



Master of Social Work Program
College of Social Work

THE UNIVERSITY OF UTAH

MSW Practicum Handbook

(Policies and Procedures)

Updated June 2024

College of Social Work
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Introduction

This document sets out the Policies and Procedures for Social Work Field Education and applies to students enrolled in the College of Social Work at the University of Utah. Because of the nature of professional social work practice, the College of Social Work has different expectations of students than do non-professional programs. The standards are linked to students' abilities to become effective social work professionals and are provided so that students, field instructors, and field practicum faculty are clear about expectations and procedures to address performance concerns and expectations in field education. The ultimate goal of these standards is to facilitate a successful experience for students in our program and our community agency partners.

Persons who supervise students in the field (field instructors), along with field faculty (Practicum Professors) will assess student academic and professional performance and apply their professional judgment to determine if standards are being met during a student's educational career. Professional judgment is the capacity to assess a situation by applying the values and knowledge of the social work profession combined with a professional's own experience and practice wisdom. It also represents the application of knowledge, values, and skills to making decisions in a helping process.

Social work students are expected to read the [*National Association of Social Workers Code of Ethics*](#), the [*MSW Program Handbook*](#) and the [*University of Utah Student Code of Student Rights and Responsibilities*](#).

Upon entrance into the field education program, students are expected to commit to learning what is required for professional behavior and competent practice. Professional behavior includes compliance with the NASW Code of Ethics, employer policy, and University of Utah policy; keeping commitments to and respecting clients, supervisors, community members, faculty, other professionals, colleagues, and fellow students; and the ability to work effectively with others regardless of level of authority. Students must engage in reflective listening, act to promote the welfare of others, and behave in a trustworthy manner in their interactions with clients/community members, faculty, and other members of the College of Social Work community at all times.

Other aspects of professional behavior include humility, acceptance, presence, relational skills, mutuality, and self-compassion, as well as being punctual and dependable, engaging in intentional supervision and practice, dressing appropriately, prioritizing responsibilities, and seeking clarification. Understanding and maintaining confidentiality with regard to clients/community members is of utmost importance. Promptly reporting known violations of any professional standard by other social work students to your field instructor and/or University of Utah practicum professor is essential.

Every effort will be made to continuously provide students accurate and current information; however, the College of Social Work reserves the right to change, without

notice, policies, procedures, programs, and other matters as circumstances dictate. Further, MSW field education curriculum and program policies are evaluated regularly. As a result, changes will be made to the curriculum or policies as recommended by the MSW Program Advisory Committee, the College Council, and the Practicum Advisory Committee. Every effort is made to notify students when these occur.

Please refer to the [MSW Program Handbook](#) for all policies not related to Field Education.

College of Social Work Anti-Racism Statement

The College of Social Work commits to the long-term work of anti-racism; that is, recognizing and dismantling racism and interrelated oppressions in its curriculum, programs, organizational practices, processes, and outcomes. Anti-racist social work education supports us in doing the important work of reshaping social work practice, programs, and policies for a society of equal opportunity and belonging. It explicitly highlights, critiques, and challenges all forms of racism—individual, interpersonal, institutional, and structural—by addressing how racist beliefs and ideologies structure lived experiences, personal and professional relationships, education and employment opportunities, and physical and emotional health. It also examines and challenges how programs and institutions such as education, health care, housing, food access, justice, and social provisioning, among others, support and maintain disadvantages and advantages along racial lines. We engage in the work of anti-racism to prepare social workers who will contribute to building a just and peaceful society.

College of Social Work Curriculum Statement

Social work education encompasses learning, observing, listening to, and talking about a wide variety of difficult or challenging life experiences that may overlap with the personal experiences of students. When this happens, students may experience feelings that are unpleasant, intense, and challenging to manage. Students enrolled in graduate level social work training need to be prepared to engage in an appropriate and professional manner with course content, challenging conversations, and client interactions, all of which are critical to advanced social work training. Avoiding uncomfortable classroom content or discussions or disrupting field practicum training due to difficulty managing personal experiences may result in academic progression delays. The College of Social Work encourages students to exercise self-awareness, adaptability, and self-care. In turn, the College of Social Work is committed to supportive learning environments that foster relationships and encourage openness, self-awareness, adaptability, and self-care. If you are experiencing emotional difficulties with classroom content, discussions, or client interactions in field, please reach out to field or classroom faculty or our advising team. We are happy to provide information about campus and community resources intended to support you.

Please note the following, according to the [University of Utah Content Accommodations Policy](#):

- Accommodations do not require faculty to alter course content.
- Accommodations do not permit students to "opt out" of course assignments for religious or any other reason.
- Accommodations do not oblige faculty to grant accommodation requests, except in those cases when a denial would be arbitrary and capricious or illegal.
- Accommodations do not require faculty to predict what course content may conflict with a student's deeply held core beliefs.
- Accommodations do not require faculty to judge either the sincerity or the validity of a student's beliefs.
- The University of Utah and the College of Social Work cannot guarantee that all students will be able to complete all classes or majors at the University.

CSW Civility Statement

The College of Social Work is strongly committed to the values and ethics of the social work profession as indicated by the National Association of Social Workers (NASW). The NASW core values include: service, social justice, the dignity and worth of the person, the importance of human relationship, integrity, competence, human rights, and scientific inquiry. The College of Social Work does not discriminate against applicants, students, or employees on the basis of age, class, color, creed, disability, ethnicity, family structure, gender, gender identity, marital status, national origin, political orientation, race, religion, sex, or sexual orientation. We expect all social work staff, faculty, and students to endeavor to provide an affirming environment that is anti-oppressive and supports individuals' backgrounds and lived experiences, including the use of preferred names and pronouns.

CSW Land Acknowledgement

The College of Social Work acknowledges that the land the University of Utah occupies has always belonged to Indigenous Peoples. The erasure of the relationship between Native Peoples and their traditional lands is an insidious form of ongoing settler colonialism and we must be mindful of its continuing impact and work to mitigate it. We recognize and honor the deep history of these sovereign communities, as well as the enduring relationship that exists between Indigenous Peoples and their traditional territories. As social workers, we are obligated to past and future indigenous communities to hold our College accountable to the hopes and needs of Native American and Indigenous Peoples.

We encourage you to explore the indigenous land you live and work on. You can find this

information on native-land.ca.

U of U Land Acknowledgement Statement

<https://president.utah.edu/indigenous-land-acknowledgment/>

Lauren's Pledge

I will listen and believe you if someone is threatening you.

[McCluskey Center for Violence Prevention](#)

Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA)

Student records at the University of Utah are governed by the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA). The act forbids the university from releasing personal identifiable student educational records or files, or personal information contained in those files, without the student's written consent, except in specified situations.

The student, MSW field education director, University of Utah practicum professors, field instructors, partnering agencies, academic advising, and administrators work collaboratively in the educational process and are considered University of Utah employees or extensions of the University of Utah with legitimate educational interests. Information and/or concerns regarding student needs, student performance and/or progress will be shared among these individuals as required to optimize student learning. Accordingly, the field education office may, in good faith, share field practicum-related information, in compliance with the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA), with appropriate persons including the field education director, University of Utah practicum professors, agency representatives, field instructors, partnering agencies, academic advising, MSW or Online Program director, and the Associate Dean and/or Dean of the College of Social Work. Field practicum-related information is defined as information that may involve the field placement selection, clients, constituents, agency field instructors, staff, the student learning experience, evaluative information, concerns regarding student performance, or school and/or agency policies. Such information will be shared to facilitate and/or enhance the learning process, and/or to protect clients, peers and/or colleagues.

For a full description of the rights of students and their parents under these regulations, please visit <https://registrar.utah.edu/handbook/ferpa.php>

ADA Accommodations and the Center for Disability Access

Students are required to contact the [Center for Disability and Access](#) (CDA) if they require special accommodations for field education. ***Please note that field education will require a CDA letter separate from classroom accommodations, and this process should be initiated as early as possible.***

University of Utah Nondiscrimination and Accessibility Statement

Pursuant to Federal law, the University of Utah and College of Social Work do not discriminate on the basis of race, ethnicity, color, religion, national origin, sex, pregnancy, pregnancy-related conditions, age, disability, sexual orientation, gender identity, gender expression, genetic information or protected veteran's status, in employment, treatment, admission, access to educational programs and activities, or other University benefits or services.

The University does not discriminate on the basis of sex in the education program or activity that it operates, as required by Title IX and 34 CFR part 106. The requirement not to discriminate in education programs or activities extends to admission and employment. Inquiries about the application of Title IX and its regulations may be referred to the Title IX Coordinator, to the Department of Education, Office for Civil Rights, or both.

Additionally, the University endeavors to provide reasonable accommodations and to ensure equal access to qualified persons with disabilities. [Click here to request a reasonable accommodation.](#)

Where discrimination is found to have occurred, the University will take reasonable steps to investigate the matter, stop the harassment, prevent its recurrence and remedy its effects.

If you or someone you know has experienced discrimination, [sexual misconduct](#) including sexual harassment, or disability discrimination, we encourage you to report it to the University's designated and authorized Title IX/ADA/Section 504 Coordinator in the Office of Equal Opportunity and Affirmative Action:

Director & Title IX Coordinator
Office of Equal Opportunity and Affirmative Action (OEO/AA)
383 South University Street, Level 1 OEO Suite
Salt Lake City, UT 84112
801-581-8365
oeo@utah.edu

Online reports may be submitted at <https://oeo.utah.edu/>

For further information, please see:
<https://www.utah.edu/nondiscrimination/>
<https://regulations.utah.edu/general/1-011.php>

<https://regulations.utah.edu/general/1-012.php>

MSW Program Contact Information

Field Education Office

College of Social Work Building
395 South 1500 East, Room 322
801-585-7811
<https://socialwork.utah.edu/practicum/>

Academic Advising Office

College of Social Work Building
395 South 1500 East, Room 319
msw@utah.edu
<https://socialwork.utah.edu/advising/>

MSW Program Office

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1. University of Utah MSW Field Education

1.1 About the University of Utah Field Education Program

Field Education is considered the signature pedagogy of the social work curriculum. Students must complete field practicum clock hours, learning objectives, practice requirements, and 100% of the co-curricular Canvas coursework. MSW students in the two-year program complete both generalist and specialist field practicum in the first and second years, respectively. Advanced Standing students complete specialist field practicum only. Students in the three-year program begin their generalist field practicum during their second year in the MSW Program. Students complete field practicum in approved community agencies under the direct supervision of a qualified practitioner. This practitioner serves as the student's *field instructor*. Placements are assigned by the field practicum team or through direct application with the agency. Every effort is made to assign students to one of their top ten choices, but due to high demand, this cannot be guaranteed.

All partnering agencies have been carefully vetted by the College of Social Work to ensure alignment with professional accreditation standards established by the Council on Social Work Education (CSWE). Concurrent assessment is made of the credentials, experience, teaching ability, and professionalism of agency field instructors.

Please note that, unless otherwise indicated, students must maintain a minimum of 12 clock hours per week within their agency settings unless exceptions are granted pursuant to CDA, CSWE, or program discretion.

2. Glossary of Field-Related Titles and Terms

2.1 Intern Placement Tracking (IPT)

The College of Social Work Field Education Program currently utilizes the web-based system *Intern Placement Tracking* (IPT) to manage information related to students, field instructors, and agencies. Information on IPT is password protected. All forms related to field education are located on IPT for ease of use in the field and real-time accessibility and information sharing between students, task supervisors, field instructors, and University of Utah practicum professors. If you do not have a username, please contact Diane Buck at diane.buck@socwk.utah.edu

2.2 MSW Field Education Director

The Field Education Director provides overall management of the Field Education Program. The Field Education Director (and potentially the program directors and Associated Dean for Academic Affairs) will make final determinations regarding student readiness for field and student dispositions when concerns regarding performance, grading, or other issues arise.

