

Social Work Field Education Handbook

**Department of Sociology and Social Work
University of Wisconsin—Stevens Point**



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TABLE OF CONTENTS	Page
Introduction	3
Message from the Field Coordinator	3
Purpose and Design of Manual	3
Program Context	4
Mission Statement relevant to Field Education Program	4
Social Work Program	5
Generalist Practice	5
Social Work Values and Ethics	6
Connection Between Social Work and Sociology	6
Field Education Program Design and Curriculum	6
Relationship with Social Work Curriculum	6
Degree Requirements	7
Sample Graduation Plans	8
Field Education Program Goals and Objectives	10
Practicum Design and Hours	13
Grading and Evaluation	13
Application and Placement	15
Requirements for Application into Field	15
Procedure for Application into Field	16
Agency Requirements	17
Field Agency Partnerships	18
Roles and Responsibilities	18
Standards for Field Placement Agencies	20
Partnership Agreements: University, Department, & Approved Field Agencies	21
Field Education Program Policies	22
Confidentiality	22
Employment Based Internships	23
Conflicts of Interest	25
Paid Placements	25
Absences	25
Field Experience and Course Conflicts	26
Protected Time for Field Work	26
Fieldwork when UWSP is not in Session	26
Change in Practicum Site	26
Performance Problems for Students in Field	27
Termination of Field Placement	28
Nondiscrimination	29
Sexual Harassment	29
Safety and Security of Students	30
Social Media and Social Work Competencies	31
Student Rights and Responsibilities/Grievance Procedures	31
Liability Insurance	33
Driving	34
Resources/Contacts for Students in Field Education	34
Forms	35

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 UWSP 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, 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, community partners, 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 contact 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

University of Wisconsin System Mission

The mission of this 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 education, and public service designed to educate people and improve the human condition. Basic to every purpose of the system is the search for truth.

University of Wisconsin-Stevens Point

As an institution of the University of Wisconsin System, UW-Stevens Point shares the following core mission with other universities. Each university shall:

- a) Offer associate and baccalaureate degree level and selected graduate programs within the context of its approved mission statement.
- b) Offer an environment that emphasizes teaching excellence and meets the educational and personal needs of students through effective teaching, academic advising, counseling, and through university-sponsored cultural, recreational, and extracurricular programs.
- c) Offer a core of liberal studies that supports university degrees in the arts, letters, and sciences, as well as specialized professional/technical degrees at the associate and baccalaureate level.
- d) Offer a program of preprofessional curricular offerings consistent with the university's mission.
- e) Expect scholarly activity, including research, scholarship, and creative endeavor, that supports its programs at the associate and baccalaureate degree level, its selected graduate programs, and its approved mission statement.
- f) Promote the integration of the extension function, assist the University of Wisconsin-Extension in meeting its responsibility for statewide coordination, and encourage faculty and staff participation in outreach activity.
- g) Participate in inter-institutional relationships in order to maximize educational opportunity for the people of the state effectively and efficiently through the sharing of resources.
- h) Serve the needs of women, minority, disadvantaged, disabled, and nontraditional students and seek racial and ethnic diversification of the student body and the professional faculty and staff.
- i) Support activities designed to promote the economic development of the state.

UW-Stevens Point Select Mission

In addition to the Core Mission of the University Cluster Institutions, the select mission of UW-Stevens Point is to provide programs that help communities become more vibrant, healthy, prosperous, and sustainable. We accomplish this by providing a broad foundation in the fine arts, humanities, natural sciences, and social sciences for associate and baccalaureate degrees. Our commitment to helping communities thrive requires that we provide education, research and outreach in a wide array of disciplines, with particular emphases at the baccalaureate level in integrated natural resources management and environmental education; in the performing and visual arts; and in areas such as business, health and wellness professions, communicative disorders, design, select engineering programs, family and consumer sciences, information science, paper science, social work, and teacher education. UW-Stevens Point provides select master's programs in business, communication, communicative disorders, health care, health promotion, natural resources, teacher education, wellness, and other select areas clearly associated with this university's undergraduate emphases. UW-Stevens Point provides a clinical doctoral program in audiology, as well as professional doctoral programs in select areas of strength at the master's level. UW-Stevens Point puts special emphasis on promoting inclusivity, advancing human wellness, providing excellent academic support resources, offering extensive study abroad and international programs, and providing a robust array of UW-Stevens Point programs.

