

**Department of Social Work
Field Instructor Manual
2022-2023**



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** For all field placement inquiries

Please use the [Department Bookings Calendar](#) to book an appointment with the Academic Coordinator or Field Education Coordinator.

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** Appointments to be booked through the Academic Administrative Assistant

BACHELOR OF SOCIAL WORK OVERVIEW

Introduction

The intent of this document is to provide guidelines intended to ensure a smooth experience in the program, and enhance both positive and challenging learning, inherent in social work practice. The document will explore the curriculum, field education, Departmental policies, University Policies, and course regulations.

Social Work as a Profession

As described by our accreditors, the Canadian Association of Social Work Education (CASWE), Social work is a profession concerned with helping individuals, families, groups and communities to enhance their individual and collective well-being. It aims to help people develop their skills and their ability to use their own resources and those of the community to resolve problems. Social work is concerned with individual and personal problems but also with broader social issues such as poverty, unemployment and domestic violence.

Human rights and social justice are the philosophical underpinnings of social work practice. The uniqueness of social work practice is in the blend of some particular values, knowledge and skills, including the use of relationship as the basis of all interventions and respect for the client's choice and involvement.

Accreditation

Social Workers in Ontario are regulated under the Provincial Social Work Act through the Ontario College of Social Workers and Social Service Workers (OCSWSSW). Anyone referring to themselves as a Social Worker must be registered with the College. Students in general, in classes, or in placement cannot refer to themselves as a social worker as they are not eligible to register until after they graduate. Trent's BSW program is fully accredited.

Curriculum

This is a generalist BSW program, meaning that students must learn knowledge, values, and skills across levels of practice; learning is considered transferable across populations. Our lens is anti-oppressive practice, striving to be responsive to community needs and dedicated to decolonization. Developed in consultation with community partners, Trent colleagues, & students, our BSW program motto is, "passionate, practical, prepared, and professional."

To graduate from Trent's BSW program, students must complete 20.0 full credits with at least 11.0 credits (over 50% of the degree) of professional social work education courses, plus a minimum of 700 hours of field practicum. During Years 1 and 2 of the Program, students take foundational courses across disciplines that inform social work practice, are introduced to the social work profession and learn the foundation of social change in the context of determining their fit and preparation for social work. During the Professional Years (Years 3 and 4), students will take all social work courses, except for one Trent elective. Students will acquire the knowledge, values, and skills to become effective *generalist* social work practitioners, and to be eligible to register with the Ontario College of Social Workers and Social Service Workers.

FIELD INSTRUCTION OVERVIEW

Purpose of Field Practicum

BSW students normally will have two practicums and complete a minimum of 700 total learning hours of supervised field education. Please note that the purpose of the practicums is learning, not securing employment after graduation (although sometimes a practicum agency will hire a student). Field education provides students an opportunity to learn about (in 3rd year) and apply (in 4th year) theoretical knowledge to practice situations with individuals, families, groups, organizations, and communities.

Third Year Practicum

SWRK 3000Y is scheduled in the winter term (January to April) of 3rd year. Typically, students attend their assigned field practicum agency three days a week (normally Monday, Tuesday, and Wednesday for 7 hours per day) for approximately 11 weeks and are required to complete a minimum of 240 learning hours. Students cannot carry forward extra hours into their fourth year placement.

Fourth Year Practicum

SWKR 4000D is scheduled across both the fall and winter terms (September to April) of 4th year. Students typically attend their assigned field practicum agency three days a week (normally Wednesday, Thursday, and Friday for 7 hours per day) for approximately 12 weeks in each term and are required to complete a minimum of 460 learning hours. All students start at “0” hours, extra hours from third year placement cannot be counted towards the 460 minimum.

