



**NORTHERN MICHIGAN  
UNIVERSITY**

DEPARTMENT OF SOCIAL WORK

**BACHELOR OF SOCIALWORK  
PROGRAM**

**FIELD INSTRUCTION MANUAL**

**Northern Michigan University  
BSW Program  
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## Section I

### Overview and Placement Process

#### Field Instruction Overview

Northern Michigan University's BSW program was one of the first programs in Michigan to be accredited by the Council on Social Work Education (CSWE) in 1974. NMU's program has played an integral role in helping the University achieve its mission by giving students the knowledge and experiences to "become productive citizens in the regional and global community."

Northern Michigan University's Baccalaureate Social Work (BSW) Program, as a member of the Council on Social Work Education (CSWE), provides a field education program that meets professional and accreditation standards. These standards require a minimum 400 clock hours of field instruction for a Bachelor of Social Work (BSW) degree. NMU requires eight (8) credit hours of field instruction: SW 480 (4 credits) and SW 481 (4 credits). Usually this translates into about 15 hours per week for 30 weeks during the senior year for a total of 450 hours. A minimum of 400 hours is required for a passing grade. Field placement is graded on a Satisfactory/ Unsatisfactory basis. The NMU faculty liaison is responsible for assigning the semester grade. Field students are concurrently enrolled in a Field Placement Seminar course (SW 473 Fall and SW 474 Winter) while in placement.

The NMU Field Coordinator arranges prospective placements between the student and social service agency. Field agencies interview each prospective student during the previous winter semester before the placement is approved for the following fall. A professional working at the agency agrees to serve as a Field Instructor. Field Instructors should have either a Master of Social Work (MSW) degree or a BSW degree with experience. Exceptions can be made, with additional supervision provided by an external community field supervisor who is a BSW or MSW, or an NMU Social Work faculty member. The field instructor completes a rating form each semester as part of the student evaluation process assessing competency development.

Only students who have been admitted to the advanced BSW curriculum and who have a grade point average of at least 2.5 are eligible for placement. Each student prepares a learning agreement with assistance from the field instructor; this learning agreement operationalizes how the student will address CSWE competencies during field placement. The learning agreement is reviewed and revised each term. Students provide a weekly log of activities to their Field Instructor and the Field Placement Liaison to document hours and indicating in which areas they have made progress toward their learning objectives. Students also complete a self-assessment each term of their competency development.

## Student-Placement Matching Process

The Field Coordinator is primarily responsible for locating, screening, identifying, selecting and confirming student placements. The placement process begins during a student's junior year. When students complete their applications to the upper level BSW curriculum, they also complete a "Field Placement Addendum" that includes their background information and interests. Each winter semester, the Field Coordinator provides an informational session to students (usually in one of the Social Work practice methods classes). The formal process for student admission and matching are as follows:

- I. The student submits an application to the upper level BSW curriculum. This includes:
  - A. Application to field education
  - B. Release of information form
  - C. Resume
  - D. Cover letter to accompany materials sent to field instructor
- II. The student schedules a pre-placement interview with the Field Coordinator to discuss learning objectives, discuss student interests, and identify any specific placement needs (location, handicap restrictions, etc.)
- III. Once tentative placement choices are identified, the Field Coordinator contacts agencies to discuss the student's interest and field education requirements. If the agency is receptive to accepting a student, the agency will be asked to identify an individual whom the student can contact and arrange a personal interview.
- IV. The Field Coordinator provides student information to the agency. The agency reviews the student information, and if the agency decides to move forward, the Field Coordinator concurrently the student of the need to arrange a personal interview.
- V. During the agency interview, the student and staff member(s) responsible for field supervision discuss the agency; its function; the general nature of field assignments available to the student; scheduling expectations; any factors that might prohibit placement; and other matters relevant to the acceptance of the student for placement.
- VI. Following the interview, the Field Coordinator discusses the interview with both the student and agency representative. If the agency is willing to accept the student for placement, a formal placement assignment will be made. If concerns preclude placement, the request for placement will be withdrawn and other placement opportunities explored.
- VII. The field agency indicates acceptance or non-acceptance of the student to the Field Coordinator

## Agency Selection Process

Field settings are selected primarily on the basis of capacity to prepare students for generalist social work practice, through providing opportunities for students to demonstrate the competencies outlined by the CSWE. The criteria for agency selection as a field site are:

- I. The capacity of the agency to provide learning experiences related to the competencies of CSWE accredited social work education.
- II. Available supervision. Field agencies should provide a field instructor who holds a BSW or an MSW. Supervision may also be provided by an experienced human service supervisor with a closely related degree who agrees to consultation with an MSW/BSW qualified individual approved by the NMU Field Coordinator.
- III. Adequate facilities such as office space and technology for students to perform field related tasks.
- IV. The agency has demonstrated effectiveness in supervision of previous students.
- V. The agency's field supervisor(s) has/have participated in field instructor development activities.

Prior to placement of a student with an organization, the following should be completed:

- I. **Agency Affiliation Agreement.** This document outlines the responsibilities of the agency and the university. Once executed, the agreement remains in effect until canceled by either party. It does not need to be renewed with each student each year.
- II. **Agency Data Form.** This provides information about the activities and services provided by the agency. This information is stored in the NMU field data base to aid in matching field settings with prospective students.
- III. **Field Instructor Data Form.** This provides the Social Work Department with important information about each agency staff person who will serve as a field instructor. The information requested documents the Field Instructor's academic and professional experience for compliance with CSWE requirements.

