



Master of Social Work Program

Field Education Policy Manual

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Field Coordinator

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Introduction

This manual has been prepared as a resource to be utilized by all Master of Social Work (MSW) program faculty members having responsibilities related to student field education, students preparing for or are currently enrolled in field education courses, social service organizations providing practicum experiences for students, and Field & Task Instructors within these organizations.

If, after reviewing the manual, you would like clarification on a policy or document, please reach out to the Field Coordinator at the contact information below:

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Overview of Field Education

The Council on Social Work Education (CSWE) is the national accrediting body for all Social Work programs in the United States. CSWE identifies field education as the “signature pedagogy” to emphasize much of the learning to prepare students for professional practice occurs while practicing their professional skills working directly with clients. Also, the mission of the MSW Program at BGSU includes preparing students for advanced practice and professional leadership. The MSW Program considers the field education experience as the final “capstone” and pathway to employment as a professional social worker.

CSWE has established 9 areas of competence to guide evaluating a student’s readiness for professional practice. Students will have all the 9 areas addressed in the various courses throughout the MSW Program’s curriculum. The field education experience is the time to integrate and demonstrate knowledge, values, skills, and cognitive/affective abilities students have gained in the classroom into their practice with clients.

The field education curriculum in the MSW Program at BGSU has 2 components. First, students complete a practicum (“Practica” is a Latin word meaning “practical training”.) A practicum is 2-3 semesters long depending on the degree track in which a student is enrolled. Regular Standing students complete 3 semesters (Summer, Fall & Spring) logging a minimum of 900 hours. Advanced Standing students complete 2 semesters (Fall & Spring), logging a minimum of 500 hours towards. Second, integrated with the practicum, students are enrolled in a practicum seminar class each semester. The seminar class is taught by MSW Program faculty with a focus on integrating theory and practice. The practicum and seminar combine to make a field education course.

SECTION I

MSW Program

1.1 – Purpose of Field Education in MSW Program

The Council on Social Work Education (CSWE), Educational Policy and Accreditation Standards (2015) states, “Social work competence is the ability to integrate and apply social work knowledge, values, and skills to practice situations in a purposeful, intentional, and professional manner to promote human and community well-being.” (p. 6). Since field education is the “signature pedagogy” of social work education, the purpose of the field education process is for students to develop their knowledge and skills to demonstrate their ability to effectively practice within each of the competency areas defined by the CSWE.

1.2 – Responsibilities of MSW Program Field Coordinator

1. Drafting, editing, publishing, disseminating and implementing all policies and procedures related to the field education portion of the MSW Program curriculum.
2. Staying up to date with field education policies and standards published by the program’s accrediting body, Council on Social Work Education (CSWE) in order to edit existing or draft new policies to remain in compliance with accreditation standards.
3. Recruiting and maintaining a sufficient and appropriate pool of practicum sites and qualified Field Instructors where students can complete required field education experiences.
4. Facilitate initial Affiliation Agreements be sent to the College of Health & Human Services (CHHS) Dean’s office and practicum organization representative for signatures. Monitor expiration dates for Affiliation Agreements and request renewal documents be signed.
5. Provide training and orientation to new and ongoing Field Instructors regarding the requirements of supervising students in practicum.
6. Orienting students to the field education process.
7. Interviewing each student applying for a practicum to assess the student’s academic, personal, and professional readiness.
8. Obtaining signed Release of Information forms between student and potential practicum organizations and sharing relevant documents to organization on behalf of students being considered for placement.
9. Planning, coordinating, and implementing “Focus on the Field” events for potential practicum organization representatives and MSW students to engage with each other.
10. Matching students with practicum organizations and Field Instructors and confirming all student placements.
11. If a problem occurs that may interfere with the successful completion of a student’s practicum and the problem cannot be mediated by the Field Faculty Liaison, the Field Coordinator will assist with developing a resolution. The final responsibility for conflict resolution and reassignment of students as needed is the Field Coordinator’s.
12. Communicating with the MSW Program Coordinator to keep them informed of field education related concerns and providing consultation as necessary.

13. Creating, collecting and storing all field education related documents from students including:
 - a. Learning Contracts
 - b. Evaluations of Student's Performance
 - c. Student Exit Surveys
 - d. Student's Log of Hours
 - e. Field Instructor Surveys
 - f. Place-of-Employment Practicum Proposals
15. Creating and disseminating practicum related data to the program's advisory board and coordinators as well as department, college, and university leadership.
16. Train and monitor the field education related responsibilities of Faculty Field Liaisons.
17. Other responsibilities as determined by the MSW Program Coordinator, Department of Human Services Chair, and Dean of the College of Health & Human Services.

1.3- Responsibilities of Faculty Field Liaison

There may be times when the Field Coordinator requires assistance to meet the demands of a high volume of students completing practicums during the same semester. During times of high student volume, a Faculty Field Liaison will provide support to the Field Coordinator by completing the following tasks:

1. Maintain ongoing contact with students and organizational representatives during practicum and arbitrate issues that may arise where either student or organization is having trouble. Notify the Field Coordinator in writing, sharing details of the conflict and resolution.
2. Conduct a minimum of one meeting with student and Field Instructor during each semester of the practicum to review the student's progress.
3. Monitor the educational progress of students.
4. Make themselves available to students and Field Instructors for support, problem-solving, and facilitation of learning activities to enhance students' educational experiences.
5. Teach the respective practicum seminar course for assigned students and submit field education course grades.

