

SOCIAL WORK

STUDENT HANDBOOK

ACADEMIC YEAR

2026-2027

BACHELOR OF SOCIAL WORK PROGRAM

2026-2027

HANDBOOK

Welcome to the Bachelor of Science in Social Work

Methodist College General Information

Program Sponsor:
Methodist College Carle Health

Accredited by:
Higher Learning Commission
230 South LaSalle Street, Suite 7-500
Chicago, Illinois 60604-1411
Phone: 800-621-7440/312-263-0456
www.hlcommission.org

CSWE
(Council on Social Work Education)
333 John Carlyle Street, Suite 400
Alexandria, VA 22314
www.cswe.org

Organization and Governance:

Methodist College is a four-year college affiliated with Carle Health. It is governed by a Board of Directors, composed of 12 members who represent the Peoria area community.

Mission Statement:

To educate future healthcare professionals-ready to learn, adapt, and elevate care delivery.

Our Vision:

Advance healthcare through a legacy of compassionate professionals dedicated to lifelong learning and world-class care.

Methodist College Values:

Human Dignity: Unconditional respect for the inherent worth, uniqueness, and autonomy of individuals.

Integrity: Displaying strong moral character and acting in accordance with accepted standards of behavior and an appropriate code of ethics.

Inquiry: An active process of exploration and investigation that leads to understanding and construction of knowledge through one's life.

Social Justice: Acting in accordance with fair treatment regardless of gender, economic status, race, religion, ethnicity, age, citizenship, disability, or sexual orientation.

Institutional Goals:

The faculty and staff of Methodist College are dedicated to achieving the following goals:

- Provide rigorous academic experiential learning opportunities required of healthcare industry professionals.
- Support a positive, student-centered learning environment.
- Foster quality instruction and innovative programs.
- Offer quality student support services and programs.
- Recruit and retain a diverse qualified workforce.
- Demonstrate fiscal responsibility and accountability.
- Provide resources to support institutional mission.
- Recruit and retain a qualified, diverse student body.
- Cultivate collaborative community relationships to support the mission and vision of the college.

Methodist College Institutional Culture Statement:

Methodist College is an institution that embraces a diverse community committed to the equity of all dimensions and demographics. We strive to produce an environment of safety, comfort, respect, and civility to promote personal and professional growth, as well as cultural awareness.

Social Work Program Information

Mission

The mission statement of the Methodist College BSW program provides the framework for all educational activities in the major, including the Field Practicum experience. The mission statement of the undergraduate BSW degree program is consistent with the main tenets of the Social Work profession, as indicated in the Council on Social Work Education's Educational Policy as "...to promote human and community well-being. Guided by person-in-environment framework, a global perspective, respect for human diversity, and knowledge based on scientific inquiry" (CSWE, 2015). The mission of the program incorporates, with the support of the learning outcomes for the program [below], the quest for social and economic justice, prevention of conditions that limit human rights, elimination of poverty, and the enhancement of the quality of life for all persons, locally and globally.

The Mission of Methodist College's Social Work Program is as follows:

To prepare Students as Social Work generalists to be change-agents facilitating human well-being and responding to diverse human needs within the context of their practice environment. Methodist College desires its Social Work students to be change-agents as necessary in their Field of practice and responding to the diversity of all human needs within the same context of their practice environment. We understand and are committed to providing a generalist approach to Social Work education – in that all students will be prepared to function as bachelors prepared Social Workers in a variety of settings upon completion of their degree.

Goals of the BSW Degree Program at Methodist College

The goals of the Social Work program are explicitly described in the mission statement itself: *To prepare students as Social Work Generalists to be change-agents, facilitating human well-being and responding to diverse human needs within the context of their practice environment.*

In addition, there are five Learning Outcomes that are indicators of the learning, behavior and application of knowledge and skills, these are how students will arrive as being able to practice as competent, calm useful resources in their practice areas:

Upon completion of the Bachelor of Social Work program (BSW), the graduate will be able to:

1. Integrate research-informed practice in providing culturally appropriate care to a diverse clientele in a variety of social systems and contexts
2. Practice the tenets of social, economic, and environmental justice.
3. Respond to influences and determinants that impact human rights and public policy
4. Practice professionalism that embodies a commitment to inquiry and community to improve practice and service delivery.
5. Practice integrity and competence in building relationships with persons while respecting dignity and worth of individuals, families, groups, organizations, and communities.

The Learning Outcomes/Goals of the program align well with the core components of the Social Work profession, supporting the importance of human relationships, dignity and worth of individuals, integrity, competence, human rights, and inquiry.

Requirements for graduation with a BSW from Methodist College include general education and other requirements common across the College. The Social Work major consists of 62 credit hours of Social Work specific courses, and 15 credit hours of elective Social Work/related courses. **Credit is not granted for previous life or work experience.** In addition, students are required to successfully complete 51 credit hours of Arts & Sciences/General Education courses, including two upper level General Education courses. The specific courses can be found in the Methodist College Undergraduate Catalog of their entering year or the most current catalog for more complete details of specified general education requirements. Students are encouraged to regularly meet and consult with their assigned department academic advisors for classes currently eligible to meet these requirements.

Social Work Computer Requirements

Each student entering Methodist College is required to have access to a computer. Since Methodist College may offer computer checks to help ensure your laptop/notebook meets the minimum specifications, watch college communication resources for times and places. If you are not able to meet for an in-person PC checkup, we can verify system specifications over phone or email.

Minimum Laptop Requirements

Most Surface Pro, Surface Book, and Surface Laptop devices are supported, provided they have a CPU that meets requirements. **Non-pro Surface devices are NOT supported.**

No Chrome Books are supported.

iPads and Android Tablets are not supported.

