

# **Social Work Field Education Manual**



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## PART 1 INTRODUCTION

### Welcome

Canadian Mennonite University (CMU) takes great pleasure in welcoming you to field education, a critical component of our new Bachelor of Social Work Program. Based on our foundation of Anabaptist values, we strive to prepare students for service with diverse individuals, groups, families and communities through critical approaches to social work practice. We acknowledge the history of harms committed to our Indigenous relations and seek to walk humbly together to build a world that is more equitable and just for all.

We also look forward to our students playing an important role in helping us shape and define the program going forward based on your experiences.

### CMU Mission

Preamble: CMU is an innovative university, rooted in the Anabaptist faith tradition, moved and transformed by the life and teachings of Jesus Christ. Through teaching, practice and research, CMU seek to inspire students for lives of service, leadership, and reconciliation.

The following commitments colour the university's work across all its programs and activities:

- 1. Educate for Peace and Justice**
- 2. Learn through Thinking and Doing**
- 3. Welcome with Generous Hospitality... Radical Dialogue**
- 4. Model Invitational Community**

### CMU Social Work Mission Statement

Shaped by the values and mission of Canadian Mennonite University (CMU), our Social Work program emphasizes peacemaking, community building and the pursuit of social justice as key tenets for social work practice. The social work program at CMU seeks to prepare students for service with diverse individuals, groups, families and communities through Anti-Oppressive, Indigenous, Structural, and Feminist critical approaches to social work practice. We acknowledge the history of harms committed to our Indigenous relations and walk humbly towards a world that is more equitable and just for all.

### CMU Social Work Vision Statement

Graduates of the CMU social work program are compassionate and empathetic people that demonstrate passion for peace and social justice and who critically examine and confront systems and social factors which cause harm to those most vulnerable in society. Our graduates build relationships with Indigenous and other peoples experiencing oppression in ways that acknowledge the shared history of harms from both the social work profession and Christian tradition. Graduates use their privilege and their skills to partner with those experiencing marginalization, enhancing the

self-determination of those they serve to work collaboratively to create peaceful and just communities for all.

## CMU Social Work Values

We are committed to:

- i. Critical listening through empathy, reflection and learning.
- ii. Community building for peace, conflict resolution, advocacy and social justice.
- iii. Critical thinking to challenge systems of oppression.
- iv. Accountability, transparency and to build trust.
- v. Diversity, inclusion, decolonization and Anti-Racism to break down barriers and build relationships.
- vi. Creativity and curiosity as tools to promote lifelong learning and growth.

## CMU Social Work Learning Outcomes:

### (i) Identification as a professional social worker and the reflexive use of self

Students will:

- a. Demonstrate the capacity to present themselves respectfully and responsibly in the field of practice.
- b. Be able to demonstrate a reflexivity that informs their sense of self and how they apply their own skills in social work practice.
- c. Develop an appreciation and commitment to lifelong learning that demonstrates a humble perspective to their own professional education and practice.
- d. Develop and exhibit essential characteristics for practice including empathy, compassion, honesty, transparency and integrity.
- e. Be prepared for leadership/ally roles that promote solidarity with and support self-determination of oppressed groups for organizational change and beyond.

### (ii) Knowledge and use of ethical frameworks, including the *Social Work Code of Ethics and Social Work Values in Professional Practice*

Students will:

- a. Demonstrate understanding of the purpose of professional ethics and how social work values influence these.
- b. Be able to articulate how their own morals, values and principles affect how they understand the ethical implications of social work practice.
- c. Be able to demonstrate application of such tools as the CASW Code of Ethics and the MCSW (Manitoba College of Social Workers) Standards of Practice to articulate ethical practice in social work.
- d. Critically reflect on the advantages as well as critiques of professional ethical frameworks, especially as they impact vulnerable populations including but not limited

to Indigenous peoples, women, children, differently abled and 2SLGBTQIA+ people.

(iii) Professional practice skills with individuals, families, groups, communities and organizations.

Students will:

- a. Gain a variety of skills to practice at the micro, mezzo and macro levels of practice.
- b. Be able to practice in a variety of fields including but not limited to services for individual, families, groups, communities, and organizations.
- c. Demonstrate that they can function within organizational structures and social service delivery systems that demonstrate understanding and application of organizational dynamics and change processes.
- d. Demonstrate competency in applying a broad range of knowledge and skills, including those that are anti-colonial and decolonial in nature to a range of people served in a variety of different social work settings.
- e. Utilize supervision, consultation, and other forms of feedback to continue to review and improve their own competencies in practice and own education.
- f. Be able to work within environments that encompass other professions and disciplines that build collaborative practices and partnerships.

(iv) Critical inquiry into the structural nature of oppression and injustice while working to advance human rights and the promotion of social justice for all

Students will:

- a. Learn about how their own social location promotes privilege to understand how structural factors affect others who do not have such advantages.
- b. Be able to describe the historical context of racism and social work's own role in the development and maintenance of structures that reinforce harms to racialized groups.
- c. Understand their own responsibilities as social workers to bring about the advancement of human rights and social justice from anti-racist and anti-colonial perspectives, from the local to the global.
- d. Learn how different forms of racism and discrimination manifest from systemic to interpersonal levels and their responsibility in challenging and confronting these.
- e. Engage in the critical reflexivity needed to consider their own power and positionality especially as it pertains to anti-Indigenous, Francophone, Newcomer, Black and Asian forms of racism.

(v) Human behaviour and the environment

Students will:

- a. Be able to critically reflect on how social work has contributed to diminishing the importance of the natural world via an embrace of the social environment in its development of theories of human behaviour.
- b. Be able describe the current concerns of human and non-human flourishing due to global warming and develop ways to critically examine how environmental injustice and racism affects vulnerable and at-risk populations.
- c. Learn about communities and associated economic systems that are ecologically sustainable and aid in the thriving of eco-systems.
- d. Learn how to advocate for environmentally sustainable futures via engaging the public systems of social policy and community practices as well as within individual, professional and organizational contexts.

(vi). Engage in research

Students will:

- a. Become literate regarding the research literature that impacts social work practice.
- b. Engage in research with an understanding of research methods and process to evaluate findings that include a critical reflection of how research has promoted White Supremacy and other discriminatory ideologies that have harmed vulnerable populations.
- c. Learn how to engage in research that aids in the advancement of social justice and the knowledge of the profession of social work.
- d. Learn to apply research methods in the application of policy development and/or service provision as well as the evaluation of their own professional practice.
- e. Demonstrate an understanding of the necessity for anti-racist approaches to research methods and the dissemination of race-based data to shape social work practice.

(vii). Use of critical thinking for professional practice, advanced studies, and lifelong learning.

Students will:

- a. Be able to use both oral and written communication skills in investigating and examining knowledge from diverse and multiple sources, theoretical positions and applying these to practice.
- b. Critically examine and evaluate social work practice and develop strategies to commit to ongoing learning to maintain current in their skill and knowledge of the discipline.
- c. Be able to challenge the oppression inherent in Western knowledge systems in how they promote a fixed representation of social problems and their solutions by appreciating the purpose of a commitment to lifelong learning and critical self-reflection.

(viii).Policy analysis and development of change strategies at local, organizational and systems levels

Students will:

- a. Be able to describe how social policies and legal frameworks shape and influence the health and wellbeing of the individual, family, group, and community.
- b. Be able to identify and analyze the intentional/unintentional as well as harmful and positive outcomes of social policies especially as they impact Indigenous peoples and members of equity-seeking groups and the role the state has in both perpetuating and ameliorating oppression.
- c. Be able to identify and develop strategies for change, including community asset mapping, community organizing, and the developing or changing of social policy to address existing inequity and social problems.
- d. Develop skills to practice advocacy and/or engage in leadership/allyship roles to shape systems where they practice as well as in society.

(ix). Commitment to community, peace and conflict resolution

Students will:

- a. Identify the diversity and strengths of the many ways that community is defined and practiced, including Indigenous, Francophone and Newcomer perspectives.
- b. Be able to apply principles of conflict resolution and peacemaking to foster mutual aid in communities.
- c. Critically evaluate both their own efforts as well as structural factors that may harm the flourishing of community to promote resilience and resurgence.

(x). Critical engagement with racism, colonialism and social justice

Students will:

- a. Be able to identify and describe the ways in which White Supremacy has contributed to the oppression of racialized groups in Canada.
- b. Be able to identify both the history and present-day impact of colonialism on Indigenous peoples around the world and be committed to engage in anti-colonial practice for greater social justice for all.
- c. Be able to articulate the importance of ensuring that Newcomers from former French colonized countries are provided with resources and the importance of *Active Offer* to this end.

(xi). Commitment to Reconciliation with Indigenous communities in Canada

Students will:

- a. Be able to demonstrate an understanding of the framing of rights and responsibilities inherent in treaty relationships for both Indigenous and Settler peoples.
- b. Be able to describe how important documents including but not limited to the UNDRIP, *The Calls to Action of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission* and *The*



*MMIWG Final Report* related to the responsibilities of social workers to engage in professional practice that is conducted with the intention of reconciliation.

- c. Recognize how their own positionality and privilege can be leveraged to support and be in solidarity with Indigenous self-determination.
- d. Articulate how Indigenous ways of knowing inform a distinct, valid and important form of social work and alternative healing practices, culture and language.

## PART 2. THE ROLE OF FIELD EDUCATION IN THE SOCIAL WORK CURRICULUM:

The field program plays a signature role in student social work education. It is in the field practicum experience that students, utilizing classroom theory and specialized knowledge from the placement site, apply their acquired theoretical knowledge, values and skills to practice. It is a time of practicing new skills and engaging in critical reflection, while receiving feedback and guidance. The field practicum is expected to be an educational rather than training experience and is grounded in adult learning theory. A successful field experience relies on effective communication, collaboration and commitment from all parties involved, notably the students, Field Liaisons, Field Instructors and field placement sites.

The *Educational Policies and Accreditation Standards* of the Canadian Association for Social Work Education (CASWE) are at the foundation of CMU's Field Education Program, informing the development of curriculum, learning objectives of students and the program's expectations of its field placement hosts and instructors.

