

Memorial University School of Social Work
MSW Field Education Manual
Agency Mentors

Field Practica in Field Settings Lacking Access to Qualified MSW Field Instructors

When the decision is made by the MSW Field Education Coordinator to place students in a field setting where there are no available qualified MSW field instructors, the MSW Field Education Coordinator designates a qualified social worker from the School of Social Work or from the community to provide offsite field instruction. Offsite field instructors are responsible for providing 25 hours of field instruction, including assignment of learning opportunities, integration of theory and practice, supervision of students, and evaluation of student learning.

Where there are no available qualified MSW field instructors and an offsite field instructor is assigned, the field setting designates a staff member (where possible, a social worker) to act as the agency mentor. Agency mentors are responsible for the mentoring and day to day supervision of students. They also are responsible for collaborating with offsite field instructors in assigning learning opportunities and evaluating student learning.

Roles and Responsibilities of Agency Mentors

Agency mentors assume a number of roles and responsibilities in mentoring MSW students, which are grounded in the *CASWE-ACFTS Standards for Accreditation*, the School of Social Work *Vision and Mission Statements*, and the MSW curriculum. The following list of roles and responsibilities of agency mentors may be individualized to fit particular field practica.

Agency mentors are expected to:

- complete and submit a *Field Instructor / Agency Mentor Information Form*
 - <https://www.mun.ca/socialwork/field/MSWFieldEducation.php>
- log into IPT (Intern Placement Tracking), where most MSW field practicum forms can be accessed, reviewed, completed, and signed;
- orient students and provide them with all relevant field setting rules, regulations, policies, and procedures, in advance of their field experiences with clients/ participants
 - /patients/service recipients;
- provide guidance and support to students in developing their *MSW Field Learning*

- *Contract (IPT)*;
- identify appropriate learning opportunities and facilitate student involvement with services and programs in the field setting;
- provide regular feedback and evaluation of student performance and learning,
 - including collaborating with offsite field instructors and students in the completion of the *Midterm Evaluation of MSW Student Learning (IPT)* and the *Final Evaluation of MSW Student Learning (IPT)*.

Agency mentors are strongly encouraged to read the components of the *MSW Field Education Manual and the CASWE-ACFTS Standards for Accreditation (Guiding Principles; Core Learning Objectives; Field Education)*; plus review the *Agency-School Affiliation Agreement and Information Sharing Agreement*, and the *MSW Field Practicum forms*. This information is available on the MSW Field Education website: <https://www.mun.ca/socialwork/field/MSWFieldEducation.php>.

MSW Field Practicum Learning Opportunities

Agency mentors, in partnership with field instructors, are responsible for assigning learning opportunities and activities to students. Typically, this occurs in collaboration with students. The assignment of learning opportunities and activities is expected to be grounded in the *MSW Field Learning Contract (IPT)* and the *CASWE-ACFTS Standards for Accreditation*.

Students are assigned social work responsibilities only to the degree commensurate with the assessment, by the agency mentors and field instructors, of the student's level of skill and ability. While students, agency mentors, and field instructors may agree upon the assignment of responsibilities, the wishes of clients/participants/patients/service recipients are primary. **People have the right to choose whether or not they receive social work services from students.**

Depending on the field setting and the particular MSW field practicum, learning activities may include a variety of components of social work practice:

- administration/supervision;
- collection and review of literature and other resources;
- community development and capacity-building;
- design, delivery, and evaluation of professional and public education and training;
- design and development of tools, resources, and program materials;
- direct/clinical practice;
- health and wellness promotion;
- interprofessional and interagency collaboration;
- needs assessment;
- organizational development;
- policy analysis, development, implementation, and evaluation;
- prevention/intervention; and
- program development, delivery, and evaluation.

Research is a key component of Pathways/Pathways Scholarship/Theses and, as such, is not an acceptable learning activity of MSW field practica.

MSW Field Practicum Hours

The MSW field practicum is designed to be completed on a full-time or part-time basis. On a full-time basis, the 500 hours normally are completed over one semester in 13 to 15 weeks (35 to 40 hours per week). On a part-time basis, the 500 hours normally are completed over two semesters in 20 to 32 weeks (minimum 16 hours per week). **The 500 hours do not include:**

- lunch, coffee, and other breaks;
- sick days, family days, bereavement leave, or other leaves of absence;
- snow days;
- statutory holidays or annual leave;
- any other absences from the field practicum/field setting;
- work on other social work courses (including Pathway, Pathway Scholarship, theses).

Students are required to inform their agency mentor and field instructor if they will be absent at any time from the field setting. If students are absent from the field setting for four or more days, it is the students' responsibility to inform the MSW Field Education Coordinator.

Confidentiality and Information Sharing

Students, the School of Social Work (i.e., Field Education Coordinators, offsite field instructors, field secretary, Associate Deans), and field settings (i.e., field instructors, agency mentors, agency coordinators) agree to maintain confidentiality of information in accordance with social work values and the CASW-ACTS Code of Ethics, the Access to Information and Protection of Privacy Act (ATIPPA), and other applicable privacy legislation. The *Agency-School Affiliation Agreement*, the *Agency-School Information Sharing Agreement*, and the *MSW Student-School Field Practicum Agreement* outline which information is to be kept confidential and which information can be shared between students, the School of Social Work, and field settings.

Continuing Education for Field Instructors and Agency Mentors

While not a requirement for providing field instruction, current and prospective field instructors and agency mentors are encouraged to complete the online Field Instructors Course and to participate in continuing education events offered by the School of Social Work and Memorial University.

Designed to provide prospective, new, and experienced field instructors and agency mentors with opportunities to advance their understanding of and increase their skills in field instruction and professional education, the online Field Instructors Course is a non-credit course, offered at no charge to social workers and agency personnel interested in field education. The course addresses the theoretical and practical aspects of social work field instruction, and is designed to challenge participants to think critically about field instruction, adult education concepts, field education methods, field education issues and challenges, and evaluating the field practicum experience.

Current and prospective field instructors and agency mentors are invited to contact Lisa Muise, Field Secretary, at scwkfield@mun.ca or (709) 864-2556 for more information or to register.

Social workers may receive Continuing Education Credits for Field Instruction and for Field Instructor Courses from their provincial social work regulatory body (i.e., NLASW).