Laptop/Notebook	Specifications
CPU	Intel Core i5 (or AMD Equivalent) or better. Devices with a Microsoft SQ series chips and Qualcomm CPUs may not support certain software. MacBooks with any Intel CPU or M1 CPUs are OK.
RAM	8GB or more preferred
Hard Drive Space	256 GB or greater
Display	11 inches or larger
Screen Resolution	1024x768 or higher
Camera and Microphone	Must have but no specific requirements
Wireless	802.11 g/n/ac
Internet Connection	Off campus internet connection not below 8mbps upload and download
Operating System	Windows 10 is required. Must be update level 2004, 20H2, 21H1 or higher

	Mac OS X 10.14.6 or higher is required
For Support	Working USB, newer devices may require an adaptor
Adobe Reader	Acrobat Reader DC or Equivalent
MS Office 365 can be attained free of charge through the college. It can be accessed by logging in to office.com with your student email account.	

Field Practice

BSW students are required to participate in the signature pedagogy of Social Work education, the Field Practicum. The Field Practicum (Field) experience occurs during the final two semesters of a student's senior year. Senior BSW students will serve 12-15 hours per week in their Field placement throughout their spring and fall semesters. Students will spend a minimum of 400 clock hours, total, in Field. Each Field Course (I & II) is 9 credit hours, three of which are didactic and 6 of which are for the placement itself.

BSW students are placed in Social Work agencies throughout Central Illinois, which provide learning experiences to prepare them in the generalist foundation required for entry-level professional practice. Field Practicum settings include not-for-profit human service agencies, mental health and counseling centers, inpatient hospital units (including those serving behavioral healthcare and substance abuse), outpatient clinics, schools, community centers, child welfare agencies, senior service agencies, and many others.

This handbook is provided to students that are one semester away from starting their Field (typically 2nd semester, junior standing). This handbook should serve as a resource and reference for both student and Field Instructor and puts forth the policies, procedures, and expectations for the Field Education component in the BSW degree program. This handbook is presented as informational only and is not a contract between Methodist College and its students. The information, policies, and procedures contained in this handbook are subject to change at any time, with or without notice. The electronic version of this handbook on the Methodist College website is the most current.

All College documents contain current pertinent information. Methodist College reserves the right to make changes as necessary, including changes in requirements, programs, policies, and fees. Changes shall go into effect whenever appropriate with such notice as is reasonable under the circumstances.

Methodist College Structure

The Social Work program is part of the Arts and Sciences Division at Methodist College. Dr. Octavian Gabor, Chair of Arts and Sciences, and Chief Academic Officer, oversees the Social Work department. The curriculum for Social Work is reviewed and developed by the Social Work Congress.

Curriculum

Degree Requirements

Requirements for graduation with a BSW from Methodist College include general education and other requirements common across the College. The Social Work major consists of 62 credit hours of Social Work-specific courses, and 15 credit hours of elective Social Work and related courses. Credit is not granted for previous life or work experience. In addition, students are required to successfully complete 43 credit hours of Arts and Sciences/General Education courses, including two upper level General Education courses. Students are encouraged to regularly meet and consult with their assigned department academic advisors for classes currently eligible to meet these requirements.

Bachelor of Social Work (BSW) Curriculum – Required Courses

Bachelor of Social Work Curriculum

Liberal Arts & Sciences Core	Credit Hours
Writing	6
Communication	3
Life and/or Physical Sciences (one laboratory course required)	7
MAT 150 or MAT 201	3
Behavioral/Social Science	9
Humanities	6
Fine Arts	3
Upper Division General Education Courses (300 level or above)	6
Total Credits Core Liberal Arts & Sciences Courses	43
Course Options	Credit Hours
Social Work Electives (See list for approved non-SW courses)	15
Total Credits of Social Work Elective Courses	15
Social Work Core Courses	Credit Hours
SW170 Concepts of Social Work	3
SW270 Foundations of Social Work	3
SW271 Service Learning in Social Work	3
SW272 Contemporary Social Issues	3
SW373 Cultural Humility in Social Work Practice	3
SW310 Research	3

SW320 Foundations of Social Work Practice with Individuals and Families	3
SW334 Case Management	3
SW375 Social Work in Groups	3
SW370 Human Behavior in the Social Environment	3
SW371 Family Life Cycle Transitions	3
SW372 Special Topics in Social Work	1
SW431 Policy and Professional Leadership	3
SW470 Special Topics in Social Work	3
SW471 Field Practicum	18
SW473 The Ethics of Social Work Practice	3
SW474 Field Practicum Preparation	1
Total Credits of Social Work Core Courses	62
Total Credits for BSW: Social Work	120

Program Structure

Bachelor of Social Work Sample Curriculum Plan

Year One - Semester One		Year One - Semester Two	
<u>Course</u>	<u>Credits</u>	<u>Course</u>	<u>Credits</u>
ENG101	3	SW170	3
PSY101	3	Life and Physical Science (lab)	4
MAT150 or MAT 201	3	ENG201	3
SOC101	3	COM101	3
		Humanities	3
Total	12	Total	16
Year Two - Semester One		Year Two - Semester Two	
<u>Course</u>	<u>Credits</u>	<u>Course</u>	<u>Credits</u>
SW270	3	SW271	3
SW272	3	SW373	3

Social Science	3	Fine Arts	3
elective	3	Humanities	3
Special Topics	1	Life and Physical Science	3
Total	13	Total	15
Year Three - Semester One		Year Three - Semester Two	
<u>Course</u>	<u>Credits</u>	<u>Course</u>	<u>Credits</u>
SW310	3	SW370	3
SW320	3	SW371	3
SW334	3	SW431	3
SW375	4	SW372	1
Upper Level General Education	3	Elective	3
		Upper Level General Education	3
Total	16	Total	16
Year Four - Semester One		Year Four - Semester Two	
<u>Course</u>	<u>Credits</u>	<u>Course</u>	<u>Credits</u>
SW471	9	SW471	9
SW474	1	SW473	3
SW470	3	Elective	4
Elective	3		
Total	16	Total	16
Total Program Hours			120

Methodist College Social Work program has mapped all course learning objectives to the program learning outcomes. The program learning outcomes, in turn, have been identified and matched with one of the nine CSWE competencies outlined in EPAS 2015 standards.