Social Work Program

The National Association of Social Workers (NASW) states in its 2021 Code of Ethics that the primary mission of the social work profession is to enhance human well-being and help meet the 6 basic human needs of all people, with particular attention to the needs and empowerment of people who are vulnerable, oppressed, and living in poverty. A historic and defining feature of social work is the profession's dual focus on individual well-being in a social context and the well-being of society. Fundamental to social work is attention to the environmental forces that create, contribute to, and address problems in living. Building upon this, the mission of the Social Work Program at UW-Stevens Point is to:

Prepare competent, effective, self-reflective generalist social workers who embody the core values of the social work profession, apply critical thinking skills, abide by the NASW Code of Ethics, and engage anti-racism, diversity, equity, and inclusion in their work. The program prepares students to be community leaders who advocate for social, economic, racial, and environmental justice and the development of responsive social policies, programs, and services that enhance human and community well-being. The program prepares students to employ systems, strengths-based, and empowerment approaches in serving individuals, families, groups, institutions, and communities.

Definition of Generalist Practice

Undergraduate students of social work are prepared to be generalist practitioners. According to the Council on Social Work Education:

“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.”

Social Work Values and Ethics

Consistent with the NASW Code of Ethics, the Social Work Program at UWSP supports the values of:

- *Service*, and recognizes social workers’ primary goal to help people in need and to address social problems
- *Social Justice*, and the role of social workers in challenging social injustices
- *The Dignity and Worth of the Person*, and the need for social workers to treat each person with care and respect, mindful of individual differences
- *Importance of Human Relationships*, and the understanding that relationships between and among people are an important vehicle for change
- *Integrity*, and the need for social workers to behave in a trustworthy manner
- *Competence*, and the expectation that social workers will practice within their areas of competence and develop and enhance their professional expertise.

Upon admission into the social work program, students are expected to familiarize themselves with the NASW Code of Ethics and to follow all ethical principles and standards described. The NASW Code of Ethics can be found at: [Code of Ethics](http://socialworkers.org) (socialworkers.org)

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—18 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 351 (Social Statistics)
 - Sociology/Social Work 352 (Research Methods)

2. Core Social Work courses—33 credits—take all of the following:
 - Social Work 261 (Introduction to Social Work and the Social Services Field)
 - Social Work 262 (Social Welfare Policies and Programs)
 - Social Work 303 (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 376 (Human Behavior and the Social Environment I: Dimensions of the Person)
 - Social Work 377 (Human Behavior and the Social Environment II: Dimensions of the Environment)
 - Social Work 385 (Mental Health and Co-Occurring Disorders: Resilience and Recovery)

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 384 (Substance Use Disorders: Advanced Practices for Recovery)
 - Social Work 387 (Emerging Issues in Social Work with Children and Youth)

4. Capstone Experience—10 credits—take all of the following:
 - Social Work 494 (Social Work Practicum)- 4 credits each semester enrolled in field.

- Social Work 495 (Social Work Practicum Seminar)- one credit each semester enrolled in field.

Students who major in social work do not have to select a minor in order to graduate. There are, however, several other majors, minors, and certificates offered at UW-Stevens Point that would complement this major well including sociology, psychology, substance use & addiction studies, criminal justice, child, youth, & family studies, law & policy, religious studies, women’s studies, health, behavior, & society, and/or a minor in a foreign language.

Ideal Course Sequence for Students

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.*

- Many of the upper-level social work-specific courses are only offered one semester per academic year. Please review the timetable and consult with your academic advisor about course offerings when developing your academic plan.
- Some social work courses are restricted to students who have been formally accepted into the social work major: SW 316, 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 completed during the final two semesters of the student’s undergraduate education. Special circumstances are considered if a student requests a one-semester internship, such as military service obligations, international internships, or other special needs. These requests are considered on a case-by-case basis by the field coordinator.