2.3 University of Utah Practicum Professors

The University of Utah practicum professor is the University of Utah based faculty member and Canvas course instructor whose primary responsibility is to place students in appropriate agencies and see that the students' internship experiences are educational and meet the established learning objectives. University of Utah practicum professors will also intervene when concerns arise, so please contact them as soon as possible if you are experiencing difficulties in field practicum. University of Utah practicum professors are ultimately tasked with integrating curriculum content in Canvas courses and webinars; monitoring educational opportunities; connecting CSWE competencies and skill development; evaluating, in conjunction with the student's field instructor, progress toward competencies; and assigning course grades. Students are typically assigned to the same practicum professor for the generalist and specialist years.

2.4 Field Instructor

Qualified field instructors for MSW students must have a master's degree in social work from a CSWE-accredited school of social work and at least two years post-master's experience. Licensed mental health professionals from related disciplines are eligible as well; these include marriage and family therapy, mental health counseling, psychology or psychiatry. Non-psychiatrist physicians, nurse practitioners, and physician's assistants with advanced mental health training will also be considered.

The field instructor provides a minimum of one hour of supervision per week to the student. In most cases, the field instructor will be on site at the assigned field placement; however,

when a master's level mental health professional is not available at the placement site, this role will be filled by a master's level mental health professional who is outside of the agency and who has been approved by the Field Education Program.

2.5 Task Supervisor/Preceptor

The task supervisor/preceptor is the agency employee that assigns tasks to the student and who assists in evaluating the daily performance of the student. The task supervisor/preceptor maintains regular contact with the field instructor and University of Utah regarding the student's progress in field placement. Although task supervisors/preceptors are adjunctive to the oversight provided by the approved field instructor, they do have the authority to delegate field practicum tasks, collaborate on supervision, offer feedback, and assess student performance in conjunction with the approved field instructor.

2.6 Field Placement/Practicum

The field internship or practicum is considered the "signature pedagogy" for social work education and is a mandatory, intentional, and planned educational requirement. It consists of an ongoing work assignment at an assigned agency and allows the student to apply social work theory, values, ethics, and competencies to practice. This work assignment is directly supervised by a field instructor and/or task supervisor and coordinated by the University of Utah based practicum professor. Qualified field instructors for MSW students must have a master's degree in social work from a CSWE-accredited school of social work and at least two years post-master's experience. Licensed mental health professionals from related disciplines are eligible as well; these include marriage and family therapy, mental health counseling, psychology or psychiatry. Non-psychiatrist physicians, nurse practitioners, and physician's assistants with advanced mental health training will also be considered.

2.7 Generalist Year

Year one in field practicum

2.8 Specialist Year

Year two in field practicum (or Advanced Standing status)

2.9 Canvas Course

There is a coursework component of the social work student's field practicum experience. In addition to working in an agency setting, the student is required to concurrently attend to academic coursework in the form of Canvas course modules. Please see Section 3 for detailed course information.

3. Field Practicum Course Registration Process

Students will receive a REGISTRATION CODE and SECTION NUMBER from their assigned University of Utah practicum professor. In order to avoid delays, please register for the appropriate section number and instructor to which you are assigned. Webinars, and field logs (generalist year) or process recordings (specialist year) and other assignments are required to integrate curriculum content with direct practice knowledge and experiences.

3.1 Course Numbers and Sequence for Regular Track:

Generalist students, semester one: SW 6511

Generalist students, semester two: SW 6512 (prereq: 6511)

Specialist students, semester one: SW 6521 (prereq: all generalist courses and 6511 and 6512)

Specialist students, semester two: SW 6522 (prereq: 6521)

3.2 Course Numbers and Sequence for Advanced Standing:

Specialist students, semester one: SW 6521 (prereq: all generalist courses and 6511 and 6512)

Specialist students, semester two: SW 6522 (prereq: 6521)

3.3 Course Numbers and Sequence for One Year School Social Work Career Path

(students placed in a school must use these course numbers)

School Social Work generalist students, semester one: SW 6813

School Social Work generalist students, semester two: SW 6814 (prereq: 6813)

-OR-

School Social Work specialist students, semester one: SW 6823 (prereq: 6511 and 6512)

School Social Work specialist students, semester two: SW 6824 (prereq: 6823)

4. Overview of Field Practicum Team

4.1 University of Utah Field Education Office

The Field Education office is responsible for assigning all field practicum placements. In collaboration with students, University of Utah practicum professors will assist with placements that will serve to broaden and diversify a student's professional exposure, experiences, and skills to enhance students' professional identification and knowledge. A student's placement assignment is based on consideration of the individual student's previous experience, identified learning needs, interests and goals, readiness for field practicum, and available approved field practicum sites. University of Utah practicum professors may determine that a student is not ready to enter field practicum. In this case, the University of Utah practicum professors will work with the student to determine an appropriate plan (see policy 5.1 Readiness for Field Education).

4.2 University of Utah Practicum Professor

Each student will be assigned to a University of Utah practicum professor who is a faculty member or instructor in the College of Social Work with advanced clinical experience. The role of the University practicum professor is to assist the student in all areas of field practicum, including the selection of field practicum, answering field practicum-related questions, resolving problems or concerns, and making agency-based site visits with the student and the field instructor and also serves as the instructor/faculty for the field practicum seminar. Each student is usually assisted by the same University ~~liaison~~ practicum professor for the duration of their graduate school experience.

4.3 Field Instructors

Agency-based field instructors are responsible for the instruction and supervision of students. A field instructor is an agency-based social worker who has received an appointment from the University of Utah College of Social Work as a Clinical Instructor to direct students in their individual educational and professional development. The field instructor's responsibilities include the following:

- Directing the student's field practicum education within an agency setting. This includes assessment of student needs, selection of assignments which meet the student's and school's goals and objectives, and provision of ongoing supervision to evaluate the student's educational progress within the agency setting.
- Facilitating agency and community resources to ensure the completion of student assignments. This may include the development of inter-and intra-agency coordination as well as providing space, supplies, and staff support.
- Providing specialized educational content to ensure and enhance the student's understanding and compliance with agency policies and procedures, as well as special client populations served by the agency.

- Collaborating with the student to develop a plan for achieving the field practicum learning objectives.

5. Academic and Professional Behavior Standards and Expectations

Due to the nature of professional social work practice, MSW programs have different expectations of students than do non-professional educational programs. The goals of the MSW Program are to provide the best professional preparation for students, so both our students and our graduates are equipped to provide high quality professional services in order to minimize risk to clients or other members of the public. This policy is intended to monitor and assist students in their pursuit of a successful academic experience. These standards were developed to foster effective and competent social work professionals and are provided so that students, faculty, and other stakeholders are clear about the expectations and the procedures involved to address academic and/or non-academic difficulties.

5.1 Field Practicum Readiness

Field practicum is an academic experience that seeks to develop skills and competencies but also hinges on student readiness to interact in a competent and professional manner with clients, supervisors, colleagues, faculty, and community professionals. The University of Utah College of Social Work is bound by the NASW Code of Ethics in its responsibility to protect the best interests of individuals with and for whom social work students have professional responsibility.

If, in the academic and professional judgment of school and/or field faculty, a student does not demonstrate the basic skills necessary to ensure competent and professional practice with clients, the student will not be allowed to enroll in field practicum until the appropriate skills have been sufficiently developed and/or concerns sufficiently mitigated to meet basic requirements to be permitted to enroll in field practicum.

If the student is permitted to proceed with a field practicum, in the interest of lending support to the student's prospects for a successful field experience, prospective field practicum sites may receive information from the school relevant to the concerns cited and the ameliorative steps initiated by the Office of Field Education.

Although it is the school's responsibility to make every reasonable effort to help the student secure a field practicum placement, the school cannot require a site to accept a student. All field practicum students must successfully interview and be accepted by a school-approved site that fulfills the educational requirements of the field practicum within the timeframe noted for that semester. It is the student's responsibility as an emerging professional to assume the responsibility of successfully securing a field practicum placement. If a student is unable to secure or maintain placement due to agency concerns, a student may be provided up to two additional referrals during the academic year at the discretion of the Office of Field Education. A student who cannot fulfill the field education requirement in social work cannot continue in the MSW Program. If the student is not successful in their efforts to either begin or successfully complete a field practicum, they will be referred for dismissal from the MSW Program in accordance

with University policy.

5.2 Physical and Mental Health

Students should understand that social work is a demanding profession. It can be physically demanding, psychologically activating, intellectually challenging, personally and interpersonally conflictual, and at times emotionally upsetting.

Field practicum offers applied experiential learning in actual practice settings. These learning contexts are very different from classroom settings. Social work field practicum courses require that students work with distressed people from various backgrounds who are experiencing a wide range of difficulties.

The College of Social Work makes every effort to ensure that the challenges students may be experiencing do not interfere with competent practice and the protection of clients' best interests. It is important that social work students not allow personal challenges, medical conditions, psychosocial distress, substance abuse, cognitive impairment, or mental health difficulties to jeopardize their work with clients. Students experiencing any challenges that are or could affect their ability to assume the professional roles, demeanor, boundaries, and responsibilities involved in field practicum should discuss these concerns with their faculty practicum professor as soon as possible before or during the field practicum planning process or as soon as problems emerge.

If at any time a student feels overwhelmed by personal difficulties or challenges, they are encouraged to reach out to their practicum professor, advising team or student support services, all of whom can support them in procuring supportive services.

When students indicate, or their behavior demonstrates, that personal difficulties or challenges are not sufficiently resolved to allow them to work effectively with others, the student's faculty practicum professor and field director or delegate may conduct a Readiness Assessment to better gauge student preparedness as well as the need for additional support services. Please refer to the Readiness Skills Required for Professional Social Work Practice detailed in the Appendix as well as in Policy 5.

5.3 Student Impairment

Emergency Services will be contacted if at any point during the field practicum, or during the planning process leading up to the field practicum, a student appears to be an immediate threat to themselves or someone else, or is incapable of caring for themselves. The College also reserves the right to contact the Behavioral Intervention Team (BIT) at the Office of the Dean of Students to ensure appropriate follow-up and aftercare.

5.4 Disabilities

A disability that may require accommodation to meet field practicum standards should be identified before or during the field practicum planning process. The University of Utah is

committed to providing reasonable accommodations for all students with disabilities. Students may register with the Center for Disability Access (CDA). This office will consult with the student to determine reasonable and appropriate accommodations for the field practicum setting. The instructor of record for the field practicum courses (the practicum professor) and the Field Instructor should receive notification of the accommodation(s) in a CDA letter provided by the [University of Utah Center for Disability Access](#). Please note that students will require a separate CDA letter for field practicum. To discuss the need for potential accommodations, please contact the [Center for Disability Access](#).

5.5 Ethical Standards

The National Association of Social Workers is a professional membership organization that works to enhance the professional growth and development of its members, to create and maintain professional standards, and to advance sound social policies. Among the academic standards set forth in the *Student Performance Policy* are the ethical standards embodied in the *NASW Code of Ethics*.

Field practicum students must exhibit a strong commitment to the goals of social work and to the ethical standards of the profession as specified in the NASW Code of Ethics. Students must demonstrate commitment to the essential values of social work, including respect for the strengths, dignity, and worth of every individual and their rights to self-determination and a just share of society's resources.

Students must demonstrate active engagement with the learning process. Behavior, classroom performance, and field practicum performance must demonstrate adherence to the ethical expectations and obligations of professional practice outlined in the NASW Code of Ethics or students may not be allowed to participate in field practicum.

Behavior and statements contrary to ethical standards as prescribed in the NASW Code of Ethics may be cause for denial of admission to or continuance in programs of the College of Social Work. See <https://www.socialworkers.org/about/ethics> for a copy of the NASW Code of Ethics.

6. MSW Field Practicum Registration Process

6.1 MSW Field Practicum Application Timeline

Students will receive information regarding field practicum at different times depending on their year in the program

6.1.1 Incoming Generalist (year 1)

Students will receive field practicum information after final seating fees are due, typically in late February (online cohort) and early March (grounded cohort).

