

CHAPTER IV –POLICIES & PROCEDURES

Part 1:

ADA AND STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES

ADA and Students with Disabilities Services are available to each student with a disability and the Social Work Program utilizes the University policy on students with disabilities. In general, each student with a documented disability is provided reasonable accommodations in the classroom and field. A student with a disability must first meet with a representative from the office that works with students who have disabilities who in turn accesses the necessary documentation for the University, explains campus resources available to the student, and reports to faculty (anonymously), the necessary accommodations needed for instruction. In the field, students with a documented campus disability should explore with the field site the possible accommodations that can be made by the placement site and in line with the American's with Disabilities Act. At times, students with disabilities are concerned about how their specific disability might impact their work in the field. For further exploration of this issue, students are encouraged to seek out the consultation of their Field Coordinator.

Part 2:

CONFIDENTIALITY

Any information regarding the student's performance in field is to be kept confidential among the educational partners (Student, Field Coordinator, Faculty Advisor, Agency Field Instructor, and Faculty Field Instructor) and is not to be released to those outside the university without the express, written permission of the student. UW system confidentiality policies also apply. In regard to student records, the Family Education Rights and Privacy Act regulate access to individual student academic records. Under this law, students have the right of access to their files and must give written consent before any material in the student file can be released to anyone other than faculty. In regard to client records, students should have access to client files and other agency records only insofar as access is related to the practice behaviors listed in the Student Learning Contract. Students must make themselves familiar with and abide by the rules of confidentiality and laws governing informed consent and privileged communication and protocols for responding to court orders for client information. The National Association of Social Workers (NASW) Code of Ethics should also be consulted.

NASW - Confidentiality (2.02) – Social workers should respect confidential information shared by colleagues in the course of their professional relationships and transactions. Social workers should ensure that such colleagues understand social workers' obligation to respect confidentiality and any exceptions related to it (NASW, 2015).

Part 3:

ABSENCES

Absences from Field Placement – The student is expected to notify the Agency Field Instructor, as early as possible, of any absence. Absences in excess of one week must be reported to the Faculty Field Instructor. Absences, for whatever reasons, must be made up in order that the required hours may be accomplished by the end of the 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 the seminars. Occasionally, situations arise wherein a student desires to miss seminar due to either pressing service requirements to a client that cannot be rearranged, or a unique learning opportunity in agency programming where Agency Field Instructors invite their participation. Decisions to miss seminar for these reasons require responsible behaviors by the student including explaining to the Faculty Field Instructor, obtaining her/his advance permission, and accepting responsibility for accomplishing the class work missed.

Part 4:

PROVISION OF PROFESSIONAL SERVICE AT FIELD AGENCIES

Practicum experience for BSW conforms to the 14-week University calendar. There is a period between the fall and spring semesters that lasts from approximately December 15 to February 1 when:

1. Students are neither required nor expected to provide agency service at their field practicum site during the interim time period.
2. Any hours spent at the placement during this period may count towards the 210 clock hours required during either semester, if negotiated with Field Coordinator and Agency Field Instructor prior to interim.
3. Faculty members may not be available to provide support, supervision or consultation about field related issues during the interim time period.

Please note that this provision only applies to BSW students. MSW placements during the academic year follow a 17 week calendar.

Part 4a:

EMPLOYMENT AND FIELD PLACEMENT DISTINCTION POLICY

Students are not placed at agencies where they are employed. Should a partnering agency extend an offer to a student for employment while the student is enrolled in Field, an addendum to the Student Learning Contract is developed and reviewed. The *Student Learning Contract (SLC) Offer for Employment Form* is located in the Field manual as Appendix AA. The purpose of the form is to:

1. Provide an avenue for review,
2. Outline hour and placement protections to ensure degree completion to the greatest extent possible,

3. Clarify intern, supervisory, and paid position roles, and
4. Support for students and partnering agencies when a student is offered a paid position while completing Field Practicum courses.

Part 5:

CHANGE OF FIELD PLACEMENT SITE

Under ordinary circumstances, student placement is made for two consecutive semesters in the same agency setting in order to allow for depth and breadth of learning. Changes in placements are considered problematic since leaving one agency for another disrupts the continuity of the learning experience. Placement changes should be conducted in a thoughtful and carefully planned manner.

When either the student or the Agency Field Instructor requests a change of placement, the following steps will be followed:

1. The student and Agency Field Instructor will meet together to fully discuss the concerns. If a satisfactory resolution is not accomplished, contact should be made with the Faculty Field Instructor.
2. The Faculty Field Instructor will meet with the student and the Agency Field Instructor to clearly define the problem and consider possible solutions. The Field Coordinator should be notified and included in the problem-solving process. When the student initiates the change request, s/he must provide a compelling rationale for the action, including a statement of learning goals, why the goals cannot be accomplished at the current placement agency, and a plan outlining how the practicum experience can be successfully completed by an agency change.
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 time frame 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.