1.4- Responsibilities of MSW Program Coordinator

The MSW Program Coordinator offers administrative and leadership support to the Field Coordinator at times when university, college, department, or general program policies, that impact the field education process need interpretation. The MSW Program Coordinator also receives data related to student educational outcomes and program outcomes related to field education courses in order to provide the required data to the program's accreditation body, CSWE.

SECTION II

Practicum Organizations & Field Instructors

2.1 – Practicum Organization Eligibility

Strong, long-term partnerships with public and private social services organizations are essential to successfully delivering the field education curriculum to students. In order for an organization to be qualified as an appropriate site for hosting a student for a practicum, the following criteria must be met:

1. The organization's mission and service philosophy is compatible with the values and ethics of the social work profession and Bowling Green State University.
3. The organization's administration and staff must be open to providing the necessary educational opportunities for students to meet the program's learning objectives.
4. The organization exhibits interest and accessibility for participation in the educational process.
6. The organization's service offerings must be stable and maintained without reliance on student labor.
7. The organization should be able to offer students assignments and experiences based on the student's current stage of professional development, in accordance with the educational objectives and guidelines defined in the Learning Contract. The organization must offer learning experiences that are compatible with the scope of practice of a Master-level, social work practitioner. Experiences should progress from generalist to advanced-level practice and provide students with opportunities to interact with diverse populations and client systems of all sizes (i.e. - individuals, families, groups, organizations, and communities).
* If an interested organization does not have access to all the necessary educational experiences, arrangements can be made with the Field Coordinator for supplemental learning experiences to be offered in addition to what the organization provides.
8. In organizational settings that may not be directly social services driven such as a hospital, school or court, the social services department must be an integral part of the institution, both in the structural organization of service and in philosophy.
9. The organization is committed to equal opportunity personnel policies.
10. The organization attempts to make available the necessary resources for the student to fulfill their practicum responsibilities such as, but not specifically limited to: workspace, technology including access to electronic client records, office supplies, reimbursement for transportation costs related to organizational business, etc.
11. The organization agrees to the terms and responsibilities outlined in an Affiliation Agreement (A sample can be found in the appendix section of this manual.), to be signed by an administrator of the organization and the Dean of College of Health and Human Services at the University.
12. The organization will provide a qualified Field and/or Task Instructor to supervise the student's practicum activities. The organization must allow the Instructor(s) time to provide required supervision to the student and attend periodic trainings offered by Program faculty.

2.2 - Field Instructor Eligibility & Responsibilities

The Field Instructor is one of the most essential components of the student's practicum experience. The Field Instructor serves as the primary supervisor and final evaluator of the student's performance at the organization. The Field Instructor, along with the Faculty Field Liaison, supports the student as they prepare for advanced-level practice. The Council on Social Work Education (CSWE) establishes eligibility criteria for who can supervise and evaluate a MSW student's competency. Those criteria are possessing a Master of Social Work degree (or equivalent) and a minimum of two years post-Master's degree practice experience.

A Field Instructors responsibilities are:

1. Provide consistent and ongoing supervision, a minimum of 1-hour weekly, to the student throughout the practicum process.
2. Provide the student with adequate learning opportunities to develop and demonstrate their competency. If needed, assist the student with facilitating contact with other staff at the organizations so the student can practice all areas outlined in the Learning Contract.
3. Complete student performance evaluations at the end of each semester.
4. Maintain communication with the Faculty Field Liaison, including but not limited to, the once per semester meeting and concerns about the student's performance, especially if performance is considered unacceptable to continue the practicum.
5. Attend required Field Instructor training and orientation sessions.

2.3- Task Instructor Eligibility & Responsibilities

Some social service organizations meet the eligibility criteria to be an appropriate practicum site, but do not have a representative qualified and willing to be a Field Instructor. In other cases, some Field Instructors at qualified organizations provide supervision to numerous students at the same time, and are therefore, limited on the amount of time they can spend with each student beyond the 1-hour required each week. In both situations a Task Instructor may be utilized to provide the student with a more direct supervisory support.

A Task Instructor is someone that either does not meet the degree and/or experience requirements to be a Field Instructor by CSWE standards but has been deemed competent to supervise the day-to-day activities of MSW students within the organization's setting. Utilizing a Task Instructor can be helpful if they have more specialized knowledge in a practice area where the Field Instructor may have only limited knowledge, or if they can provide more direct supervision to the student through direct observation of work with clients and feedback to the student than the Field Instructor is able.

The requirements and responsibilities of a Task Instructor are:

1. Possess a Master's degree in a field aligned with Social Work knowledge, values and skills.
2. Employed at the practicum organization for a minimum of 6 months.
3. Have at least 2 years-experience working in a social service organization.
4. Have on-going access to provide and receive feedback to the Field Instructor about the student's performance.
5. Participate in meetings when the Faculty Field Liaison meets with the student and Field Instructor a minimum of once per semester.
6. Contribute to the evaluations of the student's performance.

2.4- Student Evaluation of Field Instructor & Organization

With the goal of maintaining high quality Field Instructors and organizations, each student is required to complete an evaluation of both based on their practicum experience. The student completes this evaluation at the end of the final semester of practicum. The organization and Field Instructor can request a copy of students' evaluations. If the organization and/or Field Instructor receive numerous, consecutive, and comparable negative evaluations from students, the organization is at risk of not being referred to additional students until the cause of the negative evaluation is resolved.

