



Master of Social Work Field Education Manual

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FACULTY OF SOCIAL WORK
ON CAMPUS MSW PROGRAMS
FIELD EDUCATION MANUAL
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Preface

The aim of the Faculty of Social Work's **MSW Field Education Manual** is to provide information to students, instructors, advisors, and practice settings regarding the:

- (i) General philosophy and objectives of the Master of Social Work Program;
- (ii) Specific goals, objectives, roles, structures, policies, practices and procedures of the field courses of the MSW program.

The content of the Manual is based on formal policies of the Faculty of Social Work, the Canadian Association for Social Work Education Accreditation Standards, and Wilfrid Laurier University. For more detailed information regarding a particular policy, contact the [MSW field education coordinator](#).

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1. Faculty of Social Work

The Faculty of Social Work (FSW) at Wilfrid Laurier University (WLU) is committed to providing education at the Bachelor of Social Work (BSW), [Master of Social Work](#) (MSW) and [Doctor of Social Work](#) levels. The Master of Social Work program aims to educate students for advanced social work practice in Canada and abroad. The PhD program in Social Work prepares students for leadership roles in education, research and specialized areas of practice in Canada and abroad. The Faculty of Social Work also offers opportunities, through its continuing education program, for specialized learning. The faculty maintains standards through accreditation of the Canadian Association for Social Work Education (CASWE), the Ontario Council of Graduate Studies, and other evaluative activities. The faculty is committed to providing an [international](#) focus for its programmes so that graduates can respond to social problems and needs arising from a rapidly changing socio-economic world order.

It is recognized that social work knowledge and skills are constantly evolving. Therefore, social work education is conceptualized as a life-long learning process in which the faculty is a central resource. A dynamic relationship among faculty, practitioners, and students at differing stages of professional development ensures change and growth in the social work profession.

Statement of Values, Vision, Mission, and Principles for the Faculty of Social Work

The Faculty of Social Work at Wilfrid Laurier University recognizes that intellectual inquiry, critical reflection, and scholarly integrity are the cornerstones of all academic units of all universities. Our unique values are drawn from the key elements on which Wilfrid Laurier University was founded, as well as those values that are integral to the profession of social work.

We Value

- Our engagement with community, both local and global
- Diversity, inclusivity and the promotion of social and economic justice
- Developing the whole person; mind, spirit, emotions, and body
- Dynamic and lifelong learning that values experience and recognizes and respects different forms of knowledge
- Active citizenship that is devoted to the pursuit of social and economic justice

Our vision provides a lens that we use to look at the world to understand what we do and what we aspire to be.

Our Vision

Our commitment is to social and economic justice. Recognizing that a full understanding of injustice is elusive, we are committed to intentionally pursuing critical reflective and self-reflective space. Through the fostering of such individual and institutional spaces we aim to be better able to support a more just, inclusive and egalitarian society. Our teaching, research, scholarship and actions support challenging structural sources of inequality, including conditions that infringe upon human and civil rights, and facilitating well-being in individuals, families, groups, organizations, and communities, locally and globally. We strive to have our Faculty of Social Work be known for its cutting edge, community-based scholarship and academic rigour, and providing a challenging and nurturing learning environment to our students.

Our Mission

The Faculty of Social Work is devoted to excellence in research, creative and critical thinking, and reflective practice. Our students learn through traditional and innovative teaching techniques and our Indigenous Field of Study challenges traditional pedagogy through Indigenous-based learning (i.e., Indigegogy). We challenge students to become active citizens of an increasingly complex and interconnected world. We fulfill our mission by advancing multi-disciplinary and marginalized forms of knowledge, including an Aboriginal world-view, which is foundational to developing excellence in social work practice with individuals, families, groups and communities. Skilled in the continuum of practice, our graduates are committed to challenging the oppressive conditions and structures that affect their clients. Our individual and collaborative scholarship is relevant to community and social needs, framed by our engagement in our own communities, and by our dedication to innovative and integrated practice education.

Our guiding principles are consistent with our vision and mission and will inform our decision-making as we embrace our future.

Guiding Principles

- Responsible and transparent leadership and governance
- Local and international community engagement and collaboration
- Collegiality and respectful relationships
- Openness to change and renewal
- Recognizing the interconnections among research, theory, and practice
- Realizing an appropriate balance among research, teaching, and service
- Learning and teaching that involves multiple forms of knowledge relevant to reflective and engaged social work practice that promotes social justice

Approved by Divisional Council on September 21, 2012

Objectives

- (i) To educate students for responsible, advanced social work practice. This objective will be achieved through provision of a graduate program leading to the MSW degree. The program prepares graduates for positions of leadership in macro and micro social work practice, including direct practice with individuals, families, groups and communities, and for roles in research, social policy development, social planning and administration. It is understood that all graduates will also acquire basic competence in research sufficient to enable them to function in their practice as knowledgeable consumers of research findings and as producers of social work research.
- (ii) To participate, when feasible, with other faculties of the university in appropriate academic activities. Such participation may include teaching of courses, work on thesis committees and research collaboration. The faculty is also responsible for offering undergraduate social welfare courses and other courses at WLU. It may also include cross-registration of students between the Faculty of Social Work and other faculties of the University. This concept of participation is based on the premise that the Faculty of Social Work is an integral part of Wilfrid Laurier University.

- (iii) To contribute to the development of the social work profession through active participation in research, scholarship, publication, specialized practice and related activities of intellectual leadership. These activities may include consulting; contract research; production of instructional programs, instructional materials and of textbooks; organization of symposia and conferences on topics of concern to the profession. It is the aim of the FSW to coordinate and integrate this objective with its educational objectives so that they may complement and reinforce each other. Collaboration in scholarly activities with members of other universities is also encouraged.
- (iv) In cooperation with appropriate professional organizations, to provide continuing education credit programs for members of the social work profession designed to update and expand their professional competence.
- (v) To provide services to its various social service communities, local, provincial, national and international provided that the needed resources are available. Needs of areas nearest to the geographic location of the School will receive priority consideration but, when feasible and appropriate, the School may lend its assistance to other regions. The School's services may take such forms as organization of special educational programs (eg. workshops and conferences) for personnel employed in the field of social welfare: participation in in-service training programs and related activities; provision of advice and information to social welfare organizations, governments and community groups on matters within the competence of the members of the Faculty of Social Work.

Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy

The University's guidelines in Policies 10.1 [Information Availability and Privacy Protection](#) and 10.2 [Student Records](#) provide rights to access and limitations. Notice carefully that these rights of access may be exercised without recourse to the formal process, and associated expense to you, set out in FIPPA. You will find, among other things, that subject to a few exemptions, the University's guidelines give every member of the faculty, staff, and student body of the university access to records containing their personal information. Individuals may request access through the office that holds their personal information. An individual may also request correction of their personal information where the individual believes there is an error or omission and reasonable proof can be provided to substantiate the error or omission. Again, to request a correction, contact directly the office that holds the relevant personal information. The University's guidelines also restrict the collection and use of personal information. The University undertakes to collect and record only such personal information about an individual as is either reasonably necessary to the proper administration of the university and its academic and other program, or is required by virtue of data collection or reporting requirements lawfully imposed upon the university.

If you have questions about your rights under the University's guidelines, contact the Office of the privacy coordinator at privacy@wlu.ca.

2. MSW Program Overview

Integrative reflexive social work practices

As a revitalizing practice, the Faculty of Social Work (FSW) engages in systematic curriculum review processes to methodically ensure that we are on the cutting edge of social work education and practice. Our latest curriculum revision spanned more than two years. It was thorough and rigorous. It involved the use of surveys, interviews and focus groups with all stakeholders of the program including faculty, contract academic staff, students, administrative staff, alumni, field instructors, supervisors and social service agencies.

Our new curriculum, integrative reflexive social work practices, embodies what we consider quintessential aspects of social work practice. With an overarching framework including social justice, equity, inclusivity and reflexivity, the curriculum is now designed to provide a wholly integrated foundational year that grounds all two year full-time and three year part-time students in four essential and interconnected social work practice areas: individual, family and group; community; policy and organizations; and research.

The curriculum continues and strengthens our strong practice tradition. While we no longer use the nomenclature of fields of study in any of our program options, students can continue to focus their placements and [courses](#) on micro and/or macro practices having increased flexibility to choose their particular practice leanings. While advanced standing full-time and part-time students will not be participating in the revised foundational year, their year of program study, will offers more course options than in the past.

We believe that our curriculum will equip students with a robust and integrated grounding in theory and practice so that students are ideally prepared for the challenges of contemporary social work practice. Our intent is to help nurture social workers who are actively concerned about the well-being of the people with whom they work, who are reflexive and ethical in their practices, who are competent and caring practitioners and who will stand up for what they believe is just.

MSW programs offered

The Faculty of Social Work offers:

- a regular track full-time MSW program,
- an advanced standing (post BSW) full-time MSW program,
- an online part-time MSW program,
- an online part-time advanced standing (post BSW) program.

The MSW program does not intend to educate narrow specialists and every student is expected to build on a solid core of general social work knowledge and skills.

The concurrent [courses](#) offered with each period of the field placement are intended to strengthen the integration between classroom and field teaching.

A full list of courses by MSW program is available on the students.wlu.ca website.

3. MSW Field Education

Overview

Learning begins with the acquisition of factual information, moves on to theory formulation, and finally to an assimilation of knowledge which involves self, feelings and attitudes, as well as intellectual understanding. The goal of social work education is to help students achieve that integration of personal, social, emotional and intellectual capacities which transmutes professional practice into a fine art in the application and use of knowledge. In the student's placement, all of these elements come into play for the first time. The areas of learning open to the student in the field are more comprehensive and pragmatic than is possible in the classroom teaching situation. Accordingly, the [field instructor](#) carries a teaching role of special importance.

[Field education](#) is a vital aspect of the MSW program. The objective of field education is to ensure the field placement experience reflects the framework of the Faculty of Social Work, and the curriculum goals of the MSW program. Additionally, it provides an opportunity for students to:

- apply the values, knowledge and skills learned in the classroom,
- practice and integrate foundational and advanced level social work theories and practice,
- and develop of a professional "self" and professional identity as a social worker.

The objectives for the field program are set to meet the standards set by the Canadian Association for Social Work Education (CASWE) as outlined in the document [Standards for Accreditation](#). The [MSW Field Education Office](#), under the direction of the MSW field education coordinator, facilitates the MSW field program.

As part of field education, students will complete courses with approved agencies that provide micro, macro, or integrated learning opportunities. A qualified agency-based field instructor will provide supervision to help students develop social work practice skills that reflect the foundational or advanced field education course. The field instructor becomes a source of learning for the student in two respects:

- the field instructor and other agency personnel serve as models of the professional practitioner at work,
- and the field instructor facilitates the student's development in areas including effective assessment and problem-solving, mastery of primary skills, values and ethics dilemmas and the development of a professional self.

The Faculty of Social Work at Laurier seeks to offer the highest quality and most relevant graduate social work education and training to its students. In acknowledging our current global reality, such social work education ideally permits students' exposure to social work as it occurs in other contexts, particularly those of the so-called 'developing world' or global south. The faculty believes that such exposure and opportunity to both contribute expertise and learn from the expertise of these communities will broaden social work horizons, creating new models of social work practice and new possibilities for global collaboration and understanding. To this end, the [International Social Work Program \(ISWP\)](#) is offered to a limited number of students who fulfill the program requirements. ISWP is offered to students in the:

- two year full-time,
- three year part-time,
- and two year part-time advanced standing MSW program.

ISWP offers students the opportunity to complete an [international placement](#) in lieu of the second, advanced placement.

Field education objectives

The following specific field objectives are applicable. It is understood that the objectives meet the standards for accreditation of the Canadian Association for Social Work Education (CASWE) as outlined in Domain III of the "[CASWE-ACFTS Standards for Accreditation](#)" for field education.

- a. The field experience reflects the conceptual framework of the Faculty of Social Work.
- b. The field experience reflects the Faculty of Social Work curriculum goals. The major goal is to permit the student to develop professional competence in general social work practice with increasing emphasis on advanced practice in the latter phase of the MSW program.
- c. The field placement provides an opportunity for the student to apply the values, knowledge and skills learned in the classroom.
- d. The field setting provides the student an opportunity to observe and learn from a variety of social work intervention methods and styles of practice.
- e. The field setting is designed to encourage the student to assume considerable responsibility for his/her own learning and for identifying his/her future career goals. The student's ability to assume this responsibility will vary and his/her goals can be expected to change during the MSW program.
- f. The field setting is encouraged to develop innovative field opportunities that reflect the requirements of the MSW program and accreditation.
- g. The field experience is designed to teach the inter-relatedness of micro and macro social work practice. Learning assignments offer interconnected practice opportunities within individual, family, groups, community concerns, policy and organizations, and research.
- h. The field experience facilitates identification with the profession of social work.
- i. The field experience prepares the student for continuous and rapid change; to recognize that their capacities to be responsive and adaptive to change will be a major factor in future success in social work.

Standards for field placement agencies

Field placement agencies, or teaching centres/settings, are approved by the Faculty of Social Work's MSW field education coordinator based on the following standards:

- a. Clarity and appropriateness of agency purpose and function for a MSW field placement.
- b. Sound social work practice as reflected in structure, philosophy, administration and service.
- c. Readiness and interest on the part of both the agency administrator and instructor to oversee the responsibilities usually associated with social work MSW placement.
- d. In secondary settings, clarity of purpose of the social service department, acceptance of social work by other key departments and administration support of the student's education programs.
- e. Acceptance by the teaching centre of student's participation in the organizational structure, such as attendance at staff meetings and participation in committees.
- f. Willingness to provide the student with appropriate learning opportunities.
- g. Demonstrated interest in membership and participation in appropriate standard setting organizations and in community, regional and provincial agencies of community organization, social planning and social policy. Appropriate interest and participation in planning and action organizations at the federal level are also desirable.
- h. Adequate space to accommodate student and appropriate equipment and support services to assure maximum efficiency in the preparation of records and reports by students and instructors.

- i. The participation of a field instructor with at least two to four years post BSW (for foundational placements) depending on experience, and two years post MSW (or its equivalent) for advanced placements.
- j. Providing adequate individual supervision for the student at a minimum of 1.5 hours per week.

Field Education Office

The MSW Field Education Office comprises the MSW field assistant, field coordinator, and field advisors. The coordinator oversees the planning and strategic direction of the office and provides direction to the MSW field staff including off-site field instructors.

Contact Information	When to contact
<p>MSW Field Education Office Lyle S. Hallman Faculty of Social Work 120 Duke Street West Kitchener, ON, N2H 3W8 Email: mswfield@wlu.ca Fax: 519.888.9732</p> <p>Field Websites: Faculty of Social Work Field Education International Social Work Program</p>	<p>First point of contact for any field related questions. Reviewed by all field staff. Students will receive a response from the appropriate field staff.</p>
<p>Breanna Kersey Field Education Assistant, MSW Program Email: mswfield@wlu.ca Phone: (519) 884-0710 ext. 5269</p>	<p>Field Assistant oversees all administrative related duties. Contact when you have any administrative related questions, e.g.:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • WSIB paperwork • Deadlines
<p>Erin Schreiter, MSW Field Advisor Email: eschreiter@wlu.ca</p> <p>Lisa Leiher, MSW Field Advisor Email: lleiher@wlu.ca</p> <p>Sue Turner, MSW Field Advisor Email: sturner@wlu.ca</p> <p>Tracey Watson, MSW Field Advisor Email: twatson@wlu.ca</p>	<p>Field Advisors provide support to students prior to and during placement. Contact your assigned Advisor as identified on the portal (see placement record) for any inquiries or concerns related to your placements.</p> <p>Each student is assigned an Advisor and will have an opportunity to meet with the Advisor during the first week classes at the faculty (see upcoming field events).</p>
<p>Yumna Al-Adeimi, MSW Field Education Coordinator, MSW Program Email: yaladeimi@wlu.ca Phone: (519) 884-0710 ext. 5274</p>	<p>Oversees the field education office.</p>

Field courses

Emphasis is placed on the experience of direct and indirect social work practice with disadvantaged and disenfranchised populations. Field education is conceptualized as an educational experience rather than a work term. That is, it is a graded placement course with an agency based qualified instructor assigned to teach each student. The placement workload is controlled to facilitate this emphasis on learning.

Field education course requirements for each MSW program are as follows:

- Two year full-time MSW program
 - SK541: Foundational Field Education (462 placement hours)
 - SK649: Advanced Field Education (546 placement hours) or SK650: Advanced International Field Education (720 hours)
- Three year part-time MSW program
 - SK541: Foundational Field Education (462 placement hours)
 - SK649: Advanced Field Education (546 placement hours)
- One year advanced standing (post BSW) MSW program
 - SK649: Advanced Field Education (546 placement hours)
- Two year advanced standing (post BSW) part-time MSW program
 - SK649: Advanced Field Education (546 placement hours)

Field timelines

Field education courses are structured within specific terms, with start and end dates that normally do not align with the term dates for the class-based courses. Placements outside these terms are not possible. This structure considers the student’s program as a whole, and ensures that students complete required courses within the appropriate [course sequence](#) and can graduate in a timely manner. Field courses and class-based courses are offered concurrently. Placements are scheduled during days students are not required to be in class.

Program & field course	Days & hours/week required	Months	Total placement hours & minimum days required
Two year full-time: SK541 (Foundational field course)	3 days/week: Monday to Wednesday (21 hours/week) & 4 days/week: Monday to Thursday (28 hours/week)	January to March April to May	462 hours 7 hours/day: 66 days
Two year full-time & advanced standing full-time: SK649 (Advanced field course)	3 days a week: Monday to Wednesday (21 hours/week)	September to April	546 hours 7 hours/day: 78 days
Three year part-time: SK541 (Foundational field course)	2 days/week: days of the week based on instructor availability (14 hours over two days)	September to June	462 hours 7 hours/day: 66 days
Three year part-time & advanced standing part-time: SK649 (Advanced field course)	2 days/week: days based on instructor availability or (14 hours over two days) or	September to July or September to April	546 hours 7 hours/day: 78 days

	3 days/week: days based on instructor availability (21 hours/week)		
International Social Work Program: SK650 (Advanced International field course)	5 days/week: Monday to Friday	Late August to December	720 hours 16 weeks

Thesis students' field timelines

The thesis option for advanced standing students include exemptions from three courses: two electives and SK649 Advanced Field Education. Students may choose to complete SK649 Advanced Field Education in addition to these requirements. The thesis option for students in the two year full-time or three year part-time program include an exemption of 126 hours during SK649 Advanced Field Education.

