



2022 – 2023 Field Manual

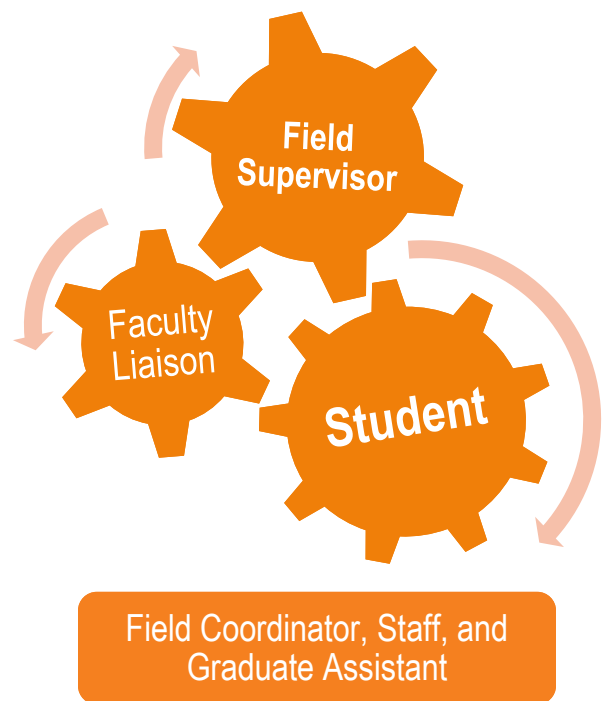
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Field Education at WMU's School of Social Work

WMU is proud to offer quality field education opportunities to BSW and MSW students to develop professional-level competencies in social work practice at micro, mezzo, and macro levels. The field experience is the signature pedagogy of the profession because it is the most fundamental way that social work practice is taught. Field education involves coordination among four key groups of people including:

1. The **Student**
2. The **Field Education Director/Coordinator**, who coordinates all field placements and processes
3. The **Field Supervisor**, who oversees learning opportunities at the organization and provides student supervision
4. The **Faculty Liaison**, who is instructor of record for the field education course and who provides the vital link between the Field site and the School of Social Work
5. Field office staff, who include graduate assistants and administrative assistants who both support the field office, students, and community organizations



Eligibility for Field Practicum

Field education is a required component in the preparation, education, and training of social work professionals. Field education is required to meet accreditation and licensing requirements. Aggregate data on student outcomes in field is collected and reported as part of the re-accreditation process and is used to inform curricular decision-making processes.

Field education is an intensive experience that places considerable responsibility on students. A student must possess personal attributes that will enable them to work in a mature, responsible, and constructive manner with agency personnel and clients. Students need to have personal strength to withstand the stressors that they will inevitably experience while in field. The field office therefore recommends a high level of student discernment re: their feelings of readiness for their field placement.

Undergraduate students must maintain an overall minimum GPA of 2.0 and a 3.0 in all social work courses. If a grade below a C or a no credit is received in 4100/4110, students must obtain approval of their advisor and the field department to retake the course(s).

Graduate students must maintain an overall minimum GPA of 3.0 in the program. If a grade below a CB in 6710/6720, or a no credit is received in 6760/6780 or 6770/6790, students must obtain approval of their advisor and the field department to retake the course(s).

Students must demonstrate a basic level of competency in the use of technology such as email, Microsoft Word, and Excel.

Field Placements and Courses

Field education courses take place over two (2) consecutive semesters at one (1) agency or organization. Courses include both classroom instruction and time in the field. The semester schedule and number of required hours for each field education course is as follows:

Student Cohort	Hours/Weekly Hours	Course and Semester
BSW Fall/Spring (6-8 class sessions)	400 hours/16	SWRK 4100 Fall SWRK 4110 Spring
BSW Spring Summer I (6-8 class sessions)	400 hours/16-30	SWRK 4100 Spring SWRK 4110 Summer I
MSW Foundation (6-8 class sessions)	400 hours/12-16	SWRK 6710 Fall SWRK 6720 Spring
MSW Clinical Practice Concentration (2-4 class sessions)	500 hours /12-20	SWRK 6760 Fall SWRK 6780 Spring
MSW Program, Planning, and Administration Concentration (2-4 class sessions)	500 hours /12-20	SWRK 6770 Fall SWRK 6790 Spring

All Field Placements

All field placements provide students with:

1. The opportunity to practice social work skills in all 10 areas of competency development.
2. Supervision by a primary and when applicable, a secondary social work field instructor for at least one hour/week.
3. Guidance in and opportunities to develop, implement, and evaluate activities within the Learning Contract.
4. Classroom support through in person and virtual instruction along with collaborative group learning opportunities with peers.
5. Liaison connection between the university, organization, and student throughout the internship.

Selecting a Field Site

For Field Sites

To qualify as a field site for students, an organization must provide learning opportunities that match the student intern's program level, i.e. BSW, MSW Foundation, MSW Clinical, MSW PPA and/or have learning opportunities that match the student intern's specialization (TALS, TF-CBT, SPADA, School Social Work). A field site must also meet the following criteria:

- Support the ethical, professional, and social justice standards of the profession and the School of Social Work
- Offer social work-related activities, experiences, and learning opportunities appropriate for the level of student intern(s) being hosted
- Demonstrate a commitment and capacity for required supervision and support the addition of a secondary field supervisor if necessary
- Complete an affiliation agreement with the University
- Participate in required field visits
- Support the SSW student problem-solving process
- Agree to provide timely notification to the student intern and the Office of field education of any disruptions, changes, or other factors that could impact the placement completion or student participation

For Students

Securing an internship is a collaborative process between the student, the field office, and the organization. The field office will send communication to students who are identified as ready to begin their internship. Students should schedule an academic advising appointment with their advisor no later than December 1st to discuss their academic and internship interests. Following the advising appointment and prior to February 1st, students should complete their IPT field application including the upload of a resume, narrative, disclosure if appropriate, photo, and signed agreement form. Students will subsequently meet with their field coordinator (Kalamazoo & Benton Harbor – Marian Tripplett, Grand Rapids – Vicki Poleni) to review their profile/application, discuss site interests, and begin creating a plan to move forward.

Mandatory field orientations are offered to students on multiple dates at a variety of times such as mornings, afternoons, evenings, and weekends to discuss the field process and answer any questions.

Students may search for field organizations where they are interested in interning, but there are NO guaranteed placements. Students may not contact a field organization directly to apply for an internship. All communication must filter through the Field Office.

Student Conduct

Students are responsible for making themselves aware of and understanding the policies and procedures in the Undergraduate and Graduate Catalogs that pertain to academic honesty. These policies include cheating, fabrication, falsification and forgery, multiple submission, plagiarism, complicity, and computer misuse. <http://catalog.wmich.edu/content.php?catoid=20&navoid=778>

If there is reason to believe academic dishonesty has taken place, a referral to the Office of Student Conduct will be made. The student will be given the opportunity to review the charge(s). Should the student believe he/she is not responsible, the opportunity for a hearing will be made. The student should consult with their instructor of record if he/she is uncertain about an issue of academic honesty prior to the submission of an assignment or exam.

<http://www.wmich.edu/conduct/code/index.html>

The social work profession demands a commitment to professional responsibility and ethical behavior. Students must maintain professional behavior in accordance with the NASW Code of Ethics as well as the following professional standards. Failure to comply constitutes academic misbehavior under the Western Michigan University Code of Conduct and may result in a student's dismissal from the program.

Integrity: Students must behave in an honest and trustworthy manner including representations in the initial field application, work at the placement, and any other representations made in field-related assignments.

