Competency 6-struggles/successes/additional activities
- F. Session 6: Professional boundaries
1. Identifying aspects of case situation that have potential for boundary risks
  2. Identifying personal issues that put student at risk for boundary slips
  3. Developing personal guidelines to protect student and client
  4. Learning Plan & Core Competency 7-struggles/successes/additional activities
- G. Session 7: Termination
1. Exploring the student's readiness of the client for termination
  2. Assessing the meaning of termination for the client and developing an appropriate termination process
  3. Exploring the student's feelings about termination and the importance of self-awareness in handling termination with the client
  4. Learning Plan & Core Competency 8-struggles/successes/additional activities
- H. Session 8: Dealing with conflicting professional perspectives
1. Reviewing/applying principles that represent the social work perspective
  2. Exploring the priorities/perspectives of other disciplines
  3. Developing strategies that deal constructively with conflict and differing agendas; keeping the client's interest at the forefront
  4. Learning Plan & Core Competency 9-struggles/successes/additional activities

### **Field Practicum at Place of Employment**

It is possible that students can have a practicum placement at the agency that already employs them, provided that the educational experience is new learning of knowledge, values, and skills. This learning is to be clearly reflected in a detailed educational plan involving the integration of specific, goal oriented, and clearly measurable objectives. Students who wish to complete a practicum at their place of employment must complete the Application for Field Practicum at Place of Employment form. This form includes name of employment supervisor, name of proposed practicum field instructor, documentation of difference between work assignments and proposed field practicum activities, and approved signatures. This form is submitted in conjunction with the Application for Social Work Practicum. Time spent in activities related to the regular employment responsibilities will not be counted toward the required hours for the field practicum. The practicum plan and application of hours must be approved by the Director of Field Education. The field instructor should not be the student's employment supervisor. This is to ensure the field instructor is available to focus on the educational components of the practicum. The agency and practicum field instructor must also adhere to the same responsibilities required by all practicum agencies/field instructors.

Placement at an agency that offers new employment or a stipend for a student is acceptable as long as the agency agrees to meet the requirements of the practicum. It will be expected that the educational activities will take priority over the employment during this semester, including attendance at seminar sessions and assignments that support the student's individualized learning plan.

### **Prior Experience or Internships**



No credit is given in the practicum for life experience or previous work experience. Prior internships from unaccredited programs may not be transferred for practicum credit.

### **Sharing Sensitive Student Information**

Students should discuss any sensitive, personal information with the Director of Field Education during the application process. Relevant\* personal student information, written and oral, may be shared with relevant parties including the agency field instructor, the seminar instructor/liaison, the Director of Field Education, and the department chair as deemed necessary. This information will be shared to enable appropriate field placement, enable informed choice by field instructors, protect clients, protect students, and facilitate the learning process. Students who choose not to share relevant personal information with their agency field instructor or allow the department to share such information may not be admitted to the practicum. Seminar instructor/liaisons may share relevant student information from field seminars with field instructors. It is expected that agency field instructors will share relevant information from field placement with seminar instructor/liaisons. Students, seminar instructor/liaisons, and agency field instructors will have knowledge of the policy before the placement process begins.

\*Definition: Relevant is defined as having direct impact on field placement. Information is relevant if it may affect clients, field instructors, agency staff or the learning process.

Examples of relevant student information to be shared:

1. If your placement involves working with sexual assault cases and you or a member of your family has been raped, you should probably share this information.
2. If your placement involves a mental health setting and you or a member of your family has been hospitalized for a psychiatric illness, you should probably share this information.
3. If your placement involves a setting where drugs are administered or clients have substance abuse issues and you have a history of substance abuse, you should probably share this information.
4. If you have an illness or disability that will affect the performance of your field placement responsibilities, you should probably share what you will do to carry out the tasks in the placement and what accommodations the agency will need to make. For example, if you have chronic fatigue syndrome you may need to spend shorter periods of time in the agency and spread the placement out over a longer time period.
5. If you have a felony conviction, you may not be able to be placed in a client-centered agency. It is the student's responsibility to notify the Director of Field Education.

### **Conflict of Interest**

To avoid breaches of confidentiality and conflicts of interest, the social work program discourages placement of students in organizations where family members are employed.