Program & field course	Exemptions for Thesis students	Placement options	Total placement hours & minimum days required
Two year full-time and three year part-time: SK649 (Advanced field course)	126 hours	Full-time: September to February (Monday to Wednesday, 3 days/week) Part-time: September to April (2 days/week) or September to February (3 days/week)	420 hours 7 hours/day: 60 days

Current & upcoming placement schedules

The field placement schedules for the [current](#) or [upcoming](#) academic year are detailed on our [website](#).

4. International Social Work Program (Diploma)

The Faculty of Social Work at Wilfrid Laurier seeks to offer the highest quality and most relevant graduate social work education and training to its students. In acknowledging our current global reality, such social work education ideally permits students' exposure to social work as it occurs in other contexts, particularly those of the so-called 'developing world' or global south. The faculty believes that such exposure and opportunity to both contribute expertise and learn from the expertise of these communities will broaden social work horizons, creating new models of social work practice and new possibilities for global collaboration and understanding. To this end, the [International Social Work Program](#) (ISWP) is offered to a limited number of students who fulfill the program requirements.

Students who successfully complete all ISWP courses as well as an international field placement are eligible for the International Social Work Diploma (ISWD). ISWD provides students with an opportunity to advance knowledge and theory of social work practice in countries with social, economic and political contexts that are significantly different from those in Canada, while encouraging the sharing of ideas among social work students, schools and practitioners around the world. The program fosters understanding of global interdependence, the universality of social problems, and the need to develop responses grounded in the local community.

ISWD combines courses and orientation sessions with an international advanced field placement course. The international placement is in lieu of the second, advanced placement course, and takes place between late August and December. The international placement is not available as a foundational placement.

Benefits

Our communities are becoming increasingly diverse. This requires approaches and interventions by social workers that reflect the needs of our diverse ethno-cultural communities. Students who are immersed in alternative learnings of social work practice, and experience first-hand how to adapt knowledge and skills in new and unique international contexts, develop a better understanding of the intersectionality of global communities, and are better equipped to understand and develop local responses in diverse Canadian communities.

Additionally, ISWD reflects Laurier's internationalization efforts by offering graduate students opportunities to expand their knowledge abroad and enrich their communities when they return. The program enhances students' understanding of diverse social work practice areas through international placements and academic courses at the graduate level.

The importance of international placements and education in international social work cannot be underestimated. Exposure to international social work education and immersion in an unfamiliar context stimulate career awareness of the marketplace and enhance professional development. International social work placements expand students' academic/career choices while they contribute to an organization. Other benefits of international social work education and placements for students and their communities include:

- Immersing students in a bi-cultural experience within a new society where they are considered a minority enhances their ability to better appreciate the needs of diverse minority populations in Canada.
- Students develop critical integration and adaptation skills in a new society, and improve their capability to support the integration of newcomer Canadians and their capacity to flourish in their new communities.
- Students develop foreign language competency, as many international placements require that students develop some local language skills.
- Equip future generations of social workers to develop unique responses and interventions to the diverse ethno-cultural Canadian communities they serve.
- Increase students' opportunities for career placement in multi-national, international companies, in government agencies, and in educational institutions.
- Enhance the capacity of social workers to advocate for and develop social policies that reflect the needs of local communities.
- Returning students share their experience and knowledge with the MSW student body, faculty and staff through an annual colloquium in the winter. The sharing of information exposes students and faculty to new knowledge in social work practice as well as present possible connections for future research.
- Establish contacts for developing future career goals. In today's competitive job market, knowing key individuals can be an asset.
- Prepare students for the innumerable challenges of adapting to a variety of environments. This skill will be very useful in coping with the "expect the unexpected" situations which emerge with any job.
- Identify career-related goals based on their placement experience.
- Provide students with experience in an employment setting that will make them more desirable as employees, increasing their ability to find employment.

Development education

In order for students to be effective contributors in their assigned placements and so that they are prepared, psychologically, and physically for a four to five month residency in a different cultural and social work milieu, development education is a required component of preparing for an international placement.

Travelling to and living in a new country can offer multiple opportunities and challenges. Differing customs, politics, language and food are often areas of anticipated difference. As most international placement applicants will assume placements in the so-called developing world – in Africa, Asia and Latin America – they will also experience moving from a culture of white western dominance to one where these familiar markers of identity are in the minority. These and other aspects of identity require exploring before a student is approved to participate in the international placement. This process often helps a student identify that they do not want an international placement or that there are particular areas of the world or cultures that they would not feel comfortable in. This process is an anticipated and important part of placement preparation. Often there are many more students who initially plan to do an international placement than there are students who formally apply.

Other aspects of contemporary western life such as hot water, flush toilets, safe food supplies, high levels of personal security and housing that is private, spacious and secure are also taken as givens. Many international placement settings will challenge western assumptions about these aspects of personal comfort and security. Students explore these issues and their attitudes and expectations in depth. Because of the enduring legacies of colonialism, many people and agencies in the developing world have a high regard for western knowledge. Thus as a western trained social worker, students may find themselves given deferential and privileged treatment as well as being cast in the role of expert. As a social work intern, students must be able to learn as well as to contribute. Challenging the role of foreign expert and negotiating an appropriate role are important preparatory topics. Through the ISWD courses, preparatory workshops, and pre-departure orientation meetings, students are equipped to consider many of these challenges prior to embarking on the international placement.

Eligibility

Master of Social Work (MSW) students in the two-year full-time are eligible to apply for the ISWD international placement. Interested students must attend an information session; provide a written application package, and successfully interview with a select panel of Faculty and Staff prior to receiving conditional acceptance into the program. Students must be progressing through all current courses to be considered. Approved applicants attend ISWD courses during the spring term and must complete the Laurier International Opportunities My Learning Space course modules titled: Travel Logistics, Health & Safety, and Culture and Adaptation prior to attending three half days of pre-departure orientation. As part of the application package, students rank available placements. Students who successfully interview with move on to being interviewed by the international placement agency/instructor. Final approval for the program lies with this interview.

Program sequence

ISWD combines courses and orientation sessions with an international advanced placement. Students interested in ISWD apply during the first term of their MSW program and begin required courses during their second term. The international placement is in lieu of the second, advanced placement, and takes place between early August and late December.

Required Courses

- SK592: Transnational Social Work Practice
- SK596: International Social Work Research (to replace SK615: Research 2 intensive in June)
- SK630: International Placement Orientation: Introduction to Culture, History and Traditions of your Host Country
- SK622: Personal and Professional Identity: Reflexivity and Growth in International Context
- SK650: Advanced Field Education (five-day block placement in an international setting)
- SK597: International Social Work Research Paper

These courses are a part of the core and elective courses of the MSW program for students who intend to complete the Diploma and participate in an international placement. Students who do not wish to participate in the ISWD or an international placement may enrol in SK596 (Research in International Social Work) and SK592 (Transnational Social Work practice), which are open to all students. The remaining courses are only open to students approved for participation in the ISWD.

Course exemptions

Students participating in ISWD are exempt from a few courses listed in the [appropriate course sequence](#). ISWD students are exempt from courses that are tailored to the learning needs of students completing a local advanced placement. In lieu of these exemptions, ISWD students complete the courses outlined above.

International placements

The Faculty of Social Work collaborates with international non-governmental organizations, non-profit organizations, and academic institutions that meet the requirements for providing a MSW level placement opportunity. Placement availability varies from year to year, and depends on various factors including the political context of the country, and staffing changes. MSW students apply for field placement opportunities with international agencies that the Faculty of Social Work has an established relationship with. Detailed information about available placements are shared with students every fall term during the orientation sessions.

Currently, the Faculty of Social Work supports placements with host agencies in China, Uganda, Peru and Tanzania. Past placement opportunities were provided in Ghana, Kenya, India and the Philippines. Students seeking new placement opportunities may be encouraged to present their proposed placement to the coordinator during the first term of their program. Students are encouraged to review the [Department of International Trade and Foreign Affairs Canada – Travel Reports and Warnings](#) for information about any risk or safety issues about the country. Placements are not offered in countries and/or regions that are deemed high risk by the Department of International Trade and Foreign Affairs. High risk regions are designated as “avoid non-essential travel” or “avoid all travel”.

Agencies request for MSW placements

The MSW Field Education Office contacts agencies and instructors to seek out and verify International MSW placement opportunities each fall. Agencies are asked to complete a MSW International Social Work Program Placement Information document or to update the currently active document. At this point, new instructors are vetted and additional information may be collected regarding the services of the agency. If a student proposes an international placement agency, the Field Office completes the necessary research and approval process. The Field Office contacts Laurier International during the fall verification process to explore/exchange information about location specific safety risks. A risk assessment by the Field Office is

completed to ensure the placement is not in a high risk location. The final list of available international placements is approved by the MSW Associate Dean.

Placement matches

The Field Education Office processes and shares the placement opportunities submitted by agencies and approved by the Associate Dean with interested students to allow students to identify the placements of interest to them. As part of the decision-making process to match a suitable candidate for the placement, the Field Education Office considers the interests of all students individually and collectively, the information obtained through the interview process, as well as the information and requirements provided by the agency and instructor (e.g. student's previous experience). Considering these factors and many others, the Field Education Office recommends a student to the agency for an interview.

Applying to the program

Students interested in participating in the ISWD and international placement must complete a two-step application process that includes a written application and an interview. Applicants must submit the completed **International Social Work Program Application** no later than the due date. A shortlist of candidates will be invited for an interview with a committee of field education staff, students, and faculty. Interviews are mandatory for all applicants. Only approved candidates may participate in the ISWD and/or international placement.

Assessment of applications

Students will be selected for ISWD on the basis of the following criteria:

- Evaluated through the Faculty of Social Work's academic records:
 - Satisfactory performance in field courses (foundational or BSW).
 - Good academic performance in the MSW program to date.
- Evaluated through the application form and interview:
 - Suitability of learning goals for international social work practice.
 - Suitability of personal and professional motivations for pursuing international placement.
 - Critical self-reflection on personal suitability for an international placement.
 - Understanding of international context (e.g. awareness of cross-cultural dynamics, issues of cultural adaptation, cultural humility, the role of social work, etc.).
 - Evidence of independence, flexibility and adaptability.
 - Specific skills, experiences or competencies of relevance to the particular placement requested or to international placements in general.
 - Suitability as 'ambassador' for the Faculty of Social Work.

Planning for the international placement

Successful ISWD applicants are required to participate in Pre-departure Orientation Sessions including an on-line component. These sessions are facilitated by Laurier International and Laurier's Diversity and Equity Office and are intended to prepare MSW students for their international placements. Sessions are interactive in nature and focus on various practical elements. The orientation is not part of course work and students are not graded; however, participation and successful completion of all sessions is a mandatory requirement for students. Session topics include:

- Health, Wellness and Safety Abroad
- Navigating Identity and Ethical Considerations
- Intercultural Communication, Conflict Resolution and Group Work

Students complete an Acknowledgement and Assumption of Risk for International Social Work Placement form which outlines the student's responsibilities including the requirement to obtain adequate insurance coverage and the completion of a Field Activities Safety Plan. Students are responsible for obtaining passports and visas and all costs associated with this.

Students are required to purchase supplementary health insurance from a [provider recommended by Laurier International](#). Students should obtain detailed information about this coverage and determine its suitability for their individual circumstances. Health requirements for each placement country may also require vaccinations and advance preparation. It is the student's responsibility to visit their doctor and or a travel clinic well in advance of their anticipated departure.

Laurier International is involved in monitoring students while on placement and as such contact information is collected including next of kin information for all placed students. Students are also required to register online with the Canadian Department of Foreign Affairs, Trade and Development. When students arrive at the placement destination they are to contact the nearest Canadian embassy or consulate and request the activation of the student's registration.

Funding opportunities and fees

Students pay tuition fees at Laurier and are responsible for all expenses incurred towards the international placement, including travel, accommodation and health insurance. Students approved for the MSW-International Social Work Diploma pay \$750 for the additional Diploma credential.

In the past, students have offset their expenses through scholarships and organizing various fundraisers. There may also be opportunities to apply for external grants. Some international organizations assist with housing or offer students a stipend towards accommodation or meals. Such financial assistance is offered at the discretion and capacity of the organization. There are a few funding opportunities available to ISWD students:

- The Faculty of Social Work **International Placement Bursary Fund**, funded by Allon Bross, is available for Laurier MSW students participating in ISWP who demonstrate financial need. Up to \$1,000 is provided to students who are not receiving funding from other sources.
- Our partner agency in **China** may provide students with a monthly stipend (approximately \$800/month) and covers the cost of accommodation, utilities, and meals for each student. Availability of funding is up to the discretion of the agency.
- [Laurier International](#) also facilitates additional scholarship opportunities that are open to graduate students completing an international placement.

Logistics

Visa

Many countries require internship students to obtain a Visa. It is the students' responsibility to ensure that they have obtained the necessary documents and permissions necessary for travelling to, and completing their placement. In most cases, students will apply to renew their visa while on an international placement. Students are advised to prepare for costs and deadlines associated with renewing a visa.

Health Insurance

Student fees include supplementary health insurance. Students should obtain detailed information about this coverage and determine its suitability for their individual circumstances. Health requirements for each

placement country may also require vaccinations and advance preparation. It is the student's responsibility to visit their doctor and or a travel clinic well in advance of their anticipated departure.

Registry of Canadians Abroad

Students are also encouraged to register online with the Registry of Canadians Abroad (ROCA) managed by Foreign Affairs Canada. When students arrive at the placement destination they should contact the nearest Canadian embassy or consulate and request the activation of the student's ROCA registration. This can be done by telephone, e-mail or in person.

OSAP

While away, there may be university registration and/or OSAP requirements as well as financial issues that might be expedited through the identification and naming of someone who can act on the student's behalf. Giving a power of attorney to a family member or friend can be done through a simple legal document that can be notarized for a small sum.

5. Field Instruction

The role of the field instructor in the education of social workers is crucial. The instructor attempts to teach complex skills within the respective concentrations, model professional behaviours, and facilitate the growth and development of values and ethics in the student.

For both educational and administrative reasons, the Faculty of Social Work relies on agency-employed field instructors for all field placements. At all times the students and instructors are accountable to the agency administration for the service responsibilities and to the University for the educational requirements and procedures. It is expected that the instructors attend meetings or committees required by the agency to provide for realistic involvement in agency administration.

Appointment of field instructors

Field instructors are employed by agencies, or teaching centres, and normally have a Masters of Social Work (MSW) for advanced or foundational placements, or a Bachelor of Social Work (BSW) for foundational placements. Instructors are expected to have at least:

- two years post-MSW (or equivalent) full-time work experience, or two to four years post-BSW full-time work experience for foundational placements,
- one year of employment in the agency,
- and to complete the [Beginning Field Instruction Workshop](#) or an equivalent.

Instructors make a commitment to accept a student during the time they are taking this training or the calendar year following it. Participants receive a certificate of completion, which may be used toward professional credits if applicable. The Field Education Office works closely with all field instructors and orients instructors towards their role and responsibilities a few months before the start of any placement. This includes assessing the instructor's interest and suitability considering CASWE's accreditation standards and FSW policies, and requirements, and conducting a field visit.

Agency-based MSWs usually serve as field instructors for one or two students each term. They are selected as instructors because of their competence and ability to integrate theory and practice. To be approved as

an instructor, the agency administrator must be in support of the student education program and willing to provide the necessary time to permit the instructor to undertake this responsibility.

Faculty support for field instruction

The Faculty of Social Work is committed to supporting field instruction as follows:

- Establish criteria for selection of field settings which ensure a quality field education program.
- Conduct field visits with new agencies to establish placement settings.
- Provide field instructors with a clear understanding of the faculty's curriculum objectives and the theory base which is taught in the classroom.
- Setting minimum field practice goals and criteria for student evaluations.
- Provide training and learning opportunities for field instructors to assist them to improve teaching skills in new or advanced areas of practice.
- Support, initiate, and maintain contact with field instructors and students through field advisors.

Goals for field instructors

The goal of the field instructor is to assist the student to identify concepts and integrate theory into practice, as well as to assume responsibility for providing the necessary range of learning opportunities and methods within the placement setting. This may include learning opportunities for practice with diverse, disadvantaged groups with respect to cultural diversity, class, age, gender and ability. The learning methods made available to students could include the use of tape recorders, audio/visual aids, group teaching, process recordings, other resource persons, etc.

With respect to the evaluation of the student the goal of the instructor is to encourage the development of self-awareness in the student through an open student-instructor relationship, permitting the formulation of learning goals, and evaluation of student performance.

Accountability

- The field instructor is fully accountable to the administrator of the agency or unit, or to supervisory personnel assigned by the administrator.
- The field instructor will follow the general practice of the agency and the conditions of employment, respectful of any right of the University to terminate his/her teaching responsibility.

Responsibilities of instructors

Field instructors are expected to devote at most, five hours a week to each student in placement: this includes about two to three hours a week supervision time of which a minimum of one and one-half hours should be in a regularly scheduled individual supervision each week. If group supervision is planned, time for this should be additional to the 1.5 hours per week of individual supervision. Instructors require time to read student records, listen to tapes, observe interviews and prepare evaluation reports for the faculty. Instructors for part-time students completing a two days per week placement may spend half the time per week as noted above. Field instructors have specific responsibilities towards their employer, the agency or teaching centre, the faculty, as well as towards the placement student as noted below.

