



Lakehead  
UNIVERSITY

School of  
Social Work

Masters in Social Work (MSW)

## FIELD PRACTICUM MANUAL 2021/2022

SOWK 9601/5601 FIELD PRACTICUM



**EXCEPTIONAL.**  
**UNCONVENTIONAL.**

[lakeheadu.ca/socialwork](https://lakeheadu.ca/socialwork)

## The Field Education Manual and forms are available online at the following link:

<https://www.lakeheadu.ca/programs/departments/social-work/msw/msw-forms>

If you require assistance accessing online documents, please contact the School of Social Work office at

**Thunder Bay:** 807-343-8010 ext. 8576

**Orillia:** 705-330-4008 ext. 2003

Questions regarding the placement process, manual information or any of the forms should be directed to the appropriate Graduate Practicum Coordinator:

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**Orillia:** Jill Archer at [jarcher@lakeheadu.ca](mailto:jarcher@lakeheadu.ca)

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The School of Social Work acknowledges the high quality Field Placement experiences provided for our students by Field Supervisors and participating Agencies, Services and Organizations in the community of Thunder Bay, Simcoe County and beyond.

We appreciate the time and energy contributed to the Placement experience by innumerable individuals, and the continued interest and commitment to the Social Work program and to our students.

Lakehead University respectfully acknowledges its campuses are located on the traditional lands of Indigenous Peoples.

Lakehead Thunder Bay is located on the traditional lands of the Fort William First Nation, Signatory to the Robinson Superior Treaty of 1850. Lakehead Orillia is located on the traditional territory of the Anishinaabeg. The Anishinaabeg include the Ojibwe, Odawa, and Pottawatomi nations, collectively known as the Three Fires Confederacy.

Lakehead University acknowledges the history that many nations hold in the areas around our campuses, and is committed to a relationship with First Nations, Métis, and Inuit peoples based on the principles of mutual trust, respect, reciprocity, and collaboration in the spirit of reconciliation.

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# Welcome and Introductory Information

Welcome to the MSW field practicum program. It is with great pleasure that we welcome you to the **Lakehead University Master of Social Work program!**

We respect and appreciate the commitment you have made to find yourself here today. Your participation in this program and dedication to advanced study will enhance your already significant contributions to the field of social work, through your work with individuals, families, groups and communities. We are thrilled to work with you as you explore your placement preferences and secure an opportunity that will allow you to achieve your learning goals, develop new skills and grow professionally.

Welcome to the program!

## **Graduate Practicum Coordinators**

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# An Introduction to the MSW Practicum

## Definition and Requirements

Field education is an integral component of Social Work education. The Lakehead University MSW program provides practicum education focused on training in the field. It provides students with an opportunity to challenge themselves as change agents and to experience the internal dynamics of a community service organization while applying their acquired theoretical knowledge. It is a course where the “doing” and the “reflection upon that doing” constitutes the learning. The MSW practicum is the guided and systematic application of theory to practice at a professional level with client cases. The practicum is to be distinguished from the project experience by their different goals.

This supervised learning process allows for the integration of classroom learning with field practice experience; including skill development, increased practice knowledge and the implementation of professional values and attitudes.

## Practicum

The following criteria will define Practicum:

The practicum shall involve the provision of service by the student to one or more client cases that are compatible with the student’s learning needs.

“Client case” is defined as an individual, family, small group, organization or community.

To successfully pass the your MSW practicum you must\*:

- Complete 450 hours of practicum (\*\*2021/2022 420 hours)
- Submit all required documentation
- Complete midterm and end term evaluation, evidence of learning and reflection paper.
- Complete Integrative Seminars
- Complete exit interview with graduate practicum coordinator

\*Please utilize the practicum checklist

\*\*please note hours have been reduced for the 2021/2022 academic year, following CASWe recommendations related to the COVID-19 pandemic.

## Prerequisites

It is strongly recommended that students do not begin practicums until a minimum of 1 FCE of required credits (2 half credit courses) are successfully completed. In order to successfully integrate advanced social work theory to practice it is expected that students enter practicum with further theoretical training. It is recommended that students who wish to participate in a clinical placement begin in Spring/Summer. In exceptional circumstances, alternate start

dates can be discussed with the Field Practicum Coordinator and student’s Faculty Advisor.

Please note that at least three months notice must be provided to the Graduate Practicum Coordinators for planning and securing an MSW clinical placement opportunity in a community organization.

## Academic Accommodation for Field Placements

Social Work students with disabilities who require special accommodations for both academic courses and their field placements must be registered with the Student Accessibility Services at Lakehead University. With the student’s consent, Student Accessibility Services will provide written notification of the student’s requirements for academic accommodation to course instructors.

Student Accessibility Services provides services for students with disabilities, such as assessing and identifying reasonable accommodations to be implemented as part of both academic courses and the placement experience.

During the MSW placement planning process, it is helpful if specific accommodations for the placement experience are identified and shared with the student’s Faculty Supervisor and/or Graduate

Practicum Coordinator early in the planning process. With the student's consent, information regarding accommodations at the placement site may need to be shared with the Practicum Supervisor/Agency to ensure that the student is provided with the requested accommodations.

Further information about the Student Accessibility Services, as well as Lakehead University's Policies and Procedures Concerning Accommodations for Students with Disabilities, are available on the Lakehead University website at the following links:

<https://www.lakeheadu.ca/about/accessibility>

[https://www.lakeheadu.ca/sites/default/files/uploads/72/Accommodations%20and%20Access%20for%20Students%20with%20Disabilities%20-%20Medical%20Conditions%20Policy%20and%20Procedures\\_0.pdf](https://www.lakeheadu.ca/sites/default/files/uploads/72/Accommodations%20and%20Access%20for%20Students%20with%20Disabilities%20-%20Medical%20Conditions%20Policy%20and%20Procedures_0.pdf)

<http://studentaffairs.lakeheadu.ca/uploads/policies/Procedures-for-policy-on-academic-accommodation.pdf>

### **Practicum at a Place of Employment**

If a student wishes to embark on a placement at an organization where they are currently or have recently been employed, the student should follow the guidelines specified in Appendix I, in the Field Practicum at a Place of Employment Policy.

