

# BSW Field Education Course Manual

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The Field Coordinators are responsible for managing, innovating and sustaining the development and delivery of field education resources, policies, procedures, objectives and new initiatives, and implementing all aspects of the BSW and MSW campus and distance field courses. For the purpose of this manual, Field Coordinators refers to Jennifer Fougere and Kim Gariepy.

The School of Social Work gratefully acknowledges the significant contribution made by Agency Field Instructors and placement agencies to social work education.



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<b>BSW Field Education Course Manual.....</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>Field Personnel.....</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>Introduction.....</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>BSW Field Practicum &amp; Seminar Course Objectives .....</b>	<b>5</b>
BSW Field Course Objectives.....	5
Course Components .....	6
Student Wellness Days .....	6
Requests for Accommodation .....	7
<b>Part 1: Placement.....</b>	<b>8</b>
<b>Section 1: .....</b>	<b>8</b>
<b>Role and Responsibilities of Field Coordination .....</b>	<b>8</b>
<b>Section 2: Pre-placement Processes and Requirements .....</b>	<b>9</b>
Student Submission .....	9
Field Proposal.....	9
Important Dates for Submissions and Placement Schedules.....	10
Preparing for the Interview .....	11
Submission and Placement Dates .....	11
<b>Section 3: Difference in Processes Between Distance and Campus Student Placement</b>	
<b>Coordination .....</b>	<b>11</b>
Campus.....	13
Distance .....	14
<b>Section 4: Block versus Part Time Placements .....</b>	<b>14</b>
<b>Part 2: Roles &amp; Responsibilities .....</b>	<b>15</b>
<b>Section 1: Agency Instructor .....</b>	<b>15</b>
Selection Criteria for Agency Instructors.....	15
Training for Agency Instructors.....	15
Social Work Continuing Education Course Credit .....	16
Agency Instructor Responsibilities.....	16
<b>Section 2: Student Responsibilities.....</b>	<b>17</b>
<b>Section 3: Faculty Advisor Responsibilities.....</b>	<b>18</b>
<b>Part 3: Pedagogical Approach.....</b>	<b>19</b>
<b>to BSW Field Education .....</b>	<b>19</b>
<b>Section 1: Developing Self Awareness and Critical Analysis .....</b>	<b>19</b>
<b>Section 2: Integrative Seminars .....</b>	<b>19</b>
<b>Section 3: Developing the Learning Contract .....</b>	<b>20</b>
Learning Goals and Objectives .....	20
Approval for Workshops to be Counted as Field Hours.....	22

<b>Section 4: Framework for Practice Paper .....</b>	<b>22</b>
<b>Section 5: Evaluation Criteria .....</b>	<b>23</b>
Keeping a Journal.....	25
<b>Section 6: Evaluation and Grading .....</b>	<b>25</b>
Mid Term Evaluation.....	26
Final Evaluation .....	26
<b>Part 4: Process for Difficult Situations .....</b>	<b>27</b>
Risk of Failure .....	29
<b>Part 5: Exceptional Placements.....</b>	<b>30</b>
<b>Section 1: Place of Employment Placements .....</b>	<b>30</b>
Submission for Place of Employment Placement .....	31
Process for Review.....	31
<b>Section 2: International Placements.....</b>	<b>31</b>
<b>Part 6: Confidentiality .....</b>	<b>33</b>
<b>Part 7: Insurance .....</b>	<b>33</b>
<b>Appendices.....</b>	<b>34</b>

## Introduction

The practicum component of social work education has consistently been reported to be one of the most rewarding experiences of the degree as it provides opportunity to practice in the field the concepts taught in the rest of the curricula. Students interface with agency staff and clients in a real setting and develop direct practice skills to prepare for career opportunities after graduation. This manual provides an overview of Field Education, explains how placements are coordinated for BOTH distance and campus students.

The Canadian Association of Social Work Educators (CASWE) Standards for Accreditation states that: “Field Education is considered a central component of social work education because the integration of knowledge, values and skills in the context of field education is a critical and distinctive aspect of social work education. The purpose of Field Education is to connect the theoretical/conceptual contributions of the academic setting with the practice setting...” (CASWE Standards of Accreditation, August, 2014, p.13).

Students are required to complete 700 hours total for their Field course. 665 hours are in a practice setting and demonstrates an entry level ability to carry out the broad objectives of the field course. 35 hours will be completed in the concurrent seminars with discussion topics relating to placement. 665 hours + 35 hours totaling 700.

The School of Social Work, Faculty of Health and Dalhousie University policies govern the Field Practicum & Seminar Course. Please see the School of Social Work Student Orientation Manuals (campus or distance) for a comprehensive listing. The following policies are provided in the Appendices:

Appendix I. [Faculty of Health Guidelines for the Student Use of Social Media and Electronic Communication in Practice Education Settings](#)

Appendix II. [Faculty of Health policy on Suspension or Dismissal from a Program on the Grounds of Professional Unsuitability](#)

Appendix III. [Dalhousie University Sexualized Violence Policy](#)

Appendix IV. [Faculty of Health policy on Grade Reassessment and Appeals of Practice/Fieldwork Experiences](#)

## BSW Field Practicum & Seminar Course Objectives

The Dalhousie School of Social Work has access to a wide variety of settings for placements across the region including Government, Community Based Agencies and Health Authorities. We also maintain a database of organizations across Canada that offered placements in past years to assist distance students if they cannot locate a placement independently in their home community. Both distance and campus students must accomplish the following objectives:

### BSW Field Course Objectives

Students will have successfully completed the field course (placement and seminar) when they have:

- Acquired the knowledge and skills required to effectively practice critical social work with individuals, groups and/or communities by providing a range of services from the simple to the complex
- Practiced in a manner that respects diversity and demonstrates an understanding of the significance of social identity
- Demonstrated the ability to critically analyze the relationships between societal structures, justice and equity, and the role of the placement agency in service delivery
- Demonstrated an understanding of the location of the placement agency in the service delivery system and the appropriate use of community resources
- Developed a personal framework for social work practice which integrates theory, knowledge, values and skills and demonstrates appropriate critical social work interventions
- Developed the ability to effectively and ethically practice social work, especially in situations of conflict, showing good judgment, an openness to learn, an understanding of privilege, critically reflective self-awareness and the appropriate use of the self in practice
- Demonstrated a commitment to practicing social work consistent with a critical understanding of the ethical and professional values and standards contained in the Social Workers Code of Ethics and Standards of Practice

Field Education at the SSW is based on adult education principles which build on existing knowledge and experience. There is an opportunity, under agency and faculty supervision, to develop a broad range of practice knowledge and skills in fields such as individual, group and community work, social policy and research, sufficient to meet the requirements of an entry level professional position. The student becomes proficient in situations requiring intervention, and can recognize the need for influencing policy, program or process within the placement agency in order to carry out professional responsibilities.