Students shall not knowingly be placed in an agency under the following situations:

1. Agency owned or operated by relatives
2. Student would be supervised by relatives or family friends
3. Student would be in a dual relationship with family members
4. Student or members of student's family have been agency clients

It is the responsibility of the student to decline a placement based on a conflict of interest or dual relationship which would violate the NASW Code of Ethics. If a student fails to reveal a conflict to the Director of Field Education and is subsequently placed in a field practicum at the agency, this will be considered grounds for possible termination of the field practicum.

### **Safety and Liability**

Safety in the field is discussed extensively in Pre-Practicum. All students must be alert to the possibility of unexpected confrontations that might put them at risk of harm. Protective measures should be taken to minimize the possibility of such an occurrence. Students and agencies must consider creating a safe environment. These issues should be addressed in the agency orientation as well as in supervision. It is important to discuss guidelines for prevention and development of safety plans. The field instructor should inform the student in advance of any

known risks or potential hazards. At no time should a student knowingly expose him or herself to bodily injury or harm. In addition, no field instructor or agency representative should assign a student to a function where a risk is present. Students must be permitted to decline any assignment exposing them to excessive risk without prejudice. Students should feel comfortable in approaching the field instructor regarding safety concerns. Students may also contact his/her field liaison regarding any safety issues.

Also during individual practicum planning sessions with the Director of Field Education, any potential risks known by the Program that are related to agencies being considered for placement are discussed with the student.

The student is requested to complete a Statement of Insurance Coverage form indicating that the student is and will remain covered by medical insurance during the practicum semester.

The student is also requested to sign a Waiver and Release of Liability form indicating that the student will hold the University and the placement agency harmless regarding any malfeasance in the performance of duties as a practicum student.

Most agencies will require background checks prior to placement and some may require that the student hold liability insurance. Applications for NASW membership and student liability insurance are made available and students are encouraged to apply. The University also includes practicum students under its SURMA Self-Insurance Program up to \$1,000,000 per occurrence within the scope of the practicum.

### **Background Check**

Most agencies require students to undergo a criminal background check and/or fingerprinting, and drug screen, especially in areas specializing in child welfare and aging population. Students must comply with these requirements if requested. Most agencies cover all or at least some portion of the costs. Students are responsible for any costs incurred if they are not covered by the agency. Students are encouraged to apply for the Nancy Coney Field Education Grant accessible on the Social Work website, if financial assistance is needed. Some agencies are also requesting credit checks if working with certain populations (e.g., senior citizens). It is the student's responsibility to notify the Director of Field Education of any past criminal records (misdemeanor/felony). A past criminal record **or positive drug screen** may hinder a practicum placement.

An agency may deny a student a field placement position based on the results of the background check/drug screen. An agency has the right to accept or refuse a student for social work practicum.

### **Automobile/Driver's License**

Students are responsible for their own transportation to and from field placement and for their own automobile insurance. Most agencies require students have a valid driver's license and access to a car. Policies pertaining to traveling, reimbursement for travel, access to agency vehicles, and insurance coverage for students should be made clear to students prior to placement. **Students are not allowed to transport clients at any time while completing the practicum.**

The student is expected to sign a Waiver and Release of Liability form indicating the student will hold the University harmless regarding any malfeasance. Some agencies may require students sign additional transportation liability forms per agency policy. It is the student's responsibility to discuss travel issues with agency prior to placement.

### **Special Requirements**

Some agencies will require TB testing. It is the student's responsibility to comply with requirements if requested. In addition, some agencies may require training in the handling of blood-borne pathogens before students commence working with clients. Students are encouraged to contact the Director of Field Education regarding any special requirements from the agency.

### **Preparation for Licensure**

BSW graduates may use the title of social worker and become Licensed Social Workers (LSW) in Illinois by completing three years of full-time supervised post-degree practice and successfully completing a licensing exam.

The BSW curriculum, including the field practicum, provides the required academic preparation for the licensing exam. Application for licensing also requires affirmation of good moral character. Application questions inquire about prior felony convictions. Students who have questions about becoming licensed in Illinois should contact the Illinois Department of Professional Regulation.

### **Problem Solving during the Field Placement**

Students/field instructors experiencing any kind of difficulty during a field practicum are encouraged to use the following problem solving process:

1. Attempt first to resolve the problem at the field instructor level. Discuss the problem in an issue oriented manner with the field instructor/student.
2. Discuss the problem and attempt to resolve it next at the agency level with the faculty liaison using the Practicum Improvement Plan form if applicable. It is the student's responsibility to discuss the situation with both the field instructor and the faculty liaison.
3. If a satisfactory solution cannot be achieved, the student/field instructor may consult with the Director of Field Education. The Director of Field Education may communicate with the Chairperson regarding the issue.