Communication: Students must exercise professional judgment in all communications including those written, in person, or over the phone. Students must have the ability to communicate effectively both orally and in writing. Students must demonstrate an ability to engage in constructive feedback, both as the receiver of feedback and the provider of feedback to others.

Dress: Students must dress professionally and, in a manner appropriate for their placement site whether working in person or remotely. The purpose of considering how we present to others is to support our ability to effectively perform our scope of practice and to cultivate an environment of mutual respect. According to this, the questions below should be considered in decisions about personal presentation:

- Will my personal presentation support the perception of a clean and sanitary work environment?
- Will my clothing allow for safe and easy range of movement needed in my scope of practice?
- Will my personal presentation support positive rapport with my clients/patients/community partners?
- Will anything on my person communicate disrespect for a historically marginalized population?
- Will anything in my bodily presentation distract me or my clients/patients from working effectively?

If at any time your field supervisor has questions or concerns regarding your appearance or dress, these questions will be used to facilitate a discussion to ensure the safety and comfort of yourself, your preceptor/supervisor, your peers, and your clients. Students should clarify the field site dress code prior to the start of their placement and include a discussion with their supervisor about appropriate attire.

Confidentiality: Students must comply with all applicable standards for privacy and confidentiality in all communications related to their placement.

Attendance: Students must meet the attendance requirements of their placement. This includes arriving on time, working through the shift as scheduled, and ensuring their supervisor is aware of said schedule.

Performance: Students should actively participate in their internship experience. This includes adequate preparation for the placement, the following of directives from supervisor/s, and completion of responsibilities consistent with the placement requirements. Students must have the ability to discuss and process information in a satisfactory manner based on the demands of their placement. Students must be able to think critically, analyze and interpret objective and subjective data, and apply effective problem-solving skills. Students must be able to use the technology required at their placement including but not limited to the use of computers, phones, and agency databases.

Self-Awareness: Students must demonstrate the appropriate use of self-disclosure and exhibit knowledge of the ways in which personal experiences and values affect their practice.

Self-Regulation: Students must demonstrate emotional and behavioral regulation and must exhibit unimpaired judgment in decision-making.

NASW Code of Ethics

All students and Field Supervisors in the social work program have the responsibility to be familiar with the National Association of Social Workers (NASW) Code of Ethics. It is expected that all students, field instructors, and faculty will abide by the Code. The current Code can be found on the NASW website: www.socialworkers.org Discussion about ethical standards should be a stated activity of each student's Learning Contract and incorporated into supervision sessions. Students are to learn the principles and responsibilities articulated in the Code and be given opportunities to apply them at their field placements. Part of professional social work training includes commitment to the NASW Code of Ethics, which states in part that social workers' primary goal is to help people in need and to address social problems. <http://socialworkers.org/pubs/code/default.asp>

Employment-Based Placements

Employment-Based Placements (EBPs) are field placements that are created within the student's organization of employment. All EBP's require a formal, student-led proposal and must be approved by the assigned field coordinator and the School of Social Work Field Education Department.

Standard Employment-Based Placement (S-EBP) – This is an internship in the student's place of employment provided the organization approves a proposal to allow the student to engage in internship activities at the workplace. The tasks and activities must align with the social work competencies and allow demonstration of required learning contract behaviors. In the standard EBP, the student would intern in a different department, under a different supervisor than their paid employment supervisor. The internship supervisor must meet the qualifications set by the School of Social Work.

New Hire Employment-Based Placement (NH-EBP) – This is an internship in the student's place of employment with six months or less on the job provided the worksite approves a proposal to allow the

student/new hire to engage in internship activities at the workplace. In the new hire EBP, the student's internship is comprised of work activities that align with the social work competencies and allow demonstration of required learning contract behaviors. Students may count up to 50% of work-related tasks and assignments toward the internship. The new hire EBP may utilize the work supervisor as the field supervisor OR the organization may identify a different individual to supervise the internship. The supervisor must meet the qualifications set by the School of Social Work. This opportunity can be available to students who are hired at their field site as a continuation/EBP placement.

Continuation Placements

Continuation placements are two field placements completed at the same field organization provided the entity has the range of services to allow for new learning in advanced practice skills. Students interested in this option must do the following:

- Complete the ([link to Continuation Placement Proposal](#)) and secure approval from the current field supervisor, proposed field supervisor, and assigned field coordinator.
- Develop new field placement tasks and responsibilities that are new learning experiences, and which are substantially different from current field responsibilities, tasks, and functions.
- Provide justification to continue with the same internship supervisor and if not, then a different field supervisor must be provided. The field supervisor must meet all the field supervisor qualifications set by the School of Social Work.
- Be committed to the focus of their learning and educational objectives as set by the School of Social Work through the Learning Contract.

Local/National/International Block Placements

Block Placements are field placements completed locally, nationally, or internationally over a shorter period than a traditional field placement. Students interested in this option must do the following:

- Complete the ([link to Block Placement Proposal](#)) as well as other university-required documents and secure written approval from the academic advisor, proposed field supervisor, field director/coordinator, and Heineke Institute of Western Michigan University (as appropriate).
- Understand that the field supervisor must meet all the supervisor qualifications set by the School of Social Work.
- Be committed to the focus of their learning and educational objectives as set by the School of Social Work through the Learning Contract.
- Coordinate with the field director/coordinator and faculty liaison to arrange all expected communication and appropriate field contact during placement. This may involve in person field visits or remote contacts using Zoom or WebEx platforms. Regularly scheduled communication between the student and the faculty liaison is expected during the block placement just as it would occur in any other field placement.
- Coordinate with their academic advisor and field director to make any needed changes in the program Plan of Study while engaged in a non-local block placement.
- Understand that the School of Social Work is not responsible for the additional costs associated with block placements, including but not limited to:
 - Travel (including advisories), lodging, and meals
 - Student visas, immunizations, or travel health requirements

Summer Block Placements

Students may request to complete their internship during the Summer 1 and 2 semesters. Approval of this opportunity must be given and is dependent upon site availability. Additionally, this opportunity is expected to be completed in its entirety over the course of the 2 summer semesters. Students should anticipate 25-35 hours/week in field placement during a summer block internship. Students interested in completing a summer block placement should notify their field coordinator by March 1st.

School Social Work Endorsement Placements – MSW only

Students in the MSW Foundation, MSW Clinical, or MSW Policy, Planning & Administration Concentration can request to complete one placement in a school or child and family practice setting as part of the requirements of the School Social Work endorsement.

- A school social work field placement is 500 hours total and focuses on child and family practice, typically in a school setting.
- To qualify for the School Social Work Endorsement through WMU upon graduation, students must also complete 9 elective credits specified by the School Social Work Certificate. The required courses include: SWRK6200 (Policy for School Social Workers), SWRK6210 (Assessment for School Social Workers) and SWRK6220 (Intervention for School Social Workers). These courses should be taken in sequence as each is the prerequisite of the next. Exceptions can be made as necessary.
- Interns are expected to remain in their school placement until the children complete their school year unless alternate arrangements are made between the field supervisor and intern. SSW interns may consequently accumulate more than 500 hours during their internship. Additionally, WMU breaks may not coincide with the school's scheduled breaks. Therefore, any breaks during the school year should be arranged collaboratively between intern and supervisor. Scheduling between the intern and supervisor is critical in school placements and should be discussed early and consistently.
- Foundation students may complete their SSW internship but must follow the 500-hour requirement and may not subsequently complete 100 hours less in their Concentration internship. Foundation students who choose to complete their SSW internship could accumulate up to 1,000 hours at graduation rather than the otherwise required 900 hours total.

https://www.michigan.gov/documents/mde/School_Social_Worker_Approval_544628_7.pdf

Trauma-Focused Cognitive Behavioral Therapy Placements – MSW Clinical Concentration Only

Students in the MSW Clinical Concentration year can apply for a Trauma-Focused Cognitive Behavioral Therapy (TF-CBT) placement to work with children ages 4-18 exposed to trauma using a specific evidence-based practice.