### Field Education Objectives:

The overall objective of field education is to produce a professionally competent, ethical, self-evaluating, knowledgeable social worker with the capacity and the initiative to continue their professional learning on a life-long basis. Field education places students in a variety of settings, offering them opportunities to learn how to integrate workplace knowledge with the values and ethics of the social work profession.

Social Work Practicum students will engage in practical experience with the purpose of developing compassionate, skilled, critically reflexive, and ethical social work practitioners. They will collaborate with client systems from a lens that identifies and critique systems of oppression, including colonizing, discriminatory, and racist policies, beliefs and attitudes, that have served as roadblocks to health and well-being. They will partner with client systems on a journey of creative transformation that builds a community of peace and justice where individual, family and community needs are met. Students will normally have one placement experience in a community-based setting with the aim of exploring community building and social justice initiatives, and another placement experience in a setting that serves individuals, families or groups with the aim of developing case management and/or direct practice skills.

Students in their first placement will engage in introductory level practice that exposes them to basic concepts and interventions within the agency context of practice. Students in their second placement will apply knowledge in more sophisticated ways that foster thoughtful critique, more complex interactions, and nuanced interventions across systems. Graduating students will demonstrate appropriate levels of independence in thinking and action as they grow into practice as an entry level practitioner.

### Part 3. ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

Field Education Coordinator:

The Field Education Coordinator (FEC) is responsible for:

- the development, coordination and administration of the Field Education program, and works with the Social Work program chair to ensure it supports and aligns with the broader social work curriculum.
- Being available to students for discussion of educational needs and goals in field placements for the forthcoming year.
- maintaining agency partnerships, orienting, and supporting Field Instructors, and developing and implementing the student's field placement matching process including screening student applicants.
- supporting Field Liaisons and assists as needed with problematic situations.
- overseeing the orientation of students to field education, ensuring that policies are current, and partnering with agencies to ensure innovations in the field are reflected in the social work program.

Together with the Chair of the Social Work program the FEC undertakes annual evaluations of the Field Practicum Program.

Practicum Coordinator:

The Practicum Coordinator (PC) supports the work of the Field Education Coordinator in building and maintaining relationships with Field Agency partners, working with students in progression through the placement matching process and acting as a faculty liaison as needed.

Field Liaisons:

Field Liaisons (FL)s are core or sessional faculty members whose primary responsibility is to ensure that the students' field experiences are educational by ensuring that the Field Instructor and student understands the educational objectives of the field placement, and the role of practicum students. The FL serves as a link between the Social Work Program

and the Field Placement Site and maintains regular contact with the student and Field Instructor including periodic in-person agency visits to assess field performance and provide supportive services and resources as needed.

FLs meet three times an academic year with Field Instructors and students, to review and discuss the Learning Contract, Midterm Evaluation and Final Evaluation. As well, they may meet with the Field Instructor, student, and Field Placement Site at any point in the placement to provide additional assistance with the process of helping students integrate class and field learning, or when problems arise.

The FL is also the facilitator for the concurrent Integrative Field Seminar course and develops curriculum and assignments such as reflective journals, case studies, presentations and capstone projects to facilitate and integrate learning from the field setting.

The FL will be involved in providing enhanced supervision and support for students who are placed in an agency where the Field Instructor does not have a social work degree.

#### Field Placement Sites:

Field placement sites are selected based on the ability of the agency to offer learning activities to students for developing their values/knowledge/skills in a manner which is transferable across settings. The agency/organization is responsible for providing a learning environment conducive to a student's growth and development as a professional social worker.

Expectations of the field placement site include:

- A clear commitment to the education of social work students and that social work practice within the agency is based on professional standards.
- A qualified staff member can provide regular supervision to the student to serve as the Field Instructor/Mentor; normally Field Instructors will possess a BSW or MSW.
- Ensuring that the assigned Field Instructor/Mentor has sufficient time and resources within their schedule to develop planned learning opportunities and tasks for students, prepare for supervision by attending a Field instruction course, and can prepare mid-term and final evaluations of the students.
- Providing orientation materials about the placement to the student or training.
- Providing students with an appropriate workspace including needed supplies and resources needed for the performance of the student's duties.
- Providing a work environment at the agency host free from harassment or discrimination.
- Providing re-imbursment to the student for pre-determined and agreed to expenses that the student may incur during the practicum, including transportation costs to meetings and events as part of the practicum, (however, the student is responsible for cost associated with travelling to and from the placement).

- Notify the Field Education Coordinator at CMU as early as possible if unable to offer the field placement for any reason and if there are any changes in the Field Instructor/Agency Mentor.
- Students doing a field placement are covered in terms of liability by CMU. The placement agreement with the field placement site and CMU will indemnify the site from liability.
- Students doing field placements will be covered by Workers Compensation through CMU within the province of Manitoba. Students doing field placements outside of Manitoba must make sure they are covered by the practicum host in the province or territory they do their practicum in.

#### Field Instructor:

The Field Instructor is assigned by the field placement site and approved by the Field Education Coordinator (FEC) at Canadian Mennonite University. Field Instructors will normally have a BSW or MSW degree and two years of social work experience post-graduation. If a Field Instructor does not have a social work degree, the FEC will identify a Social Work Consultant either within a different department of the agency or external to the agency, to provide regular discussion with the student of the integration of social work knowledge, values and skills. Alternatively, the Field Liaison will provide enhanced supervision to ensure the integration of a social work perspective to the learning.

The Field Instructor is primarily responsible to assist the student in achieving the overall goals of the practicum and the agreed upon learning objectives. Practicum instruction emphasizes developing sound educational experiences based on reaching the identified education outcomes contained in the learning contract and the competencies outlined in the field evaluation form.

Field Instructors assume the overall responsibility for the student's practicum experience including orienting the student to the field placement site, supporting the student in the development of a sound learning contract, and assisting the student in accessing a variety of direct and indirect practice opportunities. Field Instructors are responsible for providing at least one hour of direct supervision time per week to guide the student's placement experience, assist with following the learning contract, explore integration of theory with practice, and allow for ongoing feedback on performance to the student. They are responsible to engage the student in upholding the Canadian Association of Social Workers Code of Ethics, Values and Guiding Principles, and the Manitoba College of Social Workers Standards of Practice.

Should there be concerns about student performance, the Field Instructor will contact the Field Liaison and follow the protocol provided in this manual. Field Instructors will complete all evaluation forms and provide information to the Field Liaison to assign a grade to the field

placement course. Field Instructors will provide timely information and signatures to relevant learning contract and evaluation forms using the IPT Database system.

In addition to the above responsibilities, the Field Instructor is asked to keep the Field Liaison or Field Education Coordinator abreast of changes within the organization that may affect the student placement, such as:

- major adjustments proposed to student assignments;
- pending strikes and labour/management disputes that may impact placement;
- absence of Field Instructor due to extended vacation, illness, etc.;
- changes the Field Placement Site wishes or needs to make to the Learning Contract;
- a need for the placement to switch from 'in-person' to virtual.

The FEC will ensure orientation is provided to all new Field Instructors.

Students:

While students are not expected to exhibit the same level of skill as professional social workers, they are expected to conduct themselves with professionalism while demonstrating responsible behaviour along with good judgement. Students are expected to demonstrate a commitment to ethical behaviour as the core of social work practice, including an understanding of the CASW Code of Ethics.

Students in placement need to plan how they will make themselves available for the field component within the scheduled timeframes and are expected to be active, self-directed learners through their field instruction course. Specifically, students are expected to:

- Attend practicum weekly for the duration of the scheduled practicum.
  - Students in concurrent placement must complete a minimum of 16 hours per week (lunch and breaks included), for a 14-week term in placement (no placement hours required on reading week) in both fall and winter semesters. Students are required to complete at minimum 208 hours per academic term and a total of at least 416 hours for each of their two field placements.
  - Students in a block placement must complete a minimum of 40 hours per week (lunch/breaks and Integrative Seminar class time is included), for a 14-week term in placement (no placement hours required on reading week or Statutory holidays). Students complete a total of approximately 488 hours for this placement.
- Comply with Social Work Practicum dates, including practicum start and end dates and Reading Week as outlined in the CMU Academic calendar
- Comply with all CMU and Field Placement Site standards, policies and procedures, as well as those pertaining to appropriate dress, personal conduct, preserving

confidentiality and social media use. Should field placement site policies differ from those of CMU any differences will be discussed in advance of student's placement, and unless there is an agreed upon exception the student adheres to the host agency policies during all field practicum activities.

- Participate in all required orientations at the Field Placement Site.
- Participate fully in goal-directed learning and related activities including developing a learning contract in consultation with the Field Instructor and Field Liaison, preparing for and actively participating in regularly scheduled integrative field seminars and all scheduled supervision, and fulfilling learning objectives as outlined in the learning contract.
- Complete and follow through with all field practicum responsibilities as assigned by the Field Instructor.
- If unable to attend the practicum due to illness, notify the Field Instructor and Field Liaison with as much advance notice as possible.
- Seek assistance from the Field Liaison at the onset of any problems that cannot be mutually resolved with the Field Instructor.
- Report any workplace accident or injury sustained on placement to the CMU Field Education Coordinator as soon as possible afterwards.
- Submit all assignments and requirements as outlined in the Field Placement and the Field Education Integrative Seminar syllabi.

## PART 4. PRACTICUM PLACEMENT PROCESS

### Students Planning for Field Placement

Field placements normally will be completed during the final two years of the program, with placements happening back-to-back in consecutive academic years and concurrent with remaining courses. All students must consult with their Student Advisor early to review eligibility and confirm timing of field placements within the recommended course sequence. Students must attend the *Field Placement Information Session* in the fall of the year before they anticipate taking a field placement.

Students who are studying part-time or who do not go through the program in the recommended sequence must be aware that certain placement types have a limited enrolment, and students may need to adjust their hoped-for graduation date to meet the availability of field placements. Students are expected to complete a practicum during their graduating year to ensure skills are current as students seek employment as a professional social worker.

As noted above, field practice and integrative course requirements are normally the last requirements to be met by the Social Work student to graduate. However, a student may

under special circumstance take an additional class after final field with permission from the Social Work Program Chair.