### **Change in Practicum Placement**

#### ***Non-performance related issues***

A student enrolled in the B.S.W. program may seek a change in her/his field practicum when problems unrelated to the student's performance make the continuation in the field practicum an issue. It is the function of the student's seminar instructor/liasion to determine whether the problem is performance related.

Examples of some non-performance problems may include, but are not limited to the following:

1. Inadequate agency resources to support field practicum.  
For example, lack of student office space, lack of clients for student cases, insufficient supervisory time, loss of field instructor due to illness, change of jobs, etc.
2. Learning experiences in agency are too narrow.  
For example, lack of direct service opportunities to work with individuals, families, and groups or to assume multiple interventive roles: counselor, broker, advocate.
3. Misplacement error based on paper credentials of student and field practicum.  
For example, agency learning experiences are too advanced for the student or the converse. It is more a problem of an unanticipated "mismatch" than a difficulty in student performance.
4. Agency reorganization.  
During the academic year the agency substantially changes its administrative structure, which creates a chaotic situation for the student and adversely affects available learning opportunities.
5. Personality or ideological clash between agency field instructor and student.  
Sometimes this problem is intertwined with difficulties in student performance. However, in unusual instances the student and agency field instructor may discover irreconcilable differences that cannot be resolved quickly enough to permit a productive learning environment for the semester.

#### ***Performance Issues of Students in Field Placement***

It is important for students, field instructors and/or faculty liaisons to recognize and respond early to performance problems of students. If a performance related issue is noted, please complete the Performance Improvement Plan template located on the Practicum webpage. The plan should be initiated and discussed with the student and the faculty liaison.

Examples of some performance issues may include, but are not limited to the following:

1. Failure to demonstrate professional behavior in attitude
2. Lack of professional behavior in appearance
3. Failure to prioritize duties, responsibilities, and complete assignments.
4. Lack of satisfactory progress in completing learning plan
5. Attendance issues and/or arriving late to practicum on a regular basis

The procedure for initiating a change in a practicum placement (non-performance or performance issues) includes the following:

1. The seminar instructor/liaison and student meet to discuss the problem. The student may include her/his advisor (or another member of the faculty) if the matter is delicate.
2. The seminar instructor/liaison, student, and agency field instructor discuss the problem and explore alternative solutions. It is the seminar instructor/liaison's responsibility to inform the Director of Field Education of the difficulties. If a solution is not found within the agency, a decision to terminate the placement is then made by the agency field instructor, student, and seminar instructor/liaison in consultation with the Director of Field Education.
3. The student, seminar instructor/liaison, and Director of Field Education explore options of other placement sites, scheduling, and hours required, and develop a placement plan. The student will be responsible for setting up and interviewing at other placement sites identified and agreed upon by the student, faculty liaison, and Director of Field Education. Completion of alternative placement arrangements and fulfillment of practicum requirements will be contingent on acceptance by an agency.
4. The seminar instructor/liaison function will continue to rest with the student's current liaison until such time that placement in a new practicum agency is completed. At such time, the Director of Field Education will determine if a change in liaison assignment is indicated.

### **Violation of Ethics**

In instances where the student's problem is not primarily academic but has arisen because of a violation of professional ethics or behavior that is detrimental to the welfare of the student's client, the student will be **subject to dismissal** from the B.S.W. Program by the faculty (see NASW Code of Ethics).

Examples of violation of ethics include but are not limited to:

- Transporting a client after practicum hours
- Sexual misconduct with client, colleagues, supervisors
- Socializing with client outside of practicum
- Not adhering to confidentiality
- Discussing client information outside practicum (e.g. Facebook, friends)
- Falsifying client information
- Disclosing personal information about oneself to the client that is deemed inappropriate
- Asking client personal information not relevant to the client's case
- Imposing one's personal beliefs onto the client

Students are expected to read the NASW Code of Ethics prior to practicum and review during practicum. Students are expected to consult with their agency field instructor regarding any ethical dilemma encountered in practicum. Students may also consult with their Field Liaison at any time during the practicum.

### **Discontinuance**

The Social Work Program faculty are responsible for seeing that the students who receive the BSW degree are capable and willing to use the knowledge, skills, and values of the social work profession. Any student who receives a grade of D or F in SW 480, Generalist Social Work Practicum, may not continue enrollment in the Program. The student's admission to the Program will be rescinded for at least one calendar year, at which time the student may reapply for admission to the Social Work Program and Practicum.

