



# **Social Work Program Field Instruction Manual**

Revised September 2024

### **Social Work Program Mission Statement**

The Southwest Minnesota State Social Work Program prepares liberally educated professional social workers to ethically serve diverse populations and promote a just global community.

### **Statement on Non-Discrimination**

Southwest Minnesota State University is committed to providing equal education and employment opportunities to all persons and does not discriminate on the basis of race, sex, color, creed, religion, age, national origin, disability, marital status, status with regard to public assistance, sexual orientation, or membership or activity in a local commission as defined by law.

In adhering to this policy, the University abides by Title VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972, Minnesota Statutes Chapter 363, and other applicable state or federal laws.

Inquiries regarding compliance should be referred to the Affirmative Action Officer, BA 257, phone 507-537-6544.

Revised June 2017

### **SMSU Land Acknowledgement Statement**

Southwest Minnesota State University sits on the ancestral, traditional, and contemporary lands of the Dakota, Lakota, and Nakota people, collectively known as the Oceti Sakowin, Seven Council Fires. We acknowledge and recognize our sovereign neighbors from the Pezihutazizi Otunwe (Yellow Medicine Village) and Cansayapi Otunwe (Village Where They Mark The Trees Red), and all indigenous people who continue to call this area home. SMSU resides on land ceded by the Dakota Nation to the United States in the disputed 1851 Treaty of Traverse des Sioux. This land acknowledgement affirms these nations' sovereignty and history, while seeking to hold SMSU accountable to the needs of American Indian and Indigenous people.

Dear Colleagues,

On behalf of the Southwest Minnesota State University (SMSU) Social Work Program, I would like to express our appreciation for your commitment to quality social work education. Your on-site training with a social work practicum student in field placement is a critical part of the SMSU Social Work Program.

The social work faculty at Southwest Minnesota State University in Marshall recognizes the importance of quality educational experiences for students graduating with the Bachelor of Social Work degree. Whether through field instruction or courses, the quality of the social work curriculum and instruction has implications for human services agencies, graduating social workers, social work professionals, and clients. Although the social work faculty at SMSU is accountable for the quality of the social work curriculum, the responsibility for developing and assuring quality curriculum is shared with the students and the broader social work community.

Field education is an integral component of social work education. Your setting reinforces students' identification with the purposes, values, and ethics of the profession, fosters the integration of empirical and practice-based knowledge, and promotes the development of professional competence.

This field instruction manual is designed to provide the field information needed for our students, our faculty and our field instructors. I hope the manual will be of help to you and we welcome your suggestions as to how the manual could be improved.

Our appreciation is given to the students, faculty, and agency-based professionals for their contributions to social work education. Thank you for your personal and professional contributions toward making the SMSU Social Work Program an outstanding program.

Sincerely,

Nan Askeland, MSW, LICSW (MN), LISW (IA)  
Director of Field Education  
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## **USE OF THIS MANUAL**

This manual is intended to familiarize students, faculty, and field instructors with the field instruction policies and procedures in the SMSU Social Work Program. The information is intended to serve as a guide for the basic Social Work Program field instruction expectations. This manual is not intended to supersede official policies and procedures of Southwest Minnesota State University that are contained in the Southwest Minnesota State University Student Handbook, available online at [www.smsu.edu](http://www.smsu.edu) under Menu (for the most up-to-date information).

All social work majors and field instructors are expected to familiarize themselves with this Field Instruction Manual and to be responsible for relevant tasks. Any questions or comments you may have can be directed to:

Director of Field Education  
Social Work Program  
Southwest Minnesota State University  
1501 State Street  
Marshall, Minnesota 56258  
Main Office: (507) 537-6224  
Email: [socialscience@smsu.edu](mailto:socialscience@smsu.edu)

The contents of this manual are subject to change.

## **Social Work Licensure 2022 Minnesota Statutes Chapter 148E**

The Minnesota Board of Social Work Practice Act (*2022 Minnesota Statutes Chapter 148E*) is the law enacted by the Minnesota Legislature which governs the licensure and regulation of social workers in the State of Minnesota. The regulations prohibit practicing social work, and the use of a title incorporating the words social work or social worker unless the individual holds either a temporary permit or a license as a licensed social worker. A baccalaureate student, graduating from a Council on Social Work Education (CSWE) accredited social work program, is eligible to complete an application to the Minnesota Board of Social Work, and upon approval, schedule the examination.

The Minnesota Board of Social Work Practice Act (*148E.010 § 11 Practice of social work*) defines the practice of social work as:

- (a) "Practice of social work" means working to maintain, restore, or improve behavioral, cognitive, emotional, mental, or social functioning of clients, in a manner that applies accepted professional social work knowledge, skills, and values, including the person-in-environment perspective, by providing in person or through telephone, video conferencing, or electronic means one or more of the social work services described in paragraph (b), clauses (1) to (3). Social work services may address conditions that impair or limit behavioral, cognitive, emotional, mental, or social functioning. Such conditions include, but are not limited to, the following: abuse and neglect of children or vulnerable adults, addictions, developmental disorders, disabilities, discrimination, illness, injuries, poverty, and trauma. Practice of social work also means providing social work services in a position for which the educational basis is the individual's degree in social work described in subdivision 13.
- (b) Social work services include:
  - (1) providing assessment and intervention through direct contact with clients, developing a plan based on information from an assessment, and providing services which include, but are not limited to, assessment, case management, client-centered advocacy, client education, consultation, counseling, crisis intervention, and referral;
  - (2) providing for the direct or indirect benefit of clients through administrative, educational, policy, or research services including, but not limited to:
    - (i) advocating for policies, programs, or services to improve the well-being of clients;
    - (ii) conducting research related to social work services;
    - (iii) developing and administering programs which provide social work services;
    - (iv) engaging in community organization to address social problems through planned collective action;
    - (v) supervising individuals who provide social work services to clients;
    - (vi) supervising social workers in order to comply with the supervised practice requirements specified in sections 148E.100 to 148E.125; and
    - (vii) teaching professional social work knowledge, skills, and values to students; and
  - (3) engaging in clinical practice.

For further information contact: Minnesota Board of Social Work  
335 Randolph Ave Suite 245  
St. Paul, MN 55102  
Website: <http://mn.gov/boards/social-work/>  
Office Email: [social.work@state.mn.us](mailto:social.work@state.mn.us)  
Phone: (888) 234-1320

For further information about social work licensure in other states visit:  
[www.aswb.org](http://www.aswb.org) and search under “How to get a license”



**Code of Ethics of the National Association of Social Workers**

Approved by the 1996 NASW Delegate Assembly and revised in 2021 by the NASW Delegate Assembly

The NASW Code of Ethics can be found at:

<https://www.socialworkers.org/About/Ethics/Code-of-Ethics/Code-of-Ethics-English>

# **Section I**

## **Social Work Program Description**

### **Social Work Program Mission Statement**

- Program Goals
- Program Objectives

### **Social Work Major Course Requirements**

### **Field Instruction Philosophy**

- Field Instruction Objectives/Outcomes

### **Role Descriptions and Responsibilities**

- SMSU Social Work Program
- Director of Field Education/Field Coordinator
- Faculty Field Liaison
- Field Instructor/Supervisor
- Task Instructor
- Student Expectations

### **Criteria for Selection of Field Agencies and Field Instructors**

### **Basic Field Instructor Training Seminars**

### **Field Advisory Committee**

### **Applying for Field Practicum: The Pre-Field Practicum**

### **Guidelines for Setting up Your Own (New) Placement**

### **Guidelines for Setting up a Placement at Your Place of Employment**

### **Setting up a Placement at MN Department of Corrections Agencies**

## **SOUTHWEST MINNESOTA STATE UNIVERSITY (SMSU) SOCIAL WORK PROGRAM**

Generalist social work practice is grounded in the liberal arts and the person-in-environment framework. To promote human and social well-being, generalist practitioners use a range of prevention and intervention methods in their practice with diverse individuals, families, groups, organizations, and communities based on scientific inquiry and best practices. The generalist practitioner identifies with the social work profession and applies ethical principles and critical thinking in practice at the micro, mezzo, and macro levels. Generalist practitioners engage 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.

