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School of Social Work
Renison University College
Affiliated with the
University of Waterloo

Master of Social Work
Practicum Manual

2023-2024

Please read this manual in its entirety. It contains valuable information that can be of great assistance to you as you move through the program and field education. We regularly review our program information and update the MSW Student Handbook and MSW Practicum Manual annually. Please remember, the [School of Social Work website](#) will always have your most up-to-date information moving forward. It is your responsibility as a student to meet all the requirements and due dates for your program.

We hope you have an enjoyable and meaningful MSW experience!

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TERRITORIAL ACKNOWLEDGMENT

The School of Social Work acknowledges with gratitude that our work is on the traditional territory of the Anishinaabeg, Hodinohsyó:ni, and Attawandaran (Neutral) Peoples. Renison University College and the University of Waterloo are situated on the Haldimand Tract, the land granted to the Six Nations that includes ten kilometers on each side of the Grand River from mouth to source. Our active work toward reconciliation takes place in all corners of our campus through research, learning, teaching, community building and outreach. We are guided by the work of our Reconciliation and Re-storying Steering Committee and Anti-Racism and Decolonization SpokesCouncil, as well as the [University of Waterloo's Office of Indigenous Relations](#).

[We encourage you to reflect on the truth about colonial oppression and your reconciliation commitment. Explore the land you live on through these sites: <https://www.whose.land/en/> and <https://native-land.ca/>]

INTRODUCTION

Social work is both the art and the science of providing professional interventions to improve individual, family, group, and community well-being. The Social Work profession has a long tradition of working with a strong 'person in environment' orientation and demonstrating an understanding of how the social, cultural, political, and economic aspects of the lives of individuals, families and communities intersect with mental, emotional, spiritual, and physical health. This focus is essential to the transformation of our fragmented health care system and perspectives into a more integrated, inclusive, and holistic understanding of health and well-being.

Social workers have key roles in supporting individuals, families, organizations, and communities adapt to and overcome challenges associated with physical and mental wellbeing. As members of inter-professional health teams, social workers also seek to assist in understanding the social determinants of health and enhance individual and collective well-being. Social workers endeavor to facilitate growth and change processes to support individuals and communities with varying needs, abilities and possibilities for their health and well-being.

Mission of the School of Social Work

The School of Social Work prepares social work practitioners through an accessible and inclusive curriculum, at both baccalaureate and masters levels, in a learning environment that fosters caring and ethical social work practice within a local and global context. The School is committed to positive social change through the principles of justice, equity, and respect for diversity.

MSW Statement of Educational Philosophy

The Master of Social Work program offered through the School of Social Work at Renison University College, University of Waterloo, provides students with knowledge and skills in advanced social work practice within a focus on health, research/scholarship, professional leadership, and social work supervision. This degree program is delivered primarily online, allowing students to continue to work and participate in family and community life while pursuing a post-graduate degree in social work. The MSW program offers a rich and highly interactive learning environment.

MSW Program Learning Outcomes

- Explain and demonstrate advanced critical understanding of diverse theoretical frameworks and worldviews on health in a variety of health-focused practice contexts.
- Apply an understanding of the social and structural determinants of health, including colonialism, in relation to individual, community, and global well-being.
- Explain and demonstrate advanced critical understanding of the colonial roots of health disparities and inequities for Indigenous Peoples and communities.
- Exhibit advanced knowledge and skills for a value-based and holistic critical social work practice through a range of methods and approaches.
- Integrate theory with practice in health-related professional settings and demonstrate advanced proficiency in this integration.
- Convey advanced knowledge of the Social Work Code of Ethics and principles of practice, including their limitations with respect to anti-oppressive and anti-racist approaches to practice.
- Demonstrate advanced understanding of socially-just, ethically, and culturally accountable social work.
- Exemplify values of equity, inclusion, diversity, accessibility, and social justice.
- Exhibit ability to form, maintain, repair, and end relationships, recognizing and respecting diverse knowledges, perspectives, and lived experiences.
- Engage in action-oriented critical reflection, communication and interpersonal skills needed for discussions and action about colonization, racism, anti-Black racism, anti-Indigenous racism, homophobia, transphobia, ableism, sanism, ageism, and classism, among other forms of discrimination.
- Identify social work's unique commitment in interprofessional health settings to address structural sources of injustice and inequity as they relate to health and health services access.
- Display the capacity for professional leadership and development in health-related social work practice, including social imagination, creative, innovative, alternative, unique responses to practice contexts and issues.
- Demonstrate critical research skills, including knowledge synthesis and mobilization and the ability to apply research to social work practice.

Purpose of the Master of Social Work Practicum Manual

The purpose of the Master of Social Work Practicum Manual is to provide an overview of field education and guidelines for the school, students, Agency Field Instructors, and other partners. The Manual details the policies & procedures governing field education at the graduate level, including the process for setting up a placement; the expectations of the partners in the placement process; guidance on the development of the Learning Contract and Student Evaluation. The primary contact person for the School of Social Work Field Education team is your Field Education Coordinator.

FIELD EDUCATION: PRACTICUM AND INTEGRATION SEMINAR

Purpose

Field education is considered a central component of social work education that facilitates students' integration of theory and practice in the context of field practicum and integration seminar. The purpose of this degree requirement is to provide advanced level opportunities for development, integration, and strengthening of students' abilities through social work practice in a health-related setting. A key goal of the MSW program is to foster the acquisition of knowledge,

values, and skills relevant to the profession and inter-professional collaboration. Field education strengthens the connection between the theoretical/conceptual contributions of the academic setting and the practice context while enabling the student to acquire social work practice skills that reflect the core learning objectives identified in the standards for accreditation.

The field education program consists of one Practicum and a Master's Integration Seminar. The online integration seminar must be completed concurrently with the Practicum. The integration seminar is a component in the Master's Integration Seminar and Capstone program milestone. The capstone component which includes a creative and summative project to reflect the student's overall MSW journey is completed at the student's final term with the program. The Practicum and Master's Integration Seminar and Capstone milestones are required components of the program that must be passed to satisfy degree requirements. Full time students are expected to start their Practicum and Integration Seminar in September, during the fall term. New part time students are encouraged to start in the winter term of their first year and are expected to begin their practicum no later than January of their graduating year.

Field Learning Objectives

For their practicum, students are assigned a community-based, health-related field practicum in an approved agency or organization. It is expected that the student will:

- demonstrate a growing capacity for professional development and critical reflection of their own practice;
- develop and demonstrate a meaningful relationship with the field setting and be willing to be open and constructively critical of social service conditions affecting clients, including both an understanding of policies and procedures and an ability to use these policies and procedures as well as the physical and human resources to benefit clients;
- demonstrate an ability to apply field instruction effectively towards the advancement of their practice knowledge and skills;
- demonstrate an ability to identify and describe groups socially located to experience greater marginalizations;
- organize and interpret information/data for assessment and prepare and execute an advanced plan for treatment and/or action including working with clients to develop short and long-term goals as well as strategies.

Carried out concurrently with practicum, during the Integration Seminar, it is expected that students will demonstrate through discussions and assignments that they understand and have a commitment to the social work profession and its fundamental values such as respect for human dignity and personal worth, pursuit of social justice, service to humanity and integrity in professional practice. Students will use real life examples from the practicum placement to demonstrate an advanced understanding of the link between theory and practice that promotes excellence in social work education, scholarship, and social justice practice which are applicable to individuals, families, groups, communities, and organizations.

The Practicum

Students spend 462 hours in practicum and receive supervision from an agency-based supervisor qualified at the MSW level. Students are expected to attend the practicum a minimum of two consecutive 7-hour days per week, excluding lunchtime, to reach the requirement of 462 practicum hours. Full-time students are expected to complete their practicum two or three days per week in addition to their full-time MSW course load. Part-time students may opt to complete their practicum two, three, four or five (7-hour) days per week on a continual basis. A minimum of one hour per two practicum days (14 hours) of educational supervision is required from the agency-based Field Instructor.

The location of the practicum is determined through consultation and agreement among the student, the Field Education Coordinator, and the agency. Students are expected to proceed with their placement commitment upon acceptance, confirmation and approval of practicum offered

by a placement agency. **The Field Education Coordinator is responsible for approving all practicums.** Students can normally expect to undertake their field practicum in their own community or region, subject to the availability of suitable practicum agencies and supervisors. The student must successfully complete the practicum to meet the milestone degree requirement.

Relationship between the Practicum and the Integration Seminar

The Integration Seminar runs concurrently with the Practicum. All students participate in the seminar using the online platform LEARN upon approval of their Practicum. The seminar is a component in the Master's Integration Seminar and Capstone course led by the Master's Seminar Instructor. The seminar will focus on select topics pertaining to practice in accordance with the Canadian Association for Social Work Education's (CASWE) core learning objectives.

The Integration Seminar is intended to provide an opportunity for self-reflection and group discussion of issues encountered by students in the field practicum. The seminar takes place online and participation is required while the student is in practicum. A student must successfully complete the Master's Integration Seminar and Capstone to meet the milestone degree requirement.

The Integration Seminar recognizes the established professional capabilities of the students and serve various functions including:

- Provide a place wherein theory and knowledge gained through the curriculum can be further analyzed and integrated within a practice framework.
- Encourage students to reflect upon past practice experiences as further touchstones of relevance.
- An important aspect of the seminar experience is the collegial bond generated among students as they share their insights, resources, and dilemmas with each other.
- As the field experience is a unique one within the MSW degree, the Integration Seminar is a critical source of social work practice dialogue and challenge.