The nine competencies are woven throughout the curriculum, as indicated by this matrix. This excerpt demonstrates how in each syllabus, the course learning objectives have been tied to the program Student Learning Outcomes, which in turn are tied to the Institutional Student Learning Outcomes.

Course Student Learning Objectives EPAS 2015

Upon completion of this course, the student learner will:

<i>Undergraduate Course Student Learning Objectives:</i>	<i>Program Student Learning Outcomes</i>	<i>Institutional Student Learning Outcomes</i>
1. Demonstrate Ethical and Professional Social Work behavior.	Practice professionalism that embodies a commitment to inquiry and community to improve practice and service delivery.	Civic Engagement Integrative Learning
2. Engage diversity and difference in practice.	Practice professionalism that embodies a commitment to inquiry and community to improve practice and service delivery.	Civic Engagement Integrative Learning
	Practice integrity and competence in building relationships with persons while respecting dignity and worth of individuals, families, groups, organizations, and communities.	
	Practice the tenets of social, economic, and environmental justice.	
3. Advance human rights and social, economic, and environmental justice.	Practice the tenets of social, economic, and environmental justice. Respond to influences and determinants that impact human rights and public policy.	Civic Engagement Integrative Learning
4. Engage in practice-informed research and research-informed practice.	Integrate research-informed practice in providing culturally appropriate care to a diverse clientele in a variety of social systems and contexts.	Integrative Learning
5. Engage in policy practice.	Practice the tenets of social, economic, and environmental justice.	Civic Engagement Integrative Learning

	Respond to influences and determinants that impact human rights and public policy.	
6. Engage with individuals, families, groups, organizations, and communities.	Practice integrity and competence in building relationships with persons while respecting dignity and worth of individuals, families, groups, organizations, and communities. Integrate research-informed practice in providing culturally appropriate care to a diverse clientele in a variety of social systems and contexts.	Communication Civic Engagement Integrative Learning
7. Assess individuals, families, groups, and communities.	Practice professionalism that embodies a commitment to inquiry and community to improve practice and service delivery.	Inquiry and Analysis Communication Civic Engagement Integrative Learning
8. Intervene with individuals, families, groups, organizations, and communities.	Practice professionalism that embodies a commitment to inquiry and community to improve practice and service delivery. Integrate research-informed practice in providing culturally appropriate care to a diverse clientele in a variety of social systems and contexts.	Inquiry and Analysis Communication Civic Engagement Integrative Learning
9. Evaluate practice with individuals, families, groups, organizations, and communities.	Practice professionalism that embodies a commitment to inquiry and community to improve practice and service delivery.	Inquiry and Analysis Communication Civic Engagement Integrative Learning

	Integrate research-informed practice in providing culturally appropriate care to a diverse clientele in a variety of social systems and contexts.	
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2026-2027 Methodist College Social Work Faculty

Dr. Daniel Kotzin Program Director

Ms Haley Moreland, MSW, Instructor

2.0 Field Education Experience

The Field Education experience includes many participants: the Student, the Field Instructor [FI], Field Agency, the Field Practicum Director, the Chair of the Social Work Department, and Methodist College. Open, regular communication and straightforward processes are encouraged for this educational experience to be successful.

The Role of the Student:

While the Social Work Department and the agency can provide the educational environment and learning opportunities, it is up to the student and remains the student's overall responsibility for his or her own learning in the classroom and at the Field Agency. The primary function of Field Practicum is to help students integrate the knowledge attained in their courses to generalist practice of Social Work. The Field setting allows for the student to do this while being supervised and coached while learning in a real practice setting.

BSW students are assumed to be motivated adult learners who are committed to the Social Work profession as a career goal and who will actively participate in their learning process. Practicum students serve as representatives of the agency and are expected to adhere to the policies and regulations of the agency the same as employees. Professional behavior and compliance with the ethics and values of the profession are expected. Practicum students are responsible for understanding the goals and objectives of the program, the development of a learning contract and the Field assignments made by the agency Field Instructor – more on this later in this handbook. Students are expected to use professional skills in advocating for their learning needs and addressing difficulties that may arise in the Practicum.

Additionally, there are several Practicum documents that are required to be completed in a timely manner and submitted to the Field Practicum Director and/or the Field Instructor (FI) as noted. These documents can be found in the Field Practicum folder in the D2L site for the Social Work program. They include: a completed Practicum application (to Field Practicum Director); Field Seminar Syllabi (to FI); Learning Contract Template (both Field Practicum Director and FI); Field Evaluation (Field Practicum Director).

The student should be advised that during the Practicum planning process, he/she will be asked if he/she has a criminal record, including a history of any felony convictions. If this is the case, the student should inform the Field Practicum Director immediately. Practicum agencies routinely perform background checks on prospective students, so this fact will become known at some point during the placement process. Any student who makes a false statement regarding his or her background will be dismissed from the program. Existence of a criminal record may seriously interfere with the Field Practicum Director's ability to place the student in an agency for training. Furthermore, in many states and jurisdictions, individuals with a felony record cannot be licensed, registered, or certified to practice Social Work. While Methodist College does fingerprint background checks upon entry to the institution, we understand that situations may arise in which students will need to disclose any subsequent issues after enrollment.

