Western Illinois University

FIELD PRACTICUM MANUAL

Bachelor of Social Work (BSW) Program

School of Applied Clinical, Educational, and Professional Programs

Western Illinois University

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Revised August 2026

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 School of Applied Clinical, Educational, and Professional Programs

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RIGHTS RESERVED

The provisions of this handbook are not to be regarded as an irrevocable contract. The Social Work Program reserves the right to modify, revoke, or add to any regulations at any time.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The Social Work Program would like to acknowledge the social work program advisory committee, field education committee, field instructors, faculty liaisons, faculty, and Social Work Program Coordinator for their ongoing participation in the delivery of quality field education. We would also like to acknowledge field education directors' willingness to share ideas and policies which build the foundation of field practice.

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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 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 2022 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. In 2024, the Social Work Program merged with Counselor Education and College Student Personnel Department to create the Counselor Education, College Student Personnel, and Social Work Department. In 2026, the Counselor Education, College Student Personnel, and Social Work Department moved to the School of Applied Clinical, Educational, and Professional Programs in the newly created College of Business, Health, and Community Professions (CBHCP).

Social Work Program 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
The mission of the social work program is to prepare competent generalist social workers who empower individuals, families, groups, organizations, and communities, both locally and globally, to advocate for a more socially just society. The program provides a supportive learning environment that fosters a respect for human diversity, a passion for human rights, a commitment to responsible and ethical professional practice, and a dedication to eliminating poverty and enhancing the lives of all people.

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.

Social Work Program Goals and 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 their 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 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, skills, values, cognitive and affective dimensions 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 https://www.socialworkers.org/About/Ethics/Code-of-Ethics/Code-of-Ethics-English) 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 regarding 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, or have a plan of study in place for BIOL 100, ENG 180, PSY 100, and SOC 100
2. Have a minimum overall GPA of 2.00
3. Complete the Social Work Program application materials and have a personal interview with a member of the Social Work faculty.
4. Be accepted based on the application process by the Social Work faculty. If the application is denied, the student has the right to appeal to the Social Work Program Coordinator. 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, cognitive/affective processes 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 begin 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)	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	Selected	6 hrs.
		TOTAL: 54 S.H.

Credit for Life Experience

There is no provision for the granting of academic credit for past work or life experience in lieu of required social work courses. This is a policy guided by CSWE accreditation.

CURRICULUM AND CORE COMPETENCIES

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 2022 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; cognitive and affective processes. The goal of the outcome approach is to demonstrate the integration and application of 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 policies, laws, and regulations that may affect practice with individuals, families, groups, organizations, and communities. Social workers understand that ethics are informed by principles of human rights and apply them toward realizing social, racial, economic, and environmental justice in their practice. Social workers understand frameworks of ethical decision making and apply principles of critical thinking to those frameworks in practice, research, and policy arenas. Social workers recognize and manage personal values and the distinction between personal and professional values. Social workers understand how their evolving worldview, personal experiences, and affective reactions influence their professional judgment and behavior. Social workers take measures to care for themselves professionally and personally, understanding that self-care is paramount for competent and ethical social work practice. Social workers use rights-based, antiracist, and anti-oppressive lenses to understand and critique the profession's history, mission, roles, and responsibilities and recognize historical and current contexts of oppression in shaping institutions and social work. Social workers understand the role of other professionals when engaged in interprofessional practice. Social workers recognize the importance of lifelong learning and are committed to continually updating their skills to ensure relevant and effective practice. Social workers understand digital technology and the ethical use of technology in social work practice.

Social workers:

1.1. Make ethical decisions by applying the standards of the National Association of Social Workers Code of Ethics, relevant laws and regulations, models for ethical decision making, ethical conduct of research, and additional codes of ethics within the profession as appropriate to the context;
1.2. Demonstrate professional behavior; appearance; and oral, written, and electronic communication;

1.3. Use technology ethically and appropriately to facilitate practice outcomes; and
1.4. Use supervision and consultation to guide professional judgment and behavior.

Competency 2: Advance Human Rights and Social, Economic, and Environmental Justice
Social workers understand that every person regardless of position in society has fundamental human rights. Social workers are knowledgeable about the global intersecting and ongoing injustices throughout history that result in oppression and racism, including social work's role and response. Social workers critically evaluate the distribution of power and privilege in society in order to promote social, racial, economic, and environmental justice by reducing inequities and ensuring dignity and respect for all. Social workers advocate for and engage in strategies to eliminate oppressive structural barriers to ensure that social resources, rights, and responsibilities are distributed equitably and that civil, political, economic, social, and cultural human rights are protected.
Social workers:
2.1. Advocate for human rights at the individual, family, group, organizational, and community system levels; and
2.2. Engage in practices that advance human rights to promote social, racial, economic, and environmental justice.

