



**LAKEHEAD UNIVERSITY  
School of Social Work  
Honours Bachelor of Social Work  
H.B.S.W.**

***FIELD EDUCATION MANUAL  
Orillia Campus  
2021/2022***

**SOWK 3500 FIELD INSTRUCTION I  
SOWK 4500/4501 FIELD INSTRUCTION II**

**Lakehead University  
Orillia Campus  
School of Social Work  
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Orillia, ON  
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**The Field Education Manual and forms are available online at the following link:**

[https://www.lakeheadu.ca/academics/departments/social-work/orillia-Field-Placement -  
forms](https://www.lakeheadu.ca/academics/departments/social-work/orillia-Field-Placement-forms)

If you require assistance accessing online documents, please contact  
the School of Social Work office at 705-330-4008 ext. 2003

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

Tess Buchanan at [tcbuchanan@lakeheadu.ca](mailto:tcbuchanan@lakeheadu.ca) or  
Jill Archer at [jarcher@lakeheadu.ca](mailto:jarcher@lakeheadu.ca)

## **ACKNOWLEDGEMENT**

**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 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.**

**\*We acknowledge that the land on which Lakehead University, Orillia Campus,  
is located is the traditional territory of the Anishnaabeg People, specifically  
Ojibwe/Chippewa People. \***

**FIELD PLACEMENT GUIDELINES for the 2021/2022 ACADEMIC YEAR**

Field Education is an important component of the HBSW Program and the School of Social Work. We would like this to be a very positive experience for all of the students in the professional years of the program.

Due to the present COVID pandemic, we want to inform you of the possibilities and options available to students for the upcoming placement.

We fully understand that some students have concerns about moving into an onsite placement. Your safety is paramount to us as well as your success in the HBSW program. We are working to ensure that both of these items are addressed with the utmost care and responsibility towards all students and agency partners.

We want to clarify that for students who choose to complete an onsite placement, we are able to support you in that regard where there are opportunities.

For students who do not want to attend an onsite placement there are options for you to complete placement hours offsite. We want to stress that you have a choice. As field coordinators, we fully support you if you choose to not be in an onsite placement and can provide you with off-site/remote placement opportunities.

Placements could look very different for each student and each type of placement will be supervised by an experienced Social Worker. All of the placement options below will provide you with the necessary skills to move forward into the Social Work profession.

1. Onsite placement experiences and supervision
2. Hybrid placement with an agency (some onsite, some off-site work)
3. Off-site placement with an agency (phone counselling/ research placements etc.).
4. Remote placement with an off-site supervisor (no agency attachment).

Placements may begin as usual but there is a possibility that they may be shut down if the pandemic worsens. If that is the case, placements could continue remotely with offsite supervision.

For students choosing to attend an onsite placement, agencies will have specific policies regarding COVID -19. If you do agree to accept a placement you will have to follow the policies the agency has in place.

Please review your local health authority's website to fully understand the risks associated with COVID-19 as part of your decision-making process.

As per recommendations from the Canadian Association for Social Work Education (CASWE) required placement hours for the 2021/2022 academic year have been reduced.

3rd Year Winter term placement - 45 days (315 hours)  
4th Year Fall/Winter placement - 55 days (385 hours)  
One-Year Winter/spring placement - 90 days (630 hours)

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We are happy to answer any questions you may have regarding the Field Placement.

Jill Archer: [jarcher@lakeheadu.ca](mailto:jarcher@lakeheadu.ca) (One Year HBSW students)

Tess Buchanan: [tcbuchanan@lakeheadu.ca](mailto:tcbuchanan@lakeheadu.ca) (Third- and Fourth-Year HBSW students)

# FIELD EDUCATION MANUAL

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## INTRODUCTION

### I. Purpose of the Manual

The purpose of the Field Education Manual is to set out the objectives and related expectations pertaining to student Field Placements in the third, fourth- and one-year levels of the Honours Bachelor of Social Work program at Lakehead University. The manual describes general characteristics, policies and procedures of the Field Placements and has been updated to reflect changes. It outlines the various responsibilities of the Field Education Coordinator, Field Supervisors, students and participating agencies and organizations. The material in the manual is the result of contributions from many sources including students, Field Supervisors, agency personnel, faculty, and other Social Work programs.

### II. Distribution Plan

Students may access the manual online at [Orillia Field Education Manual](#). Field Supervisors, Placement setting Administrators and Faculty are encouraged to access the Field Education Manual online but can request a hard copy by contacting the School of Social Work Administration Office at 705-330-4008 x 2003.

### III. Orientation of the School with respect to Professional Social Work Education

The Social Work program at Lakehead is an innovative program based on an integrated generalist view of Social Work practice. This approach stresses the Social Worker's role in providing and facilitating a comprehensive range of helping experiences which relate to the client's needs as a whole person. This requires skill in an integrated practice method which students learn through both classroom courses and supervised Field practice experience in human service placement settings and organizations.

The HBSW graduate is expected to have beginning competence as a generalist Social Work practitioner to undertake practice with individuals, families, groups, and communities.

The School of Social Work Mission Statement can be found on our website at this link: <https://www.lakeheadu.ca/programs/departments/social-work/mission-statement>

#### IV. Lakehead University HBSW Learner Outcomes

We expect our graduates to have the ability to arrive at professional judgements and to implement interventions based on integration of theory and practice within the context of professional values and the Social Work code of ethics. Our integrated generalist approach to social work education encompasses micro, mezzo, and macro practice. Students will graduate with a knowledge base that prepares them for interventions at the beginning level of competency at all system levels. We endeavour to strike a balance between local and regional relevance as well as the inclusion of broader topics of national and international concern for our students. Our Social Work program prepares students to advocate and promote social and economic justice, address inequities and to work in a culturally aware and inclusive manner.

Graduates of our undergraduate HBSW program will:

1. Identify as social workers by adopting values and perspectives of the Social Work profession.
  - a) Develop professional identities as practitioners whose professional goal is to facilitate the individual and collective welfare and well-being of all people to the greatest extent possible
  - b) Practice self-reflection as it relates to engaging in professional practice through a comprehensive understanding of the complex nature of their own social location and identities.
  - c) Have an awareness of personal biases, preferences and privilege that will facilitate the advance of social justice and the well-being of social service users.
2. Adhere to Social Work values and ethics in professional practice.
  - a) Have knowledge of the relevant social work codes of ethics in various professional roles, activities and institutional contexts, with a particular emphasis on professional responsibilities towards vulnerable or disadvantaged groups.
  - b) Acquire skills to seek consultation appropriately and to monitor and evaluate their own behaviours in relation to the relevant codes of ethics.
3. Demonstrate a knowledge base concerning human rights and responsibilities within the context of social justice. a) Have a beginning knowledge regarding the role of social structures in limiting the fulfilment of human and civil rights for individuals, families, groups and communities.
4. Employ critical thinking in professional practice.



- a) Develop skills in critical thinking and reasoning, including critical analysis of assumptions, consistent with the values of the profession, which they apply in their professional practice.
  - b) Apply critical thinking to identify and address structural sources of injustice and inequalities.
  - c) Apply critical thinking and self-reflection to maintain continuous quality improvement and ensure a commitment to ongoing competence in professional practice.
5. Engage in research
- a) Acquire knowledge and skills to critique and participate in social research.
  - b) Be prepared to implement social work research knowledge in professional practice.
6. Evaluate, analyse and influence the development of social policy.
- a) Demonstrate knowledge of social policies and their link to social work practice in relation to the well-being of individuals, families, groups and communities in Canadian and global contexts.
  - b) Demonstrate knowledge and skills to identify unjust or inequitable policies and their implications and outcomes, especially for disadvantaged and vulnerable populations.
7. Engage in organizational and societal systemic change through professional practice.
- a) Acquire knowledge and skills to identify social inequalities, injustices and barriers at the organizational and systems level and work towards changing oppressive social conditions and promoting human rights.
  - b) Develop ability to critically assess the social, historical, economic, legal, political, institutional and cultural contexts of Social Work practice and promote social justice and human rights.
8. Demonstrate competency in professional practice.
- a) Be equipped with knowledge and skill to competently perform various interactive practices such as engagement, assessment, intervention, advocacy and evaluation.
  - b) Have relevant knowledge and skills to actively promote empowering and strengths-based practice.
  - c) Be able to practice at individual, family, group, organization, community and population levels, including advocacy and activism.
  - d) Be prepared for inter-professional practice, community collaboration and team work.

## **V. Nature and Objectives of Field Education**

Field Education is an integral component of Social Work education. 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.

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

The overall aim of Field Education is to develop practice competence at the level of a beginning professional.

### Specific Objectives:

- 1) To integrate and apply Social Work values and principles with Social Work practice.
- 2) To increase self-awareness regarding personal effectiveness and the use of self in professional practice.
- 3) To integrate and apply conceptual and professional knowledge and skills to Social Work practice.
- 4) To develop a self-directed practice by assuming personal responsibility for ones' own professional activities.
- 5) To assume independent responsibility for continuing professional development.
- 6) To prepare students for competent and effective practice in the Field.