**Sample Graduation Plan
Degree: Social Work Major (BA | BS)
In-Person Program Option
Full-Time Plan (4 Years)**

<p><u>Year 1-Fall</u> Sociology 101 (3 cr.) Political Science 101 (3 cr.) General Education Courses (9 cr.)</p>	<p><u>Year 1-Spring</u> Social Work 261 (3 cr.) Psychology 110 (3 cr.) General Education Courses (9 cr.)</p>
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<u>Year 2-Fall</u> Social Work 262 (3 cr.) Social Work 303 (3 cr.) General Education Courses (9 cr.)	<u>Year 2-Spring</u> Sociology 270 OR Sociology 327 (3 cr) General Education Courses (12 cr.) <i>Apply for Admission into SW Major</i>
<u>Year 3-Fall</u> Social work 361 (3 cr.) Social Work 365 (3 cr.) Social Work 376 (3 cr.) General Education Course or Elective (6 cr.)	<u>Year 3-Spring</u> Social Work 316 (3 cr.) Social Work 385 (3 cr.) Social Work 377 (3 cr.) Social Work 385 (3 cr.) General Education Course or Elective (3 cr.) <i>Apply for Admission into Field Education</i>
<u>Year 4-Fall</u> Sociology 351 (4 cr.) Social Work elective (3 cr.) General Education Course or Elective (3 cr.) SW 494 (4 cr.) SW 495 (1 cr.)	<u>Year 4-Spring</u> Sociology 352 (3 cr.) Social Work 362 (3 cr.) General Education Course or Elective (3 cr.) SW 494 (4 cr.) SW 495 (1 cr.)

UWSP Social Work Program
 Degrees: BS in Social Work (BA / BS)
 Online Program Option
 Full-Time Plan (4 Years)

<u>Year 1 – Fall</u> Sociology 101 (GEP: SS, USD) Social Work 261 GEP: Arts (rec: MUS 100 or 103) GEP: NS (rec: GEO 100 or 105) GEP: WC (ENG 101) 15 credits—fully asynchronous	<u>Year 1- Spring</u> POLI 101 (GEP: SS, USD) PSYC 110 (GEP: SS) GEP: WLNS (rec: FN 151 or HSW 102) GEP: ARTS, HU, HP, or NS (rec: BIO 100 or 101) GEP: CT (rec: COMM 101) GEP: WC (ENG 202) 17 credits—fully asynchronous
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<u>Year 2 – Fall</u> Social Work 262 Social work 303 SOC 230 GEP: HU (UWX) GEP: GA (rec: GEOG 115) <i>Apply for admission into the Social Work Program</i> 15 credits—fully asynchronous	<u>Year 2 – Spring</u> Social Work 359 (virtual class) Social Work 365 SOC 350 Elective (rec: PSYC 260) GEP: HP (rec: HIST 206) 15 credits- asynchronous and virtual
<u>Year 3 – Fall</u> Social Work 316 Social Work 361 (virtual class) SOC 351(GEP: QL) SOC 355 (GEP: ER) Elective (rec: POLI 212) 16 credits- asynchronous & virtual	<u>Year 3 – Spring</u> Social Work 362 (virtual classroom) Social Work 377 Social Work 385 SOC 327 Elective (rec: PSYC—rotating options available) <i>Apply for field placement</i> 15 credits— Asynchronous & virtual
<u>Year 4 – Fall</u> Social Work 383 Social Work 376 Elective (rec: SW 387) SW 494 (4) SW 495 (1) 14 credits—SW 494 is field placement (200 hours)	<u>Year 4- Spring</u> Social Work 494 (4) Social Work 495 (1) SOC 352 Elective (rec: SW 384) Elective (rec: SOC 334) 14 credits—SW 494 is field placement (200 hours)

Field Education Program Goals and Objectives

Field Education as Signature Pedagogy

According to CSWE, 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. (EPAS, 2022)

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. 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 to offer strong contributions to the community in the way of student service, expertise, and collaboration. (EPAS, 2022)

Generalist Practice

A major goal in social work is to prepare students for generalist practice, and field education is an vital component of this. The definition of generalist practice is as follows:

“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 (EPAS, 2015).

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. Each competency describes the knowledge, values, skills, and cognitive and affective processes that make up the competency at the generalist level of practice, followed by a set of behaviors that integrate these components. These behaviors represent observable components of the competencies, and the descriptions that precede them represent the underlying content and processes that inform the behaviors.

1. Demonstrate Ethical and Professional Behavior

- a. Make ethical decisions by applying the standards of the National Association of Social Workers Code of Ethics, relevant laws and regulations, models for ethical decision making, ethical conduct of research, and additional codes of ethics within the profession as appropriate to the context.
- b. Demonstrate professional behavior; appearance; and oral, written, and electronic communication.
- c. Use technology ethically and appropriately to facilitate practice outcomes; and
- d. Use supervision and consultation to guide professional judgment and behavior.

2. Advance Human Rights and Social, Racial, Economic, and Environmental Justice

- a. Advocate for human rights at the individual, family, group, organizational, and community system levels; and
- b. Engage in practices that advance human rights to promote social, racial, economic, and environmental justice.

