

*Memorial University School of Social Work*  
*MSW Field Education Manual*  
*Suspension & Termination of MSW Field Practica*

MSW field practica may be suspended or terminated as a result of:

- labour unrest in field settings; or
- concerns raised by students, field settings, or the School of Social Work.

The rationale and process for suspending or terminating MSW field practica are outlined below.

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### **Labour Unrest in Field Settings**

In the event of a strike, walkout, or lockout occurring at a field setting during MSW field practica, **under no circumstances are students permitted to cross picket lines or to perform the duties of striking workers.** Recognizing that each circumstance and solution is unique, and that different decisions may apply to each of the field practica affected, the following process will apply in the event of labour unrest in field settings.

### **Process for Responding to Labour Unrest in Field Settings**

In the event of a strike, walkout, or lockout occurring at a field setting during MSW field practica, students and field instructors (and agency mentors) are expected to consult immediately with the MSW Field Education Coordinator. Decisions about suspending or terminating MSW field practica will be made subsequent to one or more formal meetings (in person or utilizing distance technology) involving the students, field instructors (and agency mentors), and MSW Field Education Coordinator. The meeting(s) also may include the agency coordinator (or delegate) and the Associate Dean of Graduate Studies and Research (or delegate). Other persons may be invited to the meeting(s), subject to mutual agreement by the student, field setting, and MSW Field Education Coordinator.

### **1. Suspension of MSW Field Practica**

If timing permits and all parties, including the student, field instructor (and agency mentor), field setting, and MSW Field Education Coordinator, are in agreement, those MSW field

practica affected by labour unrest will be delayed or temporarily suspended. If circumstances change, the decision to delay or temporarily suspend those field practica can be renegotiated.

## **2. Termination of MSW Field Practica**

If timing does not permit or if all parties, including the student, field instructor (and agency mentor), field setting, and MSW Field Education Coordinator, are not in agreement with delaying or temporarily suspending the MSW field practica affected by labour unrest, those field practica will be terminated.

When MSW field practica are terminated, the field setting will provide a written assessment of the learning and performance of each affected student up to and including the time the MSW field practica were terminated. Students will have access to this written assessment, as per the Access to Information and Protection of Privacy Act (ATIPPA).

The MSW Field Education Coordinator will facilitate new matches between the affected students, new field instructors (and agency mentors), and new field settings. The hours completed in the initial field settings will be credited to the affected students. As such, the affected students will be obligated to complete only the remainder of the total 500 hours in the new field settings.

During negotiations with the new field instructors (and agency mentors) for new MSW field practica, the MSW Field Education Coordinator will provide any potential field settings with information concerning the affected students' academic preparation, performance, and past field practicum experience. Students are encouraged to share with the new field instructors (and agency mentors) all relevant information pertaining to the terminated field practicum.

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### **Concerns Raised by Students, Field Settings, or the School of Social Work**

Concerns, which may lead to suspension or termination of an MSW field practicum, may be raised by students, field settings, or the School of Social Work due to:

- concerns or circumstances related to students (i.e., inappropriate conduct, unacceptable performance, personal circumstances);
- concerns or circumstances related to field instruction, field instructors, or agency mentors; and/or
- concerns or circumstances related to the field setting.

While it is expected that students will never knowingly compromise the well-being of clients/ participants/ patients/ service recipients, **field settings are the final authority on all aspects of care or intervention for clients/participants/patients/service recipients.**

The processes outlined below will be followed before any decisions are made to terminate an MSW field practicum. In exceptional circumstances, a field practicum may be suspended until a formal meeting is convened. Students who, without prior approval of the MSW Field Education Coordinator and the field setting, suspend or terminate an MSW field practicum normally will be given a grade of FAIL in SCWK 6917.

### **Process for Responding to Concerns Raised by Students, Field Settings, or the School of Social Work**

Regardless of who raises concerns, decisions about a student leaving a field setting or about suspending or terminating an MSW field practicum will be made subsequent to one or more formal meetings (in person or utilizing distance technology) involving the student, field instructor (and agency mentor), and the MSW Field Education Coordinator. The meeting(s) also may include the agency coordinator (or delegate) and the Associate Dean of Graduate Studies and Research (or delegate). Other persons may be invited to the meeting(s), subject to mutual agreement by the student, field setting, and MSW Field Education Coordinator.

Only after concerns have been explored fully and alternative actions considered will a decision be made to terminate an MSW field practicum. When such a decision is made, the MSW Field Education Coordinator will terminate the field practicum at that field setting, and the field setting will provide a written assessment of student learning and performance up to and including the time the field practicum was terminated. The student will have access to this written assessment, as per the *Access to Information and Protection of Privacy Act (ATIPPA)*.

When an MSW field practicum is terminated, those present at the meeting(s) will discuss the grading outcome for the student and may recommend that the student will:

- 1) receive a FAIL grade and not be permitted to continue SCWK 6917; or
- 2) not receive a FAIL grade and be permitted to continue SCWK 6917 in a subsequent field setting.

The final decision regarding grading outcome rests with the MSW Field Education Coordinator and is subject to appeal by the student.

## **1. FAIL Grade in SCWK 6917**

When the decision, following the termination of the MSW field practicum, is that the student will receive a FAIL grade, there will be no continuation of SCWK 6917.

## **2. Continuation of SCWK 6917 in a Subsequent Field Setting**

When the decision, following the termination of the MSW field practicum, is that the student be permitted to continue SCWK 6917 with a new field instructor (and agency mentor) in a new field setting, the MSW Field Education Coordinator will facilitate a new match between the student, a new field instructor (and agency mentor), and new field setting. The MSW Field Education Coordinator, in consultation with the initial field instructor (and agency mentor) will decide if and how many of the hours completed in the terminated field setting will be credited toward the 500 hour field practicum. The student may be obligated to complete only the remaining hours, the full 500 hours, or a portion thereof in the subsequent field setting.

During negotiations with a new field instructor (and agency mentor) for a subsequent field practicum, the MSW Field Education Coordinator will provide any potential field settings with information concerning the student's academic preparation, performance, and past field practicum experience. Students are encouraged to share with the new field instructor (and agency mentor) all relevant information pertaining to the terminated field practicum.