Students are not at liberty to arrange their own field placements. Specific requests or suggestions for possible practicum placement sites may be made to the Field Education Coordinator, but students are not to contact potential field sites directly.

#### Field Placement Eligibility

- Admission and Continuance in the Social Work Program
- Completion of 57 credit hours immediately prior to the first practicum.
- SWRK-2420 Listening and Supporting Others or SWRK/PSYC-2410 Counseling Techniques.
- Completion of, or registration in, SWRK-3400 Critical Praxis and Anti-Oppressive Social Work Practice for Groups, Organizations and Communities.

#### Placement Types

##### Fall/Winter Concurrent

- First or Second placement students
- 2 days a week for 14 weeks for both fall and winter semesters

##### Fall Block

- Second Placement students only
- 5 days a week for 14 weeks for the fall term only.

#### Student Pre-Placement Responsibilities and Placement Matching

Students must attend two workshops in fall term – the Field Information Session, and the Resume Writing workshop. They must also consult with their Student Advisor to ensure they meet the eligibility requirements and to determine whether they will apply for a concurrent or block placement. At this point they will submit an application for Field Placement by December 1 of the year prior to their anticipated field placement.

When the application is received, eligible students will receive access to the Intern Placement Tracking (IPT) database and must complete their Student Detail Page information and upload a current resume and signed Field Placement Student Agreement by January 15.

The Field Education Coordinator and Placement Coordinator will review all applications and potential agency sites, creating matches that best fit student learning needs and agency requirements. Once a potential match is found, the student will be contacted to

attend a pre-placement interview meeting at the placement agency. The purpose of the interview is to ensure a good match between the agency needs and student needs. Students are required to attend an Interviewing Workshop in January.

After the interview the Field Education Team will follow up to determine confirmation of the placement. If the agency chooses not to confirm the placement, the Field Education Team will pursue the next available opportunity for the student. Challenges with confirming placement may mean that a student must delay placement into the next placement cycle. While every effort is made to secure a placement in a desired geographic community, this is not always possible. In the event a student is offered a practicum and chooses not to accept it, the student may be required to wait until the next academic year to enroll in field practicum.

The range of agencies available as placement sites varies from year to year. Agencies are selected for their ability to provide learning opportunities that will be transferable to other sites. Students may not always get a placement at an agency or area of practice of their choice but can expect to learn values/knowledge/skills that will be transferable to other sites.

Agencies have a variety of requirements for placement including such things as immunization, mask fitting, current criminal record checks, abuse registry checks etc. Record checks can take from 4 to 8 weeks or longer in special situations. The cost for these requirements is the responsibility of the student.

***It is the student's responsibility to ensure they have complied with these requirements in a timely manner prior to the start of placement. Failure to comply with these requirements, and lack of communication with the FEC or placing agency, and/or attendance at meetings and interviews, may result in the inability to place a student.***

#### Disability Accommodation in Field Placement:

Occasionally students are impacted by physical, mental health or learning disabilities that may affect learning. The CMU Field Education Program is committed to working with students to plan for educational success and adheres to the policy regarding *Students with Disabilities* as found in the Academic Calendar (see Appendix 2). Additionally, students who require accommodation in field placement due to a declared disability are asked to provide information in this regard to the Field Education Coordinator during the placement matching process. The Field Education Coordinator will work with CMU's Accessibility Program to facilitate these accommodations. Information regarding student accommodation needs will be shared on an as needed basis with potential Field Instructors to assist with finding a field placement site that is able to meet required needs.



## Orientation of Field Instructors

The Field Education Coordinator provides a basic orientation to new Field Instructors. Orientation which may take place through an on-campus workshop, at an individual onsite agency visit or through an online orientation session where an overview of the CMU Social Work program is provided. The responsibilities of the agency and the CMU Social Work program are discussed for the purpose of clearly defining the role of the agency Field Instructor. Information on the standards and completion of learning contracts, learning activities, and evaluations are also presented. Orientation will also provide an emphasis on how to provide supportive supervision to students.

## Student Orientation to the Field Program and Field Placement Site

Students are required to attend a session at CMU that will orient them to expectations for field placement. In addition, students will engage in orientation at/to the field placement agency, which may occur in a variety of ways. Some agencies have structured orientation sessions for all their placement students, while others provide more informal orientation to the organization. Where orientations are planned to incorporate a number of students from different programs, the orientation may occur on a day the student is not usually in placement. If this conflicts with scheduled classes, students are asked to negotiate needs with individual Field Instructors and inform the Field Liaison attached to your practicum for assistance. CMU does not control the orientation schedule and time frames of Field Placement Site agencies.

The purpose of the orientation to the agency is to provide the student with some understanding of the agency or placement site, community, and the people the agency serves. Orientation may include a general introduction to the agency including a tour and introduction to staff members; information related to record checks required, office procedures; safety protocols; supervision schedule; parking; dress code; hours etc.

## PART 5. SPECIAL PRACTICUM SITUATIONS

### Conflict of Interest

The Field Education department strives to develop placements that allow a safe and objective learning environment. To that end, we ask that students inform the FEC if there is a potential conflict of interest with a particular placement site. This might include such things as having been a client of the agency or having a family member or close relationship that is a client of or works for the agency. The student may simply inform the FEC that there is a conflict of interest present, without divulging details, and they can then pursue other placement opportunities. If the student wishes to pursue placement at the agency, the student will need to offer sufficient information about the potential conflict of interest for the FEC to determine whether a placement can be appropriately conducted in

that setting. The final placement decision will be at the discretion of the FEC and the field placement setting.

#### Field Education in the Student's Place of Employment

The CMU social work program appreciates that students are increasingly pressured by multiple demands, often needing to juggle family, employment, and school responsibilities. Recognizing the current student context, the Program of Social Work is pleased to support students' ability to develop practica in their places of employment providing the following criteria are met.

- The student's proposed field roles and responsibilities and field education learning goals must be separate and distinct from their paid employment duties.
- The student must meet all eligibility requirements including registration in pre- and co-requisite courses.
- The work setting must provide the student with the opportunity to use a range of knowledge and skills, in accordance with the curriculum requirements of the BSW program.
- The student must have a different Field instructor (BSW minimum requirement) from their employment supervisor.
- A student is ineligible to do a practicum at their place of employment if they have previously failed a field placement.

#### Additional Guidelines

- The student and workplace Field Instructor must demonstrate understanding of the potential for conflict of interest and have a plan to address any such conflicts that arise.
- An interview with the student and representatives of the workplace may be held prior to the decision regarding acceptance or denial of the proposed practicum.
- As the focus of a field placement is educational, the practicum role must be grounded in new learning.
- A student should not perform their practicum in the same role for which they were previously paid to avoid creating confusion for clients.
- Decisions about a placement in a student's place of employment must be approved by the BSW program chair.

#### Prior Learning Assessment and Recognition (PLAR) / Challenge for Credit Courses

CMU has policies related to Challenge for Credit courses (see Academic Calendar) which allow students to benefit from prior learning and produce work to demonstrate knowledge commensurate with that of a specific course. Within the Social Work Field Education Program, PLAR fills this capacity.

Students may enter into the BSW program with prior experience in the field of social work. We want students to benefit from their own experience which honours their time in the field as well as helps them reframe their experiences within the academic perspective of a BSW education. PLAR is a process of recognizing the prior learning of skills and knowledge in social work practice. It provides a mechanism for identifying, documenting and evaluating learning, acknowledging and giving credit to students who demonstrate learning equivalent to a first field placement, and the accompanying integrative field seminar.

Students are expected to meet all the Field Education eligibility requirements including registration in pre- and co-requisite courses before applying for PLAR. Students must present evidence of having worked or volunteered for a minimum of 3500 hours in the last five years prior to their application to the BSW program, in an area(s) where they were exposed to and applied social work values, knowledge and skills.

Please contact the Field Education Coordinator for the complete PLAR policy and details regarding application process and eligibility requirements. Students are encouraged to talk to their academic advisor for further information. Please see also the CMU Social Work Student Manual for further details.

#### Field Distance Placements

Students may request to do their second field placement at an agency or organization anywhere in Canada. The actual placement must be in person with a qualified Field Instructor at that site. The student will attend the accompanying Integrative Field Seminar virtually, and any meetings with the Field Liaison or FEC will also be virtual.

The distance placement must take place during the regularly scheduled time for second field and is contingent on CMU having the resources to monitor and support the placement remotely.

For more information and/or to submit a request for a Field Distance Placement, students are invited to contact the CMU Field Education Coordinator.

Students doing a field placement outside of the province will not automatically be covered by Workers Compensation from Manitoba and will need to ensure they are covered by the practicum host in the province or Territory they do their practicum in.

## PART 6. GENERAL INFORMATION

If there is a situation that requires a student to make up field hours, the student will work with their Field Instructor and Field Liaison to indicate the nature of the situation, their current number of field hours, the end date of field and their plan to make up the shortage of hours.

### Student Field Wellness Days:

The CMU Social Work Program would like to acknowledge the Social Work program at the University of St. Boniface for their work in helping to create 'Student Field Wellness Days'.

To meet the accreditation standard and have students graduate on time, the field schedule does not allow students to take time off during regularly scheduled field placement days, which means that any time taken off during placement for illness or as personal days need to be made up during the duration of the Placement. However, to create some flexibility and to support student well-being during placement, students have the option to complete several virtual learning activities prior to the start of the placement, and 'bank' these hours for later use for medical or personal reasons.

The virtual activities are the equivalent of up to two field placement days (or 16 hours) per term. When the activities are completed, the student will submit a *Wellness Hours Acknowledgement Form* that must be signed, dated, and submitted to the Faculty Liaison who will review and approve the banked hours. Field wellness days should be scheduled and approved by the Field Instructor in advance, wherever possible, and the field placement site should also be notified. On the timesheet, students will simply indicate the dates taken off as wellness days and the number hours they are claiming (up to 16 hours maximum per term). Any missed hours beyond the pre-accumulated 16 wellness hours will have to be made up in consultation with the student's Field Instructor, Faculty Liaison and the FEC at CMU.