- 3. Engage Anti-Racism, Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (ADEI) in Practice**
 - a. Demonstrate anti-racist and anti-oppressive social work practice at the individual, family, group, organizational, community, research, and policy levels; and
 - b. Demonstrate cultural humility by applying critical reflection, self-awareness, and self-regulation to manage the influence of bias, power, privilege, and values in working with clients and constituencies, acknowledging them as experts of their own lived experiences.
- 4. Engage in Research-Informed Practice and Practice-Informed Research**
 - a. Apply research findings to inform and improve practice, policy, and programs; and
 - b. Identify ethical, culturally informed, anti-racist, and anti-oppressive strategies that address inherent biases for use in quantitative and qualitative research methods to advance the purposes of social work.
- 5. Engage in Policy Practice**
 - a. Use social justice, anti-racist, and anti-oppressive lenses to assess how social welfare policies affect the delivery of and access to social services; and
 - b. Apply critical thinking to analyze, formulate, and advocate for policies that advance human rights and social, racial, economic, and environmental justice.
- 6. Engage with Individuals, Families, Groups, Organizations, and Communities**
 - a. Apply knowledge of human behavior and person-in-environment, as well as interprofessional conceptual frameworks, to engage with clients and constituencies.
 - b. Use empathy, reflection, and interpersonal skills to engage in culturally responsive practice with clients and constituencies.
- 7. Assess Individuals, Families, Groups, Organizations, and Communities**
 - a. Apply theories of human behavior and person-in-environment, as well as other culturally responsive and interprofessional conceptual frameworks, when assessing clients and constituencies.
 - b. Demonstrate respect for client self-determination during the assessment process by collaborating with clients and constituencies in developing a mutually agreed-upon plan.
- 8. Intervene with Individuals, Families, Groups, Organizations and Communities**
 - a. Engage with clients and constituencies to critically choose and implement culturally responsive, evidence-informed interventions to achieve client and constituency goals.
 - b. Incorporate culturally responsive methods to negotiate, mediate, and advocate with and on behalf of clients and constituencies.
- 9. Evaluate Practice with Individuals, Families, Groups, Organizations, and Communities**
 - a. Select and use culturally responsive methods for evaluation of outcomes; and
 - b. Critically analyze outcomes and apply evaluation findings to improve practice effectiveness with individuals, families, groups, organizations, and communities.

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. Students will complete their internship hours over the course of two terms. This could include the following schedules: Fall/Spring, Summer/Fall, or Spring/Summer. Students can request a one semester internship for special circumstances, such as international internships abroad or military obligations.

Credits	Semester Length		Total Hours
	14 wk. (summer)	16 wk. (fall/spring)	
4	14.5	12.5	200
8	n/a	25	400

Students must enroll in the Social Work Practicum Seminar (SW 495) each semester that they are in Practicum. This seminar involves regular 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), submit summaries about their experiences, and complete an internship artifact. (This is like a legacy or change agent project). Practicum experiences, 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 needs and program development.

Student

Field Evaluation (completed by Agency Supervisor)

At the end of the semester, agency supervisors will be asked to evaluate students on their ability to demonstrate the nine competencies. The field supervisors will be asked to complete the

evaluation component (column 3) on the learning contract. The nine competencies specified on the learning contract form are those established by the Council on Social Work Education. The student’s learning plan has identified the learning opportunities (e.g., methods, activities, and assignments) available for the student to achieve these competencies. Agency Supervisors are asked to rate, according to the following criteria, based upon their performance of the measurable methods of achievement.

5	The student has excelled in this area.
4	The student is functioning somewhat above expectations for students in this area.
3	The student has met the expectations for students in this area.
2	The student is functioning somewhat below expectations for students in this area.
1	The student is functioning significantly below expectations for students in this area.
N/A	Not applicable, as the student has not had the opportunity to demonstrate competence in this area.*

***Note: The N/A rating should only be used when evaluating the first semester of a two-semester internship.**

Comments may be made under any competency statement, if desired. Agency supervisors are encouraged to indicate those areas in which they believe the student is particularly strong and those areas in which the student needs improvement. This evaluation is intended to give the student feedback about their performance. For the midterm semester evaluation, the rating is based on what the student has accomplished to-date and how well they have accomplished it in terms of expectations. The final evaluation rating indicates the “outcome” in terms of achieving the behavior. For BSW students, the desired outcome is that of entry-level generalist social work practitioners.

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 and assignments in the CANVAS course.