The baccalaureate program in social work prepares students for generalist practice. The descriptions of the nine Social Work Competencies presented in the Educational Policy and Accreditation Standards (EPAS) identify the knowledge, values, skills, cognitive and affective processes, and behaviors associated with competence at the generalist level of practice. (Council on Social Work Education, 2022.)

### **SOCIAL WORK PROGRAM MISSION STATEMENT**

The Southwest Minnesota State Social Work Program prepares liberally educated professional social workers to ethically serve diverse populations and promote a just global community.

### **SMSU SOCIAL WORK PROGRAM GOALS**

- GOAL I:** To prepare students for generalist practice with individuals, families, groups, organizations, and communities of diverse backgrounds;
- GOAL II:** To promote an identification with and responsibility to the values and ethics of the social work profession;
- GOAL III:** To prepare students to be lifelong learners in a changing global social and natural environment.

### **SMSU BSSW PROGRAM OBJECTIVES (OUTCOMES)**

The goals and objectives of the Social Work Program parallel the mission of the University as a regional university serving both the public and private sectors of southwest Minnesota and other regional institutions. Upon graduation, students should be able to:

1. Demonstrate Ethical and Professional Behavior
2. Advance Human Rights and Social, Racial, Economic, and Environmental Justice
3. Engage Anti-Racism, Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (ADEI) in Practice
4. Engage In Practice-Informed Research and Research-Informed Practice
5. Engage in Policy Practice
6. Engage with Individuals, Families, Groups, Organizations, and Communities
7. Assess Individuals, Families, Groups, Organizations, and Communities
8. Intervene with Individuals, Families, Groups, Organizations, and Communities
9. Evaluate Practice with Individuals, Families, Groups, Organizations, and Communities

## SOCIAL WORK MAJOR COURSE REQUIREMENTS

The Social Work Program's BSSW curriculum is organized around SMSU's Liberal Education Program (LEP), interdisciplinary courses, and professional foundation courses which include content on Social Work values and ethics, diversity, social and economic justice, populations-at-risk, human behavior and the social environment, social welfare policy and services, Social Work practice, research, and field practicum.

### Liberal Education Foundation (MnTC) (22 credits)

ENG 151	Academic Writing	4
ENG 251	Writing in Professions	3
PHIL 103	Ethics	3
POL 220	American National Government	3
PSYC 101	General Psychology	3
SOCI 101	Introduction to Sociology	3
COMM 110	Essentials of Public Presentations	3

### Interdisciplinary Foundation (16 credits)

INDS XXX	any Indigenous Nations and Dakota Studies course (3 credits)	
PSYC 200	Statistics for the Behavioral Sciences	3
PSYC 200L	Stats for the Behavioral Sciences Lab	1
PSYC 235	Abnormal Psychology	3
PSYC 260	Developmental Psychology	3
SOCI 315	Applied Social Research	3

### Professional Social Work Foundation (24 credits)

SWRK 234	Introduction to Social Work & Social Welfare	3
SWRK 330	Basic Interviewing Skills	3
SWRK 340	Human Behavior in the Social Environment	3
SWRK 342	Generalist Social Work Practice I	3
SWRK 343	Generalist Social Work Practice II	3
SWRK 344	Generalist Social Work Practice III	3
SWRK 351	Diverse and At-Risk Populations	3
SWRK 402	Social Welfare Policy	3

*[For Social Work Methods Sequence (SWRK 342, SWRK 343, and SWRK 344) admission to the major is required.]*

### Field Practicum (13 credits)

SWRK 484	Pre-Field Practicum	1
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#### Full-Time Practicum Students

SWRK 485	Social Work Field Seminar	4
SWRK 499	Field Practicum	8

#### Part-Time Practicum Students

SWRK 487	Social Work Field Seminar I	2
SWRK 488	Social Work Field Seminar II	2
SWRK 497	Field Practicum I	4
SWRK 498	Field Practicum II	4

## **FIELD INSTRUCTION PHILOSOPHY**

Field education is the signature pedagogy for social work. Signature pedagogies are elements of instruction and socialization that teach future practitioners the fundamental dimensions of professional work in their discipline: to think, to perform, and to act intentionally, ethically, and with integrity.

The field setting is where students apply human rights principles from global and national social work ethical codes to advance social, racial, economic, and environmental justice. It fosters a learning environment where anti-racism, diversity, equity, and inclusion are valued. Field education is designed to integrate the theoretical and conceptual contributions of the explicit curriculum in the field setting. It is a basic precept of social work education that the two interrelated components of curriculum—classroom and field—are of equal importance, 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 and measures of student acquisition and demonstration of the nine social work competencies. Responding to the changing nature of the practice world and student demographics and characteristics, field education programs articulate how they maintain or enhance students' access to high-quality field practicum experiences. Field education programs develop field models to prepare students for contemporary and interprofessional social work practice, including the use of various forms of technology. (Council on Social Work Education, 2022)

The field instructor is viewed as a facilitator of learning, and creates the conditions where the learning takes place. The learning agreement is an educational tool that integrates the knowledge, value and skill bases for social work practice. It emphasizes both an academic approach (learning outcomes), knowing and understanding the professional knowledge base for social work practice, and a competency-based approach (practice-core clusters/competencies), demonstrate a particular professional knowledge base in the form of measurable behaviors. Social policies, human behavior and the social environment, practice methodologies, and techniques, social work values and ethics, and research comprise the elements which the field instruction is expected to integrate into a meaningful whole.

The focus of field instruction must be on the student. The task is more than serving clients or learning to do agency work, although these are important. It demands a carefully planned effort to enable students to draw on their knowledge, values, skills, and life experiences; and requires translating abstract knowledge and principles from classroom learning into practical applications. The nine SMSU Social Work Program outcomes are actualized in field instruction as Field Instruction Course Outcomes.

### **FIELD INSTRUCTION COURSE OUTCOMES**

- 1. Demonstrate Ethical and Professional Behavior**
- 2. Advance Human Rights and Social, Racial, Economic, and Environmental Justice**
- 3. Engage in Anti-Racism, Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (ADEI) in Practice**
- 4. Engage In Practice-informed Research and Research-informed Practice**

5. Engage in Policy Practice
6. Engage with Individuals, Families, Groups, Organizations, and Communities
7. Assess Individuals, Families, Groups, Organizations, and Communities
8. Intervene with Individuals, Families, Groups, Organizations, and Communities
9. Evaluate Practice with Individuals, Families, Groups, Organizations, and Communities

### **ROLE DESCRIPTIONS and RESPONSIBILITIES: SMSU Social Work Program**

The Social Work Program is responsible for:

1. the approval of field agencies and field instructors;
2. assessing the student's readiness for field instruction responsibilities;
3. the placement of students in agencies;
4. coordinating the details of the placement;
5. maintaining a supportive learning environment for students;
6. the final determination of student grades;
7. the provision of student intern professional liability insurance for students in field placement through the State of Minnesota Risk Management for Students of Minnesota Colleges and Universities;
8. the orientation, training, and other supports to students, field instructors and agencies.

#### **Director of Field Education**

The Director of Field Education/Field Placement Coordinator must possess an MSW degree and have a minimum of two years direct practice experience. They are administratively responsible for planning, implementing and evaluating all aspects of the field education experience including:

1. assessing the readiness of students for field instruction;
2. assessing and approving agencies;
3. acquiring and verifying qualifications of field instructors;
4. acquainting students with the nature of field instruction and the variety and range of learning experiences available in agencies;
5. placing students;
6. scheduling and implementing orientation and training of students, field instructors and agencies;
7. monitoring placements and consulting with agency personnel and students as needed;
8. mediating problems that may arise that may interfere with the successful completion of field instruction and assisting the student and field instructor in developing solutions;
9. convening the Field Advisory Committee as needed;
10. consulting with the Program Director on field instruction/student concerns;
11. monitoring the field instruction program to ensure the instructional integrity of the experience for students, conducting professional advisement activities for students in placements, e.g., career guidance, job placement, etc.

### **Faculty Field Liaison**

At SMSU the field liaison activities are the responsibility of the Director of Field Education. The primary activities of the field liaison are to monitor student progress in placement, including:

1. maintaining regular contact with the student through the practice seminar to assess the integration of course work and field instruction;
2. providing the field instructor with a standard tool for performance appraisal;
3. assigning grades based on the written evaluation and recommendation of the field instructor;
4. arranging a minimum of two on-site or virtual visits per semester.

