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I. Field Education in the BSW Social Work Professional Program

Introduction to BSW Field Education

Welcome to the exciting and challenging world of social work practice. The practicum learning experience is the centerpiece of social work education where the integration of professional knowledge, skills and values comes to life... The practicum is the key to formation of professional identity, preparation for ethical practice, and development of direct-practice, advocacy and community-building skills... It is in the practicum settings that students experience first-hand the process of engagement, power of bearing witness to human pain and resilience, and possibilities of people coming together to create change. (Garthwait, 2011, xi)

As the above quote indicates, BSW field education is a critical component of the curriculum of a social work educational program. Field experience is when students apply and integrate knowledge and values with the development of skills essential to professional practice in social work.

The Council on Social Work education, when outlining the revised accreditation standards in 2008, emphasized the importance of the field experience to the development of generalist practice social workers.

In social work, the signature pedagogy is field education. The intent of field education is to connect the theoretical and conceptual contribution of the classroom with the practical world of the practice setting. It is a basic precept of social work education that the two interrelated components of curriculum—classroom and field—are of equal importance within the curriculum, and each contributes to the development of the requisite competencies of professional practice. (CSWE, 2008, p. 8)

The BSW Field Education Handbook (often referred to as the field manual), which details the objectives, policies, processes and procedures for implementing and maintaining a high quality BSW field education program, was first developed by the University of Wisconsin - Green Bay, Social Work Professional Program prior to the program’s initial accreditation in 1985. That work was carried out in conjunction with the newly developed BSW field education Advisory committee, now known as the Program Advisory Committee. The faculty and Advisory committee regularly review and revise the entire handbook to make it user friendly to students at the junior and senior levels and useful to field instructors and faculty. Field instructors are highly knowledgeable about the Program. A working relationship, characterized by honesty and respect for varying points of view, exists between faculty and field personnel. Many valuable suggestions have been made by Advisory committee members. Faculty members have made every effort to incorporate these into the material which follows.
BSW Field Education Philosophy

The philosophy that guides the organization of the BSW field education program is consistent with the overall Social Work Professional Program’s philosophy incorporating the Program themes of: utilization of a strengths perspective, teamwork, critical thinking and andragogy/adult learning. Some of the basic principles that flow from this philosophy are as follows:

1. A sound BSW field education program is a mutual endeavor on the part of faculty and field instructors/supervisors. It is a team effort with faculty and field working together in a cooperative, collaborative relationship in the development and implementation of the total program. The different roles played by the educational team: faculty; faculty field liaison; and field instructor/supervisor, must be understood and each must support the other.

2. All aspects of the required University of Wisconsin-Green Bay Social Work curriculum are focused on the outcomes also referred to as “competencies”, of the educational program. The competencies and associated practice behaviors delineate the knowledge, values, and skills that must be achieved by all graduates of the University of Wisconsin-Green Bay Baccalaureate Social Work Professional Program. Thus, curriculum, including field assignments and assessment materials, are derived from the competencies.

3. Curriculum, as defined by the University of Wisconsin-Green Bay Social Work Professional Programs, includes the environment in which students learn how to become competent social workers. The program subscribes to principles of learning drawn from adult learning (andragogy) theorist Malcolm Knowles (1970). Modeling professional behaviors, collegiality and teamwork, treating all persons, including students, with respect, and expecting students to be actively involved in their own learning are all essential to the development and maintenance of a learning environment that supports the achievement of the practice competencies and critical to the development of compassionate, humane social workers.

4. Concepts are taught and built upon sequentially throughout the Social Work Professional Program curriculum and opportunities for application of these concepts are sequenced throughout the upper level courses. Thus, application of knowledge and the development of skills begins at the junior level continuing throughout the student’s tenure in the Program.

The above principles are reflected throughout the material in this manual.
Mission Statement of the BSW Professional Program

Mission

Grounded in the values of the Social Work Profession, the BSW Program at the University of Wisconsin–Green Bay provides a regionally responsive, competency-based, interdisciplinary program which prepares Baccalaureate-level social workers to promote social justice in a multicultural and evolving world by engaging in strengths-based generalist practice that enhances human and community well-being.

Our BSW Program has 5 goals that reflect this mission, they are:

- **Social Justice**: Advance the primary mission of the social work profession by addressing the needs and empowerment of vulnerable and oppressed populations. [C4: Diversity; C5: Social Justice; C3: Critical Thinking; C10: Change Process; C2: Standards & Ethics]

- **Curriculum**: Offer and continually strengthen an effective generalist practice curriculum that reflects the core values and purpose of the profession. [C4: Diversity; C5: Social Justice; C6: Research; C8: Social Policy]

- **Community Partnerships**: Support the community by analyzing and responding to the dynamic needs of this region. [C3: Critical Thinking; C9: Service Delivery; C6: Research; C4: Diversity; C5: Social Justice; C8: Policy]

- **Interdisciplinarity**: Promote critical thinking by [providing an interdisciplinary major] requiring students to gain and use evidence based knowledge from multiple perspectives to inform social work practice. [C3: Critical Thinking; C7: Interdisciplinary Knowledge; C6: Research; C10: Change Process]

- **Professional Development**: Foster students’ abilities to assess and strengthen their ongoing professional growth, development, and competence. [C1: Professional Self; C2: Standards & Ethics]
Faculty Information:

The reader is referred to the UWGB Social Work Home Page (http://www.uwgb.edu/socwork) for professional biographical information about our faculty and instructors.

Role of the BSW Field Coordinator

The field coordinator is a faculty person who has administrative responsibility for overall planning and coordination of the field program. The specific responsibilities of the field coordinator are:

1. To work with the Program Advisory Committee on an ongoing basis.
2. To develop field sites that meet the criteria for placement of students at the Senior level, and are in compliance with CSWE Accreditation Standards.
3. To implement the program’s approved policies and procedures for the placement of students.
4. To supervise the development and implementation of appropriate criteria for the assessment of student performance within the field experience and the field practicum.
5. To develop and implement criteria for the periodic adjustment of field practicum sites in relation to the program’s stated objectives.
6. To organize and implement ongoing orientation and other educational opportunities for the program’s field instructors and supervisors.
7. To develop and revise written agreements and forms used in the field experience and the field practicum.
8. To develop and update the BSW field education handbook.