Competency 3: Engage Anti-Racism, Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (ADEI) in Practice
Social workers understand how racism and oppression shape human experiences and how these two constructs influence practice at the individual, family, group, organizational, and community levels and in policy and research. Social workers understand the pervasive impact of White supremacy and privilege and use their knowledge, awareness, and skills to engage in anti-racist practice. Social workers understand how diversity and intersectionality shape human experiences and identity development and affect equity and inclusion. The dimensions of diversity are understood as the intersectionality of factors including but not limited to age, caste, class, color, culture, disability and ability, ethnicity, gender, gender identity and expression, generational status, immigration status, legal status, marital status, political ideology, race, nationality, religion and spirituality, sex, sexual orientation, and tribal sovereign status. Social workers understand that this intersectionality means that a person's life experiences may include oppression, poverty, marginalization, and alienation as well as privilege and power. Social workers understand the societal and historical roots of social and racial injustices and the forms and mechanisms of oppression and discrimination. Social workers understand cultural humility and recognize the extent to which a culture's structures and values, including social, economic, political, racial, technological, and cultural exclusions, may create privilege and power resulting in systemic oppression.
Social workers:
3.1 Demonstrate anti-racist and anti-oppressive social work practice at the individual, family, group, organizational, community, research, and policy levels; and

3.2 Demonstrate cultural humility by applying critical reflection, self-awareness, and self-regulation to manage the influence of bias, power, privilege, and values in working with clients and constituencies, acknowledging them as experts of their own lived experiences

Competency 4: Engage in Practice-informed Research and Research-informed Practice
Social workers use ethical, culturally informed, anti-racist, and anti-oppressive approaches in conducting research and building knowledge. Social workers use research to inform their practice decision making and articulate how their practice experience informs research and evaluation decisions. Social workers critically evaluate and critique current, empirically sound research to inform decisions pertaining to practice, policy, and programs. Social workers understand the inherent bias in research and evaluate design, analysis, and interpretation using an anti-racist and anti-oppressive perspective. Social workers know how to access, critique, and synthesize the current literature to develop appropriate research questions and hypotheses. Social workers demonstrate knowledge and skills regarding qualitative and quantitative research methods and analysis, and they interpret data derived from these methods. Social workers demonstrate knowledge about methods to assess reliability and validity in social work research. Social workers can articulate and share research findings in ways that are usable to a variety of clients and constituencies. Social workers understand the value of evidence derived from interprofessional and diverse research methods, approaches, and sources.
Social workers:
4.1 Apply research findings to inform and improve practice, policy, and programs; and

4.2 Identify ethical, culturally informed, anti-racist, and anti-oppressive strategies that address inherent biases for use in quantitative and qualitative research methods to advance the purposes of social work.

Competency 5: Engage in Policy Practice
Social workers identify social policy at the local, state, federal, and global level that affects wellbeing, human rights and justice, service delivery, and access to social services. Social workers recognize the historical, social, racial, cultural, economic, organizational, environmental, and global influences that affect social policy. Social workers understand and critique the history and current structures of social policies and services and the role of policy in service delivery through rights based, anti-oppressive, and anti-racist lenses. Social workers influence policy formulation, analysis, implementation, and evaluation within their practice settings with individuals, families, groups, organizations, and communities. Social workers actively engage in and advocate for anti-racist and anti-oppressive policy practice to effect change in those settings.
Social workers:
5.1 Use social justice, anti-racist, and anti-oppressive lenses to assess how social welfare policies affect the delivery of and access to social services; and

5.2 Apply critical thinking to analyze, formulate, and advocate for policies that advance human rights and social, racial, 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 person-in-environment, as well as interprofessional conceptual frameworks, to engage with clients and constituencies; and

6.2 Use empathy, reflection, and interpersonal skills to engage in culturally responsive practice with 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. Apply theories of human behavior and person-in-environment, as well as other culturally responsive and interprofessional conceptual frameworks, when assessing clients and constituencies; and

7.2. Demonstrate respect for client self-determination during the assessment process by collaborating with clients and constituencies in developing a mutually agreed-upon plan.

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. Engage with clients and constituencies to critically choose and implement culturally responsive, evidence-informed interventions to achieve client and constituency goals; and

8.2. Incorporate culturally responsive methods to negotiate, mediate, and advocate with and on behalf of clients and constituencies

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 culturally responsive methods for evaluation of outcomes; and

9.2. Critically analyze outcomes and apply evaluation findings to improve practice effectiveness with individuals, families, groups, organizations, and communities.

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 emphasis on values and ethics and diversity is the concern to identify populations that are at particular risk and to promote social, economic, and environmental 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. Emphasis is included in HBSE, Social Justice & Diversity, policy, and practice 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, 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.

Pre-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, and 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, safety preparedness, and a final exam.

Practicum Seminar
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 Practicum and Seminar are designed to help the students integrate the knowledge; values; skills; cognitive and affective processes 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 nine core competencies. 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 based on criteria by which students demonstrate the achievement of program objectives and professional competencies.

PRACTICUM OBJECTIVES

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

1. Demonstrate Ethical and Professional Behavior
2. Advance Human Rights and Social, Economic, and Environmental Justice
3. Engage Anti-Racism, Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (ADEI) in Practice
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.
In-person Contact: Interpersonal interactions with clients and constituencies, and may include the use of digital technologies such as Zoom, etc.
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/Faculty liaison: The WIU Social Work Program faculty member (MSW and 2 years post degree practice experience) 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:

Field education forms available to access include, but not limited to, the practicum application, special permission request, field setting preferences, practicum learning plan, statement of insurance coverage, statement of understanding, waiver and release of liability, student evaluation of practicum agency, time sheet and weekly log templates, agency and field instructor profiles, orientation checklist, and student graduation information.