### **Field Instructor/Supervisor**

The field instructor is the primary supervisor for the student at the agency/field site, and is responsible for the following:

1. to assist the student in developing a strong sense of identification with the profession of social work through discussion, role modeling and provision of actual social work tasks;
2. to assist the student in learning about values and methods relevant to social work, for example, taking an ecological perspective, starting where the client is, etc.;
3. to assist the student in developing understanding of and familiarity with the *NASW Code of Ethics*, including making the Code tangible and relevant to the setting;
4. to provide the student with an orientation to the agency and identifying the agency policies and procedures within which the student is expected to operate, including the provision of an organization chart;
5. to ensure adequate work space for the student intern, including a suitable desk, phone, etc.;
6. to facilitate the field instruction learning outcomes of the social work program;
7. to develop in conjunction with the student the required *Learning Outcomes Agreement*, to be submitted to the faculty field liaison on the date specified by the Director of Field Education/Field Coordinator (after placement begins);
8. to ensure that all assignments reflect the learning outcomes and identify tasks and learning opportunities within and outside the agency setting;
9. to select appropriate and challenging assignments for the student in order to assist the student in preparing for beginning entry level BSW practice;
10. to monitor all assignments by offering appropriate direction, coordination and availability for consultation sessions designed to enhance the student's learning and performance;
11. to monitor the student's performance by requiring accountability for practice behaviors while in the field placement;
12. to facilitate student completion of field-based assignments for concurrent social work required courses;
13. to provide the student with a minimum of one hour of individual supervision per week;
14. to provide the student with ongoing evaluation and feedback;
15. to notify the Director of Field Education/Field Coordinator of any problems that develop during field instruction;
16. to participate in formal conferences with the student and field liaison and to conduct midterm and final evaluation of the student;

17. to sign Student Time Report Forms and assure students meet the requirement of a minimum of 40 hours orientation and 400 hours field instruction;
18. to complete and submit the following forms to the Director of Field Education: Field Supervisor/Instructor Agreement and Information form, Field Instruction Agreement, and the Mid Placement and Final Evaluation forms.

### **Task Instructor**

A student may have a placement that involves having a field instructor/field supervisor, and a task instructor who assigns cases, provides ongoing supervision and also serves as a field instructor. If there is not an identified task instructor, the field instructor/field supervisor is responsible for these outcomes.

The responsibilities of the task instructor are as follows:

1. to provide the student with an appropriate case load, daily work assignments, regular ongoing supervision and consultation, and provision of other tasks as appropriate.
2. monitor and evaluate the student's success toward completion of tasks.
3. assist the student in developing interpersonal helping skills, assessment and referral, and/or other relevant areas.
4. provide the students with insight into the corporate culture of the agency, professional relationships with colleagues and other personnel, etc.
5. assist in the developing and monitoring of the student's performance by requiring accountability for and documentation for the student's professional behaviors while in placement.

### **Student Expectations**

The Social Work Program views the field placement experience as a mutual sharing of responsibility among the student, field instructor, and the field liaison. Students in field internship placement are responsible for the following:

1. to conduct themselves in an appropriate and responsible manner, consistent with the *NASW Code of Ethics*;
2. to read and be familiar with this manual;
3. to demonstrate honesty in the classroom, to display respect for self, clients, organizations and members of the University community, and to comply with the policies and expectations of the field placement agency;
4. to complete a minimum of 40 hours orientation to the agency;
5. to complete a minimum of 400 clock hours over the course of the placement. Students are expected to maintain a schedule which will have them in the agency during agreed upon days and times;
6. to be responsible for personal transportation to and from the agency;
7. to notify the field instructor prior to or at the time of absence or tardiness;
8. to notify the field instructor in advance of vacation plans;
9. to complete, with the field instructor, all forms, contracts and written evaluations to be submitted to the faculty field liaison. These forms (contained in this Field Instruction Manual) include, but are not limited to:
  - a. Field Instruction Agreement
  - b. Learning Outcomes Agreement



- c. Student Time Reports
  - d. Midterm and Final Evaluations
  - e. Student Evaluation of Field Instruction (submitted once the placement has ended)
10. to arrange liaison visit conferences between the student, the field instructor, and the faculty field liaison. These should be a minimum of two conferences (at the middle and at the end of the internship);
  11. to participate in training opportunities offered by the agency that are appropriate to the student's field and educational experiences and learning outcomes;
  12. to participate in a supervisory relationship with the agency field instructor in which self-assessment and evaluation are expected. Meetings between the field instructor and student should be held weekly for a minimum of one hour;
  13. to notify the faculty field liaison of any difficulties encountered in the placement about which consultation with them might be helpful;
  14. to participate in SWRK 485 Field Practicum Seminar (for full-time practicum students) or SWRK 487/488 Field Practicum Seminar I & II (for part-time practicum students) that is scheduled as part of the field requirement.

### **CRITERIA FOR SELECTION OF FIELD AGENCIES and FIELD INSTRUCTORS**

The primary criteria for agencies and field instructors participating in field instruction are a commitment to the profession of social work education at the Bachelor's level. This commitment needs to be expressed through the availability of direct supervision of students and participation in the evaluation of the BSW program.

Prospective agencies must be able to provide students with a level of practice experience consistent with the stated goals of field instruction experience. During field instruction, students must be able to demonstrate that they are able to function as competent and ethical entry-level generalist practitioners.

Field instructors that are chosen will have an MSW or BSW degree from an accredited program and a current social work license where required, or, if not a professional social worker, is willing to work closely with the Director of Field Education to provide a generalist social work practice experience. In those cases where the field instructor does not hold a social work degree, the social work program faculty will assume responsibility for identifying the specific areas that will require additional faculty involvement to ensure that a social work focus and identification are sustained and for providing whatever involvement is judged necessary to achieve this objective. Field instructors that are chosen will accept students for field instruction without regard to race, gender, ethnicity, culture, class, religion, national origin, age, physical or mental ability, sexual orientation, political orientation, public assistance status, or geographic location, and have experience in the agency sufficient to orient the student to the agency's policies and practices, select appropriate work assignments, and guide the student's learning about generalist practice, including the relationship of practice to social policy, values and ethics, diversity of persons, populations at risk, and evaluation of practice and programs.

Field instructors must be knowledgeable of and practice in accord with the Codes of Ethics from NASW and their state Board of Social Work, must not be under sanction by NASW nor have a social work license suspended or revoked; and must acknowledge and respect professional and personal boundaries.

**Criteria for selection of field agencies:**

1. The agency should provide students an opportunity to form purposeful, professional relationships with client systems at individual, group and community/organizational levels.
2. The agency should provide students an opportunity to participate in and assume responsibilities for professional activities consistent with expectations of an entry level BSW.
3. The agency should provide students with supervision by qualified, experienced, BSW or MSW degreed social workers with ample time to meet weekly with students for supervisory sessions.
4. The agency should provide agency-based field instructors/supervisors with adequate time to attend SMSU's orientation for field instructors/supervisors.
5. The agency should be interested in social work education at the baccalaureate level.
6. The agency should be able to provide students with an opportunity to understand through practice, the complexities of social work practice.
7. The agency should be able to provide students an opportunity to recognize our society as culturally diverse and to understand the implications of this for sensitive and effective social work intervention.
8. The agency should provide students with the necessary support services and resources to carry out work assignments and achieve designated learning outcomes (for example, phone, desk, supplies, clerical services or computer, and mileage reimbursement for agency related tasks).
9. The agency should be able to accept students on a specific time frame corresponding with SMSU's academic semesters.

**Criteria for the selection of field instructors/supervisors:**

1. The individual should hold a social work degree from an accredited social work program, and have been working in a social work position for at least two years post BSW or MSW. In those cases where the field instructor does not hold a social work degree, the social work program faculty will assume responsibility for identifying the specific areas that will require additional faculty involvement to ensure that a social work focus and identification are sustained and for providing whatever involvement is judged necessary to achieve this objective.
2. The individual should be willing to provide an educationally directed experience by participating in regularly scheduled supervisory conferences with the student; by participating with the student in the completion of a course objectives agreement; by supporting the student; by directing the student to opportunities, activities and assignments within the agency that will ensure the student's achievement of the learning outcomes for field instruction.
3. The individual should be able and willing to devote time to students.
4. The individual should be committed to education at the undergraduate level.