The Practice Competencies

The purposes of social work provide the basis for the educational outcomes of the BSW Program of the University of Wisconsin-Green Bay, Social Work Professional Programs. These outcomes are described as competencies expected to be mastered by all BSW graduates as articulated the Council on Social Work Education. The competencies and practice behaviors reflect the particular educational emphasis of the BSW Program of the University of Wisconsin-Green Bay mission. The practice competencies that the student are expected to acquire as he/she progresses through the curriculum are listed as an appendix to this document.
II. Senior Level Field Practicum

Course Objectives and Field Activities

All social work majors are enrolled in the senior level field practicum for both fall and spring semesters concurrently with methods and skills courses each semester that reinforce the learning of the field practicum. Full curriculum for the senior year can be found in the BSW student Handbook.

Students will spend 16 hours per week in an assigned human service agency for 15 weeks each semester. [Note: University policy excludes field during winter break.] Students are in the classroom on Tuesdays and Thursdays and are expected to maintain a consistent schedule in field on alternate days. During the senior field experience, students are expected to develop increasing levels of skill leading toward independent generalist social work practice. Upon the completion of the field experience, students must meet a basic level of competence with all practice behaviors. (The field evaluation tool specifically outlines parameters required to pass field.)

Participants and Responsibilities

Student

The senior-level student in the BSW program is sequentially enrolled in SOC WORK-402 and SOC WORK-403, Field Practicums I and II. The student is responsible for initiating and maintaining open communication with the field instructor and faculty concerning educational objectives and priorities. Specifically, the responsibilities of the student are:

1. To work in a field agency 16 hours each week for 15 weeks each semester for a total of 480 hours over the senior year.

2. To keep the field agency informed of his/her schedules, interests, and background material relevant to the learning experience.

3. To be accountable for having knowledge of the field practicum objectives and act in a professional manner in accordance with the expectations of the agency, the University of Wisconsin-Green Bay Social Work Professional Programs, and the Social Work Code of Ethics.

4. To become knowledgeable of the agency programs and services and agree to comply with all regulations and policies which directly apply to the scope of the training experience.

5. To develop and implement a learning agreement with the field instructor and Methods course instructor in which the learning outcomes for each competency area are described.
6. To document the learning activities in a daily or weekly log indicating how the learning experiences apply to the competencies of the program. The logs are submitted to the field instructor and Methods instructor.

7. To assume responsibility for amending the contractual agreement with the field instructor and Methods instructor when necessary.

8. To initiate discussion with the field instructor and/or Methods instructor when the learning agreement is not being met.

9. To participate with the field instructor and Methods instructor in an assessment of performance and development at the end of each semester.

Field Instructor

The field instructor for the agency will hold a CSWE-accredited baccalaureate or master’s social work degree. In situations where a field instructor does not hold a CSWE-accredited BSW or MSW degree, the Program will assume responsibility for reinforcing a social work perspective, and, when indicated, a faculty member, referred to as the Faculty Field Instructor, will provide the necessary oversight to the student.

The field instructor or team of field instructors will be responsible for the following:

1. To enter into an agreement with the University of Wisconsin-Green Bay Social Work Professional Program as the designated agency representative who will provide students in placement with educationally guided experiences appropriate to the baccalaureate level of social work education.

2. To assume responsibility for implementation of learning activities with agency staff.

3. To develop a learning agreement/contract with the student and the faculty field liaison.

4. To complete a Program-sponsored orientation session(s) embedded in the annual Welcome to the New Year workshop and the annual Program-sponsored workshop scheduled during the year or documentation of attendance at an equivalent workshop.

5. To provide the instruction and opportunities necessary for the student to complete the contracted learning activities and assignments within the field agency.

6. To assure that at least one hour per week of face-to-face supervision is provided to each student by the field instructor.

7. To assure that the student has access to the necessary resources appropriate to the level of social work practice expected of the student.
8. To adhere to the affirmative action guidelines in the selection of student(s) for placement (please see page 25).

9. To monitor the progress of the student and provide ongoing feedback to the student and faculty field liaison.

10. To notify the faculty field liaison of problematic student performance in the field that requires faculty attention and action.

11. To assess the performance and development of the student placed in the agency with the student and the faculty field liaison at midterm and the end of each semester.

Faculty Field Liaison

The faculty field liaison is a MSW credentialed professional, licensed or certified by the State of Wisconsin as a social worker, with at least two years of practice experience post-graduation. This faculty person is designated to instruct the two courses, SOC WORK-411 and SOC WORK-420, Social Work Methods II and III. The responsibilities of the faculty field liaison are:

1. To assist the field instructor and the student with the development of the student’s field practicum learning agreement/contract.

2. To plan and consult with the student and field instructor about relevant placement experiences and student performance.

3. To provide opportunities for the student to connect theories of practice with applications experienced in the field placement.

4. To keep informed about the student’s field experiences through the student’s participation in class discussions, review of student’s submitted logs, individual meetings with the student, and through meetings with the field instructor.

5. To have contact with the field instructor a minimum of four times per semester to assure the student’s progress toward the educational objectives of the field practicum. The first contact will be to establish the learning objectives of the field practicum; the second contact (usually by phone), will be at midterm; the third contact will be at the end of the semester for the final assessment. A fourth contact occurs at the Welcome to the New Year workshop held every Fall and the Spring Workshop held in March or April.

6. To review the progress of the student toward the contracted learning objectives in the field practicum and to determine the final grade for the field practicum based upon the evaluation by the field instructor, the student and the faculty.
7. To assess problematic or unsatisfactory performance in the practicum and take appropriate action.