2.5- Field Instructor Evaluation of Program

With the goal of maintaining a high quality MSW Field Education program, Field Instructors are asked to complete an "Evaluation of MSW Field Education Program at BGSU" at the end of a student's practicum. This survey asks the Field Instructor to rate the program on specific tasks or curriculum content and evaluate how well the curriculum has prepared students for practicum and advanced-level professional social work practice.

2.6- Field Instructor Evaluation of Faculty Field Liaison

With the goal of providing high quality support, Field Instructors are asked to evaluate the Faculty Field Liaison related to their job performance, accessibility, and overall support in the practicum process. It also is a tool that the Field Instructor can use to make suggestions on improvements to the program's curriculum.

SECTION III

Students

3.1 – Eligibility Criteria for Students to Apply for a Practicum

Traditional/Regular Standing students are eligible to apply for a practicum if the following conditions are met:

1. The student has a GPA of 3.0 or higher, and is in academic good standing with the program.
2. Successfully completed or currently enrolled in the follow courses: SOWK 5000, SOWK 5005, SOWK 5060, SOWK 5100, SOWK 5160, SOWK 5205 and SOWK 5220.

Part-Time Advanced Standing students are eligible to apply for a field practicum if the following conditions are met:

1. The student has a GPA of 3.0 or higher, and is in good academic standing in the program.
2. Successfully completed or enrolled in the following courses: SOWK 5120, SOWK 5500, SOWK 6000, and GERO 6010.

Full-Time Advanced Standing students are eligible to apply for a practicum at the time of admission into the MSW program.

3.2 - Application for Practicum

The process for acceptance into the field education portion of the program's curriculum and securing a practicum has six key components:

1. Meet or exceed the academic standards highlighted in the policy above.
2. Submit a complete practicum application.
3. Complete an interview with the Field Coordinator.
4. Complete interview(s) with prospective practicum organization representatives and Field Instructor.
5. Receive confirmation of the secured practicum from Field Coordinator.
6. Complete any mandatory orientation tasks the practicum organization requires.

Each component must be completed in entirety prior to the student beginning practicum.

A. The Practicum Application & Interview

The Practicum Application has several specific components. There is a written application and readiness for practicum interview between the Field Coordinator and applying student. Both components and must be completed and submitted by the deadline set by the Field Coordinator in the semester prior to beginning the practicum. The application consists of information related to the following topics:

1. Student Profile – student contact information, including emergency contacts that will assist the Field Instructor, Faculty Field Liaison, Field Coordinator in communicating with the student.
2. Statement of student's goals and objectives for field, including any personal issues that may

interfere with performance in and completion of the practicum.

3. A resume including information regarding the student's education, employment and volunteer experiences.
4. A self- statement that provides a sample of the student's writing and goals for practicum and social work career.
5. Release of Information forms for each organization where the student is planning to interview for a potential practicum. Once the practicum organization is confirmed, this release will allow ongoing communication between the University and practicum organization.
6. A Memorandum of Understanding reflecting the guidelines of the field related courses and behavioral expectations of the student during the practicum process.

The interview portion the application process will be scheduled between the Field Coordinator and the student. The focus of the interview will be assessing the student's academic, personal, and professional readiness for a practicum. Areas discussed will include the student's academic performance, any personal limitations of the student (such as criminal background, employment and/or caregiving responsibilities, etc.), preferences of organizations, areas of practice, and goals for professional growth.

If, during the interview, the Field Coordinator deems the student has limitations that will prevent them from meeting the academic and/or professional readiness standards for entering a practicum, the Field Coordinator will provide the student with a written action plan outlining the issue preventing the students place, options to resolve the issue (if possible), what documentation the student needs to submit to the Field Coordinator, and a deadline for submission. If resolution of the issue can be achieved before the application for practicum deadline passes, the student will be able to submit their application immediately. If the issue cannot be resolved before the application deadline passes, the student can apply for a practicum the semester before the next time the field education course sequence is offered.

If, after the interview, the student deems they are not personally ready to enter a practicum, the student can postpone their practicum decision. The student's application may remain on file for one calendar year. When the student is ready to begin practicum planning again, the application may simply be updated instead of needing to complete a new, full application.

If both the Field Coordinator and the student mutual agree about readiness to progress with applying for a practicum, the Field Coordinator will provide the student with contact information for potential organizations that could meet the student's interests and educational needs. If a student requests a specific organization that is not currently in the database of existing organizations the program has an affiliation, the Field Coordinator will initiate contact with the organization to screen/vet and deem appropriateness as a practicum site prior to the student being placed at the organization. The student will also complete Release of Information form(s) providing the Field Coordinator with permission to share their information with the potential

organization. The Field Coordinator will share the student's resume and self-assessment with the selected organization(s) to inform them of the student's interest.

B. Student Interview with the Potential Practicum Organization

1. Once the Field Coordinator sends the student's information to the potential organization, it is the student's responsibility to contact the organization's representative to schedule an interview.
2. Students need to interview the organization to determine:
 - a. The compatibility of the student's goals, objectives, and expectations for practicum with the experiences the organization has to offer.
 - b. The student's perception of their ability to meet the organization's expectations for a practicum student.
 - c. If any additional requirements that need to be completed prior to beginning a practicum. This can include, but is not limited to: additional immunizations, medical tests (i.e.- chest x-ray or physical), fingerprinting, drug testing, etc.
3. Once interview(s) are complete, the student is responsible for providing the Field Coordinator with feedback related to practicum organization preferences.