Students must schedule a face to face interview with the Field Practicum Director the semester *before* they are to begin their Field experience. It is the student's responsibility to schedule this interview at a mutually agreed upon time. The purpose of this interview is to create the best match between available placement settings and the student's career goals, past educational and occupational experience and current competencies. At this meeting, the Field Practicum Director will review available placement opportunities, provide information about the placement process, and offer support. Not all placement interests can be met, but every reasonable effort will be made to consider the student's needs. The Field Practicum Director reserves the right not to place a student at an agency in which the student has an existing or potential conflict of interest. Conflicts of interest may include, but are not limited to, dual relationships such as a personal friendship with the Field Instructor or a student being or having a history of being a mental health client at the potential Practicum site. Students have the responsibility to disclose such conflicts to the Field Practicum Director.

Other specific responsibilities of the student in the Field Practicum include the following:

- Collaborate with the Field Practicum Director in the process of placement, including providing immediate feedback to the Field Practicum Director about the outcome of placement interviews.
- Be familiar with the rights and responsibilities of the Field education process. If a student is asked to engage in an activity in which learning is doubtful, then the student has the responsibility to have a respectful and professional discussion with their FI. The FPD may be consulted for assistance in determining the appropriateness of a learning activity. Students, on the other hand, should be open for a wide range of activities and to question their own assumptions about what might be gained from the experience.
- Students are expected to always be professional in their interactions with agency staff, clients, and colleagues, conducting themselves within the guidelines of the agency, the NASW Code of Ethics and the values of Methodist College.
- Students have the responsibility for development of the learning contract that meets the criteria of the Department of Social Work. A template for the learning contract is shared in SW 474
- Students are expected to know due dates and adhere to these dates specified in the Field Education Calendar.
- If a student does not think his/her learning needs are being met, then it is the student's responsibility to discuss this with her/his FI. If the student does not think that his/her FI is responding to her/his concerns, then it is the student's responsibility to discuss this with the Director of Field Practicum. The student should anticipate continuing discussion with his/her FI to resolve concerns about learning needs within the Practicum.
- Students are expected to be engaged in direct practice assignments and activities for a minimum of 50% of the hours required for Field Practicum. Direct practice in this case means client work or the conducting of reach. This could include working with clients one on one or in groups; advocacy on behalf of a specific client; case staffing; paperwork regarding specific clients.

The Role of the Field Practicum Director

The Field Practicum Director assumes the responsibility for assigning each student to a placement that will broaden his or her experience. The Director organizes, implements, and evaluates the Field Education program. Students are not responsible for locating or arranging Practicum placements. Students who do so are fraudulently representing themselves as agents of Methodist College, which is strictly forbidden. Any student who seeks to arrange or establish a Practicum placement without the express knowledge and explicit consent of the Field Practicum Director will be suspended and/or dismissed from the BSW Program and/or Methodist College.

The Director also facilitates the following:

- Establishes a network of qualified agencies and FI's to participate in hosting students.
- Matches students with these agencies
- Serve as the link between Methodist College, the Agency, and the student.
- Establish and conduct educational programs, including didactic pedagogy and orientation sessions for all participants in Field.
- Coordinate annual events related to Field (meeting of qualified student's semester prior to Field).
- Update and ensure access of all Field handbooks, rules, policies, guides, and forms.
- Coordinate process of Field evaluations each semester.

Placement of Students:

Field Practicum is the signature pedagogy of Social Work education. The Director is responsible for placement of students with approved Field sites and qualified FI's. Placements are based upon the abilities of the agencies to provide learning opportunities consistent with the CSWE Professional Competencies (CSWE, 2015). Student interests in fields of practice, client populations, and social problems will be used in the placement process. Reasonable efforts will be made to address student needs based on transportation services, proximity to agencies, and family care responsibilities. Student's preference for an agency will receive consideration in the planning process whenever possible. However, there is no guarantee that students will be placed in a preferred agency setting.

Students are welcome to recommend an agency that is not currently participating in Field Education by providing complete contact information. The Director will contact the agency to determine if the agency's resources and staff will meet the qualifications of a Field site. Students should not initiate contact with an agency or representative to negotiate a Field Practicum.

Students will be expected to interview with the agency that has been identified by the Field Practicum Director. Instructions for setting up the interview will be sent to students, along with the contact information for the agency. The agency and the student must confirm the Practicum to the Field Practicum Director. If the agency or student does not feel the match is a good fit, the student should contact the Field Practicum Director for another option. If three different agencies interview and decline a specific student, an Academic Review meeting with the Social Work Chair will be requested by the Field Practicum Director to determine whether agency placement will be possible during the coming academic year.

It is the expectation of the Field Practicum Director that students engage effectively with the planning process. Failure to follow instructions to schedule interviews, contact agencies, confirm placements or establish Practicum attendance schedules in a timely way may result in the inability to be placed in the academic year for which the student has applied, and may delay a student's plan of study.

The Role of the Field Agency

Methodist College is very excited to partner with human and social service agencies to provide this signature pedagogy experience for BSW students. The agencies that partner with us provide a great service to our students and the community of Peoria as well as Social Work education.

There are some expectations that are assumed of each of our Field Agencies, and these will be verified each year by the Director of Field Practicum.

- Provide conditions that support the learning and achievement of undergraduate Social Work students
- Support the pedagogy of Methodist College
- Demonstrate a commitment to Social Work practice and Social Work education
- Accept students into their agencies without regard to age, sex, race, ethnicity, religion, sexual orientation
- Provide a qualified Field Instructor. At the undergraduate level this would be a licensed Social Worker who is prepared with a bachelors or master's degree from a CSWE accredited program. This person must also have two or more years' experience in Social Work practice.
- Provide the Field Instructor with time and/or resources to fulfill responsibilities to this role.
- View all interactions with the student as opportunities for engagement of learning
- Provide the student with resources necessary to be successful, such as space to work, information that they need to fulfill their duties, and a thorough orientation to the agency, including its policies and procedures.