Students who are experiencing significant difficulties in the field practicum so as to jeopardize successful completion may submit a Special Permission Request to terminate the placement and retake the following semester. The Director of Field Education and the seminar instructor/liaison must concur that the student has the potential to be successful in a second placement in order for the request to be approved.

If the seminar instructor/liaison and the Director of Field Education judge that a student does not have the potential to successfully complete a practicum, or is unsuited for the social work profession for academic, emotional, social relationship, or ethical violation reasons, the student may be terminated from the program by a unanimous decision of the faculty. Such reasons may include, but not be limited to:

1. Failure to meet generally accepted standards of professional conduct and practice.
2. Inadequate personal integrity or emotional stability requisite for professional practice.
3. Inappropriate or disruptive behavior toward colleagues, faculty, or staff.
4. Consistent failure to demonstrate effective interpersonal skills necessary for forming professional helping relationships.
5. Unable to allow client self-determination.

The procedure for terminating a student includes the following steps:

1. The field liaison pursues all reasonable problem-solving efforts with the student and agency field instructor.
2. The Director of Field Education must concur that all reasonable problem-solving steps have been taken and that the student is unable to successfully complete a practicum.
3. The BSW program faculty will meet as a review committee and must concur with the decision to terminate the student.
4. The Director of Field Education and field liaison will meet with the student and present the faculty decision, in writing from the chairperson, to terminate the student.
5. In serious cases requiring immediate action, the Director of Field Education may remove the student from the practicum agency pending BSW program faculty review and determination.
6. The Director of Field Education will notify the agency in writing that the student's practicum has been terminated.
7. The student may follow the Social Work Program's grievance procedures if she/he wishes to appeal the faculty decision for termination.

### **Appeal/Grievance Procedures**

In the case of a grade dispute, the student should first discuss concerns with the faculty member. If the dispute is not resolved, the student may contact the department chair and request a review by the Grade Appeals Committee of the BSW program. See <http://www.wiu.edu/policies/gradeapp.php> for the appeal procedure.

Students who dispute denial of admission to the practicum or termination from the practicum are entitled to appeal these decisions. Following discussion with the Director of Field Education, the student may contact the department chair. If the dispute is still not resolved, the student may submit in writing to the department chair a request for review by the entire social work faculty with his/her reasons for the appeal.

Grievances in regard to discrimination or harassment issues may be made through the social work program grievance procedures by contacting the department chair, or by contacting the Affirmative Action Office, 202 Sherman Hall.

### **Student Problematic Behavior, Ethical Misconduct, Impairment, and Incompetence Policy**

The Social Work Program is committed to clarifying and identifying the level of professionalism and ethical conduct expected of the students in the Council of Social Work Education-accredited Social Work Program at Western Illinois University. The Social Work Program follows the policy on student problematic behavior, ethical misconduct, impairment, and incompetence. This policy can be located in the BSW application for admission at:

[http://www.wiu.edu/coehs/health\\_sciences/undergraduate\\_programs/Admissions%20Forms.pdf](http://www.wiu.edu/coehs/health_sciences/undergraduate_programs/Admissions%20Forms.pdf)

### **Student Academic Integrity Policy**

The Social Work Program follows University policy on student academic integrity. Students can access this policy at <http://wiu.edu/policies/acintegrity.php>. It is the student's responsibility to adhere to this policy.

**Nondiscrimination Policy**

The Department of Health Sciences and Social Work at Western Illinois University is committed to providing a learning context which respects diversity and provides equal opportunity in all aspects of its program, including recruitment, retention and graduation of students and recruitment, retention, and promotion of faculty.

The Program will not condone, permit, or tolerate any form of discrimination based on age, color, disability, ethnicity, gender, national origin, class, race, religion, or sexual orientation.

Students with disabilities that require special accommodations should inform their instructor of their needs per university policy. In accordance with the Americans with Disabilities Act, the instructor is not permitted to inquire about the particular needs of students. Every effort will be made to help the student who indicates special needs.

For more information please see the Disability Resource Center link

[http://www.wiu.edu/student\\_services/disability\\_resource\\_center/](http://www.wiu.edu/student_services/disability_resource_center/)

**Title IX Policy**

University values, Title IX, and other federal and state laws prohibit sex discrimination, including sexual assault/misconduct, dating/domestic violence, and stalking. If you, or someone you know, has been the victim of any of these offenses, we encourage you to report this to the Title IX Coordinator at 309-298-1977 or anonymously online at:

[http://www.wiu.edu/equal\\_opportunity\\_and\\_access/request\\_form/index.php](http://www.wiu.edu/equal_opportunity_and_access/request_form/index.php). If you disclose an incident to a faculty member, the faculty member must notify the Title IX Coordinator. The complete Title IX policy is available at: <http://www.wiu.edu/vpas/policies/titleIX.php>.