## **Section II Guiding Principles**

### **NMU Mission Statement**

Northern Michigan University's distinctive academic mission and career programs are nurtured by exceptional teaching and extensive opportunities for scholarship, creativity, and engagement. Our supportive, connected community empowers students, graduates, faculty and staff to contribute to a diverse and sustainable world.

### **NMU Vision**

Northern Michigan University promotes an active environment to foster strong minds and bodies, inspires innovation and inclusion through community engagement, and develops leaders capable of local and global impact.

### **NMU Diversity Statement**

Northern Michigan University strives to be an inclusive community where differences are recognized as assets of the institution, respected attributes of the person and a valuable part of the university experience.

### **Department of Social Work Mission Statement**

The Department's mission is to foster the development of knowledge, values, and skills necessary to understand and positively influence the human condition. Through a rich selection of courses in Social Work, we create a learning environment that challenges students to think critically about our social world, and to seek creative solutions to human problems. We offer a welcoming and supportive environment that intentionally engages students in the community, and prepares them for both professional employment and graduate study.

### **Goals of the NMU Social Work Program**

Throughout the program students will be exposed to the values and ethics that guide professional practice. The Social Work Program will develop awareness in students of the need for continued professional development following graduation and throughout their professional careers. The entry level to the profession of social work is considered to be generalist practice. The generalist practitioner has the capacity to provide services across a broad range of client systems. The generalist is able to work with an array of problem situations and can apply a common or generic social work method across a variety of service systems within an eco-systems model and utilizing a strengths perspective. The generalist practitioner provides services to clients directly. Although the curriculum certainly contains elements of preparation for such activities as planning, research, supervision and administration, the major skill preparation is for direct practice with clients.

The Social Work Program is built on a humanistic philosophy that exemplifies the values of social justice, respect for human rights, dignity and diversity. The Social Work Program seeks to respond to the unique needs of the Upper Peninsula by providing educational opportunities for social work practitioners and professionals of other disciplines.

## **Purpose of Field Education**

Field Education is the signature pedagogy of social work education. It provides the student the opportunity to begin practicing and developing social work skills and competencies learned theoretically in the classroom setting and to carry out assignments from courses taken concurrently with placement. The field experience also enables students to expand their professional knowledge base and test out theories and principles under the supervision of an experienced social worker. Through field experience, students are provided an opportunity to develop professional identities and responsibilities. Field education provides students an opportunity to achieve skilled mastery by practice. Field education is required for accreditation by the Council on Social Work Education.

## **Student Competencies**

### **Council on Social Work Education**

### **2015 Educational Policy and Accreditation Standards (EPAS)**

### **Competency Areas and Practice Behaviors**

The curriculum for the Social Work major is guided by ten core competency areas that reflect standards of the Council on Social Work Education and the Department's mission and goals. The curriculum prepares students for generalist social work practice through mastery of these core competencies.

Each competency area has performance outcomes - practice behaviors of knowledge, values, and skills needed for generalist practice. Curriculum is designed so that students, upon completion of the major, will be able to demonstrate the integration and application of the competencies in practice with individuals, families, groups, organizations, and communities.

### **Competency 1: Demonstrate Ethical and Professional Behavior**

Social workers understand the value base of the profession and its ethical standards, as well as relevant laws and regulations that may impact practice at the micro, mezzo, and macro levels. Social workers understand frameworks of ethical decision-making and how to apply principles of critical thinking to those frameworks in practice, research, and policy arenas. Social workers recognize personal values and the distinction between personal and professional values. They also understand how their personal experiences and affective reactions influence their professional judgment and behavior. Social workers understand the profession's history, its mission, and the roles and responsibilities of the profession. Social Workers also understand the role of other professions when engaged in inter-professional teams. Social workers recognize the importance of life-long learning and are committed to continually updating their skills to ensure they are relevant and effective. Social workers also understand emerging forms of technology and the ethical use of technology in social work practice. Social workers:

- make ethical decisions by applying the standards of the NASW Code of Ethics, relevant laws and regulations, models for ethical



- decision-making, ethical conduct of research, and additional codes of ethics as appropriate to context;
- use reflection and self-regulation to manage personal values and maintain professionalism in practice situations;
- demonstrate professional demeanor in behavior; appearance; and oral, written, and electronic communication;
- use technology ethically and appropriately to facilitate practice outcomes; and
- use supervision and consultation to guide professional judgment and behavior.

### **Competency 2: Engage Diversity and Difference in Practice**

Social workers understand how diversity and difference characterize and shape the human experience and are critical to the formation of identity. The dimensions of diversity are understood as the intersectionality of multiple factors including but not limited to age, class, color, culture, disability and ability, ethnicity, gender, gender identity and expression, immigration status, marital status, political ideology, race, religion/spirituality, sex, sexual orientation, and tribal sovereign status. Social workers understand 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 also understand the forms and mechanisms of oppression and discrimination and recognize the extent to which a culture's structures and values, including social, economic, political, and cultural exclusions, may oppress, marginalize, alienate, or create privilege and power. Social workers:

- apply and communicate understanding of the importance of diversity and difference in shaping life experiences in practice at the micro, mezzo, and macro levels;
- present themselves as learners and engage clients and constituencies as experts of their own experiences; and
- apply self-awareness and self-regulation to manage the influence of personal biases and values in working with diverse clients and constituencies.