Field Practicum Learning Objectives

During the Professional Years (3rd and 4th years), students are expected to acquire the knowledge, values, and skills to become effective generalist social work practitioners. This is facilitated partially during their placements, using the following field learning objectives:

1. **Professional Social Work Identity:** develop a professional social work identity in line with social work values and ethics of the social work profession. Students demonstrate the ability to understand and apply the guidelines of the Canadian Association of Social Workers Code of Ethics, and social work core values and principles;
2. **Professional and Reflective Practice:** practice reflectively and apply methods of critical thinking and inquiry into social work practice;
3. **Engagement with Individuals, Groups, and Communities:** develop social work skills to enable them to work effectively through a planned change process with individuals, families, groups and communities;
4. **Equity, Diversity, and Social Justice:** demonstrate knowledge about the ability to provide effective service to individual service users whose identities encompass and intersect a range of social positions;
5. **Policy:** understand how social policies, in various forms, influence the services provided by the agency, and ultimately, service users and communities. Students

understand various forms of oppression, and develop professional practice orientations and frameworks in keeping with social justice outcomes;

6. **Research:** apply research skills to develop a deeper professional understanding of the experiences of service user.

It should be noted that individual practicum settings might not be able to provide opportunities to learn each element identified in each area. It is anticipated that the development of learning will occur over the two field practicum experiences. It should also be noted that the Learning Agreement is the primary authority on practice objective details.

Student Responsibilities

Students are ultimately responsible for their own learning. If a student has questions or concerns in their practicum, it is their responsibility to bring that concern first to their on-site Field Instructor. The student may bring that concern to the Faculty Field Liaison (FFL; their integration seminar instructor) for guidance on how to approach the concern with their on-site supervisor. Students must ensure the Field Education Coordinator has updated contact information for the student (and emergency contact information) and is aware of absences beyond three days.

Field Instructor Responsibilities

Field Instructors are required to have a minimum of two years' experience in the social service sector, hold a Social Work degree wherever possible, and work in agencies that provide services to diverse service user populations.

Overview

Field Instructors are responsible for ensuring the agency is providing students with a rich social work practicum experience, fostering the opportunity for students to complete all the learning outcomes in their learning agreement. Specific activities include:

1. Conducting a pre-placement interview with students;
2. Confirm any placement requirements (vulnerable sector check, immunization records, etc) with the student as soon as possible;
3. Ensuring they have a knowledge and understanding of the policies and practices as outlined in Trent's BSW Student Handbook;
4. Welcoming and orienting the student to the agency, its policies, programs, and practices (e.g., recording, filing, computer entries, work hours, dress code, and absence due to illness);
5. Clarifying the BSW program's expectations related to students' learning goals, supervision, hours, and assessment requirements;
6. Clarifying the context in which learning will take place by reviewing expectations with respect to frequency and duration of supervision meetings/hours of instruction and teaching tools used to monitor student's learning;
7. Collaborating with students in completing Learning Agreements;
8. Conducting an ongoing review of appropriate learning tasks and supervision;
9. Conducting a mid-term and a final assessment with students;

10. Selecting and assigning learning experiences such as observation of practice experiences, projects, tasks, staff meetings, community events and activities, and seminars appropriate to meet the learning needs of students;
11. Providing on-going feedback to students including 1-1.5 hours of weekly supervision;
12. Consulting and liaising with the Faculty Field Liaison including notifying the Faculty Field Liaison at the first sign of concern with respect to students' competency, suitability, or behaviour;
13. Completing the Field Instructor Evaluation of Field Practicum survey.

Supervision

The Field Instructor should have 1-1.5 hour(s) of designated time a week to connect with the student for supervision. Supervision meetings should include review of: field assignments; concrete feedback on observation of the student; student development; and assessment. Supervision may be split between multiple Field Instructors if the student has more than one. Supervision will also occur on an ad hoc basis throughout the student practicum.

In instances when the Field Instructor does not have a BSW or MSW, students will be provided with additional support/Supervision from their FFL, in addition to their integration seminar (unless there is a staff member at the Placement Agency who is able to provide this Supervision). Formal Social Work Supervision with an FFL counts towards the student's hours.

Concerns about student performance

We expect that if a student is not performing at a satisfactory level, is not meeting attendance requirements, or is breaching ethical expectations, that this concern will be discussed with the student at the earliest opportunity possible, and that it will also be raised with the FFL **and documented**.