C. The Placement Confirmation

Confirmation of placement involves several steps that are designed to assure the best possible match between the student and placement organization. The steps for confirmation are as follows:

1. The student provides the Field Coordinator a rank ordered list of preferred practicum organizations choices.
2. The practicum organization's representative provides the Field Coordinator with a rank ordered list of preferred students. For organizations that are willing to host multiple students, the number of students the organization is willing to accept is also provided.
3. The Field Coordinator will attempt to match the first preferences of both the organization and student. If this is not possible, the Field Coordinator will consult with the student about available options or the need to apply and interview with additional organizations.
4. Once all parties agree and placement has been approved by the Field Coordinator, an official practicum confirmation letter is sent to the organization's representative and the student is immediately notified of being placed. The letter lists the start and end dates of the practicum, seminar course information, supervision requirements, and contact information for the Field Coordinator.

3.3 - Responsibilities of Student during Practicum

The student's responsibilities to successfully complete a practicum are:

1. Be punctual. Be available to complete practicum duties during the scheduled times and days, agreed upon by the Task and Field Instructor.
2. Document practicum time appropriately. Students are required to document their time in a Log of Hours form provided by the program and gather signatures from their Task Instructor, Field Instructor, and/or Faculty Field Liaison for time earned completing tasks/activities for their practicum organization and attending practicum seminar class sessions.
3. In case of an emergency creating tardiness or absence, the student will notify the Field and/or Task Instructor(s) in the same method staff at the organization are required to notify supervisors.
4. Make up time missed for emergencies not addressed by university or practicum organization policy.
5. Comply with the practicum organization's policies related to professionalism such as respectful communication, dress code, boundaries with clients, timely documentation, etc. (Refer to the practicum organization's policy manual for specific information.).
6. Abide by other regulations pertaining to staff behavior. This would include things such as regulation of certain conduct and the handling of records. **Students are not to access client records without consent from their practicum supervisor(s).** This demonstrates respect for the confidentiality and privacy of clients.
7. Comply with all standards listed in the NASW's Code of Ethics.
8. Participate fully in all tasks listed in the Learning Contract to improve knowledge, values and skills.
9. Participate in self-evaluation and display openness to critical evaluation of student's performance by Field Instructor.
10. Contact the Faculty Field Liaison and/or Field Coordinator, should problems develop in the practicum organization which the student cannot resolve in cooperation with the assigned Field Instructor.
11. Attend the Field Seminar class sessions and complete all assignments by due dates.

3.4 – Practicum Seminar Classes

Seminar classes are integrated into all field education courses. The seminar class occurs in-person with MSW Program faculty on main campus. The purpose of the class is to supplement the learning obtained in the practicum organization setting by allowing students an educational environment to process the connection and integration of theory with professional social work practice. Seminar classes cannot be taken as an independent study. Students are required to complete assignments directly related to their practicum experience. Students receive a traditional letter grades (A-F) for seminar class assignments. Assignment grades will be a portion of the overall grade for field education courses.

3.5 - Student Evaluation of Field Education Process

With the goal of maintaining a high quality field education process, at the end of the practicum experience students will be required to complete an evaluation of the program's field education process. The evaluation survey covers areas related to the: Field Instructor, practicum organization, Faculty Field Liaison/Seminar Instructor, seminar course content, and Field Coordinator. Specific emphasis is given to what the student views at the strengths and areas for improvement in the process as well as recommendations for future practicum students.

SECTION IV

General Policies

4.1 - Monitoring, Evaluation, and Completion of Practicum

A. Monitoring

All students will be regularly monitored throughout the practicum experience. At minimum, the Faculty Field Liaison or Field Coordinator will make phone calls and/or emails to the Field Instructor to monitor the student's progress. The Faculty Field Liaison or Field Coordinator will also meet with the Field Instructor and student once per semester to discuss the student's strengths, areas needing improvement, and professional goals. If necessary, more frequent contact can occur between the student, Field Instructor, Faculty Field Liaison and Field Coordinator to problem solve issues and resolve concerns that arise during the practicum.

B. Evaluation

Evaluation of the student's performance in practicum involves input from the student, the Field Instructor, and the Faculty Field Liaison.

The Evaluation of Student Performance is a document completed by the Field Instructor, with input from the student and Task Instructor (if applicable), at the end of each semester. The evaluation rates the student's practice skills in the nine competency areas defined by CSWE and covered in the Learning Contract. The student will be scored on a 1-5 scale on each specific task outlined in the Learning Contract. Field Instructors are also prompted to provide formal, written feedback related to the student's strengths, weaknesses, areas for growth, and readiness for professional practice. Any student that receives a score of "unacceptable" on any portion of the evaluation will receive zero points for the evaluation assignment in the related field education course and will not be able to pass the course. Students who receive an average score of "acceptable" or below on the evaluation will receive ½ the available points for the evaluation assignment in the field practicum course. Students who receive an average score of "good" or higher will receive full points for the evaluation assignment in the field practicum course.