### **Paid Field Placement**

School policy states that students WILL NOT be allowed to participate in a paid field placement.

### **Roles**

#### **The Faculty Supervisor**

The Faculty Supervisor is responsible for approving the MSW practicum contract and ensuring that a copy of the approved practicum contract is placed in the student's departmental file.

The Faculty Supervisor, acting on behalf of the School, will be directly involved with the prospective field agency in negotiating and planning the placement. Students should discuss their placement learning goals and possible sites with their Faculty Supervisor before connecting with the Graduate Practicum Coordinator as required.

The Graduate Practicum Coordinator acts as a resource person in supporting this process, particularly with regard to respecting community agency protocols and identifying contact people, as well as documentation requirements for field placements. The forms required to secure insurance coverage for the practicum will be processed by Graduate Practicum Coordinator, as well as other safety related paperwork.

The Faculty Supervisor will provide and/or arrange appropriate supervision for all aspects of the student's practicum. Faculty Supervisors may occasionally function as the direct supervisor of the practicum experience. This may be the case when the student is doing a non-traditional placement where there is no on-site supervisor who is appropriately qualified with an MSW degree. If this is not an option, then the Faculty Supervisor will work with the Graduate Practicum Coordinator to ensure that an Off-Site supervisor with appropriate qualifications and experience is assigned.

The Faculty Supervisor is responsible for the mid-term and final evaluation of the student in the practicum and to ensure that a written final evaluation is placed in the student's departmental file. The Faculty Supervisor is responsible for submitting the practicum grade (pass/fail) on a Change of Mark form to the Administrative Assistant (Thunder Bay) who will ensure that the Director signs it before submitting the form to the Office of the Registrar.

#### **The Graduate Practicum Coordinator**

The Graduate Practicum Coordinator acts as a resource and support person in the placement planning and search process, particularly with regard to observing community agency

protocols and identifying suitable agency contacts. The Coordinator provides placement orientation and document information for students, Faculty and Practicum Supervisors. The Coordinator monitors initial documentation requirements for field placements, including the forms required to secure insurance coverage, and the Safety Orientation Checklist for placements. The Graduate Practicum Coordinator facilitates ongoing practicum policy development for the graduate program in collaboration with the MSW Committee.

### **Practicum Supervisor**

The Practicum Supervisor is a qualified agency staff member who will provide the on-site supervision for the practicum. The Faculty Supervisor has ultimate responsibility for ensuring that appropriate supervision is provided and to ensure that practicum objectives are achieved. Direct involvement by the Faculty Supervisor with the agency, Practicum Supervisor, or adjunct supervisor is mandatory to ensure practicum arrangements are clearly established.

Practicum supervision may be delegated to a qualified agency staff member, an adjunct faculty member or a qualified Off-Site Supervisor. An MSW student must be supervised by an individual who holds a minimum of a Master's Degree in Social Work and two years experience, as required by the CASWE accreditation standards.

### **Off Site Field Supervisor**

The role of the off site field instructor is to provide direction, supervision and evaluation in a field placement setting where there is not a qualified social worker with a masters degree on staff. The off site field instructor maintains a similar role to that of a Practicum supervisor field instructor arranging to meet with the student for supervision on a weekly basis and to be available for consultation in person or by phone as required. Consultation between the off site supervisor and personnel in the placement setting promotes valuable feedback based on the student's daily progress and input into evaluation of student progress. The off site field instructor is responsible to complete the mid and end term evaluation in consultation with the onsite resource person and faculty supervisor. In some cases the Faculty Supervisor will provide off site supervision.

### **D2L Course Site**

Students will access the Field Practicum Course Site on MyCourseLink/D2L.

### **Students Experiencing Placement Difficulties**

As professional Social Workers, students in the MSW program engage in self-directed learning. Should issues arise during practicum it is the expectation that students will engage in problem solving that is in line with the Social Work Code of Ethics and their level of professional practice experience.

It is the responsibility of the student and/or Practicum Supervisor to notify the Faculty Supervisor if there are difficulties during the practicum or if performance in the placement is consistently below expected standards. The student, Practicum Supervisor and Faculty Supervisor will meet together to discuss the concerns and how to support the student in achieving the expected level of performance. Re-contracting and clear identification of learning goals and expectations will be outlined together.

If a placement ends prematurely due to student health concerns, accommodation issues or placement agency issues unconnected with the student's performance, this situation may be resolved by the student's Faculty Supervisor working in collaboration with the student and Graduate Practicum Coordinator and in consultation with the Graduate Coordinator. In such instances a student may be permitted to keep placement hours already accumulated.

If it appears that the student will be unable to meet the expectations of the practicum, a decision may be made by the Practicum Advisory Committee to extend or delay the placement, or to look at an alternate placement site to assist in meeting the student's identified learning needs.

If a placement is terminated prematurely due to student performance, professional suitability, or safety concerns and/or deemed unsuccessful, placement time accumulated during the initial practicum experience will not be transferable to the second placement site. To ensure adequate opportunity for integrated learning, professional growth and the achievement of competency criteria, the student will be expected to complete a full placement experience in the new setting.

It will be determined by the School of Social Work Practicum Advisory Committee whether a student who has been unable to achieve the expected level in the field placement should be given an opportunity to repeat the placement. It is School policy to provide only one opportunity to repeat the field placement

### **The Practicum Advisory Committee**

The Practicum Advisory Committee shall be comprised of the Graduate Coordinator, the student's Faculty Supervisor, one faculty member from the

School of Social Work, and one community Social Work professional knowledgeable in the area of Graduate field education, in collaboration with a Graduate Practicum Coordinator. Membership of the committee may change based on any conflicts declared.