PRACTICUM ELIGIBILITY

The Program does not admit students simultaneously into both the program and field education. Students are admitted to the Program first. Admission into field education occurs the semester before the Practicum when students are taking SW 440 (Pre-Practicum) course. Students in the Bachelor of Social Work Degree Program must complete a semester of Practicum, which requires a minimum of 450 hours (minimum of 15 weeks) of social work experience in an agency that adheres to social work values. 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. Consent of 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, including social work electives
2. Being within 20 credit hours of completion of degree requirements
3. Completion of Social Work Major Admission Progress
4. Senior standing
5. Completion of English 180; Biology 100; Psychology 100; Sociology 100 prior to Pre-practicum

6. **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 SW 440 without completion of the 100 hours prior to SW 440.**
7. Completion of the Practicum Application and all other requirements of SW 440: Pre-practicum including demonstrated readiness for professional agency behavior
8. Demonstrated readiness for professional agency behavior
    a. Completion of SW 440 requirements per due dates
    b. History of timeliness in completion of assignments in prior courses
        i. A Pre-Practicum Improvement Plan may be initiated, if necessary
    c. History of excellent class attendance, punctuality, and participation
        i. A Pre-Practicum Improvement Plan may be initiated, if necessary
    d. Demonstrated respect for peers and faculty and potential clients
        i. A Pre-Practicum Improvement Plan may be initiated, if necessary
    e. Registration for SW 480 must be completed before the end of SW 440, except in cases of 1.a) above. If a student has a hold on their account which prevents them from enrolling in the SW 480, they may not begin the practicum or start the seminar course until the hold is removed. This may result in the student having to delay the start of the practicum and thus hinder the student's attainment of degree.
    f. Completion of individual interview with Director of Field Education to discuss agency placement and preference, practicum approval criteria, professional behavior, and review resume and agency interview process.
    g. Students must successfully complete an evaluation of professional practice behaviors in SW 315 and SW 440 to continue enrollment in the Social Work degree program.
9. Completion of placement arrangements
    a. Timely agency interviews with three agencies
    b. Acceptance by an 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
    f. Practicum Agreement contract signed by appropriate personnel, including the student.
10. Consent of the Field Education Director

It is the student's responsibility to confirm with their academic advisor that they have met all the requirements for the practicum and for graduation. **Application for Social Work Practicum Part 1 form must be typed and completed prior to meeting with the Academic Advisor.** After confirming with their academic advisor that the student has met all of the academic requirements for practicum, students will arrange an individual appointment with the Field Director during the 6th week of the semester to ensure only students who have met the criteria are admitted into a field placement. Students will not be able to interview with three agencies until the initial meeting and consent of the Field Director to proceed with the interviews. Students will meet individually with the Field Director to review the practicum application and approval criteria for practicum, discuss agency settings and diverse client populations, and discuss student's professional behavior in the classroom. If a student is not demonstrating readiness for professional agency behavior based on professional classroom behavior at the time of the individual meeting with the Field Director, a pre-practicum improvement plan may be initiated by the Field Director to develop a professional behavior improvement action plan and resolution. If a pre-practicum improvement plan is initiated by the Field Director, a follow-

up meeting will occur between the student and the Field Director to determine if the student meets the professional approval criteria for practicum.

PLANNING FOR A PRACTICUM

Student Placement

Policy

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 work students and social service agencies that provide the field sites for the student practicum. Students complete a Pre-Practicum course the semester prior to practicum. The Pre-Practicum course highlights the skills necessary to interact with diverse populations in social work settings, develop professional skills, adhere to NASW ethical standards, and promote student safety in the field. Students are introduced to the social work practicum during the Application to the Social Work Major process. Students are responsible for selecting, contacting, and interviewing with three agencies within an 80-mile radius of Western Illinois University-Macomb campus. Students wishing to select, contact and interview with an agency beyond the 80-mile radius are required to complete the Special Permission Form and receive approval from the Field Education Director.

Procedure

The Program uses a block model for practicum and is completed over the course of one semester. The planning for a practicum begins the semester prior to a social work practicum. Students enroll in the Pre-Practicum course (SW 440) held the semester prior to Practicum. Students will make an appointment to meet with the academic advisor during Week 2 of the Pre-Practicum class. The student will complete the Practicum Application Form Part I and meet with the academic advisor who will review and sign the Practicum Application Form Part I. Students complete the Practicum Application Form Part II on their own. Students will submit both Part I and Part II on the assigned due date. During week six of the Pre-Practicum class, students make an appointment and meet with the Field Director to review possible agencies and locations as provided by the Director of Field Education. Students prepare Practicum application materials during the practicum agency selection process. Application material during the practicum selection process includes the Practicum Application, Statement of Understanding form, Verification of Insurance, and Professional Behavior form. After consultation with the Director of Field Education, and verification of students' meeting criteria to complete a practicum, students contact and complete interviews with at least three agencies. After the interviews are completed and the interview confirmation forms have been returned by the agencies, the Field Education Director meets with the individual student to discuss placement options based on the agency's practicum acceptance or denial. The individual student indicates to the Director of Field Education their preferences based on practicum locations placement approval. If a student is not approved by one of the three agencies, the agency selection process begins again. Thid process includes meeting with the Field Director to discuss alternative options. The student selects and interviews with additional agencies. After a student is accepted by an agency, the student completes the practicum agreement which is also signed by the Director of Field Education, the agency field instructor, and appropriate Western Illinois University Administrators.