The Field Practicum and Seminar course is taken at or near the end of a student's program. The prerequisites for field are SLWK 2112, 2113, 2222, 2334, 2335 and 2550. The co-requisites for this course are SLWK 3032, 3033, 4008, and 4009. For information on registration, please consult the Dalhousie University Calendar. Please direct questions related to pre and corequisites to BSW Student Services Administrator Josyl Headley at (902-494-2703) or [bsw.advising@dal.ca](mailto:bsw.advising@dal.ca)

## Course Components

The BSW Field Practicum and Seminar course consists of:

- Students must successfully complete a minimum of 665 hours in the agency-based placement. 35 hours are counted for attendance and participation in the concurrent seminar, for the total of 700 hours. This is a requirement under our accreditation standards for all BSW programs in Canada. We sometimes get questions from students about counting lunch as part of the hours accumulated. Students need to follow the agency policies around schedules and daily work habits. For example, if employees are paid for a 7-hour day then that is what students claim for placement. However, the most important thing to remember is to always make the effort do well and act professionally. That is what will lead to success.
- Participation in an integrative seminar facilitated by the Faculty Advisor. Students have an opportunity to discuss their placement experiences with other students and to further demonstrate the integration of theory and practice. All students must participate in the seminars. In order to access the seminar, students must be registered in the field course.
- A paper on the student's Social Work Framework for Practice
- Presentation of the Framework for Practice at a meeting in the placement agency attended by the Agency Instructor, other interested agency personnel, and the Faculty Advisor (campus advisors attend and distance advisors can be invited via teleconference). The outline for the presentation must be discussed with the Faculty Advisor prior to the presentation and it is expected that campus based Faculty Advisors attend the presentation.

## Student Wellness Days

"It is important to integrate a wellness model throughout (social work) training as a preventative strategy for burnout, as a means to practice self-care both personally and professionally (Myers & Sweeney, 2005, as noted in Long & Clark, 2017, p. 10).

Self-care is very important to sustain oneself in the Social Work profession and practicing this while being a student is a great skill to develop. It involves making appropriate choices and effective communication with supervisors/managers and peers.

The Field Team has observed over recent years that more BSW students completing their 700-hour placements are challenged by the multiple roles, often necessarily taken, to maintain their lives and manage their mental health. Many students are working while studying and this impacts success and general wellness. We have received approval from the BSW committee to begin awarding 3 wellness days over the course of placement for BSW students only.

All BSW students completing a placement are entitled to 3 wellness days which can be taken any time during the course. These 3 days can be used for any reason and go beyond being absent for a specific illness. The time can be used for appointments, outside personal events, mental health or other personal needs.

To access these days students must inform their Agency Instructor/Supervisor in advance that they intend to use some of this time. Students are not required to explain the reason for using the time but must have it approved. Students must ensure the operations of the site are not negatively impacted by their absence so preplanning and prior approval is necessary.

**Please Note:**

Coordinating placements involves many people and documents, whether locally or at a distance so it is CRITICAL that deadlines are respected and communication is effective and timely. Students are required to check Dal email and voice mail and respond to messages promptly and professionally.

## Requests for Accommodation

Advisors in the Student Accessibility Centre serve as Dalhousie's experts on student accessibility and accommodation ([www.dal.ca/access](http://www.dal.ca/access)). Their work is governed by Dalhousie's [Student Accommodation Policy](#) to support student learning. They work with students who request accommodation as a result of:

- (dis)Ability
- religious obligation
- an experienced barrier related to any other characteristic protected under Canadian Human Rights legislation

Whenever possible the request for accommodation should be made in advance of the start of the Field Practicum & Seminar course so that a decision can be made as to what is needed and available and proper supports can be accessed. We strongly advise any student who might need accommodation and/or advising to contact the Student Accessibility Centre as early as possible.

The [School of Social Work's Accommodation Policy](#) designates an Accommodations Officer each year. The Accommodations Officer is available to discuss student accommodation needs and also consults with the Field Coordinators regarding student accommodation needs.

# Part 1: Placement

## Section 1: Role and Responsibilities of Field Coordination

### **Field Personnel**

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The SSW supports an approach that, wherever possible, students' interest and preferences for particular agencies or sites are explored. The Coordinator negotiates field placements by matching student learning needs with placement settings and learning opportunities.

In every case (both distance and campus) students are contacted to discuss their submission and request any revisions. Potential Agency Instructors are contacted to verify interest and availability, confirm what learning opportunities are available and ensure supervision standards can be met. It is expected that distance students will identify up to three options in their home community, to assist efforts of the School.

Specifically, the Field Coordinators:

1. Review the student field submissions after the due date and notifies students of any revisions needed.
2. Evaluate individual learning needs in the context of prior student experiences, education and the overall objectives of the Field Practicum and Seminar Course.
3. Approve all placements (Place of Employment proposals are reviewed and approved by both Field Coordinator and BSW Chair).
4. Ensure all Agency Instructors meet the criteria established by the School and the CASWE Standards of Accreditation by providing orientation and training (please see Agency Instructor role section for details and access to online modules)
5. Ensure confirmation materials (that include contact information for each person) are received by the Student, Agency Instructor and Faculty Advisor.
6. Negotiate Affiliation Agreements with sites locally and across Canada for distance delivery as every site must have these contracts in place in order to host a student.

7. Liaise with various Affiliate Placement Offices of Health Authorities to communicate site specific requirements to students and ensures compliance with these policies and procedures.
8. Resolve complex issues that occur in a placement that cannot be addressed through typical methods and consults with the Agency Instructor, Faculty Advisor and others as deemed appropriate in these matters.

## Section 2: Pre-placement Processes and Requirements

### Student Submission

The following four documents must be received on the appropriate due date (please see [Submission and Placement Dates](#) for due dates for each category of field placement):

1. Student Information Form – a fillable PDF available at <https://www.dal.ca/faculty/health/socialwork/programs/field-education/bsw-field-placements.html>
2. Current resume in – MS Word or PDF
3. Field proposal (see description below) – in MS Word or PDF
4. SIGNED Student Acknowledgement Agreement – available to download at <https://www.dal.ca/faculty/health/socialwork/programs/field-education/bsw-field-placements.html>
5. Degree Auditing Report [https://www.dal.ca/campus\\_life/academic-support/register-for-courses/degree-audit.html](https://www.dal.ca/campus_life/academic-support/register-for-courses/degree-audit.html)

This Field package is submitted electronically to [sswfield@dal.ca](mailto:sswfield@dal.ca). Please attach each of the 4 components as its own document (i.e. 4 attachments to the email). Do not merge the documents into one file.

Please note: Due to the volume and time sensitivity of arranging placements, late or incomplete submissions cannot be accepted.

### Field Proposal

The field proposal has two main purposes:

1. The Field Coordinator needs to have information to assist in securing the best fit for each student's learning needs and the potential agency's requirements and expectations.
2. The Field Coordinator gets to know about the student placement candidate, their writing style, ability and practice interests.