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 completed within the SW 494 and SW 495 CANVAS courses, and results are reviewed by the Social Work Program Director. The Social Work Program Director 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 261, SW 262, SW 303, 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

***Note:** If a student has an incomplete in any classes at the time of their application to field, they will need to complete unfinished work from the previous semester before their application will be processed.

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. Students 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:

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 Program requires that all persons who make application to the field program complete a Caregiver Background Check. As part of the application process to SW 494/495, students will complete a criminal and caregiver background check through CastleBranch, <https://discover.castlebranch.com/>. Students will set up their own accounts on this website and will be able to access their results. The cost for the check is \$33. 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. The criminal background results are reviewed by the field coordinator. 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. 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 their academic advisor, field coordinator, or the Director of the Social Work Program.

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 background checks, as well.

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. ***Note: If a student has an open criminal case or is placed on probation, parole, or extended community supervision at the time of their application to field, they may be asked to delay until their supervision is completed or open case is resolved. This will be assessed on a case-by-case basis.**

Non-Discrimination Statement

The Department of Sociology & 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/>.

Procedure for Application into Field

Students 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 online field application by the application deadline, in which they will provide the following information: Student ID and Contact information, academic status, placement preferences, any special needs or accommodations, their degree progress report, resume, cover letter, and their emergency contact information. Additionally, students will be asked to initial statements related to demonstrating professionalism during their field experiences and abiding by the NASW code of ethics.
4. Completes a criminal background check on www.discover.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 student preferences.

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 any 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 their 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. *Note: a student may be asked to delay their placement for unprofessional conduct during the interview process or a refusal to complete any agency pre-placement requirements. 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 may be asked to withdraw from the Social Work Major, since completion of an internship is a core requirement for the major.

Agency Requirements

Some agencies have additional requirements to be completed prior to the start of field. Examples may include evidence of a health screen, flu shot, COVID vaccine, drug tests, 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. The UWSP Social Work Program does not assume responsibility for the costs and process associated with additional agency requirements. However, the field coordinator can assist a student in completing any pre-placement requirements through consultation and resource connection. A delay or refusal to complete agency requirements may result in a delayed placement or limited internship opportunities.

Vaccination Policy: While UWSP does not require vaccinations, many of the community partners require that students who learn in their facilities are vaccinated against specific communicable

diseases. Such policies are developed and administered by the community agencies, and those facilities may in some cases grant exemptions to their own vaccine requirements. However, UWSP does not review or grant exemptions/waivers/exceptions to policies developed by other entities. Students who choose to enroll in the UWSP social work program must adhere to all vaccine requirements of the clinical, agency, or community partner facilities to which they are assigned. Further, UWSP is not obligated to reassign students to a different field experience or facility based on vaccination status, or for any other reason.

Employer and student roles with regards to exemptions: if you are participating in a field placement for an organization you are employed by and have received a medical or religious exemption for the COVID-19 vaccination (or any other vaccination), you must go through that process again, but this time in the student role. An employer exemption does not carry over to the UWSP student role.

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, including facilitating the interview process, assisting with interview preparation, internship readiness, and agency pre-placement and onboarding requirements
3. Preparing and coordinating affiliation agreements, MOUs, and orientation materials between UWSP and field sites.
4. Provide relevant information to Agency Supervisors, administrators, and staff about the Social Work Program and the expectations of the Field Education Program.
5. Consult with Field Agencies to develop their potential in working with students.
6. Maintain open dialog with Field Agency administrators and staff.
7. Conduct at least one site visit during each semester of the student field experience.
8. 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.
9. Assist students in stronger identification with the social work profession.
10. Assist students in setting appropriate learning goals.
11. Foster a safe atmosphere during seminar to discuss challenges, concerns, client issues, and experiences.
12. Assist with solving problems that come up in placement.
13. 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. Attend and/or review field education orientation materials provided by the field coordinator.
5. Assist the student in creating a schedule and program of work.
6. Assist the student with setting appropriate learning goals.
7. Create a positive, professional atmosphere for learning and practice
8. Negotiate and outline the expectations of the placement with the student in order to maximize communication and learning.
9. 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.
10. Provide opportunities for observation and shadowing of social work and other staff.
11. Provide opportunities for integration of academic course learning into the agency setting.
12. Instruct/educate the student on social work tasks, roles, responsibilities.
13. Identify ways for the student to contribute to the functioning of the agency.
14. Supervise the student in their field activities.
15. Provide regular discussion/supervision time to the student in order to process experiences, placement activities, and other matters.
16. Assist with solving problems that come up in placement.
17. 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. Complete orientation, pre-placement, or onboarding requirements requested by the agency.
5. Become a responsible member of the helping staff.
6. Engage in mature and professional conduct.
7. Meet the standards for dependability expected of an agency employee.
8. 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.
9. Notify the Agency Supervisor in advance of any anticipated absence from field work.
10. Arrange to make up any field work time lost because of illness, family crisis, or closure of the agency.
11. Arrange transportation to the agency.
12. Attend to appearance and general demeanor as they relate to agency expectations.