- Students must participate in a screening interview with the TF-CBT coordinator, take SWRK 6500 (Core Concepts of Child Trauma) and complete a 2-day TF-CBT training.

- Students in this specialization should alert the field office as early in the matching process as possible and should discuss their interests in a TF-CBT concentration with their academic advisor.

Trauma Specialization Placements – MSW Clinical Concentration Only

Students in the MSW program who are pursuing a Trauma Across the Life Span Specialization (TALS) can apply to complete their MSW Interpersonal Practice placement focused on trauma interventions.

- Students must also take all 9 elective credits in trauma, including SWRK 6500.

Holistic Health Placements – MSW Foundation or Clinical or PPA Concentration

As of January 2021, student applications have been suspended for graduate certificate programs; however, select courses may be available.

Specialty Program for Alcohol and Drug Abuse (SPADA) Placements – MSW Foundation or IP/PPA Concentration

Students in the MSW program who are also pursuing a SPADA graduate certificate can complete their MSW Foundation, IP/clinical, or PPA Concentration placement in an organization which provides substance use disorder services.

Students must take a 1-credit ADA course and coordinate their field placement with their SPADA advisor as well as the Social Work Field Director/Coordinator. [Link to SPADA Website](#)

Social Work Innovation Placements – BSW, MSW Foundation, Clinical or PPA

The School of Social Work seeks to respond to emerging trends and opportunities in field education. One of these areas include the opportunity to pilot new and innovative field placements.

Split (Dual) Placement (SSW Pilot) – This internship is for students whose learning goals extend beyond those available in the primary placement organization who is willing to support the student interning in a split or dual arrangement. The split pilot placement requires pre-planning with the assigned field instructor and approval by all involved entities (primary placement, secondary placement, and all field supervisors.

Split (Dual) Employment-Based Placement (SSW Pilot) – This internship is for student in an Employment-Based Placement who desires learning experiences beyond their organization OR whose workplace cannot provide learning in all competency areas but is willing to support the student interning in a dual or split arrangement. The split pilot EBP requires pre-planning and approval with the assigned field coordinator.

Remote Field Placement

During the 2022-23 academic year, students may, with departmental approval, request a fully remote field placement. However, in this circumstance, the student must acknowledge that this choice will limit placement options and is only an option based on available site opportunities.

Remote internship activities as part of an in-person internship structure are available to all students. Activities can be counted toward required field education hours provided they reflect approved learning contract activities and have been sanctioned by the field supervisor or taken from an approved list of remote activities provided by the Council on Social Work Education (CSWE) and/or the WMU School of Social Work Office of Field Education. Other remote activities and learning experiences may be presented for approval as identified.

- **80/20 Remote Field Activity** – Remote field activity may include engagement such as field-related assignments, trainings, and virtual meetings. Client-related virtual meetings should be in accordance with field site policies for secure communications. However, students may not count more than 20% of their field experience through remote work unless approved by the field supervisor and liaison.
- **Remote Supervision** may be utilized to deliver required field supervision and may count toward the accrual of field hours.
- **Field Seminar hours (both remote and in-person)** may be counted toward the accrual of field hours.

EMERGENCY TRANSITION TO REMOTE INTERNSHIP ACTIVITIES

Students placed in an in-person, face-to-face internship may be required to cease in-person attendance due to Covid-19 health and safety recommendations. Plans for this possibility should be discussed early in the placement.

COVID-19 Guidelines

The University strongly urges COVID-19 vaccination for students, faculty, and staff. The University does not require students, faculty, or staff to reveal whether they have been fully vaccinated. Sindecuse Health Center is no longer collecting vaccination information; you do not need to report your vaccination status.

Masks are optional on campus and in University facilities with two exceptions: Sindecuse Health Center and Unified Clinics, which is in accordance with specific CDC and MDHHS guidance for clinical and health care settings. Masks are optional but not required at events.

If COVID-19 symptoms develop, a test should be taken as soon as possible and a close-fitting mask preferably, a KN95 or N95, should be worn.

If a COVID test is positive, CDC guidelines should be followed for isolation and close contacts should be notified. Close contacts should follow these same CDC recommendations for quarantine and testing for COVID-19. Students should communicate directly with their instructors their supervisor and field liaison about their positive test result and need for isolation.

If a student knows or suspects they have been in contact with a person who tested positive for COVID-19, CDC guidelines that explain what to do in the event of an exposure should be followed.

Background Checks, Drug Testing & Vaccinations, and On-Boarding

Many organizations require students to complete a criminal background check which may involve a state or national-level clearance. Some organizations require a Central Registry check through the Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS) to determine if the student has ever been adjudicated in a civil court for abuse or neglect of a child or vulnerable adult. Organizations may also require a student to take and pass a drug test. While Michigan has voted to legalize and regulate recreational marijuana, it is the university's position that marijuana is not conducive to a productive learning or work environment, remains illegal under federal law, and is prohibited on all WMU campuses. **All on-boarding requirements may be conditions of acceptance or continuation for a field placement and can be requested at any time before or during the student internship. The School of Social Work nor the University cover the costs of onboarding requirements for social work internships. Students seeking specialized internship placements should be prepared for potential costs related to the organization's onboarding requirements.** Some organizations may cover the cost of these requirements while others may expect the student to pay these costs. Students may be required to provide proof of mandated vaccinations either through an eligible record or titer testing, understanding these may be a condition of acceptance to an internship site. The field office does not maintain immunization or health records for students unless specifically requested to do so by the field agency. Any requested records stored by the university will be destroyed or returned to students after internship is completed. Additionally, Western Michigan University does not require COVID vaccination. It is the student's responsibility to ensure all on-boarding requirements are met prior to the start of the internship, and costs associated with on-boarding requirements are also the student's responsibility.

Time and Attendance

Attendance at the field placement is an indicator of professional behavior. Students are expected to respect the organization's policies and procedures as if they were an employee. If a student will not be in field at the agreed upon schedule due to illness or unexpected barriers, the field supervisor should be notified immediately. Field supervisors are encouraged to notify the faculty liaison if there are questions or concerns surrounding the attendance or overall participation of the student in the field placement.

Students may begin their placement on the first day of the semester of enrollment if they have attended a field kick-off session prior to the first day of the semester. Students who have not attended a kick-off session must wait until after their first field class to begin their placement hours. Students should discuss their anticipated completion date with their supervisor and classroom instructor as soon as possible. Averaging 12-16 hours/week ensures the required 400/500 hours are completed although higher or lower totals can be approved with supervisor consent. It may be that the anticipated completion date does not coincide with the completion of the academic semester in which case the student will receive an 'incomplete' until all field hours and responsibilities have been finished. Many students require additional time beyond the end of each semester to complete their placement while others will anticipate finishing early.

Meals, break times, and commuting to and from field placement are not counted toward hours logged in field. Classroom assignments do not count toward field placement hours; however, field seminar hours do count in all field class sections at both the undergraduate and graduate levels.