5. The individual should be able to serve in a modeling role, or coaching role, for learners in terms of the sharing of knowledge and skill, positive attitude toward issues in the profession, and identification with student needs and interests.
6. The individual should be committed to and exemplify in action social work values.
7. The individual should be willing and able to attend orientation and training sessions for field instructors/supervisors sponsored by the Social Work Program at SMSU.

Selection of field agencies and field instructors is formalized through the completion of the Field Agency Agreement form, to be completed by the agency executive, and the Field Supervisor Information form, to be completed by field instructors.

## **FIELD INSTRUCTOR TRAINING**

Field education revolves around a student's productive activities, which enable the development of roles and skills. The student is required to integrate social work values and knowledge in action. Field instruction is an educational process in which the field instructor/supervisor makes a shift from the role of practitioner to the role of educator/teacher. The SMSU Social Work Program may offer field training seminars during the year. The training seminars may include the following:

### **Field Requirements/Engagement**

This session will introduce the supervisor/instructor to the SMSU Social Work Field Education Program. The instructor/supervisor will receive an orientation to the procedures for practicum placements and field requirements. The instructor/supervisor will be introduced to the student journal, and the field seminars. The role of the field liaison will be established. The sexual harassment policies of the University and field education program will be introduced and discussed. The Social Work Program's Retention and Discontinuance policies will be introduced and discussed.

### **Supervisory Beginnings with the Inexperienced Student Worker: Assessment and Planning**

This session will introduce activities designed to engage the instructor/supervisor and student in the instructional process. The instructor/supervisor will be guided through the beginning phase of developing a working contract with the student. The instructor/supervisor will also be introduced to a model for teaching the core practice skills.

### **Implementation and Evaluation**

This session will introduce the process and function of instruction. Specific instructional skills and strategies will be discussed. Through the use of the practice core competencies model as an instructional tool, the instructor/supervisor will be guided through a series of examples that present an opportunity to develop instructional skills for professional performance. In this session field instructor/supervisors will be introduced to evaluation methods which assess and enhance practice competency skills. Evaluation as an important aspect of generalist social work practice will be discussed. Termination with the student, client system, agency and instructor/supervisor will also be a focus of this session.

Seminars may be held annually. These programs fulfill the basic training requirements for field instructors in order to participate in the SMSU field instruction program as a qualified field instructor/supervisor.

### **FIELD ADVISORY COMMITTEE**

- The Field Advisory Committee is open to all field instructors.
- The Committee meets at least once yearly.
- The Committee's responsibilities include consultation on policies and procedures related to field instruction, consulting on field issues and the field manual, acting as liaison between community agencies and the school, and assisting in the evaluation of the Director of Field Education.

## **Applying for Field Practicum: SWRK 484: Pre-Field Practicum Seminar**

A student enrolls in SWRK 484 Pre-field Practicum Seminar the semester before enrolling in SWRK 499 Field Practicum. The placement planning for the internship takes place during this seminar. The pre-field practicum seminar provides opportunities for a student to explore their personal and professional interests and issues involved with field placement.

Within the first two weeks of the semester in which the student is enrolled in SWRK 484, the student completes an application for admission to field instruction and submits it, along with their DARS, to the Director of Field Education. A release of information is included with the application in order to permit distribution of student information to approved field agencies and field instructors. The Director of Field Education determines the eligibility of the student to continue placement planning and to enroll in SWRK 499 (for full-time practicum students) or SWRK 497/498 (for part-time practicum students). A student may be accepted with conditions to continue placement planning; however, the student will not be allowed to enter SWRK 485 & 499 (for full-time practicum students) or SWRK 487/488 & 497/498 (for part-time practicum students) until those conditions are removed.

Requirements for admission to SWRK 499 or 497/498 include the following:

1. Completed or is completing all required courses for the social work major.
2. Completion of SWRK 342 and 343 (students may complete SWRK 344 during their practicum)
3. Earned a minimum overall cumulative GPA of 2.5.
4. Earned a minimum overall cumulative GPA of 2.5 in the courses required for the major; and
5. Earned a grade of "C-" or better in all social work courses required for the major.
6. Demonstrated the values and ethics of the profession.
7. Students must have completed SWRK 342: Generalist Social Work Practice I and SWRK 343: Generalist Social Work Practice II BEFORE they can begin their practicum. Students can be in the process of completing SWRK 344: Generalist Social Work Practice III during their practicum.

Admission to field is the decision of the Director of Field Education. A student will not be admitted to SWRK 499 Field Practicum (for full-time practicum students) or SWRK 497/498 Field Practicum I & II (for part-time practicum students) without meeting the above academic criteria. The Director of Field Education will notify the student in writing of the decision. Students denied admission will be informed in writing of reason(s) for the decision.

### **Matching**

Following admission to the field program, the student may have an interview with the Director of Field Education. The interview will focus on student's interest's strengths, and limitations. In lieu of an interview, students will be asked to submit a form that lists potential agencies of interest or areas of service that the student is interested for the practicum. The Director of

Field Education will review this material and every effort is made to provide a match for both the student and the agency with regard to: the educational objectives of the program, the learning needs of the student, the educational opportunities available at the agency, and other specific concerns related to location, special needs, and requests of the student. The Director of Field Education after reviewing the written application materials makes the initial judgment about a possible agency/student match.

Following the selection of a field agency the student will forward a resume and cover letter to the field instructor requesting an interview.

### **Pre-Placement Interview**

The purpose of the interview is for both the student and field instructor to meet and determine if the proposed match is a good fit with regard to the matching variables including: the educational objectives, the learning needs of the student, the educational opportunities available at the agency and other specific concerns related to location, special needs and requests of the student. In addition, both field instructors and students should discuss learning and supervisory styles. Both field instructors and students are encouraged to carefully evaluate the proposed match discussing any reservations before confirmation in order to avoid the need for replacement later.

### **Confirmation**

Once the interview is completed and both the student and field instructor believe the match to be satisfactory, the Field Instruction Agreement form is signed and submitted to the Director of Field Education. The Field Instruction Agreement involves a mutual understanding between student, field instructor and the SMSU Social Work Program about the student's weekly and total hours to be spent at the agency. The Agreement stipulates the approximate beginning and ending times of the placement, spells out the time frame during which the student will receive an orientation to the field agency, lists times during which the student will meet with the field instructor to work on the Learning Outcomes Agreement, and identifies anticipated assignments and responsibilities.

## **Guidelines for Setting up a Placement at Your Place of Employment**

The practicum courses are an educational experience and not a work experience; therefore a practicum placement at a student's place of employment is highly discouraged. However, if a student feels this option is needed the student needs to communicate this desire to the Director of Field Education as soon as possible. The SMSU Social Work Program and the Council on Social Work Education require that the distinction between student and employee be clear and unambiguous. The educational supervisor must be a different individual than the employment supervisor. Therefore, a practicum at the place of employment will be allowed only under certain conditions. Refer to the "Social Work Program Policy on Field Placements in an Agency of Employment" in this manual.

## **Paid Practicum Placements**

Some agencies offer paid internship placements. The SMSU Social Work Program supports a student's need for payment during their practicum and if payment can be agreed upon between the agency and the student, the Director of Field Education will support that option.