The Role of the Field Instructor (FI)

The FI is the agency's liaison with Methodist College, as well as serves as the student's primary supervisor at the Field Agency. The person serving in this role must have a BSW or MSW degree from a CSWE accredited school and have two years of direct Social Work experience. **If the agency is unable to provide a FI with that background, Field Director and agency will work together to access a qualified Social Worker to provide the supervision for the placement. That Social Worker, upon agreement from FD and agency, would provide the expected role of FI for the placement, and ensure all requirements for placement are enacted.**

The following are expectations of the FI:

- Provide an orientation to the agency, and expectations of the student's role in the agency
- Discuss all safety concerns that need to be considered in practice at the agency
- Provide the student with information about mandatory reporting as it is required in the agency setting.

- Collaborate with the student and the Director of Field Practicum in the development of the Learning Contract, and the end of year evaluation and assessment of student competencies (SWPAI-FI).
- Field Instructors must provide a minimum of 1-1 ½ hours of supervision each week to the student.
 - A minimum of 30 hours of Field instruction is expected. When multiple students are placed in an agency, group supervision may be used in addition to individual supervision. However, group supervision cannot replace the use of regular individual supervisory meetings.
- Participate in Methodist College sponsored Field meetings and trainings as needed and required.
- Plan learning activities for BSW students in Field.

2.0 Getting Started in Field Practicum

The BSW Practicum is designed to help students develop the skills for generalist practice and provide them with the opportunity to integrate knowledge obtained in the classroom with the realities of practice in the agency and community settings.

In the first few weeks of the Field Practicum it is critical that the student, FI, and the Field Practicum Director develop mutual expectations around not only when to communicate, but also develop an understanding of the different styles and expectations around communication.

Contact Requirements: Field Instructors, Field Liaisons, and students

- Students and Field Instructors have a mutual responsibility to contact each other prior to the start of the Practicum, and to arrange an initial orientation meeting/start date.
- The week prior to the start of the academic year (late August), and prior to the beginning date of Practicum, all students who are in Practicum will meet with the Field Practicum Director at a Field Orientation session held at Methodist College [see Field Education Calendar].

During this meeting:

- Field Practicum Director will give students his/her contact information and share her/his general approach to the Field Practicum Director role.
- The student should inform the Field Practicum Director of the preliminary arrangements made with their Field Instructor concerning agency orientation and the start of Practicum. Additionally, they should share their contact information as well as any special needs or issues that may affect his/her learning in the Practicum.
- The Field Practicum Director will contact the Field Instructor during the first two weeks of the student starting Practicum to provide information about the best ways to communicate about student progress, and to initiate a beginning relationship with the Field Instructor.
- Field Instructors must provide a minimum of 1-1 ½ hours of supervision each week to the student.
 - A minimum of 30 hours of Field instruction is expected. When multiple students are placed in an agency, group supervision may be used in addition to individual supervision. However, group supervision cannot replace the use of regular individual supervisory meetings.

- The Field Practicum Director will meet with the student and the Field Instructor--at the Field agency—three times each semester. For Field Agencies geographically distant from the campus (120 miles or more), the minimum visitation is one onsite visit and two planned, extended telephone or web-based conferences.
- It is expected that the student and Field Instructor will be available for supervision and meetings with the Field Practicum Director as requested.
- Students, Field Instructors, and the Field Practicum Director need to keep each informed about any events that might influence the student's Field placement. Early identification of issues is critical in preventing problems, so open communication is important. Students or FIs can contact the Field Practicum Director for additional support when there are unresolved issues, or when help is needed to seek an intervention or solution.

Student: Agency Orientation Suggestions

The agency and FI are expected to provide the student with an orientation at the start of Practicum. Some suggestions that prior students have found helpful include:

Manual: Develop a brief orientation manual or other resource [web] that includes:

- a. Organizational chart
- b. Agency procedures
- c. Dress code and schedule expectations (if not already discussed)
- d. Access information (how will the student access the agency's resources, both physically and electronically)
- e. Map of the agency, including parking options
- f. Paperwork/timekeeping procedures
- g. Confidentiality guidelines
- h. Ethics of the agency and how NASW ethics are incorporated into agency practice
- i. Community agencies/resources that interface regularly with agency [It is important for students to spend some time not only learning about the site where they will be assigned, but to also visit other sites within the organization and collaborating agencies. For example, the student may be assigned to work with families and children, but it also important for them to visit the senior service center within the agency.]
- j. Agency contact information and staff phone numbers
- k. Release of information forms and instructions/policy/procedure around these and other forms
- l. Other helpful resources for working with the agency client population
- m. Important meetings/trainings: students are often included in staff meetings, case conferences, team meetings, and some board meetings. Many agencies have found it helpful to include students in staff training opportunities. All these components help students to understand the organization and the community more fully as a context for professional practice.

Safety considerations

Field Instructors play a significant role in helping students to become familiar with the agency's safety procedures. Students are often concerned with their personal safety. However, many students find it difficult to discuss these directly with the Field Instructor, especially at the beginning of their experience in the agency.

Safety and Security of the Student in Practicum

While the Social Work Department does not want students to be sheltered from the realities of professional practice, immersing students in Social Work and human service agencies may expose them to safety and security risks. The department and Practicum agencies must collaborate to reduce risks to students in Practicum. Some Practicum students have safety and security concerns as they enter the Field Practicum. If not addressed, concerns about personal safety can significantly affect learning opportunities in the Practicum. In addition, every effort must be made to increase the safety of the student.