THE FIELD TEAM APPROACH

Key People in the Field Education Program

The practicum is based upon the collaboration of the student, Field Instructor, Field Agency, Field Education Coordinator, and the Master's Seminar Instructor in the teaching and evaluation of the student's field education experience. The Field Instructors, who are social work practitioners in community settings, facilitate students' learning through field instruction, supervision, support, and mentorship. The Field Education Coordinator assists students in negotiating potential practicums, approves practicums and, in the role of liaison between placement agency and school, facilitates students' learning through support of both student and Field Instructor. The Master's Seminar Instructor facilitates students' learning through the linking of theory to practice in the Integration Seminar.

The Field Team

Each student has a field team comprised of the following members:

- The Student
- The Field Instructor (Master's level social worker or equivalent)
- The Field Education Coordinator
- The Master's Seminar Instructor
- MSW Program Manager

Responsibilities of Each Member of the Field Team

The **Practicum Student** is responsible for completing:

Administrative tasks related to the practicum:

- Read the MSW Student Handbook, the MSW Practicum Manual and the Intern Placement Tracking (IPT) Manual to become familiar with all policies and procedures of the School of Social Work
- Read and understand the CASW Code of Ethics (2005) and Guidelines for Ethical Practice
- Participate fully in the field practicum set up and selection process
- Complete all documentation required for the practicum
- Organize and schedule learning discussions and evaluation meetings with the Field Instructor and/or Field Education Coordinator
- Complete the hours required in the practicum
- Notify the Field Instructor and Field Education Coordinator as soon as possible of any major changes in the practicum, any safety concerns, any injury, or accident occurring during the practicum

Learning and practising professional social work

- Prepare and revise the Learning Contract in consultation with the Field Instructor and Field Education Coordinator
- Participate in learning opportunities made available in the practicum
- Successfully perform the tasks and duties associated with completion of identified learning objectives
- Prepare for and actively participate in the Master's Integration Seminar
- Apply social work values in practice and adhere to CASW Code of Ethics (2005) and Guidelines for Ethical Practice

Evaluation Tasks

- Prepare for and actively participate in supervision with the Field Instructor
- Contact the Field Education Coordinator with any concerns regarding progress in the practicum
- Prepare for and actively participate in the mid-practicum & final evaluation processes
- Complete the evaluation of the field placement and overall field education experience

The **Field Instructor** is responsible for completing:

Administrative Tasks related to the practicum:

- Become familiar with policies, procedures, and expectations of the practicum as indicated in the MSW Practicum Manual and other School communications
- Become familiar with the Intern Placement Tracking (IPT) system
- Orient the student to the practicum setting
- Complete all required documentation including IPT safety-related forms, timesheets, learning contract and evaluation forms

Teaching/Supervision Tasks

- Attend or complete the Beginning Field Instructor training (strongly recommended for new field instructors)
- Support the student in defining learning objectives to complete the Learning Contract
- Provide at least one hour of field instruction/supervision for every fourteen hours (2 days) of practicum
- Offer individualized assignments and learning experiences to facilitate the student's achievement of set learning objectives

Evaluation Tasks

- Provide frequent and ongoing feedback to the student regarding the student's progress

- Document and follow procedures when there is a concern that the student is having difficulty performing satisfactorily in the practicum
- Participate in the mid-practicum and final evaluation process with the student and Field Education Coordinator
- Complete the two evaluation forms in consultation with the student and Field Education Coordinator
- Complete the Field Instructor Evaluation of Practicum Process

The **Field Education Coordinator** is responsible for completing:

Administrative Tasks:

- Advise and assist students in negotiating potential practicums
- Assess agencies and Field Instructors to ensure both meet the established criteria
- Orient Field Instructors to the School of Social Work
- Inform Field Instructors of expectations and responsibilities in field education
- Ensure that all practicum documentation is submitted when required
- Approve practicums

Connection/Liaison Tasks

- Serve as liaison between practicum setting (student, Field Instructor & agency contact) and the School
- Provide information regarding field education to students, Field Instructors, agencies
- Facilitate a minimum of three meetings (teleconference or video conference) or more as required/needed with each student and their Field Instructor
- Facilitate professional development opportunities for Field Instructors, as applicable

Teaching/Evaluation Tasks

- Consult with Field Instructor and student on matters relating to field education, including Learning Contract discussion, to ensure field learning meets school and graduate level expectations
- Coordinate and ensure completion of mid-practicum and final evaluation
- Consult with and guide student and Field Instructor through the procedure for a student at risk of failure should a student not be performing satisfactorily
- Provide notice of successful completion of the practicum

The **Master’s Seminar Instructor** is responsible for:

- Facilitation of the online Master’s Integration Seminar
- Ongoing consultation with the MSW Program Manager and/or Field Education Coordinators in matters relating to field education, as needed
- Submission of the milestone requirement for successful completion of the Master’s Integration Seminar and Capstone

The **MSW Program Manager** is responsible for:

- Leading the administration of field education and program delivery
- Providing collaborative leadership to ensure that the field education program at the Master’s level is conducted according to university and professional policies and accreditation standards
- Coordinating the management of student performance issues in the field and program with faculty, field staff, Master’s Seminar Instructor, agency representatives, etc.
- Overseeing annual field education orientations and professional development opportunities for students and Field Instructors
- Ongoing evaluation of field education and program delivery

SETTING UP THE PRACTICUM

Students enrolled in the Master of Social Work program will play an important role in the planning of their practicum experience. If a student is employed while enrolled in the MSW program, it is strongly recommended they select a practicum in an agency/organization different from the regular work setting. However, in some exceptional circumstances, the School will consider a practicum within the work setting provided the practicum meets the criteria for this option (refer to the section on Graduate Studies Practicum in the Current Place of Employment).

Students who are employed are encouraged to discuss with their employers their professional development needs and seek support for their MSW studies. Some potential arrangements that may be negotiated include:

- suitable “leave time”
- flex time or reduced hours
- job exchange allowing worker flexibility to attend classes and practicum
- others, according to specific agency policies

As this is mainly an online program, students are expected to initiate contact with potential field agencies, explore interests, opportunities, and availability for supervision with agency personnel, and then communicate with the Field Education Coordinator the relevant contact information and planning that has occurred well in advance of the anticipated beginning of the practicum. Securing placements could be highly competitive so close communication with the Field Education Coordinator is important to support the planning process, learn about guidelines and timelines of particular agencies or health authorities and work on a few options to complete the practicum milestone.

Students planning to complete their practicum within Waterloo region and surrounding area need to contact their Field Education Coordinator first to inquire about existing relationships. The Field Education Coordinator will follow up with the agency and potential Field Instructor to ensure required criteria are met, as well as to ensure that learning opportunities appropriate for a graduate level practicum and for the learning goals of the student are available. The Field Education Coordinator will also address any questions regarding roles and responsibilities the agency and potential Field Instructor may have. The Field Education Coordinator will maintain contact with the student throughout this process.

Often an agency may choose to interview the student to assess the fit between the student and the organization. Agency personnel and/or the potential Field Instructor and the student will directly connect and arrange a meeting to discuss the potential placement. Both the student and the agency will be asked to share the results of this meeting with the Field Education Coordinator.

As part of the practicum preparation process, **all students** must submit a [MSW Field Package](#) to their Field Education Coordinator. **All agencies** acting as field practicum settings must sign and submit a **Memorandum of Agreement** with the School. The Memorandum of Agreement will be sent to the agency by the School well in advance of the beginning of the practicum. The School recognizes that some organizations have created affiliation templates (e.g. Affiliation Agreement) they prefer to use.

PLEASE NOTE THAT THE FIELD PRACTICUM IS NOT APPROVED AND THE STUDENT MAY NOT BEGIN THE PRACTICUM UNTIL APPROVED BY THEIR FIELD EDUCATION COORDINATOR. THE PRACTICUM WILL NOT BE APPROVED UNTIL ALL REQUIRED DOCUMENTATION IS RECEIVED.

Graduate Studies Practicum in the Current Place of Employment

The School of Social Work strongly recommends that MSW students undertake the field practicum in a setting other than their regular site of employment. This strategy is based on the principle

that the graduate level field placement must engage in new learning that augments their existing knowledge and practice base. The field practicum should provide an opportunity for the student to enhance their existing social work knowledge and practice skills in new dimensions beyond the current field of employment. The student must be able to critically engage with agency policies and procedures and actively learn and participate in discussions about alternative interventions and approaches to dealing with social work problems and concerns. Further, the agency Field Instructor must be in a position to objectively evaluate the student's performance. Finally, the work performed during the practicum must qualify as Master of Social Work level learning.

The School recognizes that in some **exceptional** situations the above noted conditions can be met in the student's place of employment. The School will consider requests for placement in the current site of employment from individual students on a case-by-case basis.

The student must present a compelling reason as to why a field placement in a location outside the current site of employment is not possible to arrange and why it is the optimal arrangement to meet the learning goals. The rationale needs to go beyond financial considerations and convenience.

If a student is considering completing the practicum in the student's place of employment, the student must involve a representative of the employment organization in the planning process. Please contact your Field Education Coordinator with any questions.

The student and agency must submit to their Field Education Coordinator a proposal to allow a student to do a practicum in the student's current site of employment. Their Field Education Coordinator must approve the proposal.