C. Completion

The MSW program has two curriculums, Traditional/Regular Stand and Advanced Standing.

Completion of practicum for the Traditional/Regular Standing curriculum includes:

- 3 semesters of practicum (summer, fall & spring)
- Log a minimum of 900 hours in practicum activities
- Receive an overall average score of a 4 out of 5 on end of the practicum evaluation.

Completion of practicum for the Advanced Standing curriculum includes:

- 2 semesters of practicum (fall & spring)
- Log a minimum of 500 hours in practicum activities.

- Receive an overall average score of 4 out of 5 on end of the practicum evaluation.

Student must submit a completed Log of Hours form, with signature from their assigned Field Instructor and/or Task Instructor, at the end of each semester in practicum. The minimum hours requirement must be met at the end of the final semester of practicum. The end of semester evaluations are completed by the student's Field Instructor and submitted directly to the Field Coordinator. The student will receive a grade of "Incomplete" in the field education course if a Log of Hours and evaluation are not submitted by the end of the semester. The Field Coordinator will submit a "Change of Grade" form to post final field education course grade once both documents are received and approved.

If a student is not performing acceptably within a practicum setting and completion is in question, the following options can be implemented:

1. The student can remain in the organization after the semester ends and complete additional hours to improve their competency. This option requires development of a plan with specific behaviors and outcomes that need to be accomplished before the student will be considered completed.
2. The student can re-take the field education course and determine a different organization to complete the practicum.
3. If an emergency occurs that prevents the student from attending the practicum, the student may be eligible to receive a grade of 'Incomplete' which allows the student additional time to resolve the issue(s) before resuming and completing the practicum. In this case, documentation from healthcare provider may be required before the student can resume practicum activities.
4. The Field Instructor or student can request a change in practicum site that would better suit the student's needs.

4.2 - Learning Contracts

The Council on Social Work Education (CSWE) has established nine topic areas that define competent social work practice. The MSW program at BGSU has developed observable skills to measure competency in each of the areas. Those skills make up the contents of the Learning Contract. Therefore, the Learning Contract is a standardized list of developmentally appropriate tasks to demonstrate knowledge and skills each student should be able to become independent during their practicum experience.

The Learning Contract is an agreement between the student and the Field Instructor stating each party will actively work towards completion of these tasks. The role of the Field Instructor is to guide the student in gaining access to practice situations where they will have the opportunity to practice their skills. The student's role is to actively participate in the opportunities, and to also

propose potential educational opportunities to the Field Instructor. The student should not participate in activities at the organization without the consent of the Field Instructor. The Field Instructor should not limit the ability of the student to gain access to educational opportunities within the organizational setting unless the student is at personal risk or there are ethical boundary concerns. As a point of clarification, due to the educational nature of the student's practicum experience, a student may be given access to participate in certain activities where the organization's employees may be limited. However, students are bound to the ethical principle of confidentiality regarding the organization's information.

Despite the standardized nature of the Learning Contract, there is room for diversity and individualization when deciding what tasks, a student could complete to demonstrate competency in the highlighted areas. Students and Field Instructors have the freedom to interpret how the day-to-day practices of the organization apply to the Learning Contract. The student and Field Instructor should consult the Faculty Field Liaison or Field Coordinator if they have questions or concerns on how to accomplish any of the listed tasks in the Learning Contract. The student needs to share the Learning Contract with the Field Instructor during their initial supervision sessions. The student and the Field Instructor should review the contract, initial next to each competency area, and sign their names at the bottom of the contract as a symbol of their commitment to fulfill the tasks. The student needs to submit the initialed and signed Learning Contract to their seminar course instructor by the established deadline.

The evaluations completed by the Field Instructor regarding the student's performance in field is directly linked to the tasks listed in the Learning Contract.

4.3 – Change or Termination of Practicum Site

Despite the best effort to thoroughly screen and match students with appropriate practicum organizations and supervisors, there is sometimes the need to make changes within the same organization or terminate the practicum completely. These changes or termination could be due to student, Field Instructor, or organizational issues. Ideally, these changes would be completed prior to the starting date of the student's practicum. However, there are occasions where changes or termination needs to take place during the practicum. Sometimes a student can be re-placed in another organization in the same semester, or a student may need to stop the field education process until the issue(s) can be resolved.

A. Issues that Require a Change or Termination

The change of placement can be requested by the student, Field Instructor, Faculty Field Liaison, or Field Coordinator. The following are potential reasons to change and/or terminate a practicum:

Student Issues:

1. The student experiences an exacerbation of an existing medical condition or is diagnosed with a new medication condition, the severity of which will not allow the student to perform adequately in a particular organizational setting.
2. The student experiences counter transference or secondary trauma due to participating in tasks/activities at the placement organization, the severity of which will not allow the student to perform adequately in a particular organizational setting.
3. The student experiences a personal crisis, the severity of which will not allow them to perform adequately in a particular organizational setting. Examples of this include, but are not limited to, loss of a family member, partner, or close friend; sexual assault; fire or vandalism to the student's residence or becoming a victim of crime.
4. The student engages in unprofessional, unethical or illegal behavior as determined by the Ohio Revised Code, NASW Code of Ethics, University Code of Conduct, or practicum organization policy/procedure.