Field Instructors and Practicum sites should, when applicable:

- Discuss safety and security matters with students at the placement interview or at the outset of the Practicum. Information about the prevalence of or potential for violence while conducting Practicum activities should be relayed to the student
- Explain and enforce agency safety protocols with students, including building and office security, emergency procedures, management of violent clients and home visit safety procedures
- Provide a tour of the surrounding neighborhood and address concerns students may have regarding work in the community
- Allow students to observe staff engaged in the work for which the student is preparing.
- Allow students to be observed while engaged in learning activities and
- Link students with agency-provided security resources (i.e. safety training, cellular phones, beepers)

The following types of activities warrant special concern and these activities must be discussed with the Social Work Department and the student prior to the assignment:

- Physical restraint of clients
- Transportation of clients in the student's private vehicle
- Transportation of a client with a recent history of violent behavior
- Treatment of a client with a history of violence toward the staff and
- Work in the agency at times when/or in areas where other staff are not present.

3.0 – Field Practicum Policies and Procedures*

Enrollment in Practicum

Field Practicum is the hallmark of Social Work education. This process marks the start of a student's professional Social Work career in the community. Two consecutive semesters (Fall and Spring) of Field experience in the same Practicum placement are required. The Practicum course is 9 credits each semester. Six (6) of these credit hours are allotted for Field Practicum time which equates to 12-15 hours/week in a 15-week semester (total of 200 hours per semester). The remainder 3 credit hours will be utilized in a weekly seminar to support the Field learning. This seminar will consist of 3 hours of face-to-face or on-line meeting (per hybrid structure) per week. A student must pass both Practicum and seminar the first semester to proceed to the second semester.

Practicum begins during the first week of each semester, although some placements may have an orientation before the start of fall semester. Time in placement averages approximately 12-15 hours

per week. The following is required: 200 hours per semester and 400 hours overall. Hours cannot be carried over into the next semester, nor can a student complete the Practicum early.

Undergraduate Social Work students who are admitted to the BSW Program are expected to enroll in the BSW Practicum and Seminar sequence and successfully complete that sequence. Failure to do so for academic reasons, including the failure to meet the performance standards of the Field placement agency, may result in dismissal from the BSW program.

The weekly seminar portion of the Practicum course is taught by faculty who also serve as the liaison to the student's agency. Currently, the Field Practicum Director serves as the seminar instructor and serves as the Field Liaison. In this role, this individual maintains contact with the agency and Field Instructor through a minimum of three personal visits each semester and telephone/electronic contacts as necessary. The purpose of these contacts is to maintain an awareness of the student's progress in the Field and to offer consultation to the Field Instructor as appropriate. The Field Practicum Director is a resource for both the student and the Field Instructor with the primary focus being the success of the student in Practicum.

The Field Practicum Director also interprets the program's policies to the Field Instructor and provides information as requested by the agency. At the end of each semester, the Field Practicum Director collects and reviews the Field Instructor's written evaluation of the student's progress. The evaluation provides significant input to the Field Practicum Director's assignment of combined grade for seminar and Practicum.

Employment-based Practicum

The primary purpose of Practicum is experiential learning in settings that offer new opportunities for knowledge acquisition and skill development. Generally, the Field Practicum Director does not place students in agencies where they are employed. However, the Council on Social Work Education does permit an employment-based placement if the educational integrity of the Field Practicum is preserved. Practicum opportunities must be substantively different from employment activities and must correspond with the student's program status. The prospective Field Instructor must be appropriately licensed and be someone other than the student's employment supervisor.

A detailed written proposal must be submitted to the Field Practicum Director prior to the student's interview with the Director (forms and further information are available from the Field Practicum Director). The application must clearly document the student's current employment tasks and assignments and specify the differences in the anticipated tasks and responsibilities as a student learner. It is to be developed in consultation with the agency of employment and must be signed by the agency director, current supervisor, and potential Field Instructor. The final decision on applications is made by Field Practicum Director.

Parallel Placements

Like the employment-based Practicum, parallel placements involve consideration of a Practicum at a human service agency that employs the student. However, in this instance the parameters are different in that the student is employed in a position not closely related to Social Work such as a clerical position. Because the issues of role separation and the need for separate supervision are

the same, the student must submit a detailed, written proposal that demonstrates that the educational integrity of the Field Practicum is preserved (forms and further information are provided by the student's Field Practicum Director during the interview process).

Tracking Time

Students are responsible for tracking their time spent in the Practicum placement. Agencies may have their own requirements for time-tracking and students should check with their FI's for this information. Students are expected to conform to the agency's working hours, arranging Practicum hours in consideration of agency needs and class schedules. Time schedules are developed jointly by the student and Field Instructor but should not be less than twenty-four (24) hours per week, but allowing for flexibility as needed by the student or agency for agency or college holiday's, breaks, or other professional obligations [see below, Holidays, Breaks, Personal Leave]. Written documentation of Practicum hours must be maintained for review at site visits and reporting on seminar documents and semester evaluations.

Holidays, Breaks, Personal Leave

Students are entitled to all university holidays and are encouraged to use these respite opportunities. There is no expectation for students to serve in their Practicum during official College breaks and therefore discussions and plans should be developed prior to students starting in the placement around these dates. There can be no earning of hours between semesters or during official breaks. At times, personal issues may arise that would affect a student's participation in a scheduled Field activity. For this reason, students are encouraged to discuss these expectations with the Field Instructor as early as possible to ensure that requests are reasonable, and the parameters clearly understood by all parties. Requests by a student to attend conferences or workshops are subject to the Field Instructor's approval.

Students may be excused from Practicum only when such absences are unavoidable, such as illness or family crisis. Employment conflicts and completion of course work assignments are not appropriate reasons to miss Practicum. At the beginning of the placement, the student and FI should work through the Field agreement to discuss such situations. At the very least, a student must inform the Field Instructor at the earliest possible opportunity if they must be absent from Practicum. A plan will then need to be developed to make up all hours that were missed. The number of required Practicum hours will not be reduced.

