**University of Maine School of Social Work**

**Eligibility, Process, and Application for converting existing unpaid field practicum to paid employment-based practicum**

The University of Maine School of Social Work understands that students often must work during their studies and may find it difficult to manage the requirements of education, employment, and the field practicum. We also often have requests by students and agencies for paid employment-based field practicum. Paid employment-based field practicum can bring benefits to students and employers although there are important boundaries and safeguards that must be in place to protect the integrity of student learning. Regarding student protection, if placed at the work site, a student could jeopardize his/her paid employment if problems arise within the domain of the field placement. It is also possible for previous or current work experience and responsibilities to interfere with the successful completion of the field placement. CSWE provides standards and implementation guidelines for schools of social work about the importance of protecting the role of student as learner in any paid employment- based practicum and directs each school to create policies and procedures for how to address worksite-based field practicum.

## Stipended Placements

In recognition of the financial difficulties that graduate students may encounter, the Social Work faculty will consider stipend placements when possible and as offered by an agency or external funding source. A stipended placement must be structured so that the student is receiving a stipend, but is not being paid for service delivery. The payment of a stipend must in no way place employment expectations or requirements that result from the remuneration on the student.

## Paid Employment-based Practicum

At times a student may be interested in seeking a paid employment-based field practicum.

The School of Social Work believes that paid employment-based practicum can best structured in one of three ways:

1. when a student currently employed by a social service agency requests a paid employment-based practicum with their existing employment agency in a position that is different from their current or previous paid employment;
2. when a student in existing unpaid practicum is offered the opportunity to complete the rest of the field practicum as a paid employment-based practicum; or
3. when a student is offered a new paid employment-based practicum in a position they have not held before in an agency where they are not currently employed

In no circumstances may any student use the activities of their previous employment or employment responsibilities which they have held for more than 90 days to fulfill field practicum experiences. In no circumstances may students complete the field practicum earlier than outlined by the School of Social Work field practicum schedule due to working employment additional hours. Agencies should consult with employment statutes and understand students who are considered both employees and social work field students must be compensated for the entirety of their time with the agency to ensure compliance with wage and hour laws, workers compensation law and tax law.

It is the policy of the School of Social Work not to approve paid employment-based field placements unless special circumstances (as outlined below) are met. Any employment based arrangements requested by the student must include a **written proposal that ensures the integrity of the learning experience by documenting the requirements outlined below.** The proposal must be signed by the student, by the student’s agency administrator or administrative supervisor and by the BSW/MSW selected to be the Field Instructor. The proposal must be:

1. Submitted in writing to the Field Coordinator;
2. Agreed upon by the proposed field instructor, the student’s work supervisor and the administration of the placement agency;
3. Approved by the Field Director, the BSW Assistant Field Coordinator, and the MSW Distance Field Coordinator.

### Eligibility and process for converting existing unpaid field practicum to paid employment-based practicum

In order to be eligible to convert an existing unpaid field practicum to a paid employment-based practicum, agencies and students must be in good standing with the School of Social Work (i.e. no concerns with student performance in the field practicum to date or academic concerns in the field seminar class, no concerns about agency setting, supervision, etc.).

Agencies:

1. must continue to offer the student opportunity to meet all the social work competencies as outlined in the student learning plan agreement;

2. negotiate the rate of pay/benefits for the employment-based practicum, the job description, and the length of employment (temporary or permanent) directly with the student;

3. agree that students will complete all required field practicum hours at the agency as paid employment-based practicum;

4. provide field supervision/site supervision\* above any required employment supervision. We request agencies assign separate field instructors /site supervisors and employment supervisors;

a. If that is not possible, then a single supervisor may offer both employment and field supervision but the two supervision purposes cannot be combined. Field instructors/site supervisors must offer 1.5 hours of field instruction or supervision (1 hour individually weekly and ½ hour as needed) in addition to any required employment supervision.

5. sign completed student worksite application and discuss information contained within with the Field Coordinator prior to approval.

6. sign a new University of Maine Field Placement Affiliation Agreement prior to the student beginning any paid practicum.

*\*Field instructors may hold BSW or MSW for BSW students only. Field Instructors must hold an MSW for MSW students. All field instructors must have two years post graduate social work experience*.

Students:

1. negotiate the rate of pay/benefits for the employment-based practicum, the job description, and the length of employment (temporary or permanent) directly with the agency;

2. clarify the expectations with the agency for employment timeframes, including post practicum and semester breaks;

a. Students are not able to engage in field placement activities during times they are not registered for classes (i.e. winter break/summer break) without special arrangements made with the faculty liaison.

b. In no circumstances may students complete the field practicum earlier than outlined by the School of Social Work field practicum schedule due to working employment additional hours.

3. complete and sign student worksite application and discuss information contained within with the Field Coordinator prior to approval. This application must be approved prior to any paid employment-based placement hours being counted towards field hours;

4. make any additions to the student learning plan agreement based on new opportunities offered.

**UNIVERSITY OF MAINE APPLICATION FOR OR CONVERTING EXISTING UNPAID FIELD PRACTICUM TO PAID EMPLOYMENT-BASED PRACTICUM**

***Instructions:*** *Students must complete in full and obtain required signatures prior to submitting to the Field Coordinator.*

Student’s Name:

1. Agency/program and address of your current Field Practicum
   1. Program and address of your proposed paid employment-based field practicum (if different)
2. Describe your current field practicum (i.e. responsibilities, population of clients or client systems that you currently work with, etc.)
3. Describe your proposed paid employment based-field practicum (if different or note same as above)
4. Does your proposed paid employment-based field practicum continue to offer opportunities to demonstrate all 9 social work competencies?
5. Does your proposed paid employment-based field practicum significantly alter or change your student learning plan agreement?
   1. If so, please provide brief summary of changes
6. What kinds of things will you do to keep your paid employment secure and in good standing while also being a student field practicum student?
7. What kinds of things will you do to keep the focus on your learning as a field practicum student while also being an employee?
8. Name/Contact information for your employment supervisor at the agency
9. Name/Contact information for Field Instructor or BSW/MSW consultant
   1. Credentials of proposed Field Instructor or BSW/MSW consultant: BSW or MSW?
10. Is the Field Instructor or BSW/MSW consultant employed at the agency?
    1. If the proposed field instructor or BSW/MSW consultant is not employed at the agency, provide the name and contact information for the person who will oversee your daily proposed field practicum tasks at the agency (i.e. your site supervisor).
11. Number of paid employment-based field practicum hours per week:
    1. # of paid employment-based field practicum hours per week: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_
    2. # of additional, paid, non-practicum employment hours per week at the agency:\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_
12. Student rate of pay (please complete all that apply)\*:
    1. Hourly: $\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_
    2. Salaried: $\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_
13. Temporary or Permanent Position?\* (Please check all that apply:
    1. This employment-based field practicum is expected to be temporary for the student for the length of the field practicum\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_
    2. This employment -based field practicum is expected to be permanent for the student and continue post field practicum\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Student signature \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ Date\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Employment supervisor’s signature

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Field Instructor’s signature

\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_Date\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

*\*Gathered only for aggregate, de-identified accreditation and university data reporting purposes.*



This request was reviewed on \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_(date) and \_\_\_\_\_\_approved or \_\_\_\_\_\_not approved. If not approved, see comments below.

Field Coordinator’s Signature

\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_Date\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

**Field Coordinator Comments:**