Faculty Field Liaison (FFL) Responsibilities:

Each student is assigned a Trent Faculty member who acts as the liaison between the placement agency and the University and is the student's seminar instructor. The FFL's role is to support students in their integration of the course learning throughout the program, and the field practicum experience. In instances when a Field Instructor does not have a BSW or MSW, the FFL also acts as a Social Work Supervisor to ensure that the student is integrating social work principles into their learning. FFLs assign the students' final grade. In cases where agencies have multiple students, efforts will be made to have a single FFL oversee each of these students.

The FFL's role includes ensuring that students and Agency Field Instructors are engaged in a meaningful learning process. FFLs assist in making sure this happens by having regular communication, offering consultation, and advising students and instructors on building effective learning opportunities. Part of this process includes conducting a site visit with the student and the Field Instructor early to mid-term each term the student is in placement and subsequent visits as deemed necessary. If there are concerns in placement, additional visits may be arranged. If students bring a concern forward to the FFL, the FFL will hear the concerns but encourage the student to address the concern directly with their on-site Field Instructor. Only if the concern cannot be resolved internally to the agency, will the FFL be involved in trying to mediate that concern. Any change in the student's hours of attendance,

supervisor, or role in the agency should be communicated to the FFL and the Field Education Coordinator by the agency.

Integration Seminars

The placement and integration seminars must occur concurrently; each informs the other. This is an example where college and university differ. While at college the expectation is on doing – acquiring skill – at University, the expectation is on critical thinking and integration of theory and practice. It is not enough just to have the skill to carry out tasks – BSW graduates must have reflected on why social workers carry out the tasks they do and what aspects of each task is aligned with which theory.

Throughout supervision with their field instructor and during the integration seminars, students are expected to share their practicum experiences and critical reflections in relation to the student's agreed upon learning objectives. The purpose of the supervision and integration seminars is to assist students with integrating that learning with the theory and other classroom learning.

Field Education Coordinator (FEC) Responsibilities:

The Field Education Coordinator role focuses primarily on placement procurement, student preparation, and matching. The FEC also orients and supports Field Instructors when support is required beyond what is being offered by the FFL. Once a student is placed, there is an expectation that communication about placement will occur between student, their on-site Field Instructor, and the FFL. The FEC only becomes involved during placement time if there are concerns at the placement that affect the student and cannot be resolved internally or with assistance from the FFL. We encourage feedback be shared with the FEC at any time if anyone has ideas for improving our program.

Student Experience Portal (SEP)

Students, Field Instructors, and Faculty Field Liaisons will receive guidance on how to use this system and have individual accounts on the server. Matches/records are finalized on Student Experience Portal, which requires Field Instructors to create an account. Accounts can be created here: <https://ccr.trentu.ca/employer/employerregistration.htm>. Students will also submit their learning documents to SEP at the end of placement. Field Instructors are not expected to check SEP during placement as documents will be hosted on SharePoint. Please direct any questions about SEP to the FEC.

SharePoint

SharePoint will host the students Learning Documents, Timesheet and Supervision Record, and will contain resources to support Field Instructors and Students. Field Instructors will be sent a link via email to their student's SharePoint Folder. SharePoint is designed to facilitate easy collaboration and signing of documents, however students and Field Instructors are more than welcome to work on documents offline, however they choose. Students must regularly re-upload their learning documents to SharePoint so their FFL and the FEC have access to updated documents.

Field Education Practicum Hours

Students typically complete 21 learning hours per week, including supervision. Lunch hours, statutory holidays, snow days, sick days, or other absences from the field setting are not included. Students record their hours using the Student Timesheet and Supervision Excel file, which is located in SharePoint. Students are responsible for updating this document regularly (weekly, at minimum) and uploading it to SEP at the end of their placement. The specific schedule will be shared with FIs in advance of students starting placement.