### Student Absences

#### Substitution of Days

There may be certain meetings or tasks required by the agency which call for changing or substituting field days. Substitution of days is permitted provided the purpose for changing days contributes to the overall learning for the student and the field placement site is in agreement.

#### Absence for Medical Reasons

When a student is absent from their practicum for medical reasons, certain policies apply depending on the severity and duration the illness. Where a medical condition exists for a period shorter than three weeks duration, no formal application for medical leave will be requested and upon return it is expected that the student will make up the time lost

due to the student's absence. *If there is flexibility in the field placement it may be possible, with the agency's agreement, for a student to make up lost time, beyond the term.* Any make-up of days lost due to sickness, must be negotiated between the student, the Field Instructor and the Field Liaison and may include use of extra days, extension of term, etc. Extensions beyond the end of the final term will require an application through the Registrar's office and approval from the Student Academic Issues Committee (see Academic Calendar).

Where the student is unable to attend, due to medical reasons for more than three weeks, the student requiring a leave of absence for medical reasons will need to complete a formal request for such a leave and have a medical certificate confirming this requirement. This request will be assessed by the Field Education Coordinator, but approval will not be unreasonably withheld.

The FEC, in discussion with the Field Placement Site/Field Instructor will look at whether the student is able to make up lost time, after they return from medical leave. This may extend beyond the normal limits of a term. Another option is for the student to repeat and complete the practicum during the next field placement cycle, at the same or a different agency. (Normally placement hours completed in one setting are not transferable to a different setting).

#### Holidays or Closure of the Agency

Students do not attend practicum on agency holidays or other times that the agency is closed. When a statutory holiday occurs or the agency is closed on a practicum day, students are expected to make up the time during the semester. If the agency is closed due to bad weather and this is normally a scheduled practicum day, students are also expected to make up the hours.

#### Jury Duty

If called for jury duty, students should inform the Field Liaison and Field Instructor immediately. Absences missed due to jury duty must be made up to meet the practicum requirements for each placement and may lead to a delay in graduation. A student may request from the court that they be excused from jury duty on the grounds that it would be detrimental to their studies.

#### Strike or Labour Dispute

It is the responsibility of the agency to notify the Field Liaison immediately of anticipated work slow-down, work stoppage, or strike. *Students who are in placement in a site where the Field Instructor and/or other employees are on strike should not cross the picket line in order to perform duties associated with the practicum.*

Every case is unique and the number of hours that a student has already completed will be taken into consideration when determining the most appropriate option for the student in the event they are prevented from attending or completing a practicum placement due to a labour dispute.

## Criminal Record, Abuse Registry and Immunization Requirements

The social work program supports the requirement of many agencies for criminal record, abuse registry, and various health tests, x-rays, or immunizations. Students are responsible to determine what these requirements are and for any costs incurred in meeting the requirement.

## Transportation in Field Education Placement

Students are responsible for their own transportation and the costs associated with travel to and from the agency, including parking.

While it is not preferred, students are sometimes asked to use their vehicles for practicum business: e.g. transporting clients, making home visits, attending court or meetings. They must ensure that if they are required to transport clients they meet Placement Site requirements for liability insurance etc. in order to do so. Students should expect to be reimbursed for mileage and parking in the same way that the agency reimburses their staff, and should adhere to all safety guidelines as discussed in their practicum and agency orientation.

## Social Work Conferences and Workshops

Many agencies will provide the opportunity for students to attend workshops and conferences sponsored by the agency. Attendance at workshops and conferences must be cleared by the Field Liaison prior to signing up for the workshop or conference. Attendance at conferences and workshops may count toward the total Field hours, **up to a maximum of six days**, if approved by both the Field Instructor and Field Liaison. Any training or workshops beyond this amount will not count towards practicum hours as the focus of Field education is hands-on experience in real practice situations.

## Risk Management and Safety in the Field Placement

It is expected that Field Instructors and Practicum Sites will provide students with necessary and appropriate information concerning issues of risk management and safety in the performance of field assignments. This information must be reviewed at the time of the placement field orientation and shared with the Faculty Liaison.

This information should include policies/practices regarding building/office security, home visiting, transportation of clients, staffing patterns, infectious disease control, working with high-risk populations, and other potential risk aspects unique to the specific setting, populations, and core communities in which the student is practicing.

Recognizing that issues and dynamics involved in assessing and managing risks are complex, it is expected that Field Instructors will carefully consider the assignments given to students and will actively anticipate, supervise, and address the management of potential risks to which students might be exposed in their field placement sites. Any possible or potential concerns must be fully discussed with the student by the Field Instructor

## Liability Insurance

Students and the organizations they are placed with must have sufficient insurance to cover liability on behalf of the student, the university and the organization. This is formalized through Affiliation Agreements that are signed by both the organization and Canadian Mennonite University for all placement settings.

## Field Placement Injury or Illness

Should a student have an injury or illness attributable to their Field Placement (including accident or injury that occurs when the student is enroute to or returning from their placement site) they are covered under CMU's Workers Compensation Policy and Liability Insurance (for students doing their practicum in Manitoba). Should the student's injury prevent them from completing their practicum in the allotted time, the Field Education Coordinator, Field Instructor, Field Liaison, and student will confer to look at suitable options.

- a) The student should report the injury as soon as possible and how it occurred to an appropriate representative at the Field Placement Site, as well as to the CMU Field Liaison or Field Education Coordinator
- b) The student should seek immediate medical attention and advise the physician that a claim for WCB will be filed.
- c) The student will need to contact the WCB to file a claim, providing details of the injury and who provided treatment as soon as possible.

## PART 7. DEALING WITH CHALLENGES IN THE FIELD

As in any learning situation, students face new challenges as they engage in the process of social work practice. It is important for Field Instructors to recognize that students will make mistakes in the process of developing beginning social work skills. Students will have individual reactions to learning based on past experiences and will likely go through various stages in the learning process.

### Students

It is quite normal that due to anxiety of stress, performance difficulties may manifest themselves at points of field experience as part of this normal growth. While these difficulties should not be ignored, they should be seen within the perspective of overall performance.

### Field Instructor

The risk of difficulties occurring can be diminished by having the students:

- Understand the purpose and protocol of the activity.
- Observe a competent practitioner demonstrate the activity.

- Debrief after observing the activity.
- Attempt the activity together with the Field Instructor.

### The Process

1. It is important to maintain documentation of student performance on an ongoing basis, whether by activity sheets, supervisory logs, recordings or other means of feedback which can offer a basis for teaching. If patterns of difficulty persist which negatively affect the student's ability to meet their practicum obligations, these difficulties need to be specifically identified.
2. It is important to discuss such difficulties with the student as early as possible sharing the basis of concern and documenting the pattern. It is important that these be clearly defined in behavioural terms, and that they be presented to the student in a constructive and supportive way with a view to problem solving. It is anticipated that such concerns should be raised before the midterm evaluation. It is important for the instructor to seek consultation with the Field Liaison when such patterns persist.
3. The Field Instructor is responsible for documenting the way in which the concerns were raised with the student, the consultation process engaged in, the action plan adopted, and the subsequent feedback and teaching provided in the corrective plan.

### Situational Issues

Situational issues such as attendance difficulties because of personal crisis, health concerns, childcare challenges etc. should be worked out with the Field Instructor and Field Liaison/Field Education Coordinator to ensure that practicum hours and requirements are met. The student may be required to extend the practicum placement to meet the requirements. If extended field hours last beyond the end of the final term, the student must apply to the Academic Student Issues Committee through Registrar for an extension by the required deadline (see Academic Calendar). All extensions must fall within CMU's BSW Degree Completion time-line policy (Appendix 3). If the situational issue is not ameliorated and the student is unable to fulfill their responsibilities to the practicum the placement may be terminated by the student, the Field Site, or the Field Liaison. In this situation, documentation of the termination with appropriate reasons should be forwarded to the Field Education Coordinator through the Field Liaison.

The student may be allowed to Voluntarily Withdraw from the Field Placement and the Integrative Field Seminar course. Normally, they will be able to re-apply for a repeated Field Placement in the next Field Education cycle. **See also Part 9 Voluntary Withdrawal from Field.**



## Performance Issues

On occasion, a student's performance may not meet the standards outlined in the *Field Education Manual* (FEM) and evaluation tools. If a student is identified by the Field Instructor as being at risk or unable to meet the expected level of performance defined in the FEM and evaluation tools, or appropriate educational/professional standards, the Field Instructor is expected to initiate immediate contact with the Field Liaison. Every effort will be made by the Field Liaison to understand the difficulty and to provide the student and Field Instructor with necessary supports and guidelines for resolution.

The following additional steps should be followed when a problem is identified by the Field Instructor:

- Field Instructor meets with the student and expresses concerns, outlining expectations for improvement. The purpose of this meeting between the Field Instructor and student is an effort to assist the student in finding ways to successfully accomplish field education goals and skills. This shall include an opportunity for the student to talk about his/her understanding of the situation and offer potential options for remedy. The Field Instructor will ensure to document the discussion and expectations resulting from the meeting.
- The Field Instructor notifies the Field Liaison of the concerns and notes the attempts to assist the student in making necessary improvements.
- If there is a failure, unwillingness, or inability of the student to demonstrate improved performance a meeting will be scheduled with the Field Instructor, Field Liaison, and student.
- The Field Instructor and Field Liaison will meet with the student and create a Learning Contract Addendum which will identify the performance difficulties, clarification of the learning and performance abilities to be demonstrated by the student, resources available to remedy the situation, and a plan of action with timelines and specified responsibilities. The Learning Contract Addendum will be signed by the Field Instructor, Field Liaison, and student. The student may be required to extend the field placement to meet the requirements of the addendum.
- If extended field hours last beyond the end of the final term, the student must apply to the Academic Student Issues Committee through Registrar for an extension by the required deadline (See Academic Calendar) . All extensions must fall within CMU's BSW degree completion time-line policy (Appendix 3).
- A review meeting will be scheduled between the Field Instructor, Field Liaison, and student. Failure to meet the requirements outlined in the Learning Contract Addendum will result in failure of the practicum and accompanying integrative field seminar.
- If a failure of the practicum occurs, or if concerns are significant enough, or if the Field Site asks for the removal of the student from a placement, a *Professional Suitability*

*Review* may be initiated through the Field Education Coordinator and Chair of the Social Work Program. A student may be given the opportunity to repeat a practicum at a different agency or may be required to withdraw from or be dismissed from the program.

