

Social Work Field Education Handbook

Department of Sociology and Social Work

University of Wisconsin—Stevens Point



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* *to preserve formatting of forms, they are not included in this document, but rather are posted on the Social Work Field website*

Introduction

Message from the Field Coordinator

On behalf of the Department of Sociology and Social Work and the University of Wisconsin-Stevens Point (UWSP), I would like to extend a warm welcome and appreciation to everyone participating in the Field Education Program, including students, faculty, advisors, and community professionals. It is my hope that the content of this Handbook is useful for learning about the mission, objectives, structure, policies, and operation of the Field Education program. Students are encouraged to read the entire Handbook and to keep it handy as a reference throughout their time in the Field Education Program. Current and prospective agency supervisors and their organizations will find the material helpful in understanding social work education at UWSP, expectations of parties involved in field education, and relevant policies and procedures. Suggestions for revision/addition to the manual may be directed to the Field Coordinator.

Supervised practice in a field agency is central to the development of competent, humane, knowledgeable, skilled, and effective social workers. Field education is the point at which the integration of theory, practice, skills, and ethics come together for emerging social work professionals. As the profession's "signature pedagogy" it allows opportunities for applying classroom content and experiences to professional situations, developing and evaluating student readiness for professional practice, and developing collaborative partnerships among students, faculty, and the University. Field education is an exciting endeavor, and I look forward to facilitating this process with all of you. Please feel free to call on me with any questions or concerns you may have about our Field Education Program.

Purpose and Design of Manual

This manual was prepared as a guide to assist both social work students and agency supervisors in understanding the Field Education Program at UWSP. First, it begins with a description of the context in which field education takes place within the Social Work Program at UWSP. Second, this manual outlines the design of the social work curriculum and of the field education component. Third, the application criteria and process are described to give all involved a sense for the requirements for field as well as the steps students must take to be considered by an agency. Fourth, the partnership between the field agencies and the University is covered outlining roles and responsibilities of key players and standards that field agencies must meet. Fifth, a number of policies pertaining to field are addressed. Finally, a number of appendices include documents/forms used within the program.

Program Context

Mission Statements Relevant to the Field Education Program

UW System

The mission of the University of Wisconsin System is to develop human resources, to discover and disseminate knowledge, to extend knowledge and its application beyond the boundaries of its campuses, and to serve and stimulate society by developing in students heightened intellectual, cultural, and humane sensitivities, scientific, professional and technological expertise, and a sense of purpose. Inherent in this broad mission are methods of instruction, research, extended training, and public service designed to educate people and improve the human condition. Basic to every purpose of the UW System is the search for truth.

University of Wisconsin-Stevens Point

The University of Wisconsin-Stevens Point has the following select mission to:

- a. Provide a broad foundation of liberal studies and selected degree programs in the fine arts, humanities, natural sciences and social sciences, imparting the heritage of human civilization, critical intelligence, and the skills necessary for a lifetime of learning and upon which education in the professional fields may be built.
- b. Provide undergraduate professional programs in communicative disorders, teacher education, home economics*, the visual and performing arts, paper science and natural resources with emphasis on the management of resources.
- c. Provide graduate programs in teacher education, communicative disorders, natural resources, home economics, communication and other select areas clearly associated with this University's undergraduate emphases and strengths.
- d. Provide programs in wellness and health promotion.
- e. Provide quality undergraduate and graduate instruction through innovative methods using print and nonprint library resources, computing, communication technology and direct student assistance.
- f. Expect scholarly activity, including research, scholarship, and creative endeavors, that support its programs at the associate and baccalaureate degree level, its selected graduate programs, and its select mission.
- g. Cooperate with UW-Extension in the development and coordination of statewide outreach programming, integration of the extension function into the institution, and appropriate and adequate recognition of those involved in outreach activities.

- * The former home economics programs are now offered as child and family studies, dietetics, early childhood education, family and consumer education, human development, nutrition and interior architecture.

Department of Sociology and Social Work

The Department of Sociology and Social Work strives to:

- a. prepare student to use the sociological imagination in developing a critical understanding of the interaction among individuals, groups, and institutions within and between societies;
- b. prepare students for effective and responsibility participation in society; and
- c. prepare students for professional fields related to sociology and social work and for graduate study in sociology and social work.

Social Work Program

The mission of the Social Work Program is to prepare students for entry level generalist social work practice, attending to the needs and resources of diverse populations and the understanding of global issues (such as oppression) that affect the human condition. The program prepares students to be competent and professional community leaders who implement humane social policies, services, and programs that seek social and economic justice for individuals, families, groups, communities, and the broader global societies. A unique emphasis of the program is a commitment to the well-being of those living in Rural Central Wisconsin communities as well as to the sovereign cultural integrity of Native American communities within this region.

Connection between Social Work and Sociology

The Department of Sociology and Social Work has deliberately designed its social work and sociology majors to be highly interconnected and collaborative. Social work majors are required to take a number of sociology courses, and students can easily double-major, if desired. Through this relationship, social work students gain more exposure and experience with the macro-institutional and broader cultural perspectives. Social work educators have expressed concern for many years that the profession has become too micro-focused or individualistic and that the original macro-thrust of the profession has fallen by the wayside. Social work students benefit from having a close connection with sociology to gain an integrated understanding of the macro, mezzo, and micro orientations. Social work students also benefit in terms of their opportunity to take advantage of emphases in such areas as deviance/social control, family/socialization, community/environment, and gerontology. Social work students entering field bring this broader and more comprehensive perspective with them to their host agencies, demonstrating a higher level of preparation to work within agencies, organizations, institutions, communities, and the broader society. Their opportunity to take specialty courses within their interest areas results in a more highly developed knowledge base that will benefit them during field.

Field Education Program Design and Curriculum

Relationship with Social Work Curriculum

Field education is a required component of the social work curriculum. It is the means by which all elements of the curriculum are tested, applied, and integrated. It builds upon the total social work curriculum and is the forum within which the student exercises knowledge, values, skills, self-awareness, and self-evaluation. The field education component of the social work curriculum takes place during the student's senior year and is viewed as the "signature pedagogy" and "capstone" experience. The following description of requirements for the Social Work Major and ideal sequencing of courses illustrates how field fits into the social work curriculum.

Degree Requirements

In addition to completing the requirements listed below, students must fulfill the UWSP General Education Requirements and the UWSP requirement of 120 credits for graduation. Students completing a Bachelor of Arts must additionally fulfill the foreign language requirement. *Note: Course credit will not be granted for life experience or previous work experience.*

1. Supporting courses—22 credits—take all of the following:
 - Political Science 101 (American Politics)
 - Psychology 110 (Introduction to Psychology)
 - Sociology 101 (Introduction to Sociology)
 - Sociology 270 (Race and Ethnicity) OR Sociology 327 (Social Inequality)
 - Sociology 350 (Sociological Theory)
 - Sociology 351 (Social Statistics)
 - Sociology/Social Work 352 (Research Methods)

2. Core Social Work courses—30 credits—take all of the following:
 - Social Work/Sociology 261 (Introduction to Social Work and the Social Services Field)
 - Social Work/Sociology 262 (Social Welfare Policies and Programs)
 - Social Work/Sociology 263 (Ethical Practice in the Helping Professions)
 - Social Work 316 (Child Welfare Practice)
 - Social Work 359 (Social Work Methods: Casework)
 - Social Work 361 (Social Work with Groups)
 - Social Work 362 (Social Work Methods: Community Organization and Social Service Administration)
 - Social Work 365 (Social Work Practice with Diverse Populations)
 - Social Work/Sociology 376 (Human Behavior and the Social Environment)
 - Social Work 385 (Social Work and Mental Health)

3. Electives—3 credits—take one of the following:
 - Social Work 381 (Death, Dying, Loss and Grief)
 - Social Work 383 (Substance Use Disorders: Assessment and Intervention)
 - Social Work 387 (Emerging Issues in Social Work with Children and Youth)

4. Capstone Experience—9 credits—take all of the following:
- Social Work 494 (Social Work Practicum)
 - Social Work 495 (Social Work Practicum Seminar)

Students who major in social work do not have to select a minor in order to graduate. There are, however, several other majors and minors offered at UW-Stevens Point that would complement this major well including sociology, psychology, gerontology, child and family studies, human development, public policy and administration, religious studies, women's studies, and family life education.