6.1.2 Rising Specialists (currently enrolled Generalist and Advanced Standing)

Students will receive field practicum information by the last week of January.

Please refer to the [Field Calendar](#) found on the College of Social Work website and refer to email and or written correspondence from the College of Social Work for detailed information regarding important dates.

6.2 Virtual Field Education Practicum Expo

All currently enrolled generalist students (referred to as *rising specialists*) and newly admitted Advanced Standing students should plan to attend the Field Education Practicum Expo held early in spring semester, typically the first week of February. The purpose of the field practicum expo is to orient students to specialist placement agencies.

6.3 Virtual School Social Work Career Path Information Session

For rising specialist students interested in meeting Utah requirements for certification as a school social worker, the school social work career path information session, held early in spring semester, will provide an overview of the two semester course requirements and field practicum requirements. Students will take the required two-sequence courses during their specialist year. Selection for the school social work pathway takes place by formal application process and students must be admitted to the pathway to take the required courses. Formal details are provided via the MSW Canvas Community page annually along with deadlines and expectations.

6.4 Information and Readiness Sessions

The placement of students in social work agencies carries with it a professional responsibility to the profession, students, and partnering agencies. Thus, students must demonstrate an understanding of and commitment to professional behavior and the ethical and professional standards required of social workers. These ethical and professional standards are defined in three places: the [NASW Code of Ethics](#), the “Guidelines for Expected Student Behavior” in the [MSW Program Handbook](#) [See section

8.2], and “Academic and Professional Behavior Standards” Handbook [See section 5]. These meetings will take place in a virtual format to accommodate distance and online students.

6.4.1 Specialist Placement Information Sessions

After the virtual field practicum expo and school social work career path information session, rising specialist students *have the option* to meet in small groups with their assigned University of Utah practicum professor virtually and or in-person to further discuss and explore specialist-year field practicum placements. They must also submit a field practicum application. There are a limited number of second-year field practicum agencies that provide stipends. Agency placements are based primarily on the educational objectives of each student and the need/requirements of our partnering agencies. Scheduling information will be sent to all students after the virtual Field Education Practicum Expo.

6.4.2 Generalist Placement Information and Readiness Sessions:

All incoming generalist students are required to meet with their practicum professor virtually or in-person. This may be in private or group formats. In order to prepare for the meeting with the University of Utah practicum professor, students should reflect on and be prepared to speak about the items below.

- Students’ objectives for field placement
- Students’ knowledge of the NASW Code of Ethics, as well as their ability to explain how their field work is/will be aligned with the NASW Code of Ethics.
- Students’ awareness of the MSW Program Handbook’s “Guidelines for Expected Student Behavior,” as well as students’ ability to articulate how their professional behavior will comply with these guidelines.
- Students should also review the list of available agencies in advance and be prepared to ask questions and learn more about the placement process.
- Scheduling information will be sent to all incoming generalist students in early spring.

6.5 Criminal Charges or Convictions

Criminal charges or convictions may impact and limit placement options. Accordingly, it is important to report any concerns regarding criminal charges or convictions to your University of Utah practicum professor/interviewer early in the process. Criminal history guidelines for licensing through the Department of Occupational and Professional Licensing (DOPL) can be found here: <https://dopl.utah.gov/soc/>

6.6 Independently Arranging a Field Practicum Placement

Students cannot arrange their own field practicum placements unless they are enrolled in the online cohort*; unsanctioned contact with an existing partner field agency

may result in a student being removed from the placement process, which may result in a delay in graduation progression. If you are interested in a placement at a specific agency and the agency is not an existing partner field agency, students should reach out to their University of Utah practicum professor as early as possible to discuss the best approach for facilitating contact. If an agency is already an approved field agency, students must participate in the process outlined in the field placement process. This is to ensure an equitable and fair process for all students.

**It is understood that for our MSW online students, or in other extenuating circumstances, students may need to explore agencies out of state or in underserved areas. Please consult and collaborate with your University of Utah practicum professor in this process. See below for more information.*

6.7 Field Practicum Placement Considerations for MSW Online Program Students

We have a limited number of placements in cities and towns across Utah and in a handful of cities outside of Utah. However, students accepted to the *MSW online program* who live outside of Utah's Wasatch Front, Northern Utah (Logan and Ogden "catchment" areas), or Summit, Utah, Washington or Iron Counties, will be required to submit a **Practicum Identification Form** to support your practicum professor in identifying a suitable practicum in your home community. This form will ask you to identify three different agencies that may be suitable practicum sites.

This form is due when you submit your practicum application (deadlines will be provided to all students at the beginning of the placement process).

From there, your practicum faculty support will communicate with the agencies you have identified.

6.8 Placement Process

There are two processes utilized by agencies with support from the Office of Field Education:

6.8.1 Direct Application Process (Specialist and Advanced Standing placements only)

Several specialist-level field practicum agencies require students to submit an application directly to them. In this scenario, the agency will review applications/resumes, interview, and select the students for placement. Information regarding direct application agencies and deadlines are aggregated for students and will be made available in late January.

6.8.2 Traditional Process-Placements made by Office of Field Education

Referrals for placement made by the Office of Field Education take into consideration students' interests regarding practice areas, information, and the top ten agency preferences provided in the field practicum application, placement availability, and field readiness. Every effort is made to ensure that students have field experiences that are

consistent with students' interests and educational needs/objectives, and every effort is made to place students in one of their top ten agency choices. Reasonable efforts will also be made to place students in the locale of their residence if they reside more than 50 miles from campus, but there are no guarantees.

After field practicum applications are received and information sessions conducted, the Field Education team will refer students to interview with a specific agency. This typically happens in mid-March. ***This referral is not a guarantee of placement; rather, it is a referral to interview to secure the placement.*** Students receive their agency referral via email from the field education office with instructions on how to contact the agency to schedule the interview. Students must contact the agency within five days to request an interview. This interview provides both agency personnel and the student the opportunity to evaluate fit and appropriateness of placement. If both agency personnel and student agree to the placement, the student will be offered a placement with the agency. Students should notify their University of Utah practicum professor as soon as possible if they are not selected for placement in order to pursue another option.

If a student is not accepted by the agency due to non-agency issues this will be considered an unsuccessful placement and the student will need to meet with their practicum professor to re-evaluate placement status. A student experiencing three unsuccessful interviews and/or placements in one academic year will not be referred for additional placement interviews, and the student will be referred to the MSW Program and Field Education directors for potential dismissal from the program.

Please Note: Students are ultimately responsible for 1) submitting the field practicum application to their practicum professor by the established deadline; 2) meeting with their practicum professor if an incoming Generalist student; 3) contacting the agency for an interview after receiving agency referral and presenting professionally in interactions and for the interview; 4) completing the REPLY FORM and AFFILIATION AGREEMENT by the established deadline; and 5) following through with all requirements for placement, which may include, but are not limited to, the following: attending the *Practicum Foundations* course (incoming Generalist students only), checking in with agency field instructor prior to the start of the semester, completing a background check, complying with vaccination requirements, attending agency orientation, and completing onboarding requirements.

It is the responsibility of students to familiarize themselves with these requirements and follow through with them well in advance of the semester start. Students are also required to complete the *Practicum Foundations* course prior to entering practicum.

7. Disruptions in Agency Referrals During or Early in the Placement Process

The Office of Field Education will facilitate up to *three* placement referrals per academic year for the student; however, students are referred for placement interviews one agency at a time. A student experiencing *three* unsuccessful interviews *and or placements* in one academic year will not be referred for additional placement interviews and the student will be referred to the MSW and field directors for potential dismissal from the program. If the disruption is a function of agency-related issues (agency dissolution, departure of field instructor, or public health emergencies) this policy may not apply.

7.1 Field Education Application Process Quick Reference

7.1.1 Rising Specialist and Advanced Standing Students

In late January, all Rising Specialist and Incoming Advanced Standing students will be invited via email to access the information regarding the practicum placement process and placement options. This may be through Canvas or another student management system. Students should review all aggregated information and resources. Questions regarding access should be directed to diane.buck@socwk.utah.edu.

Rising Specialist and Incoming Advanced Standing students should plan to attend the virtual Field Practicum Expo, typically held the first week of February.

After the Field Education Practicum Expo, all Rising Specialist and Incoming Advanced Standing students will receive an email from their University of Utah practicum professor to attend an optional small group information session to learn more about the placement process. These will take place virtually or in-person.

Rising Specialist and Incoming Advanced Standing students will complete the field practicum application and submit via IPT to their practicum professor.

If a student does not submit the field practicum application by the established deadline, they will be considered for placement only after all students have been placed.

If a student does not follow through appropriately and/or in a timely manner with the agency to which they are referred at any point in the process (e.g., during referral OR prior to the start of the semester for onboarding, orientation, etc.), the student will forfeit their placement and be reassessed for field readiness in a future semester.

7.1.2 Incoming Generalist Students

In late February (online cohort) or early March (grounded cohort), all incoming Generalist students will be invited via email to access the information regarding the practicum placement process and placement options. This may be through Canvas or another

student management system. Students should review all aggregated information and resources. Questions regarding access should be directed to diane.buck@socwk.utah.edu.

All Generalist students will also receive an email from a University of Utah practicum professor to attend an optional small group information session to learn more about the placement process.

All incoming Generalist students will complete the field practicum application and submit via IPT to their practicum professor.

If a student does not submit the field practicum application by the established deadline, they will be considered for placement only after all students have been placed.

If a student does not follow through appropriately and/or in a timely manner with the agency to which they are referred at any point in the process (e.g., during referral OR prior to the start of the semester for onboarding, orientation, etc.), the student will forfeit their placement and be reassessed for field readiness at the discretion of the practicum professor. This may occur in a future semester which may delay progress toward graduation.

Students cannot arrange their own placements without consulting with the practicum office and are not permitted to reach out to agencies with whom there is an existing partnership.

8. Field Practicum Stipends

A *limited* number of agencies provide stipends for students. Field practicum placement is based primarily on student educational and professional development. Students who have financial needs are encouraged to apply for financial assistance through the University Financial Aid & Scholarship Office in 105 Student Services Building (801-581-6211).

When an agency does provide stipends, decisions regarding who receives them and how they are disbursed are made exclusively by the agency. The stipend award and method of disbursement will be documented in the Affiliation Commitment between the Practicum Agency/University of Utah College of Social Work/Field Instructor and Student. The student is responsible for all payroll taxes as required by the Internal Revenue Service. However, we do ask that students note the following:

While some agencies may provide financial support, some will not. **Here is why:** Field practicum is a class. As with any class for which you pay tuition, the goal is to provide you with a valuable learning experience. However, unlike other classes, the focus is on *applied* social work practice and integration.

This is often confusing for students because it seems like "work" to go to an agency and provide services. Some students refer to this as "non-socially just", "contrary to social work values", "exploitive" or "free labor." However, field practicum internships are strictly differentiated from "work" and they meet fair labor standards (FLSA) through its educational focus, monitoring, supervision, reporting requirements and structure.

Practicum activities and student roles are separate and distinct from "employment," which is why most agencies will not provide a "stipend:-" For more information regarding federal internship standards please review the following: [U.S. Department of Labor Wage and Hour Division, Internship Programs Under the Fair Labor Standards Act](#). Our social work accrediting body, CSWE, has also released a statement regarding stipends that can be provided upon request.