Responsibility towards the agency

- To cooperate fully with the administrator of the social agency, hospital or board of education service selected by the faculty for field instruction purposes.
- To attend staff meetings; to prepare such reports as is normally required of supervisors in social work in the setting involved.
- To plan for and prepare for the selection of assignments made to students.
- To supervise students in the field setting with regard to professional practice and to prepare such statistical and other reports as may be required of other supervisory personnel in the social agency, hospital or board of education service involved. In the supervision of student practice, the field instructor carries the same status and responsibility as any other supervisor in the service setting involved. This includes professional responsibility for the care and treatment of each client or patient in each student practice load.
- To provide for the orientation of students upon arrival for field instruction.
- To maintain professional relationships with other supervisory and administrative personnel as may be necessary or helpful in upholding a good quality of student service.

Responsibility towards faculty and educational components

- To provide a commitment to the basic curriculum objectives of the Faculty of Social Work.
- To cooperate with the faculty with regard to educational content and educational methods in functioning as a teaching supervisor.
- To cooperate with the faculty and its field representatives in determining the kinds of assignments to be selected for student practice, the size of the student's practice load and the diversity of student practice loads.
- To focus the practice experience on the learning level and interests of the student where appropriate. The level of student's ability should set the pace of the placement rather than agency or client need.
- To assist the student to identify concepts and integrate theory into practice. Field instruction is a progressive knowledge and skill building process moving from relatively straightforward assignments to more complex ones.
- To assume responsibility for providing the necessary range of learning opportunities to meet the Faculty of Social Work's generic goals either through assignments within the field setting or satellite projects in the community. This includes opportunities for practice with diverse, disadvantaged groups with respect to cultural diversity, class, age, gender and ability.
- To encourage developing self-awareness in the student through a student-field instructor relationship which is an open and direct transaction permitting the formulating of field goals, optimum student-instructor sharing and evaluation of student performance.
- To make available the widest possible range of learning opportunities and methods, i.e., use of tape recorders, audio/visual aids, group teaching, other resource persons, etc.
- To conduct a regularly scheduled conference weekly with each student and to be available for unscheduled conferences as needed within available time.
- To submit midterm and final evaluation reports as requested by the faculty.

Responsibility towards students

- Reception and orientation of students upon arrival.
- Become familiar with the educational philosophy and curriculum of the faculty.
- Link theory and practice within the student's learning experience.

- Develop the learning plan with the student.
- Provide practice assignments based on the learning plan.
- Observe students in the placement setting with regard to professional practice.
- Schedule individual supervision on a weekly basis, for a minimum of 1.5 hours per week, in order to teach practice values, knowledge and skills.
- Allow the student the necessary time for participation in concurrent courses offered during the field placement (courses are not offered on placement days).
- Make use of field advisors as appropriate.
- Complete and submit midterm and final evaluations as requested by the faculty. Evaluation guidelines are available to help facilitate planning for an evaluation meeting.

It is recommended that the instructor carry a reduced workload to reflect the increased time required for teaching. This can be achieved in several ways but the most common approach is to assign cases/projects normally carried by the field instructor to the student. All assignments will include considerable input from the student along with the delegation of responsibility to the student for some components of the tasks of field instruction.

Recognition of instructors

Experienced field instructors receive special recognition for their instruction of students via an official title. Field instructors who have completed two successive placements will receive a certificate of recognition with the title **Assistant Field Education Professor (Part-time)**. Instructors who have completed ten or more placements and have made special contributions to the field education program at Wilfrid Laurier University are invited by the MSW field coordinator to apply by letter for the title **Associate Field Education Professor (Part-time)**.

Approved FSW Divisional Council, 1998

Orientation and training for instructors

Training opportunities are provided for new field instructors each year. Periodic workshop activity involving all instructors are usually offered by the faculty once a year. All new instructors are expected to take the [Beginning Field Education Instruction](#) workshop series prior to or while providing field instruction to their first student. Instructors who have completed similar training at another school or faculty of social work may be exempt. There is no fee for this workshop.

Benefits for instructors

The Faculty of Social Work recognizes that due to budget pressures it is increasingly difficult for social agencies to find the resources necessary for providing placements for our students. The success of our MSW field program relies heavily on field agencies that dedicate their time, resources and staff to the education of social work students. In order to reward the longstanding commitment of field instructors and agencies, and facilitate continued involvement with our field education program, the faculty provides several benefits to our field agency partners.

Professional Development dollars

In appreciation of the commitment of field agency partners in providing excellent learning opportunities for our MSW students, the Faculty of Social Work offers Professional Development (PD) dollars. Each agency that supervises a MSW field placement student receives PD dollars, which can be used toward almost any

workshop offered by the [Faculty's Professional Development Office](#).

PD dollars are awarded on the following basis for each student's field placement:

- 85 PD dollars for the MSW foundational field placement (462 hours)
- 100 PD dollars for the MSW advanced field placement (546 hours)

PD dollars are awarded at the end of student placements (in December and May), and can be used immediately or saved for up to five years. The PD dollars will be given to the agency rather than the individual field instructor so that agencies have some flexibility in how to use them (although we trust that field instructors for our students will be the primary beneficiaries). For example, an agency may save PD dollars for a few years and then send a number of staff to the same professional development workshop. PD dollars have no cash value and expire after five years.

Library privileges

All field agency personnel who have some connection with current student field placements (i.e., not just the field instructor, but also the agency director, the placement supervisor, and anyone else with some role to play in student's placement) will have electronic resource access to the Laurier library through a login provided by the Field Education Office. Field personnel also have the option to sign up for a community borrower card to access hard copy items in the library. There is no charge for a community borrower card.

Athletic Complex

Field Instructors are provided membership in the Athletic Complex at the rate paid by faculty and staff, which is paid by the field contingency fund of the Faculty of Social Work.

Committee participation

Field instructors may participate in the Faculty of Social Work Divisional Council meetings and/or one of its standing committees. Depending on the committee, field instructors may also have voting privileges.

Agencies request for MSW placements

The MSW Field Education Office contacts agencies and instructors to seek out MSW placement opportunities every term. This process requires agencies to submit a Placement Request Form with information about the placement opportunity that will be offered.

Placement matches

The Field Education Office processes and shares the placement opportunities submitted by agencies with students to allow students to identify the placements of interest to them. As part of the decision-making process to match a suitable candidate for the placement, the Field Education Office considers the interests of all students individually and collectively, the requirements of the student's MSW field course, as well as the information and requirements provided by the agency and instructor (e.g. student's previous experience). Considering these factors and many others, the Field Education Office recommends a student to the agency for an interview.

Overview of placement planning timeline for agencies

For placements that start in September

- Placement requests are sent to agencies in January.
- Agencies submit the [Placement Request Form](#) by mid-April.
- Students are referred to agencies for interviews late April.

- Most interviews are completed by end of June.

For placements that start in January

- Placement requests are sent to agencies in July.
- Agencies submit the Placement Request Form by end of September.
- Students are referred to agencies for interviews by mid-October.
- Most interviews are completed by end of November.

Alternative placement planning timelines

Some agencies interview students earlier than the placement planning timeline for Laurier, require students to apply directly to the agency, or prefer to review resumes of potential candidates prior to offering a placement interview. The Field Education Office coordinates with agencies that prefer alternative placement planning options. Agencies are encouraged to contact the Field Education Office or complete the appropriate sections of the [Placement Request Form](#) to identify the agency's preferred process for reviewing student applications as well the agency's timeline for interviewing students.

For international placements, planning with agencies begins in the fall of each year, at least ten months before the placement starts in late August. Agencies complete an MSW International Social Work Program Placement Information document which provides all the information contained in the Placement Request Form and additional information that students need to consider such as visa information, local supports, customs, currency etc.

6. Field Advising

The strength of the Faculty of Social Work program lies not only in the quality of the campus courses and the placement opportunities but also in the coordination and communication between these two components in the education process. Provision for such coordination and communication must be ensured not only by suitable organizational structures within the faculty but also by means of allocation of appropriate personal responsibilities.

To further strengthen and facilitate the process of learning in the placement, the FSW assigns a field advisor for each instructor and student during the field placement. The field advisor is an experienced social worker employed by the Faculty of Social Work who has worked in the field for a minimum of five years, and has experience working with students. The field advisor provides a connection between campus and field for the student and placement setting. Each term the field advisor is assigned to a group of students placed at an agency. To ensure continuity of learning for students, efforts are made to assign each advisor the same group of students for the foundational and advanced placements when possible.

International Field Advisor

One field advisor is hired for the international social work program and is responsible for all students attending international placements. The responsibilities of this advisor are the same as other advisors with the exception of contact being conducted via skype instead of in person. International placement students have an increased level of contact to support them prior to and during the placement period.

Responsibilities of field advisors

Field advisor overall responsibilities include:

- Assist agencies and instructors to feel positively connected with the Faculty of Social Work.

- Establish and maintain an atmosphere of trust, supportiveness and openness with the field instructor and student.
- Ensure early in the placement those field goals as required by the curriculum will be met.
- Ensure that specific student educational needs and/or problems in learning are being dealt with.
- Act as a contact person from the Faculty of Social Work for agencies, instructors, and students to address questions, procedures, and possible problems, should they occur, in a collaborative manner.
- Provide students with an individual resource person; and offer field preparation workshops.
- Review students' written learning plan, evaluation reports and, if required, address problems when identified (with instructor and student).
- Initiate and implement [Field Resolution procedures](#) and [Placement Dissolution procedures](#) in situations where the field instructor has identified that the student is not meeting expectations, in collaboration with the MSW field education coordinator.
- Assist with and monitor the placement as to whether it meets the learning requirements of the MSW program.
- Provide relevant support for field instructors and other agency personnel.
- Conduct field visits at the beginning of each placement identified by the Field Education Office.

Contacting agencies

Field advisors connect with students as well as instructors by the first day of placement. Advisors also connect with students and instructors prior to each evaluation in order to provide any support needed towards the student's placement.

Field visits

The advisor visits the placement setting and meets with both the field instructor and the student for consultation on any matter pertaining to the student's education at the faculty and performance in the placement. At least one field visit is required for any new agencies, full-time and part-time students completing a foundational placement, new field instructors, full-time and part-time students in the advanced standing program, and any other agencies indicated by the Field Education Office. Where appropriate, these visits may also be conducted via skype or zoom.

The first field visit for new agencies, full-time and part-time first year students, advanced standing students, and new instructors takes place during the **first eight weeks of placement**.

Student meetings

Field advisors meet with their group of students within the first two weeks of the placement term. Advisors are also available to meet with students at the faculty as needed.

Advisor responsibilities according to cohort

Students completing the foundational field course and advanced standing students: The field advisor visits the agency to assist with such issues as reviewing students' learning assignments, evaluation concerns and to provide any needed information and support. Early visits are planned in the case of a new agency and/or instructor in order to assist and support this new setting. Further visits may be made at the request of the instructor, student or Field Education Office.

Students completing the advanced field course (two year full-time and three year part-time): For the second, advanced placement, field advisors contact the agency via phone/email and are available to visit with the student and instructor on any issues that may arise. A visit is expected in the case of a new agency and/or instructor or as requested by the Field Education Office. The visit takes place earlier in the term in order to assist and support this new setting.

Field Resolution Procedure

The field instructor initiates a discussion with the field advisor as soon as he/she feels a student is experiencing problems. This makes it possible for the advisor and instructor to work together to assist the student early in the placement while there is still enough time to resolve the difficulty. The [Field Resolution Procedure](#) was established by the faculty to assist advisors in addressing placement related issues. Students are also expected to contact the field advisor should they face any issues in placement.

Field advisors initiate and implement the [Field Resolution Procedure](#) in situations where the field instructor has identified that the student is not meeting expectations. This procedure is also initiated to report any conflict that arises between a student and the field instructor, or when a student identifies learning issues or challenges within the placement. If the issue is not resolved, the [Placement Dissolution Procedure](#) may be initiated as per the recommendation of the agency, instructor, or MSW field coordinator.

7. Field Placements

The curriculum is designed to offer theoretical and practical knowledge in four essential and interconnected social work practice areas:



Micro practice refers to direct practice with individuals, families and groups. It includes placements in a community setting or placements with a counseling agency.

Macro practice refers to direct and/or indirect practice with groups and communities. It includes placements with agencies that work on research, program development, policy, and/or communities.

Integrated practice incorporates both micro and macro learning opportunities. It includes placements that offer both micro and macro practice areas.

It is expected that students entering the MSW program at the advanced level have already been exposed to the continuum of social work practice and have developed foundational skills. Advanced field education placements include placements geared towards micro, macro and/or integrated skill development.

Types of placements

Social Work Practice Area	Description	Types of Placements
Macro Social Work Practice	Focus on macro settings applying a variety of theories, practice methods and models. Learning activities may include collaborative work in community organizational practice, developing proposals, program planning, implementation, evaluation and relevant research, as well as policy analysis and development where feasible.	Social planning councils, government ministries and services (all levels: political, health and legal), organizations, family service and child welfare agencies, research groups, and funding bodies.
Micro Social Work Practice	Focus on practice in ongoing and short term counselling with individuals, families and groups. Applying a variety of theories, practice methods and models. Learning activities may include assessment work, psychotherapy, intake, crisis intervention, and case managements. Placements may include observation or direct practice this is dependent on the placement setting and the discretion of the field instructor.	Counselling agencies, hospitals, mental health clinics, treatment facilities, child welfare, addictions agencies, nursing homes, and long-term care facilities, women’s centres, agencies responding to diversity issues, correctional settings, school boards, and other specialized social service agencies.
Integrated Social Work Practice	Emphasis on micro or macro social work practice with a view of facilitating social change via a planned combination and range of theories and social work interventions, practice methods, and	Child welfare agencies, community based programs in counselling centres, schools, hospitals, women’s centres, agencies

	<p>models applicable to small and large systems. These placements may or may not include direct practice with individuals and groups. Practice could include information gathering to assist in the development of programs, case management, or service coordination.</p>	<p>responding to diversity issues, and community mental health programs.</p> <p>Grassroots community agencies including some counselling centres, child welfare, specialized organizations responding to diversity issues, women’s organizations, community mental health projects, specialized programs through schools and hospitals.</p>
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Field placement assignments according to field course

In keeping with the major goal of the FSW to permit each student to develop professional competence in general social work practice, field placements are provided in diverse settings in order for students to acquire the necessary tools to practice in a variety of social work environments. As such, placements are not planned based on students' career interests. Additionally, students cannot complete two MSW placements within the same type of social work learning environment or agency (i.e., two hospital placements, or two government placements, or two workplace placements).

Since the first purpose of student practice is educational, student practice loads must be selective and based on opportunities provided by the agency setting. Learning assignments may correspond with the instructor’s or placement’s activities and projects.

Foundational assignments

In the foundational field placement, students will have the majority of assignments in the area of the placement setting, with exposure to develop skills in other areas of social work practice. That is, if the student is placed with an agency that primarily provides individual and group counselling learning opportunities, or micro social work practice, the student must also engage in activities that orient their learning towards macro social work practice such as program development, research or policy review. The assignments in the minor areas could include activities such as speaking to a community group, participation in staff meetings and board-staff committees, attendance at board meetings and participation in agency or community projects. Where possible, students should have a range of experiences including working with clients of different life stages, socio-economic circumstances, social problems and diverse factors. Foundational placements are integrated in nature and placement assignments reflect the core areas of the foundational year’s curriculum, which exposes students to all areas of social work practice.

Advanced assignments

In the advanced field placement, the assignments for students reflect the advanced learning activities delivered by the agency. Some placements will focus on advanced micro learning opportunities, others on advanced macro learning opportunities, while some will integrate both areas of social work practice. Integrated placements will have a blend of learning activities for students. More experienced students may carry a heavier load depending on learning needs and style. Assignments may include aspects of the other modalities determined by student learning needs, interests and experience.

An important aspect of the field placement is that the students have opportunities to develop their potential. Ideally, they should be encouraged to explore issues of concern to them, initiate programs where appropriate and be creative in their problem solving approaches. They should be fully engaged in the practice assignments and assume considerable responsibility for their own learning.

8. Learning Plan, Evaluation & Grading

The planning and evaluation documents are designed in accordance with the Faculty of Social Work's field objectives and the standards of its accrediting body, [Canadian Association for Social Work Education](#). The Learning Plan serves as the formal field course learning contract. Nine essential social work practice areas based on the social change process have been identified. Each of these practice areas is important for **all** students. Depending on the student's field course (foundational or advanced), the emphasis and focus will differ. Other basic and broad areas of practice may be added when deemed appropriate for the student, instructor and agency.

For each field course there are two written evaluations to be submitted to the faculty: the midterm and the final evaluation. The midterm evaluation is a review and revision of the initial goals and objectives as it has evolved from the Learning Plan. It is also a record of assignments and evidence of goal attainment to that point. It especially affords the student and field instructor an opportunity to identify gaps in learning that may be a focus for the remainder of the field placement course.