Criteria for a Practicum that is within a Current Place of Employment

The following criteria have been established for approval of a practicum within the student's current place of employment:

- The practicum must be carried out in an area of work that is clearly different and distinct from the student's employment responsibilities (i.e. different department/service area, different branch office, different program/team).
- Field instruction must be carried out by a social worker who is not responsible for the day to day administrative or practice supervision of the student in the employment setting.
- Potential conflicts of roles and of interest have been discussed and the agency is providing a procedure for addressing potential conflicts within the practicum.
- The organization must meet the criteria to become a practicum setting.
- The Field Instructor must satisfy the School of Social Work criteria.
- The proposed practicum must be realistic and possible given the time constraints and employment demands of the student/Field Instructor/agency.

Submission of MSW required documentation:

Prior to the approval and commencement of the practicum, a written formal agreement between the School of Social Work and the placement organization must be completed and signed by both parties.

All students must submit or arrange submission of the following prior to the approval and commencement of the field practicum:

- Current resumé
- [MSW Practicum Pre-planning Form](#) (This contains information for practicum exploration and set up.)
- [MSW Practicum Proposal](#) (The purpose of the Field Proposal is to assist the Field Education Coordinator in discerning if the Agency contacted will provide the learning experience the

student needs. It should not be confused with the Learning Contract and does not require the same detail.)

- [Agency Field Instructor Information](#) (This information allows the School to assess the qualifications of a potential Field Instructor to ensure criteria are met.)
- Ministry/insurance-related documents (eg. [Student Declaration](#), [Letter to Placement Employer](#), [Due Diligence Checklist](#), [Safety Orientation Checklist](#) etc.). The Safety Orientation Checklist must be submitted electronically or completed on Intern Placement Tracking (IPT) system at the beginning of practicum.

Agency Requirements

The School of Social Work supports the requirements of many agencies for criminal record checks, vulnerable sector screening and/or various health tests. Students are responsible for complying with these requirements.

Some agencies may require the School as stipulated in affiliation agreements to collect and/or verify personal information related to placement including health records or police checks. If such records are collected, the School will adhere to university guidelines in records management ([Policy 46](#)) as well as applicable legislation. The School will dispose of the records confidentially upon completion of the practicum. Students typically submit their practicum documents to their Field Education Coordinator. They may choose to submit health records and police checks to the MSW Program Manager.

The practicum process will not proceed with incomplete documentation. Due to the volume and time sensitivity of arranging practicums, early submission is highly recommended. Evidence of graduate level scholarship, writing and professional communication skills is expected in all documentation submitted by the student.

SELECTION OF PRACTICUM SETTINGS AND FIELD INSTRUCTORS

Criteria for the Selection of Practicum Settings

Field Practicum settings are approved by the School of Social Work according to the following criteria:

- A demonstrated commitment to the education of social work students.
- A demonstrated commitment to provide an environment that is safe and free from discrimination and harassment.
- Social work practice within the practicum setting is based on professional standards and is a respected component of the activities of the setting.
- The practicum setting is willing and able to provide learning experiences and assignments appropriate to the education needs of the student and in accordance with the School curriculum, Canadian Association for Social Work Education's (CASWE) accreditation standards and Canadian Association of Social Workers' (CASW) Code of Ethics
- A qualified Field Instructor is available in accordance with the School's requirements and is given adequate time during the workday to provide the field instruction to the student as required by the School. As well, the Field Instructor is given time to participate in required meetings with the School and training offered by the School.
- If the social worker who has been identified as the Field Instructor leaves the practicum setting after a student's field practicum begins, the practicum setting will attempt to find an appropriate replacement.
- Adequate space, agency support services and a milieu conducive to student learning and participation is provided.

- The agency is expected to reimburse expenses the student incurs while completing field responsibilities and in accordance with the policies of the agency concerning reimbursement.
- Reliable high speed internet access is available to the Field Instructor and student.
- The practicum setting allows and encourages full participation of the student in staff meetings, professional development activities, and other activities as deemed appropriate by the Field Instructor and the Field Education Coordinator.

Criteria for the Selection of Field Instructors

The School of Social Work is committed to providing field instruction by a Social Worker for each of the students in the practicum. The following guidelines determine the selection of Field Instructors for the field education experience:

- Field Instructors hold an MSW degree from an accredited social work program. In exceptional circumstances, the field education team will consider practitioners who do not meet this requirement. Consideration will be given to professional experience and educational background recognized by Canadian Association of Social Workers (CASW) and/or respective provincial regulator. The Field Instructor should be recommended by the practicum agency.
- Field Instructors are employees of practicum settings and have demonstrated interest in supervision, field teaching and a willingness to meet the responsibilities of a Field Instructor as defined by the School.

When a field agency or organization does not have a professional MSW level social worker on site, the field team will determine additional strategies and supports to provide social work instruction and to ensure that a student has access to a qualified social worker in accordance with the accreditation standards. Strategies may include additional support from a faculty member, field education team member, Field Consultant, or an external Field Instructor.

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION FOR FIELD INSTRUCTORS

Recognition of Field Instructors

Adjunct Instructor Status - Field Instructors are given the official title of Adjunct Instructor for the duration of the student's placement. This appointment, which is non-salaried, entitles them to library privileges and online resources that may be available through the school.

MSW Field Instructor of the Year Award –Every year, the graduating MSW class members are requested to nominate outstanding field supervisors who have enriched their practice experiences. This award is announced during the end-of-program celebrations during the MSW class's final Summer Institute.

Beginning Field Instructor Workshops

Online Field Instructor Course is available to new field Instructors or as a refresher to experienced field supervisors through CASWE. It is recommended that new Field Instructors complete the training within one year of becoming a Field Instructor with Renison University College. This online, asynchronous course is offered a few times in a year. Renison-affiliated field instructors will receive registration information from their student's Field Education Coordinator, or the MSW Program Manager.

Advanced Field Instructor Training

The field education teams of the School of Social Work at Renison in collaboration with the Faculty of Social Work at Wilfrid Laurier University organize the Advanced Field Instructor Training annually. Field Instructors from both universities are invited to attend this training.

The School of Social Work offers professional development opportunities for the field instructors who participate in our field education program such as orientation sessions, training events and activities organized by the School and through field partnerships with the Ontario Alliance of Social Work Field Education Directors (OASWFED) and Canadian Association for Social Work Education (CASWE).

Please consult the School of Social Work website for more information, at:
<https://uwaterloo.ca/school-of-social-work/workshops-for-field-instructors>

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION RELATED TO PRACTICUM

Student Remuneration in Practicum

Practicum is a critical requirement to complete the MSW program. As a graduate level course, practicum is set up between the student and their Field Education Coordinator. Students are typically not paid to access the field practicum. This practice is aligned with established norms in social work field education. Placement agencies may choose, at their discretion, to provide stipends or reimbursement for expenses in keeping with their own organizational policies and practices.

The School will respect but will neither initiate nor mediate any process related to existing placement agency policies and practices on remuneration for social work students. The School maintains its responsibility and discretion in ensuring that the practicum adheres to the MSW curriculum and provides for a learning experience where students are considered and assessed as learners and not employees or not placed in a situation of potentially negotiating competing expectations from the program and the placement organization due to monetary arrangements. Field placement agencies mandated by government, union, or their governance policies to provide paid placements will be responsible for their practicum students' workplace insurance coverage.

Absences from Practicum

If a student is absent from practicum, the following guidelines apply:

A student may be absent for acceptable reasons such as illness, compassionate leave, and religious holidays. The student must inform their Field Instructor of the absence, in advance when possible, and negotiate ways to make up the missed time, to complete the required 462 hours of practicum.

In general, students are expected to adhere to their practicum agency's policy regarding absence.

During the Fall and Winter Reading Weeks (October and February), students are not expected to participate in field placements, unless arranged otherwise. Students must ensure that their Field Instructors are well advised of their Reading Week schedules.

All students are expected to make up the missed time to complete the minimum 462 hours of practicum.

Accessibility and Accommodation

Accessibility issues can impact a student's success in a practicum. It is the student's responsibility to request academic and/or practicum accommodation. Students with accessibility concerns who may require accommodation are advised to register with AccessAbility Services (AAS) for support: <https://uwaterloo.ca/accessability-services/>
Read the [Student Academic Accommodation Guidelines](#) for more information. Visit the AAS website for online registration and online appointments.

If a student is seeking accommodation, the student must notify their Field Education Coordinator and Field Instructor prior to beginning the practicum. In the practicum, accommodation entails a collaborative process among the student, Field Instructor/agency, and Field Education Coordinator. Safety and Security in the Practicum

Social work students need to be aware of safety risks associated with their field practicum experience. The location, nature, and scope of agency services might present safety risks. Home visits, street interviews, community group work and provision of health care services, including mental health crisis intervention, are some assignments associated with additional risks.

Students who perceive themselves at risk, at any time, in any practicum setting, are obliged to contact the Field Instructor and the Field Education Coordinator or the MSW Program Manager immediately.

All practicum agencies are responsible for ensuring that students are aware of the safety protocols of the agency, including fire and health system procedures. In addition, students should be made aware of how to handle emergency situations in the absence of their Field Instructor during regular hours or during after-hours work. Students also have a responsibility to request information and seek instruction to ensure their own safety and to avoid behaviours associated with an unacceptable, increased risk of injury.

There are areas of risk to which students might be exposed in the field placement including but not limited to:

1. Risk of physical injury related to travel to and from the field placement.
2. Risk of a lawsuit for physical injury or property damage if students were to have passengers (such as other students or clients) in a personally owned vehicle involved in an accident resulting in bodily injury and/or property damage, while engaged in their field practice responsibility.
3. Risk of physical injury or illness, emotional harm, harassment, discrimination or systemic violence, which may occur in the performance of assigned and prescribed duties during the field placement.