The University has an established calendar of holidays and break periods. Students are not required to be in field placement during these periods but may continue their internship during semester or holiday breaks with the consent of their field supervisor and liaison. Students should discuss their planned semester break times with their field supervisor as quickly as possible after the start of the internship. <http://www.wmich.edu/registrar/calendars/>

Students should address scheduling with their potential field supervisor as early as the interview process and should consider client and organizational needs. Official university holidays and breaks such as winter/spring break, legal holidays, as well as those officially observed by the organization are granted to the student. Inclement weather scheduling should be discussed with the field instructor taking note that significant variability in location will influence determinations. Students may not count holidays, snow/weather days, sick days, or other days they are not in field as field time. When applicable, students and their field supervisor should negotiate a plan to make up field hours due to sick time, family illness, holidays or snow/weather days.

Self-Care

An additional Competency has been added by Western Michigan University's School of Social Work field office which focuses on the short and long-term self-care strategies of our students. As a result, students will be expected to identify activities of self-care on their Learning Contract, which will be evaluated by their supervisor and may be counted for up to 1 hour/week on their IPT time sheet. Activities must be approved by the field supervisor and may be either on or off-site. Students are required to discuss their self-care plan in supervision and portions of field assignments may be focused on the student's self-care practice.

Preparing for the Internship

Students should maintain periodic contact with the field supervisor between the time of the placement confirmation and the start of the internship. All on-boarding and preparatory work must be completed by the student as directed by the supervisor. Concerns about on-boarding expectations should be discussed with the supervisor and field coordinator. Any site which requests a student to begin prior to the first day of the semester should be directed to the assigned field coordinator. Students may not accrue internship hours before the first day of the semester of enrollment.

Students should confirm with their agency what personal protective equipment is required and whether this PPE (Personal Protective Equipment) is provided by the agency. Agency safety protocols should also be discussed between student and field supervisor prior to the start of placement including under what circumstances hours should be completed remotely, how to approach social distancing, etc. Telehealth or other remote activities should be reviewed along with what tools and technology the student may be required to use during any times of quarantine.

Students are expected to follow and comply with any public health guidance as it relates to the spread of COVID-19 or any other emerging health issue as well as any protocols, guidelines or policies adopted by the University or field site. This guidance will evolve as the public health crisis evolves and may include the following: infection control and prevention activities required for client contact, health screening protocols, participation in contact tracing, use of face coverings, COVID-19 diagnostic testing, disinfection protocols, limitations on gatherings, vaccinations and social distancing. Current guidelines, which are subject to change, can be found here:

https://www.michigan.gov/documents/whitmer/MI_SAFE_START_PLAN_689875_7.pdf

(specifically, p. 14-15: “Controlling Spread in the Workplace”).

<https://wmich.edu/safereturn>

Students should complete the following on-line trainings prior to the start of their internship:

How to protect yourself:

<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/prevent-getting-sick/prevention.html>

How to safely put on and take off a face covering:

<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/prevent-getting-sick/how-to-wear-cloth-face-coverings.html>

How to physically distance

<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/prevent-getting-sick/social-distancing.html>

Evaluating Student Learning

The Learning Contract is a guide for student learning and activities throughout the field placement.

Student learning at the field placement is jointly evaluated by the field supervisor(s) and the student intern, using the Learning Contract at various points in time and progressively throughout each semester, including informal evaluations at mid-semester and formal evaluations at the end of each semester.

Student learning in the field course is formally evaluated by the field faculty liaison and the Learning Contract Evaluation contributes to the grade for field courses but does not alone determine the grade. Specified percentages, from 30-50% of the student grade, are at the discretion of the field faculty liaison/course instructor and can be found in field course syllabi.

Students must demonstrate competencies of no less than a ‘3’ of ‘5’ on a Likert scale for the total of all Competencies and subsequent practice behaviors before the successful completion of a field placement. Because internships vary in emphasis, scope and opportunity, there is no set order of completion to practice behaviors. However, the student is expected to complete half of the practice behaviors during their first semester and the additional half during their second semester. Additionally, students must successfully complete all classroom assignments to receive a passing grade for their field placement courses.

Field course assignments are designed to be completed according to the schedule in the syllabus for their assigned field course. Field course assignments support the integration of social work education with real world learning experiences in the internship. Field course assignments have points that count toward the overall grade in the courses and are therefore important to the student experience in field education.

Intern Placement Tracking (IPT) System

The field supervisor, student, and liaison are expected to utilize the Intern Placement Tracking (IPT) system unless formal accommodations have been approved. All field placement-related documents are in IPT. The field office provides on-line webinars, video trainings, and tip sheets as needed. In addition to these resources, additional trainings and individual coaching can be provided by the field

office for field supervisors. [Link to IPT training slides and videos](#)

Field Placement Forms

NOTE: *Completion of these forms may be tied to course assignments and points toward grade*

Learning Contract - The Learning Contract delineates Competencies and their Practice Behaviors that will need to be met in field placement. It also identifies activities designed to meet those competencies, as well as evaluation of competency development at the end of each semester. Designated activities are identified by the student with guidance from the field supervisor and input from the faculty liaison when needed. The field course will assist the student to understand the importance of this document. Additionally, students are encouraged to gather ideas for their Contract from their peers, site colleagues, WMU SSW field website, and even the internet.

The Learning Contract will be electronically signed by the student, field supervisor/s (primary and secondary), and field liaison a total of 4 times throughout the placement including at the start and end of each semester. During the 2 formal evaluations, the student and the field supervisor will separately rate the student's performance. Discrepancies between ratings and perspectives as to the student's demonstrated learning should be discussed in supervision and at the time of the liaison visit.

Students are expected to demonstrate "emerging competence" for at least ½ of all practice behaviors (score of 3 on 5-point Likert scale) at the end of the first semester of placement. Students are expected to demonstrate "competence" (score of 4 on a 5-point Likert scale) at the end of the placement. Ratings of student performance at the end of each semester are used, in addition to classroom requirements, to determine the field education course grade. All scores assessed by the field supervisor below 'emerging competence' (1 or 2 on a 5-point Likert scale) should be discussed between the student, field supervisor, and field liaison as soon as possible. Scores of '1' or '2' on any Competency during any semester could require a written performance improvement plan and additional hours.

Scores at the closure of a placement that fall below '4' could result in the requirement of additional hours, additional assignments, or the failure of either the 2nd semester or the field experience in its entirety. N/A should not be given as a score as all competencies and practice behaviors must be addressed. If the student has not begun earning hours in a particular competency or behavior at the time of the first evaluation, this item should be left blank and evaluated/scored in the second or subsequent semester evaluation.

Safety and Orientation Checklist – This checklist enables students and field supervisors to complete structured orientation and review policies relevant to the field placement, at the beginning of the placement. The document should be completed at the beginning of the field placement and is due within 2 weeks of field placement start. The student and field supervisor should complete the document together and electronically sign the Checklist. Student safety in field placement is a priority for the WMU School of Social Work. Students should not be shielded from the realities of professional practice, but caution and discretion should be used when immersing students in the realities of practice which can also expose them to safety and security risks. In addition to the safety and orientation process in field placement, students are required to receive an introduction to safety in the field during their field education class sessions in the BSW program and in the foundation sequence of the MSW program. This preparation includes awareness of risk, assessment of the client, the environment, oneself, and intervention skills to de-escalate potential risky situations.

Time Log – This form includes notes, times, and activities of the student during placement. Students are responsible to enter their time and activities for all hours spent in field. The field supervisor should electronically initial each entry the student documents at regular intervals. Field supervisors and students will both electronically sign the time log at the completion of the student's required placement hours. Classroom time does count toward the required internship hours.