## **VI. Organization of the Field Education Program**

### **ROLE OF THE FIELD EDUCATION COORDINATOR**

The Field Education Coordinator is directly responsible to the Director of the School of Social Work for the ongoing development, maintenance and evaluation of the Field Education program. The coordinator’s specific responsibilities are:

1. To consult with administrators of agencies, organizations and leaders of community groups:

- a) To explore potential educational opportunities for students and determine possible working arrangements.
  - b) To work with administrators and community leaders so that educational opportunities can be designed that will maximize student learning opportunities at the same time as being of benefit to participating settings.
2. To enhance the quality of Field instruction by providing opportunities for Field Supervisors:
- a) Regular seminars and learning opportunities for new and experienced Field Supervisors to assist them in their role.
  - b) Bibliography of Field Education material relevant to Field Supervisors.
  - c) Encourage the networking of Field Supervisors.
  - d) Special consultation with Field Supervisors and students as needed:
    - 1) To help the Field Supervisor and student in dealing with challenges that may arise that are related to the educational progress of the student;
    - 2) To aid in the professional growth and development of Field Supervisors in their supervisory roles.
3. To maintain a good working relationship with the School of Social Work and Field Supervisors by:
- a) Taking all opportunities to share the characteristics of the learning experiences that are or can be a part of class and Field settings. This includes sharing selected written materials.
  - b) Participating with the School, faculty members and Field Supervisors with an ongoing focus on the functioning of the Field Education program in all of its aspects.
  - c) Engaging the involvement of faculty and community Social Workers in:
    - 1) Orientation of students entering field placements
    - 2) Professional training and development for Field Supervisors
    - 3) Providing suggestions with regard to identifying agencies, organizations and community groups offering field placement opportunities.
4. To provide services to students that include:

- a) Assigning placements to individual students with consideration of student preferences, previous experiences, Placement requests, and the school's assessment of individual learning needs.
  - b) Preparing students for the Placement by arranging an orientation.
  - c) Arranging integrative seminars to discuss progress in the Field and to explore specific areas of knowledge identified as being necessary to the achievement of the educational objectives of the school, and the practice needs of the participating setting.
  - d) Providing information on available Field Placements.
  - e) Arranging collaborative consultation at the request of the student, the Field Supervisor or Field Coordinator.
  - f) Ensuring that evaluations of student performance are developed jointly by Field Supervisor/s and student and that evaluations are submitted to the Field Education Coordinator at midterm and end-term of each Placement as designated in the current placement calendar.
  - g) Ensuring that each Field Supervisor reviews with the student the final copy of the Field Placement performance evaluation before it is submitted to the Field Education Coordinator.
5. To provide services that maintain the ongoing quality of the Field Education program by:
- a) Coordinating placement planning by arranging the involvement of agency and organization administrators, community leaders, faculty and students.
  - b) Selecting the settings to be used for Field Placements and making the final decisions on the students to be placed in those settings.
  - c) Assigning a Field Placement Pass/Fail grade following review of all data and evaluation materials and consultation with the Field Supervisor/s.
  - d) Acting as the first line of appeal for students with Field Placement challenges which are not being handled to the student's satisfaction.
  - e) Serving as a channel for communication to the school regarding resources, experiences and concerns of students, field Supervisors, and agency administrators.
  - f) Evaluating all aspects of the Field Education program at regular intervals.

6. To provide services that contribute to the quality of the Field Education program by carrying out the following:
  - a) Acts as a general Field Education resource person for the school, the agencies and the community.
  - b) Coordinates all communications to and from the field and from other units in the school.
  - c) Gathers and compiles information from agencies related to current or future placements for students.
  - d) Controls the distribution of written materials including the Field Education Manual, current course outlines and placement calendars, evaluation forms, and lists of agencies, students, and Field Supervisors.
  - e) Encourages and participates in networking with Field Supervisors.
  - f) Participates in meetings called by the Field Supervisors, students or the school to discuss various matters related to the field.
  - g) Maintains up-to-date files of:
    - 1) Agencies and learning opportunities.
    - 2) Distance Field Supervisors.
    - 3) Students - those currently completing the program and currently in Placement, the settings in which they are placed and all evaluations of their work in current and previous Placements.
    - 4) Training opportunities for Field Supervisors and orientation sessions for students, including written materials for Field Supervisors and students.
    - 5) Field Education library holdings, resources and references.

### **ROLE OF THE AGENCY/ORGANIZATION ADMINISTRATORS**

Student opportunities for learning through doing would not be possible without the willingness of agency administrators, and community leaders to share Social Work educational responsibilities. Following are the more specific responsibilities of Agency/Organization Administrators as they make their ongoing contributions to student learning:

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1. To participate in the development of an agreement that defines the roles and responsibilities of the student, the agency, and the School of Social Work.
2. To recognize that student Field Placement s have educational components that require the expenditure of considerable time by agency staff members. Field Supervisors and agency Supervisors need to be allowed sufficient time to prepare for the student's arrival, to develop orientation plans, to establish regular supervisory conferences for students and to participate in relevant meetings and training opportunities provided by the school.
3. To approve student participation in the organizational structure of the setting. This includes providing opportunities for the student to learn about policies and procedures, meet the organization's staff members and learn about the nature of their work in much the same manner that would be developed for a new staff member. Educational gains also come through student participation in organization committee work and attendance at staff meetings.
4. To approve direct student participation in the delivery of services to clients, including individuals, groups, families and communities.
5. To define any specific criteria related to acceptance of a student (i.e., health requirements, police records check).
6. To make available, within organization limitations, minimum office space and office support services.
7. To provide reimbursement for pre-approved expenses while on agency or organization business.

## **ROLE OF AGENCY FIELD SUPERVISORS**

Agency Field Supervisors are required to have a minimum BSW degree and Social Work experience. In the field The Agency Field Supervisor works directly with the Field Education Coordinator:

1. To be available to provide a pre-placement visit to the setting outlining any specific requirements such as criminal records checks, medicals, immunization, cross referencing for the protection of client information and confidentiality. This provides an opportunity for both the Field Supervisor and the student to determine the appropriateness of the placement “fit”.
2. To provide a description of the placement setting to interested students that includes:
  - a) Purpose of agency and services provided
  - b) Role of Social Work
  - c) Methods of service available including policies and procedures
  - d) Description of client group
  - e) Expectations of the student
  - f) Methods of supervision
  - g) Role of students in placement and facilities available to support their learning
3. To develop an orientation program for students coming into the agency setting. Items covered should include dress code, issues of confidentiality, consent forms, routines of the setting (i.e., hours of work, lunch/coffee breaks).
4. To become familiar with the role and expectations of a Field Supervisor and the field instruction process by reviewing the Field Education Manual and participating in training opportunities.
5. To design, facilitate, supervise and evaluate a student placement opportunity within the agency.
6. In conjunction with the student, to facilitate the development of a student learning plan utilizing the format provided by the School of Social Work. This learning contract is intended to reflect the individual needs of the student, the uniqueness of the Placement setting and the criteria utilized for evaluation purposes.
7. To have major responsibility for student learning in the Field Instruction process. The Field Supervisor is responsible for scheduling regular individual supervisory sessions at weekly intervals throughout the Field Placement. Ongoing feedback and

evaluation help to build student's confidence and reinforces the acquisition of knowledge and skills.

8. To have major responsibility in organizing various agency involvements that the student can participate in, for example, attending board meetings, staff and team meetings, training seminars, case conferences as well as live supervision.
9. To engage early regarding student-Field Supervisor challenges. It is the responsibility of both the Field Supervisor and the student to take the first steps in the resolution of a problem in their relationship that affects the way the student learns or the way the Field Supervisor teaches. This can be accomplished by jointly discussing the nature of the difficulty as seen from each vantage point. In those few instances when concerns cannot be resolved, the student and/or the field Supervisor should bring the issue to the attention of the Field Education Coordinator as soon as possible.
10. To participate in Field Supervisor learning opportunities, whether on-line or in person, for the purpose of enhancing supervisory skills, fostering student learning and facilitating collaboration between Field Supervisors, faculty and the Field Education Coordinators to create a supportive Field network. Consultation with the Field Education Coordinator can be requested by the Field Supervisor, student, or agency with the purpose of exploring areas of concern and strategies for increased student learning.

11. *Evaluation:*

To participate with the student in the joint evaluation process at both the midterm and final points of placement, with the support of the Field Education Coordinator. The evaluation process will follow the evaluation criteria outlined in the Field Education Manual.

It is the responsibility of the Field Supervisor to complete the written evaluation document supplied by the School of Social Work. If there are disagreements, the student has the right to add an addendum to the Field Supervisor's evaluation, identifying any area of concern. Both student and Field Supervisor sign the evaluation, include their comments in the relevant sections and provide it to the Field Education Coordinator, along with required evidence of learning by the date indicated on the Placement calendar.

12. *Illness:*

To contact the Field Education Coordinator as soon as possible when it is determined that long term illness or any other significant absence may cause placement interruption.

13. *Flow of Work:*



To contact the Field Education Coordinator as soon as possible when concerns develop related to changes in the nature and flow of learning opportunities within the agency. This particularly applies to lack of sufficient opportunity for the student or changes in roles.

14. *Evidence of Learning:*

It is the responsibility of the Field Supervisor to identify, oversee and provide feedback on the assignments given and produced by the student. The Field Supervisor should keep records of supervisory sessions, examples of assignments i.e., social histories, process recording, case assessments and summaries, and any other relevant material.

Two pieces of Evidence of Learning will be made available to the Field Education Coordinator for evaluation purposes at the mid and end-term points of placement or in the event of a review of the placement experience.

**ROLE OF THE OFF-SITE FIELD SUPERVISOR:**

Off-site Field Supervisors are required to have a minimum HBSW or BSW degree and Social Work experience in the field. The role of the off-site Field Supervisor is to provide direction, supervision and evaluation in a Field Placement setting where there is no qualified Social Worker with a degree available on staff.

The off-site Field Supervisor maintains a similar role to that of an agency Field Supervisor arranging to meet with the student for supervision on a weekly basis and to be available for consultation in person, or by video-conference or phone as required.

Consultation between the off-site supervisor and on-site mentor in the Placement setting provides valuable feedback on the student's daily progress and for the student's evaluation.

The off-site Field Supervisor is responsible to complete the Mid and Final evaluation in collaboration with the on-site resource person and the student and to connect with the Field Education Coordinator to discuss student progress.

**FIELD SUPERVISOR RESOURCES:**

1. Use of In-person Library Facilities at Lakehead University
2. Free Parking for Current Field Supervisors

The School of Social Work will provide Field Supervisors with a date specific parking pass when attending Placement related events on campus. Please contact the administrative Social Work office (705 330-4008 ext. 2003) to make arrangements for this.

## Field Supervisor Training

Currently training for on- and off-site Field Supervisors is primarily conducted in a one-to-one format by the Field Education Coordinator. Additional online training approaches are in development, and access to these opportunities will be announced shortly. All field Supervisors are invited to make use of available literature on field instruction as well as on-line field education resources.