Learning goals & practice areas

1. Practicing from a social work knowledge base

- a. apply a broad range of social work theory constructs, with particular attention to concepts and principles related to the nature of the field course (foundational with opportunities for integrated learning in micro and macro social work practice, or advanced social work practice)
- b. apply social work concepts and principles regarding diversity and oppression
- c. apply social work theory regarding organizational behaviour, systems/ecological perspectives, human development and helping relationships

2. Developing a professional self in terms of social work values, ethics, principles and practices

- a. according to the Canadian Social Work Code of Ethics, the Ontario Standards of Practice; and the Ontario Human Rights Code, i.e., section 5 including race, ethnic origin, class, colour, creed, heritage, sex, age, mental and physical ability, gender, sexual orientation, record of offences, family status
- b. self reflection
- c. self awareness
- d. differential use-of-self
- e. initiative
- f. collaboration and teamwork
- g. advocacy
- h. a balance of autonomy and accountability
- i. time management
- j. administrative task responsibility such as case notes and reports

- k. sensitivity to personal and professional boundaries
- l. sensitivity to placement's political and relational realities in the agency and community
- m. creative, effective use of resources

3. Engaging in and maintaining social work relationships

- a. engage in and maintain social work relationships by:
 - using trust building skills
 - focusing on strengths
 - working effectively on a team
 - responding professionally to the intellectual, mental, emotional, social and dynamic components of relationships at all systemic levels. This includes for examples issues of loss, conflict, difference, power, resistance, ambivalence, dependency, etc.
 - respecting personal and professional boundaries
 - negotiating social systems
 - advocating with and for clients/consumers/communities
 - becoming familiar with history, development, context and mandates
- b. Learn effectively from the teaching /learning relationships with the instructor(s) and others
- c. Using effective confrontation and conflict resolution skills where a power difference exists

4. Assessing

- a. apply the assessment methods and tools of the placement setting
- b. assess the organizational and community context as applicable
- c. assess from a systems or person-in-environment perspective
- d. collaboratively identify and formulate a shared understanding of strengths, capacities, gaps, needs and priorities
- e. organize and record all assessment information clearly and analytically

5. Planning

- a. identify relevant community resources
- b. collaboratively develop a dynamic action plan which includes short and long term goals based on the assessment
- c. take initiative in clarifying with all participants the purpose, roles, boundaries and expectations of the contract/plan
- d. articulate the rationale for the plan and modify it as is appropriate
- e. take leadership in the resolution of difficulties arising within the context of the plan
- f. practice social planning with all the systems and stakeholders involved

6. Implementing strategies, methods, practices

- a. collaboratively determine interventions based on the assessment and plan
- b. apply these interventions including the following skills: empathy, active listening, support, empowering, focusing, tuning into non-verbal communication, problem solving, effective use of resources, referral, advocacy, negotiating, consulting, program development, policy analysis, research techniques, mediating, facilitating, motivating, networking
- c. use the strength of the social work relationship(s) purposefully at all levels to facilitate change and development

- d. be aware and flexible regarding the need to respond differentially as situations change

7. Documenting

- a. document practice, i.e., assessments, process notes, reports, proposals, correspondence, case recording, minutes, in accordance with the policies and procedures of the placement setting
- b. describe the process, progress and outcomes of practice clearly and concisely
- c. respect confidentiality and legal implications
- d. complete required written work in a competent, timely and organized manner

8. Evaluating

- a. evaluate the process collaboratively including feedback from all participants
- b. respectfully inform all participants regarding evaluative reports
- c. contribute to the development of agency programs, policies and procedures based on the evaluative work
- d. contribute to agency evaluative research projects where feasible, e.g., program evaluation
- e. critically reflect on her/his own practice (and the practices used in their setting) and identify subsequent learning and growth
- f. engage in a constructive evaluation of the placement teaching/learning experience

9. Closure

- a. effectively bring direct practice situations, projects and social work relationships to a conclusion
- b. transfer ongoing direct practice situations and projects to another social worker, team and/or other community resources
- c. in consultation with the instructor, conceptualize the learning/practice experiences in terms of transferability to other practice situations

Practice elements according to practice area

The following describes components that may be included in the field course planning process or the student's workload, taking into account the student's field course (foundational or advanced), agency requirements, and placement opportunity that is offered.

Macro social work practice

Depending on the context of the agency, the following provide examples of workload:

- **Guideline for workload:** a varied, inclusive, clear project which has a time frame (or a couple of projects) which includes the required elements. A flexible workload that provides time for practice related reading, reflection and planning is important.
- **Community:** community practice in a group context within organizations such as community based social agencies, grassroots groups, neighbourhoods and social action groups, participating in leadership capacities, in social change committees.
- **Social planning:** using a team approach, developing proposals and participating in aspects of program planning, implementation, evaluation and related research.
- **Social policy:** analyzing and developing policy in a collaborative context.
- **Organizations:** practice with organizational and administrative change.
- The foundational placement will also offer opportunities for integrated practice, with a few hours per week of formal or informal micro social work practice, such as counselling with individual consumers/clients and families. The advanced placement may focus on macro social work practice.

Micro social work practice

- **Guideline for workload:** A few cases (individual or group), and/or a small community outreach project are appropriate for the foundational placement. A flexible workload that provides time for practice related reading, reflection and planning is important.
- **Individual practice:** short term and ongoing varied counselling (include therapy, case management, crisis intervention) – if feasible. Observation and extensive shadowing during the foundational placement is expected.
- **Family practice:** counselling with families or parts of families (formal family therapy where feasible, couples where feasible - not required).
- **Group practice:** facilitating or co-facilitating at least a process and/or psycho-educational group
- The foundational placement will also offer opportunities for integrated practice, with a few hours per week of macro social work practice, such as participating in a small project in, for example, community outreach, program development, committee work, or needs assessment. Alternatively, students can participate in a time-limited way in, for example, a clinical research project at the agency, program evaluation, or policy development. The advanced placement may focus on micro social work practice.

Integrated social work practice

- **Workload guideline for integrated macro placement:** varied, inclusive, clear projects that incorporate community, planning, policy and organizational work. Ongoing client/consumer cases, (or more if brief intervention work) and, if feasible, a group, all of which integrate with macro social work practice, e.g. working on policy and program development on family violence in a team format and providing a community education group program on family violence while carrying a case or two of that nature that require support, advocacy and crisis intervention and referral.
- **Workload guideline for integrated micro placement:** Case management/psychotherapy with ongoing cases, including some crisis and brief intervention, supportive counselling and possibly intake work, co-leading a psycho educational, support, or community action group, community work project that integrates with that particular population, e.g., working with community adolescent support service, providing supportive counselling on a drop in basis, advocacy work, developing and facilitating some structured group programming, (e.g., life skills group) for the teens, liaising with schools, mental health and addiction facilities.

Student learning plan - process & instructions

The development of the Learning Plan is a collaborative process between the student and instructor(s) and begins immediately. The instructor and student meet to determine the student's learning interests considering agency opportunities, and practice activities that will provide learning within the nine social work practice areas identified. It serves as the basis for evaluating learning at the mid-term and completion of the field placement course. Assessment of learning occurs on an ongoing basis throughout the placement via weekly meetings between student and instructor(s) and the use of clear evaluative measures including for example, live observation, AV tapes, case/project review, reports, process recording, team contribution, one-way mirror, reflective team, etc. The Learning Plan is shared with the Field Advisor early on in the placement.

Instructions on completing the Learning Plan

1. The **Learning Plan**, which gives focus and direction to the placement, is written up by the **student**, and the final document is reviewed by the field instructor and student, with final approval from the instructor.
2. This plan is completed within the first four to six weeks of the placement and may be modified throughout as needed.
3. The learning plan is shared with the Field Advisor.
4. As part of the mid-term and final evaluation process, students update the plan to indicate their progress in each of the areas identified. This is then reviewed by the instructor.
5. The plan is submitted to the MSW Field Education Office and field advisor as part of the mid-term and final evaluations.

Evaluation of learning - process & instructions

A formal written evaluation is completed at midterm and again at the completion of placement using the Learning Plan as a guide. The evaluation is a collaborative process between Instructor and student; however, as course instructor, the instructor evaluates the student's progress. Evaluation of all nine social work practice areas is required at the mid-term and final evaluations. The normal procedure for the completion of the evaluation includes joint planning and preparation with detailed discussion of the student's work and goals during the placement. Following an evaluation meeting it is the instructor's responsibility to prepare the written evaluation report, recommend a grade of satisfactory or unsatisfactory (pass or fail) and send the evaluation to the MSW Field Education Office, field advisor, and student. The student should have the opportunity to read and sign the evaluation report **before** it is sent to the Field Education Office. The student's signature only indicates that he/she has read the evaluation. Any student disagreement with the evaluation should be noted and the student can add his/her own report if he/she wishes.

Evaluation, of course, is an ongoing process and begins on the first day of placement. The student and the field instructor are aware of the level of performance throughout the field practice period. It is expected that every meeting between the student and the instructor, whether it is on an individual basis or in group supervision, provides the opportunity for evaluating the student's performance. Each instructor should be prepared to discuss the criteria for assigning a failing grade to a student so that unnecessary anxiety may be alleviated. The MSW Field Learning Plan & Evaluation provided to the student and the instructor facilitates this model of learning and evaluation.

Instructions on completing the mid-term and final evaluation

1. At least three weeks prior to the due date of the evaluation, the student revisits the learning plan and completes his/her progress for the appropriate evaluation (mid-term or final).
2. The student also provides overall feedback for the appropriate evaluation.
3. This copy is shared with the field instructor for review and input.
4. The instructor completes the remainder of the evaluation by providing an overview of the student's activities for the appropriate evaluation (mid-term or final), evaluating the student's progress in each of the nine social work areas, and providing overall feedback for the evaluation.
5. This final evaluation is then reviewed by the Instructor and the student. The student's name/signature indicates that he/she has read the document.
6. The instructor then submits this evaluation electronically no later than the due date to the following parties simultaneously: Laurier MSW Field Education Office, field advisor, and student.

- Evaluations are reviewed by field advisors and the Field Education Office, and are part of the student's records.

Field education course grading procedures

The field education course is graded by the field instructor at mid-term and at the end of the placement. The Learning Plan that is negotiated between the student and the instructor provides the framework upon which the student's learning is assessed. Field education is considered a pass/fail requirement of the MSW degree. As such, the Instructor provides the Field Education Office with a satisfactory (pass) or unsatisfactory (fail) mark on the mid-term and final evaluations. In addition to the provision of a satisfactory or unsatisfactory mark, each mid-term and final evaluation must include a timesheet, which documents the required hours of practice in the field. The field education coordinator is the assigned course instructor for all field courses and is responsible for submitting grades to the [Faculty of Graduate and Postdoctoral Studies](#) on behalf of all field instructors. The following procedures are used:

Mid-term evaluation

Satisfactory grade on the mid-term evaluation and approved timesheet (if submitted by due date):

- Student receives a Continuing mark (000).

Satisfactory grade on the mid-term evaluation and approved timesheet (if submitted after due date):

- Student receives an Incomplete grade (INC).
- This mark is revised to a Continuing grade (000) once the evaluation and timesheet are received and reviewed. Delayed submissions result in delayed grades which may impact student's ability to register in courses in a timely manner.

Unsatisfactory grade on the mid-term evaluation:

- The field advisor will initiate the [Field Resolution Procedure](#).
- If the placement continues: student receives a Continuing grade (000) or Incomplete (INC) at the discretion of the coordinator in consultation with the field advisor and instructor.
- If the placement is [discontinued](#): student receives a Fail grade (F). The fail will be part of the student's official transcript. If the course is repeated, a "Repeated Later" notation will be seen on the official transcript and the repeated course will be subject to the course grading procedures. The student will remain on academic probation until the course is successfully repeated. The student has the right to petition the Faculty of Graduate and Postdoctoral Studies to have a grade removed as a historical record change prior to convocation.

Final evaluation

Satisfactory grade on the final evaluation and approved timesheet (if submitted by due date):

- Student receives a Satisfactory grade (S), which is a Pass.

Satisfactory grade on the final evaluation and approved timesheet (if submitted after due date):

- Student receives an Incomplete grade (INC).
- This mark is revised to a Satisfactory grade (S) once the evaluation and timesheet are received and reviewed. Delayed submissions result in delayed grades which may impact student's ability to register in courses or apply for graduation in a timely manner.

Unsatisfactory grade during the final evaluation:

- Student receives an Unsatisfactory grade, i.e. Fail grade (F). The fail will be part of the student's official transcript. If the course is repeated, a "Repeated Later" notation will be seen on the official transcript and the repeated course will be subject to the course grading procedures. The student will remain on academic probation until the course is successfully repeated. The student has the

right to petition Faculty of Graduate and Postdoctoral Studies to have a grade removed as a historical record change prior to convocation.

9. Field Placement Planning Process

Students are informed of placement expectations at the time they apply to the MSW Program. All incoming students agree to the MSW Field Placement Agreement prior to acceptance to the program:

MSW Field Placement Agreement

All MSW applicants must read and agree to the following declarations:

- I have read the information on the Faculty of Social Work pertaining to the [MSW Field Education](#) and have reviewed the time frames and planning procedures that apply to my MSW program.
- I understand that the Faculty of Social Work at Wilfrid Laurier University requires field placements without remuneration in order to complete the MSW program.
- I understand that the Field Education Office at the Faculty of Social Work will determine a suitable placement and assign me to a placement taking into account my MSW program requirements. Placement centres include agencies/organizations where professional broad social work is practiced.
- I understand that students are required to follow the placement term structure in order to graduate in a timely manner. The MSW Field Education website lists the placement timelines for each cohort of students.
- I understand that students must not set up their own placement without approval from the Field Education Office. Note: If you are completing a foundational and advanced placement you may set up one placement at your workplace in accordance with the criteria outlined in the MSW Field Education manual description.
- I understand that placements generally do not offer highly specialized training in, for example, psychotherapy, as the MSW is by nature broad. More specialized certifications, some of which are offered by our Professional Development Department online, may be pursued when available.
- I understand that it is important to make every effort to have access to a car as most agencies require possession of a car for the work they do and some may not be easily accessible by public transportation. Even in our “commuter” area, access to a car facilitates more placement opportunities.
- I understand that students are not paid while completing their field placement course with the exception on occasion of some part-time, workplace-based placements. Field placements are a course with a curriculum and are assigned a grade, which is different from paid co-op work terms. Financial planning regarding the placement is important before you commence the program. Students should expect additional costs such as travel to and from the agency as well as parking fees.
- I understand that many placement settings have requirements for a criminal record check and/or vaccinations prior to commencing the placement and that I am responsible for any expenses associated with these tests.

For on-site MSW applicants: I understand that students may be placed by the Field Education Office in centres that are normally located within a radius of 150 km of the Kitchener campus. I understand that I will be required to participate in the field planning process, and accept any field placements selected by the Field Education Office at the Faculty of Social Work in order to continue

my registration in the program. The Field Education Office does not guarantee placements in a student's home city. Toronto and GTA placements are particularly limited. Flexibility is required of students in terms of geography and placement settings. Agencies conduct interviews to determine a suitable student for the placement opportunity. The final decision will be made by the Field Education Office.

I have read and understand the above procedures that guide the field placement planning process. By checking the box below, I agree to abide by these procedures and understand that I am required to accept any placements selected by the Faculty of Social Work in order to continue my registration in the program.

Application information is collected under the authority of the Wilfrid Laurier University Act to administer the university-student relationship. This includes but is not limited to maintaining your academic and ancillary records, contacting you, and others on your behalf, and releasing such information as is appropriate for the operation of the university. Visit our [privacy coordinator's web-page](#) for more information and the Notice of Collection and Use or Disclosure of Personal Information.

I have read and agree to the declarations (check the box to agree)

Once admitted to the program, students participate fully in the placement planning process, which begins immediately upon their acceptance to the MSW Program at the Faculty of Social Work. The Field Education Office communicates with incoming students and provides an outline of the placement planning and matching process. Students cannot arrange their own placement; however, they are invited to [propose placements](#) within a specific timeframe.

Planning process & expectations

1. Incoming students

Incoming students are contacted by the MSW Field Education Office with information about the field placement planning process, and upcoming timelines. Students will be invited to the Headstart sessions in the summer, during which the Field Education Office shares important information with students about the placement planning process.

All students are welcome to set up individual meetings (phone or in-person) with the field advisor after Headstart. Some students may be asked to arrange for meetings with the Field Education Office. Meetings are intended to discuss the field education expectations and process, accommodation plans (if applicable) as well as the student's interests. Students are expected to share their resume prior to the meeting with the Field Education Office and are encouraged to bring any questions to this meeting.

2. Set up Laurier email

The Field Education Office will communicate with all students via the designated Laurier email as soon as students are admitted to the program. Additionally students need myLaurier email accounts in order to log into the [field placement portal](#) as outlined below. Students are expected to review their emails regularly.

3. Accommodation needs

Students who require academic and/or placement accommodations for disability-related reasons are encouraged to contact the [Accessible Learning Centre](#). Taking into consideration the student's consent, the Accessible Learning Centre may share the student's accommodation plan with the Field Education Office. Students with accommodation plans are invited to a meeting with the field coordinator to discuss placement needs as part of the placement planning process. The field coordinator considers information gathered from the student and the accommodation plan to match the student with a placement interview that can meet the student's needs.

4. Regulations regarding contacting agencies

Students cannot contact an agency or arrange meetings with agency members to learn about the available opportunities, set up an interview or meeting with an agency, or arrange their own placements. The Field Education Office assumes this responsibility on behalf of all students. Students may conduct a general search, [propose a new placement](#), and provide leads to the Field Education Office who will review placements based on several accreditation standards and requirements for MSW level placements. To ensure an equitable process, the Field Education Office will not approve any placements arranged outside of the placement planning process.

5. Proposing placements

Students may propose a placement or a workplace placement by completing a [Placement Proposal form](#) no later than the deadline provided. Students are expected to submit proposals for agencies that they have some knowledge about, are interested in, and are aware have provided MSW placements in the past. Students interested in completing a workplace placement are also required to complete this proposal form. Proposals for new placements and workplace placements will not be considered after the deadline.

Proposing a workplace placement

Workplace placements are intended to provide students with new learning opportunities at a previous or current work environment that they have not been exposed to during previous placements or employment. Students may be permitted to complete a placement at their current workplace, as long as:

- the workplace placement is in a department they have not worked in,
- is under the supervision of a field instructor who was/is not the student's employer or supervisor,
- and the placement includes learning opportunities of a MSW level that the student has not done before.

A request for a workplace placement can be considered for **one** placement only.

Proposing a placement

Students who propose a **new** placement opportunity with an agency that the Field Education Office has not worked with in the past will be given priority for a placement interview, and will be placed with the agency on the [field placement portal](#) should the agency consider the student for an interview. Students who propose a placement with an agency the Field Education Office has an established relationship with, will be considered along with other students interested in that particular placement.