### **Information for Setting up a Placement at Minnesota Department of Corrections Agencies**

Students, who want to apply for employment positions as Corrections Agents after graduation, must have completed an internship in a correctional agency. Minimum Qualifications for employment as a corrections agent include a Bachelor's degree in Corrections, Criminal Justice, Criminology, Counseling, Counseling Psychology, Law Enforcement, Psychology, Social Work, Sociology or a Human Services related field with an emphasis in corrections/criminal justice; and a completed, full-time internship (minimum duration of one semester or 10 weeks or 400 hours) with the Minnesota Department of Corrections as a Corrections Agent or Corrections Security Caseworker, or with another jurisdiction as a Probation Officer. An application for internship at MN DOC is available to download online at:

<https://mn.gov/doc/employment-opportunities/intern-opportunities/>

### **Information for Setting up a Placement at State of South Dakota Agencies**

Students who wish to apply for internships at social service agencies in the State of South Dakota need to apply early in the process to start the interview process. Please work with the Director of Field Education as soon as possible if you are interested in doing a placement with the State of South Dakota. More information can be found at: <https://bhr.sd.gov/job-seekers/internship>

# **SECTION II**

## **Policies and Guidelines**

### **Operating Policies of the Field Program**

- Intolerance, Harassment or Discrimination Related to Sex/Gender, Sexual Orientation/Preference or Race or Disability in Field Instruction
- Hours and Schedules
- Holidays, School Breaks, and Absences
- Transportation
- Liability Policy: General and Professional Liability Protection
- Policy on Field Placements in an Agency of Employment

### **Guidelines for Termination due to Academic and Professional Reasons**

### **Non-Discrimination in Employment and Educational Opportunity Policy**

### **Confidentiality Guidelines**

### **Reassignment of Practicum Placement Students**

### **SWRK 499 Field Practicum Course Outcomes Agreement**

### **Evaluation Policy**

### **Grading Policy in Field Placement**

### **Field Placements in an Agency of Employment**



## **Operating Policies of the Field Program**

### **Intolerance, Harassment or Discrimination Related to Sex/Gender, Sexual Orientation/Preference or Race or Disability in Field Instruction**

Sexual/gender intolerance/harassment based on sexual orientation/affectional preference and racial intolerance/harassment or disability discrimination/harassment is unacceptable. Such conduct has the purpose or effect of threatening and substantially interfering with an individual's employment, with an individual's work or academic performance, or creating an intimidating, hostile or offensive, work or educational environment. Refer to the Minnesota State policy on Nondiscrimination in Employment and Educational Opportunity in this manual or at [www.minnstate.edu](http://www.minnstate.edu)

### **Hours and Schedules**

All BSW students must complete 440 hours in practicum. Completing excessive hours each week, in order to finish the required 440 hours in less time, is prohibited. Students, with their Field Instructors, should plan practicum activities that avoid exceeding 32 hours/week. Exceeding 32 hours/week should be a rare occasion. The practicum is not a "race to 440 hours". It is critical that students experience the inevitable progress and setbacks that occur over the weeks and months of service delivery. Students completing their practicum in a part-time manner need to balance their hours between the two semesters of their practicum – about 220 hours in one semester and 220 hours in the other semester.

It is the responsibility of the student to comply with the schedule, which is designated in the learning contract. The student is responsible for notifying the field instructor when attendance is not possible and to arrange to make up missed hours. It is possible that part of the hours per week would be scheduled during evenings and/or weekends. All field instruction hours should be spent in activities that are congruent with the educational objectives of the field program.

### **Holidays, School Breaks, and Absences**

The Social Work Program does not require students to do field work during holidays or school breaks (e.g., Spring Break). However, professional responsibilities as a social worker and the nature of their professional fieldwork determine the student's responsibility to the clients during these periods.

If a student desires time off during the holidays or Spring Break, they must make a request to their agency-based field instructor. If time off is granted, then the student and field instructor mutually plan coverage of work during the absence of a student.

With no exception, students are required to complete 440 hours of field instruction. Time absent due to weather, illness, pregnancy or any other occurrence must be made up. If a student knows they are going to be absent from field instruction prior to entering field instruction, they should notify the field director so that the absence can be taken into consideration when planning the placement.

## **Weather**

With students completing their practicums all around the region and country, weather related absences or closures of agencies needs to be discussed by the student and their field instructor/supervisor. Every situation related to how a student deals with weather closures/delays needs to be a conversation with the field instructor/supervisor. If a student needs assistance in having this conversation or does not feel supported in their conversation with the field instructor/supervisor, the student should consult with the Director of Field Instructor. The closure of SMSU due to weather does not necessarily mean the student's placement is closed for the day and the student needs to consult their field instructor/supervisor.

## **Transportation**

Transportation to and from the field setting is the student's responsibility. Assignments in many settings require the use of a car, and students must be prepared to provide not only a vehicle for transportation but also to bear transportation costs incurred. Agencies are urged to assist students, if at all possible, with the out-of-pocket transportation costs students incur while they are performing services for the agency. Students are encouraged to use "agency vehicles" to transport clients and do agency business. Students should use their person vehicle as a last resort. The student's personal automobile insurance carrier is the primary coverage in the event that a student has an auto accident which occurs during the internship "while under supervision."

## **Liability Policy: General and Professional Liability Protection**

The University's comprehensive liability policies provide coverage for University faculty, staff, and employees while acting within the scope of their duties as University employees. Students, who are participating in an internship as a requirement of the students' curriculum, including field instruction administered by the SMSU Social Work Program, are covered by the SMSU Student Intern Professional Liability Insurance. Field instruction agencies may require students to acquire additional liability insurance at the students' personal expense.

Additional questions concerning liability protection for University employees or students engaged in student internships should be directed to the State of Minnesota, Risk Management Division (RMD), 320 Centennial Office Building, 658 Cedar Street, St. Paul, MN 55155.

## **Policy on Field Placements in an Agency of Employment**

A student's place of employment is highly discouraged due to conflicts that could arise affecting the practicum, employment or both for the student. However, if a student feels this option is needed the student needs to communicate this desire to the Director of Field Education as soon as possible. The SMSU Social Work Program and the Council on Social Work Education require that the distinction between student and employee be clear and unambiguous. The educational supervisor must be a different individual than the employment supervisor. The Director of Field Education makes the final decision on if a placement at a student's place of employment is acceptable. Students should reference the Field Placements in Agency of Employment Policy below.

## **Policy Guidelines for Termination Due to Academic and Professional Reasons**

The SMSU Social Work Program recognizes that there may be mitigating circumstances which influence a student's ability to function satisfactorily as it relates to likely performance as a social work practitioner. In such cases, at the request of a student, faculty field liaison, field instructor, or faculty member, the SMSU Social Work Program and the Director of Field Education will review the student's status and take action regarding continuance in the program. This could include, for example, a recommendation for study skills development or referral to other resources for resolving academic or personal problems. Knowledge, skill and value expectations are all academic in a professional program as they relate to a student's likely performance as a social work practitioner.

A student in the social work major is expected to maintain the standards established by the Social Work Program regarding continuation in the major. Under ordinary circumstances, failure to meet the standards established by the Social Work Program shall result in discontinuance from the major. Many aspects of a student's performance, including non-academic problems, are reviewed when a decision is made to recommend discontinuance.

Discontinuance can occur during any period of registration in the major.

Final authority regarding student continuation in the program rests with the Director of the Social Work Program. A recommendation is made by a social work faculty committee and held in confidence until the final decision is made known to the student. The SMSU social work faculty may request a meeting with the student to discuss issues related to discontinuance. A letter will be sent to the student to notify them of this decision.

Social workers frequently work with individuals having various personal and emotional difficulties. The demands of the social work role require that students have the emotional, psychological, and intellectual resources to render effective assistance to those in need. The social work student will be evaluated not only academically, but also on professional attitudes, skills, and behaviors based on the Code of Ethics of the National Association of Social Workers. Evaluation will, also, comport with the 2021 Minnesota Statutes Chapter 148E ("Minnesota Board of Social Work Practice Act"), particularly §§ 148E.200 through 148E.230. For more information, review the law online at:  
<https://www.revisor.mn.gov/statutes/?id=148E>

The NASW Code of Ethics (rev. 2021) has placed further responsibility on social work programs to ensure that social work graduates are able to engage themselves with their clients in the practice of social work. For example, Standard 4 – Social Workers' Ethical Responsibilities as

Professionals, section '4.05 Impairment' states

- (a) Social workers should not allow their own personal problems, psychosocial distress, legal problems, substance abuse, or mental health difficulties to interfere

with their professional judgment and performance or to jeopardize the best interests of people for whom they have a professional responsibility.

(b) Social workers whose personal problems, psychosocial distress, legal problems, substance abuse, or mental health difficulties interfere with their professional judgment and performance should immediately seek consultation and take appropriate remedial action by seeking professional help, making adjustments in workload, terminating practice, or taking any other steps necessary to protect clients and others.

The social work graduate is a professional prepared to work with people in a variety of human service settings. Therefore, the Social Work Program has established academic and professional performance expectations. Failure to meet academic requirements or to demonstrate professional conduct and relationship skills and behavior consistent with the values and ethics of the profession can result in discontinuance in the social work major.