In summary, it is best to assume that your practicum agency will not offer a stipend and to budget your timing and financial resources accordingly. If you have financial concerns, please reach out to the [University of Utah Office of Financial Aid](#)

9. Professional Liability Insurance

Professional Liability Insurance is provided by the University of Utah. All students will be insured against negligent acts or omissions that may occur in the performance of their assigned duties in field practicum. The university is a governmental entity as that term is defined in the Governmental Immunity Act, U.C.A. 1953, Section 63-30-1, and is bound thereby. All students practicing within an agency setting under the direct supervision of a licensed mental health practitioner are eligible for liability protection. A student's practice in field education is an extension of the supervisor's licensure, and the supervisor is an extension of the University of Utah. In accordance with Section U.C.A. 1953 Section Q (3), if you live outside of Utah, or are referred to an agency outside of Utah, you will be required to have supplemental insurance through the NASW (www.socialworkers.org) or another professional malpractice entity.

9.1 Supplemental Professional Liability Insurance if Physically Located or Placed Remotely in an Agency Outside of Utah

Students who live outside of Utah, or are referred to an agency outside of Utah, will be required to have supplemental insurance through the NASW (www.socialworkers.org) or another professional malpractice entity.

10. Enhancing Safety and Minimizing Risk in Field Practicum

Social work practice contains inherent risks; therefore, agencies, field instructors and students are expected to collaborate to enhance safety and minimize risk in field practicum. Agencies are expected to have written policies to address work situations that may entail risk. Such situations may include the following: home visits, services to clients outside the agency and/or at night or on weekends, services to clients who may become angry or violent, exposure to pathogens or toxic substances, and politically-sensitive services which may result in threats of violence. Field instructors are expected to orient students to their agency's policies and practices regarding risk management and to assign tasks which are consistent with the student's level of competence. Students are expected to adhere to agency risk management policies and to promptly address any concerns about their safety with their field instructor. Students are expected to comply with agency requirements regarding immunizations, drug testing, and BCI (Background Criminal Investigation) checks in a timely manner. The Office of Field Education will also require that students and field instructors complete the **AGENCY OVERVIEW and SAFETY CHECKLIST** in the first three weeks of the practicum experience. This document outlines safety and supervisory expectations as well as criteria and process for placing agencies on HOLD when there are concerns.

11. Field Practicum Schedule

Completing the field practicum is a requirement and should be considered a priority. Exceptions to this requirement will not be extended for outside employment or other competing demands.

Students must arrange their schedule to accommodate placement in field practicum **no less than 12 hours/week**, unless hours are reduced pursuant to a CDA letter. However, even with reduced weekly hours, students are required to fulfill the hours required for advancement and/or graduation and students will be financially responsible for field practicum that extends into future semesters.

In order to maximize teaching and supervisory opportunities, students are expected to be in field practicum during regular agency hours when field instructors and other professional staff are available for coordination, collaboration, and supervision. It is also generally expected that all requirements and clock hours are completed at the assigned practicum agency unless disrupted by extenuating circumstances such as natural disasters, health crises, or national emergencies in which case, the office of Field Education, in collaboration with the College of Social Work and CSWE, can amend this requirement. *It is further understood that students in the evening program may attend field practicum during weekend and/or evening hours. In years when evening students are enrolled in field practicum, they will be given priority for placement in agencies that can accommodate alternative schedules.*

12. Field Practicum Holidays and Breaks

12.1 Planned or Emergent Absences

Students are required to notify field instructors of any planned absence as early as possible and any emergent absence the night prior to or the morning of their scheduled time in field practicum.

12.2 Extended Absences

Any absence extending beyond two weeks (or four scheduled days in practicum) requires the consent of the field instructor as well as the involvement of the student's University of Utah practicum professor. Accordingly, students are required to reach out to their University of Utah practicum professor promptly. If a student is absent or plans to be absent from field for an extended period, there are four options:

1. At the discretion of the field instructor and with involvement from the University of Utah practicum professor, develop a concrete plan for making up the missed hours, and document this plan in a student success plan.
2. Work with the University of Utah practicum professor, student advisor, and the relevant University offices to take a formal leave of absence or withdrawal or late withdrawal from field practicum and complete requirements in a future semester.
3. Earn an "incomplete" grade. This option is available only to students who have completed 80% of the required hours in the semester in which they are enrolled. It should be noted that regardless of circumstances, students will incur the cost of tuition for any class, including field practicum that requires enrollment in a future semester (see policy 16.3 Incompletes.)
4. Earn a failing grade. Note this may result in dismissal from the MSW Program.

12.3 Absence Due to Approved Activity

Students may be given time away from the agency to attend conferences or other educational activities if the activity is relevant to the student's learning experience. This requires advanced approval of the agency field instructor. Other community meetings may also count as regular field practicum hours with approval from the field instructor.

12.4 Holiday Breaks

With the exception of Winter Break (see policy 12.5 below), if a student is scheduled to be in field practicum on a day that the University is closed (such as Fall, Thanksgiving, or Spring Break) or classes have been cancelled, students are not required to attend field practicum and these hours do not count towards the student's total clock hours. It is expected that students will behave in a professionally responsible manner and make appropriate arrangements with their agency for any planned absence well in advance of University holidays/breaks.

Students may choose to attend practicum during University of Utah breaks and may count these hours, but these hours **may not be used to complete the field practicum early**. Rather, these hours may be used to reduce the weekly hours expected during the remainder of the semester, as discussed and agreed to by the field instructor.

12.5 Winter Break

Since Winter Break is especially long, students are expected to confer with their agency field instructor regarding the appropriateness of extended time away from field practicum and clients. This will depend on several factors, including continuity of client care and agency needs. Students are encouraged to initiate this discussion *early in the semester* and to document the agreed upon plan in an email correspondence to their field instructors and University of Utah practicum professor, so all parties are apprised in writing of the disposition.

Hours earned between semesters (such as over the Winter Break) will count toward the following semester and must be documented in the first log, process recording, timesheet, or assignment entry of the semester (please refer to your course syllabus for additional details).

12.6 Ending Field Practicum Early

Students are not permitted to finish their field practicum earlier than the last week of classes for the semester unless due to an extreme extenuating circumstance or agency policy, in which case the student must have approval from their practicum professor. The decision to allow this will be made at the discretion of the practicum professor and associate/lead and/or director of field education.

13. Field Practicum Placements That Require Preapproval

13.1 Non-Standard Field Practicum

Students may request an alternative field practicum format in the following situations:

- The health of the student or student's immediate family member precludes the student from completing practicum under the standard schedule.
- The student has a disability, verified by the University of Utah [Center for Disability & Access](#) and requires an accommodation to the field practicum format. Reasonable prior notice is needed to arrange accommodations, and the student must coordinate through the University Center for Disability & Access (801-581-5020).
- Extenuating circumstances due to public health emergencies and/or natural disasters.

13.2 Placement in an Agency Where Also Employed

In general, students are not placed in agencies in which they are employed. However, students who wish to explore the possibility of using their place of employment as a field practicum site may submit a completed "Same as Employment" application via IPT to their practicum professor.

The Office of Field Education will consider placing student in their current place of employment if specific criteria are met. Requests are made by application and must reflect all of the following to ensure an educational focus for the field practicum that is different from the scope of work and schedule in the student's agency of employment:

- A highly differentiated focus between the Generalist or Specialist field practicum scope of work and your employment responsibilities. Practicum professors and/or the MSW Field Director have discretion in determining if the scope of work described meets this criteria.
- Congruence with the CSWE Generalist and Specialist competencies and behaviors.
- The field practicum setting must be approved (or willing to become approved) by the College of Social Work and must be able to provide the educational experiences required by the College of Social Work and the Council on Social Work Education (CSWE).
- The student's field instructor must be approved (or willing to become approved) by the College of Social Work.
 - Qualified field instructors for MSW students must have a master's degree in social work from a CSWE-accredited school of social work and at least two years post-master's experience. Licensed mental health professionals from related disciplines are eligible as well; these include marriage and family therapy, mental health counseling, psychology or psychiatry. Non-

psychiatrist physicians, nurse practitioners, and physician's assistants with advanced mental health training will also be considered.

- If you are applying as a Specialist or Advanced Standing student, the agency placement must provide an educational experience matching your chosen area of focus.
- Duties and responsibilities must be significantly different from those routinely done in the student's role as an employee with the agency. The volume of responsibilities also must be reduced to reflect the field practicum as a learning experience rather than an ordinary workload.
- The employment supervisor and field instructor may not be the same person.
- A schedule of hours for the field practicum must be clearly defined, separate, and documented from employment work hours.
- Students cannot complete a "same as employment" field practicum for both specialist and generalist years unless there is a demonstrated financial need. These requests will be reviewed by the Field Education director, MSW/Online Program director, and the Office of the Dean.
- Decisions to continue the field practicum if a student is terminated from co-occurring employment will be delegated to the agency. If the recommendation is made to remove the student from the field practicum but no serious concerns are noted by the field practicum supervisor, the student's practicum professor will support the student in securing alternative placement. However, this may delay student progress.

13.3 Consecutive/Concurrent Year Field Practicum Placements

In exceptional circumstances, students may be able to complete a second-year practicum within the same agency system.

With these guidelines in mind, students may request permission to complete two placements within the same agency and complete an application in support of this request in the following circumstances:

- Student is not and has not been employed by the agency. Exceptions to this requirement will be granted in cases of a demonstrated financial need to remain with the agency.
- Student can demonstrate a highly differentiated scope of work from Generalist/BSW to Specialist years in placement.
- Student has not completed field practicum in the agency prior to entering or while in the MSW Program.
- The agency offers experiences that support growth and professional development in required competencies and behaviors.
- The agency can meet all field practicum requirements (macro work, individuals, groups, families).
- The field instructor must be different from the employment supervisor if also

employed at the agency. It is also encouraged that a student be supervised by a different field instructor than the previous year's field instructor.

- The student's field instructor must be approved (or willing to become approved) by the College of Social Work. Qualified field instructors for MSW students must have a master's degree in social work from a CSWE-accredited school of social work and at least two years post-master's experience. Licensed mental health professionals from related disciplines are eligible as well; these include marriage and family therapy, mental health counseling, psychology or psychiatry. Non-psychiatrist physicians, nurse practitioners, and physician's assistants with advanced mental health training will also be considered.
- The scope of work aligns with the student's area of focus.

13.4 Out-of-State Placements for Non-Online Students

Students may qualify for an out-of-state placement. Any student interested in such a placement, should arrange a meeting with their University of Utah practicum professor **at least six (6) months prior to placement and must meet the following criteria:**

- Student must be in good academic standing and not on a *Practicum Success Plan*.
- Students must identify the area of practice interest and region preferred.
- Student must submit one reference letter to their University of Utah practicum professor indicating appropriateness of student for this type of placement.
- The proposed site will only be approved after confirmation of appropriate learning opportunities for the student, appropriate supervision, application, and formal approval of agency and field instructor by the field education office.
- Supplemental liability insurance purchased at student expense will be required

13.5 Summer Field Practicum

Some students can be granted permission to complete a summer block practicum equivalent to two semesters or one semester of field practicum following completions of generalist coursework. For a one-year equivalent placement, specialist students will complete 550 hours over a 12-week block; generalist students, 400 hours.

Students electing a summer block placement should be aware that 1) summer block placement options are very limited; 2) summer block placements may limit the integration of concurrent practicum and course content; 3) due to the consolidated (12- week) summer semester, summer block placements require a full-time commitment; 4) and students cannot take summer electives concurrent with practicum.

13.6 Earning Hours Prior to Semester Start

Students may elect to earn hours toward practicum in the semester preceding official enrollment in field practicum but must comply with the following conditions:

- All students are limited to *counting* 50 hours only. Students can *earn* additional hours, but any hours exceeding the 50 allowable hours cannot be applied to your overall hours (400 for generalists and 550 for specialists).
- Because students are not *officially enrolled* in a training practicum or licensed to practice social work in Utah, students are not permitted to engage in any direct therapeutic practice with clients, including independently facilitating a group, or conducting independent intakes/assessments*
- Students are permitted to attend trainings, and orientations, engage in onboarding activities, shadow and/or observe a licensed clinician (from any mental health discipline), co-facilitate a psychoeducational group without a therapeutic component, engage in macro-level projects including social work research, program development for small and large communities, community-based education initiatives, social media campaigns, policy analysis and advocacy, administrative and leadership tasks, and organizational development. All macro-level projects should be planned in consultation with your agency field instructor.
- The Affiliation Agreement (located in IPT) must be signed prior to initiating any hours in-agency.