8. To meet with the field instructor at the end of the academic year to provide mutual feedback.

9. To help identify when a student is not getting adequate experiences in the field and work with the student and field instructor to rectify the inadequacy. If sufficient changes cannot be made to accommodate the student’s learning objectives, then consult with other faculty to facilitate transfer to a new placement.

Approval and Selection of Agencies

Procedures for Approval of Field Agencies in the Practicum

1. An agency expresses interest in becoming a field agency for the program or the field coordinator inquires about interest. The field coordinator may request completion of an application by the agency and field supervisor (to insure meets CSWE requirements) and an agency description.

2. The Field Coordinator and agency representative discuss placement policies and procedures as well as identify a prospective field instructor.

3. The Program Advisory Committee will act in the capacity of consultants regarding the establishment of field placement sites as needed, keeping in mind the criteria for selection of field agencies and field instructors as well as utilizing the Committee’s knowledge of experience in the practice community.

4. The Field Coordinator presents proposed new field agencies to the BSW full faculty so the faculty may provide input into strengths or challenges related to the placement that would impact student development and learning.

5. Approval of the field agency will be based upon the selection criteria for agencies and field instructors as described below.

6. Should a field site lack the CSWE-required BSW or MSW credentialed staff, the Field Coordinator will present this information to the full faculty for discussion and review. With the approval of the full faculty, and the agreement of a faculty member to assume field liaison responsibilities, the site may be approved.

Criteria for the Selection of Field Agencies:

The presence of a qualified field instructor or a team of field instructors who are willing to provide students with educationally guided experiences appropriate to baccalaureate levels of social work practice.
The provision of services and training compatible with the program’s objectives.

The acceptance, enthusiasm and support for BSW level of practice by the agency.

The recognition of affirmative action guidelines in the selection of students for placement (please see page 24).

The promotion of: the four purposes of the Social Work Profession
   (1) enhancing people’s capacities to resolve problems, cope, and function effectively,
   (2) linking clients with needed resources,
   (3) improving the social service delivery network,
   (4) promoting social justice through the development of social policy
      (DuBois and Miley, 2011, p.9);

And promotion of the six core values of social work: service, social justice, dignity and worth of the person, importance of human relationships, integrity, competence (NASW, r2008)

**Criteria for the Selection and Retention of Field Instructors:**

The acceptance of the responsibilities for field instruction previously stated in the section titled: Participants and Responsibilities - Field Instructor (p. 9).

Have an MSW or BSW earned from a CSWE accredited program or a related degree from another discipline with demonstrated understanding of and commitment to professional social work practice.

In situations where the field instructor does not hold an MSW or a BSW degree, a qualified faculty member will sign on as field instructor to provide needed support. Exceptions to this general standard (CSWE BSW/MSW) for agency field educators is considered on a case by case basis and can include issues related to: a placement site that should be used because of strong student need; practitioners who are highly experienced and qualified and who understand the philosophical underpinnings of social work and the role(s) it has among the helping professions; and, agencies in remote, rural regions or highly diverse practice settings. In all such cases, placements are supported or complemented by increased faculty supervision or community practitioner oversight on a regular basis.

Have an interest, enthusiasm, and belief in BSW professional practice.

Have supervisory and/or teaching skills and experience.

Have a practice orientation which is compatible with the mission and educational objectives of the University of Wisconsin-Green Bay, Social Work Professional Programs.

Have knowledge of and demonstrated support of the profession’s Code of Ethics.
Placement of Senior Students in the Practicum

Placement Procedures for the Practicum

Arrangements for field practicum will occur during the second semester of the junior year. The placement site must be carefully selected for each student, matching the educational needs of the student with the type of learning experience which an agency and field instructor can provide. Placement procedures for all students include the following steps:

1. Early in the spring semester of the junior year, the Field Coordinator will discuss with students the field practicum procedures and opportunities.

2. Students will complete the Senior Field Practicum I and II - Student Application form and return to the Field Coordinator.

3. The Field Coordinator, after reviewing the students’ completed applications, makes preliminary, suggested field placement assignments and consults with the Methods I instructor and the Profession of Social Work instructor to review the applications and assign prospective senior field placements as needed.

4. The Field Coordinator discusses prospective field placements with students. If receptive, the Field Coordinator makes a referral to the placement agency.

5. The Field Coordinator forwards a copy of the Senior Field Practicum I and II - Student Application form to the prospective field instructor of the selected site for review prior to the interview with the student. In addition, the Field Coordinator will acquaint the prospective field instructor with the educational needs of the student and the reason(s) for the selection of the field sites.

6. Once the placement agency has accepted the referral, students are instructed to contact the prospective field instructor to schedule a placement interview.

7. If at the end of the placement interview both field instructor and student are in agreement that this placement is a good mutual fit, the field instructor and student sign the Student Placement /Agent Liability Coverage Confirmation form brought by the student to the interview indicating agreement to the placement. The signed form is then returned to the Field Coordinator by the student. If either the student or prospective field instructor has questions or concerns regarding the appropriateness of the placement, the field instructor and/or the student are to immediately contact the Field Coordinator.

8. The Field Coordinator will send a copy of the signed Student Placement/Agency Liability Coverage Confirmation form to the field instructor for his/her records as well as the Caregiver Background Check (for those agencies which require this).

9. The Student Placement/Agency Liability Coverage Confirmation form is housed with the student file in the Social Work Professional Program.
10. Students will begin their field placement the first week of class each Fall and Spring semester.

Learning Contract/Self-Assessment for the Practicum:

The Field Learning Contract is a learning agreement/understanding among the field instructor, the field liaison, and the student developed at the beginning of each semester which generally describes the practicum assignments and delineates the learning activities the student will complete during the placement. The learning activities for students are derived from assessment materials indicating the learning needs of the student and from the ten practice competencies which are a statement of the program’s educational outcomes. In addition to guiding the field experiences, the practice competencies direct the entire curriculum. Please see the learning contract/self-assessment document for specific criteria necessary to receive a passing grade in Field Practicum I and II.