### **Academic Criteria for Discontinuance in the Social Work Major**

Students are considered to be in academic difficulty if their grade point average drops below 2.5 upon completion of one-half the total credits required in the major. Students may be advised to withdraw from the major if their cumulative grade point average falls to 2.25. The social work faculty reviews the criteria at the time of application to the social work major:

1. minimum cumulative GPA of 2.5;
2. minimum overall GPA of 2.5 in the courses required for formal admission to the major;
3. minimum grade of "C" in ENG 151, and "C-" in ENG 251, and COMM 110;
4. minimum grade of "C-" (2.0) in the Liberal Education Foundation (MnTC), the Interdisciplinary Foundation, and the Professional Social Work Foundation courses;
5. Students must demonstrate competency in knowledge and understanding of social work theory and methods prior to admission to the field instruction course which is taken in the senior year.

### **Other Reasons for Discontinuance**

While there are no rigid guidelines for assessing a student's lack of professional development and/or self-awareness which could result in a recommendation for discontinuance from the major, some of the examples of behavior which the Social Work Program reviews and evaluates in this process are the following:

1. Ability to relate to people with warmth and empathy, communicating feelings appropriately.
2. Capacity for an accepting attitude toward one's total self, including responsibility for meeting one's physical and emotional needs.
3. Openness to change in oneself and others.
4. Recognition of the essential worth and dignity of all human beings.
5. Ability to respect and work with differences in people (race, class, culture, ethnicity, sexual preference, religion/spiritual beliefs, gender, value system, disability, or political affiliation)
6. Untreated mental health or chemical health issues
7. Ability to develop self-confidence and initiative in working with people.

8. Ability to identify personal strengths, limitations, and motivations, especially as related to a decision to work with people.
9. Ability to express thoughts with clarity in both written and oral form.
10. Ability to ensure that one's own personal, religious, sexual and political preference is not imposed on clients.
11. Adherence to the NASW Code of Ethics.

Failure to meet generally accepted standards of professional conduct, personal integrity or emotional stability requisite for professional practice, inappropriate or disruptive behavior toward colleagues, faculty or staff (at school or field placement) can result in discontinuance from the social work major.

### **Discontinuance from Field Instruction**

All students receive adequate information about ethical and legal boundaries related to practice prior to entering Field Practicum. Violation of these boundaries results in immediate discontinuance from Field Practicum.

1. Substantiated complaints in either of the following areas may result in immediate suspension from Field Instruction.
  - a. Violation of client or agency confidentiality.
  - b. Violation of professional relationship boundaries including physical contact with clients, harassment or dual relationships.
2. Substantiated complaints in either of the following areas may result in immediate suspension from Field Instruction.
  - a. Evidence of current drug abuse including alcohol.
  - b. Evidence of mental/emotional instability which, in the judgment of the Field supervisor/Instructor and Field Coordinator, jeopardizes clients' interests.
3. Substantiated complaints in either of the following areas may result in immediate expulsion from Field Instruction and termination from the Social Work Program.
  - a. Evidence of sexual activity or sexual contact with a client, or with client's relatives.
  - b. Felony charges that reflect personal behaviors incompatible with expected behaviors or ethics of professional social workers.

### **Flagrant documented violation of the NASW Code of Ethics will result in termination from the Social Work Program.**

Decisions made to discontinue an individual from field instruction have a profound effect on a person's future career; therefore, these decisions are not made on the basis of allegation or unverified circumstance. In any situation of potential discontinuance for professional reasons, there must be clear, concise documentation of the problem areas as well as verification that the Social Work Program and field instructor have discussed these with the student and attempted to ameliorate them.

Refer to the additional information on unprofessional conduct that is grounds for disciplinary and corrective action in the Minnesota Social Work Practice Act.

### **Faculty/Student Reconsideration Plan**

In the event that a student demonstrates emotional or mental instability, inadequate communication skills, insufficient academic ability, lacks the level of self-awareness necessary to pursue a social work career, or is suspended from Field Instruction, the following process will ensue:

1. Social work faculty will document reasons for concern.
2. Social work faculty will meet with the student and discuss how the skills or behaviors demonstrating a concern are negatively affecting the student's progress in the Social Work Program. The faculty team, with the student's input, will recommend a plan to improve skills and/or behaviors.
3. If the student accepts the reconsideration proposal, a written contract with completion date will be signed by the student and the faculty team. The completion date may be renegotiated.
4. If the student does not accept the reconsideration proposal, termination from the program will proceed.
5. The reconsideration contract will be a part of the student's social work program file, unless the student requests in writing that the plan be confidential; then the plan will be kept separate from the student's social work program file. (See the discussion of Confidentiality of Records below.)
6. Continuation in the Social Work major is dependent upon completion of the reconsideration plan. In some cases, students will continue course work; in other cases, students will interrupt their progress and courses and/or field instruction pending completion of the reconsideration plan. (An example might be if a student exhibits unstable and unreliable behaviors in a class and a plan is developed to regain stability, the student delays completing major coursework and/or field instruction.)
7. The social work faculty and student will evaluate if the reconsideration plan objectives have been met in a timely fashion. The faculty may recommend the following options:
  - a. continuation of the reconsideration plan for a specific period of time with expected outcome written into an amended reconsideration plan;
  - b. successful completion of plan, with recommendation that the student continue courses and practicum requirements towards graduation;
  - c. documented failure to meet the objectives of the plan and dismissal from the Social Work Program and major.

The faculty will inform the student of their right to appeal any Social Work Program action to the institution.

### **Confidentiality of Records**

All written deliberations shall be considered confidential and placed in the student's program file in the social work office unless the student requests otherwise. All materials submitted by students, who are denied admission, withdraw, or are dismissed from the program, are placed in the program file and will be kept for two years and then destroyed. Faculty members may retain copies of letters and memoranda written in the course of their interactions with students.

### **Right of Appeal**

Applicants to the Social Work Program who are denied admission or are suspended, discontinued, or terminated from the program will have the right to appeal the decision. The appeal and grievance procedures are specified in the SMSU Student Handbook, available online at <https://www.smsu.edu/administration/studenthandbook/index.html>

### **Procedures of Adjudication of Student Grievance or Appeals**

Students should note that the SMSU Student Handbook contain discussions of the various committees in the University that have been established to review student appeals concerning academic or disciplinary decisions, including grades.

Students who believe that their rights have been violated or denied, who desire to appeal a decision made by a social work faculty member, or who desire to appeal a decision for denial of admission to the Social Work Program or suspension/dismissal from the Social Work Program are encouraged to utilize the following formal appeal procedures within the Social Work Program:

1. The student may appeal the decision in writing by sending a written request for reconsideration to the Social Work Program Director within 10 business days of the decision. The written appeal must specify the basis for appeal. The written appeal will be reviewed by all Social Work Program faculty, and the student will be given an opportunity to orally present her or his case in a hearing before all the social work faculty.
2. The student will be notified in writing of the faculty's decision within 10 business days of written notification of the appeal.
3. If the student remains dissatisfied with the decision, then he or she has the right to take the appeal to appropriate individuals and committees as specified in the SMSU Student Handbook in the sections regarding student appeals.

# **Non-Discrimination in Employment and Educational Opportunity**

Minnesota State is committed to a policy of nondiscrimination in employment and education (Minnesota State Board Policy 1B.1 Nondiscrimination in Employment and Education Opportunity).

No person shall be discriminated against in the terms and conditions of employment, personnel practices, or access to and participation in, programs, services, and activities with regard to race, sex, color, creed, religion, age, national origin, disability, marital status, status with regard to public assistance, sexual orientation, gender identity, or gender expression. In addition, discrimination in employment based on membership or activity in a local commission as defined by law is prohibited.

Harassment on the basis of race, sex, color, creed, religion, age, national origin, disability, marital status, status with regard to public assistance, sexual orientation, gender identity, or gender expression is prohibited. Harassment may occur in a variety of relationships, including faculty and student, supervisor and employee, student and student, staff and student, employee and employee, and other relationships with persons having business at, or visiting the educational or working environment.