## VII. Placement Planning Process

- 1) **Third Year & One Year HBSW Students** will receive an email from the Field Education Coordinator that provides them with the required Field documents to be completed and access to the Field Education Manual.
- 2) Students will thoroughly read and review the manual.
- 3) Student sign Field Placement (3500/4500/4501) Student Agreement, complete Placement Planning Form and provide an updated resume.
- 4) Students schedule an appointment with the Field Education Coordinator for their cohort. (Students planning to challenge the Third Year Placement please contact Field Education Coordinator ASAP).
- 5) Students meet individually with the Field Education Coordinator to discuss Placement goals, and to submit Student Agreement, Placement Planning Form, and resume. The resume must also be sent electronically in order to be facilitate submission to prospective agencies on behalf of the student.
- 6) Third Year & One Year Students attend Agency Speaker Series (when offered).
- 7) Students apply for Criminal Record Check and Vulnerable Sector Search when advised by Field Education Coordinator.
- 8) Field Education Coordinator contacts agencies regarding placement availability and interview process.
- 9) Field Education Coordinator or students submit resumes and/or placement applications to agencies for consideration, as **advised** by Field Education Coordinator.
- 10) Agencies arrange interviews with students. (Students are to inform Field Education Coordinator when an interview is scheduled).
- 11) Agencies select students for placements and offer placement opportunities to student(s).
- 12) Student accepts placement and informs Field Education Coordinator immediately.

- 13) Field Education Coordinator contacts agency Field Supervisor to confirm placement and supervisory arrangements.
- 14) Students ensure that all medical and other agency requirements are met before placement begins.
- 15) Field Education Coordinator supplies student and supervisor with electronic Field Placement package, including Course Outline, Field Calendar and required forms.
- 16) Third Year and One Year students attend a Field Placement Orientation session as informed by Field Education Coordinator. Fourth Year students attend a Placement Orientation Review session before placement begins.
- 17) Placement commences.

#### **Fourth Year Students:**

Fourth Year students will be contacted by the Field Education Coordinator at the end of the Third year of the HBSW program, and requested to complete the Fourth Year Placement Planning Form and return the completed form to their Field Education Coordinator, along with an updated resume. Individual planning meetings will then take place with the Field Education Coordinator and the process will proceed as above.

### **VIII. Field Placement Policies and Protocols**

#### **PROFESSIONAL CONDUCT**

The Lakehead University School of Social Work has an obligation to protect the safety and well-being of the students, staff and faculty as well as clients and staff of those organizations in which students carry out their Field Placements. The very nature of Social Work education and practice places HBSW students in a position of trust in relation to the vulnerable or disadvantaged groups that they work with. As such, it is imperative that student behavior and conduct is reflective of the core values and ethics of professional Social Work practice.

Students will be expected to follow the Ontario College of Social Workers and Social Service Workers (OCSWSSW) Code of Ethics and Standards of Practice and to adhere to the policies and guidelines of their Placement agency. For the duration of their Placements students will be fully bound by all applicable Lakehead University policies, regulations, rules and procedures, including in particular the *Code of Student Behaviour and Disciplinary Procedures*.

Lakehead University School of Social Work reserves the right to withdraw a student from Placement or discontinue Placement planning under the following circumstances:

- Concealment of relevant information or distortion of the truth on the Application for Admissions to the School of Social Work or on the Placement Planning Forms and Documents
- Serious and/or persistent breaches of the Ontario College of Social Workers and Social Service Workers (OCSWSSW) Code of Ethics and Standards of Practice
- Inability to form professional working relationships
- Evidence that a student cannot effectively exercise judgement with regard to professional boundaries with clients and/or colleagues
- Persistent abuse or misuse of substances that interferes with the ability to function within a professional context
- Evidence of discriminatory behaviour or harassment that contravenes the Ontario Human Rights Code (as related but not limited to race, ancestry, origin, ethnicity, citizenship, creed, gender, sexual orientation, religion, marital status, age, socio-economic status, political affiliation, disability or diagnosis)
- Evidence of criminal behaviour, including charges or convictions for criminal offenses such as physical assault, sexual assault, drug trafficking or any crime that may threaten the safety and well-being of vulnerable client groups in Field Placement settings.
- Persistent or serious conduct that contravenes the policies of the University or of the Field Placement setting which cannot be resolved through feedback and/or negotiation.
- Please refer to the School of Social Work Professional Suitability Policy and Social Media Policy (Links are provided in Section X)

### **ADHERENCE TO PLACEMENT POLICIES**

Students are expected to review and adhere to **all** Placement policies and procedures as outlined in the Lakehead School of Social Work Field Education Manual.

### **HBSW FIELD 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 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:

*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, Supervisors 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 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 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 Agency Field Supervisor (on behalf of the agency) must give consent for all evidence of learning that is to be used for the student's field placement evaluation.
- 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.
- When in doubt, the student must always discuss particular situations with the Agency Field Supervisor, Off-Site Supervisor (if applicable) and/or Field Education Coordinator.
- Any hard copies of client related materials (such as process recordings) used as student evidence of learning are to be 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 (Section X) 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 (Section X).

### **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 students provide to the University (e.g., Social Work program application packages, placement 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 placement is an integral part of the Social Work program. Information about you may be shared with agency representatives, field 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 Supervisors can be shared to the extent necessary to resolve concerns about a student's ability to successfully and safely complete the field placement. 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 Standards of Practice and Ethics  
<https://www.casw-acts.ca/en/51-standards-practice-and-ethics>

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/>

## **CONFLICT OF INTEREST**

The intent of the conflict of interest policy is to ensure Social Work students are placed in a Placement setting that offers the most safe and objective learning environment and evaluation of performance possible.

Students will be required to sign a conflict of interest statement with the School of Social Work prior to beginning their initial Placement experience.

Students wishing to undertake a Placement in an agency where they have prior relationships must declare a potential conflict of interest to, and discuss the appropriateness of the situation with the Field Education Coordinator.

A potential conflict of interest may exist if a student or immediate family member is or has been a **client** of the agency, is a former or present **employee** of the agency, or has relatives at and/or other close **relationships** with staff members of an agency. (Immediate family is defined as a parent/grandparent/child/sibling/spouse/and/or significant other; who shall remain unidentified). As the School of Social Work will not specifically ask the student to divulge this information, it is the students' responsibility to either inform the Field Education Coordinator of a potential conflict of interest, or to refrain from requesting a Placement setting in which there is a conflict of interest, if they choose not to enter into the necessary discussion.

Where a potential conflict of interest exists with regard to a proposed student placement, the final Placement decision will be at the discretion of the Field Education Coordinator and the Field Placement Agency.

If the School of Social Work discovers a conflict of interest not declared with respect to a particular Placement application or Placement, the School may in its sole discretion terminate that application or Placement forthwith, and makes no guarantee that it will be able to arrange a substitute Placement within the time limits of the student's program.

## **RISK AWARENESS AND POTENTIAL CONFLICT OF INTEREST ON PLACEMENT**

The School of Social Work would like to support all students in having positive learning experiences on Placement, and making the most of the Placement learning opportunities. Awareness of potential conflict of interest difficulties is important in making an informed decision as to the best Placement site.

With regard to Placement situations with potential conflicts of interest (i.e. those situations where a student has had significant involvement with a Placement site, either through receiving services, employment or a close relationship with an employee of the agency) the policy of the School of Social Work is that the student should select an alternative Placement site, or declare the potential conflict to the Field Coordinator and the Placement agency so that the matter can be fully assessed and discussed by all parties. If the Placement agency does not prohibit the Placement, the final decision on whether to allow the Placement to proceed lies with the School of Social Work in its sole discretion. If an undeclared conflict of interest is discovered by either the School of Social Work or the

Placement agency after submission of the application or commencement of the Placement, either the school or the agency may terminate the application or the Placement immediately.

Some of the potential risks of an undeclared potential conflict of interest on Placement may include:

- The student may unknowingly violate agency policy regarding conflict of interest, which might lead to Placement breakdown.
- The student's confidentiality may be breached due to the agency and staff being unprepared for the situation and workers possibly experiencing confusion as to the nature of the student's role at the agency.
- On Placement, labour law does not protect the student, as students are granted Placement at the discretion of the agency, and this permission may be retracted at any time if the agency decides that the Placement situation is not viable for any reason.
- Breakdown of a Placement due to a conflict of interest can be a very stressful experience for all involved, and may delay course completion and potentially compromise the agency's relationship with Lakehead University and the School of Social Work.
- If a Placement supervisor is not aware of a student's past involvement with a Placement agency, he or she may not be able to adequately prepare for the Placement and to support the student's learning by designing a suitable learning experience that will be both appropriate and protective for the student and the agency. The issues of access to records and confidentiality also need to be considered.
- The student may be exposed to emotional triggers related to his or her own life experiences, and be unable to access the necessary supports and/or debriefing at Placement. It may also be challenging to explore certain issues in supervision.
- Client care may be unintentionally compromised due to the above concerns.

### **PROFESSIONAL SUITABILITY POLICY**

All Social Work students are subject to the Professional Suitability Policy of the School of Social Work at Lakehead University. This policy link can be found in Section X. In the Field Education Manual.

### **TYPES OF FIELD PLACEMENTS**

Students are provided Field Placements throughout the 3<sup>rd</sup>, 4<sup>th</sup>, and One Year program. (Rural, national and international Field Placements require that Third- and Fourth-Year students defer their Placement until the Spring/Summer term.)



\*Please note that placement length has been adjusted for the 2021-2022 academic year due to the pandemic and as approved by the Canadian Association of Social Work Education (CASWE).

- a) *Third year students:*  
A four-day per week block Placement begins in January and continues for fifty days until classes end in April.
- b) *Fourth year students:*  
A three-day per week concurrent Placement begins in early Fall and continues for sixty days until classes end in April.
- c) *One year students:*  
Students in the One Year program will complete a combined SW 3500 and SW 4501, one-hundred-day Placement, at one Placement site. The Placement begins in January with students spending four days per week in the assigned setting. The Placement continues in the same setting five days per week following the scheduled exam period in April until early July.

A one-year split Placement (two separate Placement experiences) can be requested only if the student has unique extenuating circumstances. If a one-year split Placement is requested and approved, the student will be required to complete a 50 day third year Placement (SW 3500) and a 60 day fourth year Placement (SW 4501) for a total of 110 Placement days.

If students wish to defer their entire placement until the Spring/Summer term, this should be requested on the Placement planning form and discussed with the Field Education Coordinator.

Every effort will be made to meet student preferences, based on learning needs and availability of placements and Field Supervisors.