### **Competency 3: Advance Human Rights and Social, Economic, and Environmental Justice**

Social workers understand that every person regardless of position in society has fundamental human rights such as freedom, safety, privacy, an adequate standard of living, health care, and education. Social workers understand the global interconnections of oppression and human rights violations, and are knowledgeable about theories of human need and social justice and strategies to promote social and economic justice and human rights. Social workers understand strategies designed to eliminate oppressive structural barriers to ensure that social goods, rights, and responsibilities are distributed equitably and that civil, political, environmental, economic, social, and cultural human rights are protected. Social workers apply their understanding of social, economic, and environmental justice to advocate for human rights at the individual and system levels; and

- engage in practices that advance social, economic, and environmental justice.

### **Competency 4: Engage In Practice-informed Research and Research-informed Practice**

Social workers understand quantitative and qualitative research methods and their respective roles in advancing a science of social work and in evaluating their practice. Social workers know the principles of logic, scientific inquiry, and culturally informed and ethical approaches to building knowledge. Social workers understand that evidence that informs practice derives from multi-disciplinary sources and multiple ways of knowing. They also understand the

processes for translating research findings into effective practice. Social workers:

- use practice experience and theory to inform scientific inquiry and research;
- apply critical thinking to engage in analysis of quantitative and qualitative research methods and research findings; and
- use and translate research evidence to inform and improve practice, policy, and service delivery.

### **Competency 5: Engage in Policy Practice**

Social workers understand that human rights and social justice, as well as social welfare and services, are mediated by policy and its implementation at the federal, state, and local levels. Social workers understand 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 understand their role in policy development and implementation within their practice settings at the micro, mezzo, and macro levels and they actively engage in policy practice to effect change within those settings. Social workers recognize and understand the historical, social, cultural, economic, organizational, environmental, and global influences that affect social policy. They are also knowledgeable about policy formulation, analysis, implementation, and evaluation. Social workers:

- Identify social policy at the local, state, and federal level that impacts well-being, service delivery, and access to social services;
- assess how social welfare and economic policies impact the delivery of and access to social services;
- apply critical thinking to analyze, formulate, and advocate for policies that advance human rights and social, economic, and environmental justice.

### **Competency 6: Engage with Individuals, Families, Groups, Organizations, and Communities**

Social workers understand that engagement is an ongoing component of the dynamic and interactive process of social work practice with, and on behalf of, diverse individuals, families, groups, organizations, and communities. Social workers value the importance of human relationships. Social workers understand theories of human behavior and the social environment, and critically evaluate and apply this knowledge to facilitate engagement with clients and constituencies, including individuals, families, groups, organizations, and communities. Social workers understand strategies to engage diverse clients and constituencies to advance practice effectiveness. Social workers understand how their personal experiences and affective reactions may impact their ability to effectively engage with diverse clients and constituencies. Social workers value principles of relationship-building and inter-professional collaboration to facilitate engagement with clients, constituencies, and other professionals as appropriate. Social workers:

- apply knowledge of human behavior and the social environment, person-in-environment, and other multidisciplinary theoretical frameworks to engage with clients and constituencies; and
- use empathy, reflection, and interpersonal skills to effectively engage diverse clients and constituencies.

### **Competency 7: Assess Individuals, Families, Groups, Organizations, and Communities**

Social workers understand that assessment is an ongoing component of the dynamic and

interactive process of social work practice with, and on behalf of, diverse individuals, families, groups, organizations, and communities. Social workers understand theories of human behavior and the social environment, and critically evaluate and apply this knowledge in the assessment of diverse clients and constituencies, including individuals, families, groups, organizations, and communities. Social workers understand methods of assessment with diverse clients and constituencies to advance practice effectiveness. Social workers recognize the implications of the larger practice context in the assessment process and value the importance of inter-professional collaboration in this process. Social workers understand how their personal experiences and affective reactions may affect their assessment and decision-making. Social workers:

- collect and organize data, and apply critical thinking to interpret information from clients and constituencies;
- apply knowledge of human behavior and the social environment, person-in-environment, and other multidisciplinary theoretical frameworks in the analysis of assessment data from clients and constituencies;
- develop mutually agreed-on intervention goals and objectives based on the critical assessment of strengths, needs, and challenges within clients and constituencies; and
- select appropriate intervention strategies based on the assessment, research knowledge, and values and preferences of clients and constituencies.