Ideal Course Sequence for Main Campus Students (*Wausau and Marshfield students should consult with their advisors for information on course sequencing*)

The sequencing of courses on the following page is the ideal way in which students move through the social work major. Faculty advisors recognize, though, that students have unique needs due to their other life responsibilities, and as such, appropriate modifications may be made.

**Note: Variation exists in the number of credits students must take to fulfill General Education requirements due to the possibility of testing out, fulfilling multiple requirements with a single course, and/or meeting the requirement through a non-credit option. As such, the grid below may not exactly reflect the needs of all students specifically with respect to General Education. Students should carefully review their Degree Progress Reports and consult with their advisor to determine individualized needs.*

- Some of the upper-level social work-specific courses are only offered one semester per academic year. These are currently: SW 362, SW 365, and SW/SOC 376.
- Some social work courses are cross-listed with sociology. Students can register either under social work or sociology. Both will count toward the social work major.
- Some social work courses are restricted to students who have been formally accepted into the social work major: SW 359, SW 361, SW 362, SW, 365, SW 494, SW 495.
- The grid below does not include summer or winter sessions. Social work electives, required sociology courses and general education courses may be taken during winter/summer. The Social Work Practicum (SW 494 and SW 495) may be partially completed during summer.
- The Social Work Practicum (SW 494 and SW 495) is typically completed during the final one or two semesters of the student's undergraduate education.

<p>Year 1-Fall Sociology 101 (3 cr.) Political Science 101 (3 cr.) General Education Courses (9 cr.)</p>	<p>Year 1-Spring Social Work/Sociology 261 (3 cr.) Psychology 110 (3 cr.) General Education Courses (10 cr.)</p>
<p>Year 2-Fall Social Work/Sociology 262 (3 cr.) General Education Courses (12 cr.)</p>	<p>Year 2-Spring Social Work/Sociology 263 (3 cr.) Sociology 270 OR Sociology 327 (3 cr.) General Education Courses (9 cr.) <i>Apply for Admission into SW Major</i></p>
<p>Year 3-Fall Sociology 350 (3 cr.) Social Work 359 (3 cr.) Social Work 316 (3 cr.) General Education Course or Elective (6 cr.)</p>	<p>Year 3-Spring Social Work 361 (3 cr.) Social Work 365 (3 cr.) Social Work/Sociology 376 (3 cr.) General Education Course or Elective (6 cr.) <i>Apply for Admission into Field Education</i></p>
<p>Year 4-Fall Sociology 351 (4 cr.) Social Work 362 (3 cr.) Social Work 385 (3 cr.) SW 494 (4 cr.) SW 495 (1 cr.)</p>	<p>Year 4-Spring Sociology 352 (3 cr.) Social Work Elective (3 cr.) General Education Course or Elective (3 cr.) SW 494 (4 cr.) SW 495 (1 cr.)</p>

Field Education Program Goals and Objectives

The Field Education Program provides students with an opportunity to merge their classroom experiences with their emerging professional practice, developing their knowledge, skill, professionalism, professional identity, and values to the extent that they demonstrate achievement of the CSWE competencies listed below. In doing so, the program aims to prepare students for generalist social work practice. The Field Education Program also strives to foster connections among students, faculty, and community professionals and to offer strong contributions to the community in the way of student service, expertise, and collaboration.

Field Education as Signature Pedagogy

According to CSWE “signature pedagogy represents the central form of instruction and learning in which a profession socializes its students to perform the role of practitioner. Professionals have pedagogical norms with which they connect and integrate theory and practice. In social work, the signature pedagogy is field education (sometimes called practicum or internship). The intent of field education is to connect the theoretical and conceptual contribution of the classroom with the practical world of the practice setting. It is a basic precept of social work education that the two interrelated components of the curriculum—classroom and field—are of equal importance within the curriculum and each contributes to the development of the requisite competencies of professional practice. Field education is systematically designed, supervised, coordinated, and evaluated based on criteria by which students demonstrate the achievement of program competencies” (EP 2.3).

Generalist Practice

A major goal of the Social Work Program is to prepare students for generalist practice, and field education is a vital component of this. According to the Council on Social Work Education (CSWE), “Generalist practice is grounded in the liberal arts and the person and environment construct. To promote human and social well-being, generalist practitioners use a range of prevention and intervention methods in their practice with individuals, families, groups, organizations, and communities. The generalist practitioner identifies with the social work profession and applies ethical principles and critical thinking in practice. Generalist practitioners incorporate diversity in their practice and advocate for human rights and social and economic justice. They recognize, support, and build on the strengths and resiliency of all human beings. They engage in research-informed practice and are proactive in responding to the impact of context on professional practice” (EPAS, 2008).

CSWE Core Competencies

Graduates of the social work major are expected to demonstrate the integration and application of the nine core competences identified by CSWE, as evidenced by the associated student outcomes for each competency. Upon successful completion of field education, students should be able to demonstrate all of the expected knowledge, skills, and values-based learning outcomes identified in this section.

1. Demonstrate Ethical and Professional Behavior

- a. Make ethical decisions by applying the standards of the NASW Code of Ethics, relevant laws and regulations, models for ethical decision-making, ethical conduct of research, and additional codes of ethics as appropriate to context.