The Practicum Advisory Committee will provide consultation and/or support to the Faculty Supervisors regarding all aspects of the Practicum component of the Master of Social Work Program.

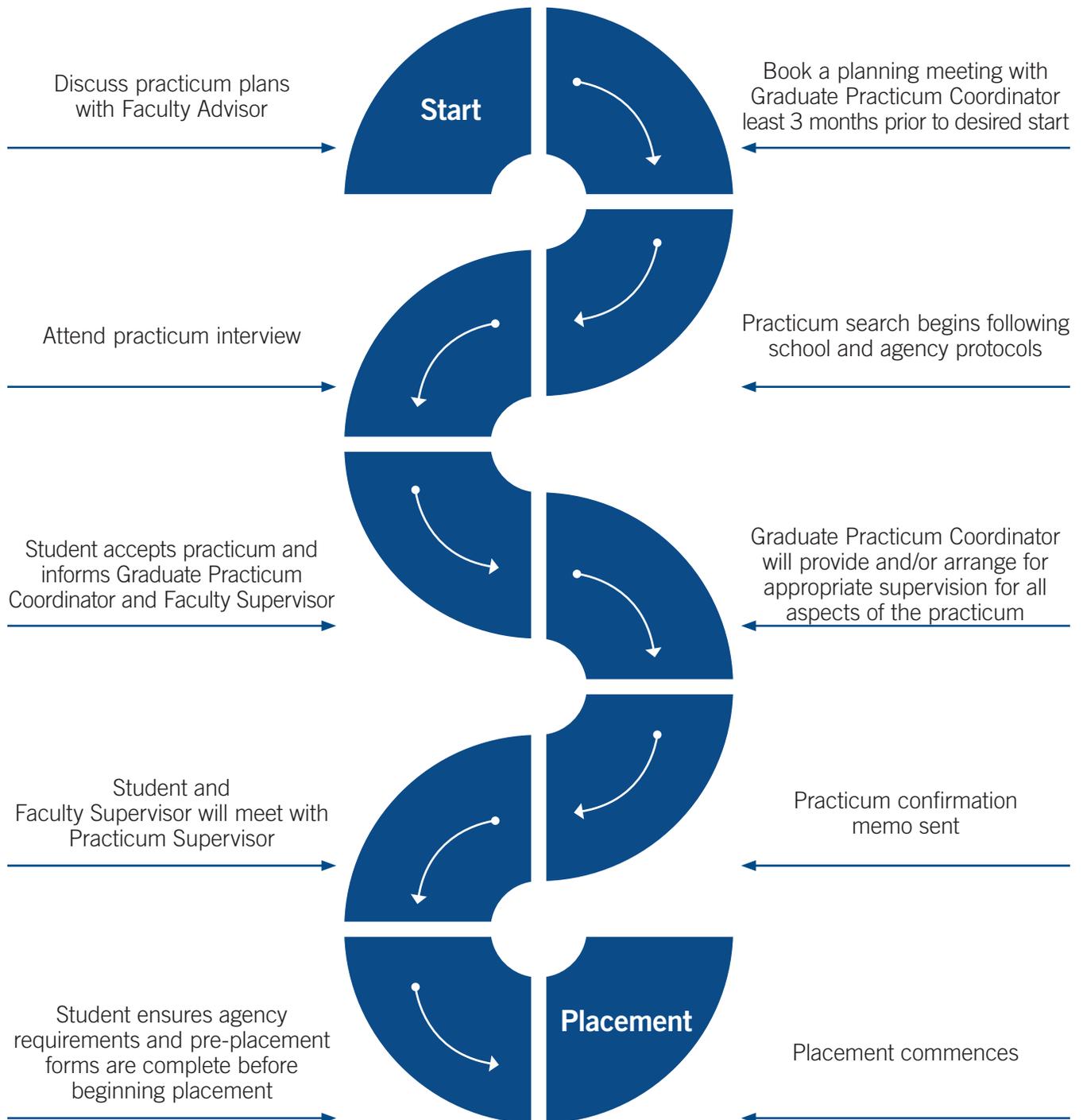
The Practicum Advisory Committee will review all practicum situations where the practicum is terminated early due to placement breakdown or deemed unsuccessful by the agency, Faculty supervisor, Practicum Supervisor or student. Both the Practicum Supervisor and the MSW student will have the opportunity to provide a written synopsis of the placement experience and/or identified issues and concerns to the committee for review. The Practicum Advisory Committee will then make recommendations to the Director of the School of Social Work as to whether a student who has been unable to achieve the expected level of competency in a practicum setting or whose performance is deemed to be unsafe\* should be granted the opportunity to repeat the placement. The Practicum Advisory Committee may also provide specific learning goals/

recommendations for the student to meet if repeating placement is a viable option. The Practicum Advisory Committee is also convened to make decisions regarding unique and/or challenging student situations that may impact placement planning.

\*Unsafe practice is any situation arising from a student's interactions with clients, agency personnel or other students that places these groups at risk for harm. As professional Social Workers it is expected that MSW students will be working at a professional level.

# Requirements for Planning a Practicum

## Placement Flowchart



## Placement Planning Steps

The following is the procedure for planning a student practicum:

- The student will discuss their practicum interest and proposed practicum plans with their Faculty Supervisor, including their learning objectives, preferred setting, and timing of the placement.
- Please note that at least three months notice must be provided to the Graduate Practicum Coordinator for planning and securing an MSW placement opportunity in a community organization.
- Student to book a practicum planning meeting with the Graduate Practicum Coordinator. This meeting will help to identify the Student's practicum goals, agency opportunities and availability.
- The Graduate Practicum Coordinator will begin the placement search. In this way, previously established agency procedures will be observed with regard to contacting agencies and securing placement opportunities, as well as verifying the availability of potential credentialed Practicum Supervisors on site. It is required that agency preferences and choices of Graduate Students are communicated to the Graduate Practicum Coordinator. Students are not to reach out to agencies to ensure that established protocols are followed and

there is minimal interference with ongoing placement planning for Undergraduate Students.