- Documentation of the request for a Professional Suitability Review with appropriate reasons, should be forwarded to the Field Education Coordinator through the Field Liaison.

**See also Part 10, “Failure of Field ”.**

#### Problems in the Field Placement Identified by the Student

At certain times in the field education process, concerns may arise with respect to the learning experience or supervision process. The following should be followed if a student experiences difficulties or has concerns about their learning at their field placement.

- The student and Field Instructor should attempt to resolve the difficulties together. If this is unsuccessful, they are to inform each other of their intention to seek additional help and should contact the Field Liaison immediately to arrange a meeting. The purpose of the meeting is to resolve the concern, if possible, through an agreed upon plan of action.
- Every effort will be made to maintain the placement. If all attempts to resolve issues in the Field Site are unsuccessful, the Field Liaison will notify the Field Education Coordinator.
- If it is determined that the placement is terminated, the student will bring to an end any outstanding assigned tasks in a professional manner.
- The Field Liaison will submit a written summary of the student’s experience at the field placement, reason for placement ending, and the number of hours completed.
- The student will apply for Voluntary Withdrawal from the Field Placement and the Integrative Field Seminar class.
- Normally students will re-apply for a repeated field placement in the next field education cycle.

#### Re-application for Field practicum

If a field placement has been terminated normally the student would, at the discretion of the FEC, re-apply for a field placement to commence during the next Field Education cycle. In certain instances, the FEC will require the student to demonstrate how the issues related to termination of placement have been resolved prior to securing a new placement opportunity.

Field placements normally run back-to-back; however, if a student needs to take time to address personal matters or other emergencies, they may identify a tentative plan with their Student Advisor who will take into consideration the student’s course work. The Student Advisor will inform the FEC of the tentative plan for the student to resume field.

Because of the unique nature of each placement setting, normally hours completed at one field setting prior to termination are not transferable to a new setting. Special circumstances will be discussed with the FEC.

## PART 8. EVALUATIONS

### Student Evaluations

#### Objectives:

- To meet the requirements of the Canadian Mennonite University and the Canadian Association for Social Work Education practicum students must be evaluated on their overall progress in Field. It is the culmination of a continuous process which occurs in instructor-student interactions.
- To provide evidence that the student has achieved a level of performance which allows them to successfully progress and complete their practicum.
- To identify areas where further learning is required providing them with a clear direction for where to focus their next learning activities.
- To confirm that students have been provided with opportunities to allow their performance to meet the practicum expectations.
- To provide an opportunity to refine learning goals and objectives to be achieved by the student in the following term (where applicable); and
- To provide means by which the student can learn to become progressively self-directed in their professional development.

### Logistics

Formal field evaluation takes place twice a year: at the midway point of the placement (end of first term for Concurrent and midterm for Fall Block) and at the end of the placement (end of the 2<sup>nd</sup> term for Concurrent and end of term for Fall Block). The forms are housed on the IPT database and are accessible by the student, Field Instructor and Faculty Liaison.

At the midway point, students will complete the *Midterm Field Evaluation Form* and ensure their time sheets are current on the IPT database. At the end of the practicum students will complete the *Final Field Evaluation Form* and ensure time sheets are complete on the IPT database.

### Field Evaluation Form

The *Field Evaluation* is designed as pass/fail to encourage students to test the limits in their professional development without fear of receiving a lower numerical grade. The same skills are assessed each semester, and students are expected to have a basic level of ability in first term and move to achieving a higher skill level by the end of the practicum.

The evaluation form will include a comments section providing an opportunity for the Field Instructor to highlight the most important characteristics of the student's performance. In addition, students will provide their own reflections on their learning and performance.

The practice of having students, as well as Field Instructors, complete an evaluation of the student's learning and performance serves three purposes:

1. It provides the student with an opportunity for meaningful participation in the educational process, consistent with the principles of adult learning.
2. It provides an opportunity for the student to begin the practice of assessing their professional development.
3. It clearly identifies areas where there are congruence and divergence between the Field Instructor and student, providing a basis for discussion.

It is expected that:

- The Field Instructor and the student have spent time specifying how general expectations will apply to the field placement as part of the Learning Contract process.
- The learning opportunities are framed within the context of the practicum's objectives.
- Educational outcomes have been developed together by the Field Instructor and the student.
- There has been an ongoing opportunity to assess the student's progress in achieving both their goals and the social work program's learning goals.

It is also useful to share the student's objectives with agency personnel who are providing the student with learning opportunities, enabling them to frame those opportunities in ways that reinforce the student's learning goals.

## The Process

Students are responsible for providing evidence that they have met the objectives of the practicum. Students should already have a sense of how they are progressing from regular meetings with the Field Instructor. It is useful for the Field Instructor to review the *Field Evaluation Form* with the student in advance and help them plan their self-evaluation. Students will complete the evaluation independently prior to meeting to discuss their self-assessment with the Field Instructor.

Field Instructors will also complete the evaluation form individually, drawing on their own observations of student performance, the student's response to supervision, and feedback from any colleagues who work closely with the student. It is important that what is discussed in the formal evaluation will normally have been discussed in previous meetings during the term.

Once the evaluation form is completed by both parties, the Field Instructor and student will review it in detail before meeting together with the Faculty Liaison to discuss areas of strength and growth, adjustments needed for the next term, or recommendations for continued learning in the next placement or upon graduation. Instructors may give the

students a general indication of their overall status (i.e., pass, or pass with clear learning tasks required, etc.). The Field Instructor, Student and Faculty Liaison must sign the evaluation forms each term.

### Program Evaluations

At the end of each year, students are given an opportunity to assess their field education experience. The evaluation form is separated into two sections:

- 1) Responding to their experience of field instruction; and
- 2) Responding to their experience in the field setting.

Field Instructors are also asked to complete an evaluation of the Field Education Program. These forms will be completed electronically and uploaded to the database.

## PART 9. VOLUNTARY WITHDRAWAL (VW) FROM FIELD PRACTICUM

It is a serious matter to fail or withdraw from the field education course. The field course is distinct from most other CMU courses in the Social Work Program in that field placement entails not only educational objectives (e.g., competencies, practice behaviours, and guidelines) for the student, but also professional responsibilities to clients, social agencies, and the community. The field placement is graded on a Pass/Fail basis, while the co-requisite field seminar course is assigned a letter grade in line with the grading scale used by CMU. A grade of Fail in the placement or a grade lower than C+ in the field seminar course will mean that the student must repeat both. See Appendix 6 BSW Academic Standing Policy and Appendix 3 BSW Degree Completion Policy.

Students may apply for voluntary withdrawal from their field placement taking into consideration valid situational reasons such as medical or personal emergencies. They must work closely with their Field Instructor and Field Liaison to ensure the needs of their clients are met as they terminate their placement.

In situations where documented attempts have been made by the student, Field Instructor and Field Liaison to address concerns arising from a placement, and the concerns remain, or it is determined the student's needs cannot be met in the field placement or the field placement objectives cannot be met, a joint recommendation can be made to terminate the placement *prior to its conclusion*. In this situation, the termination will be treated in a similar fashion to a voluntary withdrawal.

Normally students who VW from field will apply for field placement in the next field education cycle. Students are required to work with their academic advisor and the Field Education Coordinator to plan for this. Field practice courses have a co-requisite Integrative Seminar Course. Withdrawal from or failure of a field placement will automatically result in the same for the co-requisite course, and a repetition of a field course will mean the repetition of the co-requisite.

When a student re-applies for field after withdrawing, the Field Education Coordinator will determine whether the BSW Degree Completion policy (See Appendix 3) is applicable to the student, noting whether time has lapsed for more than a year and advising if another field placement can be pursued. Depending on the circumstances, a student who withdraws from two field placements will be considered to have 'failed' a field course. If they subsequently fail the next field placement, they may be dismissed from the Social Work program (See Appendix 6 Social Work Academic Standing Policy).

## PART 10. FAILURE OF FIELD

In line with the BSW Academic Standing Policy (see Appendix 6), failing a field course is equivalent to failing any other social work course and can only be repeated a second time. If a student failed the field placement twice, this means the student can no longer apply for any further field education courses or field placements and will be dismissed from the social work program.

Failure of field practice occurs when the student has failed to successfully fulfill the Learning Contract or Learning Contract Addendum, has not successfully met the required level of competency in the Final Evaluation, has not met the required number of field hours at their assigned placement, or in situations where the Field Instructor no longer has confidence in the student to perform their practica duties successfully.

When a student fails a placement or has significant situational or performance issues associated with a voluntary withdrawal from placement, they may be required to demonstrate to the Field Education Coordinator that they have successfully addressed the issues that lead to the termination of their previous field placement prior to reapplying for field.

Where a student has failed field, the FEC together with the chair of the Social Work Program will decide whether under the circumstances it is necessary and/or appropriate to apply the Professional Suitability Policy and process.

## PART 11. SOCIAL WORK and FIELD EDUCATION POLICIES

When a student has been accepted at a field site, they are regarded in the same way as a staff/team member in terms of adhering to host agency policies, protocols, hours, appropriate dress, personal conduct, and preserving confidentiality. Should Field Placement Site policies differ from those of CMU, this will be discussed as part of the student's field placement orientation with the Field Liaison and Field Instructor.

The only time there may be special arrangements for a field student to work outside of established host agency policies, protocols and directives *is when prior arrangements have been agreed to*, between the Field Instructor, Field Liaison and the student and such plans are relevant to field education learning and/or to the learning objectives of the individual student.

CMU Social Work policies related to Students with Disabilities, Degree Completion, Confidentiality and Information Sharing, Professional Readiness and Suitability, Academic Standing, and Social Media can be found as Appendices to this manual. Policies related to discrimination, harassment and sexual violence can be found in the CMU Student Life handbook [Student Handbook | Student Policies & Resources | CMU](#) .