Field Instructor Issues:

1. The Field Instructor leaves the organization and an appropriate replacement to fill the role cannot be found.
2. The Field Instructor's schedule has changed and will not only be able to accommodate the demands of appropriately supervising the student as originally anticipated.

Organizational Issues:

1. There is internal conflict within the organization that is having an adverse effect on the student and prevents the student from receiving the educational experiences necessary.
2. The student is subjected to behavior by staff or clients at the organization that is considered unethical or illegal by professional standards, the Ohio Revised Code and/or the NASW Code of Ethics. This behavior can include, but is not limited to: sexual harassment, repeated boundary violations, fraudulent record keeping, violating Department of Labor laws regarding "intern" status.
3. The students' interests and goals are not compatible with the experiences the organization is providing, resulting in the student not receiving to the educational experiences necessary to fulfill the Learning Contract.

B. Procedure to Change or Terminate Practicum Based on Student Issues

An exhaustive list could never be created for all the potential reasons to change or terminate a practicum. All parties involved must communicate openly with each other and actively participate in the procedure below to review appropriateness for the student to continue. As a caveat to the procedure, the Field Coordinator and the Faculty Field Liaison reserve the right to remove the student from the practicum site if the student's safety is at immediate risk. Also, the Field Instructor has the right to terminate the student's practicum if the student has intentionally caused harm or put clients or the organization at risk.

Level 1

- One-on-one meeting between Field Instructor (FI) and student to identify and discuss issue(s), desired change(s), and a timeframe for change.
- If issues are appropriately addressed and resolved, no further follow up is needed.
- If issues continue or intensify, move to Level 2 Review initiated by FI sending documentation of concern and lack of resolution to Faculty Field Liaison (FFL).

Level 2

- FFL meets with FI and student to review issues and lack of resolution.
- FFL makes recommendations for changes and completes a plan of action as an addendum to the Learning Contract. Documentation from meeting will go into student's file with the Program's Field Coordinator (FC).
- If issues are resolved, no further follow up is needed.
- If issues continue or intensify, move to a Level 3 Review initiated by student being temporarily removed from practicum organization until FFL can organize a faculty panel to review issues.

Level 3

- FFL notifies Field Coordinator (FC) of issue.
- FC organizes a panel of program faculty to review the issue. The panel should include FFL, FC & MSW Program Coordinator.
- The student attends the panel meeting and provides shares a written or verbal statement explaining their interpretation of the issue.
- Faculty panel renders a decision regarding the student's status in practicum, but also in the MSW program overall.
- Student has the right to appeal the panel's decision to the Chair of the Department of Human Services, then to the Graduate College per MSW program policy.

The decision of the faculty panel will result in one of 3 actions.

1. The student will remain in the program with no conditions. The Field Coordinator will begin working with the student to find an alternative organization to complete their practicum.
2. The student will remain in the program but needs to take specific actions to remedy the issue(s). Examples of actions may be, but are not limited to pursuing medical treatment,

counseling, completing more social work courses, etc. If the student provides documentation of successfully completing the conditions, they can apply for a practicum the next time field education courses are offered. If the student does not successfully complete the conditions set by the panel, the student will be considered expelled from the program.

3. The student will be immediately expelled from the program due to unprofessional, unethical and/or illegal behavior.

4.4 – Employment-as-Practicum

The Council on Social Work Education (CSWE) states there are two criteria which must be met for any practicum to be considered acceptable for course credit. Those criteria are:

- 1.) The practicum activities must provide opportunities for a student to demonstrate the nine social work competencies and corresponding practice indicators for the program in which the student is enrolled.
- 2.) The student’s practicum must be supervised by an MSW-level social worker who has a minimum of 2 years post-MSW professional social work practice experience.

Beyond these two criteria of CSWE, Bowling Green State University requires all organizations hosting students for field education experiences to sign an Affiliation Agreement outlining the legal requirements for hosting students.

If all three of these criteria can be met, the student’s employment may count as meeting all or a portion of practicum requirements.

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CSWE has also created the following standards (in bold) for employment-based field practicums.

**The program provides its policy related to field placements in an organization in which the student is also employed. If permitted, the program’s policy includes:**

- i. How the program ensures that student assignments are directly linked to the nine social work competencies (and any additional competencies added by the program) and level of practice (generalist or specialized);**

A student requesting their employment count towards practicum requirements must provide an official position/job description, on their employment organization’s letterhead, to the MSW Program Field Coordinator as part of their application for a practicum. The Field Coordinator will review the description to determine if the listed tasks are relevant to CSWE’s competency areas and at what level of practice, based on program’s established Learning Contracts.

If the Field Coordinator determines tasks are relevant, the student and their employment supervisor will then meet with the Field Coordinator to:

- 1.) Discuss areas of competency and/or levels of practice not explicitly addressed in the position/job description to plan for additional learning activities for the student to demonstrate their competence.
- 2.) Discuss potential options for practicum supervision.

If some but not all aspects of the competencies are occurring through the student's employment tasks, the student, the employment supervisor, and/or Field Instructor will propose plans for additional tasks/activities to address the additional competency areas for the student to demonstrate their knowledge, values, skills, and/or cognitive/affective ability.

The Field Coordinator will be responsible for reviewing all proposals, providing feedback to all relevant parties and accepting or deny proposals. Accepted proposals must be signed off by the student, employment supervisor, Field Instructor (if different than the employment supervisor) and any other administrator at the organization that may need to approve the student's plan.