This policy is directed at verbal or physical conduct that constitutes discrimination /harassment under state and federal law and is not directed at the content of speech. In cases in which verbal statements and other forms of expression are involved, Minnesota State will give due consideration to an individual's constitutionally protected right to free speech and academic freedom. However, discrimination and harassment are not within the protections of academic freedom or free speech.

The system office, colleges, and universities shall maintain and encourage full freedom, within the law, of expression, inquiry, teaching and research. Academic freedom comes with a responsibility that all members of our education community benefit from it without intimidation, exploitation or coercion.

This policy shall apply to all individuals affiliated with Minnesota State, including but not limited to, its students, employees, applicants, volunteers, agents, and Board of Trustees, and is intended to protect the rights and privacy of both the complainant and respondent and other involved individuals, as well as to prevent retaliation or reprisal. Individuals who violate this policy shall be subject to disciplinary or other corrective action.

For the complete policy and procedure, please reference Minnesota State Board Policies 1B.1 Nondiscrimination in Employment and Education Opportunity and 1B.1.1 Report/Complaint of Discrimination/Harassment Investigation and Resolution, available online at: [www.minnstate.edu](http://www.minnstate.edu)

Designated Officers to address questions or concerns, file a complaint, or attain a paper copy of the policy and procedures include:



For allegations against an employee, you should contact:

Human Resources  
Bellows Academic 269  
507-537-7500

OR

Director of University Public Safety  
Founders Hall 116  
507-537-7858

For allegations against a SMSU student, you should contact:

Director of Environmental Health and Safety  
Founders Hall 120  
507-573-6470

NOTE: Allegations of Sexual Violence will be handled under Minnesota State Board Policy 1B.3 Sexual Violence Policy, 1B.3.1 Sexual Violence Procedure and SMSU P-013 Sexual Violence Policy.

# Confidentiality Guidelines

The Social Work Program is sensitive to issues of confidentiality and rights of privacy. The Social Work Program has set forth, here, a set of guidelines to assist students in placement settings. None of what is stated here, however, is intended to supersede the state or federal laws, the NASW Code of Ethics, University, or agency rules and regulations concerning confidentiality and privacy. Students are expected to abide by agency policies and practices relating to confidentiality of client related information and to adhere to Minnesota Statutes (148E.230 CONFIDENTIALITY AND RECORDS) which state:

## **Subdivision 1. Informed consent.**

(a) A social worker must obtain valid, informed consent, appropriate to the circumstances, before providing services to clients. When obtaining informed consent, the social worker must determine whether the client has the capacity to provide informed consent. If the client does not have the capacity to provide consent, the social worker must obtain consent for the services from the client's legal representative. The social worker must not provide services, unless authorized or required by law, if the client or the client's legal representative does not consent to the services.

(b) If a social worker determines that a client does not have the capacity to provide consent, and the client does not have a legal representative, the social worker:

(1) must, except as provided in clause (2), secure a legal representative for a client before providing services; or

(2) may, notwithstanding clause (1), provide services, except when prohibited by other applicable law, that are necessary to ensure the client's safety or to preserve the client's property or financial resources.

(c) A social worker must use clear and understandable language, including using an interpreter proficient in the client's primary language as necessary, to inform clients of the plan of services, risks related to the plan, limits to services, relevant costs, terms of payment, reasonable alternatives, the client's right to refuse or withdraw consent, and the time frame covered by the consent.

## **Subd. 2. Mandatory reporting and disclosure of client information.**

At the beginning of a professional relationship and during the professional relationship as necessary and appropriate, a social worker must inform the client of those circumstances under which the social worker may be required to disclose client information specified in subdivision 3, paragraph (a), without the client's consent.

## **Subd. 3. Confidentiality of client information.**

(a) A social worker must ensure the confidentiality of all client information obtained in the course of the social worker/client relationship and all client information otherwise obtained by the social worker that is relevant to the social worker/client relationship. Except as provided in this section, client information may be disclosed or released only with the client's or the client's legal representative's valid informed consent, appropriate to the circumstances, except when otherwise required by law. A social worker must seek consent to disclose or release client information only when such disclosure or release is necessary to provide social work services.

(b) A social worker must continue to maintain confidentiality of the client information specified in paragraph (a) upon termination of the professional relationship including upon the death of the client, except as provided under this section or other applicable law.

(c) A social worker must limit access to the client information specified in paragraph (a) in a social worker's agency to appropriate agency staff whose duties require access.

**Subd. 4. Release of client information with written informed consent.**

(a) Except as provided in subdivision 5, client information specified in subdivision 3, paragraph (a), may be released only with the client's or the client's legal representative's written informed consent. The written informed consent must:

- (1) explain to whom the client's records may be released;
- (2) explain the purpose for the release; and
- (3) state an expiration date for the authorized release of the records.

(b) A social worker may provide client information specified in subdivision 3, paragraph (a), to a third party for the purpose of payment for services rendered only with the client's written informed consent.

(c) Except as provided in subdivision 5, a social worker may disclose client information specified in subdivision 3, paragraph (a), only with the client's or the client's legal representative's written informed consent. When it is not practical to obtain written informed consent before providing necessary services, a social worker may disclose or release client information with the client's or the client's legal representative's oral informed consent.

(d) Unless otherwise authorized by law, a social worker must obtain a client's written informed consent before taking a photograph of the client or making an audio or video recording of the client, or allowing a third party to do the same. The written informed consent must explain:

- (1) the purpose of the photograph or the recording and how the photograph or recording will be used, how it will be stored, and when it will be destroyed; and
- (2) how the client may have access to the photograph or recording.

**Subd. 5. Release of client information without written informed consent.**

(a) A social worker may disclose client information specified in subdivision 3, paragraph (a), without the written consent of the client or the client's legal representative only under the following circumstances or under the circumstances described in paragraph (b):

- (1) when mandated or authorized by federal or state law, including the mandatory reporting requirements under the duty to warn, maltreatment of minors, and vulnerable adult laws specified in section 148E.240, subdivisions 6 to 8;
- (2) when the board issues a subpoena to the social worker; or
- (3) when a court of competent jurisdiction orders release of the client records or information.

(b) When providing services authorized or required by law to a client who does not have the capacity to provide consent and who does not have a legal representative, a social worker must disclose or release client records or information as necessary to provide services to ensure the client's safety or to preserve the client's property or financial resources.

**Subd. 6. Release of client records or information.**

When releasing client records or information under this section, a social worker must release current, accurate, and complete records or information.

**Client Confidentiality:**

A complete client-student relationship is based upon the presumed consent of the client. In achieving the educational goals of field instruction, it is therefore assumed that these interactions will be shared with the field instructor.

Appropriate agency personnel permission must be granted any time a student uses data from or about clients or the agency setting to fulfill social work practicum seminar assignments. All client material used to fulfill course requirements must be disguised to the extent necessary to protect client confidentiality and anonymity.

No client is to be recorded, either on audio or video recording without their written permission. In the case of minors under eighteen years of age, the written consent of the parent and/or guardian must be obtained. In addition, written consent of the minor client should be obtained as well.

**Student Record Confidentiality:**

No evaluative work submitted by a student in the fulfillment of any course requirements shall be released by the responsible faculty person to any other person or agency not employed by the Social Work Program without the written consent of the student. The University and individual faculty members are restricted from releasing information concerning a student's academic record. Social work faculty may serve as an official University reference for a student when University records are needed to prepare the reference. Field instructors are free to prepare reference letters upon request of the student in accordance with agency policies and records. No one may provide any portion of the student record unless a completed and signed release of information form or a similar written request is on file.

Students are reminded that they sign releases of information during the Admission to the Major as well as the Application for Admission to SWRK 499 Field Practicum or SWRK 497/498 Field Practicum I & II. If a student wishes to terminate those releases, they need to contact the Social Work Program Director.

## Reassignment of Student's in Field Placement Policy

Re-assignment of a placement student may occur for different reasons and the process may be initiated in three ways:

1. Student initiated
2. Agency initiated
3. University initiated

Students normally remain in the same agency for the entire placement. However, unusual circumstances may arise which necessitate a request for a change of field agency or field instructor.

The Director of Field Education makes the final decision regarding the need to re-assign a student. Reassignment, after the semester has begun, will require the following steps:

1. Either the student or the field instructor contacts the field liaison.
2. In the event that a student is requesting replacement, a written statement must be submitted to the Director of Field Education before action is taken. The letter should include:
  - a. reasons for the request;
  - b. ways in which learning needs are not being met;
  - c. attempts that have been made to resolve the problem/s.