## Appendices

### **Appendix 1 – Faculty and Staff members – CMU School of Social Work**

Alexander Sawatsky (he/him), PhD, MSW, RSW,  
Professor & Chair of Social Work  
[asawatsky@cmu.ca](mailto:asawatsky@cmu.ca)

Buetta Warkentin (she/her) MSW, RSW, MTS  
Associate Professor of Social Work  
Field Education Coordinator  
[bwarkentin@cmu.ca](mailto:bwarkentin@cmu.ca)

Practicum Coordinator and Program Support – To Be Hired



## **Appendix 2 Students with Disability Policy**

CMU strives to provide a fair and supportive learning environment for academically qualified students with disabilities. The term "disability" refers to both mental and physical conditions which are permanent, ongoing, episodic, or of some persistence, and cause a significant limitation for the person in carrying out some of life's major activities.

CMU's Application for Admission form invites applicants to identify any physical or learning disabilities. It is the applicant's responsibility to make an adequate disclosure to enable CMU to assess its capability to respond to that applicant's disabilities.

When an applicant discloses a disability, the Admissions Counsellor will ask the applicant to provide detailed information by filling out the form entitled Self-Identification for Students with Disabilities. The applicant should normally complete and submit the form at least one month before classes begin.

At least a month before classes begin, applicants with disabilities should seek an interview with either or both the Coordinator of Accessibility Programs and the Registrar to work toward an understanding regarding responsibilities each of CMU and the prospective student will assume to appropriately structure the CMU experience for the prospective student.

The prospective student will normally provide current medical documentation about the nature of their disabilities from an appropriately licensed professional. As much as possible, the student should also provide documentation that clearly identifies accommodations needed to enable the prospective student to work or live comfortably on campus at CMU and academic accommodations that would assist the prospective student in their efforts to learn and demonstrate mastery of course content.

The Academic Student Issues Committee, which includes the Coordinator of Accessibility Programs for this agenda, has authority to approve academic accommodations and responsibility to serve as a consultative body for the Registrar and the Coordinator of Accessibility Programs in their administration of academic accommodations.

In all cases where accommodations have implications for the delivery of courses, for tests, or for examinations, the Registrar will communicate them to the student's instructors by way of a memorandum copied to the student. During the first week of classes, the student should seek an interview with each of their instructors to ensure that arrangements are in place in accordance with the Registrar's memorandum.

### **Appendix 3- Degree Completion Policy CMU Social Work Program**

The maximum time for completion of their Bachelor of Social Work is 10 years from date of the start of courses within the Bachelor of Social Work program. Any approved leaves of absence are counted within the 10 years.

#### **Procedures**

While students are encouraged to review their student enrolment status, the Registrar at CMU will review each new academic year and notify students within 2 years of their being at risk of program discontinuance. Students are encouraged to seek out their academic advisor to discuss how to complete their program of study within the 10 year period.

If students do not meet the Requirements for Continuance in the Social Work Program via having reached the 10 year limit, termination is confirmed by the Chair of the School of Social Work in writing, a copy of the correspondence is sent to the student as well as to the Academic Dean and Registrar.

Students dismissed from the Social Work Program for failing to achieve a grade of C+ in more than two social work courses will not be readmitted to the program. Students who are dismissed for other reasons may reapply to the program after twelve months.

Note the exception that for applicants that are enrolled as Former Child in Care, they may attend under Conditional Acceptance and will need to achieve a 2.5 CGPA for the final 30CR completed at CMU to complete the BSW

#### **Related Policies**

Academic Standing Policy in Social Work

## Appendix 4- Confidentiality and Information Sharing Policy

All students in CMU Work Integrated Learning (WIL) must adhere to the confidentiality requirements set out in this policy and abide by the confidentiality policies of the hosts where they are placed. Students doing a WIL placement in Manitoba must also conform with applicable rules, and exceptions to confidentiality set out in FIPPA and PHIA. Students doing a WIL placement outside of Manitoba also must conform with applicable rules, and exceptions to confidentiality set out in by legislation in the province, territory or country where they are doing their placement. If students have any questions about requirements set out in privacy legislation, they should discuss this with their placement host.

Students working with vulnerable clients must discuss limits to confidentiality with their placement host, and what procedures need to be followed, when, during a confidential communication, someone:

- reveals that a child is being abused or is at risk of abuse.
- indicates that they may be at risk from themselves.
- indicates that they may be an imminent risk to others.

Where students are working with vulnerable clients, limits to confidentiality' should be part of the placement hosts standard client/service recipient confidentiality form and students must advise new clients/service recipients of these limitations at an initial meeting.

Students may at times wish to incorporate examples from a placement in the classroom or in written assignments. Students must abide by the confidentiality policies of the placement agency/organization, preserving client confidentiality through the changing of names or other identifying information, and securing the written consent of the agency, for the use of written or recorded materials in the classroom with the understanding that written or recorded materials are the property of the agency and may not be retained by the student or CMU.

Personal information provided by students to CMU may be shared with potential WIL placement partners for the purpose of arranging practica. Any disclosure of personal information will be done in accordance with CMU's Privacy Policy and only shared on a need-to-know basis. Information may also be shared for the purpose of evaluating progress in the program; or for providing letters of reference.

## Appendix 5 - Bachelor of Social Work Professional Readiness and Suitability Policy

### PURPOSE

All Bachelor of Social Work students are expected to demonstrate attitudes, values, and conduct that are consistent with the Canadian Association of Social Workers' (CASWE) Codes of Ethics and the Manitoba College of Social Workers' (MCSW) Standards of Practice during classroom participation, in written assignments, presentations, and field contexts.

Students are expected to be independently familiar and current with all policies and procedures including, but not limited to: The Canadian Association of Social Workers (CASW) Code of Ethics and Guidelines for Ethical Practice; the Manitoba College of Social Workers (MCSW) Code of Ethics and Standards of Practice; and relevant University College and Practicum policies, and agency policies, regulations, and procedures.

All students at CMU are required to comply with course regulations, the policy on harassment and discrimination, academic appeal and dismissal procedures, and other relevant policies. Students enrolled in the CMU Social Work program have additional responsibilities regarding personal and professional suitability through compliance with specific Social Work policies included in the CMU Academic Calendar and in the Student and Field Education handbooks.

### Definitions

CMU: Canadian Mennonite University

BSW: Bachelor of Social Work

SWSC: Social Work Suitability Committee

### GUIDELINES

A professional readiness and suitability review is to be applied when a concern is raised that a student is failing to maintain suitability for professional social work practice. This includes but is not limited to evidence of a violation of the CASW Code of Ethics, or of either the Federal and/or Manitoba Human Rights Act. A review process is conducted if incidents are persistent (i.e., despite documented feedback from faculty/field liaison) and/or in the case of serious unethical behaviour (i.e. violation of the CASW/MCSW Code of Ethics, Standards of Practice). The following is a non-exhaustive list of circumstances that may raise concerns about professional suitability (whether or not they have caused harm) leading to initiation of a review process:

- Attempts to gain advantage or deceive, through falsification, forgery, or misuse of any record or document, or through false statements or representations including but not limited to academic integrity. Any academic misconduct instances in the classroom setting will fall within the purview of CMU's Academic Standing Policy (**Appendix 8**).
- Harassment, or any threat, intimidation, or attempt to harm another person.
- Engage in behaviours that are detrimental to the physical, emotional and mental well being of others including peers, workers and those served.

- Substance use that interferes with a student's ability to function within a professional context.
- A physical or mental condition which impairs essential social work performance-including academic standards needed to achieve appropriate social work education recognizing that reasonable accommodation for the special needs of individuals is required by the Manitoba Human Rights Act.
- Prevention or intent to prevent any person from exercising or intending to exercise his or her right to freedom of speech or freedom of belief.
- Serious and/or persistent conduct that is in direct violation of any CMU policy that exists to protect the safety and/or well being of all persons involved in the body politic of CMU, including staff, students and faculty.
- A conviction due to a violation of the Criminal Code of Canada, which demonstrates lack of judgment and integrity, including, but not limited to, physical assault, sexual assault, human or drug trafficking.
- Concealment or distortion of the truth on the Application for Admission to the CMU Social Work program or CMU. This is considered academic misconduct under CMU's Academic Integrity policy.
- Persistent and or/serious conduct that contravenes the policies of the practicum setting (applies to students in practicum).
- Imposing stereotypes on a client, including behaviour, values, or roles related to race, ethnicity, religion, marital status, gender, sexual orientation, age, socio-economic status, income source or amount, political affiliation, disability or diagnosis, or national origin, that would interfere with the provision of professional services to the client.
- Persistent and/or serious inability to form a professional, helping relationship based on an empathetic understanding of the client's experience.

## **LIMITS OF CONFIDENTIALITY**

CMU Social Work must balance the need for confidentiality against its duty to protect present and future students or persons who might otherwise be placed in jeopardy by a student who is acting in an unprofessional or unethical manner. Information disclosed during meetings with instructors, program or practicum coordinators and Field Instructors, or the chair will not be kept confidential if the information raises concerns about the student's capability of assuming the professional responsibilities of social work practice. Instructors and/or program coordinators and/or the chair will share pertinent information with each other in a respectful and professional manner, for the purpose of identifying student issues and enhancing problem solving about the concerns. CMU Social Work reserves the right to share information with the University or third parties as required by law and University regulations.

## **BASIC COMPONENTS OF PROFESSIONAL SUITABILITY CASES**

Every case involves a decision about whether a student's actions have not demonstrated professional readiness/suitability, and, if so, what are the appropriate consequences.

1. **Assessment:** Information is gathered
2. **Decision:** This decision is to be made by adjudicating the evidence gathered and arguments made by the instructor or field liaison, and the student, according to a balance of probabilities
3. **Consequences:** Appropriate consequences depend on context and follow certain patterns. Further guidance is given below, under the heading "Consequences."

## **PROCEDURE I: ASSESSMENTS**

There are three stages of review in CMU's Social Work program regarding behaviour that is not consistent with the recognized ethics and standards of the profession of social work. The stage of review is dependent upon the seriousness of the allegation of the breach of this Policy. The overall commitment of the School of Social Work is to resolve any concern related to professional conduct of a student, at Stage One or Stage Two through a mediation approach with the student. Records of any incidents that are subject to the review process will be placed in the student file by the Chair of Social Work.