Social service agencies do not necessarily provide services from 9 am to 5 pm, Monday to Friday. Students will generally attend field practicum on the designated days (during day or evening hours) however some field agencies have expressed interest in students engaging in field learning hours in the evenings or on weekends. Students will typically be at the assigned field practicum agency 7 hours each day. When students are asked to remain at an agency, beyond the 7-hour requirement, students are responsible for arranging with their field instructors how to balance their hours within the weekly expectations (21 hours).

Students are not scheduled to be in their field practicum over the Residential Reading weeks. However, students may individually arrange with field instructors to attend placement during reading week. **Students may not attend practicum when Trent University is closed (i.e. Statutory Holidays or during the Trent University Winter Closure).**

Students are expected to attend Field Placement on scheduled days. Occasionally, students may become sick or have compassionate reasons (e.g., a serious personal or family issue) to be away from practicum. Students are responsible for promptly notifying the Field Instructor in the event of an unavoidable absence. Students must meet their minimum hour requirement (3rd year - 240 hours, 4th year - 460 hours); students will be required to make up hours if they are short of these numbers. Students may not accumulate hours for the purpose of ending placement early, but may take time off placement if they have extra hours, provided it is approved by their FI and FFL.

Students who are absent from their field education practicums without valid reasons may receive a failing grade in the course. In the case of prolonged absences, it is the students' responsibility to notify their Field Instructor (via email or voice mail), Faculty Field Liaison and Field Education Coordinator and keep them up-to-date about their estimated time of return. Upon return, the student should develop a plan with the Field Instructor for covering the missed time and learning outcomes. While reasonable effort will be made to support students who are absent for a prolonged period for legitimate/acceptable reasons recuperate lost practicum time, it may not be possible in some circumstances for students to successfully meet course requirements. It may be necessary to repeat the practicum the following year.

Learning Documents

Learning Agreement

The Learning Agreement outlines student learning goals and objectives for field education. The Learning Agreement form is located in SEP and is on SharePoint as a resource. Instructions on drafting the learning agreement will be given in the first two practicum

seminars. The field instructor and student will collaboratively develop the learning agreement, which outlines student's goals and learning objectives, **during the first four to five weeks** of field practicum and sign it (specific deadlines will be provided by the student's FFL). They also discuss supervision, BSW policies, assessment, practicum activities, evidence collection, necessary forms, recording practicum hours, and conflict resolution. Students will be expected to collect and record evidence across the practicum that demonstrates how and when they have met required objectives and goals.

The Learning Agreement is intended to be a working document. Initial goals and objectives may be modified or changed over the period of the practicum as student's learning needs become clearer and learning tasks change or new ones become available.

For each Practice Objective in the Learning Agreement, students specify:

1. What they want to learn (i.e., which components of the practicum objective);
2. How they will accomplish that learning (i.e. the learning activities they will do);
3. How achievement of the learning will be evaluated (accountability);
4. When they intend to complete the learning (timeline).

The learning agreement will be reviewed and updated as part of the mid-term assessment with the field instructor. It will also be reviewed as part of the final assessment.

These activities may include: shadowing Field Instructors and other professionals as they engage with service users; going to meetings; participating in events; reviewing agency documents; filling out agency documents; meeting with service users; and other related tasks associated with the work done in each practicum. When shadowing, students may be asked to observe situations and later offer their feedback. Students might also be asked to take notes and/or participate in the situation. Typically, as students' skills and confidence develop, they will become responsible for increasingly difficult tasks as well as be more active in terms of negotiating with Field Instructors about what and how they need to learn.

Learning Assessment

Field Instructors have a supervisory role. Although a collegial relationship, the Field Instructor is responsible for assessment. Participation in negative conversations about their Field Instructor or any agency personnel may be considered unprofessional behavior (please see [Professional Suitability Policy](#)).

Assessment of students in field practicum occurs on an ongoing basis. This process encourages an opportunity to highlight student strengths, ongoing learning needs and opportunities. Students are formally assessed at the mid-point and end of the field practicum. Students and Field Instructors are to fill out the Assessment Individually first, and then meet in real time, either in person or virtually, to discuss the assessment. When they meet, they discuss the practicum and review the student's Field Education Goals and Objectives as articulated in the Field Agreement. After discussion, the Field Instructor inputs a "Collaborative" number, which reflects their dialogue. Field Instructors need to provide concrete feedback about students' progress and how they can improve specific areas. The Faculty Field Liaison does not attend the mid-term assessment meeting but does review, approve (or not), and sign the mid-term assessment form.