#### The proposal must:

- be typed, 3 to 4 pages (regular font, double spaced)
- have good structure, syntax and use of language
- have clarity in expression of ideas

- be broad and general enough to apply to more than one site as the student's first option might not be available

**Introduction:**

- write a clear, concise introduction to why you decided to study social work and what your interests are within the profession and introduce your areas of interest

**Body:**

- describe highlights of your experience that have contributed to your social work-related knowledge, skills and social issues of interest
- describe your strengths, abilities and areas for further development
- discuss social issues of interest and relate to your experience if applicable
- describe the broad contexts of social work practice within which you seek to be placed do not narrow it to one site
- include initial learning goals and objectives (without being too specific) so the Field Education Coordinator and prospective field agency can determine whether these can be met in a particular setting
- include reference to the BSW Field Course Objectives

**Conclusion:**

- summarize and conclude with repeating the areas of practice that are of interest and reflect the 3 choices reported on the Student Information Form

*Proposals that do not meet the above requirements will be returned for revision prior to work beginning on coordination of your placement.*

## Important Dates for Submissions and Placement Schedules

**This information applies to both distance and campus student placement coordination.**

After the student submission (see above for instructions and criteria for student submission) is reviewed and it is determined that the proposed agency(ies) are accepted, the Field Coordinator or designate contacts the agency to gauge interest and availability of a placement and verify learning offered. The supervision requirements are discussed as well as any other needs distinct to the particular site (for example criminal record checks, child abuse registry checks, vulnerable sector check, immunizations requirements and insurance issues).

**It is important to note students are responsible for any costs associated with these types of pre-placement requirements.**

**An interview must always take place** for both distance and campus students before a placement is confirmed. Faculty Advisors are assigned and informed of the placement details and students are organized into seminars through the registration process.

### Preparing for the Interview

It is advisable to research the potential placement agency so you can be familiar with its structure and mandate. It is also helpful to have your general learning goals in mind as that is often the first question the agency asks of a potential student. Bring a copy of your resume and proposal for discussion. Please Note: It is the student's responsibility to contact the Field Coordinator and report the results of the meeting. The Coordinator will contact the agency for their feedback on the meeting and the placement is either confirmed or the next agency is approached.

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### Submission and Placement Dates

BSW Placement Type	Submission Due Date	General Start/Finish Dates
Campus part time (3 days per week)	April 30	September - May
Campus full time (5 days per week)	December 1	April - August
Distance part time (3 days per week)	August 15	January - August
Distance full time (5 days per week)	December 1	April - August

## Section 3: Difference in Processes Between Distance and Campus Student Placement Coordination

Over time it has become evident that more clarity and support is needed for distance students who are completing the field course, SLWK 4034/35. This section is meant to provide clarity regarding how distance students prepare and plan for the field placement of their Social Work education, what needs to be considered in the planning process, and how to communicate effectively with the School to achieve success.

SLWK 4034/35 is different from all of the other courses taken online in that the student must be in an agency under the supervision of a qualified Agency Instructor. Students must comply with hours and scheduling of the agency's work and most social service agencies can only provide supervision during a regular work week (some exceptions exist). Typically studying by distance allows for time flexibility and readings/assignments can be completed after regular work hours. **Field placements generally do not fit with the rest of the education experience of online learning and that must be accounted for in planning.**

The other main point to make clear is the pre-placement planning that is required for distance versus campus students. Both groups submit the same information, and the due dates are planned in such a way that there is ample time to identify and secure a placement. **What is different is distance students are able to make the initial contact with perspective agencies of interest to gauge availability and collect the contact information for the Field Coordinator and Field Assistant. We need this because we do not have relationships with all the agencies distance students are approaching.**

However, it is not recommended to do too much planning prior to the due date because the School must approve the placement **only after** reviewing the student submissions. Once the student's plan is approved, distance students submit their resume and proposal directly to the desired agency and arranges an interview. In contrast, campus placement agencies (and local distance placements) are initially approached by the Field Coordinator and the student information is sent by the School. During this phase of the process all students need to communicate effectively with the School and provide any information requested in a timely way.

Lastly, there are differences with competition dynamics that campus and distance students experience. Campus students are competing with a large group of fellow students in a defined geographic area in the same social service and health systems, often vying for the same sites. While distance students do not have that concern, they are in competition with other local universities and community colleges and there can be restrictions in the number of placements as a result.

The following table highlights the similarities and differences between Campus and Distance Field Coordination.

DISTANCE	CAMPUS
<b>Make contact</b> with preferred sites to gather all contact information required by the school and gauge interest/availability of site. Be available to discuss placements with Field Coordinator.	<b>Do not make contact</b> with preferred sites. Be available to discuss placements with Field Coordinator.
<b>Student sends</b> student submission to site for review.	<b>Coordinator sends student submission</b> to site for review.
<b>Interview takes place</b> prior to approval of placement. Once initial contact has been made by the School, the student and prospective agency staff organize the meeting.	<b>Interview takes place</b> prior to approval of placement. Once initial contact has been made by the School, the student and prospective agency staff organize the meeting.
<b>Communication</b> between agency, school and student to confirm placement or approach a new agency.	<b>Communication</b> between agency, school and student to confirm placement or approach a new agency.
<b>Student is responsible</b> for keeping coordinator apprised of all developments in securing placements.	<b>Student is responsible</b> for keeping coordinator apprised of all developments in securing placements.
<b>Field Coordinator ensures</b> all health authority site requirements are completed and the institution notified.	<b>Field Coordinator ensures</b> all health authority site requirements are completed and the institution notified.
<b>Field Coordinator provides</b> orientation/training to all agency instructors and faculty advisors.	<b>Field Coordinator provides</b> orientation/training to all agency instructors and faculty advisors.
<b>The School provides</b> confirmation documents to all involved.	<b>The School provides</b> confirmation documents to all involved.

## Campus

Campus students and local distance students must not make contact with potential placement agencies or personnel unless directed to do so by the Field Coordinator. The Coordinator ensures the agency receives the student submission for review. This is due to a high volume of placements and the importance of maintaining a single point of contact to retain positive working relationships with community agencies. Many larger organizations also have specific protocols in place in response to

planning for student placements. Numerous requests are made from various educational institutions, both locally and nationally, so it is very important to respect the operational requirements.

Campus students: Await contact from the Field Coordinator regarding results of requests and whether there is possibility of placement with the agencies identified on the Student Information Form. Be available to attend an interview to determine if it is a fit for both student and agency. Notify the Coordinator of the results of the meeting and await confirmation of the placement.

## Distance

In direct contrast, distance students are **required** to make initial contact with potential field agencies, explore interests, opportunities and availability with agency personnel, and communicate with the Field Coordinator the relevant contact information (See Student Information Form) and planning as it occurs. The distance student sends their information to the agency for review. Distance students know their community and much more about the social service systems in their geographic area so can best identify a suitable placement site. If a student is having difficulty the Field Coordinator should be notified to discuss the situation.

Distance students: Include all of the information requested on page 2 of Student Information Form; make the initial contact with prospective placement agencies to discuss placement opportunities. Distance students arrange the interview and notify the Field Coordinator of the outcome of meeting with the prospective agency and await approval of the placement.

## Section 4: Block versus Part Time Placements

Students have two options to complete the Field Practicum and Seminar Course: on a part-time basis, 3 days per week, or full time 5 days per week within the designated placement period. The decision to complete a block versus part time placement is based on a number of factors: the nature of the placement, agency needs, academic planning for the student and the learning appropriate to a BSW placement. There are also some sites that prefer block placements and some that do not specify.