- b. Use reflection and self-regulation to manage personal values and maintain professionalism in practice situations.
 - c. Demonstrate professional demeanor in behavior, appearance, and oral, written, and electronic communication.
 - d. Use technology ethically and appropriately to facilitate practice outcomes.
 - e. Use supervision and consultation to guide professional judgment and behavior.
- 2. Engage in Diversity and Difference in Practice**
- a. Apply and communicate understanding of the importance of diversity and difference in shaping life experiences in practice at the micro, mezzo, and macro levels.
 - b. Present themselves as learners and engage clients and constituencies as experts of their own experiences.
 - c. Apply self-awareness and self-regulation to manage the influence of personal biases and values in working with diverse clients and constituencies.
- 3. Advance Human Rights and Social, Economic, and Environmental Justice**
- a. Apply understanding of social, economic, and environmental justice to advocate for human rights at the individual and system levels
 - b. Engage in practices that advance social, economic, and environmental justice.
- 4. Engage in Research-Informed Practice and Practice-Informed Research**
- a. Use practice experience and theory to inform scientific inquiry and research.
 - b. Apply critical thinking to engage in analysis of quantitative and qualitative research methods and research findings.
 - c. Use and translate research findings to inform and improve practice, policy, and service delivery.
- 5. Engage in Policy Practice**
- a. Identify social policy at the local, state, and federal level that impacts well-being, service delivery and access to social services.
 - b. Assess how social welfare and economic policies impact the delivery of and access to social services.
 - c. Apply critical thinking to analyze, formulate, and advocate for policies that advance human rights and social, economic, and environmental justice.
- 6. Engage with Individuals, Families, Groups, Organizations, and Communities**
- a. Apply knowledge of human behavior and the social environment, person-in-environment, and other multidisciplinary theoretical frameworks to engage with clients and constituencies.
 - b. Use empathy, reflection, and interpersonal skills to effectively engage diverse clients and constituencies.
- 7. Assess Individuals, Families, Groups, Organizations, and Communities**
- a. Collect and organize data, and apply critical thinking to interpret information from clients and constituencies.
 - b. Apply knowledge of human behavior and the social environment, person-in-environment, and other multidisciplinary theoretical frameworks in the analysis of assessment data from clients and constituencies.
 - c. Develop mutually agreed-on intervention goals and objectives based on the critical assessment of strengths, needs, and challenges within clients and constituencies.
 - d. Select appropriate intervention strategies based on the assessment, research knowledge, and values and preferences of clients and constituencies.

- 8. Intervene with Individuals, Families, Groups, Organizations and Communities**
 - a. Critically choose and implement interventions to achieve goals and enhance capacities of clients and constituencies.
 - b. Apply knowledge of human behavior and the social environment, person-in-environment, and other multidisciplinary theoretical frameworks in interventions with clients and constituencies.
 - c. Use inter-professional collaboration as appropriate to achieve beneficial practice outcomes.
 - d. Negotiate, mediate, and advocate with and on behalf of diverse clients and constituencies.
 - e. Facilitate effective transitions and endings that advance mutually agreed-on goals.
- 9. Evaluate Practice with Individuals, Families, Groups, Organizations, and Communities**
 - a. Select and use appropriate methods for evaluation of outcomes.
 - b. Apply knowledge of human behavior and the social environment, person-in-environment, and other multidisciplinary theoretical frameworks in the evaluation of outcomes.
 - c. Critically analyze, monitor, and evaluate intervention and program processes and outcomes.
 - d. Apply evaluation findings to improve practice effectiveness at the micro, mezzo, and macro levels.

Practicum Design and Hours

Field Education involves placement of students in agencies under the direction of professional social workers who have agreed to act as Agency Supervisors. The Agency Supervisor, working together with the Faculty Field Coordinator, provides the student with an opportunity to further integrate the knowledge, skills, and values necessary for social work practice. Field Education is the final step in preparing students as entry level social work practitioners. Beginning with an orientation to the agency and the relevant client systems, students gradually assume more independent responsibility. Throughout this learning process, there is an emphasis on a systems approach to generalist practice as students work with and within systems of various sizes.

The Social Work Practicum (SW 494) must be taken for a total of 8 credits (400 hours), with each credit equating to 50 hours. Depending on student and agency needs, the student may do this during one semester or over the course of multiple semesters. The exact schedule of hours is arranged between the student and the Agency Supervisor. The following table illustrates the typical number of hours a student works per week, depending on semester length and number of credits.

Table 1

Credits	Semester Length			Total Hours
	14 wk	15 wk	16 wk	
3	10.7	10.0	9.4	150
4	14.3	13.3	12.5	200
5	17.9	16.6	15.6	250
6	21.4	20.0	18.7	300
7	25	23.3	21.9	350
8	28.6	26.7	25	400

Students must enroll in the Social Work Practicum Seminar (SW 495) each semester that they are in Practicum. This seminar involves weekly meetings and assignments designed to further integrate social work practice and theory to the agency setting, increase knowledge of and

identification with the social work profession, learn about community resources through interaction with other students, set goals, and process client and agency experiences with the Field Coordinator and other practicum students. During seminar, interns are required to do a formal presentation on their agency, present a client case example, complete a learning contract (see Student Learning Contract Form), and submit summaries of their experiences. Practicum experiences and seminar content and assignments are designed to introduce, reinforce, and/or emphasize practice behaviors and assist students in developing the social work core competencies.

Evaluation and Grading

Evaluation is an important component of the field experience. It allows students to obtain feedback and insight as to their abilities, so that they may grow and develop as professionals. Evaluation also provides a mechanism for determining how effective the Social Work Program is in meeting its goals and objectives. In this regard, data are used to identify areas of the curriculum in need of development.

Student

Field Evaluation (completed by Agency Supervisor)

Students will be evaluated collaboratively by the Field Coordinator and the Agency Supervisor for the practicum component. Practicum evaluation will be conducted by use of the Field Instrument, which evaluates student ability according to the CSWE practice behaviors. Practicum evaluations take place informally at mid-semester with the Agency Supervisor. A formal evaluation takes place during the last week of placement. The formal, written evaluation will be placed in the student's "field work file," which is kept in the office of the Field Coordinator, and material therein will only be released upon the consent of the student. As part of the formal evaluation, the Agency Supervisor will recommend a grade, which will be further considered and potentially adapted by the Field Coordinator based on feedback provided by the Agency Supervisor, the formal evaluation form, and site visit discussions.

Field Evaluation (Self-Evaluation—Completed by Student)

Students also self-evaluate using the same criteria included in the Field Evaluation completed by the Agency Supervisor.

Seminar

Students will be evaluated by the Field Coordinator for the seminar component of field. Seminar evaluation will be based on success with completion of the seminar requirements as indicated in the SW 495 syllabus.

Agency Supervisor

The Agency Supervisor is evaluated by both the student who has been in the field placement (see Student Evaluation of Field Agency Form) and by the Field Coordinator. These evaluations are considered as the Field Coordinator plans for future placements. Any problem areas identified in the evaluations will be discussed with the Agency Supervisor.

Field Coordinator

The Field Coordinator is evaluated by students during the last week of seminar each semester, using the standard University course/instructor evaluation form. The evaluations are submitted to the Social Work Program Director who is responsible for communicating any concerns to the Field Coordinator. Feedback from students is invaluable to the process of continued growth and improvement of the program.

Application and Placement

Requirements for Application into Field

Students are eligible for application into field when they meet the following criteria:

1. Acceptance into the social work major.
2. Completion of at least SW/SOC 261, SW/SOC 262, SW 359, SW 361 and 6 additional credits specifically in social work.
3. Attainment of senior standing by the time internship is anticipated to start.
4. Evidence of prior work and volunteer experiences relevant to social work practice.
5. Attainment of cumulative GPA of at least 2.75.
6. Attainment of GPA in Social Work Major of at least 2.75
7. Complete a criminal background check through www.castlebranch.com

It is strongly recommended that, in addition to the formal course preparation required, a student acquire some direct experience in one or more settings through volunteer work and/or entry-level employment. This can produce direct knowledge of agencies, clients, and feelings about social work. Student should begin this preparation early in their academic career. A student may be asked to obtain volunteer experience and/or a letter of recommendation if there are concerns about internship readiness.