Students Travelling to and from Field Practicums

Students need to ensure they have adequate insurance coverage for their vehicle as required by the practicum agency. Renison University College, the School of Social Work at Renison University College, our field practicum agencies, and the University of Waterloo are not responsible for theft or damage to students' personal property while they are performing practicum duties or traveling to and from their practicum settings.

Students Transporting Other Students or Clients in a Personally Owned Vehicle

In the event of an accident, the student could be considered responsible, and their own insurance would be required to respond.

Injury to Student or Illness as a Result of Practicum Related Activity

Ontario students in placement in Ontario are covered by Workplace Safety & Insurance Board (WSIB) under an account provided by the Ministry of Colleges and Universities (formerly MAESD) if the placement setting is registered with WSIB. Where the placement setting is not registered with WSIB, the Ontario MCU provides insurance coverage for the student through a private insurance provider.

Please check the coverage provided by the Regulatory/Governing Bodies in the Province or Territory where you live. Being registered in an Ontario university program may influence your eligibility for coverage. Where the placement setting is not covered by the provincial Workplace Safety & Insurance Board (or equivalent) non-Ontario residents and/or non-Ontario organizations will be covered by the MCU through a private insurance provider. The private insurance is an accidental death/dismemberment policy, and does not cover much healthcare benefits, so students should have additional health insurance.

In the event of a placement related accident or illness:

- The student must follow agency protocol.
- The student must notify their Field Instructor immediately.
- The student or Field Instructor must notify the Field Education Coordinator or MSW Program Manager immediately to be apprised of the required procedure regardless of whether the student intends to make a claim. The Field Education Coordinator and/or MSW Program Manager will then liaise with the University of Waterloo's Safety Office for incident reporting and/or claim submission.

STUDENT LEARNING & ASSESSMENT IN PRACTICUM

Students will be evaluated according to the *Learning Contract*, available on the Intern Placement Tracking (IPT) database, which they complete early in the practicum. Students may choose to update the Learning Contract objectives in the mid-practicum evaluation. The form entitled *Practicum Final Evaluation*, also available on the IPT database, is completed just prior to the end of the practicum and is based on the Learning Contract and any objectives added in the mid-practicum evaluation. Specific details related to each of these tools of evaluation are outlined below.

DESCRIPTION OF LEARNING AND ASSESSMENT TOOLS

Learning Contract

The Learning Contract is the articulation of the goals and objectives of student learning while in the practicum. Within this framework, students must clearly present what (objectives) they want to learn in the placement and how (means to achieve) they will do it as well as how (means for evaluation) progress will be evident to the Field Instructor. It is the basis upon which the student's performance in the practicum is evaluated and should be completed near the beginning of the practicum (within the first three weeks of practicum).

In preparing the Learning Contract the student's professional knowledge, practice skills and understanding of the professional role should be taken into account. During the practicum, students are expected to develop and demonstrate the ability to integrate social work theory into practice as outlined in the following four (4) components for the Learning Contract: Practicum Context, Practicum Content, Personal and Professional Development, and Agency Expectations.

Underlying Principles

The student, in consultation with the Field Instructor and Field Education Coordinator, is expected to complete the Learning Contract (learning objectives). These objectives are intended to help clarify the student's individual learning needs within the framework of the school's field education objectives, program learning outcomes, and CASWE's core learning objectives. The following pages list "Expectations for Learning" to help guide the student in the development of his or her learning objectives.

It is important to stress the collaborative nature of the process of setting these objectives. The student will bring an awareness of their own learning needs; the Field Instructor is aware of the expectations of the agency and the learning experiences which can be provided in that setting; the Field Education Coordinator assures that no areas of expectation for learning are overlooked. The most meaningful objectives are likely to be simple rather than complex. They may be, of necessity, more general at the beginning of the practicum with greater specificity being possible at mid-practicum when there is the opportunity for revision. The Learning Contract will be the basis for the student evaluation that takes place mid-practicum and prior to the end of the practicum.

Expectations for Learning

The Learning Objectives must:

- be based on the School's expectations for the MSW field requirement as outlined in the four components detailed below: Practicum Context, Practicum Content, Personal and Professional Development, Agency Expectations
- take into account the student's existing knowledge, skills, and values
- identify the individual student's specific learning objectives (i.e., what is to be learned in the practicum)
- identify learning opportunities (i.e., how in the agency the learning objectives will be met)
- identify how (the means by which) the learning objective will be accomplished
- identify means for evaluation (i.e., how the Field Instructor and student will be able to assess whether the student has met the objective)
- specify the time frame for the practicum, the days, and hours in the agency.

Learning Contract components

The School of Social Work expects all graduate students to acquire knowledge and skills aligned with social work values in each of the key areas outlined below. The weighting given to each of these areas in the Learning Contract should reflect the student's existing knowledge and skills for practice and interests in further development. Weighting will thus vary from student to student; however, all four components must be addressed. The Learning Contract is an ongoing supervision tool as well as the basis for the evaluation.

1. Practicum Context

This section deals with the broader social, historical, political, economic, legal, institutional, and cultural contexts of social work practice in health within which the field agency operates. Each student must have an understanding of organizational and societal systems, recognize the role of government and relevant legislation in the structure of service planning and delivery of the field agency and implications for individual and community health and wellbeing. In order to understand the broader context within which the field placement agency operates, students should plan their learning around the following areas:

- Knowledge and analysis of legislation, social, and organizational policies that inform the health-focused practice contexts.
- Critical analysis of the underlying theoretical frameworks and worldviews on health and wellbeing, political ideologies and philosophical values of the agency's policies, procedures and practices.
- Analysis of health-focused social work practice and ethical leadership in the context of larger organizational and social responses.
- Critical assessment of the nature and characteristics of the placement agency's organizational culture, structure and political context and identification of relevant strategies for social and/or organizational change in line with the social work values of equity, inclusion, diversity, and social justice.
- Understanding of the service delivery system of which the placement agency is a part and its relationship to social and structural determinants of health.

2. Practicum Content

This section should address goals for the practicum related to knowledge and skills in the student's area of health-focused social work practice. Students are expected to define learning goals in the following three areas:

- a. An advanced critical understanding of equity, diversity and social justice.
 - Identifying and critically assessing how these practice concepts and issues are considered in the placement agency and specifically in the student's area of practice.
- b. The development of a substantive knowledge base, to support practice in the student's chosen area of specialization in relation to health and wellbeing (for example, specific aspects of policy analysis or development, individual, a family and/or group practice, research, community practice).
 - Integrating an advanced critical understanding of diverse theoretical frameworks and worldviews on health and wellbeing in practice context.
- c. An understanding of the nature and processes of change within the social, cultural, political, and economic context of the field placement agency and broader society. Define objectives that address the strategies and approaches for change relevant to the work of the agency. These may include:
 - Processes for assessments for individuals, families, groups and/or communities within the societal context, including understanding of social and structural determinants of health.

- Intervention plans based on the understanding gained through the assessment process.
- The role of client participation in identifying goals and selecting actions and interventions.
- How and from whom information is gathered.
- How termination/ending is conceptualized and implemented in the context of individual, family, group and/or community social conditions
- Evaluation with individuals, families, groups and/or communities regarding the various impacts (intended and unintended) of the change process

3. Personal and Professional Development

This section focuses on the integration of the previous sections within one's personal framework for social work practice. Students are expected to define learning objectives in each of the following four areas:

- Self-Awareness and Engagement with Others:* The student is expected to develop practice skills and display the capacity for professional leadership relevant to the effective and appropriate presentation of oneself in different practice situations. This can be facilitated by developing a critical self-awareness that facilitates positive relationships demonstrating advanced understanding of socially-just, ethically, and culturally accountable social work with diverse individuals, groups, families, communities, agencies, and colleagues.
- Organizational Responsibilities and Service Orientation:* This section addresses the importance of being able to understand the nature and importance of roles and responsibilities associated with the mission and operations of the placement. The student is expected to organize the workload in order to complete relevant tasks in a focused, independent, and responsible way while facilitating ethical communication, collaboration and interprofessional relationships. The student is expected to show initiative in carrying out assigned work and identifying areas that require further direction and supervision.
- Social Work Values and Ethics:* All students are expected to convey advanced knowledge of the CASW and provincial college Social Work Code of Ethics and principles of practice, including their limitations with respect to anti-oppressive and anti-racist approaches to practice. As well, each student must show competency in the following areas:
 - Identification of your, and others', value constructs, assumptions, and beliefs and understanding their impact on socially-just social work practice.
 - Critical reflection and communication on discussions and action about colonization, racism, anti-Black racism, anti-Indigenous racism, homophobia, transphobia, ableism, sanism, ageism, and classism, among other forms of discrimination as they arise in professional practice with clients, colleagues, agencies and communities
 - Exemplifying values of equity, inclusion, diversity, accessibility, and social justice.
 - Effective skills in ethical decision making.
- Self-Evaluation:* Students are expected to develop a process for critical evaluation of their own practice. Students must evaluate your practice in ways that promote ethical and socially-just practice situation and seek and incorporate the observations and opinions of others in relation to the process and outcomes of interventions.