Students seeking a block placement are advised to consult first with the Field Coordinator to fully discuss the placement context and the individualized learning goals. The Field Coordinator may consult with the BSW Program Coordinator on any academic considerations which influence the selection of a part-time or full-time placement. The BSW Program Coordinator and Field Coordinator may advise the student on the merits of each in relation to the student's academic needs, any individual challenges and how they may impact on choosing block versus part time.

# Part 2: Roles & Responsibilities

## Section 1: Agency Instructor

### Selection Criteria for Agency Instructors

Agency Instructors (AI) must meet the criteria as stipulated in the CASWE Standards for Accreditation (2014) and approved by the BSW Committee. The criteria are outlined below.

Taken from the CASWE Standards for Accreditation (2014) and endorsed by the BSW Committee, selection of Agency Instructors adheres to the following criteria:

“SB 3.2.21 - Field Instructors at the BSW level ... normally hold, at a minimum, a BSW degree from an accredited social work program, have two years of social work practice experience after graduation with a degree from an accredited social work program; are interested in social work education and have support from the setting to permit adequate time for assuming field instruction responsibilities (page 16).”

If the Agency Instructor does not have a BSW degree, there are two options:

1. A second Agency Instructor, who meets the above requirement, is secured. With this option, there are two instructors who carry distinct responsibilities for supervision and evaluation of the student. The experienced, agency-based, non-social work prepared instructor is responsible for the day-to-day supervision and assignment of work. The non-agency based, BSW social worker is responsible for consulting with the student on a regular basis in person, by telephone and/or by email to ensure a social work perspective. These arrangements must be made prior to confirmation of the placement.
2. The School-assigned Faculty Advisor can play an enhanced role, taking on the responsibility to have additional contact with the student and facilitate discussion to deepen a social work practice perspective.

**Please note:** A person currently undertaking MSW studies at Dalhousie University is not eligible to be the Agency Instructor for a Dalhousie BSW student.

### Training for Agency Instructors

Field Coordinators provide orientation to prepare for the role and discuss student learning needs, either in person or by telephone. In addition, we offer Agency Instructors/preceptors online training that consists of four main modules:

1. Role of the Preceptor;
2. Teaching and Learning Styles;
3. Evaluation & Feedback;
4. Supporting Students' Learning Needs.

These materials can be found at <https://www.preceptor.ca>. We strongly encourage Agency Instructors to complete this training to support the role and enhance the student experience. The password for the video listed in the Related Resources section of the training modules is **1818#**.

## Social Work Continuing Education Course Credit

In recognition of the contribution of Agency Instructors, we offer a Social Work Continuing Education credit for each student supervised. Agency Instructors may use this credit for 50% off the registration fee of any Social Work Continuing Education workshop or certificate course.

Credits expire 1 year after the supervision session has ended. A current listing of Social Work Continuing Education courses may be found at [dal.ca/health/socialwork/coned](http://dal.ca/health/socialwork/coned). For more information and/or a discount code, please contact [coned@dal.ca](mailto:coned@dal.ca).

## Agency Instructor Responsibilities

The Agency Instructor is responsible to:

1. Arrange and conduct an interview with the prospective student to determine if the placement is an appropriate teaching and learning match for the agency, agency staff and student. The site must be able to meet the student's learning goals and the BSW Field Course Objectives.
2. Communicate the results of the interview to the Field Coordinator.
3. Prepare for the student coming to the agency by providing a thorough orientation:
  - ensuring that work space is available
  - arranging for attendance at relevant meetings
  - planning work assignments
  - arranging for other staff to be involved with the student placement by job shadowing, co-facilitating groups or other joint activities with the student
  - introducing the student to agency staff and clients (where applicable)
  - making relevant policy and program manuals available
  - discussing the organizational structure of the agency, the services provided and the profile of the population served
  - ensuring that the student is aware of other agencies with which the field agency interacts on a regular basis
4. Provide an opportunity and encourage the student to visit other agencies and become familiar with community resources.
5. Oversee the completion of the Section 3: Developing the Learning Contract in collaboration with the student and the Faculty Advisor. Assist the student in drafting learning goals and objectives specific to the placement. There will be a meeting (campus) or teleconference (distance) to discuss and finalize the Learning Contract with Faculty Advisor and student.

6. Hold regular supervisory sessions with the student as specified in the Learning Contract. Be available as needed to offer consultation and support to the student.
7. Have primary responsibility for overseeing the student for the duration of the placement and arranging for another supervisor if absent either temporarily or permanently.
8. Follow the procedure outlined in this manual for Dealing with Difficult Situations.
9. Maintain ongoing liaison with the Faculty Advisor.
10. Contribute to the final evaluation process.

## Section 2: Student Responsibilities

The Student is responsible to:

1. Submit the Field Proposal, Student Information Form and a current resume by the applicable due date (see Submission and Placement Dates). The Field Coordinator reviews all submissions and then contacts each student to discuss and clarify goals, interests and the proposed sites to determine availability of placement and the best fit for each student's learning needs.
2. Be available to attend meetings or interviews and respond to all requests from the school in a timely manner.
3. Inquire about and comply with the health regulations and other policies and procedures as required by the agency (for example: immunizations, criminal record checks, etc.) and cover the costs associated with obtaining them.
4. Assist the Faculty Advisor in arranging a meeting with the Agency Instructor to finalize the Learning Contract. This should be done within the first two weeks of a block placement and the end of the first month of a part-time placement.
5. Maintain contact with the Faculty Advisor for ongoing consultation and support. If difficulties arise the student and/or the Agency Instructor are expected to contact the Faculty Advisor as soon as possible (see Part 4: Process for Difficult Situations).
6. Participate in all integrative seminars offered online for distance students and in the classroom for campus students. All seminars must be attended as they comprise part of the overall evaluation of the Field Practicum and Seminar course.
7. Prepare for supervision with the Agency Instructor (weekly or bi-weekly) to ensure that the learning goals and objectives are being met and there is time for feedback and discussion.
8. Notify the Agency Instructor and other appropriate personnel in the event of absence. This should be done as far in advance as possible to minimize the impact on clients and colleagues.
9. In preparation for the mid-placement evaluation prepare a written summary of progress in the field placement for discussion with the Agency Instructor and the Faculty Advisor.
10. Prepare and submit the Framework for Practice paper and present it to the placement agency (See Section 5: Evaluation Criteria).

11. Maintain conduct in keeping with the current Canadian Association of Social Workers Code of Ethics, the relevant provincial social workers' Code of Ethics and the Standards of Practice and agency expectations.
12. Consider student membership in the appropriate provincial regulatory body.
13. Register for the BSW Field Practicum and Seminar course (SLWK 4033 for campus and SLWK 4034/35 for distance) before the placement begins. Questions should be addressed to BSW Student Services Administrator Josyl Headley at (902) 494-2703 or [bsw.advising@dal.ca](mailto:bsw.advising@dal.ca).
14. Read the BSW Field Manual carefully. The manual and all forms are available at: <https://www.dal.ca/faculty/health/socialwork/programs/field-education.html>
15. Check the website and listserv regularly for announcements.