Criteria: In the Site Placement Selection

Every effort is made to consider each student's preferences in the 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 **academic 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, safety issues, 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 and Program's responsibility to ascertain the agency's field instructor's credentials for supervision.
6. After the interviews are completed and interview 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, drug screens, 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. **An agency has the right to accept or refuse a student for social work practicum.**

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. Students are required to complete additional paperwork per CSWE guidelines.
2. Request for agency placement outside of approved geographic area. **Students are to complete a social work practicum within an 80-mile radius of Western Illinois University-Macomb campus**

3. Request approval of new agency not currently included on approved agency list. If special permission for a new agency is requested by a student, the student requesting the approval will be the only person who will interview at the agency.

Special permission requests should be submitted to the Director of Field Education on a Special Permission Request form which is located on Western Online. 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 Social Work Program Coordinator approval in addition to approval by the Director of Field Education.

PRACTICUM COMPLETION 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. **A practicum week is defined as no less than three practicum days during a calendar week, unless prior arrangements have been made with the Field Director**. Students completing a fall practicum may not begin their practicum prior to the start of the fall semester classes and may not terminate placement more than one week before the end of the semester. Students may not begin practicum more than one week prior to the beginning of the spring 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, engaging in agency activities which support interpersonal interaction and/or in agency activities assigned by the agency field instructor, including digital technology. In-person contact with clients and constituencies is defined on page 16. 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. To promote self-care, students are expected to take a lunch break at the agency.
    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/liaison 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's 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 their faculty liaison 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. Based on the CSWE Core Competencies, 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, during field instructor supervision, and at times of performance evaluations.
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 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, community involvement, and students' personal/professional growth.
    b. Agency project
    c. 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.

PRACTICUM RESPONSIBILITIES OF THE STUDENT

In the Site Placement Selection Process

Every effort is made to consider each student's preferences in the 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 academic 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, safety issues, 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. **An agency has the right to accept or refuse a student for social work practicum.**
7. Placement will be finalized only after the Director of Field Education has completed contact with an agency, has reviewed the practicum agreement with appropriate signatures, 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, drug screens, 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/faculty 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/faculty liaison.
10. Students are responsible for carrying out all assignments during their Practicum.
11. Students are responsible for contacting the Faculty Liaison/Director of Field Education about 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.

SELECTION OF PRACTICUM AGENCIES AND AGENCY FIELD INSTRUCTORS

AGENCY/FIELD INSTRUCTOR

Policy
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 (in-person or virtually) 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.

Procedure
The Director of Field Education actively explores the selection of new field settings through networking opportunities, communication from the Program's BSW Advisory Committee, Program's Field Education Committee, and social work students. The Director of Field Education conducts site visit approval visits (in person or virtually) for all first-time placements and for sites with significant changes in supervision prior to confirmation of student placement. During the site visit, the Director reviews the criteria with the agency and documents on a Site Approval documentation form whether

the agency is meeting the agency qualifications criteria (listed below). The Director documents on the form if the agency was approved. If an agency is approved, it is added to the agency approval list which students use to locate a practicum placement.

Agency Field Instructor Qualifications Procedure

The agency designates the professional who will serve as field instructor for the student intern. Field instructors for baccalaureate students hold a baccalaureate or master's degree in social work from a CSWE-accredited program and have 2 years post social work degree practice experience in social work. This designation is determined during the agency interview with the student and submitted on the agency interview form or submitted at confirmation of agency placement. 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 they supervise a practicum student. The Form includes documentation by field instructor of credentials and practice competence.

Criteria for Agency Qualifications

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 Agency 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/workspace, 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.
9. Agency commitment to student safety during practicum hours

If a new agency is interested in accepting a social work student in the WIU Social Work Program, the Field Education Director completes a new agency site visit to discuss the WIU Social Work Program's mission, values, and provide an overview of agency/field instructor/field education expectations. The field education director completes a site visit interview with the agency to determine practicum eligibility based on agency qualifications and agency field instructor criteria. The field director reviews the information obtained at the interview with the Social Work Program Coordinator to determine agency's approval/non-approval. The agency is notified by the field director of the program's decision.

Criteria for Selecting Agency Field Instructors

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 with 2 years post social work practice experience.)
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 field instructor profile form, 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 faculty liaison.
8. Attendance at field instructor education sessions/trainings (in-person or virtual)

If such a person is not employed by the agency, arrangements may be made with the Social Work Program to provide this educational component on a regular basis.

FIELD INSTRUCTION ORIENTATION/TRAINING AND ONGOING DIALOG

Orientation:
The purpose of the orientation is to educate agency field instructors about the policies and procedures of the practicum, and also to provide an overview of social work education, with examples and emphasis on the WIU BSW program. Orientation for agency field instructors are held at virtually designated times throughout the academic year. All agency field instructors are invited to attend, but is required for new agency field instructors. An online webinar or one-on-one training is provided to agency field instructors not able to attend the virtual new field instructor orientation.