- Student to attend practicum interview at community agency with potential supervisor and/or research team.
- Placement is offered and accepted. If placement is not offered the planning process will begin again.
- No placement will be confirmed without this direct involvement of the Faculty Supervisor to ensure supervision and setting are appropriate to the students goals.
- Once a placement opportunity has been secured with a community organization, a Memo to placement supervisors, as well as a summary of Placement requirements for the Agency will be sent to the Practicum Supervisor. The Graduate Practicum Coordinator will ensure that established agency protocols are followed.
- Once a placement opportunity has been secured with a community organization, a meeting will take place involving the student, the Faculty Supervisor and the Agency Practicum Supervisor/s. The Agency-School of Social Work MSW Practicum Agreement will be completed and signed at the meeting. This meeting

also offers an opportunity for detailed discussion of the student's learning objectives and the opportunities available at the placement setting.

- It is necessary for the student to have regular supervision from a Social Worker with an MSW degree and post-degree experience, or a PhD in Social Work. Prospective Practicum Supervisors are requested to complete the Field Instructor Data Sheet to ensure that accreditation standards are being met. This provision is not intended to preclude professionals with other credentials from actively working with the student during the practicum. Co-Supervision and Interdepartmental exposure is acceptable and valued when pre-approved by the Graduate Student and Faculty Supervisor. In special circumstances, an off-site supervisor may be assigned to support a graduate field placement setting that can provide a valuable learning opportunity but does not have a qualified MSW Social Worker available on-site.
- In order to establish and maintain effective working relationships between practicum supervisors and the School of Social Work, Agency Practicum Supervisors will be invited to attend Practicum Supervisor seminars with other field instructors, faculty, and

the Graduate Practicum Coordinators. These will be held for the purpose of discussing current issues, curriculum, the mentoring/ learning process, and to create a supportive field network.

- All required pre-placement documentation (see below) will be submitted with the proper signatures to the Graduate Practicum Coordinator via D2L before placement begins. A failure to complete all required paperwork may result in an incomplete placement.

## Required Planning Documents

### MSW Field Practicum Student Agreement

Each student will be required to read and sign the MSW Field Practicum Student Agreement before planning their placement. This agreement clarifies expectations and policies regarding professional conduct, adherence to practicum policies, sharing of information and confidentiality, conflict of interest, criminal record search and medical requirements for placement. The signed agreement must be submitted to the Graduate Practicum Coordinator.

### Agency-School of Social Work MSW Practicum Agreement

As discussed above, a written agreement between the School of Social Work and the practicum agency will be collaboratively

developed either before or in the first week of the placement experience, and must accompany the Student Learning Contract. The following provisions should be addressed for all placements in addition to others deemed necessary for particular placements:

- Agency name
- Agreement to provide student with 450 hours of practicum experience
- Scheduling of practicum days & period of time to be covered by the placement
- Agency unit(s) or program(s) in which practicum is to be carried out
- Agency supervision/ consultation to be provided including names as well as credentials (if applicable) of those to be involved
- Any special agency arrangements/provisions/ resources connected with the placement
- Any special agency requirements of the student e.g. working hours, duties, requirement of a criminal records check, etc.

### The Agency-School of Social Work MSW Practicum

Agreement form must be signed by the student, the Practicum Supervisor, and the Faculty Supervisor on behalf of the School of Social Work. A copy of the signed agreement must be submitted to the Graduate Practicum Coordinator (Appendix D)

### Criminal Record Search/ Vulnerable Sector Check

Students will be required to obtain a current Criminal Record Search and/or VSC for the records of the placement agency before beginning their practicum. Students will be responsible for the cost of this search. The Criminal Record Search and/or VSC should meet the time requirements of the placement agency, which may require it to be obtained within either six months, three months or one month of the practicum start date. Planning ahead is crucial in obtaining the Criminal Record Search and/or VSC. These searches must be obtained from the students' home community police services agency. If the student's community is served by the Ontario Provincial Police a longer process may be required for the Vulnerable Sector Search. The results of the Criminal Record Search/VSC are to be provided directly to the placement agency and not to the School of Social Work, for privacy reasons. Students will be required to provide their local police services with a signed memorandum from the Graduate Practicum Coordinator in order to request a Vulnerable Sector Search (Appendix P)

## Note to Thunder Bay students

Students who are resident in Thunder Bay are required to apply for *Level 3:Police Vulnerable Sector Check (PVSC)* through the Thunder Bay Police Service Website: <https://secure.tritoncanada.ca/v/public/landing/thunderbay/home>

Student will choose the “employment” option of the application and pay a fee using a credit card (\$60.00!). Remember to allow sufficient time for the completion of the Criminal Records Search process. Please provide a copy of your completed certified “Thunder Bay Police Request for Search for Criminal Records” to your field placement site.

## Note to Orillia students

For Orillia students, please contact the Orillia Graduate Practicum Coordinator for more information on obtaining the required police checks from the police service in your home community.

## Other Requirements

Each student will be responsible for meeting any specific agency requirements for practicum students in that agency. These requirements may include, but not be limited to: provision of a current Criminal Records Search, which may also require a Vulnerable Sector Search; Medical requirements such as vaccination or proof of immunization, Tuberculosis Skin Testing, Mask Fit Testing and/or a current medical examination, as well as the declaration of any relevant agency Conflict of Interest as per School of Social Work guidelines and the MSW Student Agreement. Any medical records/letters/proof of immunization etc, and the Criminal Records Search should be submitted directly to the placement agency, and not to the School of Social Work for privacy reasons.