In the event that difficulty arises in completing the required IPT forms, the following options can be explored:

- If a supervisor is unable to complete the student's IPT paperwork on a temporary basis as in the case of supervisor illness or temporary leave for example, the student should determine if another professional at the organization can fill in for the assigned supervisor. This would require the alternate professional to initial the time sheet and sign off on the Learning Contract goals and/or semester evaluation depending on the timing of the supervisor's absence. If this is an option, the student should inform both the liaison and field coordinator. The field coordinator will temporarily re-assign IPT sign-off privileges to the temporary supervisor.
- If a supervisor has left the organization or for any other reason is no longer able to complete the student's paperwork, the student should determine if another professional at the organization is willing to complete all required paperwork. This may include the student's time sheet, Learning Contract goals and/or semester evaluation. If this is an option, the student should contact their liaison and field coordinator. If no professional at the placement is willing to complete the required paperwork, and if no discrepancies exist between the student and liaison, the field coordinator can complete the time sheet and semester evaluation forms.
- If the student has difficulty securing the completion of the required IPT forms from their supervisor, the student should notify their liaison. The student is encouraged to prompt their supervisor's IPT responsibilities using both supervision and email as vehicles to communicate. If student efforts fail to prompt completion, the liaison may reach out to the supervisor individually or may schedule a liaison visit to address the issue. If the supervisor continues to neglect this paperwork, and after liaison intervention, the field coordinator should be contacted for further problem-solving ideas.
- If the student fails to complete the required IPT forms, they will not be afforded a letter grade or credit for the course until these forms are complete. Any discrepancies between student accounting of hours and supervisor approval should be brought to the liaison's attention as soon as possible.

Field Coordinator Qualifications and Role Responsibilities

The field director and field coordinators are social work faculty or staff with extensive experience in social work practice and field experience who manage the field education components of the School of Social Work curriculum. The field director and field coordinators have earned an MSW degree from an accredited social work program and possess at least two years post-graduate social work experience.

Marian Tripplett, LMSW, M.Ed., Field Education Director & Field Coordinator, Benton Harbor and Kalamazoo

marian.tripplett@wmich.edu or (269) 387-3198 or (269)-934-1512.

Vicki Poleni, LMSW, Field Coordinator, Grand Rapids

BSW Field Supervisor Qualifications and Role Responsibilities

The field supervisor is expected to have the specified credentials and practice necessary to design internship learning opportunities for students which allows them to demonstrate the expected CSWE competencies. Field instruction requires not only experience and/or knowledge of the field of social work but a desire to supervise a student. The field supervisor is expected to have positive feelings toward social work education as a process and be aware that student supervision can be frustrating, stressful and time consuming, as well as rewarding, energizing and educational. Field supervisors are selected cooperatively but with clear criteria determined by the field education director/coordinator.

1. Must have a **BSW or MSW** with 2 years post-degree experience (may be BSW, LLBSW, or LBSW).
2. Provides field instruction and supervision for at least 1 hour/week.
3. Works with the student to develop and subsequently evaluate the Learning Contract.
4. If the primary field supervisor does not meet the above criteria, a secondary field supervisor who does meet these criteria must also be available to provide one hour of supervision at least every 2 weeks.

MSW Field Supervisor Qualifications and Role Responsibilities

The field supervisor is expected to have the specified credentials and practice necessary to design internship learning opportunities for students which allows them to demonstrate the expected CSWE competencies. Field instruction requires not only experience and/or knowledge of the field of social work but a desire to supervise a student. The field supervisor is expected to have positive feelings toward social work education as a process and be aware that student supervision can be frustrating, stressful and time consuming, as well as rewarding, energizing and educational. Field supervisors are selected cooperatively but with clear criteria determined by the field education director/coordinator.

1. Field supervisors must have an **MSW and 2 years post-degree experience**. Field supervisors may hold an MSW, LLMSW, or LMSW.
2. Field supervisors must provide field supervision for at least 1 hour/week and collaborate with the student and liaison to develop the Learning Contract. The field supervisor will subsequently evaluate student performance based on the pre-established Learning Contract goals and objectives.
3. If the primary field supervisor does not meet the above criteria, a secondary field supervisor who does meet these criteria must also be available to provide monthly supervision.

WMU expects Field Supervisors to have the ability to:

1. Provide students with individualized learning experiences in a variety of social work practice roles through which they can achieve professional practice behavior by integration of social work knowledge, values, competencies, and skills consistent with the EPAS core competencies.
2. Place educational emphasis in the MSW Foundation field internships on students' acquisition of generalist practice skills.
3. Ensure educational emphasis in advanced level field internships for students declared Concentration, either Clinical Social Work or a Policy, Planning, and Administration focus.
4. Enable students to learn and improve their skills and knowledge in a professional manner.

5. Be able to demonstrate and provide evidence of professional functioning required of a WMU field instructor, to include the following:
 - a) Demonstrate quality professional skills in practice in keeping with the objectives of a Field internship as outlined in the WMU Field Manual.
 - b) Identify with an organization of practice, plan to remain there throughout the next school year, have a degree of comfort in their status within the organization and in the community, and agree with the organization's philosophy, function, policies, and procedures.
 - c) Have a strong conviction about the importance of professional education for social work according to the CSWE EPAS Competencies and Practice Behaviors.
 - d) Have the ability to engage in an effective supervisor/supervisee relationship, offer quality supervision and consultation in accordance with NASW's standards, and differentiate between supervision, consultation, and treatment provision.
 - e) Organize their work in keeping with the organization's program and its administrative requirements.
 - f) Act in accordance with the school's policies.

Task Supervisor Qualifications and Role Responsibilities

A human service professional who does not have the minimum qualifications and wishes to function as a student's primary field supervisor serves as the task supervisor for the internship. Students in an internship may have a human service professional who serves as the primary or "task supervisor" whose role and responsibilities are to orient the intern to the activities of the agency.

Secondary Field Supervisor Qualifications and Role Responsibilities

The secondary field supervisor works to supplement the internship when the primary supervisor is a human service professional who does not possess a social work degree. The secondary field supervisor provides guidance and direction for the social work ethical and professional development of the internship. Secondary supervisors for undergraduate interns must meet the guidelines for BSW field supervisors while graduate secondary supervisors must meet the guidelines for MSW field supervisors.

Secondary supervision may be offered individually, in a group context, or a combination of the two, although at least one session per month must be provided in an individual supervision session.

Expectations of Field Supervisors

The MSW or BSW Field Supervisor is expected to:

1. Adhere to the ethical and professional standards of the NASW Code of Ethics.
2. Attend or complete Field Supervisor Orientation prior to beginning first time field placement supervision or if there has been a time gap of two years between the supervision of field students.
3. Offer a minimum of one hour per week of uninterrupted time for student supervision and be accessible for informal supervision as needed.
4. Enjoy teaching and have a capacity for teaching students to translate theoretical knowledge into professional practice.

5. Respect students by being able to create and sustain an educational context for supporting the student's overall professional growth and development.
6. Be able to inspire students to identify with the ideals and mission of the professional social work practice to people of all cultures, ethnicities, etc.
7. Accept responsibility for the evaluative function of teaching.
8. Be able to think analytically and conceptually and teach this knowledge and skills to the student.
9. Be able to work cooperatively with the school and its mission and the policies and practices of the field education department.
10. Complete the IPT profile and upload a current resume or CV to IPT.