- d) *Out of Province or International Pre-Placement Documentation Requirements*

It is expected that students planning an international or out of province placements will locate an appropriate placement site and qualified and credentialed Field Supervisor. The Placement must have prior approval of the Field Education Coordinator based on a formal agreement with the Placement site to provide opportunities to meet the student's learning needs, appropriate supervision and evaluation of student progress. It is the student's responsibility to provide the Field Education Coordinator with

- i) a brief written description of the agency /organization and its services
- ii) an overview of the proposed student role, and
- iii) a resume or C.V. of the agency Field Supervisor (HBSW or MSW qualified) plus the completed Field Supervisor Data Sheet (Section IX)
- iv) students are responsible for finding out and meeting agency requirements for Social Work Placements. These requirements may

include, but not be limited to matters such as: Agency Placement Agreements with Lakehead University, medical screening requirements, Placement administrative fees and specific Criminal Record Search requirements.

***\*Please note that students accepted to the Orillia Campus will not be able to complete Placements in Thunder Bay Ontario.***

***\*There are very limited opportunities in Toronto, the GTA, York, Peel and Durham Regions, as well as the Guelph/Kitchener/Waterloo area.***

e) *Part-time Field Placements:*

Part-time students often request special arrangements in order to accommodate the demands of home life and/or employment while at the same time completing Placement requirements. These students are encouraged to discuss their individual situations with the Field Education Coordinator. Special arrangements for the Placement are dependent on a complex number of factors. The school will consider such arrangements wherever possible and practicable. Early notification of special arrangements by the student is essential. The *minimum* commitment required for a part-time Placement is *two days per week*.

f) *Rural Field Placements:*

Rural Field Placements may be an option for students who wish to experience and incorporate the Northern/Rural perspective of the program. The block format is conducive to a rural Placement following the April exam period. (Placements will be deferred to the Spring/Summer semester). Students may choose to complete this Placement five days per week or fewer as arranged with the supervisor. Students are advised to inform the Field Education Coordinator of their interest. Students will be responsible for their own transportation and accommodation in the rural location.

g) *International Field Placements:*

Opportunities for an international Field Placement will be considered on an individual student basis. International Placement sites are to be established in conjunction with the Field Education Coordinator and must meet the Placement standards and expectations of Lakehead University's School of Social Work. Students will be responsible for all transportation, accommodation and living expenses associated with an international Placement experience. \* There are caveats pertaining to international Placement including increased insurance to be initiated and paid for by the student, procurement of a translator and associated costs for non-English speaking supervisors, as well as the potential for paying for supervision in some countries. This should be discussed with you Field Coordinator.

h) *Spring Field Placements (SW 3500, SW 4500, SW 4501):*

Students may consider the option of choosing a Spring Field Placement to commence following the April exam period. Students with family and/or work commitments often find the option of a spring Placement reduces the winter term workload and responsibilities allowing a concentrated effort during the spring or summer. Students choosing a spring Placement in 4th year will delay their graduation until fall. This option is conducive to the third year or one year (spring) Placement. **Students should note that there are extra tuition costs for a spring Placement and this option should be discussed with your Field Coordinator by mid-October.**

**THE FIELD CHALLENGE EXAM – THIRD YEAR (SOWK 3500)**

Full or partial credit for an exemption will be allowed for experience where a student can demonstrate to the school that they have had an extensive supervised work experience in the Field and that their level of performance would be equivalent to or beyond the level of performance expected of students at end-term of the third year Field Placement. Eligibility to challenge SW 3500 requires the student to have:

**A)** Previous work experience in a Social Work role, in a Social Work or human service agency, which has been supervised by an HBSW or MSW Social Worker.

**OR**

**B)** Successful completion of a Social Work Placement (minimum 350 hours) at an accredited College or University, under the direct onsite supervision of an HBSW or MSW Social Worker, that is deemed to be equivalent in terms of practice experience.

Approval of eligibility of the work experience or Placement site is at the discretion of the Field Education Coordinators.

**\*Social Service Worker Diploma Graduates may follow the Field Challenge requirements outlined on page 25 if applicable.**

**The Field Placement Challenge Process**

- a) Students must ensure they are registered in SOWK 3500
- b) An application form for the Challenge Examination is available in the School of Social Work Administrative Office, Lynda Kerr at lkerr2@lakeheadu.ca. The completed form must be taken to the Finance Office where the student will pay the challenge exam fee. The form, along with the receipt, are to be included with the student's challenge documentation package.
- c) A Field Challenge Documentation Package is to be compiled by the student and submitted to the Field Education Coordinator. The challenge package should include:

- Application to challenge SOWK 3500 plus payment receipt.
- A letter stating the student's intent to challenge SW 3500, including a summation of work experience and relevant strengths/skills/abilities that warrants exemption from the third-year placement.
- A resume or C.V. of work and volunteer experience.
- A self-evaluation of field performance is to be completed by the student. The Third Year 3500 Evaluation Form should be used for students who have direct service, client-based experience. The HBSW Macro/Community Development/Research Form should be used if the student's experience has been community development, policy or research focused. Both forms can be accessed online at: <https://www.lakeheadu.ca/programs/departments/social-work/orillia-field-placement-forms>
- It is expected that the student will complete the rating scale for each section of the evaluation AND provide comments regarding their strengths and learning goals.
- A written evaluation of student performance completed by a direct onsite Social Work supervisor who has a **Social Work degree**. This evaluation is to be completed on the Third Year 3500 Evaluation Form (or the Macro Evaluation Form) provided online at: <https://www.lakeheadu.ca/programs/departments/social-work/orillia-field-placement-forms>
- It is expected that the supervisor will complete the rating scale for each section of the evaluation AND provide comments regarding the student's strengths and learning needs. The completion of the final rating page indicating a *PASS* is also required.
- Two letters of reference from persons who have direct knowledge of the student's work experience. The letters should outline details of the student's Social Work experience, skills and abilities, and a clear indication that the referee feels confident in recommending the student for exemption from the Third Year HBSW placement. The qualifications and position of the supervisor as well as the nature and length of professional relationship should be briefly noted. (The supervisor who has completed the evaluation form is eligible to provide one of the letters of reference.)
- The student is to provide at least two samples of work that adequately reflect third year competencies.

**\* If the student's experience has been of a CLINICAL NATURE, please include:**

- A)** A written verbatim process recording of a client interview or meeting (directions and an example are available from the Field Education Coordinator – please omit any identifying information)

**AND**

**B)** An assessment, summary report, social history or comparable Social Work documentation that demonstrates an understanding of Social Work theory.

**\* If the student experience has been of a MACRO SOCIAL WORK NATURE (Community Development, Research, Policy, Program Development), please include 2 of the following:**

-A description and analysis of your macro Social Work position, the client population served and a critique of the Social Work skill set utilized in your role.

-A research project or project you developed

-Program summary or Group work analysis

-Manual

-Literature Review

-Other relevant Social Work documentation reflective of your work.

***One of the evidences of learning must include a section that identifies and discusses a relevant theory to practice approach.***

- d) The School of Social Work Field Education Coordinators will review the material submitted. If further information is required the student will be provided the opportunity to meet with the Field Education Coordinators and a member of the faculty to elaborate on the documentation package and provide further comment on:
- The student's Social Work experience
  - A description of specific Social Work skills and techniques that have been utilized in the Field
  - A comprehensive analysis of Social Work theory as related to the student's practice experience
  - A summation of strengths/skills/abilities that warrants exemption from the third year placement
  - Discussion of future learning goals
- e) The Field Education Coordinators reserve the right to waive the meeting requirement of the Challenge Exam should the documentation exceed the expected level of third year final Placement criteria.
- f) The Challenge Committee will recommend the student's eligibility for any full or partial credit based on the challenge qualifications.

Students in the One Year HBSW program who are successful in the challenge exam SW 3500 are required to fulfil SW 4501 requirements of a sixty-day Placement.

There is no exemption possible for SOWK 4501, as completing this course is an accreditation requirement.

LAKEHEAD UNIVERSITY SCHOOL OF SOCIAL WORK FIELD EDUCATION MANUAL

<b>School of Social Work, Lakehead University</b> <b>Student Checklist for Challenge Package: SOWK 3500</b> <b>*Remember to register for SOWK 3500*</b>		
Items to be included	Hints and Tips	✓
Application Form for Challenge Process	Application form is available in the School of Social Work Administrative office. Form must be completed, signed by the Field Coordinator, Director of the School of Social Work and submitted to Finance office to pay fee.	
Receipt for Challenge Process fee	Issued by LU finance office	
Letter of Intent	A letter stating student's intention to challenge SOWK 3500, including a summary of work or placement experience, skills and abilities to warrant exemption from the Third Year placement. (Written by student).	
Resume or CV	Comprehensive resume/CV of work, placement and volunteer experience. (No page limit).	
Reference letter #1	Letters from 2 people who have direct knowledge of the student's placement or work experience. References should include student's Social Work experience, skills and strengths and a statement that student qualifies for exemption from SW 3500 placement. Qualifications and position of the referee are to be included, as well as nature and length of professional relationship with student.	
Reference letter #2		
Self evaluation form	Use SW3500 Field Placement Evaluation form (or Macro Evaluation Form depending on your experience - refer to Manual). Complete rating scales and include comments on strengths and learning goals. The student's evaluation is to be on a separate form than the supervisor's evaluation.	
Supervisor evaluation form *Supervisor must have HBSW or MSW degree	Use SW3500 Field Placement Evaluation form (or Macro Evaluation Form as noted above). Signature of student & Supervisor required on first page. Complete rating scales, include comments on strengths and learning needs. The supervisor's evaluation is to be on a separate form than the student's evaluation. <b>On Final page ~ Pass/Fail recommendation is required.</b>	
Evidence of learning #1 *Remove identifying information	Verbatim Process Recording (a sample can be acquired from Field Education Coordinators or Administrative Assistant) *If using the Macro Evaluation please refer to title page for evidence of learning options	
Evidence of learning #2 *Remove identifying information	Substantive document that reflects practice experience, skills and abilities of student. E.g., assessment, summary report, social history, group program, manual, research, policy project etc.	
<b>Please submit your Challenge package to the Field Education Coordinator for SOWK 3500</b>		

## **FIELD CHALLENGE PROCESS FOR SOCIAL SERVICE WORKER DIPLOMA GRADUATES**

Full course exemption for SW3500 will be considered for students who have successfully completed a Social Service Worker Diploma at an accredited college and who meet the requirements of the Field Placement Challenge.