Following is the process used by the student in the development of his/her Learning Contract:

1. The student, at the beginning of the fall semester, thoughtfully examines each of the practice competencies to determine a personal learning objective for each competency. In doing this, the student draws upon his/her past field and classroom experience, prior evaluations, and feedback from faculty to choose the most appropriate outcome objective to enhance his/her learning experience for the semester.

2. At the contracting meeting in beginning of the fall semester with the student, field instructor and field liaison in attendance, the Learning Contract is reviewed to be certain that the activities by the student can be accomplished in the setting and in the time frame indicated. This, along with the Evaluation of Student Mastery of the Competencies form (which describes the behaviors by which the student’s progress is measured in the field), then becomes both a guide and a measurement for the student’s activities in the field placement.

3. The student then writes up the learning contract for each of the ten competencies that address his/her personal learning need.

4. At the end of each semester the student engages in a self-assessment based upon the Learning Contract and the Evaluation form.
Assessment of Student Performance in the Practicum

Introduction:

The awarding of BSW degrees from a CSWE accredited Social Work Program signifies to the student, clients, practice community and employing agencies that the graduate has achieved the profession’s specified level of acquired knowledge and skill, and thus is “competent” to practice as an entry-level professional social worker who understands and subscribes to the profession’s Code of Ethics.

The responsibility for the assertion of competence rests ultimately with the Social Work Professional Program and the University of Wisconsin – Green Bay. However, the issue is complex for the professional program as it is clearly understood that practice competence is not fully realized in the classroom but rather in the field placement.

The demonstration of competence must include the student’s capacity to apply knowledge to specific practice situations toward the goal of realizing the profession’s major purposes in relation to people. The application of knowledge becomes skill. Finally, assertion of competence must also include the assessment of the student’s capability to practice within the ethics of the profession.

The assessment of student competence is carried out in partnership with the student and field instructor. The understanding and agreement of the faculty, field instructors, and students as to assessment purposes, philosophy, criteria, structure and format are critical to the process and an outcome that, insofar as possible, does assure that graduates of the University of Wisconsin-Green Bay Social Work Professional Program are competent to practice as entry-level professional social workers. Thus, communication among faculty, field instructors and students is essential to identify issues raised in the field and classroom.

The following material serves as a guide for the assessment of student performance in the University of Wisconsin-Green Bay, Social Work Professional Programs.

Assessment Purposes

Overall, the purposes of the assessment process are:

1. To evaluate student progress in the development of the competency level deemed essential for entry into professional practice at the baccalaureate level.

2. To help students develop skills in assessing their own ongoing professional growth and functioning.

3. To provide direction for continued professional development.

4. To provide an ongoing mechanism for the evaluation, modification, and change in curriculum, as may be indicated.
Principles/Philosophy of the Assessment Process

1. The assessment of the student’s professional growth and development of competence begins at the time the student enters the program and continues until he/she leaves the program. The assessment culminates in the senior practicum experience when students are expected to demonstrate the skills, knowledge, and values reflected in the ten practice competencies.

2. Criteria, developed from the competencies to be achieved, are utilized in the assessment of the student’s professional growth and performance. These criteria are clearly specified to and known by the students.

3. The criteria for the assessment of student performance are developed from the program’s stated outcomes, the ten competencies. These criteria are utilized in structuring the student learning experiences in the practicum. The learning experiences provide opportunity for students to demonstrate evidence for the achievement of competence. There are a range and variety of experiences that can be used to achieve and demonstrate competence. Thus, while the outcomes (competencies) are fixed and non-negotiable, the learning experiences are varied and reflect the service activities of the agency, the student’s special needs and interests, etc. However, there cannot be learning objectives or experiences that are in conflict with the baccalaureate practice competencies.

4. The competencies and subsequent assessment criteria derived from them are used by faculty, field instructors and students to assess the performance of each student. They assure that all students have achieved a comparable basic level of performance before leaving the program.

5. Faculty are responsible for delineating assessment criteria and for the development of the assessment tool. The advice and critique of the Program Advisory Committee and field instructors are reflected in this material. Faculty are responsible for seeing that the learning contract developed by the field instructor, student and faculty field liaison provides the learning experiences which are both appropriate for BSW practice and relevant to the achievement of the practice competence required.

6. The formal assessment conference is intended to be a constructive, non-intimidating experience for everyone - especially the student - just as the whole of the supervising experience should be. This does not mean that problems and/or problematic situations are to be avoided and not dealt with. It does mean, however, that such situations are called to the attention of the student long before the final conference.

7. The ultimate objective of the University of Wisconsin-Green Bay Social Work Professional Program is to prepare a competent professional practitioner at the BSW entry level. Students are expected to develop the skills necessary to assume responsibility for their own professional behaviors and decisions. This means that students are active participants in the assessment process, including assuming
responsibility for preparing and presenting an assessment of their own professional achievements.

Assessment Process and Format:

1. Field Instructor Supervision - Ongoing Assessment:

   Field instructors will meet with students regularly to review student progress, discuss future plans, attend to any areas needing special attention, etc. The student will be encouraged by both faculty and field instructor to raise any issues or concerns he/she may have in the practicum experience directly with the field instructor. Field instructors are encouraged to provide regular, ongoing feedback to students regarding their performance in the practicum so that there are no surprises at the semester’s end. Faculty should be contacted immediately if issues arise which cannot be resolved by the field instructor and the student.

2. Mid-Semester Progress Assessment:

   At the middle of each semester, the faculty field liaison will initiate an email or phone call to receive a report on the student’s progress in field. Questions related to professionalism, fit with the agency, and progress toward the competencies are the focus of the mid-term progress assessment.