Orientation topics 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 that could arise with student supervision. An additional training addressing the learning plan process is also provided to new field instructors at least twice a year.

Additional Training:
Trainings for agency field instructors are held virtually at designated times throughout the academic year. All agency field instructors accepting a student are required to attend. This includes a Learning Plan Workshop. An online webinar or one-on-one training is provided to agency field instructors not able to attend the Zoom training. The purpose of trainings is to educate agency field instructors about the Learning Plan purpose, process and provide sample activities to assist agency field instructors and students. The Learning Plan training occurs in the Pre-Practicum course at the end of each semester.

Continuing Dialogue with Field Settings and Field Instructors:
Ongoing dialogue with field instructors is provided through the field education committee, continuing education workshops, the programs field education website, the practicum placement process, e-mail communication, site visits, and telephone contact. Field setting appropriate staff and

field instructors are encouraged to initiate dialogue with the faculty liaison and/or Field Education Director when needed.

Role of 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 Chair. 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.

MONITORING OF PRACTICUM STUDENTS

Policy

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 Program will provide ongoing education and monitoring of students' performances. This includes the faculty liaison's responsibility to monitor the student's placement. Monitoring of practicum students includes responsibilities of the Program, Field Education Director, Faculty Liaison, practicum agency, and agency field instructor.

Procedures

Students are monitored through the practicum seminar class by addressing the agency report questions, and discussing learning activities shared by students. The faculty liaison continues to monitor students' placements by reading each student's weekly log to review what students are learning each day, documentation of required supervision, and assess potential issues student are including in their weekly logs. The faculty liaisons (which includes the Field Education Director) will complete one in-person site visit during the semester to monitor the student's progress at the practicum agency. If an agency is outside or in the 80-mile geographical area or if requested by the agency, the site visit will be held by Zoom. Faculty liaisons will also monitor the practicum at midterm by reviewing the student's midterm evaluation. If the faculty liaison is concerned about the student's progress based on the midterm evaluation, they will contact the field instructor to clarify and address concerns. Students receiving supplemental social work supervision by their faculty liaison are monitored through one-on-one interactions during the practicum. A faculty liaison is required to co-sign the midterm and final evaluation per CSWE guidelines.

Criteria: Responsibilities of the WIU Social Work Program

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 social work faculty member of the Western Illinois University School of who works in collaboration with the BSW 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 program.
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 seminar instructors/liaisons to proper agencies and coordinating and supporting faculty liaison activities.
10. Maintaining field practicum records.
11. Planning innovations, as appropriate, 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.
14. Serve as Seminar Instructor/Faculty liaison each semester.
15. Review CSWE Field Education Accreditation Standards to ensure continuing practicum compliance

Seminar Instructor/Faculty Liaison

Seminar Instructor/Faculty 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. 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-person site visit meetings will be arranged with agencies within an 80-mile radius of WIU. Digital technology (i.e., Zoom) will be utilized for site visit meetings at agencies outside of the 80-mile radius, unless an in-person meeting is warranted due to extenuating circumstances or requested by student

and/or field instructor. In addition, the Faculty liaison is responsible for maintaining ongoing contacts with the agency field instructor to monitor a student's placement.

3. Consulting with the agency field instructor in developing learning goals and objectives.
4. Facilitating special student learning or performance problems.
5. Obtaining, reviewing, and co-signing 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 Program'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 AND FIELD INSTRUCTOR

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 experience and to be willing to provide 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/training, and submitting 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 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; values; skills; cognitive and affective processes.
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, and/or the Faculty liaison of safety issues.
18. Serve as a role model for ethical and competent social work practice.
19. Meet with the Faculty liaison at least once during the semester to discuss the student's progress, and more often if needed.
20. Complete an online evaluation of the field education program and the Faculty liaison.

EVALUATION

Evaluation of Student Learning

Agency Evaluation of the Student

Policies

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.

Procedures

The practicum student learning congruent with the social work competencies occurs at the semester midterm and at the end of the semester. During the 6th week of the practicum semester, the Director of Field Education emails each field instructor a link for the midterm evaluation form. The Director also notifies the field instructors of the date the midterm evaluation is due to be completed. This standardized form mirrors the Learning Plan which includes the nine core competencies, behaviors and students' learning activities to demonstrate the students' level of competency. The field instructor completes each area using a scale of 1-5 with 1 demonstrating a lack of performance; 2 inadequate performance; 3 competent performance; 4 superior performance and 5 mastered performance. Field instructors may also include comments in each Core Competency section. Field instructors meet with their individual student(s) to discuss and review the evaluation. Students are encouraged to verbally comment on each Core Competency evaluation with their field instructor. The field instructor and student sign the evaluation instrument to acknowledge a review of the

evaluation. A digital copy of the evaluation as well as a hard copy are kept for documentation purposes. If appropriate, the faculty liaison will co-sign the evaluation form as the social work supervisor. This process is repeated at the end of the semester. During the 13th week of the semester, the Director of Field Education emails each field instructor a link for the final evaluation form. The Director also notifies the field instructors of the date the final evaluation is due to be completed.