**Per field instructor discretion, if you are actively licensed as a SUDC or SSW, you may engage in scopes of work commensurate with your license. If you are unsure of the permitted scope of practice, please refer to the Department of Occupational and Professional Licensing (DOPL) at dopl.utah.gov*

14. Process for Approving Field Agencies and Field Instructors

14.1 Agency Approval Criteria

The selection of a field setting is based on the agency's commitment to shared responsibility for professional graduate education and on the level of staff expertise and experience. To help ensure successful placements and high-quality learning experiences for the student, the College of Social Work carefully assesses all potential placement settings. Specific criteria for selecting graduate field placement agencies include the following:

- The presence of a solid commitment by the administrator and/or staff to provide professional educational learning opportunities in cooperation with the College of Social Work;
- Willingness to designate a field instructor who (a) is a master's level social worker holding a degree from a CSWE-accredited program, and (b) whose schedule will allow for development of student learning opportunities of appropriate depth, breadth, and variety; and (c) attendance at any meetings or

trainings required by the Field Education Program. Allowances may be made for a licensed mental health professional to serve in this capacity as defined in policy 2.5, 13.2, 13.3 and 14.2)

- The agency performs functions within the scope of what is generally recognized as professional social work. If social work is not the principal function of the agency, social work is identified as a sufficient professional service offered by the agency, and the social work practitioners are accepted by the agency as professional staff;
- The willingness of participating personnel to provide students with educationally guided professional social work experiences;
- The availability of staff willing and able to devote time to the additional assignment of a student along with their normal workload;
- The presence of staff expertise in the form of professional education, experience, or other credentials which assures knowledgeable field supervision;
- Willingness to accept students without regard to race, religion, gender, sexual orientation, age, or disability;
- Willingness to allow students to actively participate in the overall agency program and activities, as appropriate to educational needs and practice competencies of the student;
- Willingness to provide access to agency case records, which are pertinent to student activities and learning needs;
- Willingness to provide support services and appropriate facilities for student use, including an adequate and regular place from which the student can operate, clerical services, necessary supplies and equipment, access to telephone, and (if possible) reimbursement for travel expenses incurred during the course of assigned duties.

Agencies meeting the criteria for approval are encouraged to complete and submit an application for field education agency approval [Field Education Agency Application](#).

The Field Education Program will review applying agencies for approval. Agencies will be notified of acceptance status by email.

14.2 Field Instructor Approval Criteria

Social workers wanting to become a field instructor for the College of Social Work must complete an application and be approved by the Field Education Director and Field Education Committee.

Qualified field instructors for MSW students must have a master's degree in social work from a CSWE-accredited school of social work and at least two years post-master's experience. Licensed mental health professionals from related disciplines are eligible as well; these include marriage and family therapy, mental health counseling, psychology or

psychiatry. Non-psychiatrist physicians, nurse practitioners, and physician's assistants with advanced mental health training will also be considered at the discretion of the Office of Field Education.

Field instructors must practice in an approved agency or an agency planning to get approved and any changes in agency affiliation should be updated with the Field Education office.

Field instructors must demonstrate a commitment to the education of MSW students and have adequate time and resources to supervise a student on a consistent basis.

Field instructors must observe the NASW Code of Ethics and operate within its context.

Qualifications for approved MSW field instructors include the following criteria:

- Participate in training sponsored by the Office of Field Education;
- Field instructor certification shall be considered valid for three years, at the end of which the field instructor will be contacted by the Field Education office to update and resubmit the application for review.

A field instructor's certified status may be reviewed at any time by the Field Director if concerns develop regarding the quality of the educational experience, supervisory relationship, or if ethical concerns arise regarding the field instructor's behavior. The Field Education office may suspend certification status at any time.

14.3 Field Instructor Application Process

Eligible individuals within qualifying agencies who have an interest in providing field instruction will complete a [Field Instructor Application](#) and [Letter of Reference Form](#).

15. Field Education Requirements and Procedures

15.1 Field Practicum Goals

The field practicum curriculum is designed to allow students to accomplish generalist and specialist practice skills, knowledge, and values consistent with the mission, goals, and objectives of the social work profession, the NASW Code of Ethics, and the MSW Program through effective performance in field placement. Expectations include demonstration of competencies and ability for independent practice, preparation for intervention with a spectrum of populations, use of current technology for practice, and successful interdisciplinary collaboration.

The educational objectives of the field sequence are consistent with the program's overall education objectives. Students must demonstrate mastery of MSW Program educational objectives. This will be achieved when students earn a 3 (out of 5) or higher on a minimum of 80% of behaviors as reflected in the final evaluations.

The purpose of MSW field practicum is to provide students with an intentional and planned learning experience that provides opportunities to demonstrate advanced practice skills, knowledge, and values consistent with the mission, goals and objectives of the MSW Program and the NASW Code of Ethics. Special expectations include demonstration of leadership skills, ability for ethical and competent independent practice, preparation for intervention with a spectrum of populations, use of current technology for practice, and successful interdisciplinary collaboration. The application of social work knowledge to a practice setting is facilitated by field instruction and the Canvas courses. Field practicum and co-requisite seminars are educationally focused agency-based learning experiences enabling students to demonstrate advanced social work knowledge, skills, and values. Students are expected to progress to higher skill levels as they move through the field practicum sequence culminating in the ability, upon graduation, to engage in advanced social work practice with persons across the life course and in multiple system contexts. The first year in field practicum is referred to as the "generalist year," the second year in practicum is referred to as the "specialist year".

The purpose of graduate field practicum is to provide students with the opportunity to integrate master's-level social work theory, practice, knowledge, skills, and values with an agency-based learning experience. The application of social work knowledge to a practice setting is facilitated by agency-based field instruction provided by an approved field instructor or task supervisor and accompanied by weekly seminars. Field practicum enables students to demonstrate acquisition of the advanced social work knowledge, skills, and values they have acquired as they proceed through the classroom curriculum.

15.1a Field Practicum Hour Requirements

Two- and three-year MSW students complete a minimum of 950* clock hours of field practicum over their generalist and specialist years. Advanced Standing students

complete a minimum of 550* clock hours of field practicum, which is added to the hours earned as a BSW student.

**Hours may be reduced at program and CSWE discretion in event of natural disaster, national emergency or public health emergency and pursuant to agency needs and program discretion.*

15.1b Practicum Foundations Course

The Practicum Foundations course is mandatory for all incoming generalist students. Students must attend this training prior to starting or in the early stages of their field practicum. These trainings will focus on ethics and engagement skills and are delivered either synchronously or a-synchronously.

15.1c Field Practicum Seminar and Counting Hours

Practicum seminar is co-requisite with field practicum and is administered via the Canvas platform. Student competencies are explored in the field sequence and, as such, evaluation of performance leading to mastery of these competencies is essential. Each field practicum seminar is similarly designed as a learning environment where students submit hours and complete assignments reflecting their ongoing learning process and skill development with focus on professional development. Please note that the only hours that can be counted toward fulfillment of required practicum hours are those spent in the agency. Hours spent on practicum seminar related assignments or other course requirements are not considered eligible hours.

15.2 Typical Field Practicum Course Sequence and Timelines

The MSW field program consists of field practicum internships and Canvas courses. Field practicum courses *typically* span four semesters: SW6511/6512 and SW6521/SW6522 for two-year, online and part-time students, and SW 6521/6522 for advanced standing students. There may be exceptions to the four-semester standard such as summer block placement (*see policy 13.5 Summer Field Practicum.*)

15.2a Two-Year MSW Students (in-person and online):

Fall of Generalist Year: SW 6511 (~200 hours)

Spring of Generalist Year: SW 6512 (~200)

Fall of Specialist Year: SW 6521 (~275 hours)

Spring of Specialist Year: SW6522 (~275 hours)

15.2b Advanced Standing MSW Students:

Fall of Specialist Year: SW 6521 (~275 hours)

Spring of Specialist Year: SW 6522 (~275 hours)

15.2c Evening Program Students (field practicum starts 2nd year in program)

Fall of Generalist Year: SW 6511 (~200 hours)
Spring of Generalist Year: SW 6512 (~200 hours)

Fall of Specialist Year: SW 6521 (~275 hours)
Spring of Specialist Year: SW6522 (~275hours)

15.2d School Career Path Students

Students in a school placement interested in pursuing the *school social work career path* will complete 6813/6814 in their generalist year and 6521/6522 in their specialist year, or vice versa, or 6823/6824 as Advanced Standing students.

School Social Work generalist students, semester one: 6813

School Social Work generalist students, semester two: 6814 (prereq: 6813)

-OR-

School Social Work specialist students, semester one: 6823 (prereq: 6521 & 6522 unless advanced standing status)

School Social Work specialist students, semester two: 6824 (prereq: 6823)

15.3 Generalist Field Practicum Procedures

Generalist students fulfill their field practicum requirements in agencies that offer opportunities to complete generalist competencies. All generalist students are required to complete a minimum of 400 clock hours* and all of the social work practice requirements and learning objectives as identified in Generalist field practicum assignments and Student Evaluation Forms in order to earn a grade of C+ or better and begin second-year course work and practicum.

**Minimum required hours may be adjusted due to public health emergencies, natural disasters or other extenuating circumstances and pursuant to agency needs and program discretion. Please stay apprised of changing circumstances affecting this requirement.*

Generalist students usually complete field practicum working an average of 13 hours (and no fewer than 12 hours) per week across two semesters, often concurrent with generalist course work.

In the generalist year, field practicum students are expected to build upon previous social service experiences and broaden their perspectives of the profession. Every effort is made to ensure that the learning objectives and interests of each student are met. **Generalist students receive placement information by email during the spring preceding enrollment.** These materials include information regarding field practicum placement

policies, procedures, and sites. All students will participate in in-person or video interviews with their assigned University of Utah practicum professor. During this interview, the University liaison will review and discuss student interests and educational goals, special considerations, and readiness for field education. All interview information is carefully reviewed and utilized in the field practicum placement process. Students are expected to have basic skills in developing rapport, interviewing, understanding problem solving models and processes, working as a team member, accepting feedback, utilizing supervision, maintaining appropriate documentation, working with a spectrum of populations, demonstrating professional behavior and readiness to comply with the NASW Code of Ethics prior to entry into field practicum.

All students must complete generalist field practicum before beginning specialist coursework and field practicum.

15.4 Specialist Field Practicum Procedures

Specialist students fulfill field practicum requirements in agencies that offer opportunities to complete specialist competencies. Specialist students are required to complete a minimum of 550* clock hours and all of the social work practice requirements and learning objectives as identified in the specialist field practicum assignments and mid-year and end of year in order to receive a passing letter grade of C+ or better.

**Minimum required hours may be adjusted due to public health emergencies, natural disasters or other extenuating circumstances, and pursuant to agency needs and program discretion. Please stay apprised of changing circumstances affecting this requirement.*

Specialist students usually complete field practicum, working an average of 18 hours per week across two semesters (no fewer than 12 hours per week), often concurrent with specialist course work (6521 and 6522, respectively), taught via the Canvas platform. Alternatively, students may choose to complete field practicum in a block placement format during summer semester following second-year course work; however, please be advised that summer block placements are limited.

Students selecting this option may petition the MSW Director to “walk” at graduation but the MSW degree is conferred at the conclusion of the semester in which they successfully complete all field practicum requirements.

Students in specialist field practicum apply advanced roles, models, and theories of social work in an agency ***that supports their specialist area of focus***. Under the supervision of an approved field instructor, students build upon the generalist perspective and increase skills in ethical, culturally aware, multi-modal social work practice.