Criminal and Caregiver Background Checks:

When students are in the application process for SW 494/495, a criminal background check is completed through the website www.castlebranch.com. Students will set up their own accounts on this website, and will have access to their results. The cost for the check is \$33. The results of the process are reviewed by the field coordinator to ascertain any challenges for future field placements of students.

Results of the background check include a listing of all charges and convictions of individuals located within the state repository. Additional criminal background information is obtained for individuals who have resided in a different state.

Students can release their background checks to prospective field agencies, and/or field faculty can provide a copy of the background check information if a student signs a release form to do so. Please be aware that some agencies choose to complete their own. Students are encouraged to discuss any legal history with the prospective field supervisor at the time of field referral. It is the responsibility of the student to inform the program and field agency of any pending or new charges once the background check has been completed.

Caregiver Background Check

In 1998 the Wisconsin Legislature passed a law requiring a check on the background of persons who provide care for others or who receive care in a number of Wisconsin health care and human service agencies. In addition, the law identifies specific crimes and offenses that will limit individuals from employment in various areas of practice. Because the law also applies to students who have field placements in certain settings, the Social Work Professional Program requires that

all persons who make application to the field program complete a Caregiver Background Check. Castle Branch facilitates the background check through a website: www.castlebranch.com for a student fee of \$33.00 paid directly by the student to this company. While the implications of a background check are sometimes unknown, an Advisor will discuss how results might possibly impact or limit a student's ability to 1) be placed for field experiences in certain areas of the human services or 2) become certified or licensed to practice social work in the State of Wisconsin. Implications for education and subsequent practice goals may also be explored. Any student wishing to discuss his or her situation prior to, during, or after completion of the Caregiver Background Check may do so by meeting with an Advisor or the Chairperson of the Social Work Professional Program.

Procedure for Application into Field

Students ideally apply for field at the end of their junior year, after successfully completing a solid foundation of coursework in social work. During the semester prior to desired placement, the student:

1. Attends a mandatory field meeting which outlines the policies and procedures for field, reviews options for placement, and addresses student questions and concerns.
2. Investigates options for field sites through materials provided at the field meeting, online, and by talking with the Field Coordinator.
3. Completes the field application form (see Application for Social Work Field Program), which includes a statement of interest, a description of previous work and volunteer experience, a list of relevant coursework taken, and an indication of the top three choices for placement.
4. Submits the field application and their DPR via SharePoint by the publicized due date for that given semester.
5. Completes a criminal background check on www.castlebranch.com

After the deadline, each application is reviewed by the Field Coordinator to determine whether the student has met requirements for field. Applicants who do not meet requirements for field will be notified immediately by the Field Coordinator that they have not been accepted for field and may request a meeting to discuss their application. The Field Coordinator will further review applications that meet minimum requirements to determine whether the top choices identified by the student are appropriate, approved or potentially approvable agencies. If they are not, the Field Coordinator will contact the student to discuss alternate options within their interest area. Whenever possible, placements will be arranged according to the student's area of interest.

The Field Coordinator will then contact each student's top choice to determine agency/supervisor interest/ability to work with a student in the given semester. If interest is expressed, the Field Coordinator will ask the student to contact the Agency Supervisor to arrange an interview. If the agency is not interested and/or able to work with a student in the given semester, the Field Coordinator will move to the student's next choice. Students are encouraged to treat the interview process as they would a professional job interview. They should present themselves professionally, and go prepared to discuss their interests, background, skills, and experiences as well as to ask good questions about the field opportunity.

After the student interviews with the Agency Supervisor, he or she will report back to the Field

Coordinator his/her thoughts on the placement. The Field Coordinator will also follow up with the Agency Supervisor to determine their willingness to work with the student. If both the Agency Supervisor and Student agree to proceeding with the placement, the Field Coordinator will request that the Agency Supervisor complete (or update) the Field Agency Data Form (see Field Agency Data Form), which provides further information on the types of practice opportunities available through the agency, the supervision to be provided, and any other special considerations. If the Field Agency Data Form reveals that practice opportunities are not available for individuals, families, groups, organizations, and communities, but the Agency is otherwise appropriate, the Field Coordinator will later work with the Agency Supervisor and student to identify learning activities and include them in the learning contract. Upon mutual agreement of the Agency Supervisor, Field Coordinator, and student, the student will be given permission to register for SW 494 and SW 495.

If it is determined that the agency is not a good fit for the student, other options will be discussed with the student. The Field Coordinator will meet with the student to discuss his/her career goals and skills in order to determine other opportunities that may be more suitable. Additionally, if deficient interviewing skills were the reason for not obtaining the placement, the Field Coordinator will mentor the student and provide additional information on successful interviewing to improve the student's chances of success at subsequent interviews. If a student interviews with three agencies and is not successful with securing a placement, though, the Field Coordinator may choose not to offer any further interviews. The Department of Sociology and Social Work cannot guarantee student placement in an agency. The student has a responsibility to successfully interview for an internship. Students unable to secure a placement will need to withdraw from the Social Work Major, since completion of an internship is a core requirement for the major.

Agency Requirements

Many agencies require that students pass a background check prior to starting field. Some agencies facilitate this process for the student, and others expect students to assume responsibility for submitting the results of a background check. The Department of Sociology and Social Work does not assume responsibility for the costs and process associated with student background checks. Some agencies have additional requirements to be completed prior to the start of field. Examples include evidence of a health screen, flu shot and/or TB test. Some agencies facilitate these things for students, and others expect students to assume responsibility for taking care of any additional agency requirements. Many students do so through their own doctor or through Student Health Services on the UWSP campus. The Department of Sociology and Social Work does not assume responsibility for the costs and process associated with additional agency requirements.

Field Agency Partnerships

Collaboration among the field agencies and their staff, the Department of Sociology and Social Work, and the University is essential to the facilitation of a successful Field Education Program. This section presents information about the roles and responsibilities among the parties involved in the Field Education Program including the Faculty Field Coordinator, the Agency Supervisor, and the student. It also describes the standards and process for approving Field Agencies and the nature of the partnership among the University, Department, and Agency.

Roles and Responsibilities

Faculty Field Coordinator

The Field Coordinator has a responsibility to:

1. Evaluate and approve Field Agencies.
2. Facilitate placement of students within appropriate Field Agencies.
3. Provide relevant information to Agency Supervisors, administrators, and staff about the Social Work Program and the expectations of the Field Education Program.
4. Consult with Field Agencies to develop their potential in working with students.
5. Maintain open dialog with Field Agency administrators and staff.
6. Conduct at least one site visit during each student field experience.
7. Oversee and monitor placements to ensure students are getting an educational experience, are appropriately contributing to the agency, and have opportunities to work towards their learning goals.
8. Assist students in stronger identification with the social work profession.
9. Assist students in setting appropriate learning goals.
10. Foster a safe atmosphere during seminar to discuss challenges, concerns, client issues, and experiences.
11. Assist with solving problems that come up in placement.
12. Evaluate student performance in field and seminar.