### **The Field Placement Challenge Process**

- a) Students must ensure they are registered in SOWK 3500
- b) An application form for the Challenge Examination is available in the School of Social Work Administrative Office, Lynda Kerr at lkerr2@lakeheadu.ca. The completed form must be taken to the Finance Office where the student will pay the challenge exam fee. The form, along with the receipt, are to be included with the student's challenge documentation package.
- c) A Field Challenge Documentation Package is to be compiled by the student and submitted to the Field Education Coordinator. The challenge package should include:
  - application to challenge 3500 plus payment receipt
  - A letter stating the student's intent to challenge SW 3500, including a summation of work experience and relevant strengths/skills/abilities that warrants exemption from the third year practicum
  - A resume or C.V. of work and volunteer experience
  - A Third Year SW3500 placement evaluation completed by the SSW Program College Coordinator or SSW Professor or a field placement supervisor who has a **HBSW or MSW Social Work degree**. The Third Year 3500 HBSW Field Placement Evaluation Form can be found online at <https://www.lakeheadu.ca/programs/departments/social-work/orillia-field-placement-forms>

It is expected that the Social Work Coordinator/Professor or field supervisor will complete the rating scale for each section of the evaluation AND provide comments regarding the student's strengths and learning needs. **The completion of the final rating page indicating a *PASS* is also required.**

- Two letters of reference from persons who have direct knowledge of the student's work experience. The letters should outline details of the student's social work experience, skills and abilities, and a clear indication that the referee

feels confident in recommending the student for exemption from the third year HBSW practicum. The qualifications and position of the referee, as well as the nature and length of professional relationship should be briefly noted. (The supervisor who has completed the evaluation form is eligible to provide one of the letters of reference.)

The School of Social Work Field Education Coordinators will review the material submitted. If further information is required the student will be provided the opportunity to meet with the Field Education Coordinators to elaborate on the documentation package.

The Challenge Committee will recommend whether a Pass will be assigned to SW3500 based on the challenge requirements.

Students in the One Year HBSW program who are successful with the SSW challenge process are required to fulfil SW 4501 requirements of a sixty-day placement.



<b>School of Social Work, Lakehead University</b> <b>Students with a Social Service Worker Diploma (SSW)</b> <b>Checklist for Challenge Package: SOWK 3500</b> <b>*Remember to register for SOWK 3500*</b>	
<b>Items to be included</b>	<b>Hints and Tips</b>
Application Form for Challenge Process	Application form is available from the School of Social Work Administrator Lynda Kerr- <a href="mailto:lkerr2@lakeheadu.ca">lkerr2@lakeheadu.ca</a> . Form must be completed, signed by the Field Coordinator, Director of the School of Social Work and submitted to Finance office to pay fee.
Receipt for Challenge Fee	Issued by the LU Finance Office
Letter of Intent	A letter stating student's intention to challenge SOWK 3500, including a summary of work or placement experience, skills and abilities to warrant exemption from the Third Year practicum. (Written by student).
Resume or CV	Comprehensive resume/CV of work, placement and volunteer experience. (No page limit).
Reference letter #1	Letters from 2 people who have direct knowledge of the student's placement or work experience. References should include student's Social Work experience, skills and strengths and a statement that student qualifies for exemption from SW 3500 practicum. Qualifications and position of the referee are to be included, as well as the nature and length of the professional relationship.
Reference letter #2	
Supervisor Evaluation  *Supervisor must have HBSW or MSW degree	Use SW3500 Field Placement Evaluation form (or Macro Evaluation Form depending on the student's experience). SW3500 Evaluation can be found at <a href="https://www.lakeheadu.ca/programs/departments/social-work/orillia-field-placement-forms">https://www.lakeheadu.ca/programs/departments/social-work/orillia-field-placement-forms</a> -Signature of student & Supervisor required on first page. Complete rating scales, include comments on strengths and learning needs.  <b>On Final page ~ Pass/Fail recommendation is required</b>
<b>Please submit your Challenge package to the Field Education Coordinator for SOWK 3500</b>	

## **FIELD PLACEMENTS AND CONFLICT OF INTEREST POLICY**

### **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 or has an immediate family member/significant relationship with a present employee of the agency. (A significant relationship is defined as a parent/grandparent/child/sibling/spouse/and/or significant other).

Either of these circumstances may preclude a Placement at that particular agency or organization.

### **Potential Risks and Disadvantages of a Placement at a Place of Employment**

#### Potential Risks and Disadvantages of a Placement 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 either their role of 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 placement.
- 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 Placement 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.
- Being an employee or being related to an employee at a Placement agency may limit or constrain the student’s opportunity and ability to critically analyze agency policy and functioning.

**PROCEDURE TO ARRANGE A PLACEMENT 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 be permitted to pursue a Placement opportunity at their place of employment. This exception would only be considered if the Placement opportunity did not conflict with agency policy. An exceptional opportunity will be considered if it will broaden and enhance the student's Social Work skill development and knowledge base in a distinct and separate unit of the agency with a different supervisor unrelated to employment.

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

1. A formal written Placement proposal and student role description is required from the 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 who is not the student's employment supervisor or manager. The Field Supervisor is responsible for ensuring that the Field Placement 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 this would be addressed.
4. The Field Education Coordinators and/or the Director of the School of Social Work will review the proposal in order to make a reasoned decision regarding the student's situation.
5. The Field Education Coordinator will contact the student and potential Placement agency with a decision regarding the Placement proposal, including any conditions that may apply if the Placement experience is approved.

**PROCEDURE TO ARRANGE A PLACEMENT IN AN ORGANIZATION WHERE A RELATIVE/SIGNIFICANT OTHER IS EMPLOYED**

1. The student will inform the Field Education Coordinator of their relationship with an employee of the agency in which they are seeking Placement.
2. A letter from the organization hosting the student Placement will be provided to the Education Coordinator which acknowledges the potential conflict of interest for the student and employee and states that:

- (i) The Placement role will be separate, distinct and not overlap in any way with the related employee's duties, agency unit, or client caseload.
  - (ii) The related employee will not be involved in any facet of the student's evaluation
  - (iii) All parties are aware and apprised of the risk and complications that could ensue if difficulties arise in the Placement situation, including how this would be addressed.
4. The Field Education Coordinators and/or the Director of the School of Social Work will review the letter in order to make a reasoned decision regarding the student's situation.
5. The Field Education Coordinator will contact the student and potential Placement agency with a decision regarding the Placement including any conditions that may apply if the Placement experience is approved.

**PROCEDURE TO ARRANGE EMPLOYMENT AT A FIELD PLACEMENT SITE UNDER EXCEPTIONAL CIRCUMSTANCES**

Despite the Conflict of Interest Policy and associated risks and challenges, there may be exceptional circumstances under which a student is able to pursue employment at their placement agency. This exception would only be considered if the placement/employment opportunity did not conflict with agency policy. An exceptional opportunity will be considered if employment is in a distinct and separate unit of the agency with a different supervisor unrelated to placement.

The procedure to request an employment opportunity at a placement setting is as follows:

A letter is required from the agency acknowledging that:

1. The student's placement is in no way connected to the potential employment opportunity and does
  - (i) the student's placement is in no way connected to the potential employment opportunity and does not overlap with the student role, client caseload or agency unit.
  - (ii) confirmation that the student's potential employment supervisor or manager will not be the student's Field Placement Supervisor.
2. The letter should also 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/work situation, including how this will be addressed.

3. The Field Education Coordinators and/or the Director of the School of Social Work will review the letter of request to make a reasoned decision regarding the student's situation

### **PAID FIELD PLACEMENT**

Students **WILL NOT** be allowed to participate in a paid field placement.

### **FIELD PLACEMENT SELECTION PROCESS**

The process of Field Placement selection for a given student is intended to result in a matching of the students' learning needs, experience, and interests with the most appropriate Placement resources available.

The Placement process commences with an individual meeting with the Field Education Coordinator. The student will complete a Placement Planning Form (which requires a self-assessment of learning needs, previous volunteer and/or work experience, relevant courses and an indication of Placement preference), sign the Student Agreement and update their resume. This provides an opportunity for the Field Coordinator to review the student's experience, interests and identified learning needs as well as to discuss possible suitable Placements. Students preparing for a January Placement will arrange this planning conference in the summer term (for One Year students) and in the Fall term (for Third year students). Students planning a Fourth year Fall Placement will meet with the Field Coordinator in the Spring term proceeding their final year.

A pre-Placement agency interview will be arranged in consultation with the Field Education Coordinator typically 1-3 months prior to the placement commencing. All students are advised to take an up-to-date resume with them to the pre-Placement visit and be prepared to discuss their learning goals in relation to the Placement being offered. Placement sites will ideally be confirmed by December (for 3<sup>rd</sup> and One Year Program students) and August (4<sup>th</sup> Year students).

The final Placement selection is made by the Field Education Coordinators and confirmed with the student and Placement Field Supervisors. Every effort is made to match student learning needs and interest within the resources available.

**ALL PLACEMENT OPPORTUNITIES ARE TO BE ARRANGED THROUGH THE OFFICE OF FIELD EDUCATION. STUDENTS ARE KINDLY REQUESTED NOT TO CONTACT AGENCIES OR FIELD SUPERVISORS ON AN INDIVIDUAL BASIS.**

**If a student has a contact at an organization who might be able to facilitate the placement planning process, please provide the Field Education Coordinator with contact information for this person.**

## **CRIMINAL RECORD & VULNERABLE SECTOR SEARCH**

Students will be required to obtain a current Criminal Record Search for the records of the Placement agency before beginning their Field Placement and they will be responsible for the cost of this Search. This Criminal Record Search should meet the requirements of the Placement agency, which may require the Criminal Record Search to be obtained within either six month, three month or one month of the Placement start date. Most agencies also require a Vulnerable Sector Search. Planning ahead is crucial in obtaining the Criminal Record and Vulnerable Sector Search. The Criminal Record Search must be obtained from the **police force serving the student's home community**. 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/Vulnerable Sector Search are to be provided **directly** to the Placement agency and not to the School of Social Work.