Part 6:

TERMINATION OF FIELD PLACEMENT

Policy regarding student request for termination – When, during the course of the semester, a student decides to terminate his/her placement in the Field Placement, notification should immediately be made to the Agency Field Instructor, Faculty Field Instructor, and Field Coordinator so that a careful termination can be accomplished. Reasons for such decisions might be related to issues of health, impairment, finances or other events. Prior to re-enrolling in the Field Experience, the student must demonstrate, to the satisfaction of the Faculty Advisor and the Field Coordinator that the reasons for discontinuance have been adequately addressed and that

the student is ready to carry out their professional responsibilities in completing the Field Experience.

Policy regarding faculty or field agency request for termination – Inferior performance by the student or personal problems that interfere with performance expectations may be grounds for dismissal from the program. Examples include, but are not limited to:

- Non-achievement or less than satisfactory achievement of Student Learning Contract goals
- Behaviors that violate the NASW Code of Ethics in the field agency or seminar setting (*see below)
- Personality characteristics that conflict with the professional values and professional role sets of the social work professional (*see below)
- 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 handicapped

**The following list of behaviors serve as examples for those which might violate the NASW Code of Ethics or be deemed as conflicting with professional values and role sets. This list is offered for examples and should not be considered all-inclusive.*

1. Inability to address unresolved life issues which interfere with judgment and performance.
2. Inability to seek professional help or take other steps necessary to protect clients and others when these problems or difficulties interfere with professional judgment and performance.
3. Preoccupation with self and self-centered behavior that is inappropriate for a professional role.
4. Inability to develop professional relationships and to use effective communication to engage others through effective relational and communication skills.
5. Inability to place appropriate boundaries between personal and professional relationships with clients, agency co-workers or others who are part of the professional practice environment.
6. Attempting to practice beyond the scope of one's competence.
7. Repeatedly misrepresenting competence or credentials to clients, agencies, others, etc.
8. Repeatedly violating obligations concerning use of privileged information and violation of confidentiality.

When concerns about impaired or inferior performance arise in the field agency, classroom, or otherwise, the concerns must be fully documented. Documentation should include statements addressing the student's skill assets and deficits, a description of the problem behaviors or attitudes, instructional or supervisory interventions provided, the student's responses 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, the Faculty Field Instructor and the Agency Field Instructor to:

1. Allow all parties to present information and perspectives related to and present recommendations for possible solutions.
2. The Field Coordinator will make a ruling regarding termination or continuance in in the practicum experience.
3. A ruling for continuance may require extending the placement, repeating the placement or transferring to another agency for practicum training.
4. A decision for termination will require the student to withdraw from their field coursework.
5. Documentation of the meeting and the outcome decision will be completed by the Field Coordinator and placed in the student's file.
6. The Field Coordinator will be responsible for informing the student about the procedures for appeal. The grievance and appeal policy pertaining to academic appeal, which applies to social work majors, may be found in the University's Student Handbook, in the section pertaining to University Policies and Procedures and in the sub-section referring to the College of Letters and Science.

Part 7:

NON-DISCRIMINATION AND SEXUAL HARASSMENT

Policy related to non-discrimination – The Department of Social Work does not discriminate against any student, professional community agency or other entity because of race, color, creed, sex, sexual orientation, or national origin. All participants in the field education process 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.

The Department of Social Work Student Handbook states:

"No student may be denied admission to, participation in or the benefits of, or be discriminated against in any service, program, course or facility of the system or its institutions or centers because of the student's race, color, creed, religion, sex, national origin, disability, ancestry, age, sexual orientation, pregnancy, marital status, or parental status."

Policy related to sexual harassment – The Department of Social Work does not tolerate any student, faculty member or Agency Field Instructor engaging in sexual harassment behaviors. All participants in the field education process are expected to conduct themselves in manner fully consistent with the NASW Code of Ethics that specifically addresses sexual harassment. Failure to do so may result in removal from the field education program and/or referral for violation of the NASW Code of Ethics.

If a field student or Agency Field Instructor believes that s/he has been the victim of sexual harassment related to the field education program, s/he should discuss the issue with the Faculty

Field Instructor, the Field Coordinator, and/or the Chair of the Social Work Department. Support and information will be provided with regard to informal and/or formal methods to see redress. The University Of Wisconsin Oshkosh sexual harassment policy (2015):

The University of Wisconsin Oshkosh is committed to providing and maintaining an environment that respects and protects the rights of all its members. This commitment is reflected in the following Sexual Harassment Policy. In approving this policy statement, the University community expresses its commitment to inform the campus community on this policy, to provide appropriate training and to follow through on all concerns that are presented relating to the environment for learning, working, and studying that is to be established and maintained at the University of Wisconsin Oshkosh.

Sexual harassment deprives its victims of rights guaranteed under Title VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964. Sexual harassment has no place in the educational or any other community and will not be tolerated at the University of Wisconsin Oshkosh.