### Section 3: Faculty Advisor Responsibilities

The Faculty Advisor oversees and monitors the process and content of student learning in the field placement, facilitates the integrative seminar and confers the final grade. It is important to maintain contact with both the Agency Instructor and student throughout the course of the placement.

The Faculty Advisor (FA) is responsible to:

1. Review seminar syllabi and the Student Acknowledgement Agreement content with all students during the first seminar.
2. Meet/teleconference with the student and the Agency Instructor a minimum of three times during the placement:
  - At the beginning of the placement to finalize the Learning Contract (important to be done during the first two weeks of block placement and by the end of the first month in a part time placement). It is expected that the student circulate the Learning Contract for feedback prior to this meeting. Minor changes may be made to the learning goals and objectives during the placement with the agreement of all parties;
  - At mid placement to review progress toward the learning goals and make necessary changes to the Learning Contract if required; concerns related to successful completion of the Field Education Course should be discussed at this time.
  - At the end of the placement to participate in the final evaluation meeting/ teleconference and assign a grade (see Final Evaluation).
3. Comply with the process and documentation provided by the Field Assistant for tracking required paperwork.
4. Notify the Field Coordinator of problems/issues which may affect the outcome of the placement.
5. Submit all documentation (the Learning Contract, mid placement check in and the Final Evaluation) to the Field Assistant at the end of term.
6. Provide guidance and support to students throughout the placement including the development of the Framework for Practice paper and presentation.
7. Coordinate tasks associated with the completion of the Final Student Evaluation, including:

- Receive the evaluation completed by the student and Agency Instructor, complete the FA portion and submit the signed copy to the Field Assistant.
- Review the outline of the Framework for Practice presentation and attend the presentation (distance FAs are exempt from this expectation but could arrange teleconference to listen).
- Grade the Framework for Practice paper in accordance with the Section 5: Evaluation Criteria.
- Confer the final grade and enter the grade into the DalOnline system.
- Ensure that all final evaluation documentation is received by the Field Assistant.

## Part 3: Pedagogical Approach to BSW Field Education

### Section 1: Developing Self Awareness and Critical Analysis

Professional programs require students to become self-aware and use their critical analysis and awareness to inform professional practice. Furthermore, the program goals of the BSW at the Dalhousie School of Social Work state that we facilitate graduation of students who *“have learned and internalized principles and processes of critical reflection and analysis.”*

Becoming proficient in critically reflective analysis involves learning both from academic knowledge and through personal and professional experience to develop the skills that embody the following:

- standing back from one’s own taken-for-granted assumptions, biases, beliefs and values in order to assess and act on practice situations
- expanding one’s understanding and options by framing practice situations from multiple perspectives
- critiquing and reframing problems within broader socio-political and moral perspectives considering and taking action that is informed by this reframing
- being able to articulate the above concepts in language free of jargon and ‘clinical’ identities

### Section 2: Integrative Seminars

The Integrative Seminars are facilitated by the Faculty Advisor and are intended to provide discussion of issues encountered by students in the field experience.

Students must participate in an integrative seminar concurrent with the placement. The seminar is accessed through the Brightspace Learning System for distance students and onsite in a classroom format for campus students. For campus students, the seminar schedule will be communicated to

students prior to the beginning of the term; students must be registered for the Field Practicum and Seminar course in order to be assigned to a seminar. The underlying premise of the seminars is that each person in attendance has important information to share and contribute. The integrative seminars are:

- a required part of the BSW Field course. Full attendance and participation are expected.
- an opportunity for peer support and the integration of practice issues and critical social work theory by discussing placement experiences with an experienced social work practitioner.
- facilitated with a focus on the integration of critical social work theory in practice and reflective use of self in practice. It is expected that students will dialogue about their experiences in placement.
- seminar attendance and participation will count as 35 hours towards the 700 total hours for the field course.

## Section 3: Developing the Learning Contract

**Please note: It is the student's responsibility to print and bring the Learning Contract Template (cover page) to the first meeting so all the arrangements can be agreed to and signed off.**

The draft learning goals and objectives must be specific to the placement and written in consultation with the Agency Instructor. In preparation for the meeting it is often useful for the student to e-mail a draft of the learning goals and objectives to the Faculty Advisor and the Agency Instructor.

During the meeting, the Learning Contract is finalized and signed by the Student, Agency Instructor and Faculty Advisor. For distance placements, the Agreement is sent to the Faculty Advisor by email or fax. The Faculty Advisor is responsible for ensuring that a signed copy of the Learning Contract is in the Student's file at the School of Social Work.

### Learning Goals and Objectives

Learning goals and objectives form the basis of the Learning Contract, which must be finalized within the first month of a part-time placement and within the first two weeks of a (full-time) block placement. The Student leads the process of its development, with consultation and input from the Agency Instructor and Faculty Advisor. The following section on goals and objectives is based on material from the book entitled: *Field Instruction: A Guide for Social Work Students*.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup>Royse, D. D., Dhooper, S. S., & Rompf, E. L. (2012). *Field instruction: a guide for social work students* (Updated 6th ed). Pearson Education.

- A goal provides a general sense of direction – the target for which you are aiming. An example would be: To develop skills to work with adolescents in groups. Consider the goal the 'what' that you want to learn.
- An objective is an activity that helps you achieve your goal. You may have several objectives to achieve one goal. Consider the objectives the 'how' for reaching your goal. Objectives should be:

- thought of as stepping stones
- easy to monitor whether or not they are achieved
- measurable
- attainable

After listing the goals, think of each active step, activity, or responsibility that should be undertaken or performed in order to reach the goals. These form the objectives that should be listed under each learning goal. Of these tasks or activities, choose the ones that are most directly observable and whose feedback will be essential to evaluation. For each objective ask, “How will my Agency Instructor and/or Faculty Advisor know that I have achieved this objective?”

Generally you should have no more than six goals with two to six objectives attached. Keep the following in mind when developing objectives:

- If it is difficult to assess when you have completed an objective then it needs to be rewritten
- If a particular goal will take more time than is available to you then discard or revise it
- The objectives should be able to be accomplished over the time period of the placement and not all clustered at the beginning or end

Learning goals and objectives form the basis of the Learning Contract, which must be finalized within the first month of a part-time placement and within the first two weeks of a full-time (block) placement. The student leads the process of its development, with consultation and input from the Agency Instructor and Faculty Advisor.

It is important to factor in the overall objectives of the course (see BSW Field Course Objectives) as they need to be reflected in the overall placement achievements and documented in the final evaluation and the Framework for Practice Paper/ Presentation.

**Sample Goals and Objectives:**

<b>Goal 1:</b>	<b>To improve counseling skills</b>	Objective 1: To observe two counseling sessions conducted by agency staff during the first month of the placement
		Objective 2: To discuss the counseling sessions with the social worker involved
		Objective 3: To conduct two counseling sessions, early in the placement, which are observed by the Agency Instructor

		Objective 4: To audiotape at least one counseling session with a client
<b>Goal 2:</b>	<b>To improve advocacy skills</b>	Objective 1: To read two articles on advocacy and discuss them with the Agency Instructor by the end of the 1 <sup>st</sup> month of the placement  Objective 2: To identify an issue that is having an adverse effect on clients in the agency  Objective 3: To demonstrate an understanding of the issue by written reflection and discussion at seminar

### Approval for Workshops to be Counted as Field Hours

With the approval of the Agency Instructor and the Faculty Advisor or Field Coordinator, workshops that students attend during the academic year in which the placement occurs may be counted as part of the required hours. These requests can be submitted by email and must include a description of the workshop, the number of hours and how it relates to the field placement setting. It is important to note that travel time to and from workshops and conferences cannot be counted as practice hours. Students may be approved up to 20hrs of workshops outside of their placement by their Faculty Field Advisor.

