

Memorial University School of Social Work
MSW Field Education Manual
Special Arrangements for MSW Field Practica

Students may request approval to complete MSW field practica in field settings requiring special arrangements (i.e., in field settings with no available qualified field instructors, in their workplace, paid practica). Final approval and related decisions concerning field practica rests with the MSW Field Education Coordinator (who reviews the requests, consults with appropriate parties, and informs students of the decision to accept, revise, or deny their request) and with the field settings (who make the final decisions regarding the selection and placement of students within their respective organizations).

1. Completion of Field Practica in Field Settings Lacking Access to Qualified MSW Field Instructors

While it is preferable to have onsite field instruction, there also exist excellent learning opportunities within field settings where there are no qualified field instructors available. Thus, students may request approval to complete an MSW field practicum in a field setting where there are no qualified field instructors available. Approval to do so may be granted by the MSW Field Education Coordinator, subject to the resources for and availability of offsite field instruction.

Qualified MSW field instructors are required to possess an MSW with at least two years post-MSW social work employment experience (*CASWE-ACFTS Standards for Accreditation*, 2014). In a number of provinces, including NL, field instructors are required by provincial legislation to be Registered Social Workers.

When the resources are available for the provision of offsite field instruction, the agency coordinator is in agreement, and the decision is made by the MSW Field Education Coordinator to place students in field settings 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 a minimum of 25 hours of field

instruction, supervising and mentoring students, facilitating the integration of social work theory and practice, and for collaborating with the agency mentor in overseeing the completion of the learning contract, assigning learning opportunities, and evaluating student learning.

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

2. Completion of a Field Practicum in a Student's Workplace

Students may request approval to complete an MSW field practicum in their place of employment, if:

- the learning opportunities, activities, and responsibilities are congruent with the learning needs of the student;
- the learning opportunities, activities, and responsibilities do not constitute or overlap with the student's activities, duties, and responsibilities as an employee;
 - **or** the MSW field practicum involves the student commencing employment in a new
 - position with new activities, duties, and responsibilities;
- the proposed field instructor is not a direct supervisor or manager to whom the student reports as an employee *; and
- the student's employer accepts and supports that the primary goals and objectives of the practicum are educational.

* Where the student reports directly as an employee to the proposed field instructor, if desired, the direct supervisor/manager may co-field instruct with another qualified MSW field instructor from within the agency. If there are no other qualified MSW field instructors available, an offsite field instructor may be designated by the MSW Field Education Coordinator (refer to #1). If desired, the direct supervisor/manager may co-field instruct with the offsite field instructor.

If the conditions listed above are met to the satisfaction of the MSW Field Education Coordinator, students can apply to complete their MSW field practicum in their workplace by submitting a written proposal (of one to three pages), which includes:

- a current job description;
- a new job description (if the student is commencing employment in a new position);
- a detailed description of the proposed field activities;
- a description of proposed learning objectives and opportunities;
- a discussion of how the proposed field practicum differs from the student's current/past work responsibilities and activities;
- the names, telephone numbers, and email addresses of the student's direct supervisor/manager and the proposed field instructor; and
- assurance that the student's employer understands the difference between the activities and responsibilities of the proposed field practicum and the student's employment.

The MSW Field Education Coordinator reviews the written proposal, consults with the proposed field instructor and/or direct supervisor/manager, and informs the student of the decision to accept, revise, or deny the request.

3. Paid Placements

Students completing an MSW practicum with the Government of NL typically are paid for the 500 required hours of the practicum, subject to current government policy. Other agencies or jurisdictions also may pay students for the 500 required hours of the practicum (or any portion thereof), subject agency policies.

The same process is used for matching students to paid and unpaid placements. Normally, students indicate their interest in completing a practicum in an agency offering paid placements on their Intent to Register in MSW Field Practicum and in their discussions with the MSW Field Education Coordinator.

Students are not guaranteed a paid placement, whether in their workplace or in another field setting. Neither the School of Social Work nor the MSW Field Education Coordinator is involved in any aspects of the payment for field practica. Any negotiations or arrangements for payment, or the discussion thereof, rest with the field setting and the student.