Possible outcomes of proposing a placement

The Field Education Office considers all proposals seriously and will place students at an agency the student has proposed, if possible. Students are expected to submit proposals for agencies they are **ready to be placed with**.

- Any proposed opportunity that meets the MSW field standards for approval and becomes available will be uploaded on the portal.

- If a proposed placement is not posted on the portal when placement matches are announced, it means the proposed placement is not available.
- If a proposed placement with a **new** agency is a possibility (that is, the agency is willing to consider the student for a placement), the student will be matched with the agency for an interview.
- If a proposed placement with an agency that has an established relationship with the faculty is a possibility (that is, the agency is willing to consider a Laurier MSW student for a placement), the placement will be available on the portal for the student to show interest in.

6. Early interviews

Some agencies interview students earlier than the placement planning timeline for Laurier, and/or require students to apply directly. The Field Education Office will provide students with a list of these placement opportunities with instructions on the application process. Students **ready to be placed** at any of these placements, may apply to more than one of these opportunities. If an interview is not possible or successful, the student will then be considered for other placements via the normal placement planning process outlined below (#8. logging into portal and selecting ten agencies of interest).

7. Attend the field education preparatory workshops

The Field Education Office facilitates workshops that are geared to each cohort to ensure students are well prepared for the placement experience.

- **Two year full-time program (foundational placement):** workshops and drop-in sessions are held during the first, fall term.
- **Three year part-time program (foundational placement):** workshops are facilitated during the second, winter term considering the availability of part-time students.
- **Advanced standing programs (full-time and part-time):** preparatory workshops for students in the advanced standing programs are incorporated into the Headstart and Orientation sessions.

8. Showing interest in placements

To plan towards students' placement, the Field Education Office utilizes the [Field Placement Portal](#), which is an online tool that is used to gather students' information, set-up placement opportunities, share information about all available placements, and match students for interviews. The Field Education Office has [written instructions](#) as well as three instructional videos to guide students through the [Portal](#):

1. [Accessing the Field Placement Portal](#)
2. [Completing your Profile on the Field Placement Portal](#)
3. [Showing Interest In and Ranking Placement Opportunities](#)

The portal is used to facilitate the placement matching process for all students, including students who did not have a successful placement proposal (#5) or early placement interview (#6). It also allows the Field Education Office to have a better idea of students' interests. Students will be informed of the placement planning timeline for their field course, including the dates the portal opens. This process requires students to:

- Log in to the portal and complete the student profile using their designated myLaurier email.
- Review all placements available for the upcoming placement.
- Indicate interest on the portal in 10 preferred placement opportunities.
- **After** indicating interest in 10 preferred placements on the portal, rank these 10 placements in order of interest by completing the [Placement Ranking Form](#).

This process is extremely important. Students are professional learners and responsible for the placements they rank and select. Students will have access to placements as they become available. It is the student's responsibility to:

- review the placement descriptions carefully,
- ensure that they are familiar with the work and philosophy of the organization,
- be interested in the learning opportunities offered by the agency they rank,
- do not have a conflict of interest with the agency selected (e.g. if student or immediate family member received services as a client at the agency),
- and meet the requirements outlined by the agency (e.g. having access to a car while on placement, the expectation around commuting, or specific immunizations).

Students must be prepared to be matched with any of the 10 placements they rank. Students who do not complete the information above as directed will be considered for a placement based on their program requirements after all students have been matched for a placement.

The Field Education Office is committed to considering the 10 preferred placements ranked by each student in addition to the requirements of each agency and instructor to determine a suitable candidate for the interview. If unable to match a student with one of their 10 preferred placements, the Field Education Office will contact the student to discuss alternative placement options.

9. Submit placement selections and ranking form

New placements will continue to be added to the portal until the day before the portal closes. Closing access to the portal allows the Field Education Office to process all interests and match students for interviews with agencies (all students are required to interview for their placements). **Profile changes or ranking changes will not be considered after the portal closes.**

Portal timelines for all advanced placements and part-time foundational placements:

- The portal normally opens during February and March.
- The portal is normally closed by the first or second week of April.
- Placements for these cohorts start in September.

Portal timelines for full-time foundational placements:

- The portal normally opens during August.
- The portal is normally closed by the first week of October.
- Placements for these cohorts start in January.

10. Placement matching process

In order to facilitate the goals of the field education experience, students are encouraged to propose placements (within a set time frame) and/or show interest in placement opportunities developed by Field Education Office. Students are encouraged to meet with field education staff before the matching process begins to clarify any questions they have about the placements they are interested in. Students are responsible for reviewing all placements available before identifying and ranking the placements they are interested in. Students should pay particular attention to ensuring that they can meet the placement expectations detailed on the placement description. The Field Education Office considers each of the choices the students make. As a result, **students should be prepared for a placement in any of the placements they prefer, propose, or apply for.** Once a student is matched to an opportunity for an interview this match is considered final and it is up to the placement agency to determine if the student is a good fit.

These procedures are in place for the benefit of all students and the ability of the faculty to continue relationships with partnering agencies. Declining a placement after a match has been made is a very challenging request to consider. It impacts the relationships the faculty has with agencies, the consideration of future MSW placements for Laurier students, as well as availability of placements. These are all very important considerations in the current climate of competitive MSW placements.

As a result, the Field Education Office takes time to communicate these expectations prior to beginning the MSW program via the MSW Field Placement Agreement, which students submit as part of their application to the MSW program. Field education staff reiterate this information with students during Headstart, Orientation, and/or placement preparatory workshops.

Students are considered for each of their ten preferred placements through a rigorous process. Placements are not assigned on a first-come, first-serve basis. Placements are not assigned through an automated system on the portal, or a lottery system. **While the Field Education Office considers students' placement rankings, students may be placed at any of the ten preferred placements.** The field coordinator is ultimately responsible for the placement decision.

The Field Education Office considers the interests of all students individually and collectively at the same time. In some situations, pre-placement interviews are required by the placement setting as per a special agreement with the agency. Normally however, the coordinator and field advisors complete the matches based on information provided by students and agencies and inform the parties regarding the decision. Decisions on matching students to any of their ten preferred placements take into consideration many factors including:

- Accessible learning accommodation plans (if applicable).
- Student's interest as reflected in the 10 placements selected.
- Student's background and professional experience.
- Proposals submitted by students for new placements.
- All students interested in the placement opportunity.
- Information provided by instructors regarding suitable candidates for the particular placement or agency (e.g. previous experience, level of independence, etc.).
- Requirements that agencies and instructors communicate to the Field Education Office.
- Pre-screening interview with the Field Education Office prior to the referral for an interview for some placements.
- Requirements of the MSW program and field course.

The priority of the Field Education Office is to provide students with **placements that meet the requirements of their MSW field course and MSW program, and to ensure an equitable process for all students.**

11. Placement announcements

Placements are competitive and a referral to an agency for an interview does not guarantee the placement. Matches are announced via the field placement portal. Students log in at this time to view the 'placement record' which outlines detailed information about their placement match.

Students have two days to confirm their matches. In the absence of any extenuating circumstances that prevent the student from considering the match, students move forward with the interview process. Students are expected to contact the agency immediately with a cover letter and resume and a request to set up an interview. If the student emails and phones the agency contact provided, and does not hear back

within 8 business days (taking into consideration if the agency contact is on vacation or away temporarily) they are expected to inform the Field Education Office.

Timelines for placements that start in September (fall term)

- Matches for placement interviews are normally announced at the end of April to all students who have completed their profiles, indicated interest in agencies and submitted a ranking form by the deadline provided. This timeline mirrors the announcement timeline for most MSW programs in the region and allows Laurier MSW students the opportunity to be considered for placements in a timely manner. Some placement announcements occur later in the summer due to the timeframe the student is admitted to the program, or due to unexpected changes to the placement a student may have been matched with for an interview.

Timeline for placements that start in January (winter term)

- Winter foundational placement matches are normally announced by mid-October to all students who have completed their profiles, indicated interest in agencies and submitted a ranking form by the deadline provided. This timeline mirrors the announcement timeline for most MSW programs in the region and allows Laurier MSW students the opportunity to be considered for placements in a timely manner. Some placement announcements occur later in November as a result of unexpected changes to the placement a student may have been matched with for an interview.

12. Placement interviews & outcomes

Placement interviews are facilitated by students as soon as the placement matches are announced. Students are expected to prepare for a formal interview. Laurier MSW students will be competing for placements with students from various universities. The interviews are intended for instructors to determine whether a student is a good fit for the placement opportunity from a professional and personal perspective. Agencies contact the Field Education Office to confirm the outcome of the interview. The Field Education Office informs students of the result of the interview through the 'placement record' section of the portal.

Interview timelines for placements that start in September (fall term)

- Placement interviews normally start the first week of May. Most interviews are completed by the end of June.

Interview timelines for placements that start in January (winter term)

- Placement interviews normally start late October. Most interviews are completed by the end of November.

Outcomes of interviews

- If the interview is successful, the student begins preparing for the field placement by completing all agency requirements prior to the start of the placement (e.g. police check, immunizations).

If a placement is not an appropriate fit, or the agency declines to offer a placement, the student will be referred back to the Field Education Office for next steps. This process includes a discussion with the student about the outcome of the interview, considering the student for any placements available in their preferred choices, and/or sharing with the student a list of all available placements. The student will be asked to rank their preferred three or five placements for consideration. At this time, and considering the feedback of the agency, the Field Education Office may require the student to work on a placement readiness plan prior to referral for a placement interview.

13. Completing field requirements & preparing for the field course

Once the placement is confirmed, the student is expected to complete all the agency requirements prior to the start of the placement (e.g. police checks, immunizations, etc.) and register in the advanced field education course (SK649) or foundational field education course (SK541) prior to the start of the placement term. Students are also expected to review and plan for the upcoming field activities, field advisor meetings and seminars, and all [important timelines relevant to their placement](#).

14. Starting the field course

Students are expected to review the MSW Field Education Manual prior to the start of their field course. During the first day of the term, the Field Education Office organizes a meet and greet session between students and their field advisors. All students are expected to attend this meeting.

Students who are registered in the field course receive a course outline by the first day of their field placement. Students who did not register in the course will not be able to attend placement until they have registered in the course.

15. Submitting WSIB forms

Students are required to submit WSIB insurance forms at the start of each placement, including the Student Declaration of Understanding and the Safety Orientation Checklist. A copy of each must be submitted to the Field Education Office via email (mswfield@wlu.ca), fax (519.888.9732), or hard copy (brown box across from the elevator on the 4th floor). These forms are due one week after the start of the placement. **Students cannot continue in placement if their WSIB forms are not submitted by the deadline.** Students completing an international placement are required to complete the International Safety Orientation Checklist.

- Student Declaration of Understanding: To be signed by the student only and is completed on the first day of the placement.
- Safety Orientation Checklist: To be signed by both the student and the agency. The student submits the completed checklist (signed by student and agency director) to the Field Education Office.

If there is an accident an Accident/Injury Report needs to be filed. It is the student's responsibility to contact the Field Education Office immediately and follow up on next steps.

16. Learning plan & field visit

Within the first four weeks of the placement start date, the student begins, completes and reviews the Learning Plan with their field Instructor. The field advisor arranges for a [field visit](#) that takes place within the first six to eight weeks of the placement start date. The field advisor also reviews the learning plan.

17. Timesheet & evaluation

Students are responsible for documenting their hours via the timesheet provided and for initiating the evaluation process with their Instructors. Students are expected to update their instructors about the upcoming evaluation deadline, and commence the evaluation process at least three weeks prior to the evaluation deadline.

If a student is unable to meet any of the midterm or final evaluation deadlines, they are expected to advise the Field Education Office prior to the due date. Delayed submissions impact the grade entry for students and their ability to register for courses in a timely manner.

Students are expected to use the timesheet (or a copy of it) to monitor placement hours to ensure that total hours will be completed by the end of the placement timeframe.

18. Providing feedback

At the end of the placement, students will be invited to provide feedback about their placement experience to the Field Education Office. Feedback is gathered in the form of an online survey. The Field Education Office considers the input of all students when planning for future placements and as part of the annual review of the placement process.

Overview of placement planning based on cohort

Two year full-time program

Foundational field course (SK541)

- Preparatory workshops are held during the first, fall term.
- The portal normally opens during September.
- The portal is normally closed by the first week of October.
- Winter foundational placement matches are normally announced by mid-October to all students who have completed their profiles, indicated interest in agencies and submitted a ranking form by the deadline provided.
- Placement interviews normally start late October. Most interviews are completed by end of November.
- Placement starts in January.

Advanced field course (SK649)

- The portal normally opens during March.
- The portal is normally closed by the first or second week of April.
- Matches for placement interviews are normally announced at the end of April to all students who have completed their profiles, indicated interest in agencies and submitted a ranking form by the deadline provided.
- Placement interviews normally start the first week of May. Most interviews are completed by end of June.
- Placement starts in September.

Three year part-time program

Foundational field course (SK541)

- Preparatory workshops are held during the second, winter term.
- The portal normally opens during February and March.
- The portal is normally closed by the first or second week of April.
- Matches for placement interviews are normally announced at the end of April to all students who have completed their profiles, indicated interest in agencies and submitted a ranking form by the deadline provided.
- Placement interviews normally start the first week of May. Most interviews are completed by end of June.
- Placement starts in September.

Advanced field course (SK649)

- The portal normally opens during March.
- The portal is normally closed by the first or second week of April.

- Matches for placement interviews are normally announced at the end of April to all students who have completed their profiles, indicated interest in agencies and submitted a ranking form by the deadline provided.
- Placement interviews normally start the first week of May. Most interviews are completed by end of June.
- Placement starts in September.

Advanced standing programs (full-time and part-time)

Advanced field course (SK649)

- Preparatory workshops are incorporated into the Headstart and Orientation sessions.
- The portal normally opens during March.
- The portal is normally closed by the first or second week of April.
- Matches for placement interviews are normally announced at the end of April to all students who have completed their profiles, indicated interest in agencies and submitted a ranking form by the deadline provided.
- Placement interviews normally start the first week of May. Most interviews are completed by end of June.
- Placement starts in September.

International Social Work Diploma (all eligible students)

Advanced international field course (SK650)

- Orientation and information sessions held during the fall term.
- ISWD materials sent to interested students.
- Students propose a placement by the November deadline.
- **International Social Work Program Application** due in November.
- Interviews held during December.
- Successful applicants notified by December.
- ISWD students register in required courses.
- Updated ISWD Placement Summaries provided to interested students in February.
- Successful applicants introduced to matched international agency to arrange interview.
- Colloquium presented by students returning from an international placement in February.
- Once approved by the Agency, students complete **Acknowledgement and Assumption of Risk for International Social Work Placement**.
- Complete Laurier International Opportunities My Learning Space course modules titled: Travel Logistics, Health & Safety, and Culture and Adaptation.
- Complete three half days of Pre-departure Orientation Sessions facilitated through Laurier International.
- Complete **International Travel Form**.
- Complete the **Field Activities Safety Plan** by due date and return to the Field Office.
- Placement starts between late July/early August.

10. Field Placement Policies

Placement learning assignments

- Readings or assignments in relation to MSW courses should not interfere with field placement time.
- Students may be asked by their field instructors to complete readings and other assignments related to their field education.
- Up to 10 hours for the foundational field placement course (SK541) and up to 20 hours for the advanced field placement course (SK649) is allowed towards formal faculty committee work, faculty events, and/or approved faculty learning opportunities.
- In line with the faculty's standards of approval for field placement assignments, students cannot complete two MSW placements within the same agency, or same type of social work learning environment (e.g., two hospital placements, or two government placements, or two workplace placements).
- If a placement is discontinued for any reason, the placement may be repeated once. This policy applies to both the foundational and advanced placements.

Placement hours based on program

All students

- Placement hours required for each field course do not include scheduled breaks.
- All [placement start and end dates](#) are based on a seven hour/day schedule. That is, students attend placement eight hours/day and take an hour break.
- Total placement hours in a day (including overtime) may not exceed nine placement hours.
- Successful completion of a field course requires:
 - Completion of all placement hours
 - Timesheet approved by Instructor
 - Satisfactory evaluations
- Students are expected to attend placement during the agency's regular business hours. Evening hours may be required by some agencies in order to facilitate group programs and students must make arrangements to be at placement during those hours.
- Agencies do not offer placements that take place strictly in the evening or weekends. It is the student's responsibility to make arrangements to be in attendance at placement during regular business hours.
- Students attend placement during the availability of the onsite field instructor.
- Placement start and end dates cannot be adjusted without approval from the Field Education Office.
- There is no break in students' placement between the winter and spring terms.
- Students must complete a minimum of 14 hours/week (across two days) and a maximum of 44 hours/week (across 5 days).

Full-time cohorts

Full-time students completing their foundational field course (SK541) abide by the following placement structure:

- Winter term: 21 placement hours per week, Monday to Wednesday.
- Spring term: 28 placement hours per week Monday to Thursday.

- Total: 462 hours over 66 days.

Full-time students completing their advanced field course (SK649) abide by the following placement structure:

- Fall term: 21 placement hours per week, Monday to Wednesday.
- Winter term: 21 placement hours per week Monday to Wednesday.
- Total: 546 hours over 78 days.

Part-time cohorts

Part-time students completing their foundational field course (SK541) abide by the following placement structure:

- Fall term: 14 placement hours per week, over a two-day period.
- Winter term: 14 placement hours per week, over a two-day period.
- Spring term: 14 placement hours per week, over a two-day period.
- Total: 462 hours over 66 days.

Part-time students completing their advanced field course (SK649) abide by one of the following placement structure:

Option 1:

- Fall term: 14 placement hours per week, over a two-day period.
- Winter term: 14 placement hours per week, over a two-day period.
- Spring term: 14 placement hours per week, over a two-day period.
- Total: 546 hours over 78 days.