Additional expectations, as the primary or secondary field supervisor:

- Conduct a structured, well-planned orientation to the organization's policies, procedures, resources, and socio-political context using the orientation checklist provided in IPT.
- Participate in the problem-solving method outlined in the Field Placement Procedures of the Field Manual.
- Provide and participate in the development, review, and evaluation of the Learning Contract Competencies and Practice Behaviors of the student. Field supervisors should ensure initials and signatures are completed in the student's IPT profile.
- Give the student continuing and clear feedback throughout the internship and at regularly determined intervals. In the event of a problem, a field supervisor is expected to give the student a timely opportunity to address the problem through discussion and behavior, keeping in mind the distinction between educational supervision and psychotherapy.
- Monitor the student's hours via a regularly scheduled review and approval of the student's time log by initializing, and upon completion, electronically signing the IPT time sheet. If there is a discrepancy or concern, the supervisor should discuss the concerns directly with the student and seek assistance of the faculty liaison if disputed time log concerns continue or remain unresolved.
- Be accessible to the student and the faculty liaison for consultation and visits both as scheduled and as needed.
- Help the student assess and reassess their educational needs and professional development, e.g., what they know; what they need to know; what their learning needs and learning style may be, etc.
- Teach the student the skills, decision making, and appropriate behaviors needed to accomplish the requirements of the Learning Contract in the internship.
- Interpret the student's role at the organization as well as the organization to the student and facilitate the establishment of inter and intra-organizational contracts.
- Encourage and support the student's integration of the values and ethics of the social work profession utilizing the NASW Code of Ethics as a guide.
- Help the student integrate theoretical knowledge and knowledge from previous experiences with present practice.
- Participate in a formal evaluation process with the student and the Faculty Liaison at the end of each semester utilizing the evaluation form provided in IPT.
- Provide feedback to the faculty liaison and the field director/coordinator regarding

recommendations for improving the overall field education program, classroom preparation for field, curriculum, etc.

Supervision

Students and their supervisor are expected to meet at least 1 hour each week in a private setting that allows for thorough evaluation of the student's skills and challenges. Up to 2 sessions/month may be held in a group supervision format. Students should come prepared to each session with an agenda and are encouraged to bring their course syllabus and classroom assignments to these meetings. Additionally, each session should review progress toward Learning Contract goals, time-log entries, and any concerns on the part of the student, supervisor, or site staff. If supervision is not occurring on a weekly basis, students and/or supervisors are expected to discuss the matter with the field liaison.

Field Faculty Liaison Qualifications and Role Responsibilities

- Field Faculty Liaisons are part-time or full-time faculty in the School of Social Work who have experience and expertise in practice at a foundational, advanced micro, and/or advanced macro level.
- Faculty Liaisons teach field education courses and provide summative evaluations and grades to students in those courses.
- Faculty Liaisons act as the bridge between the student, field supervisor(s), and School of Social Work including providing at least 3 field visits (2-fall/1-spring) during the placement and engage in "trouble-shooting" as needed to facilitate student success in field. Additional visits may be required to respond to performance or problem-solving concerns. This bridge is provided through face-to-face visits, phone, email, and/or other electronic communication supports such as WebEx, Zoom, Teams or Google meet.

Communication and Field Visits

Communication between the Field Office, faculty liaisons, and the field supervisor(s) must be maintained throughout the student's field placement. A minimum of 3 visits to the field site during the placement will occur with the student, liaison, and field supervisor. Additional visits, contact, and/or consultation should occur as requested by the student, field supervisor, field liaison, organization, or field director/coordinator.

Establishing and Maintaining Affiliation with Field Organizations

In establishing and maintaining affiliation with organizations, the University is guided by educational standards and criteria designed to ensure quality field education. WMU has specific and clear criteria regarding procedures for selecting field internship settings, student placements, maintaining faculty liaison and field instructor communication, and the evaluation of student learning and internship-setting effectiveness, all of which are congruent with program competencies. The Field Education Office employs a wide array of methods and standards to ensure that all aspects of the complexity of the field internship development, field instructor and faculty liaison education and support, as well as student evaluations and adherence to the EPAS Competencies, are followed.

The selection of internship sites and field supervisors is a critical component in educational planning. The school carries the responsibility for determining an organization and field instructor's suitability

for student training. A signed implementation letter (CHHS Affiliation Agreement) must be on file for each organization hosting a student.

The following criteria is used in the selection of internship sites:

- The relationship of an organization to education: Recognition that in professional social work, field internship instruction is an essential complement to academic instruction. Therefore, the organization, administrators, and select staff are expected to have the genuine desire to teach students and regard the field internship as an important part of its function. Further, there should be recognition that the educational relationship is mutually strengthening to the school, organization, and the overall profession of social work.
- The relation of an organization to the public: Recognition that the public and the profession have created the School of Social Work and made it responsible for the educational function. The organization should recognize that the school has a primary responsibility for professional education and has commensurate authority.
- The relationship of an organization to the profession: Recognition that the National Association of Social Workers is the standard setting body for the profession and that the Council on Social Work Education is the standard setting body for social work education. The school and the organization share the responsibility for providing social work experiences commensurate with the following standards:
 - (1) The staff of the organization would be of such size as to maintain and develop the basic program of the organization and provide its core services without reliance on the student.
 - (2) The essential availability of a qualified field supervisor. Qualified refers to a professional with the required social work education, commitment, practice experience, ability to work with a secondary field supervisor if indicated, and an interest as well as competence in teaching students placed at the organization. It is expected that the organization's administrators will adjust the work assignments and responsibilities of the field instructor(s) in such a way that will enable them to carry out these responsibilities in an effective, ethical, and responsible manner.
- Philosophy of the organization: The organization's commitment to service is compatible with the mission of the School of Social Work, the goals, and objectives of field education, and with the values and ethics of the social work profession as stated in the NASW Code of Ethics. <https://www.socialworkers.org/About/Ethics/Code-of-Ethics/Code-of-Ethics-English>
- Structure and services of the organization: The BSW field site must have experiences that are compatible with the scope of practice of the bachelor's level practitioner. The MSW Foundation site must have experiences that are compatible with the scope of practice of the foundational level master's practitioner. Experiences for both the BSW and MSW Foundation should be generalist in nature and provide opportunities for students to learn entry-level social work practice with diverse populations and systems of all sizes, e.g., individuals, group, families, organizations and communities. Organizations must be committed to helping students with a beginning level of professional competence with diverse populations. The MSW Clinical field sites will have experiences that are compatible with the scope of practice of the Advanced Interpersonal Practice level master's practitioner. Organizations must be committed to providing students with opportunities for direct clinical service and opportunities to work with individuals, families, and groups. The MSW Policy, Planning, and Administration Field Sites must have experiences that are compatible with the scope of practice of the Advanced Policy,

Planning and Administration master's practitioner. Organizations must be committed to providing students with opportunities for direct experiences with the tasks inherent to the concentration's goals and objectives, such as designing, maintaining, and changing community and/or organizational social systems.

- The organizational structure: The organizational structure should match the function(s) of the organization and be available in written form. It should have a clear statement of its function, objectives, areas of service and activity, and provision for revision of function in response to changing community needs and trends. The organization's practices should meet standards accepted in its field and/or discipline. Practices should incorporate the ethical standards of the social work profession. The organization should be a part of and cooperate with the community service network. The organization's program should be large and varied enough to ensure a continuous supply of learning experiences appropriate to the educational needs of students accepted for an internship.
- The organizational resources: The organization should make available and provide access to a suitable workspace, telephone, computers, supplies and any other items that are necessary for a student to enable the organization's functioning. The organization should provide an appropriate plan for the selection of service tasks to be recommended to Field Supervisor/s for assignment to students. The organization should be able to offer such assignments based on educational values in accordance with the student's current level of education and professional experience, as well as in relationship to the Learning Contract Competencies/Practice Behaviors outlined in this document.