When a concern about a student's professional behaviour first arises, it is preferable for the instructor to make first contact with the student about the issue. Thus, all professional readiness and suitability procedures begin with the instructor/field liaison **gathering evidence, consulting with the Chair of Social Work**, and **meeting with the student**, though the aims of that meeting differ depending on the context.

1. **Gather Evidence:** when there is reason to suspect a concern about a student's professional behaviour, the instructor/field liaison, begins to gather evidence. If there is enough evidence, the instructor/field liaison proceeds to a consultation with the Chair of Social Work.
2. **Chair of Social Work:** The instructor/field liaison consults with the Chair of Social work to review the situation, confirm that there is reason to suspect a professional behavioural concern, and receive guidance about how the case might be best approached. The case is then diverted to stage one, two, or three.

### **Stage One: Instructor/Field Liaison Assessment and Meeting with the Student**

1. **Meeting with Student:** After gathering sufficient evidence, and consulting with the Chair of Social Work, the instructor/field liaison meets with the student to discuss concerns regarding the behaviour. In some cases, an instructor may request the support of the Chair of Social Work in meeting with the student. If the instructor is unable to meet with the student, the instructor must provide sufficient information to the Chair of Social Work to warrant a meeting. The meeting should take place as soon as reasonably possible, to reduce the likelihood of continued behaviour. The instructor will make all reasonable effort to contact the student. If the student does not respond or refuses to engage, a decision will be made in the student's absence. If the problem arises in practicum, the Field Instructor will discuss the concerns directly with the student and Faculty Liaison, and will follow the procedures outlined in the Field Education Manual for "**Students**

**Experiencing Difficulty in the Field".** This corresponds with Stages one and two of the three stages of review for Professional Suitability.

1.1. **Meeting Goals**

1.1.1. **To gather evidence and better understand the situation.** The purpose of the meeting is to gather and share information about the behaviour. The instructor will note their concerns, share what evidence they have, and ask the student for an account of the matter. The student will have an opportunity to share any evidence or material they feel is relevant. If the student has additional evidence, they must submit it within 24 hours of the meeting. The instructor will document the dates and content of all meetings with the student.

1.1.2. **To decide whether unprofessional behaviour has occurred.** The instructor will determine whether unprofessional behaviour has occurred based on information gathered and according to a balance of probabilities. The instructor may communicate the decision to the student in the meeting. In cases where it is not completely clear that unprofessional behaviour has occurred, the instructor may postpone a decision to allow for additional consideration or further consultation with the Chair of Social Work.

1.1.3. **To determine next steps.**

1.1.3.1. If the concerns are resolved at stage one, no further action is taken.

1.1.3.2. If the concerns are not resolved at stage one, the individuals will proceed to stage two.

## **Stage 2: Mediation**

If the concern expressed by an instructor cannot be resolved at Stage One, a Stage Two review involves mediation.

### **2. Mediation Meeting**

2.1. **Meeting Participants**

2.1.1. The instructor (or representative). If the instructor is unable to attend, they should submit in writing (e.g., by email) a statement of their concerns.

2.1.2. The student's faculty advisor. In situations where the instructor and faculty advisor are the same, the Chair will appoint an alternate faculty member.

2.1.3. The student. The student may invite a support person to the meeting, whom the student may consult, and who may ask questions of clarification, but will otherwise not normally speak on behalf of the student. All reasonable effort will be made to contact the student for the meeting. If the student does not respond or refuses to engage, a decision will be made in the student's absence.

2.2. **Meeting Preparation**

2.2.1. A statement of the behavioural concern and all relevant files for discussion (if applicable) will be circulated to all participants of the meeting one business day in advance. This will include the nature of the concerning behaviour accompanied by all evidence, with time for all to review. If the student has additional evidence, they must submit it to the faculty advisor two business days in advance of the meeting.

2.3. **Meeting Goals**

2.3.1. **Determine the nature and specifics of the concern.** All participants will have the opportunity to present and respond to evidence and ask questions.

2.3.2. **To decide whether concerning behaviour has occurred and develop a plan to address the concern.** If the concerning behaviour is substantiated, the instructor will work with the student and advisor to develop a written plan (including timelines and specific actions) to address the concern. A written copy of the plan will be emailed to all parties and each person must respond via email agreeing to the plan of action.

2.3.3. **To determine next steps.**

There will be a follow up meeting with all parties to determine if the concern has been resolved.

2.3.3.1. If the concern has been resolved, no further action is required.

2.3.3.2. If the plan of action has not been followed or if concerning behaviour persists, the individuals will proceed to stage three within two weeks of the follow up meeting.

### **Stage Three: Major Concerns**

A Stage Three review is conducted when a student is being considered for dismissal from the program or if a recommendation for suspension from the University is being considered. A stage three review be conducted in one of two instances:

- Behavioural concerns have not been resolved in stage one or two of the concerns process.
- Behavioural concerns are considered by the Social Work program to be of such a serious nature that formal intervention is required immediately.

Within two weeks of being advised, the Chair will convene an in-camera meeting of the Social Work Suitability Committee (SWSC). During the review process, a student may be expected to abstain from attending class, field placement or other school activities until this has process has been completed. Any decision is based on a majority vote of the SWSC at Stage Three.

### **3. Social Work Suitability Committee (SWSC) Meeting**

3.1. **SWSC Members**

3.1.1. The Chair of Social Work or designated representative.



- 3.1.2. Two designated CMU Social Work Faculty members or alternates if necessary. A member of the committee that has had prior experience or contact with the student shall not be disqualified due to this as a sole rationale
- 3.1.3. A representative from Student life or Registrar's Office, normally the Coordinator of Academic or Student Advising.
- 3.1.4. A member of MCSW external to CMU may be invited to attend depending on the nature and severity of the concerns.

3.2. **Meeting Participants**

- 3.2.1. The SWSC members as outlined above.
- 3.2.2. The student. The student may invite a support person to the meeting, whom the student may consult, and who may ask questions of clarification, but will otherwise not normally speak on behalf of the student. All reasonable effort will be made to contact the student for the meeting. If the student does not respond or refuses to engage, a decision will be made in the student's absence.

3.3. **Meeting Preparation**

- 3.3.1. A statement of the behavioural concern and all relevant files for discussion (if applicable) will be circulated to all participants of the meeting one business day in advance. This will include the nature of the concerning behaviour accompanied by all evidence, with time for all to review. A copy of the Professional Readiness and Suitability Policy will also be provided. If the student has additional evidence, they must submit it to the Chair of Social Work two business days in advance of the meeting.
- 3.3.2. It is the obligation and responsibility of the Chair of the SWSC to communicate to the student the possible consequences of the review process, including the potential for sanction, and to notify the student of the membership of the SWSC. To this end, the student should know that they are able to raise concerns or objections to any member related to any bias or conflict of interest. They should know that the committee member will have an opportunity to respond to this concern and is either expected to recuse themselves based on their conversation with the chair or they may remain if this concern has been deemed not be significant or warranted.
- 3.3.3. The chair must communicate to the student regarding their right to a support person, the process and rights related to an appeal as well as their rights to know the information that is being presented against them.

3.4. **Meeting Goals**

- 3.4.1. **Determine the nature and specifics of the concern.** All participants will have the opportunity to present and respond to evidence and ask questions.

3.4.2. **To decide whether concerning behaviour has occurred and determine consequences.** If the concerning behaviour is not substantiated, the student will continue in the program. If the concerning behaviour has been substantiated, the SWSC will determine consequences as outlined below. Any decision is based on a majority vote of the Committee at Stage Three. A written copy of the decision will be emailed to the student.

## **CONSEQUENCES**

When discussing the range of possible consequences, the instructor, Chair of Social Work, and the SWSC will consider the following factors in Determining Consequences:

1. The severity and the extent of the behaviour.
2. Whether the student has displayed similar behaviour in the past.
3. Whether there is evidence of honest misunderstanding of expectations, or of an intent to deceive or do harm.
4. Whether the student indicates a willingness to admit errors and learn.
5. The year in which the student is enrolled and level of studies.
6. The experience a student has with Social Work expectations.
7. The pedagogical needs of the student.
8. Past precedent.

### **Consequences in Cases assessed in Stage One and Two**

The hope in Instructor meetings is that a case reaches a resolution in which the student and the instructor (as well as any other relevant parties) mutually and voluntarily agree upon a path toward repairing any harms and achieving the relevant pedagogical goals. Occasionally such resolutions are not forthcoming, and instructors will have to assess consequences unilaterally. Typical consequences assessed by the instructor may include:

- a) A warning.
- b) Setting goals, actions, timelines.
- c) Monitoring.
- d) Mentoring and Support.

### **Consequences in Cases assessed in Stage Three**

The hope in the SWSC meetings is still that the case resolves with the student better oriented toward achieving the relevant pedagogical goals. Typical consequences in stage three cases may include:

- a) Any or all of the consequences outlined in stage one and two.
- b) Placing the student on conditional continuance in the program and monitoring behaviour within the program.
- c) Referring the student to counselling.
- d) Requiring the student to temporarily withdraw from the program.

- e) Full dismissal of the student from the social work program.
- f) SWSC cannot suspend a student from the university but can make a recommendation to the Registrar and Dean of Student Life.

## **DISMISSAL FROM THE SOCIAL WORK PROGRAM**

When a student displays multiple instances of concerning behaviour and seems unwilling or unable to learn from their mistakes, or have displayed serious unethical conduct, they are not suitable for the social work program. SWSC may decide that such students should be dismissed from the program.

### **1. Considerations for Dismissal**

- 1.1. The level and number of behavioural concerns and the likelihood of committing future inappropriate behaviours.
- 1.2. Violation of the CASW Code of Ethics and Guidelines for Ethical Practice

### **2. Report**

- 2.1. Where a dismissal has been assessed, the Chair of Social Work notify the student in writing, including a brief account of the reasons for dismissal. A copy of the letter will be sent to the Registrar and placed in the student's file.

### **3. Dismissal**

- 3.1. If the dismissal occurs prior to the voluntarily withdrawal date, the student will be allowed to voluntarily withdraw from their courses.
- 3.2. The student's academic transcript will indicate behavioural misconduct as the basis for dismissal from the program.