**ii. How field education supervision is distinct from employment supervision time, even when provided by the same supervisor.**

A student whose employment has been approved to utilize their employment as their practicum and their employment supervisor will also be serving as their Field Instructor must complete weekly supervision log forms to the instructor of record (i.e. - Faculty Field Liaison) for the student's field practicum course. The supervision form must document supervision time and date, goals for the supervision session, topics discussed during session and alignment of discussion with competency areas, and feedback from supervisor to student.

**iii. How the program assists students with field education continuation or change in situations where a student becomes unemployed in an organization where field education has co-occurred with employment.**

If an organization terminates the student's employment and therefore the student's practicum due to unethical, unprofessional or performance below an acceptable level, the student will fail the field practicum course in which they are presently enrolled at the time of termination.

If a student loses their employment and therefore their practicum due to no fault of their own (layoff, program termination, etc.), the Field Coordinator will immediately begin planning with the student to find a replacement practicum opportunity. As with all cases of an interruption to an existing practicum, there may be a gap of time between practicum and the ability to log hours and demonstrate competency may be delayed. This time gap could cause the student to need to stay at the newly established practicum beyond the end of the traditional semester.

If a student voluntarily ends their employment and therefore their practicum at the organization or leave the position that was originally approved by the Field Coordinator for employment as practicum, the student will need to either request their newly acquired position be considered as a practicum or find an alternative practicum themselves.

The expectation is once a practicum is confirmed by the Field Coordinator, the student will retain their practicum unless unforeseen circumstances cause the practicum to no longer meet their educational needs.

Students pursuing this option should prepare to provide the Field Coordinator with a copy of their job/position description, on their employment organization's letterhead, and the contact information for their employment supervisor.

#### **4.5- Social Media Use in During Field Education Process**

In the age of technology and information sharing on social media platforms such as, but not limited to: Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, Snapchat, YouTube, TikTok, Reddit, etc., it can be particularly helpful in building connections with colleagues and maintaining relationships with friends and family. However, as a result, the boundary between personal and professional information has become increasingly blurry. Due to social work's professional standards and the obligation to follow the *National Association of Social Workers Code of Ethics*, social workers need to continually assess the ethical implications/complications of social media use, not only as practicing social workers, but also in the training of social work students. While social media tools obviously present many useful and exciting opportunities to spread the mission of social service agencies, the features that enable these benefits also present potentially serious challenges in maintaining privacy and confidentiality. Privacy, confidentiality, and the establishment of professional boundaries in particular, can be hindered when the necessary precautions to protect the student/employee and clients have not been established.

If the practicum organization already has a policy on social media use, this policy should be shared with students as part of the organization's orientation process. Even without formal policies specific to social media, the practicum organization should have clear guidelines and expectations for students regarding confidentiality, privacy, and professional boundaries at the

organization and in the community.

Because of the diverse mission and services of practicum organizations and the perpetually changing nature of the social media landscape, the program offers the following questions and guidelines to aid students and practicum organization representatives discuss appropriate online conduct within their unique context.

**1. What type of information is okay to share on a personal social media platform?**

- a. It is inappropriate for students to refer to any practicum organization, client, client situation, etc. on their personal social media pages no matter how ‘tight’ security settings have been set.
- b. While social workers have an ethical obligation to protect the privacy of their clients, no such restrictions prevent a client from searching for information about a student or employee. Any photos, videos, written comments, and other postings could impact a social worker’s personal safety and/or professional competence.
- c. Students should be expected to exercise great care in how they represent the social work profession in their online activities. It is very easy for a person not involved in a situation to misinterpret statements, images, or video content out of context. (See *NASW Code of Ethics Section 4.06a: Misrepresentation.*)

**2. When, if ever, is it permissible to conduct searches on social media platforms for information about an individual, family, group, organization, or community-based client?**

- a. In a macro-practice setting, where a social worker is trying to engage with a group, organization, or community to aid with outreach, recruitment, surveying, etc., it may be common practice to search social media sites.
- b. In a case management or treatment-based relationship with individuals and families or groups such searches may lead to boundary violations and other interference with both client trust and the therapeutic process. (See *NASW Code of Ethics Section 1.07a: Privacy and Confidentiality.*)

**3. What is the policy on “friending” current or past clients? Are there any contexts in which this might be acceptable? (See *NASW Code of Ethics Section 1.06c: Conflict of Interest.*)**

The short answer is, no. It is important to maintain appropriate boundaries and strive to reduce potential role confusion with current and former clients.

**4. How can social media be used to further the mission and goals of the practicum organization? How does a student present the organization’s information on a social media**

## **platform in a professionally appropriate manner?**

It is in the profession's best interest to remind students that social media platforms are public domains with all information able to be accessed by anyone. Once information is in "cyberspace", it never goes away. As a result, students and organizations should exercise caution when sharing information publicly, and always aim to limit any harm to individuals or the organization.

### **4.6 - Student Liability, Health, and Auto Insurance**

#### **A. *Liability Insurance***

1. Bowling Green State University (BGSU) provides general liability coverage to the student for no out-of-pocket cost. Students may also choose to purchase additional coverage through membership in the National Association of Social Workers (NASW). BGSU's policy will only cover the student during the time they are completing practicum activities. Once the student completes the practicum, the coverage is terminated. Insurance purchased through NASW would cover the student for as long as they maintain the policy.
2. The Field Coordinator is responsible for notifying the Risk Management Department at BGSU of the names of the students who will be participating in the field education course sequence.
3. The Field Coordinator will send a copy of the student's liability insurance coverage verification to the assigned practicum organization's representatives, as well as holding a copy in the student's file.