Reassignment is a last resort. Problem resolution and the exploration of other alternatives are considered before approving re-assignment.

The student is required to return to the agency and terminate appropriately under the direction of the field instructor and the Director of Field Education before beginning a new placement.

The Director of Field Education reserves the right to reassign a student without adherence to the foregoing requirements in the event that the student's rights have been violated, and/or it is felt that field education outcomes cannot be met in the setting. Accumulated hours may transfer to a new placement in some circumstances and is at the discretion of the Director of Field Education.

## Field Practicum Learning Outcomes Agreement

Social work field education is a critical component in the preparation of social work practitioners. Students are provided with supervised educational experiences where they have the opportunity to integrate social work theories and practice and develop necessary competencies through service delivery to be effective social work practitioners.

The field instructor is viewed as a facilitator of learning, and creates the conditions where the learning takes place. The learning agreement is an educational tool that integrates the knowledge, value and skill bases for social work practice. It emphasizes both an *academic approach* (learning outcomes), knowing and understanding the professional knowledge base for social work practice, and a *competency-based approach* (practice-core clusters/competencies), making concrete a particular professional knowledge base in the form of measurable behaviors. Social policies, human behavior and the social environment, practice methodologies, and techniques, social work values and ethics, and research comprise the elements which the field instruction is expected to integrate into a meaningful whole.

The focus of field instruction must be on the student. The task is more than serving clients or learning to do agency work, although these are important. It demands a carefully planned effort to enable students to draw on their knowledge, values, skills, and life experiences; and requires translating abstract knowledge and principles from classroom learning into practical applications.

Learning Outcomes Agreements (educational contracts) serve as guides to learning by operationalizing the educational goals and objectives of the social work program. Each learning outcomes agreement comprises the written understanding between the student and field instructor as to the SMSU Social Work Program's goals and objectives, and field instruction outcomes. Each student will need to begin the development of their learning agreement with the field instructor, integrating the opportunities for tasks and activities available at the agency. The field instructor assists the student in completing the learning agreement that identifies specific activities for meeting the ten learning outcomes identified for field instruction.

Learning Outcomes Agreements are to be signed by both the student and field instructor and submitted to the Director of Field Education. At the time of the mid-placement performance evaluation, the initial learning agreement should be revised based upon additional learning needs and opportunities identified during the first half of the placement. The Learning Outcomes Agreement is a learning document that could and should change during the practicum. The information in the Learning Outcomes Agreement should be written in a SMART format (Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Relevant and Time-Bound). The Learning Outcomes Agreement should be used by the student and the field instructor/supervisor for evaluation purposes. The document will become part of the student's record along with evaluations of the placement.

# Evaluation Policy

The ongoing field instructor-student supervisory conference is to help the student reflect upon his or own practice, and allows an exploration of alternative modes of helping. It centers on the student as practitioner. The educational assessment occurring between the student and field instructor focuses on both practice skills and learning style.

The evaluation of the student is to reflect the Social Work Program's educational goals and objectives and field instruction outcomes, assignments and activities, competency gain, the student's performance, and areas of learning that require future attention. The evaluation process is a collaborative effort by the student and field instructor which includes the student's input and joint discussion by both.

The first formal evaluation occurs at mid-placement. The student is responsible for submitting the evaluation form to the field instructor/s, for scheduling the mid-placement evaluation and for arranging an evaluation conference between the field liaison, the student and field instructor/s. The field instructor/s and student are encouraged to have an evaluation conference prior to meeting with the field liaison for the more formal evaluation session. Student performance is to be reviewed at this time and the learning agreement may be modified based on the more complete understanding of student learning needs and a reappraisal of assignments and tasks that will be available within the agency.

The final evaluation is to be prepared by the field instructor/s, discussed with the student, and discussed by both with the field liaison at a final meeting. Once again, the student is responsible for submitting the final evaluation form to the field instructor/s and arranging the evaluation conference between the field liaison, the student, and field instructor/s.

Both the student and field instructor must sign the evaluation form. The student's signature indicates that the student has read the evaluation, but does not necessarily imply agreement. Should the student disagree with any part of the content, they and the field instructor ideally would work out an agreement. Should that not be possible, the student may add a statement to the evaluation, to be seen by the field instructor before it is handed in to the SMSU Director of Field Education.

Evaluation reports submitted to the Social Work Program are the property of the University and may not be released by the field instructor/agency to others for any reason. The Social Work Program may release these reports only with the written permission of the student. In preparing general letters of reference formally requested by the student, school officials may incorporate evaluation materials only if appropriate releases have been obtained.

## **The Student's Evaluation of the Field Placement:**

To provide feedback to both the field instructor and the SMSU Social Work Program about the student's experience in the field agency, students are required at the end of their placement experience (after completion of the final evaluation) to evaluate their experience at the agency. The student evaluation (included in this field manual) must be filled out, signed

by the field instructor and returned to the Director of Field Education before the student receives their final grade.

## **Grading Policy in the Field Placement**

The field placement courses SWRK 484 and 497, 498 and 499 are graded Credit or No Credit (“C” or “NC”). Assigning field instruction grades is the responsibility of the social work faculty liaison. The field instructor’s written evaluation as well as verbal comments will be used as guidelines when determining a grade. Students who are dissatisfied with their grade are advised to discuss their concerns with the social work faculty liaison. The student may, if they wish, write an addendum to the evaluation expressing their concerns. Students completing SWRK 497 as part-time practicum students will receive a grade of “IP” for SWRK 497 until their entire practicum is completed. If the practicum is successfully completed, the “IP” grade will be replaced by a Credit/No Credit grade.

The field seminar course SWRK 485 or SWRK 487/488 is graded A-F. Assigning seminar grades is the responsibility of the seminar course instructor. Students completing SWRK 487 as part-time practicum students will receive a grade of “IP” for SWRK 487 until their entire practicum is completed. If the practicum is successfully completed, the “IP” grade will be replaced by a letter grade.

## **Field Placements in Agency of Employment Policy**

The practicum is an integral component of social work education, designed to enable students to demonstrate competent beginning level, ethical, generalist social work practice with diverse client systems of all sizes. It is important that the student have an opportunity in the practicum setting to gain the experience necessary to reach this beginning level of practice. The practicum courses are an educational experience and not a work experience. It may frequently involve educational and learning experiences and a level of autonomy beyond existing job descriptions and/or goals of an individual agency. The SMSU Social Work Program and the Council on Social Work Education require that the distinction between student and employee be clear and unambiguous. Therefore, a practicum at the place of employment will be allowed only under the following conditions:

1. The practicum must have social work as the primary function. Social work as a discipline must be clearly distinguishable from other disciplines practiced in the agency.
2. A student must have a qualitatively different experience from that provided by their regular employment at the agency.
3. A qualified social worker/field instructor, who is not the work supervisor, must supervise the student.
4. The practicum must be educational, unencumbered by workload and administrative responsibilities of regular employment in the agency.
5. The student’s obligations to the college such as attendance at seminars, completed papers and projects must have the support of the agency. No



excuses for absences or delays related to employment will be accepted by the social work field director.

A written proposal must be submitted which outlines current employment responsibilities, proposed practicum roles and tasks, and a preliminary plan of how the work situation would be modified to meet the educational objectives of the practicum courses. The agency's written support for the plan must be included with the proposal. (see the Proposal for Practicum at Place of Employment form.)

If the student experiences a disruption of their practicum placement when the practicum is at a place of employment, the Director of Field Education will:

- Meet with the student to assess the situation
- Meet with the practicum and employment supervisor to confirm all details
- See if the practicum can continue even if employment has ended – if the student feels this is a safe option
- If both the practicum and employment have both ended, the Director of Field Education will look to replace the student at a new practicum site (students should reference the policy on Guidelines for Termination Due to Academic and professional Reasons if applicable)

# **SECTION III**

## **Field Forms**

All forms and related material for SWRK 485 & 499 (for full-time practicum students) and SWRK 487/488 & SWRK 497/498 (for part-time practicum students) can be found on the SMSU Social Work website and will be available in the student's D2L course room when they are enrolled in the respective course.