### **Competency 8: Intervene with Individuals, Families, Groups, Organizations, and Communities**

Social workers understand that intervention is an ongoing component of the dynamic and interactive process of social work practice with, and on behalf of, diverse individuals, families, groups, organizations, and communities. Social workers are knowledgeable about evidence-informed interventions to achieve the goals of clients and constituencies, including individuals, families, groups, organizations, and communities. Social workers understand theories of human behavior and the social environment, and critically evaluate and apply this knowledge to effectively intervene with clients and constituencies. Social workers understand methods of identifying, analyzing and implementing evidence-informed interventions to achieve client and constituency goals. Social workers value the importance of inter-professional teamwork and communication in interventions, recognizing that beneficial outcomes may require interdisciplinary, inter-professional, and inter-organizational collaboration. Social workers:

- critically choose and implement interventions to achieve practice goals and enhance capacities of clients and constituencies;
- apply knowledge of human behavior and the social environment, person-in-environment, and other multidisciplinary theoretical frameworks in interventions with clients and constituencies;
- use inter-professional collaboration as appropriate to achieve beneficial practice outcomes;
- negotiate, mediate, and advocate with and on behalf of diverse clients and constituencies; and
- facilitate effective transitions and endings that advance mutually agreed-on goals.

## **Competency 9: Evaluate Practice with Individuals, Families, Groups, Organizations, and Communities**

Social workers understand that evaluation is an ongoing component of the dynamic and interactive process of social work practice with, and on behalf of, diverse individuals, families, groups, organizations and communities. Social workers recognize the importance of evaluating processes and outcomes to advance practice, policy, and service delivery effectiveness. Social workers understand theories of human behavior and the social environment, and critically evaluate and apply this knowledge in evaluating outcomes. Social workers understand qualitative and quantitative methods for evaluating outcomes and practice effectiveness. Social workers:

- select and use appropriate methods for evaluation of outcomes;
- apply knowledge of human behavior and the social environment, person-in-environment, and other multidisciplinary theoretical frameworks in the evaluation of outcomes;
- critically analyze, monitor, and evaluate intervention and program processes and outcomes; and
- apply evaluation findings to improve practice effectiveness at the micro, mezzo, and macro levels.

## **Section III**

### **Role Descriptions and Responsibilities**

#### **Field Coordinator**

The Field Coordinator is primarily responsible for the overall coordination and administration of the field education program. It is the responsibility of the Field Coordinator and the Social Work Program Director to establish guidelines and procedures for the field education program. The Field Coordinator is administratively responsible for planning, implementing, and evaluating all aspects of the field education experience. The Field Coordinator is responsible for developing field placements, placing students, monitoring student performance in the field as reported by Field Liaisons, evaluating the field education program of the social work program, registering field agencies, and monitoring the effectiveness of the agency's ability to provide quality field education opportunities.

The Field Coordinator works with the Faculty Field Liaisons who are the NMU faculty members assigned as the official instructors for sections of SW 480 and 481 field instruction. The Field Coordinator assists Liaisons in developing individual student Learning Agreements, coordinating the administration of mid-year and end-of-year student evaluations, and providing consultative services to Faculty Liaisons as needed.

The Field Coordinator is responsible for reviewing the effectiveness of the field education program and insuring continued compliance with the educational objectives of the social work program and the Council on Social Work Education. Field education student evaluations serve as an outcome measure of the overall effectiveness of the social work program. The Field Coordinator organizes the field evaluation data and uses data collection to monitor field placement quality.

#### **Faculty Liaison**

The NMU faculty member assigned to a section of SW 480 Senior Field Placement I or SW 481 Senior Field Placement II, serves in the role of Faculty Liaison. This person has responsibility to monitor and evaluate the student's overall performance, make agency visits, participate in field workshops and meetings, and manage problems related to field requirements. The Faculty Liaison will maintain contact with the Field Instructor throughout the student's placement and make a minimum of one (1) visit to the field agency during each placement semester. The agency visit involves the review of learning assignments and objectives, the learning contract, and other pertinent field education requirements. During agency visits, the Faculty Liaison reviews and evaluates the field experience with the student and the Faculty Instructor. After the visit, the Faculty Liaison submits a Field Visit Report (see Appendix) to the Coordinator of Field Education. The Faculty Liaison will make additional visits to the agency during the placement semester when necessary and/or requested by a student or Field Instructor.

## Agency

As a participant in the education of the student, the field placement agency provides a setting in which the students can gain meaningful social work practice experience. The placement experience must be compatible with classroom teaching and enable students the opportunity to integrate theory with practice. The agencies providing field instruction for students reflect the diversity of social welfare problems and the client populations served by social workers. As a participant in the education of the student for social work practice, the field placement agency has the following responsibilities:

- I. NMU will provide a formal Agency Affiliation Agreement to be signed by an agency designated representative. The Agency Affiliation Agreement outlines the general requirements and standards for field education including the roles and responsibilities of the university, agency, and field student. Affiliation agreements remain in effect until cancelled by either university or field organization.
- II. The agency's representative(s) conducts a personal interview with each student being considered for field study to determine if placement in that agency setting is appropriate. The agency will inform the Field Education Coordinator of the decision regarding the acceptance of the student for field placement. The agency has no obligation to work with students who are initially considered to be, or are later found to be, unsuited to the agency. Therefore, the agency, in consultation with the university, may request that the student be withdrawn from placement in the agency.
- III. The agency provides the student with an agency orientation to familiarize the student with agency personnel policies and procedures.
- IV. The agency informs students of potential work hazards such as exposure to infectious diseases or other health hazards. The agency also will make known any required preventive measures such as hepatitis testing, TB testing, and necessary immunizations.
- V. The agency ensures that under no circumstances will students prescribe, administer, or dispense medication or physical therapy.
- VI. The agency will allow Field Instructors to participate in trainings or workshops provided by the social work program.
- VII. The agency will make available physical facilities and other resources needed by the student to complete learning assignments as identified in the Learning Agreement. Ideally, the agency will provide the student with work space comparable to that provided to the regular staff.
- VIII. The agency reimburses students' travel expenses that arise in the course of providing agency services customarily given to staff. This does not include

reimbursement for daily travel to and from the agency.