Agency Supervisor

The Field Supervisor has a responsibility to:

1. Interview students to determine their suitability for a placement.
2. Maintain open communication with the Field Coordinator starting with application and continuing throughout the placement.
3. Comply with completion of Field Agency Data Form and other requests for information needed by Field Coordinator to determine learning opportunities, supervision, and other considerations in placing the student. The Field Agency Data Form will be renewed every three years.
4. Assist the student in creating a schedule and program of work.
5. Assist the student with setting appropriate learning goals.
6. Create a positive, professional atmosphere for learning and practice
7. Negotiate and outline the expectations of the placement with the student in order to maximize communication and learning.
8. Orient the student to the agency setting in terms of the personnel, functions, policies, and goals; clientele served; and relationship to the community and other agencies.
9. Provide opportunities for observation and shadowing of social work and other staff.
10. Provide opportunities for integration of academic course learning into the agency setting.
11. Instruct/educate the student on social work tasks, roles, responsibilities.
12. Identify ways for the student to contribute to the functioning of the agency.
13. Supervise the student in their field activities.
14. Provide regular discussion/supervision time to the student in order to process experiences, placement activities, and other matters.
15. Assist with solving problems that come up in placement.
16. Provide feedback and evaluation informally and formally as requested by the Field Coordinator.

Student

The demands of field education are heavy because the education process not only involves academic competence but an additional investment of self in feeling and in practice. The student must consider seriously the contractual nature of the obligations which are part of this experience. The student has a responsibility to:

1. Demonstrate motivation to learn.
2. Demonstrate initiative and creativity.
3. Fulfill commitments made to the agency.
4. Become a responsible member of the helping staff.
5. Engage in mature and professional conduct.
6. Meet the standards for dependability expected of an agency employee.
7. Complete required hours and adhere strictly to the hours determined at the beginning of the semester as the hours when field work would take place.
8. Notify the Agency Supervisor in advance of any anticipated absence from field work.
9. Arrange to make up any field work time lost because of illness, family crisis, or closure of the agency.
10. Arrange transportation to the agency.
11. Attend to appearance and general demeanor as they relate to agency expectations.
12. Adhere to the NASW Code of Ethics and behave in accordance with professional values.
13. Adhere to applicable agency personnel and policy procedures and regulations. (The student has an obligation to make a reasonable effort to learn about these procedures and regulations at the beginning of the field placement in an agency.)
14. Learn the assigned and inherent roles of the Agency Supervisor and accept the authority implied in these roles.
15. Use the help of the Agency Supervisor in furthering professional development and competence.
16. Develop self-awareness, self-discipline, and skill in social work practice.
17. Prepare for meetings and client contacts.
18. Bring relevant questions to the Agency Supervisor.
19. Notify the Agency Supervisor and/or Field Coordinator of any questions and concerns.
20. Participate fully in seminar each semester of field.
21. Evaluate the agency, Agency Supervisor, and Field Coordinator as requested by the Field Coordinator.

Standards for Field Placement Agencies and Supervisors

Community agencies are an integral component of social work education. Agencies partnering with the Social Work Program agree to provide an educationally-directed field experience that is based on the goals of the Social Work Program, the learning goals and needs of the student, and the needs of the agency. The student is guided by the agency to apply social work knowledge, skills, values, and ethics to enhance the well-being of agency clientele. Additionally, the agency provides students with opportunities to develop knowledge, skills, values, and ethics consistent with practice directed toward social justice within the broader community and societal contexts.

Criteria for approval of Field Agencies to serve in partnership with the Social Work Program are:

1. The ability of the agency to comply with requests for information used by the Social Work Program to determine initial and ongoing suitability as a Field Placement Agency (for example, the Field Agency Data Form will be renewed every three years).
2. A solid commitment by the administrator and staff to provide professional learning opportunities in cooperation with the Social Work Program.
3. The availability of staff interested in advising, guiding, mentoring, and conferring with students for the purpose of directing their learning experiences.
4. The willingness of the agency to provide students with a competent, interested supervisor who meets the program's requirements.
5. The ability of the agency to provide a practice experience consistent with the Social Work Program's curricular learning objectives, including opportunities to gain competency in working with individuals, groups, families, organizations, and communities. *Note: if an agency is not able to provide this full range of opportunities, but meets all other criteria, the field coordinator will work with the agency supervisor and student to identify additional learning experiences to include in the student learning contract.*
6. A commitment to provide an educational experience that will prepare the student for entry-level employment in a generalist social work practice position and/or graduate school in social work.
7. The willingness of the agency to provide the student with varied social work learning experiences including work with clients, agency, interagency staff, and the larger community.
8. A commitment to provide students with opportunities to perform leadership activities with and on behalf of the agency.
9. A commitment to provide educational opportunities involving participation in activities supportive of social justice.
10. A commitment to provide educational experiences allowing for the development of knowledge, skills, and sensitivity toward issues of human diversity.

Each site will be formally evaluated by the Field Coordinator every three years using the above criteria (see Agency Evaluation Form). Documentation of this review will be kept in the Field Coordinator's agency files. If the Field Agency does not meet one or more criteria and still wishes to host students, the Field Coordinator will consult with agency administration and staff to determine whether changes can be made that will enable the criteria to be met. If these efforts are not successful, the Agency will be removed from the list of available sites.

To be eligible for participation in the Field Education Program, Agency Supervisors (Field Instructors) must hold a bachelor's and/or master's in social work from a CSWE-accredited institution, have at least 3 years of social work practice experience, and have been in their current setting for at least 1 year.

In rare cases, an Agency Supervisor may be approved without having a bachelors and/or masters in social work from a CSWE-accredited institution. This may occur when 1) a student has a strong interest in an agency that does not employ a social worker but otherwise meets criteria for the Field Education Program, or 2) a student has a strong interest in community organizing and/or policy work and desires placement in a non-social agency setting. In both cases, the agency, supervision, and experience are screened for appropriateness by the Field Coordinator.

In instances in which the agency supervisor does not have a degree in social work from a CSWE-accredited institution, the Field Education Program assumes additional responsibility for

reinforcing a social work perspective. This is done through: 1) additional advising, 2) field seminar content, discussion, and assignments, 3) one-on-one or group meetings between the student(s) and Field Coordinator throughout the semester(s) during which they are placed and 4) additional consultation with the agency supervisor regarding the social work perspective and approaches, and the meaning of generalist practice.

Partnership Agreement between the University, Department, and Approved Field Agencies

When a prospective Field Agency is identified and evaluated by the Field Coordinator, he or she documents the findings and reports them to the Social Work Program Committee. Any time a student has been accepted for placement in an approved Field Agency, the Field Coordinator sends a letter to the agency supervisor confirming their commitment to work with a student and providing further instruction on next steps. In this letter, Agency Supervisors are encouraged to contact the Field Coordinator at any time with questions and concerns. The Field Coordinator connects with each Field Supervisor hosting a student multiple times per semester through e-mail, telephone, and face-to-face visits in order to monitor the placement and evaluate student progress.

Orientation and training are provided to agency supervisors prior to their first time working with a student via the Department of Sociology and Social Work website. In a special section of the website called “Social Work Field,” this Field Manual, two tutorials, and a number of other materials are available. The first tutorial is an introduction to social work at UWSP, covering the history of the program, structure, mission, generalist practice, faculty, curriculum, admission expectations, and admission process. The second is more specific to field education, including discussion of field education as signature pedagogy, requirements for application to field, field course requirements and hours, roles and responsibilities of key players, CSWE core competencies and practice behaviors, student learning contracts, and evaluation. Additional materials found on the website include forms used by students and agency supervisors, a link to the CSWE website, and a link to the NASW Code of Ethics. Upon review of the information, first-time agency supervisors are asked to complete the Orientation Verification Form. With each subsequent student, agency supervisors are encouraged to revisit the website information, and if program updates and new materials are posted, all agency supervisors are informed.