## Section 4: Framework for Practice Paper

As the final assignment in the BSW Degree, this paper and presentation are considered essential and significant components of the student’s education. This assignment is a culmination of the direct practice experience at the agency, group discussions from seminar, interprofessional learning, and knowledge from other course content. The paper is submitted and graded by the Faculty Advisor. Students provide an outline to the Faculty Advisor for approval before submitting the final paper so guidance and support can be provided.

The student presents their Framework at their field placement site and the Agency Instructor and other staff at the agency attend the presentation. The paper and presentation should highlight the development of an explicit approach to Social Work practice, which integrates personal ideology, theoretical grounding, practice strategies and professional ethics, and understanding of inter-professional dynamics. This assignment enables students to demonstrate the achievement of the overall goals of the BSW Program. Students will integrate theoretical analysis and proficiency in Social Work skills enabling engagement with services users in a variety of practice contexts (excerpted from the BSW Curriculum Manual, July, 2017).

## Section 5: Evaluation Criteria

The following are the bases for evaluation of the paper:

- clear articulation and integration of ideologies, theories, practices and ethics, and analysis of inter-professional dynamics
- demonstration of the use of the framework in a specific practice setting, indicating familiarity with the current issues in the field of practice (for example addictions, child welfare, corrections, advocacy, policy analysis)
- locating the practice framework within an understanding of systemic inequalities in resources and power, rooted in diverse factors such as class, gender, sexual orientation, race, ethnicity, ability/disability and age
- demonstrated ability to critically reflect on one's practice, including a discussion of strengths and areas for further development
- evidence of critical thinking and analytical ability
- effective integration and analysis of relevant social work literature
- good structure, syntax and use of language; clarity in expression of ideas and appropriate citation
- length of 4000 to 6000 words

The following explanation provides some guidance in preparing for this assignment:

“...a practice framework consists of a set of beliefs and assumptions about how, when and under what conditions people and systems change and what a social worker can do to facilitate desired and needed change...A practice framework should meet the following criteria:

- it should be consistent with the purpose, values and ethics of the profession
- capable of being communicated to others (i.e., its concepts, principles, and assumptions should be clearly described and defined)
- it should make sense to laypersons (i.e., most clients and volunteers should be able to understand the framework's connection to their concerns and life experiences)
- help the worker analyze and understand complex and often chaotic situations
- provide guidance and direction during the various phases of the change process
- it should rest on an empirical foundation “(i.e., be based on facts and careful and systematic observation)”<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup>Sheafor, B.W., Horesji, C.R. (2015). *Techniques and Guidelines for Social Work Practice* (10th Ed.), p. 69. Toronto: Allyn and Bacon/Pearson Education Inc.

Students need to have analyzed the development of their own approach to Social Work from a number of related perspectives: ideology and values, theoretical knowledge, practice strategies, professional ethics, and analysis of interprofessional dynamics.

These components are interdependent, so that exploration and clarification in any one area necessarily involves making connections to the others. The following suggestions are not exhaustive and should not limit the development of an individual student's framework paper.

### **Ideological Perspective**

- Present your beliefs about the determinants of social problems
- Draw from your ideology to describe the client population and constituencies represented in your placement, including their diversity
- Analyze your relationship as a social worker with the people you work with (clients, groups, and social activists) and your beliefs about client and worker status and how diversity affects these relationships
- Discuss your short and long-term practice goals and priorities and connect them to your values
- Address what implications your practice goals have for your relationship as a social worker with clients, agencies, other social workers, the profession, the community, and other professionals.

### **Theoretical Perspective**

- Explain what theories will inform your direct practice with individuals, groups, families and communities

### **Practice Strategies Perspective**

- Address the practice strategies, skills and approaches you have used in the practice settings with individuals, small groups, families, community groups, as well as particular groups informed by your placement experiences. Describe the skills you utilize in the areas of analysis, assessment, planning, individual interventions, group work, community development, advocacy (include others if appropriate).

### **Professional Ethics**

- Address the ethical obligations within the CASW Code of Ethics and applicable provincial body in relation to your ideologies, theoretical analyses and practice strategies
- Draw on examples from the placement context

### **Interprofessional Dynamics**

- Discuss examples and stories of what you have learned about how to articulate your social work perspective in an inter-professional/ multidisciplinary team/setting

- Reflect on examples where you took a stand/asserted your position to reflect your social work perspective/framework for practice and the implications to the inter-professional dynamic
- Discuss where and how you have learned with, from, and about other professions and disciplines in your placement

## Keeping a Journal

All students are encouraged to keep a journal. This written account of significant and meaningful events can be useful in assessing progress in the placement and in developing the framework for practice paper and presentation. The placements are lengthy, and it is difficult to remember every meaningful encounter. Students' Agency Instructor or Faculty Advisor may want to review the journal periodically, therefore it is important to be able to explain the content and how it is relevant to the placement context and to Social Work generally.

### **Suggestions for the Journal:**

- Consider writing a summary at the end of the week of what occurred, how you felt, and how the experiences relate to learning objectives, relationships, supervisory sessions with your Agency Instructor, discussions with the Faculty Advisor or in the seminar. Remember not to use clients' names or identifying features.
- Consider it a place to record disputes or conflicts. Such a record can be helpful in reflecting on what has occurred, under what circumstances and why you believe it occurred. You may be able to use these notes to defuse situations of conflict or explain your perspective and create fuller understanding.

## Section 6: Evaluation and Grading

This section provides the criteria for evaluating and grading the student's progress towards meeting the course objectives and the approved Learning Contract. The student's critical analysis, reflection, and practice skills demonstrated in the agency and the integrative seminar are evaluated through two formal processes, the midterm and the final evaluation.

Feedback and evaluation should be an ongoing process throughout the placement. The Agency Instructor uses feedback informally as the work occurs and by summarizing during scheduled supervision meetings. The individual learning goals and the course objectives should always be referred to and timelines revisited as needed. The Faculty Advisor offers feedback to the student in seminar sessions, during meetings and provides guidance for written materials including the student's midterm written summary, Framework for Practice Paper and presentation outlines.

If other employees in the agency have been involved in supervising the student, they should participate in the evaluation, giving written input on those areas of learning for which they are responsible as described in the Learning Contract.

## Mid Term Evaluation

The student prepares a written summary for the mid-placement evaluation and reviews it with the Agency Instructor for possible revision. The summary should report on highlights and challenges of the placement to date, revisions to the Learning Contract, and/or areas of learning requiring special attention. The summary document is given to the Faculty Advisor for signature and placement on the student file. If needed, revisions and re-circulation of the Learning Contract for approval and signature may also occur. Any concerns/issues with the student's learning or behavior must be raised at or before the mid-placement evaluation and documented in writing. Students must be provided with time to work on areas needing improvement.