- IX. The agency will assist in the identification and selection of qualified social work staff to serve as Field Instructors. Field agencies should provide a field instructor who holds a BSW or an MSW. Supervision may also be provided by an experienced human service supervisor with a closely related degree who agrees to consultation with an MSW/BSW qualified individual approved by the NMU Field Coordinator.
- X. The agency will provide time for weekly supervisory sessions between the Field Instructor and the student. The minimum expectation for supervision is one (1) hour per week. Field Instructors are also expected to be available between supervisory sessions for consultation as needed.

### **Field Instructor**

The social work program and approved field agencies engage jointly in the identification and selection of Field Instructors. Based on the standards of the Council on Social Work Education for field study, the agency staff member designated as a Field Instructor will be a professional social worker who has demonstrated competence in practice, supervision, and a capacity for teaching social work. The Field Instructor has responsibility for providing educational guidance to the student in meeting the learning objectives and other requirements for field study. Specific responsibilities of the Field Instructor during field placement include the following:

- I. Assist the student to identify learning objectives in the development of the Learning Agreement. Signed copies of the Learning Agreement will be forwarded to the Field Coordinator by established deadlines.
- II. Provide structured learning experiences for the student necessary to meet these learning objectives. These assignments should reflect curriculum goals, outcome objectives and action plans.
- III. Maintain a teaching role to help students integrate knowledge, skills, and values addressed in course work with the demands of practice.
- IV. The field instructor is responsible for notifying the field education program in a timely manner through the Field Liaison when a student's performance may jeopardize the successful completion of the field placement.
- V. Provide a mid-year and end-of-year (final) evaluation. These evaluations will be provided in writing and will be signed by both the student and the field instructor. The mid-year meeting will provide an opportunity to review the Learning Agreement and to modify and change that Agreement as necessary.
- VI. Model professional behavior and maintain a positive attitude toward the social work profession which fosters the student's professional identification and growth.
- VII. Provide weekly educational-focused conferences with the student.

- VIII. Complete and submit the Field Instructor Data Form (see Appendix) to the Field Education Office.
- IX. Provide the Field Education Office with feedback regarding their interest, time, and general availability to supervise students.

## **Student**

The importance of students accepting responsibility for achieving a successful field placement experience cannot be overly emphasized. Along with field faculty and agency personnel, each student is expected to function as an assertive, and active partner in planning, carrying out, and evaluating field education activities. Students should take initiative in working with the Field Instructor in developing the Learning Agreement and in the identification of specific educational goals and objectives. Specific student responsibilities are as follows:

- I. Students are expected to read and become familiar with this manual and comply with all policies and procedures contained herein.
- II. Students are expected to conduct themselves in a responsible and appropriate manner consistent with the NASW Code of Ethics.
- III. Students are expected to follow the procedures outlined for participating in field education outlined elsewhere in this manual. This process includes completion of required courses prior to admission to field education, application for field education, completion of documentation required for participation in field education, and acceptance by an agency for a field practicum.
- IV. Each student is required to assist in the development of a personal Learning Agreement, complete a minimum of 400 hours in the placement agency and satisfactorily complete all required assignments.
- V. Students complete a weekly log form including the number of hours completed in placement for the week and a cumulative total. This log must be submitted to both the agency field instructor and the NMU faculty Field Liaison.
- VI. Students should be receptive to supervision and use it to improve practice skills and knowledge, increase self-awareness, and develop professionally. If there are problems during placement, students are responsible for pursuing resolution using proper channels. All problems or concerns should initially be shared with the Field Instructor. Preventing or resolving problems often requires that the student take initiative to interact with, question, provide feedback, and constructively confront others when it appears that the educational objectives are not being met. (Refer to Grievance Policy)
- VII. Students should expect to meet with the Field Instructor to participate in the mid-



year and end-of-year evaluations. Students will meet with the Field Instructor and the Faculty Liaison to discuss progress toward achieving the objective identified in the Learning Agreement.

## Section IV

# Northern Michigan University Policies and Guidelines

### **Non-Discrimination Policy**

Northern Michigan University does not unlawfully discriminate on the basis of ancestry, race, color, ethnicity, religion or creed, sex or gender, gender identity, gender expression, genetic information, national origin, age, height, weight, marital status, familial status, handicap/disability, sexual orientation, military or veteran status, or any other characteristic protected by federal or state law in employment or the provision of services. NMU provides, upon request, reasonable accommodation including auxiliary aids and services necessary to afford individuals with disabilities an equal opportunity to participate in all programs and activities.

This Policy on Non-Discrimination is designed to express the University's intent and commitment to comply with the requirements of State and federal non-discrimination laws. This Policy and all other policies and procedures of Northern Michigan University shall be interpreted and applied co-extensively with such laws. This Policy shall not be interpreted as creating any legally enforceable rights, contractual or otherwise, that are greater than those existing under applicable non-discrimination laws. The prohibition against discrimination on the basis of sexual orientation does not apply to the University's relationships with outside organizations, including the federal government, the military, ROTC, and private employers. Nothing contained in this Policy shall be construed as prohibiting the University from applying bona fide occupational qualifications.