Each University of Utah practicum professor provides consultation and assistance to field instructors and students to maximize the students’ opportunities to meet all the learning objectives and social work practice requirements.

Specialist-year learning objectives and social work practice requirements are delineated in the specialist field practicum assignments and mid-year and end of year evaluations.

16. Monitoring and Evaluating Student Progress in Field Education

16.1 Field Practicum Evaluations and Course Grade

MSW field practicum is a **graded** course. Letter grades are based on submission and quality of ALL Canvas course assignments by the due date, attendance at mandatory class webinars, and mid- and end-of-year evaluations. Evaluations focus on the nine core competencies, 31 generalist, and 28 specialist behaviors established by the Council on Social Work Education (CSWE) and the University of Utah College of Social Work. For information regarding CSWE competencies and behavior, refer to the CSWE Educational Policy and Accreditation Standards ([EPAS](#)). This is subject to change Fall 2022 based on the final EPAS 2022.

16.1a Monitoring Student Progress in Field Practicum

Monitoring student progress is important for the field instructor, the University of Utah practicum professor, and the student. Each party must take responsibility to ensure that monitoring is an on-going process that takes place from the first day until the last day of field practicum. Evaluation of practice takes many forms. Evaluation provided by the field instructor, task supervisor, and University of Utah practicum professor as well as student self-evaluation via bi-weekly log entries are all integral parts of performance-informed practice.

The student and the field instructor are expected to meet for once weekly supervision to review the learning plan, adjust tasks and assignments, and discuss progress. The University of Utah practicum professor will monitor student progress via bi-weekly journal entries, participation in field webinar, site visits (once per semester), and open communication with the student and field instructor. It is also the student's responsibility to monitor their progress by appropriate use of supervision; ongoing review of the learning plan, competencies and behaviors; and open and timely communication with both field instructor and University of Utah practicum professor. Students must alert their University of Utah practicum professor to concerns when they emerge.

The mid-term progress report and site visit play a significant role in monitoring student progress; facilitating communication between the field instructor, University of Utah practicum professor, and student; identifying any need for mid-course corrections; and assessing the need for a student success plan. At the mid-term point, it is important that all parties discuss the need for any changes and collaborate on a plan to improve learning outcomes. This may be facilitated through open communication or by a written student success plan.

Evaluation is a critical component for learning and overall professional growth. It is especially important during field practicum, since the student is expected to be continuously refining their social work skills and preparing for independent social work practice. Evaluation provides essential information on the student's strengths and

identifies areas where additional growth is needed.

The fundamental purposes of student evaluation in field practicum can be categorized by the following:

1. Evaluation provides the student with an assessment of competency development in the knowledge, skills, values, attitudes, and behaviors necessary for advanced professional practice.
2. Evaluation provides the student with guidance, encouragement, and incentive to continue professional growth.
3. Evaluation provides the program and the student with a written record of performance.
4. Evaluation is an important piece for shaping effective practice in the professional development of students.

In summary, evaluation is ongoing throughout each of the field courses and provides critical analysis of performance by the student, the field instructor, and the University of Utah practicum professor. Formal evaluations of student performance are conducted at the conclusion of the semester, and less formal mid-term progress reports at the midpoint of the semester.

i. Mid-Term Progress Report – Weeks 4-7 of the Semester

The midterm evaluation occurs between weeks 4-7 of the semester, and is completed by the field instructor. This brief checklist, housed in IPT, is intended to assess mid-term progress and alert the Field Education office to any concerns regarding student performance. In addition to assessing the student's progress, this is a good opportunity to adjust assignments, reaffirm or modify the learning plan, make plans for effective use of time remaining in the semester, and, when appropriate, initiate a success plan.

ii. Final Evaluation – End of Each Semester

The final evaluation is issued once per semester and requires feedback from the student and field instructor. The final evaluation is a comprehensive review and documentation of student performance. As with the mid-term evaluation, the field instructor and student are encouraged to make the evaluation process as collaborative as possible, discussing openly student strengths and areas for growth/improvement.

1. The dates of supervision
2. Progress on requirements
3. Hours completed to date, as verified by field instructor
4. General observations/concerns (if any)
5. Students sign and save the form which will automatically “send it” to the field instructor.

The field instructor will then meet with the student to complete the evaluation process,

and report on the following: Supervision dates, progress on requirements, and competencies addressed, and provide performance ratings on a Likert scale of 1 – 5:

- a. a. 5 – Exceptional Performance
- b. b. 4 – Strong Performance
- c. c. 3 – Average Performance
- d. d. 2 -Marginal Performance/Needs Improvement
- e. e. 1—Unsatisfactory/Failing Performance
- f. f. NO-Not Observed (applicable only in first semester of practicum)

Field instructors will also provide feedback regarding performance in a narrative format that will include general observations.

Students are required to attain a cumulative score of “3” on the final evaluations in order to pass field practicum

Field instructors will sign and save the form which will automatically be sent to the University of Utah practicum professor for final review and signing. This must be completed by the deadlines provided.

Input from student and the field instructor is a key element in the social work field practicum evaluation. Periodic assessment and feedback are responsibilities shared by the field instructor, the student, and the University of Utah practicum professor. This process requires team effort; the University of Utah practicum professor utilizes multiple evaluative data points (see above) and is responsible for assigning the grade earned by the student. Students must achieve a 3 or higher in 80% of the competencies to earn credit for the course.

16.1b Incompletes

In accordance with policies of the University of Utah, the mark "I" (incomplete) shall be given and reported for work incomplete because of circumstances beyond the student's control. The grade of "I" should be used only for a student who is passing the course and who needs to complete 20% or less of the course. An "I" should not be used in a way that will permit a student to retake the course without paying tuition. If the student attends the course during a subsequent semester as part of the effort required to complete the course, the student must be registered (either as a regular student or for audit) in the semester in which the student attends.

All incompletes require completion of a Contract for Incomplete Grade (found on the MSW Community Canvas page). University policy states *incompletes must be removed within one year or they are automatically recorded as an “E.”* A student may not graduate until “I” grades are completed and a grade is submitted to the Registrar’s office pursuant to University [Policy 6-100, Section III. G. 2.](#)

When an incomplete grade is assigned, the student, University of Utah practicum

professor, and field practicum director and must collaborate on a plan to complete the required internship hours over an extended break or in a future semester. This plan will be documented in an Incomplete Contract and, in some instances, a Student Success Plan. Failure to initiate or comply with these steps will result in a failing grade which is grounds for dismissal from the MSW Program. It should also be noted that students cannot enroll in or work towards completion hours in a sequenced course until the I is completed (for example, students cannot start 6522 until the I in 6521 is resolved).

16.1c When a Student Is Not Making Satisfactory Progress in Field Practicum

If a University of Utah practicum professor or field instructor notes that a student is falling behind on hours (as indicated in field logs, process recording, or other assignments) or a field instructor or student reports concerns, a meeting with the student is required. If a field instructor notes that a student is falling behind on hours or not meeting expectations regarding professional behavior and competencies, a meeting with the University of Utah practicum professor to discuss ameliorative actions is required.

When this occurs, any or all of the below may occur:

- The field instructor will notify the University of Utah practicum professor as soon as a problem is identified;
- The University of Utah practicum professor may arrange a conference with the field instructor;
- The University of Utah practicum professor may arrange a conference with the student;
- The field instructor, University of Utah practicum professor, and/or student will meet concurrently to discuss and assess the problem and develop a remediation plan;
- The involvement of the field director as requested by the University of Utah practicum professor at any time in the process.

The remediation plan will be documented in a Student Success Plan which is intended to help the student to improve their standard of performance and successfully complete requirements.

If the student does not meet the requirements set forth in the Student Success Plan within the allotted time frame, a failing grade is earned. However, if it is determined by the field director with input from the University of Utah practicum professor and/or field instructor, that there is a legitimate and compelling reason the student is not meeting the learning and professional objectives set forth in the success plan (typically a documented extenuating circumstance such as illness) the field director, practicum professor and field instructor may allow the student extra time to complete the success plan. It is important to note that outside employment or obligations are not considered legitimate and compelling reasons for the student not meeting the learning and professional objectives of field placement.

The decision to allow additional time to complete learning and professional objectives of the success plan is based on the student's work to date, the agency's willingness to commit continued resources, the field instructor's willingness to commit extra time, the student's commitment to the identified plan, and student completion of 80% of the requirements. If it is possible that a student may meet the learning and professional objectives of internship if given extra time, the student will be assigned an "incomplete", and an Incomplete Contract will be developed outlining the agreed upon strategy to complete the hours and learning and professional objectives (see *16.3 Incompletes*).

If a student does not wish to spend the additional time necessary to successfully complete the field requirements, the options are as follows:

1. Formally withdraw from the field practicum, or
2. Earn a failing grade

If the student has not accomplished the objectives of field practicum by the end of the extension documented in the Incomplete contract or within the timeframe allotted pursuant to University policy, the student will earn a failing grade. It should be noted that a student cannot progress to the next sequenced course if they have an Incomplete grade in the proceeding sequenced course, which will result in graduation delays and/or dismissal from the MSW program.

Documentation of student progress can be assessed using the following tools:

- Direct observation of skills
- Client records
- Seminar assignments
- Feedback from other agency staff or other professionals
- Written work
- Use of supervision
- Field instructor assessment of performance
- University of Utah practicum professor's assessment of performance

16.1c Field Practicum Evaluation Requests

Field practicum evaluations are stored electronically by the College of Social Work and are available upon request to third parties if the student has signed a release of information for that purpose. Third parties include, but are not limited to, potential employers, other schools, licensing boards, etc.

These documents may be obtained by e-mailing a request to diane.buck@socwk.utah.edu. Please include name, graduation date, contact information, and name and address of the school or university requesting the evaluation.

16.1d Change of Placement

Changes in field practicum placement after the placement has been initiated are only considered in extreme cases. Factors such as a shift in area of interest or outside employment are not considered appropriate reasons for change of placement.

The following are guidelines regarding the change of students from an agency if the student requests a change of placement:

- The student will discuss issues warranting the proposed change in placement with their University of Utah practicum professor. The practicum professor, student, and field instructor will meet and discuss the issues involved. If the issues can be resolved, the student will remain at the placement.
- Should the student still desire a change in placement after a meeting to attempt resolution of the issues, the University of Utah practicum professor will discuss the issues with the Field Education director in order to clarify the status of the student and agency and discuss the plan moving forward.
- A joint conference with the Field Education director and University of Utah practicum professor, and student will occur. The agency field instructor may or may not be involved in this meeting. Decisions regarding their participation will be at the discretion of the University of Utah practicum professor in collaboration with the field director.
- If the decision is made to remove the student from the assigned placement and the student is considered 'field ready', a suitable alternative agency will be contacted, and arrangements will be made for the student to interview for a possible placement. This shall be accomplished as soon as feasible, so the student will not fall behind in field practicum hours.
- There is no guarantee that an alternate placement will be made in the semester in which a student is seeking the alternative placement. Alternative placements are based on mid-semester agency availability; therefore, there are no guarantees that a student will not fall behind on hours or progress toward graduation.
- Also, per policy, the Office of Field Education will make no more than three referrals for placement per academic year unless the alternative referrals are made for agency-related issues.
- If a change of placement is granted and the student has been actively involved in appropriate field practicum activities, the student may count hours earned at the initial placement toward the total field practicum hours requirement for the semester, and these hours must be documented on the evaluation form.

16.1d Termination from Field Practicum

Given the importance of practicum as a scaffolded learning experience, the University of

Utah expects agencies to engage in the appropriate problem-solving process (see 16.1.c) to ensure due-process for students, and an opportunity for students to improve performance. However, an agency may request an immediate removal of a student from their agency due to what is agreed to be untenable or egregious circumstances by both the practicum professor and the agency field instructor. These include but are not limited to ethical or legal violations, significant behavioral disruption, or staff/client safety concerns. Should an agency request the removal of a student, the College of Social Work will remove the student within a time frame that is agreeable to the agency.