Option 2:

- Fall term: 21 placement hours per week, Monday to Wednesday.
- Winter term: 21 placement hours per week Monday to Wednesday.
- Total: 546 hours over 78 days.

Policies applicable to part-time cohorts only

- Part-time students have the option to complete the foundational placement over a two-day period.
- Part-time students opting to complete placement over two days/week are considered for placements with agencies that can accommodate a two day/week schedule.
- Students are required to attend placement for a minimum of 14 hours of placement time each week that must be spread over a two-day period.
- Placement hours may not exceed nine placement hours per day.
- The option to complete a block placement may only available during the summer placement term and only for the advanced placement. Summer placement terms are offered at the discretion of the Field Education Office, and are open for a small number of students who apply for a summer placement term and are approved by the Field Education Office.
- Weekend hours cannot be expected unless the instructor is available to supervise the student, and the agency is open and functional during weekend hours. This option is only available for part-time students and must be vetted by the Field Education Office.

Summer block placement

The Field Education Office introduced a summer placement term as a pilot in 2015 for advanced placements. This option is currently under review. Summer placement terms are not guaranteed and are not an option for foundational placements. If made available, students must apply to request completing a summer placement term in January. Approved students may complete their advanced field course (SK649) over the summer term if they are able to adhere to the placement structure and regulations provided by the agency and the Field Education Office.

Students are expected to complete the hours within the start and end dates provided. The summer block placement is an option for approved students completing an advanced placement in the two-year full-time program, three-year part-time program, or two-year advanced standing part-time program.

- Spring term (May to August): 35 placement hours per week, 5 days/week
- Total: 546 hours over 78 days.

International Social Work placement

Students in the [International Social Work Program](#) completing their advanced international placement course (SK650) abide by the following placement structure:

- Fall term: 45 placement hours per week, 5 days/week
- Total: 720 hours over 16 weeks.

Thesis students

The thesis option for advanced standing students includes exemption from SK649 Advanced Field Education. Students may choose to complete SK649 Advanced Field Education in addition to these requirements.

Thesis students in the two-year full-time or three-year part-time programs may opt to be exempt from 126 hours towards the advanced, second placement (SK649). Accordingly, students have the option to complete 420 hours of placement over the course of 60 days rather than 546 hours of placement (78 days). Exemptions may **not** be split between placements and cannot apply to the foundational placement.

Students who do not complete a thesis after having reduced their placement time, will be required to complete the hours they were exempted from as per the MSW Program requirements for a non-thesis student to ensure accreditation and faculty standards are upheld.

Documenting placement hours

Each student has been provided with a timesheet which is used to track placement hours. Students are expected to use the timesheet (or a copy of it) to document and monitor placement hours to ensure that total hours will be completed by the end of the placement timeframe. Students submit timesheets to their instructors on a bi-weekly or monthly basis. Students are also responsible for submitting timesheets to instructors, advisors, and the Field Education Office, alongside the mid-term and final evaluation.

The **timesheet and evaluation are required to enter a grade for the field course**. Late submissions of the timesheet and/or evaluations result in delayed grade entries for students.

Overtime

Overtime required in connection with a student's placement should follow the usual policy of the agency, but may not accumulate beyond a one-month period. The field instructor should arrange for compensatory time to be taken within four weeks following the accrual of substantial amounts of overtime. Overtime can be used to shorten the span of the placement **only** in the following circumstances:

- Documented critical event that requires the student to complete placement early. This can be done with the instructor's approval and in consultation with the field advisor and the Field Education Office. The Field Education Office considers these cases individually to assess the student's completed hours and outstanding hours required based on the student's MSW program.

- If the student has taken the required steps with the Field Education Office to complete a summer placement. This also requires approval from the foundational placement instructor to end the foundational placement in time for the beginning of the summer placement in May.

Documenting Overtime

Any hours exceeding seven placement hours a day, must be entered as overtime hours on the timesheet. Total hours per day cannot exceed nine placement hours (meal breaks not included).

Changing placement timelines

Placements cannot start prior to the placement start date, and cannot be extended after the placement end date without approval from the Field Education Office. Students who wish to alter their placement schedules need to submit a formal request to the Field Education Office. If approved, students may then negotiate an alternative timeline with their Instructor and agency.

Agencies provide placement opportunities taking into consideration the length of time a student will be in placement. Placements cannot end early and overtime cannot be used to shorten the length of a placement except in the [two aforementioned](#) instances.

Holidays and reading weeks

As per the FSW regulations, students are required to complete the total hours required for their field course. The placement terms have been structured to allow students to take time off for university observed holidays, and reading weeks. Students who are absent for any reason (including unexpected agency closures) are required to make up the time missed during the scheduled time off below (e.g. during reading week, or the December break) or make alternative arrangements. There may be additional holidays observed by the agency that are not observed by the university. Students who take these holidays or any other holiday must ensure that they will complete the required total placement hours prior to the scheduled placement end date.

Students completing an international placement are expected to be in placement through the fall reading week. Placement hours in the international context are expanded to include cultural activities.

Reading weeks

On January 13, 2014 the Wilfrid Laurier University Senate approved the addition of a week-long break to the Fall Term – in addition to the existing February reading week - as a three-year pilot project. Beginning Fall 2014, Laurier students will get a full week off in both the Fall and Winter semesters.

Students who opt to attend placement during reading week, or the December break, may negotiate with their instructor to take time off during other days, and complete placement no earlier than the end date. The Field Education Office plans all placement start and end dates with the assumption that students will take reading week(s) off. Time off does not count towards placement hours.

Fall reading week

The fall reading week includes Thanksgiving and the four days following. Students are not required to attend placement during this time.

Winter reading week

As per a policy decision at the Faculty of Social Work Divisional Council meeting on November 20, 1991, MSW students in placement during winter term will be allowed to take Laurier's winter reading week, or its equivalent, off placement. The winter reading week includes Family Day and the four days following. Students are not required to attend placement during this time. The following conditions or considerations apply:

- School board and students completing placement in a university setting take March break or intersession week off instead of not in addition to Laurier's reading week.
- Students may choose to work through Laurier's Fall reading week to compensate for an extended agency/school board Christmas break.
- Agencies and students may negotiate days off at other times throughout placement as it suits the needs of all concerned.
- Students may not take these days off at the end of placement as the intention is to maintain the current length of the placement period.

Absences

Any absences must be made up over the course of the placement timeframe. This includes planned and unexpected absences, such as notices of closure by agency (e.g. snow days, strike), as well as critical events (documented illness, serious family difficulties, etc.). If the missed time cannot be made up within the placement timeframe students are expected to contact the Field Office to negotiate an altered schedule.

Process for reporting

Students are professional learners and adhere to the agency's policies while on placement including the process for reporting absences. As any professional setting, students are required to communicate absences to the instructor immediately, and as per the agency policies (e.g. reporting absence no later than official start time of placement day) to report illness or any other situation requiring absence from placement. The student is expected to inform the MSW field advisor of any absences *exceeding three consecutive days*.

If a situation requires more time away, the field instructor, field advisor and the MSW field coordinator must be notified, by the student immediately. An individualized plan suitable to the circumstances will be determined through discussion among the instructor, advisor and student. The MSW coordinator will be consulted as needed and approve the final plan. The plan will include a schedule to make up the time off. Normally, the make-up time is either within the placement period and/or at the end of the usual placement period. Overtime accrued before the situation occurred will serve as make-up time. Depending on circumstances, the student may need to complete placement at another time within the structures and regulations of the faculty. The main consideration is that students complete all field requirements of the MSW program as outlined throughout the field education manual.

Attending faculty meetings or events

Students who are involved in faculty committees, and/or would like to attend faculty conferences (e.g. Equity forum, Wholistic Healing Conference) are allowed **up to 10 hours during the foundational placement timeline, and up to 20 hours during the advanced placement timeline** to engage in formal faculty committee work and/or events. This must be discussed and negotiated with the field instructor with appropriate notice given to the instructor. Students will **not** be required to make up time in placement as these are considered essential learning components of the MSW program. When possible, students are expected to share these dates with instructors at the start of the placement term.

Community & professional development workshops

A student who wishes to be away to attend a workshop, specialized learning modules or conference in the community or through professional development will negotiate that with the instructor. Make-up time is required as a condition for approval of a request for special leave. Time to attend workshops must be approved by the instructor and students are required to make up missed time through approved overtime or an extension of their placement that must be approved by the Field Education Office.

Workshops or professional development activities organized by the field instructor or agency are considered part of the placement hours.

Expenses

Expenses incurred by the student in the placement agency will ordinarily be met by the teaching centre. Normally the student's gas costs for agency business are covered by the agency. Parking costs are not covered. Costs for workshops, police record checks and immunizations (where required) may or may not be covered by the agency. If not, costs are covered by the student.

Remuneration

Students do not receive payment during their placement and may not charge clients fees other than those that may be usual for the agency to charge. Students completing a placement in their workplace may negotiate payment with their employment distinct from the Faculty of Social Work. This is usually possible for part-time students who complete a workplace placement on a part-time basis while working with the agency as a part-time employee.

Agency requirements

Most agencies require police record checks, including vulnerable sector checks, and/or updated immunizations and records, including TB test and mask fittings (all hospitals and medical clinics). These requirements must be met by the student **before** the placement is scheduled to start. These requirements are normally stated on the portal for each placement opportunity, and agencies also inform students of these requirements prior to or during the interview. The process of meeting these requirements must begin several weeks ahead of placement due to length of time required to complete them.

Vulnerable sector record checks

Most placements require police record checks, including vulnerable sector checks. There is a cost associated with these checks, which is the responsibility of the student to cover. The process can take between 6-10 weeks. All students are highly encouraged to apply for their police check at least 10-12 weeks prior to the start of placements. This requirement is normally stated on the portal for each placement opportunity, and students are advised of this requirement during the placement interview.

MSW students with accommodation needs

Students who require academic and placement accommodations for disability-related reasons are encouraged to contact the [Accessible Learning Centre](#). Taking into consideration the student's consent, Accessible Learning may share the accommodation plan with the Field Education Office. The accommodation plan assists the Field Education Office in helping facilitate a suitable placement and the provision of required accommodations at the placement setting. Some examples of accommodations include flexibility with the placement's time structure, physical equipment such as technological supports,

or more time for report writing. In consultation with the student, the Field Education Office liaises with placement agencies that are able to provide the resources to accommodate the student's needs. The student is then referred to the agency for a placement interview. In co-creating an environment to facilitate learning, students have to be able to fulfill the core functions of the placement. Accommodations must be balanced with the professional integrity of field placement and professional requirements.

Liability insurance

Wilfrid Laurier University provides general liability coverage for students on field placement. This policy covers bodily injury, property damage and malpractice liability. Students must be registered in the appropriate field placement course prior to the start of their placement, and must attend placement within the start and end dates provided to remain eligible.

Workers' compensation & WSIB

By law, Wilfrid Laurier University is responsible for registered students in the event of an unpaid workplace injury. All social work students in this program who are involved in an unpaid field placement as part of their degree program and are placed in a setting registered with the Workplace Safety and Insurance Board (WSIB) are covered by that Act. In the event of placement related injury or illness students may be eligible for benefits related to uninsured health costs and in some cases lost pay. Students who are in settings not registered with the Workplace Safety and Insurance Board are covered by an insurance plan paid for by the Province of Ontario.

In the event of a placement related injury or illness, or the possibility of a placement related injury or illness, students and field instructors are advised to follow the procedures outlined by the agency and communicate the incident to the MSW field education coordinator and mswfield@wlu.ca within 24 hours of incident. The time frame for claims is very short and stringent so immediate action is required. This benefit to students is at no cost to agencies and will not impact on their risk assessments with WSIB.

Laurier is responsible for reporting the incident to the Workplace Safety and Insurance Board. The Field Education Office will share a WSIB Accident Report, which will need to be completed by the student and agency. The student is responsible for returning the form to the appropriate department at Laurier and following the required procedures. The Field Education Office will assist the student in facilitating the process and contacting the appropriate department.

Student

Students are required to submit a completed **Student Declaration of Understanding**. By signing this form, students are confirming that they understand that WSIB or private insurance coverage will be provided through the MTCU while they are on a placement arranged by the university as a requirement of their program of study. This form must be submitted to the Field Education Office within the first week of placement. Students cannot continue in placement if this form is not submitted by the deadline.

Agency

Agencies are required to submit a completed **Letter to Placement Employers**. By signing this form, agencies are confirming their understanding of their responsibility to protect student trainees from health and safety hazards in the workplace and to ensure appropriate supervision during their placement. They are also agreeing to report workplace injuries to Laurier immediately. This letter of understanding only needs to be completed every three years for each placement employer.

Agencies are also required to submit a complete **Pre-Placement/Field Trip Due Diligence Checklist**. This checklist is used to identify unsafe exposures in facilities/locations where students may be required to work, study or perform research activities and also to document safety measures in place to protect students from exposure. This form only needs to be completed once for an agency so if you did not receive it, the field office already has it on file.

Student & agency

The field instructor and the student must complete a **Safety Orientation Checklist**. This checklist is used to document health and safety orientation provided to a student prior to exposure of hazards. If an agency is training a group of students, one checklist may be submitted for all students that includes an attached list of student names and signatures. This checklist, or an alternate form of documentation, must be submitted for each new student(s), within the first week of placement. Students cannot continue in placement if this form is not submitted by the deadline.

All WSIB coverage forms are submitted to the MSW Field Education Office via email ([mwsfield@wlu.ca](mailto:mwfield@wlu.ca)), fax (519-888-9732), mail, or hard copy (brown mailbox across from the elevator on 4th floor of the FSW).

11. Field Concerns & Resolutions

Field placements are considered an essential part of social work education and the successful completion of a placement is a basic requirement for every student in the MSW program of the Faculty of Social Work (FSW). All placements used by the FSW are considered to provide sufficient opportunities for learning. Each student is assigned a qualified field instructor to assume the major teaching task while the student is in placement.

It is presumed that each student assigned to a placement is well motivated to effectively use the learning-teaching relationship with the field instructor and all other opportunities in the agency to promote their professional development and that this combination will result in the successful completion of the requirement of the placement.

To further strengthen and facilitate the process of learning in the placement, the FSW assigns a field advisor for each instructor and student during the placement. Ongoing communication between the FSW campus and the placement setting is considered essential for the support of the student's learning experience both in the classroom and in the placement.

As professional adult learners, Laurier MSW students have roles and responsibilities in relation to their program and field placement and are expected to adhere to professional Codes of Ethics namely, the [Canadian Association of Social Workers Code of Ethics](#), as well as the [Standards of Practice set by the Ontario College of Social Workers and Social Service Workers](#). Students are also expected to maintain professional and respectful behaviour as outlined in the following Laurier policies: [Laurier's Student Code of Conduct and Discipline](#) (12.2), [Non-Academic Intern Code of Conduct](#) (12.3), [Prevention of Harassment and Discrimination](#) (6.1), and the [Workplace Violence Prevention Policy](#) (7.18).

As a professional field of practice that services vulnerable populations, any breaches of ethical, behavioural, learning, or professional standards in the field are considered serious. As a professional field of practice that services vulnerable populations, any breaches of ethical, behavioural, learning, or professional

standards in the field are considered serious. **The Faculty of Social Work Procedures for the Review of Student's Professional Behaviour** (2016) was developed to provide a framework for the review and/or resolution of professional behaviour breaches in both classroom and field settings. This procedure, which is required by the Canadian Association for Social Work Education Standards for Accreditation, is designed to provide support to both student and instructor while providing a process that would represent the obligation of the Faculty of Social Work to require students to perform their professional responsibilities in accordance with social work codes of ethics. As part of the review and/or resolution process, the Faculty of Social Work adheres to the aforementioned Laurier policies.

It is recognized that in some instances the placement experience will not proceed according to the expectations of either the student or the instructor or both. The student may not be able to progress due to his/her own inability to make appropriate use of the placement learning experiences, or, the student may indicate that problems in the learning-teaching experience preclude his/her appropriate investment in the placement.

In 2012, The Curriculum, Admissions, Practicum and Student Affairs Committee (CAPSAC) was tasked with revising policies for the resolution of placement issues. As a result, the Field Resolution Procedure was formalized to support students, instructors and agencies experiencing difficulty with the field experience. It is expected that the Field Resolution Procedure will be followed by all parties concerned.

Establishing expectations to enrich the teaching-learning process

Within the first three weeks after the beginning of the placement it is the field instructor's responsibility to initiate with the student discussion about his/her expectations and impressions of the placement learning experience including the student-instructor relationship. Through this early feedback discussion, it is hoped that the instructor and student can begin to mutually evaluate the content of the placement learning experience and style or method in which it is reinforced in the supervision tutorial. Throughout the placement they will also continually evaluate the student's progress in making use of the learning experiences offered. During the field visit, the field advisor would be available to clarify the faculty's goals and requirements for the placement experience. The Learning Plan and Evaluation provides a written account of the learning experience (see section 14 of this manual for this document).

It will be incumbent upon both the student and the instructor to identify problems, if any, and initiate changes in the teaching-learning experience according to a mutually satisfactory plan. It is hoped that the ideas, plans and insights generated from this discussion will advance the learning and teaching opportunities in the placement experience to the mutual benefit of both the student and the instructor.

Concerns observed and initial approach

When a concern is raised around the placement by the student, field instructor or agency representative, it is incumbent on this party to initiate a discussion with the field advisor as soon as they are aware of this information. This makes it possible for the advisor and/or instructor to work with the student and Field Education Office to determine suitable supports for the student.

When difficulties persist despite the instructor's efforts to assist the student to identify ways to address concerns regarding learning difficulties, professional or ethical behaviours, and resolve problems, the student may, **but the instructor must**, contact the advisor requesting an on-site review of the situation. The

instructor contacts the advisor when there are concerns around a student's ability to meet learning requirements, professional behaviour conduct, ethical issues, or any concerns that may jeopardize the student's ability to continue in the placement or complete the placement successfully. A student normally contacts the advisor regarding any concerns related to their learning, placement, agency, or instructor.