A student may be denied access to a Placement site by the Placement agency, based on the nature of past offences, and this may affect the student's continuation in the HBSW program.

## **MEDICAL REQUIREMENTS**

Certain placements in medical, residential, educational or health care settings may require specific medical screening, which may include, but not be limited to, a medical examination, tuberculosis skin testing, vaccinations, confirmation of immunizations, and mask fit testing. The student is responsible for ensuring that they meet these requirements and all costs associated with these measures are the student's responsibility. Any medical requirements must be completed before the student can commence placement.

Any proof of medical requirements/screening are to be shared only with the Placement agency and not with the School of Social Work, unless explicitly stated to the School under the Public Hospitals Act. Please see the Field Education Coordinator as early as possible in this case.

## **ACADEMIC ACCOMMODATION FOR FIELD PLACEMENTS**

Social Work students with disabilities who require special accommodations for 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 Supervisors.

Student Accessibility Services provides services for students with disabilities, such as assessing and identifying reasonable accommodations that could be implemented as part of the Placement process. However, it is the student's responsibility to initiate this process, and to inform their Field Education Coordinator about this matter.

During the HBSW Placement planning process, requested accommodations may need to be identified and shared with the student's Field Education Coordinator. Accommodations in class **do not automatically transfer to Placement**. Therefore, with the student's

consent, information regarding accommodations at the Placement site can to be shared with the Field 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 are available on the Lakehead University website at the following links:

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

## **PREPARING A RESUME**

Resumes and cover letters work together to interest a potential employer into wanting an interview with you. This important self-marketing approach should always be written and geared to your specific Placement setting of choice that you are applying. It will include a description of your relevant skills, experience, and accomplishments that qualify you for the position for which you're applying.

Students are encouraged to access the services of the Student Success Centre for assistance with preparing resumes and cover letters.

## **PREPARING FOR THE PRE-PLACEMENT INTERVIEW**

Student information: The following are some suggestions to assist students to prepare for a Field Placement interview.

1. Research information about agencies/organizations, and fields of practice available in the School of Social Work.
2. Write down any questions you have for the Field Supervisor about the agency's mandate, services, learning opportunities, format of the interview.
3. Consider what you really want to learn in your Field Placement. Make a list of goals/objectives and be very specific.
4. Ask the Field Supervisor about the learning opportunities available in the Placement and expectations of you as a Placement student (i.e., role and responsibilities, caseload, resource materials available, training seminars, conferences).
5. Be prepared to propose ways of accomplishing your goals even if it is an area that the Field Supervisor is not currently involved in (i.e., leading a group). Keep in mind that Field Supervisors may have expertise in areas beyond their present role description.

6. Consider how you like to learn. Identify your preferred learning style and any methods which you find useful to facilitate your learning.
7. Enquire about the Field Supervisor's supervision style, expectations and process of providing supervision.
8. Have a copy of your resume available to share your previous experience with the potential supervisor and colleagues.
9. Ask the supervisor if there are any policy manuals or other resources available for you to read in preparation for the beginning of the Placement.
10. Discuss hours of attendance and any special administrative arrangements such as oaths of confidentiality, use of vehicle and mileage expense payment, dress code, flexible time schedule etc.
11. Remain open and flexible regarding Placement options, recognizing the learning opportunity in each.

Question's students may be asked:

1. Why did you choose Social Work as a profession?
2. Describe your previous Social Work or related experience, including any relevant life experiences.
3. How would you describe yourself (i.e., learning style, interests and hobbies)?
4. What are your goals in Social Work? What do you plan to be doing in five to ten years from now?
5. What do you feel you have to offer the Placement? What are you capable of contributing to the Placement?
6. What do you expect the Placement to offer you in terms of a learning experience?
7. Why should the organization consider you as a Field Placement student? What do you feel will be most challenging for you to deal with in this Placement setting?

**ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES OF STUDENTS**

1. Develop some familiarity with the range of Placements available.
2. Identify on the Placement planning form, interests and preferences for type of Placement setting along with previous experience.



3. Identification of learning needs. The student will meet with the Field Education Coordinator to discuss learning needs and suitable available Placements.
4. In consultation with the Field Education Coordinator, students will have an interview with the potential agency and meet with the Field Supervisor prior to confirmation or offer of the Placement.
5. Students will be informed as to their Placement setting as soon as all Placements have been confirmed. Students are responsible to check with the Field Education Coordinator to confirm their Placement.
6. The student is expected to familiarize him/herself with the OCSWSSW Code of Ethics, the Field Education Manual, the competency criteria and requirements for student evaluation.
7. The student is expected to attend the Field orientation and identify issues and concerns they may have at that time.
8. It is the student's responsibility to fully participate in the Field Placement experience. Under the direction and guidance of the Field Supervisor the student will engage in increasing self-directed learning. The student will be fully accountable regarding Placement related work and matters pertaining to the Placement experience.
9. The student will observe all the agency policies, guidelines, hours of work, and dress code.
10. The student, in conjunction with the Field Supervisor, will develop the Learning Contract utilizing the outline provided by the School of Social Work. It is the student's responsibility in conjunction with the Field Supervisor to ensure that the learning plan is realistic, appropriate and within the scope of the Placement setting and competency criteria. The student is responsible for ensuring that the Learning Contract is completed and forwarded to the Field Education Coordinator by the due date on the Placement calendar.
11. The student is responsible for recording the range of involvements they have in the Placement setting to be made available as evidence at Midterm and Final Evaluation or upon termination in the setting.
12. The student is to prepare themselves for evaluation by reviewing the Evaluation form, the Learning Contract and making available Evidence of Learning material (process recordings, assessments, etc.) to the Field Supervisor.

The student will be involved in the evaluation process and discussion of performance utilizing the evaluation guidelines. The student and the Field Supervisor will sign the evaluation and forward it to the Field Education Coordinator along with required evidence of learning and documentation as requested. If there is an Off-Site HBSW

or MSW Supervisor, this person will also participate, review and sign off on all of the Placement documentation.

Should the student and the Field Supervisor disagree on the evaluation, the student will add an addendum stating the areas of concern. The student and/or Field Supervisor can then request a review with the Field Education Coordinator. The evaluation, addendum and all supporting documentation will be forwarded to the Field Education Coordinator according to the date specified on the Placement calendar.

13. Students are encouraged to complete an evaluation of the Placement setting and the Field Supervisor utilizing the form provided by the School of Social Work. This evaluation will take place at the end of the Placement.
14. Hours, Overtime, Holidays, Illness, Absence, Expenses and other Placement Regulations:
  - i) *Hours:*

Unless special arrangements have been made, students are expected, on their Field Placement days, to work during the same hours as those required of the staff in the Placement setting.
  - ii) *Overtime:*

Overtime required in connection with a student Field Placement should follow the usual policy of the setting, but may not accumulate beyond reason. Recognizing the flexible hours of some Placement settings, students who attend Placement during the evening hours or on weekends are entitled to compensatory time off during the day as determined by the agency.
  - iii) *Holidays:*

Students are allowed those holidays that are observed by the Placement setting during the Placement period. Holidays are not counted in the required working days of the Placement.  
Students are entitled to take the University Study Break during the Placement but may choose to continue with Placement with the permission of the Field Supervisor, agency and Field Coordinator.
  - iv) *Illness and Absence:*

Students are expected to contact the Field Supervisor or have someone do so when the agency opens on Field Placement days to report illness or any other emergency requiring absence. Illness or absence which exceeds five consecutive days is reported to the Field Education Coordinator by the student or Field Supervisor. It is expected that students will maintain a professional attitude and only take days off that are absolutely necessary. Times missed because of illness or due to other reasons acceptable to the setting should be made up by the end of the Placement period, or, by previous special arrangement with the Field Supervisor/Field placement administration/and Field Education Coordinator.

- v) *Snow Days:*  
When the university and/or placement agency are closed due to inclement weather or when winter road conditions are deemed unsafe, students are not expected to attend placement. Students are to contact their Field Supervisor and/or Placement Agency to inform them directly of their absence. Placement days missed due to inclement weather must be made up by the end of the placement period as per the CASWE accreditation requirement.
  - vi) *Expenses:*  
Expenses related to student Field Placement responsibilities may be met by the setting in which the student is placed (e.g., taking clients for coffee/lunch). Students should consult with their Field Supervisors regarding agency policy before incurring any expenses. Discuss this at the interview to establish responsibility regarding expenses.
  - vii) *Use of Car and Insurance Coverage*  
Transportation to and from Placement is the student's responsibility. Some Field placements reimburse mileage incurred while on placement business but most do not. **Students are advised that they are responsible to discuss and obtain the appropriate accident insurance coverage required by the agency/organization**, particularly if transporting clients or co-workers is part of the student role. While Lakehead University's liability insurance covers the student during Field Placement **it does not provide** vehicle insurance coverage.
  - viii) *Parking*  
In certain settings students may have to pay for parking. This cost is the responsibility of the student.
  - ix) *Other Placement Regulations:*  
Students are expected to abide by regulations of the Placement such as dress code, submission of required reports, oaths of confidentiality, guidelines for consent, a criminal records search, up to date immunizations and medical examinations as required by the Placement site.
15. Students are encouraged to participate in the School Council. Students can involve themselves with the activities of the Council. The Council has the task of suggesting general policies and guidelines for action in respect to students, faculty, educational matters, general administration of the program, and community relations. General Field Education issues can be brought to the Council and recommendations can be made to the school through this body as well as through the Field Education Coordinator.
16. **Research in Field Education:**  
  
Students can contribute to the Field Education program by participating in research projects focused on the Field. Students may also design research projects that

would contribute to knowledge about Field Placement and Field instruction. Proposed projects may be discussed with faculty members and the Field Education Coordinator.

17. Students are expected to arrange meetings with the Field Supervisor and Field Education Coordinator to address any areas of concern.

## **FIELD PLACEMENT GUIDELINES INFORMATION**

### **The Field Placement Calendar**

This calendar is distributed to both students and Field Supervisors at the beginning of term. It outlines the specific dates for completion and submission of the Learning Contract and Evaluation forms, Field Integrative Seminar dates (for Third Year and Fourth Year students), Online Integrative Discussion Modules (One Year Students), and dates of exams and holidays for the Field Placement period.