13. Adhere to the NASW Code of Ethics and behave in accordance with professional values.
14. 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.)
15. Learn the assigned and inherent roles of the Agency Supervisor and accept the authority implied in these roles.
16. Use the help of the Agency Supervisor in furthering professional development and competence.
17. Develop self-awareness, self-discipline, and skill in social work practice.
18. Prepare for meetings and client contacts.
19. Bring relevant questions to the Agency Supervisor.
20. Notify the Agency Supervisor and/or Field Coordinator of any questions and concerns.
21. Participate fully in seminar each semester of field.
22. 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, Council on Social Work Education (CSWE), 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 these 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 also drafts a standard affiliation agreement between the agency and UWSP in coordination with the UWSP Business Affairs office. This agreement is signed by the university controller and the agency director, and this agreement is renewed every three years.

The Field Coordinator connects with each Field Supervisor hosting a student during the 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. A virtual field supervisor orientation session is held once per semester for new supervisors and the session is recorded and provided to the staff for future reference if needed. This orientation session will review the UWSP social work program, field education manual, curriculum and CSWE core competencies, roles and responsibilities, student requirements, learning contracts, resources, and the evaluation process. Additionally, in a special section of the website called “Social Work Field,” this Field Manual and field program. After attending and/or reviewing the recording of the orientation session, first-time agency supervisors are asked to complete the Orientation Verification Form. With each subsequent student, agency supervisors are encouraged to revisit the orientation information. The field coordinator will keep agency supervisors updated on program changes.

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, they 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.

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.

Employment-Based Internships (Field placement & Employment Co-Occurring at the Same Agency)

Field practicum learning activities may occur in an agency where a student is concurrently employed as a paid employee in an existing agency position. This is called employment-based field. CSWE Council on Accreditation Updates on Employment Based Field Education can be found in the 2022 EPAS (<https://www.cswe.org/getmedia/8d7dade5-2683-4940-9587-5675f6ef5426/2022-EPAS.pdf>).

Such arrangements present both unique opportunities and challenges that should be carefully considered by the student and field agency, with approval of the BSW Field Coordinator. Each employment-based field practicum arrangement is unique to the student and the field agency. Some employment duties may count toward the accrual of field hours and BSW generalist-level competencies while others may not. To demonstrate mastery of the competencies, some field tasks may need to go “above and beyond” employment tasks. If an agency allows employment-based field practicums, payment is always the prerogative of the agency. The BSW maintains oversight and approval of field practicums.

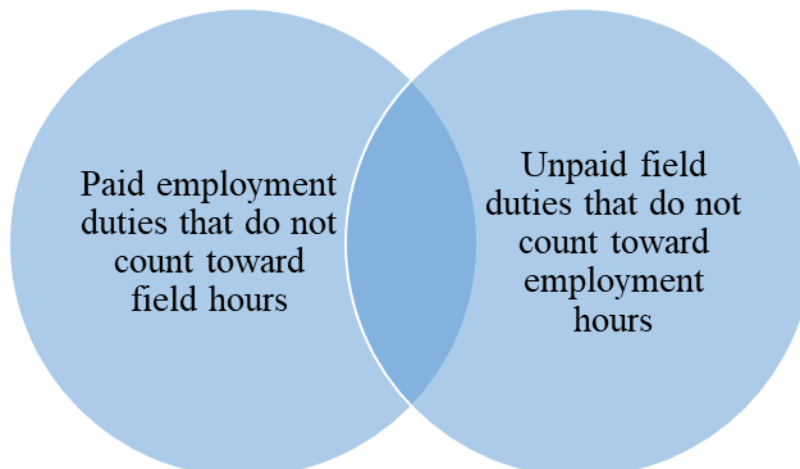


Figure 1.1: This is an example of how practicum and employment duties may be distributed in an employment-based field practicum.