Limitations are appropriate if they are directly related to a legitimate University purpose, are required by law or rules of associations to which the Board of Trustees has determined the University will belong, are lawfully required by a grant or contract between the University and the state or federal government. Limitations of current facilities are excluded from this policy.

Complaints or inquiries related to this policy shall be directed to the Equal Opportunity Office or Human Resources. In the event of an alleged violation, the University's Discrimination/Complaint Procedures will be followed.

### **Disability Law Compliance Policy**

Northern Michigan University formally affirms its commitment to prohibit discrimination against individuals with disabilities in any aspect of University life including, but not limited to, physical plant access, employment, services, and the academic process. To this end, Northern Michigan University declares its intention to adhere to the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) and all other applicable federal and state disability law.

The University shall offer appropriate and reasonable accommodations and shall establish and make known the procedures for obtaining those accommodations. Furthermore, the University shall offer consultation, assistance and problem resolution to the University community through the office of the ADA Coordinator and shall provide information regarding other applicable University processes.

## **Sexual Harassment Policy**

Northern Michigan University is committed to its faculty, staff and students. Sexual harassment of any member of the University community is inconsistent with the University's desire to create the best possible living, learning, and work environment, and is therefore absolutely prohibited.

Harassment on the basis of sex is discrimination in violation of Title VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, Title IX of the Educational Amendments of 1972, and the Michigan Elliot-Larsen Civil Rights Act. Federal and state laws prohibit sex discrimination in employment and in the utilization of educational facilities and services. Sexual harassment is considered to be sex discrimination and is therefore illegal.

### **Retaliation**

It is a violation of University policy to intimidate, discipline, discharge, or harass any individual because she or he has filed a complaint, instituted proceedings, assisted an investigation, or formally or informally objected to sexual harassment and/or discriminatory practices. If retaliation occurs, the incident should be reported either to the Equal Opportunity Office or Human Resources (faculty and staff) or to the Dean of Students Office (students).

### **Confidentiality**

The right to confidentiality, both of the complainant and of the respondent, will be respected insofar as it does not interfere with the University's legal obligation or ability to investigate allegations of misconduct when brought to its attention, and to take corrective action when it is found that misconduct has occurred.

### **Cooperation**

All members of the University community are expected to provide full and truthful cooperation to university officials during an investigation.

For additional information, please see the NMU Equal Opportunity Office Website: <http://www.nmu.edu/equalopportunity/>

### **Reporting Research Involving Human Subjects**

Normally, social work field instruction is not included as part of a research project. However, in the event that research is being conducted in the field placement experience, human subject regulations may apply. Please contact the Office of Research and Development for details.

Office of Research and Development

401 Cohodas

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[http://www.nmu.edu/grad\\_research/ord.htm](http://www.nmu.edu/grad_research/ord.htm)

The College of Graduate Studies is responsible for oversight for all grants and research conducted by employees and students at Northern Michigan University. The Dean serves as the Institutional Research Officer for the University. The Office of Research and Development administers internal grants and oversees external grants awarded to faculty, staff, and students.

Within this context, two committees serve with oversight responsibilities for the protection of human or non-human subjects used in research. The Institutional Animal Care and Use Committee (IACUC) oversees all care and use protocols for animals. The Human Subjects Research Review Committee (HSRRC) oversees all protocols involving the use of human subjects in research. External grants which university faculty, staff, or students apply for must be reviewed by this office prior to submission.

## **Section V**

### **Field Placement Program Policies and Guidelines**

#### **Placement Eligibility**

Field placement is offered as a sequence of two courses: SW 480 Field Placement I (fall) and SW 481 Field placement II (winter). In order to assure enrollment in SW 480, a student must:

- I. Be admitted to the advanced BSW curriculum.
- II. Have successfully completed SW 370 and SW 372 prior to beginning placement.
- III. File a completed application for field placement by the designated deadline.
- IV. Have a Social Work Program GPA of at least 2.5 prior to field placement entrance.
- V. Comply with the requirements of the application process, including interviews with the field coordinator and prospective field placement agency staff.

#### **Life Experience/Employment**

In keeping with accreditation standards of the Council on Social Work Education, the Bachelor of Social Work Program at Northern Michigan University does not grant academic credit for life experience or previous work experience, in whole or in part, in lieu of the field practicum or of courses in the professional foundation areas of the social work curriculum.

#### **Disclosure**

Students with a history of arrests or a history of academic or professional disciplinary action are not required to disclose this information to the Field Education Coordinator in the Application for Field Instruction. However, most field placement settings routinely conduct background checks on students referred for placement. Students are strongly advised to discuss such issues with the Field Coordinator during the application process. Depending on such factors as the nature, time and resolution of offenses, a criminal history may preclude field placement entirely or prevent placement in certain agencies due to agency policy, liability concerns or risk to agency clients. Field placement restrictions must be determined on a case-by-case basis.