In response to any concerns observed by the Field Education Office, student, instructor, agency or advisor, the advisor will promptly initiate a review of the expressed concerns in the following manner:

- The advisor will connect with the appropriate individuals at the placement setting and discuss the areas of concern with the instructor, the student, and/or both of them together. The advisor may request and review documented material and it is the student's and instructor's responsibilities to ensure that appropriate materials are available. Follow up conversations or meetings with the student and instructor as well as with other appropriate persons in the setting may also be arranged. The primary purpose of this process is to identify and resolve the problem areas.
- This process is facilitated through the [Field Resolution Procedure](#) initiated by the advisor. It is hoped that the results of this process will permit the teaching-learning experience to continue through to the end of placement course.
- The MSW field education coordinator may initiate a Review of [Students' Professional Behaviour](#) if the concern regarding the student is of a serious nature (e.g. unethical conduct in placement).
- If a concern is raised with respect to the instructor or agency where the concern is unethical/illegal conduct or alleged harassment/discrimination of the student the appropriate procedure documented in the field manual is followed.

Field Resolution Procedure

Field advisors initiate and implement the Field Resolution Procedure in situations where the field instructor has identified that the student is not meeting expectations (professional, ethical, behavioural, or learning). The procedure is also initiated to report any conflict that arises between a student and instructor, or when a student identifies learning issues or challenges within the placement setting. The advisor normally initiates this process:

1. Initiate a conversation with the student and/or field instructor to discuss the issue. Often, this involves providing direction to the student and results in a resolution.
 - a. The advisor follows up in writing with all parties outlining the outcome of discussion(s) and agreed upon plans.
 - b. Confirmation from the student and instructor is requested to ensure all are working together towards the same goal.
2. If appropriate, and if the issue is not resolved, initiate a meeting with the field instructor and student to discuss the areas of concern.
3. Work with all parties to develop a plan to address the issue(s) identified including time lines and check-in points.
4. Document all notes in a detailed Field Resolution Agreement that includes:
 - a. Declaration of Field Concern
 - b. Identification of issues
 - c. Outcome of meeting(s) and shared understanding of how the issue(s) will be resolved
 - d. Goals to be achieved for successful placement completion
 - e. Timeframe for follow up, and any changes to placement timelines

- f. The expectations that must be met by the student for placement continuation including a plan for the student (e.g. pausing the placement until the concern is remedied, or revising the learning plan)
5. The advisor shares the Field Resolution Agreement with the student, instructor, and any other appropriate personnel involved in this process.
 - a. Confirmation of the outlined agreement is required from the student and instructor within a week of receiving the Agreement.

Placement continues with concerns or failed evaluation

If the placement continues when the student is not meeting expectations (e.g. learning, professional, ethical or behavioural concerns), the advisor was not informed of the issues, and the instructor evaluates the student with an unsatisfactory mid-term grade:

- The Field Resolution Procedure is observed immediately.
- The learning plan may be re-evaluated and the field advisor works with both the instructor and the student to facilitate this process. This makes it possible for the field advisor and field instructor to work together to assist the student early in the placement while there is still enough time to resolve the difficulty.
- The placement end date may be extended and hours may be increased to ensure the student has sufficient time to address the learning gaps identified.
- Review of Students' Professional Behaviour may be initiated by the MSW field education coordinator if it is deemed necessary considering the concerns identified.

Procedures for situations involving allegations of unethical or illegal conduct in placement

- a. A student perceiving the possibility of ethical or legal concerns may consult the field advisor who will ensure the privacy and confidentiality of the information regarding the type and level of the perceived problem.
- b. If, after such consultation, the student is convinced that a serious situation with ethical or legal implications exists, it is the responsibility of the student to inform the MSW field coordinator of the nature and extent of the specific problems. All such allegations shall be in writing and shall include documentation of relevant events (times, dates, places, individuals, etc.). The student may consult with the MSW field coordinator and/or a faculty field advisor regarding the implications of these actions or the writing of this report.
- c. When the MSW field coordinator receives a serious allegation from a student, it is the responsibility of the coordinator to discuss the implications of the allegation with the student and then to immediately (no later than the end of the next working day) contact the agency coordinator (or the equivalent individual), the field instructor and the Dean, or if the Dean is unavailable, the Vice-President: Academic.
- d. Upon a thorough review and assessment of the situation, the MSW field coordinator, after conferring with the Dean, the agency coordinator, the field instructor and the student shall make a decision regarding the handling of the situation.
- e. These decisions made by the MSW field coordinator (in cooperation with the Dean, the agency coordinator, the field instructor and the student), shall be binding upon all parties until such time as a formal administrative review has been conducted to determine the long-term resolution of the problem.
- f. The Dean shall, without delay, commence a formal administrative review based upon the principles

of natural justice for all the parties involved. The review shall include the student, the field instructor, the agency coordinator, and the MSW field coordinator. Following this review, the Dean shall prepare a written report, within one week, to be shared with all participants. The report will clarify the status of the student, field instructor and the placement in regard to the issues. In addition, the report will confirm or change those decisions made in (d) above.

- g. It is to be understood that in those situations where allegations are made by agency-based personnel and/or clients concerning student conduct during the placement, it is the responsibility of the field agency to handle those allegations according to agency procedures and then immediately advise the MSW field coordinator.

Procedures regarding alleged incidents of harassment/discrimination in placement

Preamble

The Faculty of Social Work is committed to the creation of a safe environment where students can be protected from harassment and discrimination. Wilfrid Laurier University has developed an extensive formal policy and procedure for the [Prevention of Harassment and Discrimination](#) (6.1). This document, as well as the accompanying [Procedures Relating to the Prevention of Harassment and Discrimination](#), fully outline the philosophy, principles and procedures related to issues of harassment and discrimination as they affect the Wilfrid Laurier community. The Faculty of Social Work fully supports, and is bound by, this document. The faculty has utilized it as a framework to design specific procedures that MSW students can follow if an incident of harassment and/or discrimination occurs during their placement in a community agency. The University policy cannot legally bind its placement agencies to its harassment/discrimination policy. However, the signed agreement between a placement agency and the Faculty of Social Work indicates a mutual consent to blend the harassment/discrimination policies of both organizations as is deemed appropriate. This will thereby ensure the most positive outcome for all parties concerned as regards to an alleged incident of harassment and/or discrimination.

Procedures

- a. The student is encouraged to discuss the experience with individuals from her/his personal support network as well as other potentially helpful individuals within the university or professional community, including the WLU Harassment/Discrimination coordinator. Note: At any point in the process described in this procedure, the student may be accompanied by a trusted individual.
- b. The student is encouraged to document the experience immediately. Documentation may include such information as the date(s) and place(s) the incident(s) occurred, a description of the actual harassment experience(s), any earlier related incidents, discussions, observations made by others, etc. and the personal impact of the experience.
- c. At this initial thinking-through period, the student is encouraged to consult with her/his field advisor, the MSW field coordinator, the harassment/discrimination coordinator of the university and/or others to review her/his options. During this time the student will make the decision regarding what action to take. She/he, with consultation, will need to decide to continue or terminate the placement temporarily or permanently. A decision to terminate the placement may be made initially or at any point throughout the complaint process. Whatever decisions the student makes will be fully supported by the Faculty of Social Work. Should the decision be made to terminate the placement, the student will be placed in a new setting as soon as possible.
- d. Should the student decide to proceed with a complaint of harassment and/or discrimination, the following process will occur (Note: At any stage, the student has the right to proceed with, or withdraw, the complaint. Should she/he decide to withdraw the complaint, the situation will be

- resolved as deemed appropriate by the Faculty of Social Work and the teaching centre.)
- e. The student will provide a written description of the incident(s) to the MSW field coordinator. The coordinator will forward this statement to the FSW Dean and the field advisor.
 - f. The Dean or designate will initiate contact with the executive coordinator or administrator of the teaching centre to inform her/him of the incident(s), engage her/him in the resolution process and forward her/him a copy of the student's statement. It will be the responsibility of the executive coordinator or administrator of the teaching centre to inform the individual accused of harassment and/or discrimination of the allegations against her/him.
 - g. Involving the Dean, student, field coordinator, faculty advisor, teaching centre representative, and possibly the WLU Harassment/Discrimination coordinator, a plan of action will be developed. Others will be included in the planning process as deemed appropriate by all parties.
 - h. This plan, with modifications as needed, will be implemented with all parties working collaboratively to facilitate a satisfactory solution. During the course of proceedings, both victim and accused will be ensured due process.
 - i. At any point in the process the student may decide to pursue her/his complaint through the Human Rights Commission, the Ontario College of Certified Social Workers and/or the courts.

Addendum

Should it be alleged that the MSW student in placement is the perpetrator of harassment and/or discrimination, the placement agency may implement the Wilfrid Laurier University [Procedures Relating to the Prevention of Harassment and Discrimination](#), in conjunction with its own policy as is deemed appropriate.

Procedures for an administrative review of a field instructor or setting problem

If identified problems primarily concern the agency's alleged inability to provide a suitable learning experience the matter is called to the attention of the MSW field coordinator by the agency administrator, the field instructor, the field advisor or the student. The MSW field coordinator ensures that the field instructor, field advisor and the student are closely involved in evaluating the situation, or in working out alternative plans. Among the options available would be the following:

- a. With respect to the student's learning needs, the coordinator confirms that the setting and field instructor can adequately meet the student's needs and the student is asked to continue placement.
- b. The coordinator may conclude that an alternative teaching-learning experience in the same setting is needed. This could mean transferring the student to a different department or unit of the agency and/or a change in field instructor, if possible.
- c. The coordinator may decide that the student should be relocated in a new field agency. This solution could be considered only within the first four weeks of placement and would be used only in very exceptional situations considering the availability of placements.

If option (b) or (c) above is selected, the field instructor submits a written report to the Dean. With the approval of the Dean, the MSW field coordinator then proceeds to the implementation of the selected option.

13. Termination or Withdrawal from Placement

Placement Dissolution Procedure

In the event that the [Field Resolution Procedure](#) does not result in an adequate solution, and/or there is a consensus concerning the student's lack of progress, the field course may be discontinued at the discretion of the field instructor or the MSW field education coordinator or the agency. This results in a failing grade for the student's field course. Field education is a required course. Accordingly, a student may not opt out of the placement. Students who choose not to attend the required field course are expected to repeat the course in order to fulfill graduation requirements. If a placement is discontinued for any reason, the placement may be repeated once. This policy applies to both the foundational and advanced placements.

Implications on the student's field course, program sequence, and next steps are determined considering the field course instructor's feedback and outcome of the evaluation. Each case is assessed individually to determine whether the student will benefit from a delayed placement, a break in their term, or starting a placement at the next placement cycle (January or September). This process requires the student to complete an individualized **Readiness for Practice Workplan** that is developed by the MSW Field Education Office. Registration in the field course is contingent upon completion of the recommendations outlined by the Field Education Office. Placement interviews are not set up immediately.

Placement discontinued due to concerns or failed evaluation

If the placement is discontinued when the student is not meeting expectations (e.g. learning, professional, ethical or behavioural concerns) considering any of these circumstances: prior to mid-term evaluation, an unsatisfactory mid-term evaluation, at any point after the unsatisfactory mid-term is submitted, or the student receives an unsatisfactory grade at the final evaluation, the following procedures take place:

- The advisor facilitates an exit meeting with the instructor, student and appropriate agency members to discuss reasons for ending the placement. The instructor provides feedback to the student and advisor identifying the areas of growth expected from the student. The advisor outlines this feedback in the report to the MSW field education coordinator who is engaged throughout this process.
- The student, advisor and coordinator meet to address the feedback provided, and discuss the learning opportunities this has created for the student.
- Following this meeting, the field coordinator, in consultation with the advisor, will determine appropriate recommendations including the conditions required for completing a new placement course and required placement hours. Possible next steps may include:
 - Student must seek appropriate supports prior to being placed again. Placement cycle contingent on receipt of this assistance.
 - Student must complete a **Readiness for Practice Workplan** prior to being considered for a placement interview.
 - Student must complete learning assignment/identified training prior to being considered for a placement interview.
 - Student may be encouraged to consider a leave of absence from the program to attend to personal issues.
- Upon completion of the recommendations outlined by the field coordinator the student will need to repeat the field course, including all placement hours. **Placement hours or assignments completed do not carry over** to the new placement setting. The student may be placed at the next available field placement cycle if appropriate. Placement cycle is determined considering completion of readiness plan, and placement cycles (January or September).

If in the field education coordinator's opinion, after consultation with the MSW Programs Associate Dean, there has been a breach in the Professional Conduct Policy, or the student is failing to meet the requirements of the faculty, a formal Review will take place in accordance with the Faculty of Social Work Procedure for the Review of Student's Professional Behaviour. Students will be advised that their behaviour is under review as per the policy. This is a formal review process, which may result in removal from the program. Student may be required to withdraw from the program (a student may apply for re-admission at a later date, and after demonstration of sufficient progress in relation to his/her former difficulty, be considered in accordance with regular admissions procedures).

Implications on field course grade

- If a placement is discontinued prior to the receipt of the mid-term evaluation, a grade is not assigned if the student drops the field education course prior to the deadline for dropping courses. This course will not appear on a final transcript.
- If the mid-term or final evaluation is graded Unsatisfactory, as per the [grading procedures](#):
 - The student receives a fail grade (F) towards the field course and repeats the course based on the recommendations of the MSW field coordinator and MSW Associate Dean to the Faculty of Graduate and Postdoctoral Studies. The student may appeal the grade. The student will remain under academic probation until the course is successfully repeated.
 - The fail grade (F) will be part of the student's official transcript.
 - If the course is repeated, a "Repeated Later" notation will be seen on the official transcript and the repeated course will be subject to the course grading procedures. The student has the right to petition the Faculty of Graduate and Postdoctoral Studies to have a grade removed as a historical record change prior to convocation.

Placement discontinued when student is progressing successfully

In the event the placement is discontinued when: the student is progressing successfully, a successful mid-term evaluation was submitted, and due to unexpected agency/instructor reasons (e.g. strike, instructor moves to a new role, apparent safety concern, extenuating medical circumstance), the placement hours may carry over to a subsequent placement either at the same agency or another agency. This determination is made by the coordinator upon assessment of the situation and considering the field instructor's feedback. In absence of these circumstances, if a placement is discontinued, placement hours do not carry over.

Declining a Placement

Students are encouraged to meet with the Field Education Office before the matching process begins to clarify any questions they have about placements of interest. Students have the responsibility to review all placements available before identifying and ranking their placements of interest. The coordinator and advisors consider each of the choices the students make and as a result, students should be prepared for a placement in any of the placements they rank.

Students will be provided the opportunity to decline a placement before the match is announced to the agency. This is an option for students who have extenuating circumstances that now prevent them from being considered for the matched placement. Students will be asked to formally decline the match. If approved, students will be required to rank agencies from a list of placements provided by the field office.

These procedures are built in place for the benefit of all students and the ability of the faculty to continue relationships with partnering agencies. Declining a placement after a match has been made is a very challenging request to consider. It impacts the relationships the faculty has with agencies, the consideration of future MSW placements for Laurier students, availability of placements, etc. These are all very important factors considering that placements are sought after by students from various universities, and the agency conducts interviews to determine appropriate candidates for its placement setting.

As a result the Field Education Office takes the time to communicate these expectations prior to the beginning of the program via the [Field Placement Agreement](#), and when students start the program via the MSW Field Education manual and field workshops.

Request to decline or withdraw from a placement

The Field Education Office is aware that from time to time exceptional situations occur where a student wishes to decline a placement match. Field courses are required courses. Accordingly, any student who wishes to decline the placement after a match has been made is required to submit the Petition to Decline Placement to the MSW field education coordinator. All students who wish to decline a placement are encouraged to contact the MSW field education coordinator to assess whether a Petition and supporting documentation are required.

Students who have extenuating circumstances as defined in the Petition, may not be required to submit a Petition; however, supporting document is required. Extenuating circumstances include accommodation plans from the Accessible Learning Centre, bereavement, serious personal difficulties, and changes in life circumstances that hinder placement attendance. Within five business days of submitting a petition, the student will receive an email response indicating when a final decision is expected to be made.

Petitions submitted may result in one of the following possible outcomes.

- Based on the student's feedback and/or the agency's feedback and/or a field visit, if it is determined the placement opportunity is not suitable for a MSW student considering the student's MSW program and field placement course (foundational or advanced year):
 - The student is matched with an agency for an interview as soon as a suitable placement is available.
- Based on the student's feedback and/or the agency's feedback and/or a field visit, if it is determined that the placement opportunity is suitable for a MSW student considering the student's MSW program and field placement course (foundational or advanced year):
 - The student's request is denied or
 - The student's request may be considered if a placement opportunity is available after all student placements have been confirmed, within the appropriate placement cycle.

14. Field Documents

A. International Social Work Program Application

Students interested in participating in the International Social Work Program (Diploma) for their advanced placement during the fall term must complete all sections of this form and email the completed application to mswfield@wlu.ca no later than the deadline.

1: Personal Information

Name:	Phone:
Current address:	Student ID:
WLU email:	Personal email:

2: Academic Information

MSW program (Full-time or Part-time):	Foundational placement agency and city:
Completing Thesis: <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No - If Yes, thesis title/focus:	Will you complete current courses successfully by the end of term? <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No - If No, list potential incomplete course(s):

3: Placement

The placement opportunities you are interested in:

Organization	Country/Location

4: Proposed placement (if applicable)

If you are proposing a placement, please provide the following details:

Agency Name:	
Location (city, country):	
Contact at agency (name, email, and phone):	
Identify programs/areas of interest within agency:	

5: Personal Statement

Please describe your personal, educational, and professional motivations for participating in the International Social Work Program and completing an international placement. Please reference any previous travel, group work, language abilities, personal experience, skills, and personal self-reflection that might support your candidacy. Your total statement should be no more than 2 double-spaced pages (Font size 12; Times New Roman or Calibri).