# Requirements for Completing a Practicum

All of the steps required to plan and complete the MSW Practicum are outlined in the MSW Practicum Student Checklist

MSW Student Placement: Planning and Documentation Table		
Document or Requirement	Role/Responsibility	
MSW Field Practicum Student Agreement	Graduate Field Coordinator & Student	<input type="checkbox"/>
Agency/School of Social Work MSW Practicum Agreement	Faculty Supervisor, Student & Agency Supervisor	<input type="checkbox"/>
Insurance Form: Student Declaration <b>Required for community &amp; research placements</b>	Graduate Field Coordinator & Student	<input type="checkbox"/>
Insurance Form: Letter to Placement Employers <b>Required for community &amp; research placements</b>	Graduate Field Coordinator, Student & Agency Supervisor/HR Department. (Faculty Supervisor for Research placements)	<input type="checkbox"/>
Pre-placement Safety Orientation Checklist	Graduate Field Coordinator, Student and Agency Supervisor/HR Department	<input type="checkbox"/>
Learning Contract/Research Plan	Student (with input from Faculty & Agency Supervisor)	<input type="checkbox"/>
Mid-term Evaluation	Faculty Supervisor, Agency Supervisor and Student	<input type="checkbox"/>
Mid-term Evidence of Learning	Student, following direction of Faculty and Agency Supervisor (if applicable)	<input type="checkbox"/>
Final Evaluation Form	Faculty Supervisor, Agency Supervisor and Student	<input type="checkbox"/>
Final Evidence of Learning	Student, following direction of Faculty and Agency Supervisor (if applicable)	<input type="checkbox"/>
Reflexive Writing Activity	Student with feedback from Faculty Supervisor	<input type="checkbox"/>
Exit Interview and complete practicum checklist	Practicum Coordinator	<input type="checkbox"/>
Attend at least two integrative Seminars (one seminar held per term)	Student	<input type="checkbox"/>
Change of Mark Form for placement (SOWK 9601/5601)	Faculty Supervisor	<input type="checkbox"/>
MSW Student Feedback Form	SW Administrative staff and student	<input type="checkbox"/>
Practicum Agency Feedback Form	SW Administrative staff and Agency Supervisor	<input type="checkbox"/>

## Student Learning Contract

The Student Learning Contract is to be developed by each MSW student in collaboration with their Agency and/or Faculty Supervisors. This is an important document as the learning objectives and experiences detailed in the learning contract will be used as benchmarks to assess successful completion of the MSW Field Practicum experience in the placement evaluation process.

The following guidelines are provided for assisting students, Faculty Supervisors and Practicum Supervisors in developing a useful Graduate Student Learning Contract. An example of a completed learning contract is provided at the end of this guide.

The MSW Field Practicum Learning Contract and/or detailed Placement Research Study Plan is to be completed with supervisory and faculty input, and submitted to the Faculty Supervisor for approval.

The various sections of the Learning Contract are addressed below, and some examples provided:

### Statement of Practicum Purpose and Objectives

This section of the Learning Contract is to provide a clear statement of the goals of the practicum and the specific learning objectives related to

each student's educational concentration. The specific learning objectives should address areas such as professional knowledge, professional ethics and values, and advanced level of skill development to be gained during the practicum. Theoretical concepts should be integrated into the practicum learning objectives at the graduate level.

Progress on achieving these learning objectives is the basis for the mid-term and final student evaluations. At mid-term, the learning objectives may be revised if the student, Faculty Supervisor and Practicum Supervisor/s agree it is appropriate. For example, if a learning objective is too extensive to be achieved within the placement time frame, or no longer fits with the available learning opportunities at the placement setting.

### Desired Learning Experiences.

In this section the student describes the specific learning opportunities that will be available at their placement setting to provide the experiences that will enable the student to achieve their learning objectives. These opportunities will be discussed in advance with the agency or research supervisor to ensure that the planned experiences are both available and feasible in the time allowed for placement. In describing at least four learning experiences planned for the

placement experience the student will

- Identify the client population and the nature of each learning opportunity or project that is planned for the placement
- Identify the practice level of each learning experience in terms of being an individual, group, community, policy or research intervention/project.
- Identify the modalities of practice in which the student will be gaining an advanced level of skill development and practice experience.

### Priorities for Supervision

Some examples of priorities for supervision may include:

- Supervision of case activity and clinical interventions
- Learning specific advanced practice skills
- Theory review and learning new theoretical constructs or approaches
- Theory application in the particular practice setting
- Agency policy/administrative considerations
- Social justice issues impacting service users
- Creative use of advocacy strategies
- Designing a research or program evaluation project to meet the needs of the agency setting

- Discussing the impact of politics and policies on direct practice settings and service provision
- Exploring complex ethical issues in the practice setting
- Providing feedback on student performance and addressing any issues that emerge
- Exploring student/practitioner self care and reflective practice

### Responsibilities of Student and Supervisor

In this section the pre-determined primary responsibilities of both the student and the supervisor should be described for this particular placement plan.

- General & specific expectations of both student and supervisor
- Preferred approach in preparation for supervisory conferences
- Methods of student reporting/recording on practicum activities
- Plans to review clinical documentation prepared by the student
- Method of documenting student's practicum time and activities
- Reflective practice opportunities/activities
- Integrative learning opportunities
- Discussion of the respective

teaching and learning styles of student and supervisor.

### Supervisory Conferences

- Identify the frequency of these meetings (supervisory sessions should take place at least once a week for a full time placement experience)
- Note the time and place planned for these weekly meetings
- Note provisions for contacting both the supervisor and other mentors or a manager in case of emergencies or unusual circumstances

### Mid & End-Term Student Performance Evaluations (both written documents and in person meeting required)

- Planned time and place for both the mid-term and final evaluation meetings to be noted in the Learning contract. If either a teleconference or videoconference is to be utilized this should also be noted.
- Note the parties who will be involved in the evaluation meetings. The student, Agency Supervisor and Faculty Supervisor must always be present. Other mentors who played a significant role in supporting the student's learning or who had the opportunity to observe the student's skills directly may also be included e.g. a co-facilitator of a group

experience.