Criteria for Employment-Based Practicums

Whether fully or partially unpaid, employment-based practicums must always maintain the following criteria:

1. The field practicum must represent a BSW-appropriate experience directly linked to the nine competencies.
 - a. When requesting employment-based field practicum, students will demonstrate linkages to the nine competencies in the Employment-Based Field Request form. (See form:)
 - b. Students will continue to demonstrate linkages to the nine Social Work competencies throughout the employment-based field practicum via their field practicum course assignments, seminar participation, and field meetings with the agency supervisor and field coordinator throughout the field practicum.
2. The agency supervisor and field coordinator will provide ongoing oversight and support to ensure demonstration of the nine social work competencies. The employment-based field practicum must maintain distinct, education-focused, social work field supervision.
 - a. Field supervision must occur separately from employment supervision. When possible students arrange to have a field practicum supervisor that is different from their employment supervisor.
 - b. When an agency lacks a staff member with a BSW degree and two years of post-BSW practice experience to serve as an agency supervisor, the field coordinator will assist in identifying an alternative field supervisor.
 - c. Students will articulate the plan for supervision in the Employment-Based Field Request Form: [Proposal for an Employment-Based Field Practicum](#)

Requesting approval for Employment-Based Field:

Students will complete an Employment-Based Field Request Form (link above) to initiate review and approval of an employment-based field practicum. In collaboration with the field agency and prospective agency field supervisor, the student will need to identify BSW-level learning experiences link to the nine social work competencies in order to be approved as an appropriate BSW-level field practicum.

Depending on the student's relationship with the field agency, one of the procedures below should be followed:

- Requesting a field practicum in an agency where a student is already employed: Students who would like their current employment to be considered for an employment-based field practicum may request to do so. In consultation with the faculty, the Field Coordinator must approve any such arrangements as part of the Placement Procedures for the Practicum process.
- Accepting employment in an agency where a student is already completing a field practicum: Students who are encouraged to apply for or are offered employment at their field agency during the course of the field practicum should immediately alert their Field Coordinator, in order to determine whether, and to what extent, the prospective

employment role meets the employment-based field criteria. An Employment-Based Field Request Form must then be completed by the student in order to clearly describe the arrangement and request approval.

Change or Termination of Employment-Based Field Practicums:

If a student's employment ends during the course of the employment-based field practicum, the BSW Program will follow the steps outlined in the Student Request for Change of Field Placement, Student Request for Termination of the Field Placement and/or Field Agency Request for Termination of the Field Placement policies as they pertain to the nature of the termination.

Conflicts of Interest

No student may be placed in an agency where they or an immediate family member has been a client during the previous five years. Such an arrangement has the potential to create a conflict of interest and boundary issue for both the student and staff within that agency. Since the Department of Social Work does not obtain specific client information from agencies, it is the responsibility of the student to decline (or not select) a placement based on this requirement. Students who are interested in a field placement where there may be a conflict of interest are required to discuss the specific situation with the Field Coordinator prior to completing an interview with the prospective 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. Students assume full responsibility for their health insurance. While some agencies may be in the position to provide students with financial support during the field internship experience, this is not something that can be guaranteed.

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. Students should plan to complete their internship hours during time blocks of four-hours or more. 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. Advance planning is key to the successful coordination of field hours, course requirements, job, and other life commitments. In some internship sites that include some remote work, students may develop a varied internship schedule; however, these situations should be discussed with Field Program and Agency Supervisor to ensure learning goals and agency expectations are being met.

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 may not be 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 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. 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 considerations. Further, significant 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 circumstantial limitations and external demands that impair their performance. It is the responsibility of students to make the Field Coordinator and their Agency Supervisor aware of any barriers or issues impacting their internship performance 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.

Psychosocial issues of a more serious nature 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 in field education are associated with professional expectations, such as excessive absences, tardiness, lack of engagement, and/or lack of initiative. 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.

If/when student performance issues are raised, the field coordinator will meet with the agency supervisor to discuss the concerns. The field coordinator and the BSW program director will then meet with the student to discuss the concerns, problem solve, and identify any needed resources. The student will also be asked to complete the performance improvement plan form: [Field Performance Improvement Plan](#) and share this with the Field Coordinator and Agency Supervisor. The field coordinator will then follow-up with the student agency supervisor within two to three weeks following the development of the plan for improvement. If improvements are not being made, the student may be terminated from the field placement.

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 student performance arise in the field agency, classroom, or otherwise, the concerns must be fully documented on the Field Termination Form: [Termination form](#). 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 (optional), 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.

