

**University of Maine School of Social Work**  
**POLICY AND GUIDELINES FOR HEALTH AND SAFETY IN FIELD**  
**PRACTICUM DURING THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC**

Fall 2020

**Preamble:**

COVID-19 is an infectious disease caused by the coronavirus SARS-CoV-2. The virus is transmitted person-to-person through respiratory droplets that are expelled when breathing, talking, eating, coughing, or sneezing. Additionally, the virus is stable on surfaces and can be transmitted when someone touches a contaminated surface and transfers the virus to their nose or mouth. When someone becomes infected with COVID-19 they may either have no symptoms or symptoms that range from mild to severe and can even be fatal. During this global pandemic, it is imperative that all students, faculty, and staff abide by the safety protocols and guidelines set forth by the University to ensure the safety of our campus and, by extension, Field Practicum Agencies, Field Practicum Staff and Field Practicum Client Systems.

The University of Maine System provides the following COVID-19 Risk Statement: “The University consistently seeks to take steps to minimize the risk of COVID-19 infections (or any other spread of disease) in accordance with applicable law, regulation, and guidance provided by health authorities. These efforts may include policies and safeguards implemented by the University such as symptom checks, social distancing, use of facial coverings, and isolating and quarantining when required. Despite these efforts, the University cannot categorically guarantee that any person entering University campuses or facilities will not contract COVID-19 or any other communicable disease and any such person must assess and accept the risks of illness or injury for themselves.” The School of Social Work asserts this risk statement also applies to students opting into field practicum experiences and entering Field Practicum Agencies.

**POLICIES:**

Students must understand and follow all State and Federal health and safety orders, CDC recommendations, all University of Maine guidelines and requirements for campus safety, which also apply to the student’s experience in the Field Practicum Agency, in addition to SSW field policies and specific Field Practicum Agency protocols. In the case where Field Practicum Agency and any other health and safety protocols differ, students are expected to follow the more stringent protocol. **Students who do not follow these policies and guidelines may be at risk of losing their field practicums.**

The University requires **all travelers arriving in or returning to Maine from all locations, unless returning from a state exempted from the 14-day quarantine per Maine civil authorities, to self-quarantine for 14 days from the date of return or until obtaining a negative COVID-19 diagnostic (PCR) test for Covid-19.** The Covid-19 test may be sampled up to 72 hours in advance of the date of return to campus or upon arrival. **This policy applies to all field**

**practicum students arriving in or returning to Maine before entering in-person field practicums OR before returning to in-person field practicums after out of state travel.**

**If a Field Practicum agency requires a student to be tested prior to beginning the semester,** the University is providing testing available to students in internships. Students must contact [um.covidtesting@maine.edu](mailto:um.covidtesting@maine.edu) for a testing appointment.

All students are **required to complete the SOCIAL WORK 2020 FIELD PRACTICUM SURVEY prior to the beginning of the semester.** Completing this survey indicates that the student is opting in to the field practicum sequence and has read, understand and agreed to follow guidance in the following policies: **POLICY FOR FIELD PRACTICUM DURING THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC** (Fall 2020), **POLICY AND GUIDELINES FOR HEALTH AND SAFETY IN FIELD PRACTICUM DURING THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC** (Fall 2020), and **POLICY FOR REQUEST FOR EXEMPTION OF FIELD PRACTICUM HOURS DUE TO COVID-19 PANDEMIC** (Fall 2020). Students must watch and attest they understand selected training videos about COVID-19 and safety as assigned by the School of Social Work.

All students entering field placements **are required** to sign the Black Bear Cares Pact to protect the health of themselves and the health of others. All components of the Black Bear Cares Pact apply to student's time in field practicum. Instructions for reviewing and affirming the Black Bears Care Pact can be found here: <https://umaine.edu/return/black-bears-care/>.

**In particular, All Social Work Field Practicum Students will\*:**

- a. Self- monitor for symptoms of COVID-19 daily
- b. Wear face coverings during all in-person indoor and outdoor field practicum activities
- c. Practice hand hygiene
- d. Practice physical distancing
- e. Follow all existing and new recommendations from the CDC as information about the COVID-19 pandemic develops.

\*For more information, see general health and safety guidelines below.

If a student is **symptomatic for COVID-19 or has been in close contact with someone who has COVID-19** \*:

- The student **must not attend any in-person field practicum activities.**
- The student **must notify their Field Instructor/Site Supervisor and SSW Faculty Field Liaison.**
- The student must self-quarantine for 14 days after the last contact with a person who has COVID-19. See <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/if-you-are-sick/quarantine.html> for more information about quarantine.
- If symptomatic, the student **must call their medical provider or Cutler Health Center**

**and seek a COVID-19 test.**

- The student **must follow their medical provider's advice before returning** to any in-person field practicum.
- The Student **must not attend any in-person field practicum activities while waiting for results** of a COVID-19 test.
- Students must follow plans for remote field practicum attendance, as outlined in **POLICY FOR FIELD PRACTICUM DURING THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC** (Fall 2020).