Timesheet and Supervision Record

Students are responsible for recording their practicum and supervision hours in the Timesheet and Supervision record regularly. Students should record their "Practice Hours", time spent on placement activities separately from their time spent in Supervision (either from their Field Instructor or Faculty Field Liaison). The total number of hours recorded in each day should not sum up to more than what the student completed. Field Instructors should periodically review their students' Timesheet entries. Students and Field Instructors should sign the Timesheet and Supervision Record when they sign the Learning Assessments.

The Timesheet and Supervision Record can be found on the Student Experience Portal and the SharePoint.

Safety Documents

Students are expected to complete the Safety Orientation Checklist with their Field Instructor within the first two weeks of placement, and upload it to the Student Experience Portal. A Blank copy can be found in the Student Experience Portal and on SharePoint.

Site visit(s)

Faculty Field Liaisons will attend a site visit with students and field instructors at least once in the fall term (fourth year students only) and at least once in the winter term (both third and fourth year students), typically around the mid-point of the term. The purpose of the site visit is to ensure that appropriate learning tasks, supervision, conflict resolution, and activities are taking place. Additional meetings may be required to address difficulties in the practicum.

Faculty Field Liaisons will contact the Field Instructors at the beginning of the field placement to introduce themselves, provide contact information, answers any questions the Field Instructors may have and to schedule a mutually agreeable time for the site visit(s).

Student Field practicum evaluation

Similar to course evaluations, students will be asked to complete and submit a Student Evaluation of Field Education form at the end of both third year and fourth year practicums. The form will be kept confidential, and gives students an opportunity to provide feedback about their practicum experiences. Agencies will not be given copies of individual student evaluations. If an agency, Field Instructor, or Faculty Field Liaison requests feedback, the Department of Social Work will generalize the feedback and provide them with a synopsis. It is expected that students will provide fair and constructive feedback. Students may complete this anonymously.

Field Instructor Field practicum evaluation

Field Instructors are also given the opportunity to provide feedback in relation to their experience of the Field Education experience and the field education process. The Field Instructor Evaluation of Field Education form will be kept confidential, and should be completed once practicum is finished. The Department of Social Work appreciates this feedback as it gives us the opportunity to make continuous quality improvement checks to our field education

program. The Department will review the feedback and follow up when appropriate. It is expected that Field Instructors will provide fair and constructive feedback. FIs may complete this anonymously.

Insurance Coverage

Trent University provides Placement students with Workplace Accident Insurance and Errors and Omission Insurance coverage. Field Placement Agencies are not expected to provide students with this coverage. Please contact the FEC if you have any questions about these policies or would like to request proof of insurance.

Workplace Accident Insurance

Students are provided with either WSIB insurance or ACE-INA insurance, depending on what their placement agency's insurance is. Students are covered by WSIB if their placement agency is WSIB covered, and ACE-INA if they do not have WSIB.

Errors and Omission

Students are provided with Errors and Omission insurance by the University; this provides students with professional liability insurance in the case of mistakes.

DEPARTMENT OF SOCIAL WORK PROCEDURES/GUIDELINES

Practicum Breakdown (Students at Risk of Failing)

If Field Instructors believe that students are at risk of failing the practicum and/or are not making suitable progress in practicum, they are to make every effort to meet with students, identify their concerns, and make concrete plans to address these concerns. This may happen at any point in the field practicum (for example if a Field Instructor identifies concerns in the first few weeks, it should be addressed at this time, and not wait until the mid-term assessment).

If students continue to be at risk, Field Instructors will contact the Faculty Field Liaisons, by email or telephone, explaining the situation and concerns. Special support, resources, or action may need to be taken immediately. Faculty Field Liaisons and Field Instructors will arrange to meet with the students who require assistance and students will be informed that they are at risk.