## Final Evaluation

The final evaluation meeting is led by the Faculty Advisor, using the Learning Contract and the BSW Field Practicum and Seminar course objectives as the bases for discussion. Both the Agency Instructor and the student complete their sections of the Final Evaluation Form and the student sends it to the FA who reviews the agency and student section and completes the faculty section. The last meeting of the placement is dedicated to reviewing this document and assigning the grade. BSW Field is graded on a Pass/Fail basis. A failing grade requires the student to be dismissed from the BSW program. A failing grade may be awarded in circumstances where the student:

- In the course of the Field placement, demonstrates personal unsuitability for the profession according to the Faculty of Health Professions' statement on unsuitability (see [Appendices](#))
- Fails to meet, or to make what is judged to be sufficient progress, in relation to the learning goals agreed upon in the Learning Contract
- Does not receive a pass for the Integrative Seminar
- Does not submit and present the Framework for Practice paper
- Submits and/or presents the Framework for Practice paper and it is evaluated as not satisfactory
- Withdraws from a placement without adhering to due process

In all instances, if the Agency Instructor, student or Faculty Advisor begins to consider the possibility that a student may not be meeting the expectations of the BSW Field Course they should immediately follow the Part 4: Process for Difficult Situations.

## Part 4: Process for Difficult Situations

If problems arise before a placement is confirmed, the Field Coordinator, student and the agency will communicate any concerns and determine the feasibility of the placement in question. Once the placement starts, if problems arise at any time during the placement, the Faculty Advisor should be contacted immediately by either the student or the Agency Instructor and a resolution is attempted. If the issues cannot be resolved during regular supervisory sessions, the person with the concern needs to immediately call a teleconference (distance) or meeting (campus) with the other two parties to achieve a satisfactory resolution.

If a resolution satisfactory to all parties is not achieved, the Field Coordinator must become involved, and the Director of the agency will be informed of the situation if deemed necessary and appropriate. The Field Coordinator will inform the Associate Director of the School of Social Work and the Chair of the BSW Program and initiate appropriate action based on the particular situation.

Possible outcomes of discussions might include:

- alterations to the Learning Contract
- a change in Agency Instructor or Faculty Advisor
- change of placement agency
- termination of the placement
- failure of the BSW field course

The Faculty Advisor, Agency Instructor and the student can make alterations to the Learning Contract if all three parties agree. A change in the Agency Instructor or Faculty Advisor, or termination of the placement, requires the involvement of the Field Coordinator. The SSW Associate Director, the BSW Committee Chair and the Director of the field placement agency must be notified and involved to the extent deemed appropriate on a case-by-case basis.

A placement may need to be terminated after it has already been confirmed and started for the following reasons:

1. The student has unforeseen circumstances such as serious illness of a family member for which the student is the primary care giver so cannot commit to completing the field at the time previously proposed and agreed to. Other crisis situations will be reviewed on a case-by-case basis.
2. The student becomes ill as a result of a physical/mental health or addiction issue and cannot perform to the expectations of the agency and the Faculty Advisor in terms of meeting the goals and objectives of the course.

3. The Agency Instructor and Faculty Advisor have identified a risk of failure at midterm and the student or agency does not wish to continue and the student decides to drop the course.

**PLEASE NOTE:**

In each case the Student Services Coordinator can assist students to complete the requirements of the Registrar's Office for registration or tuition issues as applicable. The following link takes you to important withdrawal deadlines: <https://www.dal.ca/study/plan-your-degree/important-dates.html>.

The Field Coordinators will support students and assist with plans to complete the field course at the appropriate timeframe and that best suits their individual circumstances.

**PLEASE NOTE:**

The Dalhousie School of Social Work recognizes the right of an Agency and/or the Field Coordinator, after consultation with the appropriate people, to prematurely terminate a placement if the student's behavior is unacceptable or patient/client care is compromised.

The procedures for dealing with a placement termination are the following:

The Field Coordinator is informed about the nature of the situation and consultation is held with the parties involved to clarify the reasons for requesting termination, the students learning needs and the Agency's resources and ability to meet those learning needs. The Faculty Advisor is responsible to document the process and outcome of these consultations. The Associate Director and the Student Accessibility Centre may also become involved if appropriate or requested and needed.

A decision is made as to whether a new site will be sought out or the student needs to wait until the next term the field course is offered. This decision will be made by the Field Coordinator and the Undergraduate Coordinator, in consultation with the student and other relevant individuals and information. The final decision rests with the Field Coordinator and Undergraduate Coordinator. In the event there is disagreement the Associate Director can be consulted to enable a decision.

The only time credit will be given for hours already completed when an early termination occurs is if it is determined there was a lack of fit with the student and agency, and there are no other performance issues. There also must be a high probability that another agency and instructor that will meet the students learning needs can be found in the timeframe available. It must also be terminated no later than within the first month of a part time placement and the first two weeks of a block placement. Otherwise no credit will be given and the student must re-submit all of the paperwork on the due date for the next placement scheduled or when the student is ready to apply for practicum again.

## Risk of Failure

A student is given no credit (NCR) if the student does not meet the expectations of the course and their approved Learning Contract. This is equivalent to a failure grade in an academic course and is subject to the same regulations. The following are examples of why an Agency, or the School may decide to assign a fail grade for a placement:

- Inappropriate, unprofessional or unethical behavior
- Consistently poor performance with respect to assigned tasks, duties and responsibilities as agreed to in the Learning Contract
- Consistent tardiness and/or absenteeism
- Violation of Agency policies and procedures
- Consistently unable to receive and respond appropriately to constructive feedback

A review of the student's work will be completed by the Field Coordinator and Undergraduate Coordinator, based on meeting with the student and the written reports from the Faculty Advisor and Agency Instructor. This review will result in one of the following 3 options:

1. The student repeats the practicum in the next academic year. Students only have one opportunity to repeat the practicum. If a student gets a no credit (NCR) in the repeat practicum he/she will normally be asked to withdraw and their registration terminated.
2. The student applies to repeat the practicum when specific necessary conditions or requirements, which will support the likelihood of satisfactory field performance, have been met.
3. Another placement is not appropriate due to the extent of the concerns and the student's registration is terminated.

Review criteria to determine student's readiness to proceed with repeating the placement include:

- Nature, severity, frequency and scope of the performance issues
- Ability to understand conceptual material in the practicum and develop behavioral skills to demonstrate this understanding
- Judgement of the student's ability to hear and use constructive feedback
- Availability of appropriate practicum resources (and other interventions if needed) by the student to prepare for readmission
- Availability of appropriate practicum resources to secure another suitable placement
- The student's ability to successfully present him/herself in a practicum interview in order to secure a practicum match.

### PLEASE NOTE:

Throughout the process of termination/failure of a placement and meetings to discuss options, students can have access to a student advocate through the Student Union and the link is: <http://dsu.ca/dsas>.

The School of Social Work also has an appeal process that students can initiate regarding decisions around academic matters.