#### **Learning Agreement**

Learning Agreements (educational contracts) serve as the means of transforming the generic core competencies of the program into specific, concrete practice behaviors and experiences for the student within the context of the field setting. Each Learning Agreement comprises a written understanding between the student and Field Instructor as to the social work program's goals and objectives for field instruction.

Although the field instructor must give approval of the Learning Agreement content, development of the plan should be a mutual responsibility of both student and field instructor; the student is expected to participate in the process and may be expected to submit the completed

agreement as an assignment for the field placement related seminar. Examples of learning agreements and detailed information on each competency are available on the Field Instructors Resource Site ([share.nmu.edu](http://share.nmu.edu)).

At the time of the first semester performance evaluation, the initial Learning Agreement should be revised based upon objectives for the second semester learning as well as the learning needs identified during the first semester.

## **Student Evaluation**

The purpose of student evaluation is to determine achievement of the social work program's educational goals and field instruction objectives, and to identify assignments and activities that will address areas requiring future attention. Ideally, performance evaluation will be an ongoing process that occurs between the Field Instructor and the student.

The first formal evaluation occurs mid-year at the end of the Fall Semester. The Field Coordinator will send the evaluation instrument, directions for completing the evaluation, and other necessary documentation to Field Instructors. The Field Instructor and the student are encouraged to have an evaluation conference to discuss the student's performance and to complete the evaluation instrument. The faculty liaison will make arrangements to meet with the field instructor and the student to review the formal evaluation prior to the assignment of grades. The actual assignment of a grade for field education is the responsibility of the instructor of record (typically the NMU field placement coordinator). Upon review of the student's performance at mid-year, the Learning Agreement may be modified based on the more complete understanding of student learning needs and a reappraisal of assignments and tasks that will be available within the agency.

The final formal evaluation is due by the end of the last week of classes. The Field Coordinator will notify field instructors of the exact date. The Field Coordinator will send the final evaluation instrument, directions for completing the evaluation, and other necessary documentation to field instructors. The final evaluation will be prepared by the field instructor, discussed with the student, and again discussed by both at a final meeting with the faculty liaison. The final evaluation form will be submitted to the faculty liaison.

All evaluation forms are to be signed by both the student and field instructor. The student's signature indicates that the student has read the evaluation, but does not necessarily imply agreement. The program reserves the right to withhold a grade until the evaluation is properly signed.

Evaluation reports submitted to the social work program are the property of the university and may not be released by the field instructor/agency to others for any reason. The social work program may release these reports only with the written permission of the student. In preparing general letters of reference formally requested by the student, school officials may incorporate evaluation materials only if appropriate releases are present.

## **Grading**

The field placement courses, SW 480 and SW 481, are graded "S" (Satisfactory) or "U" (Unsatisfactory). A passing grade must be achieved in the first semester for the student to proceed to the next required sequential course.

A grade of "I" (Incomplete) is intended only for situations where circumstances such as illness or emergency prevent the student from completing work within the normal semester time frame. It is not employed for poor or irresponsible performance. A grade of "I" is only entered with the stipulation that the student make up the required, deficit work within a designated time period.

Grading is the responsibility of the NMU faculty member who is assigned as the instructor of record for the course (Field Liaison). The grade is based on the student's overall demonstration of performance and preparedness for entry level social work practice. The faculty instructor bases the grade on the field instructor's written evaluation, consultations with the field instructor and student, weekly student log reports, and the Faculty Liaison's assessment of student's satisfactory performance in achieving the goals of field education.

Minimum requirements for a grade of "Satisfactory" include:

- I. Completion of a satisfactory learning agreement assignment approved by the assigned NMU Field Liaison/Coordinator by the deadline date.
- II. Timely submission of accepted weekly field reports to the Field Placement Liaison/Coordinator. (More than 3 unsatisfactory reports is grounds for a grade of Unsatisfactory.)
- III. Approval of the field evaluation submitted by the agency field instructor.
- IV. Approval of the self-evaluation submitted by the agency field instructor.

Each NMU Faculty Liaison provides a syllabus each term in which the grading rubric is specified.

## **Service Continuity during Academic Calendar Breaks**

It is the policy of NMU's BSW program that students are not required by the university to maintain a presence in the field agency during academic calendar breaks. If students choose to fulfill placement hours over breaks, it must be agreed upon by the student, Field Liaison, and the agency. The NMU BSW program expects students to consider client and agency needs when scheduling absences during semester breaks.

## **Professional Behavior**

Becoming a professional social worker demands that students exhibit professional behavior and demeanor. Students should be able to utilize critical thinking and decision-making skills to discern and respond appropriately to multiple and varied situations. Policies students are expected to follow include, but are not limited to those of Northern Michigan University; the NMU Social Work Department; and the placement agency. When policies and/or professional expectations conflict, students should seek guidance from the field instructor and NMU faculty in best resolving the issue. Professional expectations may include, but are not limited to:

- I. Compliance with the NASW Code of Ethics
- II. Compliance with policies and procedures established by NMU, the social work department, and the field agency
- III. Professional hygiene, dress and behavior appropriate for the field setting
- IV. Appropriate verbal, written, and electronic communication

Failure to meet these expectations may lead to failure of the field education course and/or termination from the social work program.

### **Grievances**

Student issues related to field education will be handled within the social work program according to the following steps. Upon the discretion of the Coordinator of Field Education, the steps outlined below can be bypassed and taken directly to the Social Work Program Director for resolution. Complaints about grades are handled under the standard Sociology and Social Work grievance procedures.