Field Education Program Policies

Confidentiality

Student

Information related to the student’s learning needs, interests, and accomplishments is shared among the student, Field Coordinator, Faculty Advisor, and Agency Supervisor. If the student desires specific information to be kept confidential from one or more of the parties, he or she should request this accommodation. Although confidentiality cannot be guaranteed, the Field Coordinator recognizes the value of confidentiality and such requests will be given careful consideration. Any information regarding the student’s performance in field is to be kept

confidential between the educational partners mentioned above and is not to be released outside of those parameters without the express, written permission of the student.

Students are asked to write summaries reflecting on their field experiences as part of the seminar component. In order to allow the student full expression of feelings, thoughts, and concerns, these summaries are only reviewed by the Field Coordinator. The Field Coordinator will only break such confidentiality in cases in which the student shares evidence that they are at risk of harming themselves, another identifiable person, and/or the agency, or academic misconduct is taking place.

During seminar sessions, students may share feelings and thoughts they are having about their field experiences and career paths. Seminar students are expected to keep such statements made within seminar confidential.

Agency

Students gain much exposure to the inner-workings of the agencies they are placed within and develop relationships with the professionals they work alongside. Though an important part of student learning is to talk about agency experiences, both positive and negative, students are reminded to do so with caution and tact and with the best interest of the agency in mind. Agency Supervisors may request that students refrain from sharing certain agency information in seminar, and students are expected to comply. Students may share such information with the Field Coordinator for the purpose of gaining support and guidance. In such cases, the Field Coordinator holds the information confidential unless the Field Coordinator perceives that the student, staff, and/or clients are being harmed and disclosure is necessary for ethical reasons.

Client

Students gain much access to client information during their field experience. They are expected to uphold the same standards for confidentiality as if they were an employee within the organization. Students should discuss expectations for confidentiality with their agency supervisors.

Though an important part of student learning is to process client situations during seminar, students must maintain confidentiality at all times. This means refraining from using actual client names and other identifying information during the course of discussion. In cases in which a client may be known to other students (i.e. due to the interconnectedness of field sites and/or student employment in an affiliated organization), students should refrain from discussing that particular client in seminar. Students are also expected to maintain client confidentiality when presenting their case scenarios, writing summaries of their experiences, and consulting with the Field Coordinator.

Concurrent Paid Employment and Field Education in Same Agency

Students are strongly encouraged to explore field placements that differ from their employment locations. According to the NASW Code of Ethics, an issue of boundaries and conflicts of interest arises where there is an ongoing (or previous) relationship. Beyond the issue of boundaries, it is in the student's best interest to pursue new experiences and opportunities to broaden their knowledge and skill within social work. Nevertheless, there may be instances in

which such an arrangement is desired. For concurrent placement to be approved:

1. The field agency must meet the same approval criteria established for all other agencies
2. The Field Coordinator must be involved at all stages in making arrangements for concurrent field education in the agency of employment
3. A written agreement must be developed to include the following elements:
 - a. Assignments for field must be educationally focused toward the learning contract of the student and the curricular objectives of the Field Education Program
 - b. Assignments associated with field must differ from those associated with the paid work assignments
 - c. Supervision must be provided by a social worker who is not concurrently providing supervision for the paid work
 - d. The agency must provide adequate release time so that the student can accomplish coursework and field instruction.

Placement in an Agency in which a Student has been a Client

Students are strongly encouraged to avoid considering field placement opportunities within agencies that have served them as clients in the past. As above, such an arrangement has potential to create a conflict of interest and boundary issues for both the student and staff within that agency. Exceptions to this policy will be considered on an individual basis, taking into account timing, and in close consultation with the Agency Supervisor and Agency Director.

Paid Placements

Field Agencies are not responsible for payment of a wage, stipend or other financial remuneration to the student. Also, students assume full responsibility for their health insurance.

Absences

Absences from Field Placement

The student is expected to notify their Agency Supervisor, as early as possible, of any anticipated absence, much like an employee must notify their supervisor when they are unable to report to work. Absences in excess of one week must be reported to the Field Coordinator. Absences, for whatever reasons, must be made up in order to achieve the required number of hours for that given semester. Failure to complete the required number of hours prior to the end of the semester will result in either a failing grade or a grade of incomplete.

Absences from Seminar

Students are expected to attend and fully participate in seminar. Internship, class, and other life activities should not be scheduled to conflict with the seminar time. Occasionally, situations arise in which a student desires to miss seminar due to either pressing commitments to a client that cannot be rearranged or unique learning opportunities in the field agency in which their Agency Supervisor has invited their participation. Decisions to miss seminar for these reasons require responsible behaviors by the student including explaining to the Field Coordinator, obtaining his/her advance permission, and accepting responsibility for accomplishing the class work missed.

Field Experience and Classroom Course Conflicts

Students should not miss classes to participate in regular fieldwork activities. The exception would be a genuine client emergency. Regular or supplementary field experiences should not be scheduled by Agency Supervisors or students in conflict with students' class participation. Questions or concerns in this area should be brought to the Field Coordinator.

Protected Time for Fieldwork

Field placements require substantial blocks of time during the week to work with clients in community agencies. Most often, blocks of time of less than four hours are not practical. Students should not plan or structure course work or job commitments in such a way as to leave only small blocks of time for field placement. A series of two-or-three-hour blocks of time during the week will probably not be viable logistically or educationally acceptable to faculty and agency supervisors. Advance planning is key to the successful coordination of field hours, course requirements, job, and other life commitments.

Fieldwork when UWSP is not in Session

Students are neither required nor expected to provide agency service at their site during University breaks (winter break, spring break, breaks during summer session). Some students and Agency Supervisors may desire continued fieldwork, though, for the benefit of clients, the agency, and/or the student. Students and Agency Supervisors are advised that liability coverage provided by the State for student interns is not in effect in the periods between semesters (see "liability insurance" below). Also, faculty members are often not available to provide support, supervision, or consultation about field related issues during these time periods.

Change of Practicum Site

Under ordinary circumstances, student placement is for 400 hours in the same agency setting in order to allow for depth and breadth of learning. Changes in placements are considered problematic since leaving one agency for another disrupts the continuity of the learning experience and may inconvenience agency supervisors and staff. (For non-social work majors completing a 400 hour internship to complete the State of Wisconsin requirements for social work certification, a change of practicum site may jeopardize approval of the internship for this purpose. Such students should additionally work with the Department of Regulation and Licensing before considering a site change.)

Placement changes should be conducted in a thoughtful and carefully planned manner. When either the student or the Agency Supervisor requests a change of placement, the following steps will be followed:

1. The student and the Agency Supervisor will meet together to fully discuss the concerns. If a satisfactory resolution is not accomplished, contact should be made with the Field Coordinator as soon as possible.
2. The Field Coordinator will meet with the student and the Agency Supervisor to clearly define the concern and consider possible solutions. When the student initiates the change request, she or he must provide a compelling rationale for the action, including a statement of

learning goals, why the learning goals cannot be accomplished at the current placement agency, and a plan outlining how the internship experience can be successfully completed by an agency change. When the Agency Supervisor initiates the change request, and the request is related to student performance issues, the policy for “performance problems of students in field” described below will be followed.

