**University of Maine School of Social Work**

**Eligibility, Process, and Application for Unpaid, Worksite-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 worksite-based field practicum. Worksite-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 worksite- based practicum and directs each school to create policies and procedures for how to address worksite-based field practicum.

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**Worksite-based Practicum**

At times a student may be interested in seeking a worksite -based practicum.

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

1. when a student currently employed by a social service agency requests a worksite-based practicum (paid or unpaid) with their existing employment agency in a position that is different from their current or previous paid employment; or
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 paid employment-based practicum using a new employment position as the field practicum. (New employment is held at least 60 days but no more than 12 months prior to academic semester the field placement begins.)

It is the policy of the School of Social Work not to approve worksite-based field placements unless special circumstances (as outlined below) are met. Any worksite 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.

**Stipends during an unpaid, worksite-based practicum**

Students may receive stipends from the University of Maine as part of a university administered, grant funded program during their placement with an employing agency. A stipend 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. Students may not receive stipends from their employment agency during an unpaid placement at a worksite-based practicum.

**Unpaid, Worksite-based practicum**

A student who is also a current employee of placement agency may petition to complete an entirely unpaid internship with their employer in a role that is different than the student’s current or previous employment responsibilities.

While it is acknowledged that the student is an employee of the agency, while conducting Field Internship hours, the student will not perform any activities that the student usually undertakes as an employee or perform any activities in any areas where the student usually undertakes activities as an employee. During the internship hours, the student shall not be classified as an employee of the Agency, and shall not be entitled to any payment from the Agency in the nature of benefits under the Maine Workers Compensation Act for any accident, illness, occurrence or event occurring in or relating to the Agency and arising out of the field learning experience or for any other purpose. The student shall not receive any compensation from the Agency for their participation in the field learning experience. It is intended that for all purposes during the Practicum the student shall be a student of the School and not an employee of the School or the Agency.

UMS and the Agency are independent entities and are not partners, agents, or a joint venture. With regard to its own employees only, each party will be responsible for compliance with all applicable laws, rules, and regulations involving but not limited to employment, labor, overtime, hours of work, working conditions, workers compensation, payment of wages and payment of taxes (such as unemployment, Social-Security and other payroll taxes including other applicable contributions from such persons as required by law). The Agency is encouraged by UMS to discuss with the Agency's legal counsel the possible legal consequences of having individuals who are Agency employees also engaging in a field placement concurrent with their employment.

### **Eligibility and process for current employee unpaid, worksite-based practicum**

Students who are currently employees of an agency may request an unpaid, worksite-based practicum with their employer in a role that offers new learning opportunities appropriate to their level of field practicum (generalist or specialization) in a different learning-based role than their current or previous paid employment. In order to be eligible, students must have worked for the agency for more than 90 days and be in good standing with the agency. In order to be eligible, agencies must meet criteria established by the School of Social work that guides selection of field agencies and field instructors/site supervisors and offer the student different learning opportunities than the student’s current or previous employment responsibilities. Furthermore, agencies must ensure the student’s opportunity to engage in all social work competencies and behaviors in order to fulfill field education requirements.

**Agencies:**

1. negotiate new role and new learning as an unpaid worksite-based placement directly with the student;
2. offer the student different learning opportunities than the student’s current or previous employment responsibilities during the placement;
3. ensure the student has opportunity to engage in all social work competencies and behaviors in order to fulfill field education requirements during the placement;
4. provide field supervision/site supervision\* above the required employment supervision. The School of Social Work requests that agencies assign separate field instructors /site supervisors and employment supervisors.
   1. 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 supervision (1 hour individually weekly and ½ hour as needed) in addition to any required employment supervision
5. sign the completed student application and discuss information contained within with the Field Coordinator prior to approval; and
6. sign a University of Maine Field Placement Affiliation Agreement prior to the student beginning any 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. Must be current employees of the agency [as defined by employment of more than 90 days] and in good standing with their employer;

2. work with the employer to develop different learning opportunities during the unpaid worksite-based placement than the student’s current or previous employment responsibilities;

3. understand they must demonstrate all social work competencies and behaviors during the placement in order to fulfill field education requirements;

5. clarify the expectations of the agency for field placement timeframes, including semester breaks;

a. may count up to 40 hours of pre-practicum *orientation only* towards their field practicum hours**.** No other pre-placement hours will count towards field practicum hours.

b. 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.

c. In no circumstances may students complete the field practicum earlier than outlined by the School of Social Work field practicum schedule

5. and complete the unpaid worksite application and submit to the field coordinator. This application must be approved prior to any hours being counted towards field placement hours.

**UNIVERSITY OF MAINE APPLICATION FOR CURRENT EMPLOYEE, UNPAID WORKSITE-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 employment site:
2. Program and program address of your proposed field placement:
3. Job titles/dates of job titles you have held while employed at the agency:
4. Describe your current employment position at the agency (i.e. job responsibilities, population of clients or client system that you currently work with, etc.):
5. Describe your proposed field practicum, including how the learning responsibilities of the field practicum will be different from your current job responsibilities:
6. Using the 9 Social Work competencies, describe the new learning opportunities that you expect to receive as a practicum student in the agency. Provide at least one example per competency:
   * 1. Demonstrate ethical professional behavior
     2. Engage Diversity and Difference in Practice
     3. Advance Human Rights and Social, Economic and Environmental Justice
     4. Engage in Practice-informed Research and Research-Informed Practice
     5. Engage in Policy Practice
     6. Engage with Individuals, Families, Groups, Organizations, and Communities
     7. Assess Individuals, Families, Groups, Organizations, and Communities
     8. Intervene with Individuals, Families, Groups, Organizations, and Communities
     9. Evaluate Practice with Individuals, Families, Groups, Organizations, and Communities
7. 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?
8. What kinds of things will you do to keep the focus on your learning as a field practicum student during the placement while also being an employee at the agency?
9. Name/Phone/Email for your employment supervisor at the agency
10. Name/Phone/Email for proposed field instructor/supervisor?
    1. Credentials of field instructor/supervisor? (Please check)

\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_BSW or \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ MSW or \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_Other degree

* 1. Is the proposed field/instructor supervisor employed at the agency? If not, where?

1. A BSW or MSW Field Instructor is required for BSW students during placement. An MSW field instructor is required for MSW students. If the proposed placement supervisor listed above does not have a BSW degree or MSW degree, please provide the name/phone/email for the person who will be your BSW or MSW consultant:
   1. Credentials of proposed BSW/MSW consultant Please check)

\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_BSW or \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ MSW

1. Number of employment hours per week you plan to complete at the agency during the field placement period\*: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_
2. Standard # of placement hours you plan to complete at the agency during field placement (please check):
   1. BSW 400 hours \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_
   2. MSW Generalist 400 hours \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_
   3. MSW Specialization 500 hours\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_
3. Student rate of pay while an employee (please complete all that apply)\*:
   1. Hourly: $\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_
   2. Salaried: $\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

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

Student signature: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_Date\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Employment supervisor’s signature: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_Date\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Field Instructor’s signature: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_Date\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

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**