Field instructors also meet with their student(s) during their regular supervisory meeting. Students are encouraged, and given instruction in Pre-Practicum class, to ask the field instructor "What am I doing well this week?" and "What are opportunities to improve?"

EPAS Competency Criteria

Throughout the student's learning at the practicum agency, students are evaluated using the CSWE Nine Core Competencies and the Core Competency behaviors. Students are evaluated on a five-point scale as a measure of demonstrating competence at the midterm and final agency evaluations. Students are expected to show minimal competent performance at the end of the semester evaluation with a score of at least a three with each Core Competency/behavior. Students are also expected to complete all required Practicum Seminar assignments/coursework with a C or better. The final grade received is awarded by the faculty liaison. It is the faculty liaison's discretion to make a recommendation for a grade based on the agency's experience and seminar course.

If a field instructor does not meet the credentials and experience (BSW/MSW with 2 years post social work practice experience), the faculty liaison who does meet the credentials and practice experience to reinforce the social work perspective is included in the student learning assessment.

Evaluation of the Agency

Policies

To assess field setting effectiveness, each student evaluates his or her placement experience at the end of the practicum semester using the student evaluation of the agency form which is accessible on the social work website. Each faculty liaison also evaluates their assigned agency at the end of the semester. The information is evaluated by the Field Director to assess agencies' strengths and opportunities for improvement.

Procedures

At the end of the practicum semester, each student evaluates his or her placement experience using the Student Evaluation of the Agency forms, which is located on Western Online. One of the forms is shared with the Agency at the end of the semester and the other form is not shared to provide the student with another mechanism to share additional thoughts about the agency. The Field Education Director reviews the Student Evaluation of the Agency forms and mails a copy of the shared form to the agency field instructor.

To assess field setting effectiveness, faculty liaisons also evaluate each assigned agency at the end of the semester. This information is evaluated to assess placement strengths and opportunities for improvement. The Director of Field Education reviews the evaluation and verbally discusses with the faculty liaison any negative evaluations. The Field Director reviews the students and faculty liaisons evaluations to consider opportunity to improve trends. Based on the evaluations, the Field Director

will discuss a need for additional field instructor training or remove the agency based on not meeting the responsibilities of agency/field instructor.

Criteria
Based on the faculty liaison's communication and observation throughout a student's practicum, the faculty liaison completes an evaluation form which includes their assigned students' agencies. The faculty liaison uses this form to objectively assess the agency's field effectiveness. The form includes specific criteria which the faculty liaison evaluates. This includes the field instructor has a social work degree and practice experience, field instructor participates in Program orientation/training, communicates with faculty liaison, includes integration of social work theory/perspective, work support for student (i.e., workspace, appropriate technology) oversees student assignment to other staff, supports variety of learning experience for student and meets weekly for supervisory sessions. The faculty liaison rates each field instructor on a scale of 1-5 with one is not well provided, three fairly provided and five superbly provided. The minimal compliance is an overall three for each agency. Communication and observation occur during the practicum site visit, ongoing e-mail check-ins regarding students' progress, reading students' weekly logs to determine any field issues based on a students' log discussion and verbal conversations with students, as appropriate.

Evaluation of the Social Work Program
At the end of the practicum semester, each student evaluates the Social Work Program using the SWEAP instrument. 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.

ADDITIONAL POLICIES AND PROCEDURES FOR FIELD PRACTICUM

Plan for Supplementary Social Work Supervision
If 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 with 2 years post social work practice experience, the WIU program will provide supplementary social work supervision. This option is only possible for agencies in Macomb or current approved agencies. Supplementary social work supervision will be provided according to the following general plan:

1. The faculty liaison will meet regularly with the student before seminar class in addition to the field seminar. Additional supplemental supervision will be at the request of the student or faculty liaison.
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, the Nine Core Competencies, and the Learning Plan practice activities 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
        i. From classroom to field
        ii. Orienting to the agency
        iii. Supervisory expectations
        iv. Discussion of Learning Plan & Core Competencies 1 & 2 struggles/successes/additional activities
    b. Session 2: Person-in-environment assessment
        i. Discussion of person-in-environment perspective
        ii. Presenting the social work component in agency client/staff interaction
        iii. Assessing the client from a social work perspective
        iv. Discussion of Learning Plan & Core Competencies 3-4 struggles/successes/additional activities
    c. Session 3: Client self-determination/Conflicting professional perspectives
        i. Applying principles of self-determination in a case situation
        ii. Identifying potential risks when supporting the client's choices
        iii. Dealing with personal feelings and conflicts in values
        iv. Reviewing/applying principles that represent the social work perspective
        v. Exploring the priorities/perspectives of other disciplines
        vi. Developing strategies that deal constructively with conflict and differing agendas, keeping the client's interest at the forefront
        vii. Discussion of Learning Plan & Core Competencies 5 & 6 struggles/successes/additional activities
    d. Session 4: Confidentiality and the right to privacy
        i. Applying ethical and legal standards in a case situation
        ii. Consideration of agency policies versus the client's rights
        iii. Sorting out "need to know" information regarding communication and documentation
        iv. Discussion of Learning Plan & Core Competency 7-8 struggles/successes/additional activities
    e. Session 5: Micro-Mezzo-Macro intervention
        i. Defining micro, mezzo, and macro interventions, and developing/evaluating a social work intervention plan according to generalist social work principles
        ii. Prioritizing intervention strategies for maximum effectiveness
        iii. Identify relevant micro, mezzo and macro interventions– resources and gaps
        iv. Identify systems
        v. Learning Plan & Core Competency 9-struggles/successes/additional activities
    f. Session 6: Professional boundaries
        i. Identifying aspects of case situation that have potential for boundary risks
        ii. Identifying personal issues that put student at risk for boundary slips
        iii. Developing personal guidelines to protect student and client
        iv. Learning Plan Review-all competencies
    g. Session 7: Termination
        i. Exploring the student's readiness of the client for termination
        ii. Assessing the meaning of termination for the client and developing an appropriate termination process