- The proposed evidence of learning for each evaluation process should be planned when the learning contract is developed and detailed in the learning contract e.g. annotated literature review, clinical assessment, discharge summary, group report, policy developed during the placement, reflexive writing tasks etc. The evidence of learning should reflect the nature of the individual learning opportunity of each student.

### Practicum Evaluations

A Mid-Term Evaluation process takes place at the mid point of the MSW placement to provide the Graduate Student with feedback on their progress. The format and requirements of this process are at the discretion of the Faculty and Practicum Supervisors. Evaluations are to be done collaboratively with Faculty Supervisor, Practicum Supervisor and student. Both written documents and an in person meeting with the Faculty supervisor, Practicum Supervisor and student are required for evaluation. (Teleconference or videoconference facilities may be utilized for distance placements).

When the placement hours and activities have been completed, a Final Evaluation meeting will take place. At this meeting, the student's learning goals,

experiences and achievements will be reviewed and discussed. Written and verbal evidence of learning will also be presented by the student.

Any material submitted to the Faculty Supervisors by a Graduate Student as Evidence of Learning, where there is a possibility of identification of service users, will be kept confidential by the Faculty Supervisors and later disposed of in a secure manner. Please refer to the Confidentiality Policy (Appendix O).

Graduate Students are to submit a final copy of the completed Final Evaluation to the Graduate Practicum Coordinator who will place it on record as evidence of the student's successful completion of placement requirements.

The student's Faculty Supervisor determines the final mark of Pass or Fail on behalf of the School of Social Work. It is the responsibility of the Faculty Supervisor to submit a Change of Mark Form to the School of Social Work Administrative Office for processing.

### **Evidence of Learning:**

Students must produce Evidence of Learning at both the mid-term and end term evaluations that reflects progress in regards to the learning objectives and practicum learning experiences. The Evidence of Learning will be determined between the student, Faculty Supervisor and Agency

Supervisor and could include any of the following:

- Summary of practicum activities
- Written evidence related to research activity
- Evidence related to clinical activity.
- Program development material
- Policy developed for the placement setting
- Reflexive writing activity to evaluate the practicum learning experience:

Reflexive writing activity is required as one of the final pieces of evidence of learning. In this work the student will reflect on their total learning experience over the course of the MSW field practicum and how this learning will be integrated into their ongoing professional development. Once this reflexive writing activity has been reviewed by the student's Faculty Supervisor it will be shared with the Agency Supervisor to provide the Agency Supervisor with feedback about the student's experience in the agency.

### **Integrative Learning**

Integrative learning is provided through supervisory discussions with both the student's Faculty Supervisor and the Agency Practicum Supervisor/s, as well as by applying academic learning to practice contexts throughout

the placement experience. This integrated learning should be reflected in the written evidence of learning as well as the discussion at both evaluation meetings.

### **Integrative Seminars**

To further enhance integrative learning, two seminars will be held throughout the spring/summer terms. MSW students are required to attend both seminars. Seminars are facilitated by the Graduate Practicum Coordinator with the goal of connecting classroom and theoretical knowledge to practice settings. Seminars are not included as part of required practicum hours.

If a student misses a MSW Seminar, in consultation with the Graduate Practicum Coordinator a student can choose one of the following 3 options in lieu of a seminar:

- 1) a reflection paper on how you experienced integrating theory to practice
- 2) a short paper identifying how you observed and experienced the integration of a specific theory or theoretical orientation to practice at your placement site
- 3) a discussion with the Graduate Practicum Coordinator about the student's integration of theory to practice

## Exit Interview

Students will schedule an exit interview with their Graduate Practicum Coordinator upon completion of their practicum hours. The interview will include:

1. A review of the students MSW checklist for completion/ expected completion of final documents
2. Feedback on the practicum site and experience,
3. Recommendations for the program related to the Practicum experience from planning to completion
4. Brief discussion of the student's integration of classroom learning and theory to practice

supervising an MSW student and the MSW field process by the School of Social Work Administrative office.

The Placement Journey Flow Chart on the following page provides a visual overview of the MSW placement process, requirements and responsibilities.

## Field Practicum Feedback

### Practicum Feedback Questionnaires

Students are to complete the Student Feedback Questionnaire. Students may submit the feedback form electronically or submit it in hard copy to the Graduate Practicum Coordinator or the Administrative Assistant in the School of Social Work office. The Student Feedback Questionnaire may be found in Appendix G of this guide. The School of Social Work will provide the electronic survey link.

A feedback questionnaire will also be sent to Agency Practicum Supervisors requesting feedback regarding the experience of

# Required Placement Documentation, Forms and Links

Below is a list of all of the required forms for a typical placement in Ontario. Should you be interested in a remote/fly-in, out of province or international placement, additional forms are required and you should speak to your Graduate Practicum Coordinator early.

## Pre-Placement Forms/ Submissions

- a) Student Agreement Form
- b) MSW Practicum Checklist
- c) Resume

## Placement Forms

- a) Agency-School of Social Work Practicum Agreement
- b) Letter to Placement Employers – insurance form
- c) Student Declaration of Understanding – insurance form
- d) Health and Safety Orientation Checklist
- e) Field Supervisor Data Sheet
- f) Learning Contract
- g) Evaluation Forms
- h) Feedback Form

All current forms can be found here:

<https://www.lakeheadu.ca/academics/departments/social-work/msw/msw-forms>

## Practicum Insurance Coverage

### Ontario Placements

All post-secondary students in Ontario are covered under the (Ontario) Workplace Safety & Insurance Act and the Ministry of Training, Colleges and Universities while participating in unpaid training Placements. For those post-secondary students placed with employers outside the Ontario Workplace Safety and Insurance Board coverage, some private accident insurance is available through the Ministry of Training, Colleges and Universities. Students that plan to complete any part of their placement onsite with these agencies are strongly recommended to seek out additional personal insurance coverage that includes Covid-19 injury at their own expense.