4. Agency Expectations

This section focuses on what the Agency requires from the student and is therefore not written as objectives, but rather outlines the expectations incumbent upon the student. Key considerations include:

- ethical conduct and decision-making in accordance with the agency codes of conduct
- understanding and maintaining confidentiality agreement/s and other information management policies/protocols
- respectful participation in agency processes (e.g., attendance at meetings, team discussions, case conferences, rounds, etc.)
- consistent practicum schedule and timely communication of any changes
- meetings with clients and/or community groups

Process for Completing the Learning Contract

The student, in consultation with the Field Instructor, drafts the Learning Contract. The student must address the content under each of the components. It must be clear what the student wants to learn in the practicum and how the student will approach the learning in those objective areas. [See Appendix III for examples of learning objectives.]

The student will notify the Field Education Coordinator when a draft of the Learning Contract is available for review prior to the first virtual meeting (i.e., teleconference, web-based connection).

A meeting is arranged with the student, the Field Instructor, and the Field Education Coordinator to discuss and finalize the Learning Contract.

After the meeting, the student makes any necessary changes to the Learning Contract. It is then signed by the student, Field Instructor, and the Field Education Coordinator online through the IPT database system.

The Learning Contract is a “living document,” which means that it can be amended as needed to better reflect the student’s focus and learning in practicum and then signed off by the student, Field Instructor and Field Education Coordinator. Typically, any amendments are made at mid-practicum.

EVALUATION OF STUDENT PERFORMANCE IN PRACTICUM

Evaluation of the student’s field practice performance is based on the approved Learning Contract. Evaluation and feedback should be an ongoing process throughout the placement. The student and Field Instructor complete the evaluations and meet virtually (i.e., teleconference, web-based connection) with the Field Education Coordinator to discuss the evaluations. The Field Education Coordinator approves the final evaluation upon the Field Instructor’s recommendation of student’s satisfactory completion. The student must successfully complete the practicum and the Integration Seminar to meet both milestone degree requirements. The student must also submit the required timesheets on IPT to reflect completion of the required practicum hours. The Field Education Coordinator confirms the practicum completion with the MSW Program Manager for final approval of the milestone degree requirement by the School Director. The Master’s Seminar Instructor confirms the milestone completion with the MSW Program Manager for final approval of the School Director.

Process for Evaluation of the Practicum

This section provides the criteria for evaluating the student's progress towards meeting the learning objectives identified in the Learning Contract.

There are two formal evaluations, one at the mid-point of the practicum (completion of approximately 231 hours) and one just prior to the end of the practicum. Each evaluation takes place during a virtual meeting (i.e., teleconference, web-based connection) among the student, Field Instructor and Field Education Coordinator. If other workers in the field agency have been involved in supervising the student, they should participate in the meeting or give input on those areas of learning for which they are responsible according to the Learning Contract.

The mid-practicum meeting reviews the current experiences and opportunities in relation to the goals and objectives in the Learning Contract. The student submits a draft mid-practicum evaluation into IPT prior to the meeting which serves as a basis for the mid-practicum discussion (this draft is not signed). The Field Instructor is also encouraged to input their comments (not signed).

At the meeting, the student and Field Instructor report on highlights and challenges of the placement to date, suggested revisions to the learning objectives, and/or areas of learning requiring special attention. Following the meeting, the student and Field Instructor complete the Mid-Practicum Evaluation in IPT, including any revisions to the learning objectives. The evaluation is then signed by the student, Field Instructor, and the Field Education Coordinator online through the IPT database system.

The final evaluation meeting takes place just prior to the end of the practicum and is led by the student and supported by the Field Instructor, following the draft Final Evaluation being submitted by the student in IPT. The draft written evaluation is discussed during the meeting in which the participants are the student, Field Instructor and Field Education Coordinator. Any agreed upon changes will be made following the meeting and each participant can add additional comments. The Final Evaluation is read and signed by all three parties online through the IPT database following the final meeting.

Guidelines for the Evaluation Process

The following guidelines may be considered helpful in determining the process by which the evaluation is completed:

1. Student performance should be evaluated in the context of the Learning Contract of the Practicum, of the specific learning objectives of the student, and within the context of the field setting and of the tasks assigned.

The student and Field Instructor should approach the evaluation with a general discussion which draws together the work of all the preceding supervisory sessions.

2. The evaluation should focus on developing competence and its demonstration through the carrying out of specific tasks and assignments based on the Learning Contract.
3. The student, Field Instructor and Field Education Coordinator should participate in the evaluation and indicate this by their signatures. Any dissenting or additional points of view can be acknowledged on the evaluation document using the comment sections on the form or attaching a separate document.

Assessment

The Practicum and Master's Integration Seminar and Capstone must be successfully completed in order for the student to earn the two milestone degree requirements necessary to graduate. Students engage in the Practicum and online Integration Seminar concurrently while the Capstone must be completed in their final term.

The milestone degree requirements are awarded based upon the student's progress towards the learning objectives as reflected in the Learning Contract and based on the student's participation and learning assignments in the Integration Seminar. This includes any alterations made to the Learning Contract following the Mid-Practicum Evaluation and agreed upon by the student, Field Instructor, and the Field Education Coordinator.

Failure to meet the milestone degree requirement may be determined in the practicum in the following circumstances:

- Where the student, during their practicum, demonstrates personal unsuitability for the profession.
- Where the student fails to meet, or to make what is assessed to be sufficient progress, in relation to the learning objectives agreed upon in the Learning Contract.
- Where the student withdraws from a placement without respect for due process.

Failure to meet the milestone degree requirement may be determined in the Integration Seminar in the following circumstances:

- Where the student fails to participate in or successfully complete the assignments of the Integration Seminar as outlined in the syllabus.
- Where the student withdraws from the Integration Seminar without respect for due process.

In all instances when the Field Instructor, student, Field Education Coordinator, or the Master's Seminar Instructor first begin to consider the possibility that a student may be having difficulty in the practicum or Integration Seminar, they should immediately follow the process as outlined in Managing Placement Risks and Challenges (p. 23.)

INTERN PLACEMENT TRACKING SYSTEM (IPT)

The School of Social Work's field education office uses an online practicum reporting system called Intern Placement Tracking System (IPT). This system can be accessed from anywhere that a student or Field Instructor has an Internet connection.

IPT allows students, Field Instructors, and Field Education Coordinators to effectively and efficiently complete administrative tasks relating to the field education program. This includes keeping relevant practicum and contact information up-to-date and accessing and completing forms online. It is designed to streamline the practicum reporting requirements.

All forms must be completed and submitted online. Access to all forms requiring completion are available through this system. No one other than the IPT administrator, each student, their Field Instructor, Field Education Office, MSW Program Manager, and Director of the School of Social Work will have access to the forms submitted online.

For new users:

Our **IPT Instruction Manual** will help new users learn about the IPT system and is available as a PDF on the School of Social Work website: <https://uwaterloo.ca/school-of-social-work/intern-placement-tracking-ipt>

'Getting started with IPT' is a narrated windows media video (7 minutes' duration) showing you how to log in to IPT and get started. You can access the video via a link from the web page above.

'Completing IPT forms' is a narrated windows media video (5 minutes' duration) showing you how to complete IPT forms, also accessed from the link above.

POLICIES, GUIDELINES AND PROCEDURES

Conflict in a Learning Community

In keeping with the Social Work Code of Ethics, the School of Social Work aims to ensure an environment of inclusivity, support, and mutual respect. The School recognizes that in collaborative and learning communities, conflicts may arise due to diverse perspectives coming from the members as well as from systemic barriers, inequities, and challenges. Diversity in a learning community can include any or all of the following differences: learning style, communication approach, work strategies, cultural consciousness, occupation, schedule, sexual orientation, religious beliefs and/or values, educational understanding, class, gender, race, ideological orientation, political affiliation, etc. Negotiating and understanding these differences is at the core of building an inclusive learning environment where members feel a sense of belonging.

In situations of conflict therefore, it is helpful to first “go to the source” and seek to work things out directly with the person with whom you are experiencing conflict. Having conversations early on, can usually resolve conflicts.

Conflict can be a time of learning and growth, both individually and for the larger community. It is important to assume the best of others; provide space to process; and, not to confuse your assessment of the situation with the other's experience of the same situation. Good intentions may lead to negative impact, so it is important to focus more on the impact of our actions rather than our intent.

A useful guide to address conflict is modelling The Basic Principles from the University of Waterloo as follows:

1. Focus on the situation, issue, or behaviour, not on the person.
2. Maintain the self-confidence and self-esteem of others.
3. Maintain constructive relationships.
4. Take the initiative to make things better.
5. Lead by example.
6. Think beyond the moment.

For additional resources, please see:

- <https://uwaterloo.ca/conflict-management-human-rights>
- <https://uwaterloo.ca/organizational-human-development/learning-development-programs/basic-principles>
- <https://uwaterloo.ca/equity-diversity-inclusion-anti-racism/>

MANAGING PLACEMENT RISKS AND CHALLENGES

The evaluation of a student who is experiencing difficulty in progressing satisfactorily in the Practicum and/or the Integration Seminar and therefore, at risk of failure, should be, in so far as possible, a conclusion agreed upon by the student, the Field Instructor, the Field Education Coordinator and/or the Master's Seminar Instructor in consultation with the MSW Program Manager. It is important that concerns related to unsatisfactory performance be raised as early as possible in order to create a plan to address the problem areas and assist the student to perform satisfactorily. Concerns regarding being at risk may be raised by the Field Instructor, the student, the Field Education Coordinator, or the Master's Seminar Instructor.