**Racial and Ethnic Harassment Policy**

The Social Work Program follows University policy in prohibiting any form of racial and/or ethnic harassment. The Anti-Harassment Policy can be found at this link <http://www.wiu.edu/policies/harassment.php>.

The Office of Equal Opportunity & Access is located in Sherman Hall 203, telephone 309/298-1977.

## PRE-PRACTICUM (SW 440) REQUIREMENTS CHECKLIST

Use this checklist to be sure you complete all the requirements for your Pre-Practicum planning. Forms required for submission are available on the social work web site at [http://www.wiu.edu/coehs/social\\_work/practicum.php](http://www.wiu.edu/coehs/social_work/practicum.php)

✓ Done	Due	Requirement
___ 1.	_____	Meet with academic advisor within first two weeks of semester.
___ 2.	_____	Attend Pre-practicum course sessions, complete readings and assignments per syllabus.
___ 3.	_____	Submit Application for Practicum.
___ 4.	_____	Submit Practicum Special Permission Request Form if needed.
___ 5.	_____	Submit Personal Resume.
___ 6.	_____	Submit Personal Assessment Paper.
___ 7.	_____	Submit Field of Practice Paper.
___ 8.	_____	Submit Field Setting Preference form.
___ 9.	_____	Arrange individual interview with Director of Field Education.
___ 10.	<u>At interview</u>	Submit Student Statement of Understanding and Statement of Insurance
___ 11.	_____	Schedule interviews with approved potential placement agencies.
___ 12.	_____	Notify Director of Field Education of interview dates.
___ 13.	_____	Give Interview Packet to each agency at interview.
___ 14.	<u>W/in 48 hrs.</u>	Write thank-you notes to all agencies interviewed.
___ 15.	_____	Complete interviews and notify Director of Field Education of agency preference.
___ 16.	_____	Receive confirmation of placement and assignment to field seminar section.
___ 17.	_____	Notify accepting agencies of placement decision.

## PRACTICUM (SW 480) REQUIREMENTS CHECKLIST

Use this checklist to be sure you complete all the requirements for your Practicum. Forms required for submission are available on the social work website at [http://www.wiu.edu/coehs/social\\_work/practicum.php](http://www.wiu.edu/coehs/social_work/practicum.php).

<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Done	Due	Requirement
<input type="checkbox"/> 1.	_____	Attend Practicum Seminars and complete assigned readings per syllabus.
<input type="checkbox"/> 2.	_____	Submit draft of Learning Plan to Seminar Instructor.
<input type="checkbox"/> 3.	_____	Submit typed, signed copy of Learning Plan.
<input type="checkbox"/> 4.	_____	Submit weekly logs, time sheets, and agency reports at each Seminar.
<input type="checkbox"/> 5.	_____	Complete all written assignments per syllabus due dates.
<input type="checkbox"/> 6.	_____	Complete & sign Midterm Evaluation with Agency Field Instructor.
<input type="checkbox"/> 7.	_____	Complete Agency Employee In-Service Project.
<input type="checkbox"/> 8.	_____	Complete & sign Final Evaluation with Agency Field Instructor.
<input type="checkbox"/> 9.	_____	Keep Seminar Instructor informed of any problems related to the Practicum.
<input type="checkbox"/> 10.	_____	Submit Student Evaluation of Practicum Agency.
<input type="checkbox"/> 11.	_____	Submit Student Evaluation of Social Work Program.
<input type="checkbox"/> 12.	_____	Submit Graduation Information form.
<input type="checkbox"/> 13.	_____	Write thank-you note to agency at termination of Practicum.
<input type="checkbox"/> 14.	_____	Review NASW Code of Ethics.
<input type="checkbox"/> 15.	_____	Review 2008 EPAS Standards.



## **REFERENCES**

Council on Social Work Education. (2015). Educational Policy and Accreditation Standards. Retrieved from <http://www.cswe.org/File.aspx?id=13780>

National Association of Social Workers. (2008). NASW Code of Ethics. Retrieved from <http://www.naswdc.org/pubs/code/default.asp>