Grading Policy

Practicum are graded as outlined in the course syllabus. Learning objectives that meet the Council on Social Work Education standards for bachelor's level practice are stated as the learning objectives that appear on each syllabus for SW 471 and SW 472.

Field Supervision

Field supervision is the primary means through which a collaborative relationship is developed between the student and the Field Instructor, and the means through which expectations are clarified and performance evaluated. This is a time to reflect on the activities of the past week – not just to report activities, but also to discuss learning points, share successes and struggles, and identify any specific needs. This regular supervisory meeting is different from the informal

contacts that the student may have with the Field Instructor and other agency staff. It is a planned, scheduled time that is set aside to discuss the student's Social Work practice.

Methodist College expects that the student(s) and Field Instructor will meet at a minimum, weekly for 1-1.5 hours. When multiple students are placed in an agency, group supervision may be used in addition to individual supervision. However, group supervision cannot replace the use of regular individual supervisory meetings.

Providing Feedback to Students and Grading of Practicum

It is extremely important for the FI to monitor and evaluate student progress throughout the Practicum. In addition to the feedback the Field Instructor provides on a regular basis through supervision meetings, some additional mechanisms have been established to evaluate student progress more formally on an ongoing basis. These include: 1. Initial Learning Contract (developed at the beginning of the student's Practicum) 2. Site visits (conducted by the Field Practicum Director three times per semester) 3. semester Learning Contract Revision 4. End of the year evaluation.

It is important that the Field Instructor provide written feedback to the student. The final evaluation becomes the official record of the student's completion of this degree requirement and is retained by Methodist College.

Students receive academic credit for Field Practicum only after they have completed the total number of clock hours and all required assignments in SW 471 and SW 472.

Grievances Regarding Field Placement

Should problems arise in the Practicum, the student must first meet with the Field Instructor to discuss the issues. If the matter cannot be resolved at this level, the student's Field Practicum Director should then be contacted by the student and further mediation is undertaken. Due to Social Worker's ethical responsibility to agencies and clients and the contractual nature of Practicum, it is the intent of the Social Work program to maintain intact Field placements. Placements are changed *only* when careful examination determines the situation to be intractable. Examples include but are not limited to documented evidence that the placement is not providing the learning experience expected and agreed to by the Department, or that the student has been the victim of discrimination. The Field Practicum Director makes the final determination regarding change of placements. Change of placements is a rare and unexpected outcome for Field Practicum.

Termination of a Student from a Field Placement

Unexpected events in the life of the student or within the agency may result in a student's failure to achieve learning objectives. A placement may be terminated by the student, the Field Practicum Director, the agency FI, or the agency administrator. To avoid unnecessary terminations, it is extremely important that all parties involved make every effort to identify problems early so that mediation can be provided. This requires good communication among the student, faculty, and Field Instructor and/or agency. A written summary of problems and attempts at mediation is kept as a part of the student's file.

If a student terminates his or her Practicum placement, he or she must do so in writing, notifying the Field Practicum Director, the agency Field Instructor, and the BSW Program Director/Chair. This notice must be given at least five (5) working days in advance of the termination and should specify the rationale for ending the placement. If the Field Practicum Director determines that the student's position is justified, then every reasonable effort will be made to change placements. However, reassignment is not guaranteed, and the consequence may be that the student will not be able to return to Practicum) for another year.

If a student is found to have violated the student conduct policy or any other professional conduct violation, including a violation of the NASW code of ethics, their Field Practicum placement will immediately be suspended and the student code of conduct policy will be followed regarding investigation.

Grounds for Dismissal

Grounds for Dismissal are specified in the Methodist College Undergraduate Student Handbook.

Students Requesting Accommodations

Once a student has identified that he/she has a disability and will need accommodations, the student will be referred to the Office of Access, Support, and Inclusion Services (OASIS) to work with a specialist on the specific accommodations needed. After receiving confirmation that the student has identified accommodations with OASIS, the student should provide the Field Practicum Director with information regarding the accommodations the student anticipates for Practicum. The Field Practicum Director will work with the student to find a Practicum agency that is of interest. However, some accommodations may limit the agency options available to a student. Unless the Field Practicum Director is already aware of whether or not the agency would be able to accommodate the student, the Field Practicum Director will contact the agency and relay the language that has been provided by the student or OASIS regarding accommodations, to assess with the agency if they can accommodate the student. Once the Field Practicum Director and the student have identified an agency that is ready to interview the student, the student will be responsible for working with OASIS to provide accommodation language that is specific to the agency and will discuss with the agency during the interview process. An accommodations letter, drafted by the OASIS, must be provided ***by the student to the Field agency*** and the Field Practicum Director before beginning Practicum.

3.0 – The Learning Contract

The BSW Social Work Program Assessment Inventory [SWPAI] will be administered to students during the required Field Practicum meeting the week prior to starting in SW 471 [late August]. The assessment instrument is based upon the 9 Competencies of Social Work (CSWE, 2015). The instrument serves as a measure of student self-efficacy, as well as a direct assessment of student's knowledge or practice to this point in their curriculum. The outcomes of the instrument are meant to be shared with the FI to provide opportunity for a shared development of the learning contract for the Field Practicum experience. After the SWPAI is completed, the student will write the initial draft of the Learning Contract. Students and the Field Instructor should work together to identify specific tasks and activities that the student can complete at the placement.

Once the initial draft is developed, the Field Instructor will review the Learning Contract and offer any additional feedback and suggested revisions. When the initial Learning Contract is agreed to by the student and Field Instructor, it is then sent to the Field Practicum Director. The Field Practicum Director will review the contract and offer suggestions and/or request revisions. If questions arise in the process of writing the initial Learning Contract, the student, Field Instructor and Field Practicum Director are encouraged to consult with each other.