WMU offers several types of unique or specialized field placements and maintains the criteria for all field placements to meet school requirements and the needs of individual students. Some of these specialized placements are associated with certificate programs. In addition, the School of Social Work is interested in recruiting additional sites to meet the needs of its students as well as the community. If a student or community member has an idea for a new field placement, they may contact the director or coordinator of field who will communicate with the potential field placement to determine if the organization meets school criteria. When a new site is approved, the director/coordinator will facilitate the completion of an Affiliation Agreement between the organization and WMU.

When a new placement is developed - the organization, identified Field Instructor(s), and WMU Field office staff will specify the nature of the placement and the qualifications of the Field Supervisor(s) within the web-based software system, Intern Placement Tracking (IPT).

Insurance Coverage

The University provides general professional liability insurance for all students who are officially registered for field education courses. Students pay for this coverage through course-related fees at the time of their course registration. Agencies/organizations must maintain adequate general liability and professional liability insurance as well. Students may elect to purchase additional liability insurance beyond what is provided by the university. This insurance is only applicable to students registered in a field course.

The University and the School of Social Work assumes no responsibility or liability for injury that may be sustained during field placement. Students sign a liability statement in their field application which is provided to the organization accepting the student. This statement indicates that students are not covered by workman's compensation in the State of Michigan for any accident/injury that may occur during the field placement. The statement additionally states that health or other on-boarding costs incurred in preparation for or during the field placement are the responsibility of the student and the

student's health insurer. All students are encouraged to have personal health insurance while in their field placement.

In some organizations, students may be required to use their personally owned vehicle for transportation purposes. All students are required to have a valid driver's license, indicate that they can operate a motor vehicle without restriction (unless indicated on the application), carry current vehicle insurance, and agree to be in compliance with the laws of the State of Michigan. Current state and federal mandates re: social distancing should be followed when providing any transportation during the internship.

If a student is involved in an automobile accident while at their field placement, the student's personal vehicle insurance is the first tier for a claim. The university insurance policy is secondary and subject to the terms of the coverage in the University's contract. If a student is to utilize their personally owned vehicle for field placement activities (including the transportation of clients), it is the internship organization's responsibility to inform the student of these expectations prior to acceptance of the placement and to evaluate the student's ability to perform the required tasks. This includes, but is not limited to, ensuring that the student's vehicle is in good, safe, working condition.

Students, field supervisors, and in certain circumstances, faculty liaisons each may be required to file incident reports regarding events that occur during an internship. Incident reports may be required by the field agency/organization as well as WMU Office of Public Safety. Documentation should include copies to the assigned field coordinator. In the event of harm or injury involving the student, the notification should be made by phone, followed by copies of a completed incident report.

Field organizations must sign the Western Michigan University College of Health and Human Services Affiliation Agreement. This agreement holds the University and field organization harmless should suits, claims, or damages result directly from the student placement. Internship organizations may request that the University sign their individual Affiliation Agreements in lieu of the standard WMU CHHS Affiliation Agreement. The collaborative process of replacing the WMU CHHS AA with an organization-specific AA can take up to 4-6 weeks to process and is reviewed by the university's attorney/s and Business Office.

Mandated Reporting and Duty to Warn

State and federal laws require the mandatory reporting of the suspected abuse or neglect of a child or vulnerable adult and require a duty to warn if a client is considered harmful to him/herself or others. It is expected that during placement, the student will have exposure to situations that involve mandatory reporting and duty to warn. Field supervisors are responsible for educating all students about these laws. Students should not be required to be the primary mandated reporter while functioning as an intern at an agency as this role is reserved for the organization-based field instructor. The field supervisor is responsible for ensuring that all the organization's policies, regulations, laws, and ethical obligations are followed. The student should discuss any issues of suspected abuse/neglect and/or duty-to-warn with their field liaison and when appropriate, the field director/coordinator.

http://www.michigan.gov/documents/dhs/Pub-112_179456_7.pdf

Accommodation for Disabilities/Special Needs

Any student with a documented disability (e.g., physical, learning, psychiatric, vision, hearing, etc.) who needs to arrange reasonable accommodations must contact Disability Services for Students at (269) 387-2116 at the beginning of the semester. A disability determination must be made by the DSS office before any accommodations are provided. <http://www.wmich.edu/disabilityservices/>

Diversity

The School of Social Work, as part of the Western Michigan University College of Health and Human Services, is an inclusive community of learners that embraces, respects, and advocates for human diversity. The college has a sustained commitment to eliminating disparities in health care and other human services by using dynamic methods to infuse this perspective into curricula, clinical practice, and research. It is expected that students also demonstrate a respect for diversity, consistent with the NASW Code of Ethics, in their academic performance.

FERPA Guidelines

The Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act applies to all schools that receive funds under an applicable program of the US Department of Education (FERPA) (20 U.S.C. § 1232g; 34 CFR Part 99) and is a federal law which protects the privacy of student education records.

FERPA provides parents certain rights with respect to their children's education records. These rights transfer to the student when he or she reaches the age of 18 or attends a school beyond the high school level. Students to whom the rights have transferred are "eligible students."

<https://wmich.edu/policies/ferpa-policy>

Recording notice: synchronous instructional sessions facilitated through web conferencing applications may be recorded for future playback. Sessions may be recorded for student reference after a class session or to provide an alternative format for students requiring accommodations. Students who do not wish to consent to being recorded or who have questions or concerns should visit: www.wmich.edu/elearning/recording-opt-out

Online assessments using monitoring software will record examination and quiz sessions to maintain academic integrity. Alternative assessment options are available should you choose not to be recorded.

HIPAA Guidelines

All social workers are required to adhere to Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act of 1996, Public Law 104-191 (HIPAA) regulations regarding the privacy of client information outside of the agency setting. Confidentiality requirements must be strictly maintained when discussing or writing about clients in the classroom, in assignments, and/or in process recordings.

Sexual Harassment and Assault

Western Michigan University encourages all members of our community to participate in the process of creating a safe, welcoming, and respectful environment on campus. In accordance with that fundamental objective, the University has a continuing commitment to assure equal opportunity and to oppose discrimination because of race, color, sex, sexual orientation, age, religion, national origin, handicap, height, weight, or marital status.

Western Michigan University (WMU or University) strives to cultivate a healthy and diverse community that recognizes the value of each individual and helps foster safety, civility, and respect for all people. Members of the WMU Community have the right to be free from sexual and gender-based discrimination, harassment, violence, and all other forms of prohibited conduct described in this Policy. All members of the Community are expected to conduct themselves in a manner that does not infringe upon the rights of others.

Under Title IX of the Education Amendments Act, “No person in the United States shall, on the basis of sex, be excluded from participation in, be denied the benefits of, or be subjected to discrimination under any education program or activity receiving federal financial assistance.” Title IX applies to all of the University’s programs and activities and requires that the University not discriminate on such bases. Title IX prohibits retaliation against any individual who files a good faith complaint or participates in an investigation under Title IX. This Policy meets and, in some areas, exceeds the scope of Title IX and its implementing regulations.

Sexual harassment will not be tolerated behavior at Western Michigan University. It is expected that each member of the university community will consider himself/herself responsible for the proper observance of this policy. <http://www.wmich.edu/equity/policies/policiessexual-harrasment>

Anti-Discrimination

Western Michigan University, in accordance with the law, prohibits discrimination in the provision of all student instruction, activities, and programs. Discrimination based on race, color, religion, national origin, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity, age, disability, height, weight, veteran status, family status, or marital status shall not be tolerated in the determination of eligibility, participation, or grading for any courses or program established for the benefit of students unless otherwise provided by law.

Students who have inquiries about the University’s Anti-Discrimination Policy or about anti-discrimination laws, including Title IX and the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, or who have complaints of prohibited discrimination, may file their inquiries and complaints with the Office of Institutional Equity, 1015 Trimpe Building (387-6316).