Students are responsible to familiarize themselves with due dates and other placement expectations. Any major modifications to the Field Placement schedule must be pre-approved by the Field Education Coordinator.

### **The Integrative Seminars**

#### ***In-class or Online Integrative seminars (3<sup>rd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> year)***

The Integrative Seminar is a required Field Placement -related class, where students discuss their Field issues and experiences with other students and the Field Education Coordinator. These seminars provide the opportunity for students to integrate the Field and classroom curriculum.

The coordinators will schedule small group seminars during the Placement period with dates outlined on the Placement calendar distributed to students and Field Supervisors.

Students at the Fourth year are required to present a Field Placement experience relating it to a Social Work theory during the second seminar session.

Integrative Seminar hours will be counted toward Placement hours for students in the Four Year Program.

#### ***The Online Integrative Seminars and Modules (One Year program)***

All students will participate in a combination of mandatory integrative seminars and online modules throughout the winter and spring semesters.

Integrative seminars are held provide a space for students to discuss their placement, experience, issues and the ways in which they see and practice integrating theory to practice with a small group of classmates and the Field Education Coordinator over the zoom platform.

The online modules provide students the opportunity to analyze and discuss social issues through various media as well as their role in the placement setting, placement experience, and related placement issues. This is another opportunity for students to demonstrate integrating theory to practice.

Students will be required to ensure that Social Work ethics are observed in the online discussions.

\*Please note that integrative seminar hours and online modules are not counted toward Placement time for One Year students.

### **Daily Journal/ Timesheet**

Keeping a daily journal can assist students with remembering names, titles, dates, meetings, impressions, important facts or questions to ask the Field Supervisor. Journaling questions, thoughts, feelings and ideas will assist in learning as well as providing for discussion topics during supervision.

Students will find a daily planner or online scheduler/calendar is vital to scheduling appointments, telephone calls, documentation, deadlines, meetings and required follow up. This activity will also help students track hours and activities for submitting their final timesheets.

### **Supervision in the Field Placement**

Students will meet with their Field Supervisor formally for one hour a week and more frequently on an informal basis when Field Supervisors are on site or as needed.

Students are encouraged to share their perceptions of their work (thoughts and feelings) openly with their Field Supervisor but should remain cognizant that suggestions for Agency change should be presented professionally and respectfully. The Supervisor will monitor students' progress and outline expectations for supervision, including what work is to be prepared in advance of the weekly meetings. The Field Supervisors' knowledge, skill and experience will facilitate student learning through the sharing of ideas, supporting endeavours, monitoring progress, questioning and helping the student analyse work. If students do not feel they are receiving adequate supervision this needs to be addressed with the Field Supervisor and/or Field Education Coordinator.

### **Social Work Code of Ethics**

The Lakehead University School of Social Work has an obligation to protect the safety and well-being of the students, staff and faculty as well as clients and staff of those organizations in which students carry out their placements. Students will therefore be expected to follow the Ontario College of Social Workers and Social Service Workers (OCSWSSW) Code of Ethics and Standards of Practice. Lakehead University School of Social Work reserves the right to discipline (as outlined in the Professional Suitability Policy, Academic Calendar and Lakehead University's Code of Student Behaviour) any student who violates the OCSWSSW Code of Ethics during the course of student placement, as

well as to withdraw students from Placement who do not honour the affiliation to ethical professional standards.

The OCSWSSW Code of Ethics and Standards of Practice can be found at <http://www.ocswssw.org/professional-ractice/code-of-ethics/>

### **Field Placement Anxieties**

Students are advised that the Field Placement is a learning experience and thus, students, as learners, are not expected to be as skilled or knowledgeable as the professional staff. Initial anxiety prior to beginning the Placement, meeting Placement personnel and meeting the "first client" is not unusual. Students may experience anxiety about other aspects of the Placement such as areas that provoke personal fear or painful memories. Students are encouraged to be open to discussing such anxieties with the Field Supervisor. In many cases, it was not that long ago that the Field Supervisor was also a student in Field Placement, perhaps experiencing many of the same anxieties.

Students who feel that the workload expectations are unreasonable, unmanageable, or unsuitable should discuss such concerns with the Field Supervisor and/or Field Coordinator.

Students experiencing challenges or concerns that cannot be resolved in discussion with the Field Supervisor are directed to contact the Field Education Coordinator as soon as possible for consultation and direction.

### **Students Experiencing Difficulties**

It is the responsibility of the student and/or Field Supervisor to notify the Field Education Coordinator if there are difficulties at any point during the Field Placement or if performance in the Placement by Midterm is consistently below expected standards. The student, Field Supervisor and Field Coordinator will meet together to discuss the situation and whether the student might achieve the expected level of performance. Re-contracting and clear identification of learning goals and expectations will be outlined together.

If it appears that the student will be unable to meet the expectations in the Field setting, a decision may be made by the Field Coordinator and/or Field Placement Advisory Committee to delay the Placement or look at an alternate Placement site to assist in meeting the student learning needs identified.

If a placement is terminated and/or deemed unsuccessful or unsuitable, placement time accumulated during the initial placement 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. In exceptional circumstances, a limited number of 'transferable learning' hours or days will be considered by the Field Coordinator and/or Field Education Advisory Committee. It is the student's responsibility to provide the Field Coordinator and/or Field Education Advisory Committee with a list of concrete experiences to be considered, such as conferences or educational seminars.

It will be determined by the Field Coordinator and/or School of Social Work Field Education Advisory Committee whether a student who has been unable to achieve 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 Field Education Advisory Committee**

The Field Education Advisory Committee shall be comprised of one faculty member from the School of Social Work, and one community Social Work professional knowledgeable in the area of Field Education, in collaboration with at least two Field Education Coordinators.

The Field Education Advisory Committee is available to provide consultation and/or support to the Field Education Coordinators regarding all aspects of the Field Education component of the Social Work Program. The committee may advise the Field Education Coordinators on such matters as field policy and procedures, field Supervisor training, placement opportunities and specific student issues in the Field. The Field Education Committee may also be convened, at the request of the Field Coordinators, to make decisions regarding unique and/or challenging student situations that may impact placement planning.

When deemed necessary by the Field Coordinators, the Field Education Advisory Committee will review placement situations where the placement terminated early or was deemed unsuccessful by the agency, supervisor or student. Both the agency Field Supervisor and the Social Work 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 Field 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 Placement setting or whose performance is deemed to be unsafe\* should be granted the opportunity to repeat the Placement. The Field Advisory Committee may also provide specific learning goals/recommendations for the student to meet if repeating Placement is a viable option.

(\*Unsafe practice is any situation arising from a student's interactions with clients, agency personnel or other students that the Field Education Advisory Committee determines places these groups at risk for harm).

Student placements that violate the OCSWSSW Code of Ethics, contravene the policies of the university or of the field placement setting, or that do not honour the affiliation to ethical standards of Social Work practice may be referred to the Professional Suitability Committee.

### **School of Social Work Placement Safety Standards**

The Lakehead University School of Social Work has an obligation to protect the safety and well-being of the students, staff and faculty as well as clients and staff of those organizations in which students undertake their Placements. Students are expected to follow the Canadian Association of Social Workers Code of Ethics and Guidelines for Professional Practice and the Ontario College of Social Workers and Social Service Workers Code of Ethics.

Students who do not adhere to the professional and ethical standards of practice, or who display unsafe performance during the course of the Field placement, will be withdrawn from their Placement setting. Any and all allegations of unsafe practice that pertain to Placement will be investigated by the School of Social Work. Serious and/or repeated instances of unsafe practice or unprofessional behavior may invoke the Professional Suitability Policy and its protocols (Please refer to Section X). Unsafe performance is defined as, but not limited to, the following:

- being disrespectful of cultural differences and/or diversity
- inability to establish rapport with clients, supervisor and/or colleagues (including Field Education Coordinators) violations of confidentiality
- lack of self-awareness in the professional role:
  - focused on own issues instead of clients/unable to differentiate client problems from self
  - inappropriate self-disclosure
  - repeated noncompliance with agency dress code
  - unprofessional attitude and presentation of self-impacting negatively on client and/or agency staff
  - unable to identify personal biases, opinions or judgments and how they impact others
- communication is unclear, disorganized, or unprofessional
- unable to recognize practice limitations ~ attempts to practice well beyond level of competency without seeking guidance or direction from Field supervisor
- documentation as related to Agency or University Field Requirements is consistently unacceptable, incomplete, late, not turned in or lacking in professional use of language
- unwilling to follow agency policies and procedures
- knowingly establishes dual and/or intimate relationships with clients or supervisor
- decision making is hurried, unorganized, disconnected from policy/procedure and/or without consultation
- ethical dilemmas not recognized or addressed
- dishonest behaviour
- unable to recognize human rights or social justice issues
- failure to consult literature, research, draw on available resources or seek assistance from supervisor to competently address client issues
- lack of self-evaluation or awareness with regard to personal practice
- defensive attitude and/or inability to accept supervisory feedback, suggestion or guidance
- unable to assess or recognize significant client issues
- unwilling to participate in learning opportunities presented by agency/supervisor
- drug/alcohol use on Placement
- threatening/intimidating/violent behaviour

### **Withdrawal from Placement**

If a student chooses to terminate a Placement experience due to significant personal/health related issues that result in an extended absence from the program, it is expected that they



will apply to the Director of the School of Social Work for consideration of readmission. A Field Education Advisory Committee may be convened upon the students return.

### **Student Appeal Procedure**

Please refer to Section X for details of the appeal process for Field Placement courses. Students may also refer to the Lakehead University calendar regarding formal L.U. appeal procedures. If the Placement is terminated prior to the established end date as outlined in the Placement calendar, the student will be expected to be responsible to record the range of involvements undertaken in the Placement setting.

### **In the Event of a Strike**

In the case of a labour dispute and/or strike at a Placement setting, the Field Coordinator, Field Supervisor and student will discuss the opportunities with regard to the continuation of meaningful learning experiences.