### **4. Reinstatement After Dismissal**

- 4.1. Reinstatement into the Social Work program is not guaranteed.
- 4.2. The student may apply to the Chair of Social Work in writing for reinstatement after a period of one year. The appeal must be made a minimum of one month in advance of the intended start date. In the written application, the student should indicate that they understand the reasons for their dismissal, and articulate why they are now prepared to carry out their studies in good standing and are unlikely to commit further unethical behaviour. The Chair of Social Work will then interview the student in a meeting that includes another Social Work Faculty member for consultative purposes. The Chair of Social Work will consult as appropriate but the decision to reinstate the student remains the prerogative of the Chair.
- 4.3. If reinstatement is granted, the student will return with the standing of Conditional Continuance. During the period the student has this standing, the student's instructors will monitor the student's behaviour. If the student completes this period and achieves Satisfactory Standing, that student may appeal for the removal of the notation regarding dismissal from their transcript.

## APPEALS

If a student believes they have been inappropriately sanctioned for ethical and behavioural conduct, that student has the right to appeal within fifteen days after receiving notice of the sanction.

1. Appeal of decisions at Stage One and Two will be directed to the Chair of Social Work. The chair will review the evidence in consultation with the concerned parties: student, instructor, others as appropriate. The Chair of Social Work will make a decision on whether the consequences are appropriate.
2. Appeal of a decisions made by the SWSC at stage three will be directed to the Vice-President Academic.

### Appeals to the VPA

If a student believes they have been inappropriately sanctioned for ethical and behavioural conduct by the SWSC, that student has the right to appeal within fifteen days after receiving notice of the sanction. The appeal will be directed to the Vice President Academic.

#### 1. Grounds for Appeal

- 1.1. Where process as outlined in this policy was not followed, to the detriment of the student.
- 1.2. Where consequences were disproportionate, or otherwise out of line with policy and past practice.
- 1.3. Conversely, the argument that unethical or inappropriate behaviour has not occurred will not be considered grounds for appeal.

#### 2. Appeals Process

- 2.1. **Intent to Appeal.** Students will notify the Chair of Social Work of their intent to appeal within 15 days of SWSC's decision report.
- 2.2. **Statement of Appeal.** Within a reasonable timeframe, the student will follow the notice of intent to appeal with a written *Statement of Appeal* addressed to the VPA, that includes:
  - 2.2.1. A request for the VPA to hear the student's appeal.
  - 2.2.2. A summary of the SWSC's decision, and any other relevant history and context.
  - 2.2.3. A rationale for the appeal.
- 2.3. **Statement Review.** The VPA will determine, on the basis of the *Statement of Appeal*, whether or not to hold an appeal hearing. The VPA will hold an appeal hearing if it seems on the face of it that there are grounds for appeal.
  - 2.3.1. If the VPA determines that there do not appear to be grounds for appeal, the VPA proceeds to step **VPA Report**, and notifies the student and Chair of Social Work.
  - 2.3.2. If the VPA determines that there appear to be grounds for appeal, the VPA proceeds to step 2.4. **Appeal Meeting.**
- 2.4. **Appeal Meeting**
  - 2.4.1. **Meeting Personnel**

- 2.4.1.1. The VPA.
- 2.4.1.2. The Chair of Social Work, as a representative of the existing decision and consequences.
- 2.4.1.3. The student. The student may invite a support person to the meeting, whom the student may consult, and who may ask questions of clarification, but will otherwise not normally speak on behalf of the student.
- 2.4.1.4. A member of MCSW external to CMU.
- 2.4.2. **Meeting Preparation**
  - 2.4.2.1. The VPA may request from Chair of Social Work any files relevant to the case, including both materials pertinent to the case at hand, as well as any other files related to past student conduct pertaining to suitability in the program.
  - 2.4.2.2. All members of the meeting should have copies of all relevant files for discussion circulated at least 24 hours in advance (including both student conduct files and the student's *Statement of Appeal*).
- 2.4.3. **Meeting Goals**
  - 2.4.3.1. To determine whether there are good grounds to appeal that should result in an overturning of SWSC's decision or a modification of consequences.
- 2.5. **VPA Report**
  - 2.5.1. The decision of the VPA is not subject to further appeal. Regardless of the outcome, the VPA will notify the student and the Chair of Social Work in writing (via email), including the following information:
    - 2.5.1.1. The appeal decision.
    - 2.5.1.2. The rationale for the decision.

### **Related Policies**

Academic Standing Policy in Social Work  
Academic Integrity Policy

[NB: In preparing this policy, Canadian Mennonite University has relied substantially on suitability policies articulated by the schools of social work at the following institutions: Booth University College, University of Windsor, University of Calgary, Dalhousie University, Renison, Kings University, St. Thomas University and Algoma University.]

## **Appendix 6 - Bachelor of Social Work Academic Standing Policy**

### **Purpose**

Fair and equitable academic standards are necessary to ensure the quality of the program and educational outcomes of the curriculum are met. The academic standing policy is one way to ensure graduates are qualified and capable social workers.

### **Definitions**

CMU: Canadian Mennonite University

BSW: Bachelor of Social Work

### **Guidelines**

To remain in good academic standing in each semester of the Social Work Program, students are required to meet all of the following standards:

1. Remain in good academic standing as outlined by CMU's Academic Standing Policy.
2. Achieve a minimum grade of C+ in all social work courses (SWRK prefix)
3. A passing grade in field education courses.

Students who fail to meet the requirements of clause 1 above will be placed on academic alert, conditional continuance, or academic suspension, as outlined in CMU's Academic Standing Policy.

Students who fail to meet the requirements of clause 2 or 3 above will normally be permitted to repeat a given course only once and may not repeat more than three Social Work courses in the entire program. If this occurs, a student will be dismissed from the program. If students have need to retake more than three social work courses and they have compelling reasons for why this is the case, they are encouraged to speak to their advisor.

If a student does not meet the academic requirements for continuance in the Social Work Program, the student will be dismissed from the program. The Chair of the School of Social Work will confirm the dismissal in writing (via email) and copy the Registrar on the correspondence.

### **Reinstatement After Dismissal**

Reinstatement into the Social Work program is not guaranteed, and a student must apply for reinstatement. A student may encounter two different dismissal scenarios:

- A student has been dismissed from the social work program and may continue studying at CMU.

- A student has been dismissed from the social work program and has been suspended from the university.

#### *Reinstatement after Dismissal from Social Work*

In cases where a student has been dismissed from the social work program and may continue studying at CMU, the reinstatement process is as follows:

1. The student may apply to the Chair of Social Work in writing for reinstatement after a period of one year. The appeal must be made a minimum of one month in advance of the intended start date. In the written application, the student should indicate that they understand the reasons for their dismissal and articulate why they are now prepared to carry out their studies in good academic standing. The Chair of Social Work will consult with the Registrar regarding overall academic performance. The Chair of Social Work will consult as appropriate but the decision to reinstate the student into the Social Work program remains the prerogative of the Chair.
2. If reinstatement is granted, the student will return with the standing of Conditional Continuance. During the period the student has this standing, the student's instructors will monitor the student's performance. If the student completes this period and achieves satisfactory grades, the student's status will change to Satisfactory Standing.

#### *Reinstatement after Dismissal from Social Work and CMU*

In cases where a student has been dismissed from the social work program and suspended from the university, the student must first be reinstated to CMU prior to appealing for reinstatement to the social work program. See CMU's Academic Standing Policy regarding process for reinstatement to CMU. If the student is reinstated to CMU, the student will then follow the process identified above to seek reinstatement to the Social Work program.

#### **Appeals**

If a student believes they have been inappropriately dismissed or denied reinstatement without just cause, that student has the right to appeal to the Academic Student Issues Committee within fifteen days after receiving notification. The appeal will be directed to the Registrar. The student may appeal on the following grounds:

- Where process as outlined in this policy was not followed, to the detriment of the student.
- Where consequences were disproportionate, or otherwise out of line with policy and past practice.
- Conversely, the argument that unethical or inappropriate behaviour has not occurred will not be considered grounds for appeal.

Academic Student Issues Committee will consider particulars the appeal and evidence provided by the student as well as information from the Social Work department. The decision of ASIC is not subject to further appeal. The chair of ASIC will inform both the student and Chair of Social Work the appeal decision and the rationale.

## Appendix 7: Practicum and Field Education Placement Social Media Policy

In addition to the regulations in the Confidentiality and Information Sharing Policy, while students are registered in a WIL placement, they will follow these specific restrictions regarding sharing on social media platforms.

- Students must discuss limitations on social media with the placement hosts and abide by the host's regulations as they relate to social media. Where CMU's and a host's policies differ, students must abide by the more stringent regulation.
- Students must not use social media platforms to post confidential, defamatory, harassing, libelous, or obscene content. Such action may result in disciplinary action and/or the termination of their placement. In addition, students may be legally liable for anything they write or present online.
- Students must ensure that any social media comments or posts do not reflect negatively on CMU, the reputation of any employee or student or our placement host agencies, their employees, volunteers, and clients. If students have concerns or criticisms, they should discuss these with a CMU or placement host supervisor, to address issues constructively. While all students working directly with people will be expected to adhere to ethical and professional best practices relevant to their placement context, students working with vulnerable persons (e.g., children and youth, individuals with disabilities, older adults, etc.) need to take special care. In these cases:
  - Students are prohibited from posting any information on social media sites related to client/service recipient information, even if identifiers are removed.
  - Students must not use social media platforms to connect with clients/service recipients from their placement(s).
  - Students must ensure their social networking sites have the highest privacy controls set. This includes limiting profile visibility, posts, photos, and personal information to trusted contacts only.
  - Students must not use messaging or social media platforms to contact clients or respond to clients – unless the social media account is linked solely to the placement site, and there is a prior approval from your agency host to use their social media to contact or respond to clients.

While engaged in a WIL placement, students should remember that information provided about themselves on social media platforms, including photos, can be accessed by clients/service recipients. It is strongly recommended that students maintain strong privacy settings on their personal social media platforms for their own well-being and safety.