Addressing Problems in Field

Problem Prevention Strategies:

1. Plan ahead.
2. Ensure the Learning Contract reflects interests and needs.
3. Review the Learning Contract/evaluation weekly and during supervision.
4. Maintain a frequent and regular supervision schedule between the field supervisor and student of no less than 1 hour/week.
5. Discuss any life events which may impact the schedule or tasks of field collaboratively between the student, liaison, and field supervisor early in the semester/session and/or at the time an unexpected event occurs.
6. Document with the Office of Student Disability any disabilities requiring attention for the field supervisor and field liaison at the beginning of the semester.
7. Arrange schedules verbally and in writing between the student and field supervisor at the beginning of the semester.
8. Utilize an agenda for each supervisory meeting and seek collaborative input from the field liaison regularly and as needed.
9. Check email regularly, read all communications carefully and maintain records of all such communications.

10. Confirm the understanding of directions, instructions, and requirements (e.g., organization policies, guidelines, expectations, requirements) with field supervisors, field liaisons and, if necessary, with the field coordinator. Ask for assistance as needed.
11. Periodically review the field course syllabi during supervision.
12. Utilize the support of the field faculty liaison and assigned field coordinator as needed.
13. Should disagreements or misunderstandings occur, speak directly with the person or persons involved to resolve.
14. If a mistake or error occurs, seek the assistance of your field supervisor (or designee') to resolve or to correct.
15. Begin and maintain a practice of self-care, talk about resources and strategies with your field supervisor, faculty liaison and peers in the course. Striving to maintain health and well-being is a problem-prevention strategy.

In the event that students have difficulty completing the required IPT paperwork with their supervisor, the following options can be explored:

- If a supervisor is unable to complete the student's IPT paperwork on a temporary basis as in the case of supervisor illness or temporary leave for example, the student should determine if another professional at the organization can fill in for the assigned supervisor. This would require the alternate professional to initial the time sheet and sign off on either the Learning Contract goals and/or semester evaluation depending on the timing of the supervisor's absence. If this is an option, the student should inform both the liaison and field coordinator. The field coordinator will temporarily re-assign IPT sign-off privileges to the temporary supervisor.
- If a supervisor has left the organization or for any other reason is no longer able to complete the student's paperwork, the student should determine if another professional at the organization is willing to complete all required paperwork. This may include the student's time sheet, Learning Contract goals and/or semester evaluation. If this is an option, the student should contact their liaison and field coordinator. If no professional at the placement is willing to complete the required paperwork, and if no discrepancies exist between the student and liaison, the field coordinator can complete the field forms.
- If the student has difficulty securing the completion of the required IPT forms from their supervisor, the student should notify their liaison. The liaison may reach out to the supervisor individually or schedule a liaison visit to address the issue. If the supervisor continues to neglect this paperwork, and after liaison intervention, the field coordinator should be contacted for further problem-solving ideas.

Procedures to follow if problems arise:

A placement break for any reason is a challenging situation and should be addressed as such. Consistent, clear communication with all involved is of utmost importance. Dismissal from an internship will require a review by the assigned field coordinator and may result in a recommendation for the student to participate in a professional review committee (PRC), that could result in subsequent recommendations including expulsion from the program.

If issues arise during the internship:

- The student and field supervisor should discuss concerns face to face (in-person or remote as health guidelines recommend) and should also maintain written documentation about the identified concerns, goals for change, objectives to reach the desired change/s, and time frames for the expected outcome/s. The student and field supervisor may obtain advice from the field faculty liaison, individually or as a team as needed, early in the concern-identification process. Corrective action plans to remediate the situation should be developed, signed, and dated by all parties and subsequently uploaded to IPT.
- If problems persist, the student or field supervisor may request a problem-solving meeting to include the student, field supervisor, and field faculty liaison.
- If problems or concerns arise due to incomplete course assignments or unexcused absences from field seminars, or other concerning behaviors the field faculty liaison should communicate these concerns verbally and in writing to the student. Additionally, a student concern form may be submitted to the Office of Student Affairs for follow-up. [Student Concern Form \(maxient.com\)](http://maxient.com)
- If a field placement ends prematurely due to concerns about the student's performance, a Field Placement Break Review will be held. Those participating in this Review include at minimum the student, field liaison, and field coordinator. Additional participants may include the field director, field supervisor, and/or academic advisor. Students may or may not be immediately eligible for a new matching process and next steps will be based on the outcome of the placement break review meeting.
- For any issues of ethical conduct violations on the part of the student, a Professional Review Committee meeting may be held. Participants in this meeting may include the student, PRC Committee Chair, academic advisor, field faculty liaison, field director/coordinator, and field supervisor. Additional attendees at the PRC may include the Director/Associate Director of the School of Social Work, and a silent support person of student choice. Following the PRC, recommendations are made by the PRC Committee to the Director or his/her designee. Recommendations to the Director of the School of Social Work may include dismissal from the program.

Students who complete the requirements of their PRC and need to be placed in a second placement organization may be required to complete up to 50 additional placement hours at the new organization to allow for training and orientation and to ensure sufficient time to learn the skills and practice available at this second site. Additionally, a separate determination will be made on the transferability of any hours accrued prior to the PRC.

The field office is available to offer support, insight, structure, and direction for the student, field supervisor, field faculty liaison, or the field placement organization itself at any point during the internship. Need to add some brief guidance for procedures for field supervisors should problems arise

Field Deferral or Return from Leave of Absence

Students may determine for a variety of different reasons that they do not want to begin their field placement in the semester outlined in their plan of study. This decision should be discussed with the field coordinator and academic advisor prior to final determinations being made. If a student must take a break from their program for any reason, a Leave of Absence form should be completed and submitted to the manager of recruitment and retention. SWRK-admi@wmich.edu. Graduate students will also need to include a [Graduate College leave of absence form](#) and an adjusted program plan with anticipated return semesters included. Need language for return from absence

Orientation and Field Internship Instruction Trainings

WMU provides an orientation and internship instruction to all field supervisors. This may occur individually or in a group setting and may be done in person or through remote training opportunities. Group orientation may also include free continuing education credit for SW professionals. Additionally, other CE opportunities are made available at minimal or no cost throughout the academic year. Field supervisors may attend training opportunities at any campus but are encouraged to attend those offered at the campus to which their student is enrolled.

Orientation for Field Supervisors includes but is not limited to:

- General information re: WMU’s School of Social Work’s overall BSW and MSW program
- The Field Manual and on-line access to the field website and IPT
- The procedures and methods related to field instruction
- The roles and responsibilities of Field Supervisors
- The documents utilized in field and the implications for practice
- Expectations for providing an orientation/safety review with the new student intern at the internship site
- The Learning Contract, proves for evaluating student performance, and monitoring of student time sheets
- General, appropriate field internship experiences
- The use of supervision and techniques specifically designed for Field Supervisors working with a student intern in a social work-based internship
- Social Work ethics as they relate to the education of a student and the profession

Additional Resources

WMU MSW SSW Student Handbook

<https://wmich.edu/sites/default/files/attachments/u2824/2022/MSW%20Handbook%202021-22.pdf>

WMU SSW Facebook

<https://www.facebook.com/Western-Michigan-University-School-of-Social-Work>

Financial Aid

<http://www.wmich.edu/finaid/>

Student Loans

<https://wmich.edu/finaid/loans>

School of Social Work Scholarships

<http://www.wmich.edu/socialwork/scholarships/>

Sindecuse Health Center

<https://wmich.edu/healthcenter/>

Acknowledgments

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