The Learning Contract serves as the formal agreement made between the student, the Field Instructor, and the Field Practicum Director about what the student is going to learn and how he/she will accomplish this learning. The Learning Contract should ***describe specifically*** what the student will be doing for Field Practicum, and how the assigned activities will engage the student with the competencies and practice behaviors identified in the course syllabus [learning objectives].

The Learning Contract also serves as the basis for the ongoing evaluation of student progress in Practicum. The Learning Contract covers two semesters and may be modified as new learning opportunities become available. ***It is not expected that every practice behavior will be fully attained during the first semester.***

Learning Contract Templates can be found in the D2L Social Work Field Practicum Resources Center. The BSW Assessment Inventory will be completed in a web-based format that can be saved as a PDF for student's retention.

At the beginning of the spring semester, the Learning Contract should be revised/updated. This update does not require rewriting the entire Learning Contract, but it does require reviewing it to determine:

- Which practice behaviors/learning objectives still need to be addressed.
- Which tasks outlined in the Initial Learning Contract require additional practice opportunities to attain basic competence.
- What new learning opportunities are now appropriate and available based on the student's progress during the fall semester and considering new practice learning experiences that may not have been available when the Initial Learning Contract was first written.

4.0 Evaluating Students Performance in Field Practicum

Mid-Year and Final Evaluations of Student Performance

Formal evaluation of student progress in the Practicum occurs twice – first at the end of Fall semester when the student has completed approximately 1/2 of the required Practicum hours-- and again at the end of Spring semester when all of the required Practicum hours and assignments are completed. The same evaluation instrument is used for both semesters and is part of the Learning Contract. Each practice behavior needs to be evaluated, using the rating scale provided in the Learning Contract addendum. Along with the rating of student performance, the Field Instructor should write a brief narrative identifying the student's areas of competency and areas for growth.

In addition, the student will also be required to again complete the SWPAI to provide information for direct assessment of competencies met. This will be provided electronically, and the student will retain a copy; a copy will also be part of the student's record.

The Field Practicum Director must have the evaluation and the SWPAI before a grade can be assigned. For the final evaluation, original signatures from both the student and the Field Instructor must be included. If the Field Practicum Director has not received the written evaluation by the time grades are due, then a grade will not be assigned. All Field Education requirements (hours, learning assignments, writing assignments, and completed evaluations) must be completed before a final grade can be submitted. Students without a grade assigned at the end of the year are not allowed to graduate.

Methodist College Social Work Department

Technical Standards

Methodist College Social Work Department is dedicated to preparing students for careers as leaders in the Field of Social Work. Being a professional Social Worker takes time and dedication for the student and fosters a commitment to lifelong learning and personal/professional growth. Social Workers have an ethical responsibility to promote and protect the well-being of the clients and communities we serve. Methodist College has established these technical standards for students that are holistic in nature, covering not only academic performance but also core skills that are essential for success in the profession.

First, students must attest that they possess the physical, cognitive, emotional, and behavioral attributes necessary to fulfill the requirements of Social Work education. To adequately prepare for, and engage in, Social Work practice, Students must be able to demonstrate the following abilities to fully participate in all aspects of coursework and the Field Practicum.

1. **Communication** – A student must be able to communicate effectively, sensitively, and professionally with other students, faculty, staff, clients, Field Instructor, and Practicum agency staff in accordance with the NASW Code of Ethics. Communication includes not only speech, but also reading and writing. The student must be able to communicate effectively and efficiently in oral and written form.
2. **Motor and Sensory** – A student must have sufficient motor and sensory function to be able to attend class and complete a Practicum placement, with or without accommodation, by executing motor movements reasonably required to function in an academic environment and provide services to clients. Where indicated by a letter of accommodation from Methodist College O.A.S.I.S, they shall make reasonable accommodations to allow the student to meet these standards.
3. **Intellectual, Conceptual, Integrative and Quantitative Abilities** – A student must possess reasoning, analysis, and synthesis abilities. Problem solving, a critical skill required of a Social Worker, requires all these intellectual abilities. These skills are necessary for students to make proper assessments, prioritize interventions, and measure/report client and community outcomes.
4. **Behavioral and Social Attributes** – A student must possess the behavioral and social skills required for full utilization of their intellectual abilities, the exercise of sound judgment, the prompt completion of all responsibilities as specified in the BSW & MSW handbook, and the development of sensitive and effective professional relationships with clients and community members, in accordance with the *NASW Code of Ethics*. A student must be able to function effectively under stress. A student must be able to adapt to changing environments, display flexibility, and learn to function in the face of uncertainties inherent to Social Work practice. Compassion, integrity, concern for others, interpersonal skill, interest, and motivation are all personal qualities that will be assessed during the admissions and education process. A student must be willing to effectively use help and supports for medical or emotional issues that interfere with performance.
5. **Self-awareness** – A student must know how his/her values, beliefs, past experiences, and attitudes impact their own thought processes and behaviors. The student must be prepared to engage in self-reflection and change behaviors that obstruct his/her work with

clients and community members, agency staff, Field Instructors, other students, faculty, and staff. A student must be able to tolerate ambiguity.

6. Appreciation of Diversity – In accordance with the NASW Code of Ethics, a student must be able to work with a variety of diverse groups, and progress towards cultural competence regardless of race, ethnicity, national origin, color, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity or expression, age, marital status, political belief, religion, immigration status, and mental or physical ability.

A student can participate in the undergraduate Social Work program so long as they are able to meet these standards with or without reasonable accommodations. Students who would like to request reasonable accommodations to assist them in meeting these standards should contact the Director of the Office of Access, Support, and Inclusion Services (OASIS). The OASIS is in W160.

By my signature, I certify that I have read and understand Methodist College Social Work Technical Standards, and that I am committed to demonstrating the skills and abilities detailed in the policy.

Signature

Date

Print Name

Date