Collaborative remedial learning plans will be discussed that identify areas of concern and actions that will be taken to address and resolve issues (e.g., the need for additional meetings, accommodation, supervision, etc.). After this meeting, the plan will be summarized in writing by the Faculty Field Liaison and emailed to the student, Field Instructor, and the Field Education Coordinator. These plans will include tentative dates for further meetings (and/ or actions/steps that must be taken) between students, Field Instructors, and Faculty Field Liaisons. Students may place themselves at risk at any point during practicums if there are serious concerns regarding professional suitability.

Change in Field Instructors

If a student's Field Instructor changes positions, or is no longer able to fulfill the Field Instructor requirements, another member of the agency may take over. All responsibilities and benefits will be transitioned to this new Field Instructor as soon as possible. Evaluations may be delayed as necessary to provide the Field Instructor sufficient time to acquaint themselves with the learning agreement and activities.

If there are no available members of the agency able to provide supervision, the student may be withdrawn from their placement. Every effort will be made to connect the student with a new opportunity. All accumulated hours will carry forward, but the student will be responsible for making up any lost hours. This may be done through agency tasks or other activities as discussed and approved by the student's FFL.

Labour Disruption

The Department of Social Work recognizes that for students in practicum in a unionized environment, a labour disruption during practicum is a possibility. Students are encouraged to speak to the agency about the potential for a labour disruption and the agency's policy around students in practicum during a labour disruption. If a labour disruption is possible, this information should be immediately shared with the Field Education Coordinator. Students shall not cross the picket line in order to perform duties associated with their practicum;

Working Alone

Generally, there is an expectation that students do not work on their own, with no agency staff/representatives available (or physically nearby if placements are completed in person). The same is true if students are completing placement activities outside of the placement host's office location (i.e. in a client's home or in the community), it is expected that Field Instructors accompany students to the first meeting, and develop a safety plan with students. Depending on comfort level, students may conduct community visits/attend meetings on their own. A safety plan must be discussed with the student beforehand, and their FFL should be informed of the activities and plan.

Conflict in Student/Field Instructor Relationships

Conflicts between student and Field Instructor or other Placement Agency Representative should be addressed first between the two parties. Either party may seek input from the student's assigned Faculty Field Liaison if the conflict is not resolvable. If the conflict is still not resolvable, either party may contact the Field Education Coordinator for additional assistance.

To minimize risk of conflicts occurring during placement, both students and Field Instructors should make every reasonable effort to clarify roles, expectations, learning activities and consequences early in the placement experience. Chronic or acute conflict between the student and agency representatives may be grounds for terminating the placement. This must be discussed with the students assigned FFL first.

Personal Relationships

Students should maintain professional relationships with service users and abide by the CASW's Guidelines for Ethical Practice (CASW, 2005b). The Code of Ethics (CASW, 2005a)

prohibits students from entering into personal relationships with service users. This includes relationships of an intimate and/or sexual nature. Failure to abide by these professional standards will result in a review of the student's suitability, and termination of the practicum. Further action as required by law may be taken.

Gift Giving

The CASW's Code of Ethics (CASW, 2005a) stipulates that the social worker/service users' relationship is designed to benefit service users. Social workers should not seek personal gain from their interaction with service users. In simple terms, students should not accept gifts from service users. In the same spirit, faculty, staff, and field education personnel should not accept gifts from students.

Criminal Record Check with Vulnerable Sector Screening

All Professional Years students are required to **annually obtain and pass** a Criminal Record Check and upload it to SEP. Certain Placement Agencies will also require the successful completion of a Criminal Record Check with a Vulnerable Sector Check. Given the timelines for police to complete these screens, students are expected to apply for these checks as soon as their practicum is confirmed. Agencies should clearly communicate their requirements (e.g., if a Vulnerable Sector check is required, if the Police check needs to be obtained in the past 6 months) to students in the interview/offer stage.