Procedures to follow when the problem is identified by the Student

Level I

If the student believes that their learning needs as identified in the Learning Contract are not being met, the student will discuss the issue with their Field Instructor to seek resolution of the concerns.

If there is no resolution, the student will inform the Field Education Coordinator and Field Instructor in writing.

The Field Education Coordinator will make every attempt to meet with the student and Field Instructor within one week of receiving written notification from the student. The Field Education Coordinator will advise both the student and Field Instructor of the date set for the review. The purpose of the meeting will be to clarify the concerns and create a plan to meet the student's learning needs. A written report summarizing the concerns and the course of action agreed upon to resolve them will be sent to the parties involved.

Level II

If the difficulty continues, either the student or the Field Instructor will notify in writing the Field Education Coordinator. The Field Education Coordinator will organize a review (virtual meeting) with the student and Field Instructor. Recommendations from this meeting may be:

- a. Continuation of practicum with specified, agreed upon goals. The plan will be documented with copies to the student, Field Instructor and Field Education Coordinator and reflected on IPT as appropriate. A future meeting date will be determined to review progress.
- b. Relocation of the student in a different practicum setting and information regarding the student's learning needs shared with the future Field Instructor.
- c. Withdrawal from the practicum by the student (should the student decide continuing in the program no longer meets their career goals).

The Field Education Coordinator will submit a written report to the MSW Program Manager stating the agreed upon option. The Field Education Coordinator will also notify in writing the student and the Field Instructor the option agreed upon and the next steps. If there is no consensus, the report will acknowledge this fact and be forwarded to the Director of the School of Social Work, in consultation with the MSW Program Manager. The report will be copied to the student and the Field Instructor. The MSW Program Manager and Director of the School of Social Work will make plans and determine appropriate actions and notify, in writing, the student, Field Instructor and Field Education Coordinator.

Procedures to follow when the Problem is identified by the Field Instructor

Level I

If the Field Instructor determines that a student is having difficulty performing satisfactorily in the practicum, the Field Instructor will:

- a. document the problematic behaviour or lack of progress.

- b. share the concerns and identify with the student a plan to address the problems.
- c. inform the Field Education Coordinator.
- d. send a copy of the Level 1 plan to the Field Education Coordinator (copying the student).

Level II

If the student continues to experience difficulty, the Field Instructor will notify in writing the student and the Field Education Coordinator that the student is at risk of failing the practicum and detail the initial concerns, the actions taken and any additional and/or ongoing concerns.

The Field Education Coordinator, in consultation with the MSW Program Manager, and Field Instructor will make every attempt to meet with the student **within one week** of receiving written notification from the Field Instructor. The Field Education Coordinator will advise both the student and Field Instructor of the date set for the review. The purpose of the meeting will be to review and clearly identify all problem areas. Recommendations from this meeting may be:

- a. The student will remain in the practicum setting with a specified written plan that includes goals to be pursued, actions to be taken, acceptable time frames and indicators established for monitoring progress. The plan will be documented with copies to the student, Field Instructor and Field Education Coordinator. A future meeting date will be determined to review the student's progress. The student may be offered an extended placement in the same practicum setting in order to meet the requirements, subject to approval by the MSW Program Manager. Only one extension of the practicum will be allowed. Extension of the practicum does not guarantee the milestone degree requirement will be achieved.
- b. The student will be asked to withdraw from the practicum and will be required to repeat the practicum in a different setting. The practicum period must be repeated within one year following the date on which the conditions were set subject to the approval of the MSW Program Manager. A student can only repeat a practicum one time.
- c. The student is asked to leave the practicum and will not receive the milestone degree requirement. This will necessitate a review of the student's status by the School of Social Work and may result in the student being required to withdraw from the program.

The Field Education Coordinator will submit a written report to the MSW Program Manager stating the option agreed upon. The Field Education Coordinator will also notify in writing the student and the Field Instructor the option agreed upon and the next steps. If there is no consensus, the report will acknowledge this fact and be forwarded to the Director of the School of Social Work, in consultation with the MSW Program Manager. The report will be copied to the student and the Field Instructor. The MSW Program Manager and Director of the School of Social Work will make plans and determine appropriate action/s and notify, in writing, the student, Field Instructor and Field Education Coordinator.

Procedures to follow when the problem is identified by the Master's Seminar Instructor

Level I

If the Instructor of the Master's Seminar determines that a student is having difficulty performing satisfactorily in the Integration Seminar, the Instructor will:

- a. document the problematic behaviour or lack of progress.
- b. share the concerns and identify with the student a plan to address the problems.
- c. inform the MSW Program Manager.

Level II

If the student continues to experience difficulty, the Master's Seminar Instructor will notify in writing the student and the MSW Program Manager that the student is at risk of not meeting the milestone degree requirement and detail the initial concerns, the actions taken and any additional and/or ongoing concerns.

The MSW Program Manager and the Master's Seminar Instructor will make every attempt to meet with the student within one week of receiving written notification from the Master's Seminar Instructor. The MSW Program Manager will advise both the student and the Master's Seminar Instructor of the date set for the review. The purpose of the meeting will be to review and clearly identify all problem areas. Recommendations from this meeting may be:

- a. The student will remain in the Integration Seminar with a specified written plan for the Integration Seminar that includes goals to be pursued, actions to be taken, acceptable time frames and indicators established for monitoring progress. The plan will be documented with copies to the student, Master's Seminar Instructor, Field Education Coordinator and MSW Program Manager. A future meeting date will be determined to review the student's progress.
- b. The student is asked to withdraw from the Master's Integration Seminar and Capstone milestone and not meet the degree requirement. This decision will necessitate a review of the student's status by the School of Social Work and may result in the student being required to withdraw from the program.

The Master's Seminar Instructor will submit a written report to the MSW Program Manager stating the agreed upon option. The MSW Program Manager will notify the student in writing about the next steps. If there is no consensus, the report will acknowledge this fact and be forwarded to the Director of the School of Social Work. The report will be copied to the student. The MSW Program Manager and Director of the School of Social Work will make plans and determine appropriate action/s and notify, in writing, the student and the Instructor of the Integration Seminar.

Procedures to follow when the problem is identified by the Field Education Coordinator

Level I

If the Field Education Coordinator determines that a student is having difficulty performing satisfactorily, the Field Education Coordinator will:

- a. document the problematic behaviour or lack of progress.
- b. share the concerns and identify with the student and/or the Field Instructor a plan to address the problems.
- c. inform the MSW Program Manager.

Level II

If the student continues to experience difficulty, the Field Education Coordinator will notify in writing the student, the MSW Program Manager and/or the Field Instructor that the student is at risk of not meeting the milestone degree requirement and detail the initial concerns, the actions taken and any additional and/or ongoing concerns.

The MSW Program Manager and Field Education Coordinator will make every attempt to meet with the student and/or the Field Instructor within one week of receiving written notification from the Field Education Coordinator. The MSW Program Manager will advise both the student and Field Education Coordinator of the date set for the review. The purpose of the meeting will be to review and clearly identify all areas of concern. Recommendations from this meeting may be:

- a. The student will continue with their field learning with a specified written plan that includes goals to be pursued, actions to be taken, acceptable time frames and indicators established for monitoring progress. The plan will be documented with copies to the student, MSW Program Manager and/or Field Instructor. A future meeting date will be determined to review the student's progress.
- b. The student is asked to withdraw from the field education program and not meet the milestone degree requirement/s. This decision will necessitate a review of the student's

status by the School of Social Work and may result in the student being required to withdraw from the program.

The Field Education Coordinator will submit a written report to the MSW Program Manager stating the option agreed upon. The Field Education Coordinator will notify the student, in writing, of the next steps. If there is no consensus, the report will acknowledge this fact and be forwarded to the Director of the School of Social Work, in consultation with the MSW Program Manager. The MSW Program Manager and Director of the School of Social Work will make plans and determine appropriate actions and notify, in writing, the student, Field Education Coordinator and/or Field Instructor.

Procedure to Follow when a Practicum Ends Abruptly without a Review

Although not recommended, on occasion, a student may leave, or be asked to leave, a practicum without a formal review process. Should this occur, the Field Education Coordinator will ask for a meeting with the student and the Field Instructor and/or request written reports from both student and Field Instructor.

The Field Education Coordinator will consult with the MSW Program Manager to determine the next steps for the student. The student may receive a mark of unsatisfactory or be required to complete the practicum in a different setting which could impact the student's program completion status.

Second Fail Policy

In the event of an unsatisfactory rating (fail) during practicum evaluations, the student will be given the opportunity to repeat the practicum. If the student receives a second rating of unsatisfactory, they will be asked to withdraw from the program.

Professional Conduct Policy

Preamble

The School of Social Work adheres to the Canadian Association for Social Work Education's (CASWE-ACFTS) Accreditation Standards. In abiding by the standards of the national governing body, CASWE-ACFTS, the School of Social Work provides students and the surrounding communities a measure of confidence regarding competent, well-prepared professional social workers at the undergraduate and graduate level.

The School of Social Work is eager to support a learning community that is built upon relationships that foster respect and inspiration. When we consider professional relations, we focus specifically on the manner in which we share and contribute to the ample learning opportunities that are available during this program where practice meets theory. Therefore, classroom and practicum presence is significant. Together, we can support meaningful and inspiring learning opportunities in the context of meaningful and inspiring relationships.

The School of Social Work and the agencies providing field education share in the responsibility to assist students to develop the skills to conduct themselves in a professional manner both in the classroom and in the field. Therefore, faculty and field representatives have responsibility for the assessment of professional conduct.