This information, along with the Safety Tips below, is provided in recognition of the reality of potential physical vulnerability of social workers in carrying out their professional responsibilities.

Agency Protocol

- It is important for students to know the agency's protocol for safety and security. The following are guidelines and suggestions that may be helpful to students, field instructors, and liaisons as they consider the particular safety issues in their settings. Specific steps taken by students or agency personnel will obviously have to be determined by the individual situation, the nature of the setting, etc. The agency should know the student's schedule and whereabouts at all times, especially when the student is working outside the building.

Security of Belongings:

- The agency is responsible for providing students with a secure place to keep belongings while at placement. It is preferable that the space be one that can be locked (e.g., a desk drawer or filing cabinet). Students should not leave cell phones, laptops, backpacks, purses, and other personal articles visible and unattended, even in an office with the door closed. Valuables should not be brought to placement settings. Items of value should not be left in cars, and should not be placed out of view just prior to leaving a vehicle.

Safety Issues Related to Working with Clients:

- Social work students work with clients/consumers in a range of settings and situations. Some of these include work with individuals dealing with overwhelming emotions and environmental stressors that result in behaviors that are or appear to be threatening. These behaviors may include (but are not limited to) swearing, yelling, insulting, threatening or acting to cause physical harm, and other out-of-control behavior.
- Some individuals may be prone to violence and may possess a weapon. Others may be intoxicated, high on drugs, in withdrawal, or may have other medical, psychiatric, or neurological disorders. Again, we would like to emphasize that students should always consult with agency field instructors regarding preparation for and handling of specific situations that are potentially difficult or threatening, such as medical emergencies, suicide or homicide risks, potential abuse of others, and the presence of weapons.

Safety Tips for Office Meetings:

- When considering the location of an office meeting, it is important to consider what is in the room, whether there is more than one exit, and where each person will sit. When scheduling an appointment, it is helpful to think about whether other people should be around and available at the time of the meeting for help if needed. Also, it is important to

have a plan for assistance in the event that a client/consumer becomes agitated. This may include having another staff person in the meeting.

Safety Tips for Travel:

- When a student is traveling by car for field education activities, it is advisable to have clear directions and know where he or she is going. In general, it is important to be alert and attentive to one's surroundings, and to lock doors and close windows. Valuables should be placed out of sight in one's vehicle prior to parking at the destination.
- When traveling by foot or public transportation, it is advisable that students carry as little as possible. Money, license, keys, and other essentials should be carried in a pocket if possible. If a bag or briefcase is grabbed, it is best to let go of it. It is advisable to dress in comfortable clothes that are loose fitting, and to wear sturdy, flat walking shoes. It is also helpful to be alert, and to walk with a purpose, as if one has a clear destination. One should be aware of people in the immediate area, without staring or maintaining eye contact.

Safety Tips for Home Visits:

- Prior to making a home visit, the student should discuss any issues related to safety with their field instructor. On an initial home visit, it is often advisable to go with another worker. Most agencies will want to know the location and scheduling of the home visits. Some agencies require a confirming telephone call upon arrival and departure from the home visit. If the student feels unsafe upon arrival or at any time during the visit, they should not proceed with the meeting. It might be preferable to meet at a neutral location.

Social Media and the Social Work Competencies

In the age of technology and information, social media (TikTok, 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 *NASW Code of Ethics*: <https://www.socialworkers.org/About/Ethics/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?

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 accepting friend or follow requests by 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 accessible by public transportation 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

Jess Bowers, MSW, APSW
(715) 346-2444, Jess.Bowers@uwsp.edu

Social Work Program Director

Amy Zlimen Ticho, MSSW, APSW, Ph.D.
(715) 346-3603, Amy.Zlimen@uwsp.edu

Department of Sociology and Social Work Chairperson

Amy Zlimen Ticho, MSSW, APSW, Ph.D.
(715) 346-3603, Amy.Zlimen@uwsp.edu

UWSP Counseling Center

Third Floor, Delzell Hall
910 Fremont Street
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
(715) 346-3365
TTY/TTD (715) 346-3362; <http://www.uwsp.edu/dac>

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/>

Forms referenced throughout this document

Learning Contract: [Learning Contract 2024-2025](#)

Employment-Based Proposal Form: [Proposal for an Employment-Based Field Practicum](#)

Performance Improvement Plan: [Field Performance Improvement Plan](#)

Termination form: [Termination form](#)