iii. Exploring the student's feelings about termination and the importance of self-awareness in handling termination with the client
iv. Learning Plan Review-all competencies

h. Session 8: Personal and Professional Growth from a social work perspective
i. The professional social worker
ii. Professional development
iii. Self-reflection on agency practice experiences and Learning Plan activities
iv. The importance of self-care

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. Student field assignments and employment tasks may be the same and counted toward required field hours if the tasks have clear links to the social work competencies. 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 the 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 or as appropriate. The practicum plan and application of hours must be approved by the Director of Field Education. Per the CSWE 2022 interpretative guide, the field instructor and employment supervisor of a student may be the same person. In such cases, supervision time for field education learning must be separate from supervision time for employment. 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 if 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. **A BSW paid practicum is rare in a social service agency.**

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 Social Work Program Coordinator 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 ProgramDep to share such information may not be admitted to a 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 sexually assaulted, 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 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 of any convictions.

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 and students will have direct contact with family members.

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.

Interruption of Practicum Due to Extraordinary Events
In the event of natural or human events such as: natural disasters, public health emergencies, or other risks to public safety which may impact a student's practicum, the Director of Field Education may authorize students to engage in learning activities in line with social work core competencies offsite from organizations under the supervision of field instructors and faculty liaisons. Remote learning/digital technology activities are meant to be time limited. Students are responsible for immediately notifying field instructors, and faculty liaison via email or telephone call if they are ill, quarantined, or otherwise unable to report to practicum. Field instructors are responsible for

notifying the student's faculty liaison if the agency is closing or the field instructor will be unavailable. Faculty liaisons should coordinate with field instructors on planned activities including plans for telephone or video conference supervision. The Field Education Director will monitor communication from CSWE regarding accreditation modifications to field education and report changes to faculty liaisons/field instructors during the practicum semester.

Student Safety and Liability

Policy

Social work practicum involves risks to personal safety. Risks may include, but not limited to, exposure to infectious diseases, aggressive or combative individuals, and verbal and or physical assault. 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 risk to personal safety 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. Prior to or at the beginning of the practicum, the field instructor should inform the student of any known risks or potential hazards. At no time should a student knowingly expose them self to bodily injury, harm or health risks. In addition, no field instructor or agency representative should assign a student to a function where a known 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 their faculty liaison regarding any safety issues. It is imperative that students discuss safety protocols and attend discussions about safety in class and in practicum. Students must always follow the safety protocols of the agency, and act to minimize risks to personal safety.

Personal safety includes infectious disease exposure. Students and field instructors are responsible for the practicum agency policies regarding safety measures to reduce the risk of infectious disease exposure at the agency. Students are also responsible for adhering to agency and University policies.

Procedures

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. During the Pre-Practicum course, 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. Once placement is confirmed, 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. Safety at the agency is discussed at the practicum site visit which usually occurs mid-semester, and during a Practicum Seminar session.

Criteria

Student safety is specifically discussed during one Pre-Practicum class period and incorporated in a graded safety assignment in the Pre-Practicum course. The Pre-Practicum final exam also includes at least one question about safety. The agency field instructor will inform the student of any known safety risks or concerns before and throughout the practicum. 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. A student may also contact their field instructor regarding any safety issues. It is imperative that students discuss safety protocols and

attend discussions about safety in class and in practicum. Students must follow the safety protocols of the agency and act to minimize risks to personal safety.

Most agencies will require background checks, including drug screens, prior to placement, and some may require that the student hold liability insurance. The University includes practicum students under its SURMA Self-Insurance Program up to $1,000,000 per occurrence within the scope of the practicum. Applications for NASW membership and student liability insurance are made available and students are encouraged to apply, but is not required.

Background Checks

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 Western Online if financial assistance is needed. Some agencies also request 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 to 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 by the agency. **Students are not allowed to transport clients at any time while completing the practicum.** Students may accompany an agency employee when the employee is transporting a client as outlined in the practicum/agency policies.

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 to sign additional transportation liability forms per agency policy. It is the student's responsibility to discuss travel issues with the agency prior to placement.