Next Steps:

Completed applications will be reviewed by the FSW Field Office and Faculty. Candidates will be invited for an interview. One-on-one Interviews are a requirement for all applicants.

B. International MSW Placement Waiver Form

International MSW Placement Waiver Form



Assumption of Risks & Responsibility, Waiver of Claims, Release of Liability, and Indemnity Agreement
Warning: by signing this legal document you will waive certain legal rights, including the right to sue.
Please read carefully!

Placement:	
Dates of Placement – From:	To:

Assumption of Risks

I am aware that there are potential risks and liabilities associated with the circumstances arising from the conditions of living and studying in a foreign country. I freely accept and fully assume all such risks, dangers and hazards and the possibility of personal injury, death, violence, property damage or loss, during all the time of my participation in a Wilfrid Laurier University International Placement and/or resulting from the travel arrangements and any other related activities during this program.

Assumption of Responsibility

I understand that it is my responsibility to abide by the laws and respect the customs of the host country, and to ensure that I have adequate medical, personal health, dental, accident and travel insurance coverage, as well as protection of my personal possessions. I understand that my participation in this program and associated travel is my sole responsibility and I assume all financial responsibility, including debt, arising from such circumstance. I acknowledge that I have availed myself of briefing opportunities offered by Wilfrid Laurier University and completed the DepartSmart Program. I agree to follow any directive issued by the Canadian Embassy in the host country. I undertake to advise the Faculty of Social Work, Wilfrid Laurier University of any changes in the arrangements for my exchange program.

I understand that, while abroad, my activities could jeopardize the safety of local hosts and/or of Wilfrid Laurier University's partner institution in the exchange program. I will not participate in any activity, including political activity, which might endanger or prejudice either party.

It is understood that Wilfrid Laurier University, through its appointed officers, can require my withdrawal from the exchange program for conduct unbecoming a student of Wilfrid Laurier University, and will be the sole authority in exercising that judgement.

I understand that this Agreement cannot be modified nor interpreted except in writing by Wilfrid Laurier University and that no oral modification or interpretation shall be valid.

In consideration of my acceptance to participate in this program, I agree as follows:

1. To waive any and all claims that I have or may have in the future against Wilfrid Laurier University and its members, officers, employees, students, and agents (all of whom are hereinafter collectively referred to as “the Releasees”);
2. To fully and completely release the Releasees from any and all liability for any loss or damage of property, personal injury or expense that I or my next of Kin may suffer, as a result of my participation in this program due to any cause whatsoever including, but not limited to, negligence, breach of contract or breach of any statutory or other duty of care, delay, expense resulting from events beyond their control, acts of God, civil unrest, sickness, transportation, scheduling and government restrictions or regulations;
3. To hold harmless and indemnify the Releasees from any and all liability for any damage to the property of, or personal injury to, any third party, resulting from my participation in this program; and
4. This Agreement shall be effective and binding upon my heirs, Next of Kin, executors, administrators, assigns and representatives in the event of my death or incapacity.

In entering into this Agreement, I am not relying upon any oral or written representations or statements made by the Releasees other than what is set forth in this Agreement.

I appoint the following person my designated Next of Kin and authorize Wilfrid Laurier University and the host institution to contact that person for or with information about me in my absence. I have fully informed my Next of Kin regarding all aspects of my student exchange program, including the nature of possible risks. *(Please Print)*

Name:	Telephone:
Current Address:	

I have read and understood this Agreement and **I am aware that by signing this legal document I am waiving certain legal rights, including the right to sue**, which I or my heirs, Next of Kin, executors, administrators and assigns may have against the Releasees.

Signed this Day of , 20

Signature of Participant	Signature of Witness
Name:	Printed Signature of Witness

This Agreement must be completed in full, signed, dated and witnessed before the participant may be registered for the exchange program.

C. Field Placement Portal Instructions

The Master of Social Work (MSW) Field Education Office utilizes an online database, the [Field Placement Portal](#), to share information about potential placement opportunities with all students. Students log in the portal to view information about available placements as well as indicate interest in placement opportunities. Once matched with a placement for an interview, students also use the portal to learn about the outcome of their interview, contact information for their field instructor, their assigned field advisor, and their placement timelines and evaluation deadlines. For detailed information on how to navigate the portal, see the following YouTube videos:

1. [Accessing the Field Placement Portal](#)
2. [Completing Your Profile on the Field Placement Portal](#)
3. [Showing Interest in and Ranking Placement Opportunities](#)

Written instructions for navigating the portal are as follows:

Logging into the field placement portal

- Go to fsw.mylaurier.ca (works best with Firefox and Internet Explorer 6 or higher).
- Click on the student tab.
- Login: Enter your myLaurier email.
- Password: Enter your myLaurier email password.
- Click submit.

Navigating the field placement portal

You are now logged in to the portal. This is the main page or the dashboard. Here you will find updates, important dates, links related to the placement planning process, etc. Along the left-hand side, below "dashboard," there are a number of modules listed.

Field Placement	On this page you will see the upcoming, current, and past term, as it relates to your placement. You will also have access to the following: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• My Profile: your profile contains questions that help the Field Education Office match you for an interview.• Documents & Packages: this is used to upload resumes, certificates, etc. that you would like to share with field instructors and field advisors.• Opportunities to which I qualify: you can view the placements that are open to your program and field of study.• My Interests: you can review the placements you have indicated interest in. This feature becomes available after you complete your profile, and select placements you are interested in.
Resources	This page contains any applications, forms, or evaluations relevant to your placement. Agency specific applications or requirements are also provided here.
Logout	To logout of the portal.

Completing your Profile

The profile must be completed in order to view the placements that a student qualifies for. To complete your profile:

1. On the main dashboard, click on 'Incomplete: Click to Edit' beside 'My Profile' (this will remain 'Incomplete' until all sections are completed)
2. You must respond to all questions. For questions to which you do not have a response, you must indicate n/a. All text boxes must have a response.
3. Upload a general, up-to-date resume – please use a general resume that can be shared with a variety of agencies. In the event you uploaded the incorrect resume, you can upload a new resume, however you cannot delete the first resume you have uploaded.
4. Click Save.
5. This will take you back to the main dashboard. If your Profile was completed correctly, 'Complete: Click to Edit' will appear beside 'My Profile'. You will now be able to review all the Opportunities to which you qualify.

Reviewing placements for your field course

Students will be able to view, and show interest in the placement opportunities. Placements are open to students based on field course (e.g. Advanced placement). Students will be able to view all placements available; however, students may not be qualified for all these placements. To determine which placements the student qualifies for, he/she must review the 'Placement opportunity' provided by each agency.

New placement opportunities will be added on the portal until the day before the portal closes. To review the placements you qualify for:

- Beside 'Opportunities to which I qualify', click on **View Opportunities**.
- You will see all of the placement opportunities that are open for your program and field of study. You can save, delete, or show interest in any of these placements.
- Click on placement title to view the details of the placement opportunity. **Students are expected to review each placement prior to showing interest.**

Showing Interest in a Placement Opportunity

Students must carefully review a placement opportunity prior to showing interest. For questions about a particular placement please contact fswprac@wlu.ca for any clarification or visit the agency's website. Students cannot contact an agency or arrange meetings with agencies to learn about the available opportunities, set up an interview or meeting with an agency, or arrange their own placements.

Select **10 placement opportunities** that you would like to show interest in. Showing interest helps the Field Education Office consider you for placements you are interested in. It does not guarantee you will be placed with these agencies. **To show interest:**

- Click on the title to view the placement details. Under the 'Info' tab, you will be able to view detailed information about the placement.
- Click on the **Show Interest** tab.
- Click **Submit**. You have now shown interest in the placement opportunity.
- You can review all placements you have shown interest in by going back to your dashboard. You will now see a new tab 'My Interests' that has been added once you show interest in a placement opportunity. You
- can review all opportunities you have shown interest in by clicking on **Review my Interests**.

- If you are no longer interested in a placement opportunity: Go to the main dashboard, click on **Review my Interests**, click on the placement title you wish to remove from your interests, go to the 'Show Interest' tab, click on the tab **Remove Interest**.

Learning about your Placement

The Field Education Office will inform you once you have been matched with a placement for an interview.

To learn about your placement:

- Log in to the portal.
- Click on **Field Placement** on the left-hand side bar.
- Select the appropriate term and then you will see a new tab 'My Placement'. Click on **View Placement**.
- This will provide you detailed information about the placement including dates, field instructor and field advisor contact information.
- Contact the listed 'Staff Contact' and primary field instructor to set up an interview.

D. Learning Plan & Evaluation

MSW LEARNING PLAN & EVALUATION

Student's Name:		
Level:	<input type="checkbox"/> Foundational Placement <input type="checkbox"/> Advanced Placement <input type="checkbox"/> Workplace Placement	<input type="checkbox"/> Full-Time <input type="checkbox"/> Part-Time <input type="checkbox"/> Thesis Student
Placement Dates:		
Agency & Department:		
Field Instructor(s):		
Field Advisor:		

INSTRUCTORS: please complete this section when submitting the Midterm Evaluation	
Midterm evaluation outcome:	<input type="checkbox"/> Satisfactory <input type="checkbox"/> Unsatisfactory
Placement hours completed by student to date:	
Date of submission:	

INSTRUCTORS: please complete this section when submitting the Final Evaluation	
Final evaluation outcome:	<input type="checkbox"/> Satisfactory <input type="checkbox"/> Unsatisfactory
Placement hours completed by student to date:	
Date of submission:	

INSTRUCTIONS

Learning Plan:

- To be completed by the student in consultation with the instructor.
- Begin working on the Learning Plan within the first two weeks of placement.
- Should be completed within the first four weeks of placement (full-time students) and six weeks of placement (part-time students).

Midterm & Final Evaluation:

- Student to complete their portion of the evaluation and submit to instructor at least two weeks prior to the due date.

- Instructor to complete their portion of the evaluation, then review and provide feedback to student.
- **Instructor to submit completed evaluation and timesheet electronically to student, [mwfild@wlu.ca](mailto:mwfield@wlu.ca), and student's Field Advisor by the due date.**

A. LEARNING PLAN

Students are evaluated according to their learning plan as well as their performance in placement. The learning plan is a working document. The plan allows the student to identify specific, concrete goals they would like to achieve as well as identify how they will work towards their learning goals for each of the nine essential social work practice areas. **For explanation and examples of the social work practice areas, please review the MSW Field Education Manual.**

<p>Briefly describe your <u>overall</u> work/learning plan. For example: community based projects and activities, nature and type of individual work, case management activity, service coordination, referral and linkages, group/team/committee work, best practice research, program development, research, social administration, and other social work roles and functions as they pertain to your learning opportunities:</p>

Social Work Practice Areas	What do you aim to achieve for each social work practice area?	What activities, models or strategies will you undertake to achieve your goals?
1. Practicing from a social work knowledge base		
2. Developing a professional self in terms of values, ethics, practices		
3. Developing and maintaining social work relationships		
4. Assessing		
5. Planning		
6. Implementing strategies, methods, and practices		

7. Documenting		
8. Evaluating		
9. Closure: completing the work		
10. Other		

B. MIDTERM EVALUATION

OBSERVATIONS

INSTRUCTORS: The FSW requires the instructor to observe the student's progress as directly as possible. Please note that self-report and discussion, while valuable, are not on their own sufficient measures for education.

Observations	Yes	No
Direct observation		
Case/project review		
Documentation (assessments, proposals, case notes, reports)		
Interdisciplinary team contribution		
Documented use of community resources		
Shadowing		
Feedback received from colleagues in the organization		
Presentations in the community		
Other (specify):		

OVERVIEW OF ACTIVITIES

STUDENTS: Provide a brief description of overall activities which have been started and/or completed to date.

Overview of activities at Midterm:

EVALUATION OF LEARNING

STUDENTS: Complete status of activities undertaken in placement. Indicate progress in each of the nine areas by outlining the goals/outcomes/outputs you have achieved.

INSTRUCTORS: Review status of activities with student. Please check (X) in the appropriate box on the continuum that best reflects student’s performance.

Social Work Practice Areas	Progress at Midterm: Status of Activities	Check (X) in the appropriate box				
		Unsatisfactory	Limited	Satisfactory	Good	Excellent
1. Practicing from a social work knowledge base						
2. Developing a professional self in terms of values, ethics, practices						
3. Developing and maintaining social work relationships						
4. Assessing						
5. Planning						
6. Implementing strategies, methods, and practices						
7. Documenting						
8. Evaluating						
9. Closure: completing the work						
10. Other						
		OFFICIAL MIDTERM GRADE:		<input type="checkbox"/> Satisfactory <input type="checkbox"/> Unsatisfactory		

OVERALL COMMENTS at MIDTERM:

STUDENT's overall feedback at Midterm:

Comment and reflect on your learning goals, as well as your overall learning process and growth. Include any new areas of focus to achieve the learning goals as you progress in the placement.

INSTRUCTOR's overall feedback at Midterm:

Comments, concerns, and recommendations with a focus on continued learning.

MIDTERM REVIEWED BY:

Student's Name/Signature*

Instructor's Name/Signature*

Secondary Instructor's Name/Signature*
(if applicable)

*Signature is only required if the Field Instructor is not submitting the evaluation electronically.

C. FINAL EVALUATION

OBSERVATIONS

INSTRUCTORS: The FSW requires the instructor to observe the student's progress as directly as possible. Please note that self-report and discussion, while valuable, are not on their own sufficient measures for education.

Observations	Yes	No
Direct observation		
Case/project review		
Documentation (assessments, proposals, case notes, reports)		
Interdisciplinary team contribution		
Documented use of community resources		
Shadowing		
Feedback received from colleagues in the organization		
Presentations in the community		
Other (specify):		

OVERVIEW OF ACTIVITIES

STUDENTS: Provide a brief description of overall activities which have been started and/or completed to date. Please include any new additions to the learning plan.

Overview of activities since Midterm:

EVALUATION OF LEARNING

STUDENTS: Complete status of activities undertaken in placement. Indicate progress in each of the nine areas by outlining the goals/outcomes/outputs you have achieved.

INSTRUCTORS: Review status of activities with student. Please check (X) in the appropriate box on the continuum that best reflects student's performance.

Social Work Practice Areas	Progress at Final: Status of Activities	Check (X) in the appropriate box				
		Unsatisfactory	Limited	Satisfactory	Good	Excellent
1. Practicing from a social work knowledge base						
2. Developing a professional self in terms of values, ethics, practices						
3. Developing and maintaining social work relationships						
4. Assessing						
5. Planning						
6. Implementing strategies, methods, and practices						
7. Documenting						
8. Evaluating						
9. Closure: completing the work						
10. Other						
		OFFICIAL FINAL GRADE: <input type="checkbox"/> Satisfactory <input type="checkbox"/> Unsatisfactory				

OVERALL COMMENTS at FINAL:

<p>STUDENT's overall feedback at Final: Comment and reflect on your learning goals, as well as your overall learning process and growth. Include any new areas of focus to achieve the learning goals as you progress in the placement.</p>
<p>INSTRUCTOR's overall feedback at Final: Comments, concerns, and recommendations with a focus on continued learning.</p>

FINAL REVIEWED BY:

Student's Name/Signature*

Instructor's Name/Signature*

Secondary Instructor's Name/Signature*
(if applicable)

*Signature is only required if the Field Instructor is not submitting the evaluation electronically.

E. Petition to Decline Placement



WILFRID LAURIER UNIVERSITY
Waterloo | Brantford | Kitchener | Toronto

Faculty of Social Work

MSW Field Education

Petition to Decline Placement Instructions

Rationale for Petition: Students registered in the MSW program who wish to request a change in their placement after a match has been made¹, and in the absence of extenuating circumstances², must submit a *Petition to Decline Placement* to the Field Education Office.

Outcomes: Petitions submitted may result in one of the following:

1. Based on the student's feedback, the agency's feedback and/or a field visit, if it is determined the placement opportunity **is not suitable** for a MSW student considering the student's program of study (Advanced or Foundational):
 - The student is matched with an agency for an interview as soon as a suitable placement is available within the field course timelines.
2. Based on the student's feedback, the agency's feedback and/or a field visit, if it is determined the placement opportunity **is suitable** for a MSW student considering the student's program of study (Advanced or Foundational):
 - The student's request is denied or
 - The student's request is approved and the student is considered for placements that are available.

Timeline: within 5 business days of submitting a petition, the student will receive an email response indicating a decision or when a final decision is expected to be made.

[1] Request is submitted after student has commenced a placement, or after the student has been matched for an interview with an agency that:

- the student ranked as one of their top ten choices or indicated interest in
- the student proposed
- approved the student for a placement

[2] Extenuating circumstances: Accessible Learning Accommodation Plans, bereavement, serious personal difficulties, changes in life circumstances that hinder placement attendance. Supporting documentation may be required.

Faculty of Social Work

MSW Field Education

Petition to Decline Placement

Student Name (last, first):	Student ID:
WLU Email:	Field course (Advanced or Foundational):
# this placement was ranked in your Ranking form:	Placement you are petitioning (agency name):

Use section below to outline your reasons for this petition. Attach additional sheets if necessary, and any supporting documents. Petition should address:

- Lack of suitability and learning opportunities considering your field course (Foundational or Advanced year)
- New information presented after a match has been made (before or after interview, or after placement started) that resulted in your decision to decline the placement
- Rationale for ranking this placement as one of your ten choices

FOR OFFICE USE ONLY	
Date Received: _____	Received by: _____ <input type="checkbox"/> Documentation Attached <input type="checkbox"/> Petition completed
Decision: <input type="checkbox"/> Approved <input type="checkbox"/> Approved with condition <input type="checkbox"/> Denied	Date: _____
Comments/Conditions:	
Reviewed by: _____	Signature of MSW Field Coordinator: _____

Wilfrid Laurier University

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MSW Field Education Office

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W. [Faculty of Social Work MSW Program](#)