3. End-of-Semester Formal Assessment:

   At the conclusion of the semester, there will be a formal assessment of the student’s progress/achievements during the semester. The assessment tool, Evaluation of Student Progress in the Competencies, will be used in carrying out the final assessment; a pass/fail grade will be assigned by the faculty. To graduate, the student is required to achieve a minimum mastery of each competency as measured with the practice behaviors in the assessment tool during the Spring evaluation. The formal assessment process follows:

   a. The assessment conference will be arranged by the faculty field liaison at a time convenient for the liaison, field instructor and student. Typically, the conference will be held at the practicum site.

   b. Prior to the conference, the student, field instructor, and the faculty field liaison prepare for the conference. The student prepares a self-assessment relating to his or her evaluation of the learning contract and completes the Evaluation of Student Progress in the Competencies material. In the self-assessment materials, the student lists his/her outcome objectives, experiences he/she has had which relate to those objectives, and how that student measured and evaluated achievement of each objective. For the Evaluation of Student Progress in the Competencies, the student utilizes the rating scale provided. The student provides copies of these materials to the field instructor and faculty field liaison at least three working
days prior to the conference. The field instructor prepares for the conference by completing and sharing with the student his or her ratings in relationship to the document pertaining to Evaluation of Student Progress in the Competencies. The field instructor also may make notes on these materials to share during the conference.

c. At the evaluation conference, the student presents his/her completed self-assessment and evaluation material. It is expected that both field instructor and the faculty field liaison will contribute to the student’s assessment as well. The purpose of this session is to engage in an honest, open discussion with the student about his/her progress, strengths and areas needing additional development. The roles of the faculty and field instructor, functioning as a collegial team, are to facilitate and assist the student with the integration of content and its application to practice. Finally, in assuming major responsibility for the assessment, students have the opportunity to further develop skills through carefully and objectively assessing their own development and performance.

d. Learning activities for the second semester should emerge during the formal assessment conference held at the conclusion of the first semester. At the conclusion of the second semester, and prior to leaving the program, students should have a very clear sense of their professional strengths and skills, as well as limitations and areas which will need further attention as they enter professional practice.

e. The material utilized for this conference becomes part of the permanent record of the student’s performance in the practicum.
Termination of Field Placement

Senior level field placements are established to continue from September through May. The continuity of the learning experience is important to insure students are able to successfully achieve mastery in the program competencies in field. Students in the field practicum are concurrently enrolled in skills and methods courses so termination of the field placement impacts enrollment within these courses as well.

Student Request for Termination:

When, during the course of the semester, a student wishes to terminate his/her enrollment in the field practicum, notification should immediately be made to the Field Instructor, the Faculty Field Liaison, and the BSW Field Coordinator. The situation can then be discussed and if appropriate, a careful termination can be accomplished. Reasons for such decisions might be related to issues of health, impairment, finances, or other life events. Prior to re-enrolling in the field practicum, the student must demonstrate, to the satisfaction of faculty, that the reasons for discontinuance have been adequately addressed and that the student is ready to carry out professional responsibilities at the bachelor’s level. Because field placements are structured with course work, termination of a field placement has implications for program continuance.

Faculty or Field Agency Request for Termination:

Performance concerns or personal problems that interfere with performance expectations may be grounds for dismissal from the Program. Examples include, but are not limited to:

- Non-achievement or less than satisfactory achievement of BSW student contract goals.
- Behaviors that violate the NASW Code of Ethics in the field agency (see examples below).
- Personality characteristics that conflict with the professional values and professional role sets of the social work profession and the State of Wisconsin MPSW 20 Code of Conduct (see examples below).
- Disruptive behaviors constituting a threat to the safety of the student or others.
- A pattern of unwillingness to participate in the learning activities of the Program.
- Inability to communicate effectively, orally or in written form, such that performance is seriously handicapped.

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

1. Challenges in addressing unresolved life issues which persistently interfere with judgment and performance.
2. The decision to not seek professional help or take other steps necessary to protect clients and others when these challenges interfere with professional judgment and performance.
3. Preoccupation with self and self-centered behavior to the extent that it is inappropriate for a professional role.
4. Challenges in one’s ability to develop professional relationships so that effective communication to engage others using effective relational and communication skills cannot be accomplished.
5. Challenges in placing appropriate boundaries between personal and professional relationships with clients, agency co-workers, or others who are part of the professional practice environment.
6. Practicing beyond the scope of one’s competence.
7. Repeatedly misrepresenting competence or credentials to clients, agencies, others, etc.
8. Repeatedly and or seriously violating obligations concerning use of privileged information and violation of confidentiality.

**Process for Placement Termination when requested by Field Agency**

A. When concerns about impaired performance arise in the field agency, the concerns must be documented with regular updates regarding progress, or lack thereof. Documentation will include: statements addressing the student’s skill assets and deficits; a description of the concerning behaviors or attitudes; the instructional or supervisory interventions provided; the student’s responses to those interventions; and the student’s current level of functioning, and progress made in addressing the concern. This documentation and related recommendations should be submitted to the student’s faculty field liaison.

B. The faculty field liaison informs the faculty advisor and the BSW Program Field Coordinator. When indicated, a meeting will be scheduled with the student, Faculty Field Liaison, and the Agency Field Instructor to allow all parties to present information and perspectives related to the challenge or concern and to present recommendations for possible solutions.

C. The BSW Field Coordinator, in connection with the Program Chair, will make a ruling regarding termination or continuance in the field practicum. A ruling for continuance may require extending the length of placement, repeating the placement, or transferring to another agency. The final decision regarding termination of a field placement is the responsibility of the Social Work Program. A decision for termination of placement will require the student to withdraw from other classes in the Program. Documentation of the meeting and the outcome decision will be completed by the Field Coordinator or Program Chair and placed in the student’s file.