3. When an agreement is made that a change of placement is in the best learning interest of the student, the Field Coordinator will seek an alternative placement for the student.
4. The student will be responsible for following the traditional application for placement procedures under a timeframe established by the Field Coordinator.
5. The student will be responsible for following the NASW Code of Ethics and agency policies governing termination of employment and termination of client services.

Performance Problems of Students in Field

Fieldwork is different from most other university courses in that it entails not only educational objectives, but also professional responsibilities to clients, social agencies, and the community. When students engage clients and assume service responsibilities, there are ongoing professional, educational, and ethical responsibilities and courtesies to be considered. Further, considerable time and effort is spent on the part of faculty and agency supervisors to plan and deliver a quality field placement. Thus, it is important to recognize and respond to performance problems of students early, particularly those of a serious nature.

Some students may face limitations and external demands that impair their performance. Some may struggle with circumstantial limitations such as lack of transportation, financial difficulties, part-time employment, family responsibilities, or commuting difficulties. Others may need to cope with more chronic or long-term situations such as a language barrier, physical disability, or chronic illness. These students may perform very well, given the opportunity and appropriate support. It is the responsibility of students to make the Field Coordinator and their Agency Supervisor aware of such issues and seek out appropriate sources of support. The Field Coordinator and Agency Supervisors have the responsibility to intervene when these limitations and demands compromise student performance in the field experience.

Personal or emotional issues of a more serious nature can present great difficulty for students. Such issues may include a serious physical illness or psychological impairment, a life crisis, a serious legal offense, drug/alcohol use, personal instability, or unsuitability for the profession. These may be evidenced behaviorally by inappropriate or unethical behavior, excessive absences, noncompliance with agency policy, or competence and skill deficits. Fortunately, serious ethical violations or breaches of confidentiality are rare. Most common performance problems have to do with deficits in competence, understanding, or excessive absences. These problems usually present an interrelated set of concerns that require monitoring, communication, and professional judgment on the part of the Field Coordinator and Agency Supervisor. The main concerns are the rights of clients to adequate service and professional care, the functioning of the agency, the educational needs of the student, the “gate-keeper” role of the university and professional community, and the provision of corrective and support services for the student. Most students and professionals deal quite well with personal struggles and problems of daily life and do not let them interfere with their practice. However, when students’ personal problems impair field performance

and professional behavior to the extent that client and agency obligations are not being met properly, the Field Coordinator and Agency Supervisor have a responsibility to intervene.

Termination of Field Placement

Student Request for Termination

A student may decide to terminate his or her enrollment in the field experience due to issues of health, impairment, finances, or other life events. Students should notify the Field Coordinator and Agency Supervisor as soon as possible so that a careful termination can be facilitated. Prior to reenrolling in field, the student must demonstrate, to the satisfaction of the Field Coordinator, that the reasons for discontinuance have been adequately addressed and that the student is ready to carry out field responsibilities in a professional manner.

Faculty Field Coordinator or Agency Supervisor Request for Termination

The Field Coordinator and/or Agency Supervisor may request termination of a field placement due to inferior student performance or student personal problems that interfere with performance expectations. Examples include, but are not limited to:

- Non-achievement or less than satisfactory achievement of Student Learning goals
- Behaviors that violate the NASW Code of Ethics in the agency or seminar setting
- Personality characteristics that conflict with the professional values and professional role sets of the social work profession
- Disruptive behaviors constituting a threat to the safety of the student or others
- A pattern of unwillingness to participate in the learning activities of the program
- Inability to communicate effectively, orally or in written form, such that performance is seriously affected

When concerns about impaired or inferior performance arise in the field agency, classroom, or otherwise, the concerns must be fully documented. Documentation should include statements addressing the student's skill assets and deficits, a description of the problem behaviors and/or attitudes, instructional or supervisory interventions, the student's response to those interventions, and the student's current level of functioning. This documentation and related recommendations should be submitted to the Field Coordinator. The Field Coordinator will call and conduct a meeting with the student, Agency Supervisor, and Director of the Social Work Program. The student may bring a representative of his or her choice as well. At this meeting:

- All parties will be allowed to present information and perspectives related to the student's performance and present recommendations for possible solutions.
- The Field Coordinator will make a ruling regarding termination or continuance in field.
- A ruling for continuance may require extending the placement, repeating the placement, or transferring to another agency for field training (Agency Supervisors ultimately have the right to discontinue student placement within their particular agency.)
- A decision for termination will require the student to withdraw from field or receive an "F," depending on the point in the semester in which termination occurs.
- Documentation of the meeting and the outcome decision will be completed by the Field Coordinator and placed in the student's file. A copy will be provided to the student.

Students may appeal the outcome decision by submitting a formal statement to the chairperson of the Department of Sociology and Social Work. This must be done within two weeks of being

notified of the outcome decision. The chairperson will then form a committee to review the appeal and make further determinations. The student will be informed, in writing, of further determinations within two weeks of the initial appeal date and such determinations will be kept in the student's file. Additional policies pertaining to student rights and responsibilities can be found at the UWSP Division of Student Affairs website at:

<https://www.uwsp.edu/dos/pages/student-conduct.aspx>

Non-discrimination

The Department of Sociology and Social Work does not discriminate against any student, professional community agency, or other entity on the basis of age, race, color, national origin or ancestry, religion, sex, sexual orientation or gender identity, arrest of conviction record, marital or pregnancy status, disability, political affiliation, or veteran's status. All participants in the Field Education Program are expected to conduct themselves in a non-discriminatory manner. Failure to do so may result in removal from the Field Education Program and/or referral for violation of the NASW Code of Ethics. More information on UWSP policies and processes regarding diversity, equity, and affirmative action may be directed to the office of Equity and Affirmative Action: <http://www.uwsp.edu/equity/>.

Sexual Harassment

The Department of Sociology and Social Work does not tolerate any student, faculty member, or Agency Supervisor engaging in sexual harassment behaviors. All participants in the Field Education Program are expected to conduct themselves in a manner that is fully consistent with the NASW Code of Ethics. Failure to comply with the NASW Code of Ethics may result in removal from the Field Education Program and/or referral for violation of the NASW Code of Ethics. If a student or Agency Supervisor feels that he or she has experienced sexual harassment related to the Field Education Program, he or she should discuss the issue with the Field Coordinator, the Director of the Social Work Program, and/or the Chair of the Department of Sociology and Social Work. Support and information will be provided with regard to informal and/or formal methods to see redress. Additional information and support regarding sexual harassment may be found at the UWSP Equity and Affirmative Action Office:

<http://www.uwsp.edu/equity/>.

Safety and Security of Students

Attention to personal safety is a reality of social service work. While it is impossible to remove all potential risk from social work practice, it is possible and desirable for students in their field experience to exercise caution and take preventative measures to ensure their safety while delivering social services to clients. Agency Supervisors are encouraged to cover safety and security as part of a student's orientation to the agency. Students are encouraged to consult with their Agency Supervisor and the Field Coordinator with questions or concerns they might have. Should a student encounter a threat to their safety or actual abuse or harm in their placement, they should immediately notify their Agency Supervisor and the Field Coordinator, who will ensure that the necessary services, relief, and follow-up supports are provided.