Policy Statement

The School of Social Work sets expectations of students' conduct consistent with the expectations of professional conduct for practicing social workers. Based upon CASW Code of Ethics as well as workplace ethics, the student is expected to demonstrate commitment to his/her social work education as well as honesty, responsibility, reliability and courtesy. Communication is the foundation of professional conduct.

Procedural Guidelines

The student is expected to focus his/her attention on the class and/or instruction being provided. Use of a personal computer or phone for reasons unrelated to course content, is not acceptable.

Attendance is expected in all social work courses and in the practicum setting. The student must make every effort to inform the instructor as early as possible prior to any absence. In last minute circumstances (e.g. accident) the student must notify the instructor at the earliest possible time.

In order to support the student learning journey in the School of Social Work, students with any unexplained or unjustified absence will be informed of such, in writing, with the Director of the School of Social Work copied in. For professional clarity and consistent communication practices, any further absences will be documented in writing to the student with the Director of the School of Social Work copied in. The Director of the School of Social Work will follow up at their discretion.

Updated October 2014

Policy for Assessing Conduct of Students in the School of Social Work

Preamble

"The academic unit has a policy requiring that the performance of professional responsibilities of social work students be in accordance with the relevant social work codes of ethics."

"The academic unit has a policy regarding the professional suitability of the student for the profession of social work. Students are made aware that serious or repeated violations of the Code of Ethics put them at risk of exclusion from the program on the basis of professional unsuitability." (CASWE Standards for Accreditation, May 2012, page 8)

General standards of student conduct are defined by the Renison University College Codes of Student Conduct. This policy pertains to professional conduct and applies to any social work course or related learning environment including the practicum within the Master of Social Work Program. It is an attempt to balance the commitment of the School of Social Work to support and assist students in becoming professional social workers, with the need to protect the safety and well-being of all students, staff, and faculty as well as vulnerable individuals, families, groups and communities.

Policy Statement

The School of Social Work holds the expectation that its students will adhere to recognized ethical obligations and professional standards including but not limited to the CASW Code of Ethics (2005), Social Work Code of Ethics and Standards of Practice adopted by the Ontario College of Social Workers and Social Service Workers and/or the Code of Ethics of the provincial social work association/college in which the practicum takes place. The School has an obligation to take action when a student acts in an unethical or unprofessional manner.

The purpose of this policy is to provide examples of conduct that may require a review and to provide guidelines for a process of review. The School of Social Work will undertake to resolve any concerns in a fair, timely, reasonable, and effective manner.

Guidelines

It is important that students review and become familiar with:

- The Canadian Association of Social Workers' Code of Ethics and Guidelines for Ethical Practice
- The Code of Ethics and Standards of Practice provided by the Regulatory/Governing bodies in the student's province or territory
- The Academic Policies, Procedures and Regulations, School of Social Work, Renison University College and the University of Waterloo
- The policies, regulations and procedures of the field placement agency

The major values and principles as included in the Social Work Code of Ethics that guide professional social work practice are:

- Empathy and concern for clients
- Respect for individual worth and dignity
- Human capacity for growth and change
- Self-determination
- Honesty and integrity
- Confidentiality
- Social and individual responsibility
- Social justice, human rights and equality

Limits of Confidentiality

The School of Social Work recognizes that the safety and confidentiality of students or others who have been subject to unprofessional conduct under this Policy must be an important priority. The School of Social Work must balance the need for confidentiality against its duty to protect present and future students or persons who might otherwise be placed in jeopardy by a student who is acting in an unprofessional or unethical manner under this Policy. Information disclosed during meetings with instructors, Field Education Coordinators and Field Instructors, or the MSW Program Manager will not be kept confidential if the information raises concerns about the student's capability of assuming the professional responsibilities of social work practice.

Instructors and/or Field Education Coordinators and/or the MSW Program Manager will share pertinent information with each other in a respectful and professional manner, for the purpose of identifying student issues and enhancing problem solving about the concerns. The School of Social Work reserves the right to share information with the University or third parties as required by law and University regulations.

Criteria for Assessment

Offences include but are not limited to the following:

- a) Concealment of relevant information or providing false information on the Application for Admission to the School of Social Work, Renison University College, University of Waterloo;
- b) Persistent and/or serious breaches of the CASW Code of Ethics (2005) including, but not limited to:
 - Evidence that a student cannot effectively exercise judgment or function effectively within a professional social work context;
 - Persistent substance abuse (e.g., alcoholism, drug addiction, use of illegal drugs) that interferes with one's ability to function within a professional social work context;

- Charges or convictions of a criminal offense involving violent or abusive behaviour (e.g. physical assault, sexual assault);
- c) Persistent and/or serious conduct that contravenes the policies of the field practicum setting;
- d) Speech or behaviour that contravenes the provisions of the Ontario Human Rights Code (eg: discrimination or harassment because of race, ancestry, place of origin, colour, ethnic origin, citizenship, creed, sex, sexual orientation, religion, marital status, gender, age, socio-economic status, political affiliation, disability or diagnosis) that may interfere with the provision of professional services to the client or with the provision and maintenance of an environment conducive to learning;
- e) Persistent and/or serious inability to form a professional, helping relationship.

Procedural Guidelines

[Policy 71- Student Discipline](#) will inform and guide the procedures when concerns are identified regarding the professional suitability of a student in the School of Social Work.

Sharing of Information Policy

Preamble

The School of Social Work and the agencies providing field instruction share responsibility for the education of the students in the School of Social Work. An important aspect of this collaboration is the sharing of information about student performance in the practicum.

Policy Statement

Personal information that you provide to Renison University College may be used and disclosed as necessary for official college purposes and will be used to carry out college practices or policy, including the coordination of activities that are part of your classroom and field education. Your personal information is only shared within the college or university on a need-to-know basis to university officers, employees or instructors, including Field Instructors, who need the information in the performance of their duties and for the proper discharge of college functions.

Guidelines for Sharing of Information

Sharing information may be for the purpose of:

- facilitating classroom or field education experiences for you while in the program
- mobilizing appropriate resources to support your success in the program
- evaluating your progress in the program
- providing letters of reference

Use of Agency Material in the Classroom Policy

Preamble

To facilitate the integration of theory and practice, students may be using examples from their field practice in the classroom or in written assignments. The types of material that may be used could include, but is not limited to, social histories, case plans, video or audio tapes, and process recordings.

The following section in the **CASW Code of Ethics (2005)** applies to social work educators, practitioners and students:

“A cornerstone of professional social work relationships is confidentiality with respect to all matters associated with professional services to clients. Social workers demonstrate respect for the trust and confidence placed in them by clients, communities and other professionals by protecting the privacy of client information and respecting the client’s right to control when or whether this information will be shared with third parties.”

Policy Statement

Students and faculty of the School of Social Work adhere to the **CASW Code of Ethics (2005)** regarding protection of the confidentiality of clients and client information.

Guidelines for Use of Agency Information in the Classroom

In order to ensure that confidentiality is maintained when agency material is used in the classroom:

- Precaution must be undertaken and indicated to preserve confidentiality such as changing names and other identifying data.
- If the agency also has guidelines, select the strictest ones to guide in the preserving of confidentiality.
- Share knowledge with the client regarding how the information is recorded and to be used. It shall not be used in an unethical manner or without the knowledge and consent of the client for purposes other than agreed upon by written consent.
- The client, and agency or Field Instructor must also give consent for materials to be used for classroom purposes.
- Material and recording are the property of the agency and should not be retained or copied by the student or faculty. Dating materials with a time limited consent should be considered.
- All video and audio taped material must have the client’s written permission. Special consideration needs to be taken for concealment of client identity in the use of video recordings.

Social Media Policy

Preamble

The academic unit has a policy regarding ethical use of all forms of social media to ensure the privacy, confidentiality, and interests of the academic unit and its field practicum community and demonstrates how the policy and procedures are consistent with the relevant human rights legislation, with the mission of CASWE-ACFTS, and with the mission of the academic unit concerned. (CASWE Standards for Accreditation, May 2012).

With more and more social workers embracing social networking sites such as Facebook, LinkedIn and Twitter, the question arises — where do you draw the line in terms of boundaries with your clients or other professional relationships?

The rapidly changing world of social media has exceeded our ability to understand the impact that these forms of communication may have in the world. As professional social workers increasingly use social media, we need to establish guidelines that protect us and those with whom we work from potential negative consequences consistent with the CASW Code of Ethics (2005).

The CASW Code of Ethics (2005) outlines the core social work values as:

- *Respect for the inherent dignity and worth of persons*
- *Pursuit of social justice*
- *Service to humanity*
- *Integrity of professional practice*
- *Confidentiality of professional practice*
- *Competence of professional practice*

Policy Statement

The School of Social Work recognizes the importance of the internet and is committed to supporting your right to interact knowledgeably and socially on the internet through interaction in social media. The School of Social Work strives to provide its members with an environment of free inquiry and expression. Freedom of expression and academic freedom in electronic format have the same latitude as in printed or oral communication.

Members of the School of Social Work community are responsible and accountable for their actions and statements. The use of unfounded or derogatory statements or misrepresentation is not viewed favorably by the School of Social Work or your practicum agency and can result in disciplinary action.