Special Requirements

Some agencies will require TB testing or other testing options (i.e., Covid-19 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 if they become a Licensed Social Workers (LSW) in Illinois. The requirements include: 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. Students can also review the Illinois NASW website at https://www.naswil.org/professional-development

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. If the situation is not resolved at the field instructor level, discuss the problem and attempt to resolve it next at the agency level with the Seminar Instructor/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/faculty liaison may consult with the Director of Field Education. The Director of Field Education may communicate with the Social Work Program Coordinator 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 their 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/faculty liaison 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 an 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/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 and/or oral communication
3. Lack of professional behavior in the use of technology (i.e., personal cellphones, social media)
4. Failure to prioritize duties, responsibilities, and complete assignments
5. Lack of satisfactory progress in completing the learning plan
6. Attendance issues and/or arriving late to practicum on a regular basis
7. Failure to communicate with the field instructor

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

1. The seminar instructor/faculty liaison and student meet to discuss the problem. The student may include the Social Work Program Coordinator (and/or Field Education Director) if the matter is delicate.
2. The seminar instructor/faculty liaison, student, and agency field instructor discuss the problem and explore alternative solutions. The Practicum Improvement Plan form is implemented if it is a performance issue. 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/or seminar instructor/faculty liaison in consultation with the Director of Field Education.
3. The student, seminar instructor/faculty 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 another agency.
4. The seminar instructor/faculty 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 Faculty 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, practice skills, cognitive skills, affective skills and values of the social work profession. Any student who does not receive a grade of C or higher 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 student may need to seek alternative agency placement if not approved by a previous practicum agency. The Director of Field Education and the seminar instructor/faculty liaison must concur that the student has the potential to be successful in a second placement for the request to be approved.

If the seminar instructor/faculty liaison, the Director of Field Education and Social Work Program Coordinator 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 accepted NASW 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 faculty liaison pursues all reasonable problem-solving efforts with the student and agency field instructor. The Faculty Liaison reports the situation to the Field Education Director.
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 Field Education Director communicates with the BSW Program Coordinator and reports on the problem-solving efforts. Additional consultations may be obtained during the procedure. The BSW Program Coordinator and Field Education Director meet with the

student. The BSW Program Coordinator and Field Education Director concur with the decision to terminate the student.

4. The BSW program faculty will meet as a review committee and must concur with the decision to terminate the student.
5. The Director of Field Education and BSW Program Coordinator will meet with the student and present the faculty decision, in writing from the Social Work Program Coordinator, to terminate the student.
6. 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.
7. The Director of Field Education will notify the agency in writing that the student's practicum has been terminated.
8. The student may follow the Social Work Program's grievance procedures if they wish 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 Social Work Program Coordinator 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. The student may submit in writing to the Social Work Program Coordinator a request for review by the entire social work faculty with his/her reasons for the appeal.

Grievances regarding discrimination or harassment issues may be made through the social work program grievance procedures by contacting the Social Work Program Coordinator, 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.

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.

Incomplete Grade Policy

The Social Work Program follows the University policy regarding an incomplete grade. Students can access this policy at http://www.wiu.edu/policies/incomplete.php. It is the students' responsibility to be aware of this policy and understand that receiving an incomplete in practicum may affect their graduation date and new agency placement for the following practicum semester. There is no guarantee a student with an incomplete may continue with the initial practicum agency. It is also the student's responsibility to be aware the faculty liaison may change based on the semester of the incomplete grade. If an incomplete grade is assigned, the student, faculty liaison, and field education

director must collaborate on a plan to complete the required internship hours and weeks during the next practicum semester (Fall Semester or Spring Semester). This plan will be documented in a Practicum Improvement plan. Failure to initiate or comply with these steps will result in a failing grade which is grounds for dismissal from the BSW Program.

Students with disabilities that require special accommodation 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/

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. 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.

Anti-Harassment Policy

The Social Work Program follows University policy in prohibiting any form of 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 at Sherman Hall 203, telephone 309/298-1977.

Military Service Policy

As a military-friendly institution, and in accordance with federal regulations and Illinois statutes, Western Illinois University has established policies and procedures to accommodate military service students. In addition to the supports available at WIU's Veterans Resource Center (http://www.wiu.edu/student_success/veterans / 309-298-3505), veterans, members of the National Guard or Reserves, and active-duty military with military obligations (e.g., deployments, trainings, drill) are encouraged to communicate these, in advance whenever possible, to the instructor. The Military Service Policy can be found at https://www.wiu.edu/policies/military.php

STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES

Students with disabilities: In accordance with University values and disability law, students with disabilities may request academic accommodations where there are aspects of a course that result in barriers to inclusion or accurate assessment of achievement. To file an official request for disability-related accommodations, please contact Disability Resources in the Student Development and Success Center at 309-298-1884, disability@wiu.edu, or in 125 Memorial Hall. Please notify the instructor as soon as possible to ensure that this course is accessible to you in a timely manner

REFERENCES

National Association of Social Workers (NASW) (2021). Code of Ethics https://www.socialworkers.org/About/Ethics/Code-of-Ethics/Code-of-Ethics-English (The NASW Code of Ethics is also available in Spanish)

Council on Social Work Education (CSWE): 2022 Educational Policy and Accreditation Standards (EPAS) https://www.cswe.org/getmedia/bb5d8afe-7680-42dc-a332-a6e6103f4998/2022-EPAS.pdf