Conflict of Interest and Unpaid Practicums

Practicums are voluntary; students are not allowed to be paid for their time spent on placement activities. Trent makes every reasonable effort to avoid placing students in their current or former places of employment. If a student is completing a placement in their current or former workplace, they must be in a different department, have a different supervisor, and clearly identify the differences between their employment and learning activities.

Travel to Practicums/Transportation

Students are required to provide their own means of transportation to and from their assigned practicum agency. Trent does not provide any form of insurance for private vehicles, or insurance for any personal items that may be damaged or stolen while located in private vehicles. **Students are not permitted to use their own vehicle to transport Agency services users.**

Dress Code and Professionalism

Professional attire that is appropriate for the practicum setting and follows agency policy must be worn. In some cases, this may be business casual or more formal attire. Students are expected to learn about dress code expectations from their Field Instructors prior to starting their practicums.

Student Injury in a WSIB Practicum Agency

In the event that a student is injured while on Practicum in an Agency that is covered by WSIB, the Student is required to notify the Field Instructor, their FFL and the FEC **within 24 hours (immediately where possible)**. The FFL and/or the FEC, together with the student, completes

the Departmental Unpaid Student Practicum Injury Report form (this form gathers detailed information about the incident) and the MTCU Post-secondary Student Unpaid Work Placement Workplace Insurance Claim form. The Agency Field Instructor (Practicum Employer) will complete and sign the Letter of Authorization to Represent the Employer form.

Student Injury in a private ACE-INA Practicum Agency

In the event that a student is injured while on Practicum in an Agency without WSIB insurance but instead uses private ACE-INA, the Student is required to notify their Field Instructor, their FFL and the FEC **within 24 hours (immediately where possible)**.

DEPARTMENT OF SOCIAL WORK POLICIES

For full policies, please see the BSW Handbook. These policies are abridged versions of the ones contained in the BSW Handbook, which is the final authority over policies.

Professional and Ethical Conduct

Professional and ethical conduct is expected of all BSW students. Professional conduct is to strive for excellence, be trustworthy and accountable, demonstrate relevant values and attitudes, be courteous and respectful, be honest and open, to act with integrity, and be competent and improve continually. Ethical conduct is to act within established moral codes of conduct and to set good examples of integrity, respect for inherent dignity and worth of persons, and be respectful of confidentiality. Students are expected to read, understand, and adhere to the CASW Code of Ethics (Canadian Association of Social Workers, 2005a).

Professional Suitability

BSW students are expected to act ethically and professionally. The BSW's Professional Suitability policy applies to all students registered in the Professional Years (years 3 and 4) and is referenced in each Professional Years' SWRK course syllabi, the BSW Student Handbook and will be discussed in classes.

Behaviours that may result in a Department of Social Work's Professional Suitability Review include, but are not limited to:

- Breach of the Code of Ethics of the provincial or national social work regulatory bodies;
- Breach of Trent and/or Department of Social Work's policies;
- Action that is not aligned with good ethical conduct;
- Harassment or discrimination of other students, faculty, staff, practicum staff, practicum service users, or volunteers;
- Charges or conviction for a criminal offence that demonstrates lack of judgement and integrity (e.g., sexual assault, physical abuse, weapons, or drug trafficking);
- Unprofessional disruptive behavior;
- Competency issues including failed courses or practicums or absenteeism;
- Persistent issues and situations that, after appropriate accommodation, continue to interfere with students' abilities to function professionally, ethically, and academically

Social Media

Maintaining professional boundaries in all forms of communication is vital. The Department values freedom of expression and critical debate but also has expectations of respectful and

knowledgeable interactions in sometimes challenging electronic communication and social media environments.

Individuals are responsible, accountable, and legally liable for their actions including anything written or presented online. The internet is not confidential. Once items are posted, they are permanent and cannot be completely deleted, even if they are removed. All communication within the BSW program should be of a respectful professional nature. Disrespectful communication (i.e. derogatory statements or misrepresentation) can result in disciplinary action and a Professional Suitability Review ([please see our Professional Suitability Policy](#)).

