# University of Maine School of Social Work

# Plan for Interruption of Field Placement

# Due to COVID-19

The School of Social Work at the University of Maine has developed a plan to address temporary disruption to students’ social work field placements due to national or local events such as communicable diseases including the potential spread of COVID-19

If students are advised by their agency, supervisor, and/or government to not attend their field placement, or if safety concerns warrant a temporary disruption in field placement, students should **immediately** consult with **BOTH** their SSW Faculty Field Liaison and their Field Supervisor(s)/ Instructors.

In efforts to fulfill the intern’s hour requirements and educational competencies during temporary field placement stoppages, we are providing **alternative field learning activities** that can be completed off site.

This policy is meant to address short term field placement disruptions, with a maximum of 30 days. If the field placement stoppage continues beyond a 30-day period, a review will be conducted by the UMSSW Field Office to determine the most appropriate response to support students in completing their field placement requirements.

**Alternate Learning Activities**

# Field Instructors and Task Supervisors should assign students off-site alternative field learning activities that the student may complete in the event of a temporary field disruption. Examples of alternative field learning activities are listed below.

# Supervision: Weekly supervision using Zoom or other teleconferencing applications.

# Meetings with individuals, families, and groups utilizing teleconferencing applications that can be accessed via computer, tablet, and/or telephone; provided teleconferencing applications meet any agency requirements regarding HIPPA and/or confidentiality.

# Trainings for Agency: develop trainings that will benefit the agency (ex- self-care, ethics, etc.)

# Groups/Workshops for Clients: develop curriculum for future implementation with clients (ex- life skills, grief, trauma, domestic violence, etc.)

# Written Materials for Clients or Community: develop handouts/flyers/brochures (ex- explain voting rights, informed consent policies, etc.)

# Organizational Policy Review: review agency policies with suggestions/recommendations where appropriate (ex- safety policies, diversity policies, use of social media, utilization of technology, etc.)

# Legislative Policy Review: review relevant laws and policies impacting the population students work with (ex- Indian Child Welfare Act, Emergency Mental Health Holds, Homeless Camping Ban, etc.) and provide a synopsis of key takeaways or prepare advocacy materials (letter to editor, develop key talking points, etc.)

# Literature Review: conduct a literature review on a specific topic relevant to field placement (ex- effectiveness of an intervention, how interruption of services impacts mental health or economic stability, etc.)

# Grants: research potential grant opportunities and/or prepare aspects of the grant writing.

# Community Networking/Resource Development: teleconference with various service providers, participating in resource mapping, and develop a list of resources for clients with services offered, referral process, etc.

# Complete online trainings: complete assigned trainings and provide a certification of completion and/or a short written reflection and/or prepare a presentation to disseminate knowledge gained. Examples may include topics such as:

* Suicide Risk Factors and Warning Signs (Free, 1 hour):[www.co.train.org](http://www.co.train.org/) (Course ID 1080982)
* Building Resiliency: Supporting Youth Affected by Trauma and Community Violence [https://learn.nctsn.org/course/ind](https://learn.nctsn.org/course/index.php?categoryid=44) [ex.php?categoryid=44](https://learn.nctsn.org/course/index.php?categoryid=44) Each free recorded webinar presentation is 1.5 hrs.

Field Instructors and Task Supervisors may come up with other activities or trainings, in addition to the ones listed on this page. **All activities should be pre-approved by their agency supervisor**.

**Confidentiality and the Use of Technology**

All students must comply with relevant laws, regulations, ethical standards, and organizational policies to ensure the confidentiality of clients. Students and agencies are encourages to utilize the standards listed in the [Technology in Social Work Practice](https://www.socialworkers.org/includes/newIncludes/homepage/PRA-BRO-33617.TechStandards_FINAL_POSTING.pdf) guide to inform their use of technology. While each agency should develop their own protocols around the use of technology and confidentiality, the following best practices should be followed by all students:

* Take reasonable steps to maintain appropriate boundaries when using personal phone numbers or other electronic communication. For example, consider temporarily hiding your caller ID when making outgoing calls, through your phone’s settings.
* Position web cameras so that others can only see your face- all visible confidential data should be removed from camera view.
* Conduct all sensitive conversations in a private space. Be mindful of the potential for family members or bystanders to overhear any portion of your discussions.