Sexual harassment is defined by the University of Wisconsin Oshkosh as follows (2015):

Sexual harassment is a form of sex discrimination. It occurs in a variety of situations which share a common element: the inappropriate introduction of sexual activities or comments into the work, learning, or living situation. Often, sexual harassment involves relationships of unequal power, and contain elements of coercion-as when compliance with requests for sexual favors becomes criterion for granting work, study, or grading or other benefits. However, sexual harassment may also involve relationships among equals, as when repeated sexual advances or demeaning verbal behavior have a harmful effect on a person's ability to study or work in the academic setting. Unwelcome sexual advances, requests for sexual favors, and other physical conduct and expressive behavior of a sexual nature constitute sexual harassment when:

1. Submission to such conduct is made either explicitly or implicitly a term or condition of an individual's employment or education; or
2. Submission to or rejection of such conduct by an individual is used as a basis for academic or employment decisions affecting that individual; or
3. Such conduct has the purpose or effect of substantially interfering with an individual's academic or professional performance or creating an intimidating, hostile or demeaning employment or educational environment.

Part 8:

LIABILITY INSURANCE

Students should make themselves aware of the terms of the liability insurance coverage provided them by the University of Wisconsin. This insurance protects them and their field agencies in the case of negligence or malpractice suits related to the BSW student's fieldwork in the agency. The insurance is in effect throughout each academic semester. The University of Wisconsin Oshkosh is currently protected for liability arising out of the negligent actions of its employees, agents and officers through the State Self-funded Liability Program administered by the Department of Administration under State Statutes 893.82 and 895.46. The State will indemnify University employees, officers, and agents against liability for damages arising out of their activity while

acting within the scope of their respective employment or agency. Students are considered agents of the University when participating in field programs that are part of a credit course or required for degree completion.

Additionally, all BSW and MSW students are covered by the National Association of Social Workers Insurance Trust no-deductible liability coverage against claims related to professional education. The premium for this insurance is covered by student field fees. This is factored into students' tuition and fees for each term they are enrolled in SW 401, 451, 709, 710, 729, or 733. For more information on NASW membership visit NASW website at: <http://www.socialworkers.org/join.asp>. Students interested in learning more about this insurance can contact the Department of Social Work Directly for an electronic copy of the policy; call the NASW Assurance Services at 855-385-2160; or visit NASW Assurance Services website at: <http://www.naswassurance.org/pli/students>.

Part 9:

DRIVING

Students are expected to arrange for or provide their own transportation to and from their field education agency. Students are not required to drive their own vehicles to accomplish their work duties for the agency. If the agency requests that they do so, and students are willing to do so, they can voluntarily agree to use their cars to perform their work. However, the Department of Social Work advises students not to transport clients in their private cars. The University insurance does not cover any accidents or liability claims against students who transport clients in their own cars. Student's private automobile insurance is necessary for that coverage. Students who decide to use their own cars to transport clients should make sure they have adequate insurance coverage and should discuss with their agency whether agency insurance covers the use of their car. Appropriate forms for driving in the field must be completed and approved prior to any student using their automobile for any field business in connection with their social work placement.

Complete the form found [here](#) and return it via mail, fax or email attachment. Fill in the Professor/Coordinator Making Request and the contact information with your field coordinator's information:

BSW STUDENTS: Amy Fischer Williams, williamsa@uwosh.edu, Social Work, (920) 424-1419
MSW STUDENTS: Carol Collien, collien@uwosh.edu, Social Work, (920) 424-0146

NOTE: It is illegal for a student without a valid driver's license to use a vehicle even if the student fills out the necessary driving forms(s).

Part 10:

CAREGIVER AND CRIMINAL 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 have access to people who receive care in a number of Wisconsin healthcare 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 this law also applies to students who have field placements in certain settings, both the BSW and MSW Programs require that a Caregiver/Criminal Background Check ([Appendix BB](#)) be completed on all persons accepted to the BSW or MSW Program. Students who graduate from the BSW or MSW Program and go on to secure certification or licensure as a social worker in the State of Wisconsin are subject to the same background check. These background checks must be renewed every four years. Should the results of this background check limit possibilities for a field placement in certain areas of the human services, the faculty will discuss the situation with the student as well as the implications this may have on the education, certification, and practice goals of the student. Any student wishing to discuss their situation prior to, during, or after completion of the Caregiver/Criminal Background Check, may do so by meeting with their advisor or their Program Coordinator. NOTE: In addition to the completion of Criminal and Caregiver Background Checks, some agencies also have other requirements for students. Such requirements may include, but are not limited to: providing immunization records, obtaining immunization(s), completing a tuberculosis screen, or passing a drug test. Efforts will be made to alert students to known additional requirements before making Field Placement referrals. However, sometimes such requirements are not known to the Field Coordinators beforehand. A student has the right to refuse a Field Placement whose requirements may violate his/her right to privacy.