- I. The student shall discuss the problem or issue directly with Field Instructor. Efforts to resolve any problem or difficulty should normally be handled within the agency before contacting the Faculty Liaison.
- II. If the issue cannot be resolved, the student should discuss the problem with the Faculty Liaison and if necessary, a meeting between the student, the Field Instructor, and the Faculty Liaison shall be held.
- III. If a satisfactory resolution is not reached, the matter will be referred to the Coordinator of Field Education.

### **Termination of Field Placement**

When a student fails to maintain satisfactory performance in concurrent, required Social Work courses (SW 473 and SW 474) or demonstrates unsatisfactory performance at the field education site, termination from field education may be necessary. Students cannot be admitted to SW 481

Senior Field Placement II with a grade of "U" in SW 480. (See "Reassignment" for situations where the student is able to meet performance requirements but the placement has become unacceptable or is no longer available.) The Field Coordinator should be informed of each step in the following procedure:

- I. Discussion of the situation among the parties involved: the student, the Field Instructor and/or the Faculty Liaison.
- II. The Faculty Liaison will schedule separate conferences with all parties to discuss the circumstances around the consideration of termination.
- III. The Faculty Liaison may schedule a joint conference with the student and the Field Instructor to discuss and attempt to resolve the issue(s) and/or arrange for the student's termination from the agency placement.
- IV. The reasons for termination from field placement must be reported in writing by the Field Liaison and communicated to the student.



Termination of placement due to unsatisfactory field performance results in a grade of "U."

### **Field Placement Reassignment**

The Field Placement Coordinator makes the final decision regarding the need to replace a student. This action will involve consultation with the Field Liaison and agency field instructor. Reassignment, after the semester has begun, will require the following steps:

- I. The Faculty Liaison is contacted by either the student or the Field Instructor.
- II. The Field Placement Coordinator must be informed of the situation, preferably by the Faculty Liaison.
- III. In the event that a student is requesting relocation a written statement must be submitted to the Field Placement Coordinator before action is taken. This letter should include:
  - A. reasons for the request
  - B. ways in which learning needs are not being met
  - C. attempts that have been made to resolve the problem(s)
  - D. Reassignment is a last resort. Problem resolution and the exploration of other options are considered before approving reassignment.

### **Field Placement in Employment Setting**

The field placement experience is intended to provide an opportunity to engage in a structured learning situation for the purpose of acquiring knowledge and skills. Students may on occasion seek a field placement in an agency in which they are employed. The Council on Social Work Education's Program Standards do not preclude such a placement; however, a student cannot apply their paid employment experience toward the requirements for field education.

A student may complete a field placement in an agency where that student is employed if the work assignment is different from the student's regular job and it can be assured that the student will have sufficient opportunity to complete course assignments and learning objectives associated with placement. Occasionally, students are hired by the agency in which they are completing field placement prior to the completion of the field placement semester. Prior approval should be obtained from the Field Placement Coordinator to assure that learning objectives will be completed under this arrangement.

## **Liability**

The NMU comprehensive liability policies provide coverage for university faculty, staff and employees while acting within the scope of their duties as university employees. Students are also covered while they are engaged in university approved academic programs, including field instruction administered by the social work program. Field instruction agencies may require students to acquire additional liability insurance at the students' personal expense; however, this step is seldom necessary and should only be undertaken with review by the NMU Risk Manager. Additional questions concerning liability protection for university employees or students engaged in an educational program should be directed to the Office of Risk Management and Insurance, 136 Services Building, Northern Michigan University. Phone: (906) 227-2745.

## **Transporting Clients**

The social work program prohibits students from transporting clients in their personal vehicles as part of their requirements for field education. This is done to insure the safety of the client and to reduce the liability of the student.

In the event that client transportation in personal vehicles is deemed essential to the placement experience, the agency must consult with the Field Placement Coordinator and the NMU Risk Manager in order to consider possible options.

If the student is a registered volunteer or employee of the agency in which he/she is completing the practicum, and would otherwise transport clients in their role as a volunteer or employee, this policy will be superseded by the agency's policy.

## Section VI Child Welfare Certificate Program

### Rationale

The Child Welfare Certificate program was created in partnership with DHHS in an effort to develop more qualified child welfare workers in the State of Michigan. The NMU Social Work Department remains committed to cooperation with DHHS in this goal, providing excellent field experiences for students interested in making a career in the field of child welfare in the State of Michigan.

### Description of Child Welfare Certificate Requirements

In addition to the requirements for all Social Work students outlined in this manual, students on the Child Welfare Certificate track must:

- I. Complete the SW401 Child Welfare course, with a grade of C or better, prior to completion of the program.
- II. Satisfactorily complete all field placement requirements at the Department of Health and Human Services or a child welfare agency that contracts with DHHS for foster care services.
- III. Receive satisfactory scores on the Child Welfare Certificate evaluation form completed by the field instructor at the conclusion of the field placement.

Students who complete these requirements will receive the Child Welfare Certificate upon graduation from the BSW program. Unless the student indicates otherwise, his/her name and contact information will be shared with DHHS as a recruitment tool for child welfare position openings in the State of Michigan.