Either prior to or after removing a student from the agency, depending on the urgency of the removal and/or the agency concerns, the University of Utah practicum professor will discuss the situation that led to the agency request with the agency and Field Education director, and formal documentation from the agency will be requested and added to the student file.

If a student is terminated from placement by the agency, they will only be referred to an alternative placement that semester at the discretion of the practicum professor, field director and associate dean. If it is decided that the student does not meet expected readiness standards based on the written Readiness Assessment during the semester in which they were terminated, the student may be able to re-enroll in a future semester after the field director, associate dean and practicum professor have met with the student, assessed their readiness, based on the Readiness Assessment, and concludes that they are ‘field ready.’ Please note that to be considered for re-enrollment, students must be willing to participate in a Readiness Assessment.

During the Readiness Assessment, students will be provided with feedback regarding the issues and conflicts leading to their termination and can access support from their University of Utah practicum professor in addressing the issues and conflicts and meeting identified markers of field readiness. A copy of the Readiness Assessment form is available upon request.

If a student is terminated from field practicum due to severe ethical, behavioral and/or performance issues, and/or other concerns cited by the host agency, the student will receive a NC on the evaluation form. This will result in a NC/E grade for field practicum and possible dismissal from the program. It should also be noted that any hours earned prior to the termination from field practicum will be nullified. If a student is granted permission to re-enroll in a second field practicum but is unable to successfully complete the second field placement, they will be referred for dismissal from the program.

16.1e Removal of a Student from Field Practicum including grounds for removal

A student *may* be removed from field under the following circumstances:

- Request of the student;
- Request of the placement agency;

- Decision of the Office of Field Education, including the recommendation of the University of Utah practicum professor in consultation with the Field Education director.

Students who have been or who are at risk of being removed from field for any reason will be referred to the Field Education director, MSW or Online Program director, and Associate Dean of Academic Affairs. Whether the student is allowed to return to field practicum will depend on the seriousness of the incident(s) precipitating the termination and/or the ability of the student to work through the issues resulting in termination from placement.

Grounds for removal from Field Practicum

Students may be removed from their field practicum placement for any of the following reasons:

1. The student does not receive a passing grade (C+ or better) in field practicum;
2. Failure to comply with mandatory reporting requirements;
3. Dual or inappropriate relationship with agency client(s);
4. An attempt or threat to harm someone else;
5. Repeated tardiness at the agency and/or tardiness without notification;
6. Repeated absences from the agency and/or absence without notification;
7. Repeated change in scheduled field hours without prior approval;
8. Refusal to accept supervisory direction from field instructor, task supervisor, or agency staff;
9. Inappropriate or potentially harmful behavior in connection with clients;
10. Repeated concerns regarding emotional dysregulation, receptiveness to feedback, and redirection and/or teachability;
11. Student's lack of progress in correcting issues or concerns identified by the field instructor or in the Student Success Plan;
12. Failure to meet generally accepted standards of professional conduct, personal integrity, or emotional stability requisite for professional practice;
13. Inappropriate or disruptive behavior toward colleagues, faculty, or staff at the College or in the field practicum placement;
14. Consistent failure to demonstrate effective interpersonal skills necessary for forming professional relationships (for example, inability to demonstrate nonjudgmental attitude or inability to allow client self-determination);
15. Misuse of substances such as alcohol or drugs that can impair judgment and the student's ability to provide services to others;
16. Documented evidence of criminal activity;
17. Failure to abide by the NASW Code of Ethics, agency policies or expectations, the "Guidelines for Expected Student Behavior" in the [MSW Program Handbook](#) (section 8.2), and/or the University of Utah Code of Student Rights and Responsibilities.

If there is an allegation of student misconduct, the CSW Field Education office will initiate

an administrative review.

16.1f Re-Enrollment in Field Practicum After Termination or Removal by Agency or University

As social work professionals and clinical faculty, professionals in the Office of Field Education are uniquely positioned to assess markers of readiness for professional field education. Assessing readiness for field education secondary to a termination or removal from field practicum will be determined after one or more meetings with the practicum professor, director of Field Education, and the student to consider the following factors:

1. Insight into the issues and conflicts that led to the termination;
2. Observed capacity for the student to reflect on and articulate their role in the issues and conflicts that led to the termination; and
3. The proactive steps taken to minimize a potential re-emergence of similar conflicts and issues in a future field practicum.

If a student does not meet these or other markers of readiness after dismissal or removal from field practicum, a decision will be made regarding the student's professional readiness for social work education and enrollment status in the program.

16.1g Academic Appeal/Review Process

In cases where a student receives a C or lower in field practicum, the student review and academic appeal process discussed in [University of Utah Code of Student Rights and Responsibilities](#), Section IV B is applicable to the field practicum component of the MSW curriculum.

16.1h Readmission After Dismissal

The following Readmission After Dismissal policy was approved by the MSW Program Advisory Committee on May 2, 2022:

Students who are dismissed from the MSW Program may not apply for readmission to the program for a minimum of three years. Students who have been dismissed for the following reasons: academic misconduct, behavioral misconduct, or professional misconduct (consistent with Policy 6-400: Code of Student Rights and Responsibilities) are not eligible for reapplication. Additionally, students dismissed for receipt of a failing grade (C or lower) in Field Practicum in any semester during the program are not eligible for readmission.

Students dismissed for any reasons other than those described above may reapply after the three-year period. Prior to applying for readmission, students will need to meet with the cognizant program director to (a) discuss readiness for readmission, (b) discuss how they have addressed the challenges that led to the dismissal, and (c) develop a plan to ensure that a second dismissal does not occur. Readmission

after a dismissal is within the sole discretion of the MSW Program. If a student is readmitted and then dismissed from the program a second time, they may not reapply. Students who are dismissed from a program will have their dismissal information kept on record with the office of academic advising, college dean, and office of the dean of students.

If a student is dismissed from the University, the dismissal is final (see student policy: <https://regulations.utah.edu/academics/6-400.php>).

16.2 Agency “Hold” Policy

The College’s placement of students in agencies, where social work practice occurs, carries with it a serious professional gatekeeping responsibility. It is our intent for the agencies to support, nurture and encourage professional development in a learning environment. It is expected that agencies will uphold and abide by the NASW Code of Ethics:

(<https://www.socialworkers.org/About/Ethics/Code-of-Ethics/Code-of-Ethics-English.aspx>) and the resources provided to agencies through our website: <https://socialwork.utah.edu/practicum/files.php>

The College’s Field Education Office reserves the right to deny, delay, and/or suspend any placement at an agency if professional standards are not met.

Agencies need to apply and be accepted as an approved agency before receiving placements for students. Field Instructors from agencies need to apply and be accepted as approved field instructors before supervising students.

Agencies need to know and understand students are participating in a practicum course in accordance of their MSW program. They are not to be used as employees to fill gaps in agency workflow, they also must comply with state licensing laws and not employee students in a clinical capacity outside of licensure or enrollment in a practicum course.

Agencies will sign an affiliation agreement recognizing the relationship between the students, University and agency to meet the expectations of practicum course. Other contracts requiring signatures between agencies and students need to be pre-approved by the CSW practicum department to ensure consistency with University polices and governances. In compliance with state/national laws, “no complete clauses” will not be acceptable in any agency policy. Please see regulations around internships versus laws.

The CSW will review annual feedback surveys from students to gather data on trends and agency cultural practices.

Procedures:

When agencies environments aren’t meeting expectations and concerns are expressed, the following procedures will take place:

1. Agency Concern form is completed by the practicum professor receiving the complaint

2. Director of MSW Practicum reviews complaint
3. Director of Practicum or Practicum Professor follow up with agency representatives regarding the complaint for feedback and possible resolution
4. Joint meeting of all parties to continue discussion and movement towards resolution
5. Director of Practicum discusses agency concern form for review at monthly team meeting
6. Recommendations are made regarding the concern (if not resolved) and agency concern form filed on the "T" drive.
7. Each semester active concerns will be reviewed for compliance and possible reinstatement of agency status.

17. Roles and Responsibilities of All Parties

17.1 Expectations of University of Utah Practicum professors

The following are expected of the University of Utah practicum professors:

1. Monitor the student's internship experience and assist in evaluating the student's performance. This includes responding to emails and other inquiries in a timely manner.
2. Assist the field instructor and other agency personnel in connecting the school's expectations of students, the social work curriculum, the school's goals for field practicum, and the agency's goals for field practicum.
3. Facilitate the student's learning by providing guidance and serving as a source of information.
4. Meet at least once each semester with the student and the field instructor to discuss the field practicum and evaluate the student's progress.
5. Assess progress toward competencies, requirements and hours, and contact student when hours decrease by more than 20% or other competencies and requirements are not being addressed.
6. Assist the student in integrating social work theory and the specific experiences of the field practicum through feedback on logs and process recording and facilitation of field practicum seminar.
7. Participate in arranging and securing a mid-term and final evaluation of the student's performance in field practicum.
8. Meet with student and field instructor when problems arise, develop a success plan when appropriate, and document all interactions with students and/or field instructors.
9. Contact the field director when problems emerge and/or when a student is in jeopardy of not fulfilling the requirements.
10. Issue a final grade in compliance with University of Utah grading policy.
11. Supporting the daily operations of the Field Education office by assisting in administrative tasks as requested.

17.2 Expectations of the Field Education Director

The following are expected of the Field Education Director:

1. Assume responsibility for the overall management and direction of the Field Education Program.
2. Assign a practicum professor to work conjointly with assigned students and agency-based field instructors.
3. In conjunction with the MSW/Online Program director, provide suggested learning goals to aid the design of learning objectives and the selection of learning activities by the student and field instructor.
4. Provide guidelines, evaluation tools, and protocols for the evaluation of the student.

5. Develop policies related to field education.
6. Develop orientation and training for field instructors and students.
7. Be available to the student, University of Utah practicum professor, and field instructor to facilitate resolution to problems that may arise in placement after an initial meeting has been initiated and facilitated by the University of Utah practicum professor, preferably with student and field instructor.
8. Monitor and evaluate the quality of field practicum experiences provided by the various agencies and organizations utilized as field placements.

17.3 Expectations of the Field Education

The following are expected of the Field Education Associate Program Director/Lead:

1. Work with the Field Education director to assign a University of Utah practicum professor to work conjointly with assigned students and agency-based field instructors.
2. In conjunction with the MSW/Online Program director and Field Education director, provide suggested learning goals to aid the design of learning objectives and the selection of learning activities by the student and field instructor.
3. Work with the Field Education director to provide guidelines, evaluation tools, and protocols for the evaluation of the student.
4. Work with the Field Education director to develop policies related to field education.
5. Work with the Field Education director to develop orientation and training for field instructors and students.
6. Be available to the student, University of Utah practicum professor, and field instructor to facilitate resolution to problems that may arise in placement after an initial meeting has been initiated and facilitated by the University of Utah practicum professor, preferably with student and field instructor.
7. Work with the Field Education director to monitor and evaluate the quality of field practicum experiences provided by the various agencies and organizations utilized as field placements.

17.4 Expectations of the Field Practicum Student

The following are expected of the field practicum student

1. Meet all academic pre-requisite and co-requisite requirements for field education.
2. Read the MSW Field Education Handbook, MSW Program Handbook, University of Utah Student Rights and Responsibilities, NASW Code of Ethics, and agency handbooks and demonstrate understanding and application of the policies contained therein.
3. Meet with the field instructor on a weekly basis, at a minimum.
4. Prepare for all supervisory meetings with the field instructor and alert the field instructor to topics that need to be discussed during the upcoming meeting. Students are expected to take charge of this process.