The Program Chair or Field Coordinator will be responsible for informing the student about the procedures for appeal. The grievance and appeal policy pertaining to academic appeal, which applies to BSW students, may be found in the Dean of Students section pertaining to University Policies and Procedure use using the following link:

[http://www.uwgb.edu/deanofstudents/policies_procedures/students/complaints_grievances.html](http://www.uwgb.edu/deanofstudents/policies_procedures/students/complaints_grievances.html)

**Change of Field Practicum Site**

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

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

1. The student and the Field Instructor/Supervisor will meet together to fully discuss the situation. If a satisfactory resolution is not accomplished, contact should be made with the Faculty Field Liaison.

2. The Faculty Field Liaison will meet with the student and the Field Instructor/Supervisor to clearly define the challenges and consider possible solutions. The BSW Field Coordinator should be notified and included in the problem-solving process. When the student initiates the change request, s/he must provide a compelling rationale for the change, including a statement of learning goals, why the goals cannot be accomplished at the current placement agency, and a plan outlining how the practicum experience can be successfully completed through a placement change.

3. When an agreement is made that a change of placement is in the best learning interest of the student and/or the agency, the Field Coordinator will seek an alternative placement for the student.

4. The student will be responsible for following the required application-for-field-placement procedures in a time frame established by the Field Coordinator.

5. The student will be responsible for following the NASW Code of Ethics and agency policies governing termination of employment and termination of client services.

**NOTE:** The student may be required to repeat some or all of the field hours to gain knowledge of the new placement agency and establish that learning requirements have been accomplished.
III. Policy Issues

Term of Placement:

Field practicum requirements are to be met during the Fall and Spring semesters only. Students may contract extra hours for independent study credits during the summer semester, if they desire. University policy excludes field hours during the winter break for liability coverage so if continued involvement over the break occurs, this is completed as an agency volunteer and hours do not accumulate toward those required for the practicum. University liability coverage is available only during the registered course semesters (see Liability below).

Criminal and Caregiver Background Checks:

When students are admitted to the BSW program, a criminal background check is completed through the Department of Criminal Justice Crime Information Bureau as well as the caregiver background check. Students are informed within the Student Handbook of the policy and implications of this law. The results of the process are reviewed by the field coordinator to ascertain any challenges for future field placements of students.

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

Field agencies are provided the opportunity to receive a copy of the background check information when accepting a student; some agencies choose to complete their own. Students are encouraged to discuss any legal history with the prospective field supervisor at the time of field referral. It is the responsibility of the student to inform the program and field agency of any pending or new charges once the background check has been completed.

Liability

The State of Wisconsin provides liability protection for its officers and employees when acting within the scope of their employment, and extends this protection to the agents of the State where there is a written agreement on file. The Student Placement and Liability Coverage Confirmation Form serves as the means to which student status is confirmed as an agent of the State of Wisconsin with its liability protection. This form is signed upon completion of the placement interview and retained in the student file. This protection extends to time periods when students are actively enrolled in the field practicum courses.

Anyone driving while on State business must be an authorized driver. This policy applies to students who use their personal vehicles within the scope of their field activities. Students must complete a Vehicle Use Agreement and meet Department of Administration (DOA) mandated minimum driving standards to be authorized under this policy. Coverage is provided on the authorized state driver/employee pursuant to Wis. Statute, s. 895.46, which provides liability protection for the negligent acts of its state officers, employees and agents while acting within the scope of their employment. Liability coverage is limited to $250,000 per claimant per
negligent authorized state driver, as stated in s. 893.82, Wis. Stats. Claims that result from a state employee’s actions in states other than Wisconsin are not subject to this statutory limit. Students are required to complete application for driver authorization prior to senior field. The field coordinator initiates this process through e-mail in August of each year. Agencies requesting verification of driver authorization should contact the field coordinator.

Paid Practicums:

It is the policy of the Social Work Professional Programs and the Council on Social Work Education not to grant academic credit for reimbursed work experience as the practicum is designed with the focus on learning. While it is expected that the agency will benefit in a variety of ways from the presence of students, the practicum requires a commitment of supervisory and instruction time from the agency as well as the provision of opportunities for varied, planned learning experiences. Since the student’s learning takes priority over the agency’s staffing needs, the practicum student should never be viewed as supplementing or filling paid positions within the agency. Furthermore, it is the policy of the Program to attempt to place students in settings that will provide new learning opportunities. Thus, it is unusual to place a student in an agency where he/she has work as a staff member or as a volunteer. In a very few, limited situations, students may work and have an internship in the same agency. A number of procedures must be implemented in this situation which includes supervision separated between the employment supervisor and field supervision. The field and paid employment are to be kept separate and accounted for individually. Activities must be new learning and not part of the employment job description; the student’s educational experiences will be different than the paid job duties. Paid employment cannot be counted as internship hours. Additionally, Faculty also must support such an arrangement and decisions are made based upon the learning needs of the student and the student’s assessed strengths as well as areas identified as warranting further growth.

Workshop and Orientation for Field Instructors/Supervisors:

All field instructors are expected to attend workshop(s) each academic year. The Welcome to the New Year workshop for senior-level field instructors is held at the beginning of the Fall semester. Typically, in the spring of each year a workshop is offered which focuses on the enhancement of the BSW field education component of the curriculum and all senior-level field instructors are invited to attend this spring workshop. In addition, new field instructors will be provided with an orientation to the University of Wisconsin-Green Bay, Social Work Professional Programs in the field practicum. Attendance at these meetings is critical in maintaining the continuity of an educationally directed field program. Lack of attendance at orientations and workshops may affect continuance as a field training site.

Student Participation in Activities Which May Interfere with Class or Field Work:

From time to time, conferences, workshops, or other professional development activities will occur which will be beneficial for students to attend. These activities may at times interfere with class meetings or with assigned field time. Field instructors will be notified in advance when the activity is approved by the faculty. Likewise, the field instructor is expected to notify the faculty
field liaison when an agency activity will interfere with a student’s class attendance. Excused activities which are unrelated to the student’s learning agreement cannot be counted toward the hours required for field placement. Arrangements to make up field time will be negotiated between the field instructor and the student.