Student Guidelines for the Use of Electronic Technologies in Field Practicums:

- Cell phones, tablets, laptops, and other electronic devices should be put away during field practicum unless the student has consent from the Field Instructor or if these items are necessary for field work;
- Responses to personal text and voice communications during practicum shall be restricted to emergencies;
- Students are to use their official Trent email account to communicate regarding practicum, and such communications shall be of a professional nature and in a timely manner;
- Cell phone photos shall not be taken or shared without consent ([please see our Informed Consent Policy](#));
- Students are not to friend or accept friend requests from service users;
- Students shall not share any private or confidential information about service users, the practicum agency, or a colleague, on any social media format ([please see our Confidentiality Policy](#) for additional information).

Confidentiality

Students shall only speak about practicum service users and peers in ways that maintain anonymity. Strict adherence to confidentiality is essential to ethical social work practice. A breach in confidentiality may result in a Professional Suitability Review ([see Professional Suitability Policy](#) for additional information). In preparation for practicums, students are also required to complete confidentiality forms for both the University and the field practicum agency (see Field Education Manual for complete details).

Accommodation

Flexibility for students with documented disabilities is important and may require accommodation in a course or field practicum situation. See [Departmental Policy on Accommodation](#) and [Trent University Policy on Accessibility](#). The Department of Social Work is committed to ensuring students receive the accommodations they need to succeed in the program.

Students must be formally registered with the Student Accessibility Services (SAS) in order to receive academic and field accommodations. Social work students shall work with the Student Accessibility Services (SAS) on either the [Peterborough campus](#) or [Durham campus](#). Once a student has been assigned to an agency, the Field Education Coordinator, student, SAS, Faculty Field Liaison, and Field Instructor will work collaboratively to support the student so that they have the opportunity to be successful in their practicum.

Discrimination and Harassment in Practicum

The Department of Social Work (students, staff and faculty) adheres to Trent's [Discrimination and Harassment Policy](#) and [Campus Violence and Harassment Policy](#). Trent University is committed to providing a learning, working, and residential environment that is free from discrimination and harassment.

If students believe that they have been harassed or discriminated against, they should discuss the situation directly with the Field Instructor, Faculty Field Liaison or Field Education Coordinator as soon as possible.

As already mentioned students on campus and at field practicum are covered by Trent policies and the Ontario Human Rights Code. **Employees of agencies that provide field practicums for Trent BSW students are not covered by Trent policies.** If an incident occurs on field practicum, the Department of Social Work will engage in discussions with the student and a practicum agency representative to take reasonable steps to address complaints of discrimination and harassment.

Attendance

Professional behaviour includes being on time and present for each class, seminar, and field practicum. Social work students need to address life circumstances while maintaining a responsible approach to their academic responsibilities and are expected to organize their schedules so that they can attend all orientations, classes, and field practicum days.

1. In the case of absence or anticipated absence, social work students are responsible for contacting their Field Instructor **in advance (if possible)** to discuss the situation;
2. If possible, Field Instructors will attempt to reschedule missed practicum hours (for approved/acceptable absences) in order to make sure students have completed the required hours for the practicum credit;
3. If a social work student is missing a significant number of field practicum days, the matter will be brought to the attention of the Faculty Field Liaison and Field Education Coordinator for review and/or action and may result in a Professional Suitability Review;
4. Flexibility for students requiring accommodations is important. Please see our [Accommodation Policy](#) and Trent's [Policy on Accessibility](#) for additional information.

Informed Consent for Human Participants

The BSW program Informed Consent for Human Participants and Confidentiality Policies adhere to [Trent's Human Subject Research protocols](#). During classes, integration seminars, and field practicums, it is imperative for students to respect the anonymity and confidentiality of their peers, agency personnel, service users and members of the public. Obtaining written permission (informed consent) for live human participants, interviewing, recording, or surveying is part of respecting privacy and confidentiality.

Practicum Agency and Informed Consent

Most field practicum agencies will have their own Service User Informed Consent policies and forms. Please discuss these policies and related forms with your student. If your agency does not have such a policy or form, Trent can provide you with a template.