## Part 5: Exceptional Placements

### Section 1: Place of Employment Placements

The BSW Committee strongly advises that BSW students complete the agency component of the Field Education Course in a setting outside that of their regular employment.

This policy is based on the principle that the practicum must employ new learning, in a setting where issues can be debated and policies and procedures questioned. The Field Practicum and Seminar course is rooted in a relationship of learning and teaching that is optimized when free from a workplace identity. In an employment situation, the relationship is one of employee and employer and a focus on performing the assigned duties may not coincide with the academic goals of a social work education. It can be more rule-bound and there can be less opportunity for creativity and pursuit of answers to critiques.

The School recognizes that in some exceptional situations the above noted conditions can be met in the student's place of employment. Students may request approval to do their field placement in their current place of employment if the learning opportunities available meet the criteria listed below. All requests to complete the placement in the student's current place of employment must be approved by the Field Coordinator, in consultation with the Chair of the BSW Program and meet the following criteria:

1. There must be an opportunity for new learning regarding knowledge, skills and analysis that is well documented and meets the goals of the field course. An example of a proposal that would not be considered as new learning would be moving from one position in health care to another role. It may be different population and issue however it is still considered health care social work.
2. The placement must be supported by the employer as an academic endeavor.
3. A new position does not necessarily qualify. If a new position is being considered for a placement:
  - The date of appointment and the beginning of the field placement must coincide
  - The current and new job descriptions must be included in the submission and documentation from the employer must detail the new learning in the new position. This is an important issue because people are generally hired in positions because they meet the qualifications and are able to perform the duties; therefore, this is not new learning.
4. The learning opportunities available at the prospective agency must coincide with the goals for the BSW Field Practicum and Seminar course (see BSW Field Course Objectives).

5. The Agency Instructor cannot be the same person who normally supervises the day-to-day work of the student. As well, the Agency Instructor must meet the qualifications set out in this manual and be approved by the Field Coordinator. The Agency Instructor must be willing to fulfill the expectations outlined in this manual.

## Submission for Place of Employment Placement

The proposal to do a placement in one's place of employment must include:

1. Resume
2. Proposal
3. Student Information Form
4. Student Acknowledgement Agreement signature page  
It must also include the following information that can be submitted after the due date if the initial proposal is being considered a possibility by the Field Coordinator.
5. The current job description
6. The proposed activities in the placement and anticipated new knowledge, skills and analysis to be acquired
7. The new job description, if the proposed placement is an entirely new position
8. Clear articulation as to why the learning opportunities are only available in this setting (must go beyond financial considerations in maintaining employment)
9. Letter from the director or manager of the workplace, which must include the following:
  - Name and contact information for the Agency Instructor and clarify that this person does not normally supervise the student
  - Assurance that time will be made available for the student to participate in meetings, workshops, seminars and other activities which would enhance the learning experience. As well, sufficient time must be set aside for regular supervisory sessions with the Agency Instructor.
  - Explanation of how the placement being proposed is new learning and the student will not be doing the same work that s/he has performed in the past.

## Process for Review

- Only after all of the above information is received will the placement be approved or denied
- The Field Coordinator, in consultation with the Chair of the BSW Program, will review complete requests for placement in the student's current place of employment
- The decision will be communicated to the student in writing

## Section 2: International Placements

The International Placement policy for BSW field placements is currently undergoing significant revisions. Please contact your Field Coordinator to discuss international placements in more detail. The

BSW Program offers international field placements in exceptional circumstances only, and only when the following criteria are met:

- When the student has substantial experience in the social work field prior to beginning the BSW
- With agencies with which an International Affiliation Agreement is already in place
- In a full-time block after all other courses for the BSW are completed
- When the student has met with personnel at International Student Exchange Services regarding international travel as a student

Students are required to submit the following package a minimum of 8 months prior to potential departure:

- Student Information Sheet for international placements (see [website](#) for all forms)
- Student Proposal, addressing:
  - Why an international placement is relevant to the learning needs of the student
  - How the learning opportunities are specific to the international site
  - How the international placement will expand preparation for social work practice
  - Rationale for how/why a local placement cannot meet the student learning needs
- Statement regarding the student's ability to live and cope while undertaking an international placement, including what they need to prepare for.
- Resume
- Recommendation from the Instructor of the Beginning Social Work Practice course
- One letter of reference from an outside source who can comment on suitability for a professional international learning experience (for example a past or current supervisor in volunteer or paid work; past or current professor.)

Student submission packages are reviewed by the Field Coordinator and Undergraduate Program Coordinator for approval. Individual meetings may also be required. The student will be notified of the decision in writing.

Due to the volume of placements arranged locally during any one term, if a student cancels the request for an international placement within 4 months of the date of intended travel, there is no guarantee that the School can secure a local field placement for the upcoming term.

Students are required to participate in a field seminar equivalent, a central component of the field course. Where the technology exists, students can do this online; where technology does not exist, alternate arrangements will be made.

## Part 6: Confidentiality

In accordance with the Canadian Association of Social Workers Code of Ethics, SSW students, faculty and staff will protect the privacy of clients and hold in confidence all professionally acquired information concerning them. The student will follow the field agency's policies and procedures regarding confidentiality insofar as they do not contravene the professional code of ethics.

Where client information is used in supervision, seminars or courses the student will follow the policies and procedures of the individual field agency. The student must discuss the particular situation with the Agency Instructor and approval must be given. Names and other identifying information will not be used. In the case of written material, names and other identifying data will be removed and where video or audiotapes are used, written permission must be obtained from the client specifying the way in which the video or audiotapes will be used and for what purpose. Students must always consult the Agency Instructor, Faculty Advisor, or Field Coordinator when in doubt to ensure confidentiality is protected at all times.

## Part 7: Insurance

When students go out on placement they are interacting with the site's clients, patients and families along with the regular staff. Students and all organizations they are placed with must have sufficient insurance to cover liability on behalf of the individual student, the university and the organization. This is done through Affiliation Agreements that must be signed by both parties (organization head and university). Depending on which province you live there are also issues of Workers Compensation Coverage (legislation referring to student fieldwork is different in each province). These issues are dealt with by the Field Coordinator and the proposed sites.

Dalhousie University agrees to maintain adequate liability insurance to cover any loss, damage or injury of any nature whatsoever caused by the acts of its employees in the course of their employment or the acts of students in the course of their studies at the School of Social Work or at their field placement location.

If an agency does not carry sufficient liability insurance the amount of coverage can be negotiated, or an agreement may not be accepted. The student is also required to sign the Student Acknowledgement Agreement – Appendix A of this agreement. This must be signed, witnessed and be received by the school's Field Assistant prior to starting any fieldwork.

# Appendices

Appendix I. [Faculty of Health Guidelines for the Student Use of Social Media and Electronic Communication in Practice Education Settings](#)

Appendix II. [Faculty of Health policy on Suspension or Dismissal from a Program on the Grounds of Professional Unsuitability](#)

Appendix III. [Dalhousie University Sexualized Violence Policy](#)

Appendix IV. [Faculty of Health policy on Grade Reassessment and Appeals of Practice/Fieldwork Experiences](#)