#### **B. *Health Insurance***

All students at Bowling Green State University are required to maintain health insurance coverage. Students may participate in health plans through their own employment, through their family, or purchase the insurance offered to students by the University.

#### **C. *Auto Insurance***

1. There are some practicum organizations that request students utilize their own automobiles to complete organizational tasks. Before transporting clients in their personal vehicles, students should receive proper safety training from the organization, ensure their auto insurance meet the standards of the organization, and have access to a supervisor by phone in case of emergency during transportation.

2. Students may need to provide proof of insurance and a copy of their driver's license to any organization in which client transportation is an expectation. Please note:
  - a. Some insurance companies require additional coverage for "business" reasons. This is the type of insurance coverage most often needed for client transportation.
  - b. Students who require this type of coverage must verify the need with their own insurance company and provide verification of coverage to the practicum organization and Field Coordinator.
  - c. Students may check with the practicum organization to determine if any mechanisms of reimbursement exist for the potential cost accrued to adding the "business" rider on their auto insurance policy.
  - d. Students who have poor driving records or current traffic citations, may be excluded from practicum organizations that require client transportation for liability reasons.
  - e. Students need to check their personal driving records to be sure there are no issues of concern that could prevent them from being accepted into a potential practicum organization, and if there are issues, be ready to explain the circumstances to practicum organization's representatives and/or Field Coordinator.

#### **4.7 – Student Vaccinations**

The program nor the university require students receive any specific vaccinations. However, practicum organizations can require students to comply with their standards for vaccinations as a condition of beginning a practicum. It is the student's responsibility to comply with the vaccination standards of a practicum organization where they have been placed. Students must communicate any limitations to receiving vaccinations based on religious, medical, or other reasons to the Field Coordinator during the practicum application process.

#### **4.8 – Adverse Incidents & Safety Planning**

The program asks practicum organization representatives to inform the Faculty Field Liaison and/or Field Coordinator of any adverse event such as, but not limited to accident, assault, or harassment involving the student while completing practicum activities. All students have completed a Release of Information granting permission for the University to receive information from the practicum organization throughout the entirety of the field education experience. As a result, the program asks practicum organization representatives to share the incident report they have completed with the University. If an official incident report was not

filed at the organization or the report cannot be shared with outside entities, an organizational representative needs to contact the Faculty Field Liaison and/or Field Coordinator to provide specific information about how the student was involved in the incident.

Once a written or verbal report has been received from the organization, the program faculty will follow up with the Field Instructor and student to plan for the student to receive the appropriate services necessary to maintain the student's well-being and safety.

If faculty decide the student's safety and well-being cannot be maintained at the organization, faculty can choose to remove the student from the practicum until appropriate safety practices/procedures are in place.

#### **4.9- Closure of Practicum Organization or University**

In the event the practicum organization or university closes due poor weather, holidays, or any other reason the administration deems necessary to close, the student is not required to attend their practicum. However, the student can attend their practicum if they choose. It is the student's responsibility to communicate with their practicum supervisor(s) if the university closes and the closure is going to impact their attendance at the practicum organization. Practicum supervisors should include the student on any communication related to the organization's closure during a time when the student is scheduled to attend.

To earn hours towards the practicum requirement despite closure(s) students can complete activities away from the facility including providing services to clients remotely or virtually, research projects, social policy analysis, grant writing, training relevant to social work practice, etc. For practicum activities completed and hours earned away from the practicum organization's facilities, students need to provide documentation of activities to the Field Instructor and/or Task Instructor when they return to the organization. Students will need to make up hours missed if no documentation of activities is provided to practicum supervisor(s).

#### **4.10- Student Attendance at Practicum if University Classes Are Not in Session**

The student is covered by the university's liability insurance to attend their practicum throughout the semesters in which they are enrolled in field education courses. As a result, students can participate in practicum activities any time they are enrolled in field education courses, including days classes are not in session (i.e. – Fall Break, Spring Break, breaks between semesters, holidays, weekends, etc.).

#### **4.11- Earning & Documenting Time Towards Hours Requirement**

Regular Standing students must earn a minimum of 900 hours completing practicum related activities over the span of their 3 semesters in field education courses. Advanced Standing

students must earn a minimum of 500 hours completing practicum related activities over the span of their 2 semesters in field education courses.

Time can be earned working in-person at the organization's facilities, remotely (away from facility with no live audio or video contact), or virtually (away from facility but with live audio and video contact). Practicum related activities can be working directly with clients (individuals, families, groups, organizations, or communities), receiving training to improve knowledge and skills for practice, research, supervision sessions, any other task related to the Learning Contract or assigned by a practicum supervisor. Students and practicum supervisors should work together to establish a schedule for the student to earn the required hours.

Students also earn time towards the hours requirement by attending practicum seminar class sessions.

Students will document their time and practicum activities using the 'Log of Hours' form provided by the Field Coordinator. The student, Field Instructor or Task Instructor, and Practicum Seminar Faculty will each sign the Log of Hours forms confirming the information on the log is accurate to the best of their knowledge.