Social Media and the Social Work Competencies

In the age of technology and information, social media (Facebook, Instagram, Snapchat, Twitter, YouTube, Blogs, SMS/texting, etc.) 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 matters 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 in the training of social work students.

While social media tools obviously present many useful and exciting opportunities, the features that enable these benefits also present potentially serious challenges in a professional setting. 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 taken.

If the fieldwork site/agency already has a policy on social media use, this policy should be shared with social work students as part of their orientation to the fieldwork site. Even without its own formal social media policy, the fieldwork site should have clear guidelines and expectations for students regarding social media use at home and at the fieldwork site.

Because of the diverse needs and settings of fieldwork sites and the perpetually changing nature of the online social media world, the UWSP social work program does not have a formal social media policy. In lieu of an overarching social media policy, these guidelines have been developed to aid fieldwork agencies and students in determining appropriate online conduct within the context of their field work sites.

Here are a few important issues to explore and discuss:

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

- a. It seems that it should be inappropriate for students to refer to any fieldwork site/agency, client, or client situation, etc. on their personal social media pages (e.g. Facebook, My Space, Twitter, Blog), no matter how many security settings have been invoked.
- b. Should students/employees share their personal contact information including email, cell number, address, etc. with a current or former client or client group?
- c. While social workers have an ethical obligation to protect the privacy of their clients, no such restrictions prevent a client from searching online for information about a student or employee. Any photos, videos, written comments, and other postings can serve to undermine a social worker's personal safety and/or professional competence.
- d. Students (and employees) should be expected to exercise great care in how they represent the social work profession as a whole in any online activities. It is very easy for an outsider to misinterpret statements or images out-of context. (See *NASW Code of Ethics Section 4.06a: Misrepresentation.*)

2. When, if ever, is it permissible to conduct an online search for information about a client?

In a macro setting, this may be common practice when doing evaluation or other work, but in a clinical setting, 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 contexts in which this might be acceptable? (See *NASW Code of Ethics Section 1.06c: Conflict of Interest*.)

4. How can social media be used to further the goals of the fieldwork site?

How does a student or employee present information on a social media page in a professionally-appropriate manner?

5. What types of information should not be sent via email?

Because the privacy of email can never be completely ascertained, students and employees should take precautions to ensure they are not sending sensitive information in an email. (See *NASW Code of Ethics Section 1.07e: Privacy and Confidentiality*.)

It is in the profession's best interest to remind students that social media sites are public domains and any and all information can be accessed by anyone. Once information is in cyber space, it never goes away.

The challenges of social media use are particularly important as they relate to a few of the established social work competencies listed below:

1. Values and Ethics: Demonstrates how the value base, ethical standards and principles of the social work profession are applied to social work practice.
2. Professional Identity and Professional Behavior: Identifies as a professional social worker and conducts oneself as a representative of the profession, its mission and core values.
3. Organizational Context: Demonstrates an understanding of the organizational structure of the fieldwork setting, how it operates, the services offered, and its service delivery system
4. Critical Thinking: Demonstrates ability to analyze, process and implement decisions within the context of professional social work practice
5. Engagement: Demonstrates ability to connect to a client/constituent base, colleagues, community, etc. in a professional manner

When reflecting upon the importance of preparing students to function as solid, ethical, social work professionals, it seems that supervision/discussion/consultation regarding the social work competencies is critical in navigating the challenges social media presents in practice.

Student Rights and Responsibilities/Grievance Procedures

To address potential violations of students' personal or academic rights, the following protocol has been established.

1. The student should first attempt to address his/her concern with the person thought to have made the violation (e.g. faculty, other student, field supervisor, field coordinator, or advisor). As will be the case in their professional lives, students are encouraged to respond to such concerns in a professional manner, with discretion, integrity, respect, and effective communication.

2. After talking to the individual involved, if the problem continues
 - a. If the concern is with a faculty member or another student, the student should then discuss the matter with his/her advisor.
 - b. If the concern is with their field supervisor, because it is related to the student's field experience, it should then be shared with the field coordinator.
3. If the problem persists, then the student should notify the Social Work Program Director, in writing, about the concern.
4. If the problem continues or is in relation to the Social Work Program Director, then the student should notify the chairperson of the Department of Sociology and Social Work, in writing, about the concern.
5. If the problem remains unresolved, the student may contact the office of the UWSP Dean of Students, which among other responsibilities, responds to concerns regarding student rights. Information on this office and student rights and responsibilities can be found at: <http://www.uwsp.edu/dos/Pages/default.aspx>.

Additionally, the Division of Academic Affairs at UW-Stevens Point outlines a number of policies related to the rights and responsibilities of students and the broader university community. At their website (<http://www.uwsp.edu/acadaff/Pages/gradeReview.aspx>) are links to resources/procedures related to grade review, student academic standards and disciplinary procedures, the UWSP Community Bill of Rights and Responsibilities, and the UWSP Office of Student Rights and Responsibilities. Students are advised to visit the Division of Academic Affairs website for access to these policies and procedures, as well as important contact information for assistance in resolving concerns.

Liability Insurance

UWSP students enrolled in this program are considered state agents and therefore entitled to coverage under the State of WI Self-Funded Liability program. The State will indemnify students in covered programs against liability for damages arising out of their activities while acting within the scope of their respective agency, pursuant to WI §895.46(1) and §893.82, Statutes. The coverage is in effect throughout each applicable academic semester and applies only to activities within the scope of the authorized program. Coverage is not in effect during the period between semesters unless otherwise authorized by UWSP.

If desired, additional liability coverage may be purchased through the National Association of Social Workers for a minimal cost. To be eligible for this coverage, students must be enrolled in a program accredited by the Council on Social Work Education and must be members of NASW. For details, see: <https://www.socialworkers.org/>

Driving

Students are expected to arrange for their own transportation to and from their field agency. If transportation is anticipated to be a concern because of lack of resources and/or disability, the student should make this known to the Field Coordinator when applying for field. Field options close to campus and/or on the bus line are available, as are options that do not require driving as part of the field experience.

When interviewing for field placements, the student should ask about expectations for use of their personal vehicle while working for the agency. Students are not required to drive their own vehicles to accomplish their work duties for the agency. If the agency requests that the student do so, and the student is willing to do so, he or she can voluntarily agree to use his or her own car to perform work.

University insurance does not cover any accidents or liability claims against students who transport clients in their own cars. As such, students are advised not to transport clients in their private cars. Students' private automobile insurance is necessary for such coverage. Student deciding to use their own cars to transport clients should make sure that they have adequate coverage and should discuss with their agency whether the agency insurance covers the use of their personal vehicle.

Resources/Contacts for Students in Field

Field Coordinator

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Social Work Program Director

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UWSP Counseling Center

Third Floor, Delzell Hall
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Stevens Point, WI 54481
(715) 346-3553; <http://www.uwsp.edu/counseling/>

UWSP Disability and Assistive Technology Center (DATC)

Room 609 Albertson Hall
900 Reserve Street
Stevens Point, WI 54481
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TTY/TTD (715) 346-3362; <http://www.uwsp.edu/datc>

Council on Social Work Education

Educational Policy and Program Standards

<https://www.cswe.org/Accreditation>

National Association of Social Workers

<http://socialworkers.org/>

National Association of Social Workers—Wisconsin

<http://www.naswwi.org/>