Guidelines for Interactions about the School of Social Work and Your Practicum on the Internet

These guidelines in this social media policy will help you make appropriate decisions about your school and practicum-related online exchanges. They will help you open up respectful, knowledgeable interactions with people on the internet. The guidelines also protect the privacy, confidentiality, and interests of the School of Social Work and your practicum, including colleagues, employees and clients. Note that these policies and guidelines apply to school and practicum-related sites and issues and are not meant to infringe upon your personal interaction or commentary online. As professional social workers however, it is our responsibility to understand and live by the Code of Ethics consistently.

- Students may approach Field Instructors, faculty or staff to connect on professional social media sites.
- If you are developing a website, social networking group or writing a blog that will mention the School of Social Work, your practicum and / or their employees or clients, identify that you are a student and that the views expressed on the blog or website are yours alone and do not represent the views of the School of Social Work and/or practicum agency.
- Unless given permission in writing by either the School of Social Work or your practicum supervisor, you are not authorized to speak on behalf of either the School of Social Work or your practicum agency.
- If you are developing a site, group or writing a blog that will mention the School of Social Work, your practicum and / or their employees or clients, as a courtesy to the School and/or agency, please let the School of Social Work and/or your practicum supervisor know that you are writing them - **and you should clearly state your goals and what your social medium intends to say or reflect.** Representatives of the School of Social Work and/or your practicum supervisor may choose to visit from time to time to understand your point of view.

Confidential Information Component of the Social Media Policy

You may not share information that is confidential about the School of Social Work, your practicum setting and/or clients and colleagues.

If you have any questions about whether information has been released publicly or doubts of any kind, speak with the Director of the School of Social Work, MSW Program Manager, the Field Education Coordinator or your Field Instructor before releasing information that could potentially harm the School of Social Work, your practicum and / or their employees or clients.

Respect and Privacy Rights

Speak respectfully about the School of Social Work, your practicum and / or their employees or clients. Do not engage in name-calling or behaviour that will reflect negatively on the School of Social Work or your practicum's reputation.

The School of Social Work encourages you to write knowledgeably and accurately, using appropriate professionalism. Despite disclaimers, your Web interaction can result in members of the public forming opinions about the School of Social Work, your practicum and / or their employees or clients.

Photographs

Taking and sharing photographs without consent is a breach of confidentiality. Agencies increasingly use photography for professional consultation, research, and education purposes. Know your agency's policy regarding photography including any limitations on its use.

Legal Liability

Recognize that you are legally liable for anything you write or present online. It must be noted that anything published on the web is NOT confidential. Students can be disciplined by the School of Social Work for commentary, content, or images that are defamatory, pornographic, proprietary, harassing, libelous, or that can create a hostile work environment. You can also be sued by any individual or organization that views your commentary, content, or images as defamatory, pornographic, proprietary, harassing, libelous or creating a hostile work environment.

Guidelines for Interactions with Clients (Past and Present) on the Internet

- Do not "friend" your clients (current or past) and do not allow your clients (current or past) to "friend" you.
- Do not use messaging on websites such as Twitter, Facebook, and LinkedIn to contact your clients or respond to clients who may have contacted you. These sites are not secure.
- Become intimately familiar with the privacy controls on these networks and ensure that the general public cannot see personal details of your life you would prefer to share only with your immediate friends and family.
- Only use your professional (work/practicum) email address to communicate with clients.
- All email communication with clients should be of a professional nature and not involve personal discussions and/or disclosures of any kind.
- Do not discuss details of your work with clients.
- If you choose to communicate with your clients by email, please be aware that all emails are retained in the logs of your and their Internet service providers. While it is unlikely that someone will be looking at these logs, they are, in theory, available to be read by the system administrator(s) of the Internet service provider.

Tips for Responding to Social Media Requests from Clients

Here are examples of what you can say to clients who request or attempt to contact you through any form of social media:

Friending

"I do not accept friend requests from current or former clients. This holds true on all social networking sites. My reasons for this are that I believe that adding clients as friends on these

websites can compromise confidentiality and blur the boundaries of our working relationship. If you have questions about this, please feel free to bring them up when we meet, and I will be happy to talk more about it."

Interacting

"Please do not use messaging on websites such as Twitter, Facebook, and LinkedIn to contact me. These sites are not secure, and I may not read these messages in a timely fashion. If you need to contact me, please use the system outlined in our first meeting."

Email

"I prefer to use email only to arrange or modify appointments. Please do not use email to send content related to our work together, as email is not completely secure or confidential. If you choose to communicate with me by email, please be aware that all emails are retained in the logs of your and my Internet service providers. While it is unlikely that someone will be looking at these logs, they are, in theory, available to be read by the system administrator(s) of the Internet service provider. You should also know that any email I receive from you and any responses that I send to you will be printed out by me and kept in your file."

Consequences

The use of unfounded or derogatory statements or misrepresentation of the School of Social Work, faculty, staff, colleagues, clients or fellow students can result in disciplinary action.

[Policy 71- Student Discipline](#) will inform and guide the procedures when concerns are identified.

Approved May 2011 (Updated May 2015)

Harassment and Discrimination Policy

Renison University College has developed a policy on Harassment and Discrimination, which is consistent with university-wide practice. This document fully outlines the philosophy, principles and procedures related to harassment and discrimination as they affect the Renison University College community, which includes practicum students and can be found online:

<https://uwaterloo.ca/renison/harassment-and-discrimination>

Specific procedures have been adopted that students can follow if an incident occurs during their practicum.

Renison University College cannot legally bind its practicum agencies to its harassment and discrimination policy. However, practicum agencies and the School of Social Work acknowledge a shared responsibility to work together regarding the field education of students.

Specific Procedures for the Student Experiencing Harassment or Discrimination during their practicum

- The student should document the experience immediately. Documentation should include such information as the date(s) and place(s) the incident(s) occurred, a description of the actual harassment experience(s), any earlier related incidents, discussions, observations made by others, etc. and the personal impact of the experience.
- The student should consult the harassment and discrimination policy of their practicum agency.

- In the absence of a harassment and discrimination policy at the agency, the student may consult the Renison University College policy.
- Students are encouraged to seek support from someone at the School of Social Work whom they trust and who can provide support and guidance. This individual could be the Field Education Coordinator, the Master’s Seminar Instructor, the MSW Program Manager or the Director of the School
- At any point in the process, the student may decide to pursue the complaint through the Human Rights Commission, the Social Work Regulatory/Governing Bodies in your Province or Territory, or the courts.

Petitions, Grievances, Appeals

Petitions, grievances and appeals in field education follow the same procedures as those practiced in the School of Social Work. [See Policy 70 – Student Petitions and Grievances](#)

The School of Social Work and Renison University College are committed to the view that when a problem or disagreement arises between a faculty member, field instructor, field education representative or practicum agency and a student, every effort should be made to resolve the problem through mutual and respectful negotiation. Most issues are resolved by a student/field education representative meeting to discuss differences of opinion. It is only after this stage that a student initiates a grievance.

The following policies are important to read and understand. These policies may come into play during your practicum and are important to be aware of. Please follow these links to review the policies in detail.

Ethical Behaviour	Policy 33
Health and Safety	Policy 34
Prevention and Response to Sexual Violence	Policy 42
Information Management	Policy 46
Conflict of Interest	Policy 69
Student Petitions and Grievances	Policy 70
Student Discipline	Policy 71
Student Appeals	Policy 72
Intellectual Property Rights	Policy 73

To refer to other UW policies, visit:
<https://uwaterloo.ca/secretariat/policies-procedures-guidelines>

The School of Social Work at Renison University College is committed to building healthy relationships in all our processes and in fostering an inclusive and supportive community of practice. To this end, we encourage collaboration, authenticity, and mutual respect between all parties in our field education endeavors.

APPENDIX I - SCHOOL OF SOCIAL WORK ADMINISTRATION

(MSW CONTACTS)

Director

Trish Van Katwyk
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519-884-4404 x 28681

MSW Program Manager

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Field Education Coordinator

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Field Education Coordinator

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**Administrator and Student
Services Manager**

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(519) 885-4404 x 28698

Assistant to the School of Social Work

Gwen Potter
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APPENDIX II – PRACTICUM FORMS

All students must submit or arrange submission of the following prior to the approval and commencement of the field practicum:

Current resumé (use own format)

[MSW Practicum Pre-Planning Form](#)

[MSW Practicum Proposal / Practicum Proposal for Current Place of Employment - fillable](#)

[Field Instructor Information Form - fillable](#) (completed by Field Instructor)

Ministry/insurance-related documents:

[Student Declaration of Understanding for Workplace Safety](#)

[Letter to Placement Employer](#) (completed by agency)

[Pre-Placement Field Trip Due Diligence Checklist – fillable](#) (completed by agency)

[Safety Orientation Checklist](#) (must be submitted or completed on IPT at the beginning of practicum)

These forms may also be found ONLINE as **fillable PDFs**. *You will need to have **Adobe Acrobat Reader** installed on your computer to access and complete the forms correctly. Click on each form to view the fillable form in a new window or visit this page to see all the forms:*

<https://uwaterloo.ca/school-of-social-work/msw-practicum-fillable-forms>

Please submit these forms via email to your Field Education Coordinator.



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APPENDIX III – EXAMPLES OF LEARNING OBJECTIVES FOR MSW PRACTICUM

Refer to this link for [Examples of Learning Objectives for MSW Practicum](#):

Please note that these examples are for your guidance only. Please think about what you hope to learn in your placement setting and in consultation with your Field Instructor personalize your learning objectives using your own words. (Please refer to Description of Learning and Assessment Tools for more details.)