\*close contact is defined by the CDC as “You were within 6 feet of someone who has COVID-19 for a total of 15 minutes or more; You provided care at home to someone who is sick with COVID-19; You had direct physical contact with the person (hugged or kissed them); You shared eating or drinking utensils; They sneezed, coughed, or somehow got respiratory droplets on you”.

If a student **tests positive for COVID-19:**

- Students must **follow all recommendations from their medical provider**, including self-isolating until recovered. See <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/if-you-are-sick/isolation.html> for information about self-isolating.
- Students **must immediately notify their Field Instructor/Site Supervisor and the SSW Faculty Field Liaison** of the positive test results.
- Students **must self-report COVID-19 results** to UMaine and UMM Community Information line at **207.581.2681** and by completing the self-reporting form: <https://umaine.edu/return/covid-19-self-reporting-form/>
- Students **must not attend any in-person field practicum activities** until cleared by their medical provider to return.
- Students may follow plans for remote field practicum attendance, as outlined in **POLICY FOR FIELD PRACTICUM DURING COVID-19** (Fall 2020).

All students must discuss agency specific health and safety precautions with their Field Instructor/Field Supervisor(s) and communicate any concerns immediately to their Field Instructors/Site staff and their SSW Faculty Field Liaison. Students are encouraged to document health and safety related concerns addressed with the agency in writing. If the concern is unable to be resolved by the Field Instructor/Site Supervisor and the student, the SSW faculty Field Liaison will work with the student and the field instructor/field supervisor to address the concern, documenting the plan for resolution of the concern in writing. If there is a situation that cannot be resolved, the School of Social Work will follow the **POLICY FOR FIELD PRACTICUM DURING THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC** (Fall 2020).

## General Health & Safety Guidelines:

**Know where to find the most updated information about COVID-19:** The CDC provides current information about COVID-19 here: <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-nCoV/index.html>.

Maine's CDC provides information here: <https://www.maine.gov/dhhs/mecdc/infectious-disease/epi/airborne/coronavirus/index.shtml>.

The University of Maine provides information here: <https://umaine.edu/return/>.

**Symptom checking:** The symptoms of COVID-19 can range from mild to severe, and even people with mild symptoms may transmit the virus to others. Symptoms may appear 2-14 days after exposure to the virus. Students should monitor for the following symptoms daily:

- fever (temperature >100.4F/38.0C) or chills,
- new cough
- loss of taste or smell
- shortness of breath/difficulty breathing
- sore throat
- diarrhea, nausea, or vomiting
- or the onset of new, otherwise unexplained symptoms such as headache, muscle or body aches, fatigue, or congestion/runny nose.

This list may not include all possible symptoms of COVID-19. The CDC provides a regularly updated list of symptoms, developed as more is learned about COVID-19, found here: <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/symptoms-testing/symptoms.html>

**Hand hygiene:** Proper hand hygiene is an effective measure to prevent the spread of COVID-19. Students should wash their hands often with soap and water or use a hand sanitizer with at least 60% alcohol, according to CDC guidelines, including but not limited to:

- Before eating or preparing food
- Before touching your face
- After using the restroom
- After leaving a public place
- After blowing your nose, coughing, or sneezing
- After handling your mask
- After changing a diaper
- After caring for someone sick
- After touching animals or pets

More information about hand hygiene can be found here: <https://www.cdc.gov/handwashing/when-how-handwashing.html>

**Physical distancing:** Students need to make every effort to maintain physical distancing (6 feet

or more) indoors and outdoors within their field practicum sites. Students should consult with their field agencies to understand how best to do this within their spaces.

More information about physical distancing can be found here:

<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/prevent-getting-sick/social-distancing.html>

**Face coverings:** Students must wear appropriate face coverings in their field practicums. Face coverings must be worn in indoor and outdoor spaces during all field practicum experiences unless: alone in a room with a door closed; alone outside in a space where and when they can reasonably expect to be alone and they have a face covering available in the event it is needed; when eating or drinking in a space where eating or drinking is permitted; or when a medical accommodation has been granted by appropriate University or Medical officials. When face coverings are removed people are placing themselves and those surrounding them at increased risk for COVID-19. More information about face coverings can be found here:

<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/prevent-getting-sick/diy-cloth-face-coverings.html>

and here: <https://www.maine.edu/together/community-guidance/everyone/>

***NOTE:** The intention of this policy is to support current students for successful completion of field practicum during the Fall 2020 semester. This policy may be changed to reflect additional COVID-19 related demands as they develop. Students, faculty, and field agencies will be notified of changes as they occur.*