### Out of Province Placements

Students placed out of province will have limited insurance coverage provided by the Ministry of Training, Colleges and Universities. Students that plan to complete any part of their placement onsite in another province are strongly recommended to seek out additional personal insurance coverage that includes Covid-19 injury.

## International Placements

Students completing International placements will not have any insurance coverage through the university. As part of the requirements to complete an International placement, students must obtain personal insurance coverage at their own expense.

### Insurance Forms

Two completed forms are necessary for the University to track Placements and ensure that students are eligible to be provided with coverage in the event of an injury while participating in unpaid training. These two forms are the “Student Declaration of Understanding”, and the Declaration form included in the “Letter to Placement Employers: Process for Workplace Safety and Insurance Board Coverage”.

Both the student and the Placement Agency are required to complete the respective Declaration forms for students on unpaid Placement and to return these to the Graduate Practicum Coordinator at the beginning of the Placement. Copies of these documents should be retained by the Placement agency and the student.

### **In the Event of an Injury**

If a student is injured on Placement, the injury must be reported to the Graduate Practicum Coordinator and the Human Resources department at Lakehead University, and a detailed claim form, the Postsecondary Student Unpaid Work Placement Workplace Insurance Claim, must be completed. This claim form may be accessed at the following link:

<http://www.forms.ssb.gov.on.ca/mbs/ssb/forms/ssbforms.nsf/FormDetail?OpenForm&ACT=RDR&TAB=PROFILE&SRCH=&ENV=WWE&TIT=1352&NO=022-13-1352E>  
(English)

or

<http://www.forms.ssb.gov.on.ca/mbs/ssb/forms/ssbforms.nsf/FormDetail?OpenForm&ACT=RDR&TAB=PROFILE&SRCH=&ENV=WWE&TIT=1352F&N=022-13-1352F>  
(French)

Please see Section on Forms for links to the insurance forms titled 'Student Declaration of Understanding' and 'Letter to Placement Employers'.

For students, all claims normally associated with an approved claim are available. These include health care costs, temporary disability, vocational rehabilitation costs, as well as Non-Economic and Future Economic Loss awards, when applicable. An injured student would be eligible for temporary disability benefits as long as the injury prevented

the student from participating in the training program, or in the labour force if the training program was no longer available.

This insurance coverage for unpaid Placements does not extend to students while they are travelling to and from Placements, while they are engaged in activities not authorized by the Placement setting or the university; or if they are breaking the law.

# Policies

Students are required to access and review the following policies:

- a) Harassment and Discrimination Policy: [https://www.lakeheadu.ca/sites/default/files/policies\\_procedures/Harassment%20and%20Discrimination%20Policy%20and%20Procedures.pdf](https://www.lakeheadu.ca/sites/default/files/policies_procedures/Harassment%20and%20Discrimination%20Policy%20and%20Procedures.pdf)
- b) Professional Suitability Policy: <https://www.lakeheadu.ca/sites/default/files/uploads/103/Professional%20Suitability%20Policy.pdf>
- c) Social Media Policy: <https://www.lakeheadu.ca/sites/default/files/uploads/103/Social%20Media%20Policy.pdf>
- d) Appeal Process for Field Placement Courses: <https://www.lakeheadu.ca/sites/default/files/uploads/103/Appeal%20Process%20for%20Field%20Placement%20Courses-1.pdf>
- e) MSW Practicum at Place of Employment Policy: See below
- f) Confidentiality Policy and Guidelines: See page 21

## MSW Field Practicum at a Place of Employment Policy

As stated in the Conflict of Interest Policy of the School of Social Work, a potential conflict of interest exists when a student is a former or present employee of an organization. This circumstance may preclude a placement at that particular agency or organization.

### Potential Risks and Disadvantages of a Practicum at a Place of Employment

The conflict of interest policy is in place to protect student and agency interests. There are many potential risks, challenges and disadvantages when a student is both an employee and a placement intern of the same organization:

- Role confusion and conflict – blurring of the boundaries between the student or “learner role” may occur due to the differing expectations agencies have of employees

as opposed to students on placement. Students may find themselves expected to perform duties unrelated to their learning objectives.

- Any problem or difficulty that the student experiences in the role of either student or employee may negatively impact on their other relationship status within the agency. Student placement difficulties have great potential to be detrimental to an employment situation whereas challenges that develop in an employment role may negatively impact the student placement experience, the supervisory relationship, and the evaluation of the student's practicum.
- The risk of placement challenge is increased due to the multiplicity of student roles. If a placement is terminated and/or deemed unsuccessful or unsuitable, placement time accumulated

during the initial practicum experience may not be transferable to the second placement site. To ensure adequate opportunity for integrated learning, professional growth and the achievement of competency criteria, the student will be expected to complete a full placement experience in the new setting.

- Being an employee at a practicum agency may limit or constrain the student's opportunity and ability to critically analyse agency policy and functioning.

### Procedure to arrange a Practicum at a Place of Employment under Exceptional Circumstances

Despite the Conflict of Interest Policy and associated risks and challenges, there may be exceptional circumstances under which a student will, at the discretion of both the School of Social Work and the placement

agency, be permitted to pursue a placement opportunity at their place of employment. An exceptional opportunity may be considered by the School if, in the School's judgement, it will broaden and enhance the student's Social Work skill development and knowledge base in a distinct and separate unit of the agency, and with a supervisor with no connection to the student's employment role.

The procedure to request and approve such a placement opportunity is as follows:

1. A formal written placement proposal and student role description are required from the student and/or agency, acknowledging that the student's paid work is in no way connected to the potential placement opportunity and does not overlap in any way with the student role, client caseload or agency unit.
2. Supervision must be provided by a qualified Social Worker with an MSW or a PhD in Social Work, who is not the student's employment supervisor or manager. The Practicum Supervisor is responsible for ensuring that the field practicum is educationally focused and meets the student's learning goals.
3. The written placement proposal must acknowledge the potential conflict of interest for the student, and state that all parties are aware and apprised of the risk and

complications that could ensue if difficulties arise in the placement or work situation, including how the risk and complications would be addressed.