**University Non-Discrimination and Sexual Harassment Policy:**

All BSW field education agencies, field instructors and supervisors need to be knowledgeable of, and act in accordance with, the University’s policies concerning discrimination. These policies are applicable to students in both on-campus and at Social Work Professional Program’s approved BSW field education sites. The policy asserts:

The University of Wisconsin-Green Bay is committed to equal opportunity to all individuals regardless of race, color, religion, sex, sexual orientation, gender and/or gender identity expression, marital or parental status, national origin, ethnicity, citizenship status, veteran or military status, age, disability and any other legally protected basis. Harassment or discrimination based upon protected status is illegal and will not be tolerated. This policy is applicable to employment practices and all programs within the University. This commitment to all employment and educational practices includes, but is not limited to recruitment and hiring, training, compensation, benefits, promotions, transfers, terminations, layoffs, access to facilities as well as social and recreational programs.

The University's compliance with this statement is the responsibility of all administrators and others whose duties are related to decisions regarding employees. Further, the University of Wisconsin-Green Bay is committed to fully participate in the implementation of all applicable federal and state laws, executive orders, rules, regulations and policies.

[In the case of persons convicted of felonies, the program does have the legal right to information about the nature of the felony prior to admission to the major. Such information will be shared with the agency if the nature of the offense is relevant to the field assignment.]

**Grievance Procedures in the Field:**

Elsewhere in this handbook, it is clearly indicated that normal problems which may arise in the field placement shall first be drawn to the attention of the field instructor by the student and/or faculty field liaison. However, should the student believe him or herself to be the victim of unfair treatment on the part of the agency staff or field instructor, including violations of University non-discrimination/sexual harassment policy, the student shall be free to confer directly with the faculty field liaison. The faculty field liaison shall then inform the student of his/her rights and complaint-filing procedures and require the student to submit the grievance in writing to the faculty field liaison within five days. Following receipt of the written complaint, the faculty member will bring the matter to the Program Chair, who shall in turn report it to the appropriate agency administrator or supervisor.
Depending upon the circumstances and the seriousness of the allegations, the Chair may take a number of actions as may be deemed appropriate. Such actions may include: discussing the issues directly with the agency administrator; the field instructor or field instructor’s supervisor; removing the student from the placement; consulting with the Program Advisory Committee; and other actions that appear necessary and appropriate.

**Assessment (Evaluation) of Field Placement Sites and Field Instructors:**

The assessment of field placements has a two-fold purpose:

1. To enhance student learning opportunities, the professional growth of field instructors, and the BSW field education program.
2. To ensure a good match between the student, the field instructor, and field site.

This assessment process involves the input of students, field instructors and faculty. However, the ultimate responsibility to assess field placements and to provide and solicit feedback lies with the faculty.

Feedback to field instructors is expected to be provided by faculty and students on an ongoing basis. In addition, students are provided with an opportunity to communicate to their field instructors the strengths and concerns related to the learning environment during student assessment conferences. During the second semester of the senior practicum, students fill out evaluations of the placement and experience using the *Evaluation of the Senior Field Practicum*. Any areas of concern arising from a student evaluation are typically communicated to field personnel by the Field Coordinator for attention and possible action.

Annually, an evaluation questionnaire, referred to as the *Field Placement Assessment* survey, is completed by the field instructor and reviewed by faculty. This survey elicits the field instructor’s comments, opinions, and suggestions regarding the field experience. Results will be placed in the Social Work Professional Program’s evaluation/assessment file. Any areas of concern are discussed by both parties resulting in appropriate follow up measures.

**Discontinuance of a Field Learning Site and/or Field Personnel:**

Any field placement site may be discontinued if contractual agreements have not been met. Discontinuance of a field instructor may occur if the field instructor no longer meets the criteria for selection and retention of field instructors. This must not be confused with the interrupted use of a learning site and/or field instructor.

In the event of the need for discontinuance, the field instructor will be notified by faculty prior to the assignment of students for the coming year. Depending on the reasons for the discontinuance, the Social Work Professional Program Chair may also take a number of actions as may be deemed appropriate. Such actions may include: discussing the issues directly with the agency administrator or the field instructor’s supervisor; removing the student from the field placement during the academic year; or other actions that appear necessary and appropriate.
Use of Personal Cell Phones in Field

Occasionally, Social Work students are asked to use their personal cell phones to conduct business for their field agency. This request may range from minimal use to significant use including, but not limited to, the following examples:

- Communications with other agencies or professionals
- Scheduling appointments with clients
- Providing clients with their personal cell phone number

It is the opinion of the Social Work Professional Programs that students should not, or be expected to, use their personal cell phones for agency business as it places them at risk for boundary crossings. Furthermore, there is no certainty of protection of privacy/confidentiality for the client or the student when personal cell phones are used for client contact. However, the Program also supports students' rights to make their own decisions regarding personal cell phone use providing they follow agency policies and professional codes of conduct.

Agencies are asked to apprise the Social Work field coordinators if personal cell phone use is a requirement for placement in their agency so students are aware of the expectation before placements are finalized.

If students are asked to use their personal cell phones for agency business, the agency should provide options that protect the students’ personal boundaries. This could include: blocked numbers, apps that allow for transfer numbers, generic voice mail messages, and reimbursement for data overages incurred as a result of agency use.
Appendix A:  

**BSW Competencies with Behavioral Indicators**

**Competency 1—Professional Self.** Identify as a professional social worker and conduct oneself accordingly.

*Social workers serve as representatives of the profession, its mission, and its core values. They know the profession’s history. Social workers commit themselves to the profession’s enhancement and to their own professional conduct and growth. Social workers:*

1. Utilize personal reflection to evaluate strengths and learning needs related to professional development.
2. Attend to professional roles and boundaries.
3. Demonstrate professional demeanor in behavior, appearance, and communication.
4. Use supervision and consultation appropriately.
5. Contribute to and effectively participate in team discussions and activities.