Procedures to follow in the event of a potential or actual strike situation:

1. Students should inform the Field Education Coordinator as soon as they are aware of the potential for strike activity at their Placement site.
2. The Field Coordinator, Field Supervisor and student will collaboratively determine whether alternative off site learning opportunities (research, readings, special projects, group development, agency visits) are feasible.
3. Every effort will be made for the Placement or alternate assignment to be completed within the designated time frame.
4. In situations where the labour dispute is prolonged, students may be assigned to an alternate setting.
5. Students are required to honour picket lines. Any decision regarding student involvement in social action activities related to the strike are to be made in consultation with the Field Education Coordinators and the Director of the School of Social Work.

### **Personal Safety While on Placement**

**Please note that student and client safety is a priority on Placement, and students are strongly encouraged to share any personal or public safety concerns with their Field Supervisor, or immediate supervisor in the Placement setting, and with their Field Coordinator, as soon as possible. If a particular work situation at Placement feels unsafe to a student, please share that information immediately, and be aware that you may refuse to participate in that situation until your concerns have been addressed. It is important for students on Placement to process any situation of risk in a professional and constructive manner.**

**Please remember that no safety issue is too insignificant to raise.**

Every occupation has its own unique set of safety issues. Social Work is no exception. This profession requires interaction with a variety of people, places, and situations, some of

which may pose risks to the worker. Your best protection is to be aware of these potential risks and to be pro-active in keeping yourself as safe as possible.

**Safety in the Field Placement Setting:**

Students are encouraged to be aware of the policies or guidelines of the setting, to abide by these policies, and to consult their Field Supervisors with any concerns. The following suggestions offer information on how students can increase their awareness of and develop strategies for dealing with potential physical and emotional risks while on Placement. A pro-active and mindful attitude to safety in your Placement includes being knowledgeable and aware of the situations in your particular Field setting that could place you at risk.

**Familiarizing Yourself with Your Particular Field Setting:**

Familiarize yourself and discuss with your Field Supervisor safety and security regulations. What are the procedures if you feel at risk with a client? What does the agency suggest you do with your personal belongings while at Placement?

It is also important to know your client population. Talk to your Field Supervisor or agency staff members to increase your understanding of the client population demographics and to develop local knowledge of secure areas in the community as well as those areas best avoided when alone.

**Safety within the Setting:**

Be proactive. **Do not work alone in the setting.** This is especially important if you are working during the evenings or weekends when staff complement will most likely be reduced. If there is a security office available, familiarize yourself with their telephone extension. Someone should always know that you are working, especially in the evenings, and you should be aware of how to access support or help at any time. Ensure that outside doors and windows are secure and that a working telephone is always available.

Discuss safety arrangements with your co-workers and supervisors, such as partnering with another worker when doing home visits with unknown clients, or facilitating group activities. Be aware of the ongoing need to observe and assess situations, utilizing your Social Work skills.

**What should you do in the event of an act of aggression?**

If you suspect a potential for risk discuss it with someone. Always work in close proximity to other staff and make sure another staff is available to assist you. Keep mindful of how the furniture in your office is arranged (i.e., access to an exit). If your safety is threatened by a client, attempt to de-escalate the situation with non-threatening verbal responses and body language. Leave the situation and seek assistance. Report these incidents to your Field supervisor and agency management. It is important to have the opportunity to debrief after any concerning incident.

Always be aware of maintaining appropriate boundaries with clients. This includes social media contact. Review the Social Media Policy of the School of Social Work and be sure to comply with any agency protocols on the use of social media.

**Do not** give clients your home or cell phone number or your home address. If you make calls from your home phone number to clients, request call blocking from your local telephone company. This will protect you from having your number appearing on the telephones of those clients who have call display. If you ever experience harassing phone calls, inform your Field Supervisor and make use of the tracking system most telephone companies have in conjunction with the local police.

### **Home Visits and Community Outreach Activities**

Always inform your Field Supervisor or someone in the setting where you are going. Keep an up-to-date appointment schedule on your desk or online calendar, or ensure that the Field Supervisor or administrative staff have a copy of your appointments. Include on the schedule where you will be outside of the office and when you expect to return. Another suggestion is to engage in a buddy system with another worker in the agency, and keep reasonable track of each other during working hours.

Once again, be proactive. Be prepared! Familiarize yourself with your agency's policies and procedures regarding home visits. Before planning a home visit review the client file for any history of aggression or volatile behaviour. Consult your supervisor when deciding whether certain sessions should rather take place within the office environment, or be carried out by more than one worker.

If you agree to meet a client in a public place, make sure it is a place of your choosing and one that you and your supervisor are comfortable with.

When visiting a home, present yourself in a confident and professional manner. Never enter if a resident appears intoxicated, is acting oddly or is inappropriately dressed. If for any reason you feel unsafe or threatened, get out of the situation as fast as possible. Provide an excuse or just leave. You and your Placement supervisor can discuss how to best provide service at a later date.

### **Safety and Your Vehicle**

Always have a charged cell phone with you in your vehicle. Park in a well-lit public area. Have your keys easily accessible in the event that you need to enter your car quickly and have someone accompany you to your car at night, if possible.

If you see someone in trouble while driving, it is safer to use your cell phone to call the police, than to stop and offer assistance. Do not give rides to people you don't know. Keep your valuables out of sight in your parked car. Follow agency policy with regard to transporting service users.

Practice defensive driving and try to avoid being distracted while driving. If you ever think you are being followed, drive to the nearest police station. Take note of the license plate number and a description of the car. If you have car trouble and you can't drive to a service station, phone for assistance. Lock yourself in your car and wait for help.

Keep your car in good condition with the gas tank at least half full. Keep safety equipment such as jumper cables in your vehicle, as well as a blanket, snacks and candles for possible breakdowns during the winter if you are driving outside a city environment.

### **Safety While Walking**

Walk with confidence and be observant of your surroundings. Try to avoid walking alone at night and avoid isolated areas at all times. You might consider an electronic protection device or a safety whistle. If you see someone in trouble, do not attempt to help the person yourself. Call for assistance.

If for any reason you think you are in danger or that someone is following you get to the nearest public place and call the police. If others are in the vicinity, be vocal and make your predicament known. Trust your gut feelings. If something doesn't feel right, trust your instincts and act upon them.

If something or someone makes you feel uncomfortable do not enter an elevator. If already in the elevator, make a note of the alarm button, keep your back to the side wall and if need be, push all of the floor buttons. This will give you the opportunity to leave at the first opportunity.

### **Travel Opportunities as part of the Placement Experience**

If you are offered an opportunity to travel away from your Placement community for additional training or practice experience, please contact your Field Coordinator. This process will keep the Field Coordinator informed as to the student's location, and allow for a discussion of potential risks and recommended safety measures (including completion of an additional Health and Safety Checklist) for the proposed travel experience.

### **Harassment and Discrimination**

*HARASSMENT* is defined by the Ontario Rights Code as a course of comments or conduct consisting of words or actions that disparage or humiliate a person in relation to a prohibited ground contained in the Code. It can include comments or conduct by a person in a position of authority that is intimidating, threatening or abusive and may be accompanied by direct or implied threats to the individual's grade(s), status or job. Harassment can also occur between people of similar authority.

*DISCRIMINATION* refers to actions or behaviour that result in the unfavorable or adverse treatment or preferential treatment of an individual or group.

For a copy of the Harassment and Discrimination Policy and Procedures guideline for Lakehead University, please use the following link for detailed information:

<https://www.lakeheadu.ca/faculty-and-staff/policies/human-resources/harassment-and-discrimination-policy-and-procedures>

Be aware of what harassment is. Familiarize yourself with both the University's guidelines on harassment and discrimination as well as your agency's policies and procedures. If you feel you have been harassed, discriminated against or compromised in any way, please discuss the situation with both your Field Placement supervisor and Field Education Coordinator as soon as possible.

## **Field Placement 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, student 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 on 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 Field Education 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 Field Education 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=WWF&TIT=1352F&N=022-13-1352F> (French)

Please see Section IX 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.

#### **Steps to follow in case of an accident:**

1. Obtain necessary health care (e.g., first aid or medical help).
2. Notify your Placement and Agency Supervisors, as well as the Field Education Coordinator, immediately.
3. The Field Education Coordinator will either inform Human Resources at Lakehead University directly, or provide the student with the necessary contact information to do this.
4. Complete the required claim form (Postsecondary Student Unpaid Work Placement Workplace Insurance Claim) with the guidance of the Field Education Coordinator and Ursula MacDonald, Human Resources, Lakehead University.
5. Assist your Placement Agency and /or Supervisor in completing any necessary accident reports.
6. Initial reporting of injuries must be initiated within 30 days of the occurrence of an accident.

#### **Modified Work Opportunities**

In order to keep insurance costs to a minimum, the provision of modified work opportunities for injured students is strongly encouraged. In those cases where a student would be prevented from participating in an unpaid Placement due to their injuries, the Field Education Coordinator, the Placement Supervisor and Agency will be contacted to review the possibility of providing modified work by:

1. Accommodating the injured student in the workplace through changes of duties, schedules and/or equipment, **OR**
2. Excusing the injured student from Placement, with no academic penalty to the student.

Please contact the Lakehead University Human Resources Officer for Occupational Health and Safety with any questions regarding the insurance coverage.

**Field Placement Feedback:**

**Placement Feedback Questionnaires**

Students are to complete the Student Feedback Questionnaire at the end of their placement. Students may submit the feedback form electronically or submit it in hard copy to the Field Coordinator(s) or the Administrative Assistant in the School of Social Work office. The link to the Student Feedback Questionnaire may be found in Section IX or on the course website.

A feedback questionnaire will also be sent to Agency Placement Supervisors requesting feedback regarding the experience of supervising an HBSW student and the field process established by the School of Social Work.

**IX. Required 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 Field Education Coordinator early.

**Pre-Placement Forms/Submissions:**

- a) Student Agreement Form
- b) Placement Planning Form
- c) Resume

**Placement Forms:**

- a) Letter to Placement Employers – insurance form
- b) Student Declaration of Understanding – insurance form
- c) Health and Safety Orientation Checklist
- d) Field Supervisor Data Sheet
- e) Learning Contract
- f) Evaluation Forms (Midterm and Final)
- g) Timesheet
- h) Feedback Form

All current forms can be found here:

<https://www.lakeheadu.ca/programs/departments/social-work/orillia-field-placement-forms>

## X. Essential Policies for Review

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>



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