5. Meet with the field instructor and the University of Utah practicum professor jointly once during each semester.
6. Be in attendance at the agency on days and at times agreed on by the student and field instructor. If unable to attend, notify the agency supervisor prior to or at the start of the work day, and discuss scheduling during extended holiday breaks.
7. Behave in a professional manner: take responsibility to understand and carry out assigned duties, meet all deadlines, be open to feedback, and seek direction when needed.
8. Identify themselves as a social work intern or master's level practicum student in all professional interactions and interventions.
9. Demonstrate awareness and adherence to all relevant professional standards, including, but not limited to the NASW Code of Ethics.
10. Carry out agency-related assignments in a manner consistent with agency policy and procedures.
11. Prepare records and reports in accordance with agency policy, procedures, and format.
12. Identify learning needs and follow the learning plan.
13. Purchase supplemental professional liability insurance if residing out of state. In-state students are covered by the University of Utah Policy.
14. Take responsibility for ensuring personal safety while performing internship duties.
15. Complete and submit all field practicum monitoring and evaluation forms and reports required by the agency and school by the required deadlines.
16. Discuss with the field instructor and/or University of Utah practicum professor any significant areas of disagreement, dissatisfaction, or confusion related to the field practicum experience.
17. Complete all onboarding requirements in a timely manner, including, but not limited to, immunizations, background checks, and orientation.
18. Complete the required number of hours, and master the competencies and behaviors required for the field internship.
19. Complete all course assignments for the practicum seminar.

17.5 Expectations of the Field Instructor and Field Agency (Also see HOLD Policy 16.2)

The following are expected of the field instructor and field agency:

1. Describe and explain what is expected of the student during placement with the agency.
2. Provide the student with a thorough orientation to the agency, its purpose, structure, policies, procedures, and ethical standards.
3. Provide regularly scheduled supervision to the student (at least weekly).
4. Provide the student with suitable work space, equipment, and support staff.
5. Include the student in regular staff meetings and staff training sessions.
6. Assign duties and responsibilities that are appropriate to the student's learning needs and that are increasingly difficult, demanding, and challenging.

7. Assign duties and responsibilities that help the student develop a broad range of social work knowledge and skills.
8. Work with the student in ways that recognize the field practicum first and foremost as a learning experience and must be differentiated from employment tasks if in an employment-based practicum.
9. Monitor the student's work and progress and regularly provide feedback.
10. Evaluate the student's performance in a fair, respectful, rigorous, and thorough manner.
11. Meet at least twice each semester with the student and practicum professor to discuss the field practicum and student's progress.
12. Complete all evaluation forms and reports required by the school, including the Affiliation Agreement, and midterm and final evaluations. Assist the student in understanding the learning plan.
13. Model ethical practice and refrain from any inappropriate behavior toward the student (e.g., verbal abuse, sexual harassment, dual relationships).

18. Social Media Use in Field Practicum

The NASW Code of Ethics that can be compromised through indiscreet use of social media in the following areas:

- **1.3 (e) Informed Consent** (remote or electronic communication)
Social workers who provide services via electronic media should inform recipients of the limitations and risks associated with such services.
- **1.06 (c) Conflicts of Interest**
Social workers should not engage in dual or multiple relationships with clients or former clients in which there is a risk of exploitation or potential harm to the client.
- **1.07 (a) Privacy and Confidentiality**
Social workers should respect clients' right to privacy. Social workers should not solicit private information from clients unless it is essential to providing services or conducting social work evaluation or research.
- **4.03 Private Conduct**
Social workers should not permit their private conduct to interfere with their ability to fulfill their professional responsibility.

Please consider the following points when establishing a social media policy (some of these ideas adapted from Keely Kolmes, PsyD):

- **Friending:** Let clients know that you do not accept friend or contact requests from current or former clients. Friending has the potential to compromise confidentiality and blurs professional/personal boundaries.
- **Fanning:** If you have a "Fan page" on Facebook, let clients know your policy regarding accepting "friend/fan" requests. If you share articles on this page, you can, as an alternative, encourage clients to join via an RSS feed, so it does not appear that a client is endorsing your practice publicly.
- **Following (Twitter):** If you maintain a Twitter feed, encourage clients to create a username that disguises their identity, e.g., @ethicsguy instead of @johnsmith.
- **Location-Based Services (LBS):** Discourage clients from "checking-in" from your office and make it clear that your office is not a "check-in point" for Foursquare, Swarm, Gowalla, etc. Make clients aware of the risks of compromised privacy if intentionally checking-in or if they have a passive LBS-app enabled on their phone.
- **Email:** Let clients know that email correspondence is maintained in the logs of internet service providers. Some email platforms like @hushmail are encrypted, but most can be viewed by system administrators and are therefore not private interactions. Limit email correspondence to administrative functions like scheduling, etc.
- **Facebook Disclaimer Example:** Please Note: In compliance with Utah law

and the ethical standards of my profession, I cannot accept friend requests from or engage in a social media relationship with individuals with whom I have/had a therapeutic relationship. Also, the views expressed on my personal Facebook reflect my views and not the views of my employer.

19. Readiness Skills Required for Professional Social Work Practice (also see Policy 5)

Communication Skills

Demonstrates sufficient written and oral skills to comprehend information and communicate ideas and feelings.

- **Written:** Writes clearly, uses correct grammar and spelling, and applies appropriate writing style, including American Psychological Association (APA) referencing, appropriate source citation, and documentation. Demonstrates sufficient skills in written English to understand content presented in the program and to complete adequately all written assignments, as specified by faculty.
- **Oral:** Communicates effectively and sensitively with other students, faculty, staff, clients, and professionals. Expresses ideas and feelings clearly and demonstrates a willingness and an ability to listen to others. Demonstrates sufficient skills in spoken English to understand content presented in the program, to complete adequately all oral assignments, and to meet the objectives of field placement experiences, as specified by faculty.

Interpersonal Skills

Demonstrates the interpersonal skills needed to relate effectively to other students, faculty, staff, clients, and professionals and to fulfill the ethical obligations of the profession. These include compassion, empathy, altruism, integrity, and demonstration of respect for and consideration of others. Takes appropriate responsibility for actions and considers the impact of these actions on others.

Cognitive Skills

Exhibits sufficient knowledge of social work and clarity of thinking to process information and apply it to appropriate situations in the classroom and field. Demonstrates grounding in relevant social, behavioral and biological science knowledge and research—including knowledge and skills in relationship building, data gathering, assessment, intervention, and evaluation of practice. Exhibits ability to conceptualize and integrate knowledge and apply that knowledge to professional practice.

Physical Skills

Exhibits sufficient motor and sensory abilities to attend and participate in class and field practicum placement, with or without accommodations. (See section on Accommodations for Disabilities for clarification.)

Stress Management

Demonstrates ability to deal with current life stressors through the use of appropriate coping mechanisms. Handles stress effectively by using appropriate self-care and by developing supportive relationships with colleagues, peers, and others.

Emotional and Mental Capacities

Uses sound judgment. Seeks and effectively uses help for health, behavioral health or emotional problems that interfere with scholastic and professional performance. Engages in counseling or seeks support and help if personal problems, psychosocial distress, substance abuse, or mental health difficulties do any of the following:

- Compromise scholastic and other performance,
- Interfere with professional judgment and behavior, or
- Jeopardize the best interests of those to whom the social work student has a professional responsibility (as outlined in the current [Code of Ethics of the National Association of Social Workers](#) and the [MSW Program Handbook, University of Utah Code of Student Rights and Responsibilities](#)).

Professional Commitment

Exhibits a strong commitment to the goals of social work and to the ethical standards of the profession, as specified in the NASW Code of Ethics and the Utah Department of Occupational and Professional Licensing. Demonstrates commitment to the essential values of social work that include respect for the dignity and worth of every individual and his/her right to a just share of society's resources (social justice).

Professional Behavior

Exhibits behaviors that are in compliance with program policies, institutional policies, professional ethical standards, and societal laws in the classroom, field, and community. Appearance, dress, and general demeanor reflect a professional manner. Shows potential for responsible and accountable behavior by knowing and practicing within the scope of social work, respecting others, being punctual and dependable, prioritizing responsibilities, attending class regularly, observing deadlines, completing assignments on time, keeping appointments or making appropriate arrangements, and accepting supervision and criticism in a positive and professional manner.

Works effectively with others, regardless of level of authority. Advocates for him/herself in an appropriate and responsible manner and uses proper channels for conflict resolution. Shows a willingness to receive and accept feedback and supervision in a positive manner, as well as uses such feedback to enhance professional development.

Self-Awareness

Exhibits knowledge of how one's values, attitudes, beliefs, emotions and past experiences affect thinking, behavior and relationships. Accurately assesses one's own strengths,

limitations, and suitability for professional practice. Shows awareness of self and how one is perceived by others. Reflects on one's own limitations as they relate to professional capacities. Is willing to examine and change behavior when it interferes in working with clients and other professionals.

19.1 Ethical Obligations

Current behavior and classroom performance demonstrate adherence to the ethical expectations and obligations of professional practice, noted in the NASW Code of Ethics and Utah Department of Occupational Licensing.

- Adherence to the NASW Code of Ethics and the Code of Ethics and the Utah Department of Occupational and Professional Licensing
- Disclosure of criminal charges and/or convictions occurring prior to admission to the School of Social Work, occurring during the course of study, or occurring prior to admission and becoming known after admission.
- Systematic evaluation of clients and their situations in an unbiased, factual way. Suspension of personal biases during interactions with others.
- Comprehension of another individual's way of life and values. Empathic communication and support of the client as a basis for a productive professional relationship.
- Appreciation of the value of differences. Effective and nonjudgmental relation to and work with others who are different from oneself. Appropriate service to all persons in need of assistance, regardless of the person's age, class, race, ethnicity, religious beliefs, gender, disability, sexual orientation, and/or value system. No imposition of personal, religious, sexual, and/or cultural values on clients.
- Demonstration of respect for the rights of others. Commitment to clients' rights to freedom of choice and self-determination.
- Maintenance of confidentiality as it relates to human service, classroom activities, and field placement.
- Demonstration of honesty and integrity by being truthful about background, experiences, and qualifications; doing one's own work; giving credit for the ideas of others; and providing proper citation of source materials.
- Demonstration of clear, appropriate, and culturally sensitive boundaries. Does not sexually harass others; make verbal or physical threats; become involved in sexual relationships with clients, supervisors, or faculty; abuse others in physical, emotional, verbal, or sexual ways; or participate in dual relationships where conflicts of interest may exist.

19.2 Scholastic Performance

MSW students must earn a C+ or better and cannot fall below a 3.0 in two consecutive semesters. Students who earn below a C+ are encouraged to meet with their advisor to discuss any academic challenges they may be experiencing.

For MSW Program policies related to academic requirements, standing, probation, and dismissal see section 5.11 “Grading” at <https://socialwork.utah.edu/msw/documents/msw-program-handbook-2022.pdf>

20. Utah Social Work Licensing Information

Professional licensing in Social Work is administered by state regulatory boards in consultation with national professional organizations. Licensing laws vary from one state to another, so it is imperative that students consult with the regulatory agency in the state in which they intend to become licensed. Some state licensing standards may require special consideration in planning academic programs and field practicum hours. Students should familiarize themselves with these standards. In Utah, the regulatory agency in charge of Social Work licensing is the Division of Occupational and Professional Licensing ([DOPL](#)), and the testing agency is Association of Social Work Boards ([ASWB](#)).

The following forms of licensure are available in Utah for individuals with an MSW degree:

- In Utah, a Certified Social Worker (CSW) must have an MSW degree from an accredited school of Social Work.
- Licensed Clinical Social Worker (LCSW) must pass the ASWB exam and earn 3000 hours as a W2 employee of a public agency. Please refer to the DOPL website for details.

Social workers in Utah must be licensed as a CSW or LCSW to work in direct practice with individuals, families, and groups.

Utah Division of Occupational and Professional Licensing (DOPL)

Phone Numbers: (801) 530-6628 or (866) 275-3675 (Toll-free in Utah)

Fax Number: (801) 530-6511