**Competency 2—Standards and Ethics.** Apply social work ethical principles to guide professional practice.

*Social workers have an obligation to conduct themselves ethically and to engage in ethical decision making. Social workers are knowledgeable about the value base of the profession, its ethical standards, and relevant law. Social workers:*

1. Recognize and manage personal values in a way that allows professional values to guide practice.
2. Apply standards of the National Association of Social Workers Code of Ethics and other applicable standards and regulations to inform professional behaviors.
3. Recognize and accept ambiguity in resolving ethical conflicts.
4. Employ strategies of ethical reasoning to inform decision-making.

**Competency 3—Critical Thinking.** Apply critical thinking to inform and communicate professional judgments.

*Social workers are knowledgeable about the principles of logic, scientific inquiry, and reasoned discernment. They use critical thinking augmented by creativity and curiosity. Critical thinking also requires the synthesis and communication of relevant information. Social workers:*

1. Critique and integrate multiple sources of knowledge, including research and practice wisdom.
2. Analyze models of assessment, prevention, intervention, and evaluation.
3. Demonstrate effective oral communication skills in professional settings.
4. Demonstrate effective written communication skills in professional settings.

**Competency 4—Diversity.** Engage diversity and difference in practice.

*Social workers understand how diversity characterizes and shapes the human experience and is critical to the formation of identity. The dimensions of diversity are understood as the intersectionality of multiple factors including age, class, color, culture, disability, ethnicity, gender, gender identity and expression, geographic location, immigration status, political ideology, race, religion, sex, and sexual orientation. Social workers appreciate that, as a
consequence of difference, a person’s life experiences may include oppression, poverty, marginalization, and alienation as well as privilege, power, and acclaim. Social workers:

4.1 Gain sufficient self-awareness to manage personal biases and values in working with diverse groups.
4.2 Recognize and communicate understanding of the importance of difference in shaping life experiences.
4.3 Articulate a view of self as learner and engage those with whom they work as cultural informants.


Each person, regardless of position in society, has basic human rights, such as freedom, safety, privacy, an adequate standard of living, health care, and education. Social workers recognize the global interconnections of oppression and are knowledgeable about theories of justice and strategies to promote human and civil rights. Social work incorporates social justice practices in organizations, institutions, and society to ensure that these basic human rights are distributed equitably and without prejudice. Social workers:

5.1 Understand the forms and mechanisms of privilege, oppression, and discrimination and their impacts on clients/systems.
5.2 Engage in practices that advance human rights and social and economic justice.

Competency 6—Research. Engage in research-informed practice and practice-informed research.

Social workers use practice experience to inform research, employ evidence-based interventions, evaluate their own practice, and use research findings to improve practice, policy, and social service delivery. Social workers comprehend quantitative and qualitative research and understand scientific and ethical approaches to building knowledge. Social workers:

6.1 Use practice experience to inform research.
6.2 Use research evidence to inform practice.

Competency 7—Interdisciplinary Knowledge. Apply knowledge of human behavior and the social environment.

Social workers are knowledgeable about human behavior across the life course; the range of social systems in which people live with an emphasis on rural and small communities; and the ways social systems promote or deter people in maintaining or achieving health and well-being. Social workers apply theories and knowledge from the liberal arts to understand biological, social, cultural, psychological, and spiritual development. Social workers:

7.1 Utilize conceptual frameworks to guide the processes of assessment, intervention, and evaluation.
7.2 Critique and apply knowledge to understand person and environment.

Competency 8—Social Policy. Engage in policy practice to advance social and economic well-being and to deliver effective social work services.

Social work practitioners understand that policy affects service delivery, and they actively engage in policy practice. Social workers know the history and current structures of social policies and services; the role of policy in service delivery; and the role of practice in policy development. Social workers:

8.1 Analyze social policies and identify opportunities for advancing social well-being.
8.2 Collaborate with colleagues and clients for effective policy action.

Competency 9—Service Delivery. Respond to contexts that shape practice. Social workers are informed, resourceful, and proactive in responding to evolving organizational, community, and societal contexts at all levels of practice. Social workers recognize that the context of practice is dynamic, and use knowledge and skill to respond proactively. Social workers:

9.1 Assess the strengths and limitations of social service delivery systems in the context of social and environmental change.
9.2 Identify opportunities to improve the quality of social services.
9.3 Advocate for client access to services.
9.4 Articulate the role of local, state, and federal policies in shaping service delivery systems.

Competency 10(a)–(d)—Change Process. Engage, assess, intervene, and evaluate with individuals, families, groups, organizations, and communities. Professional practice involves the dynamic and interactive processes of engagement, assessment, intervention, and evaluation at multiple levels. Social workers have the knowledge and skills to practice with individuals, families, groups, organizations, and communities. Practice knowledge includes identifying, analyzing, and implementing evidence-based interventions designed to achieve client goals; using research and technological advances; evaluating program outcomes and practice effectiveness; developing, analyzing, advocating, and providing leadership for policies and services; and promoting social and economic justice. Social Workers:

(a)—Engagement.
10.1 Use professional and interpersonal skills to develop partnerships based on empowerment and collaboration.
10.2 Strengthen alliances by conveying acceptance, empathy, and respect.
10.3 Develop a mutually agreed-on focus of work and desired outcomes.

(b)—Assessment
10.4 Collect, organize, and interpret client data.
10.5 Assess client strengths and limitations.
10.6 Develop mutually agreed-on intervention goals and objectives.
10.7 Select appropriate intervention strategies.

(c)—Intervention
10.8 Initiate actions to achieve agreed-on goals and objectives.
10.9 Enhance client capacities through prevention and intervention efforts.
10.10 Negotiate, mediate, and advocate for clients.

(d)—Evaluation/Termination
10.11 Critically analyze, monitor, and evaluate interventions.
10.12 Facilitate transitions and endings.
References