4. The Faculty Supervisor, Graduate Practicum Coordinator and/or the MSW Faculty Committee for the School of Social Work may review the proposal in order to make a reasoned decision regarding the student's situation.
5. The Faculty Supervisor will contact the student and potential placement agency with a decision regarding the placement proposal, including any conditions that may apply if the practicum experience is approved.

### **Lakehead University School of Social Work Confidentiality Policy and Guidelines**

Confidentiality is a foundational ethic of social work practice. It is imperative that confidentiality be strictly upheld and practiced at all times by undergraduate students, graduate students, faculty and staff of the School of Social Work.

Students are responsible for maintaining the confidentiality of agency records in both print and electronic formats, and for familiarizing themselves with agency policies regarding confidentiality. Placement students will follow the placement setting's policies and procedures

regarding confidentiality and will ensure that this confidentiality is upheld both within and outside the field setting. This includes the transmission of information via computers, electronic mail, social media, answering machines and other electronic technology.

Students, faculty and instructors are expected to comply with applicable provincial privacy laws, including The Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act (FIPPA) and The Personal Health Information Protection Act (PHIPA), and to adhere to the guidelines on confidentiality as outlined in the CASW Social Work Code of Ethics (2005), as well as the OCSWSSW Code of Ethics and Standards of Practice (2008).

The OCSWSSW Code of Ethics and Standards of Practice, Second Edition, Paragraph 6, states that:

A social worker or social service worker shall protect the confidentiality of all professionally acquired information. He or she shall disclose such information only when required or allowed by law to do so, or when clients have consented to disclosure. (2008)

Students and School of Social Work faculty, instructors and staff are responsible for ensuring that no personal information or personal health information that could identify a user of any service system be used in class discussions or written assignments.

### **Guidelines for use of Agency material in coursework:**

To facilitate the integration of theory and practice, students may use examples from their field practice in their coursework or for evaluation purposes. The types of material that may be used could include, but are not limited to, social histories, case plans, genograms, assessments, case summaries, video or audio tapes, and process recordings.

To ensure that confidentiality is maintained when agency material is used in the classroom or for placement evaluation purposes:

- Precautions must be taken to protect confidentiality such as changing names and disguising other identifying data.
- If the placement agency (or an organization where an MSW student is conducting research) has applicable guidelines concerning confidentiality, students are to select and follow the strictest guidelines for preserving client confidentiality.
- Original case materials and recordings are the property of the placement agency and should not be retained or copied by the student or the School.
- The client and Agency Field Supervisor (on behalf of the agency) must give consent for any materials to be used for coursework or evaluation purposes.
- To use any video or audio

taped material, or whenever there is the possibility of identifying service users, the client's written permission must be obtained. (Special considerations should be taken for concealing client identity in the use of video recordings).

- Materials shall not be used in an unethical manner or without the knowledge and consent of the client for purposes other than those agreed upon by written consent (including for classroom purposes).
- When in doubt, the student must always discuss particular situations with the Agency Field Supervisor, Faculty Supervisor and/or Graduate Practicum Coordinator.
- Any hard copies of client related materials (such as process recordings) used as student evidence of learning are to be securely stored in a locked filing cabinet in the School of Social Work, and destroyed (by secure shredding) within 12 months. Electronic copies of such material must be similarly safeguarded. Confidential information in electronic form should be kept in a secure server environment with appropriate restricted user rights.
- The School of Social Work's Social Media Policy

(Appendix N) should also be consulted when considering issues of confidentiality and professional and ethical practice, as should the School of Social Work's Professional Suitability Policy (Appendix M).

### **Consent Form:**

Students must obtain written permission from the client and Agency Supervisor in any cases where video or audiotapes are to be used, specifying the ways in which any materials will be used and for what purpose (including evaluation or classroom purposes).

The Client Consent for Recording form (Appendix ---) and/or any documents required by the field setting to record client consent, must be completed prior to the use of any materials. The completed Consent for Recording form should be retained by the placement field setting in the client's agency file.

### **Sharing of student information/ student confidentiality**

Lakehead University and the School of Social Work respect each student's privacy and will protect student information in accordance with the Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act (FIPPA).

Personal information that you provide to the University (e.g. Social Work program application packages, practicum planning forms, placement evaluation

forms etc.) is collected pursuant to Section 14 of the Lakehead University Act and The Social Work and Social Services Act. This information may be used and disclosed as necessary for official university purposes and shared within the university on a need-to-know basis.

The field practicum is an integral part of the Social Work program. Information about you may be shared with agency representatives, field instructors, faculty supervisors, the Director of the School of Social Work and educational coordinators as necessary to support and evaluate your progress.

Information will be disclosed only to the extent necessary for the effective operation, supervision and assessment of the placement.

If any information should come to the attention of the School of Social Work significant enough to affect the student's placement role, and thus the field placement experience, the School will confidentially assess and discuss this information with the appropriate parties. Information disclosed in meetings with Field or Faculty Supervisors can be shared to the extent necessary to resolve concerns about a student's ability to successfully and safely complete the field practicum. The School will balance confidentiality against its duty to protect students, clients and placement agencies, as well as against legal duties to report.

Information about students may also be shared as necessary to support the student's academic success in the Social Work program, and, at a student's request, to provide letters of reference in the future.

## Resources

Link to the CASW Social Work Code of Ethics:

<https://www.casw-acts.ca/en/Code-of-Ethics%20and%20Scope%20of%20Practice>

Link to the OCSWSSW's Standards of Practice:

<http://www.ocswssw.org/professional-practice/code-of-ethics/>

Link to the OCSWSSW 's PHIPA Toolkit:

<http://www.ocswssw.org/professional-practice/hipa-toolkit/>

**EXCEPTIONAL. UNCONVENTIONAL.**