



Frequently Asked Questions about BSW Practicum

When does practicum start and end?

All practicum placements begin on (or shortly following) the first day of the term. SW 348 - Practicum I ("mini practicum") is 15 weeks in length and SW 448 - Practicum II ("major practicum") is 16 weeks in length - so to calculate the last week of your practicum, find the start date of the term and count forward by 15 or 16 weeks.

Students are not permitted to start their placements before the first day of the term as their Worker's Compensation and liability insurance are not in effect until the first day of classes.

Can I finish my hours early?

Practicum is about more than completing the required number of hours. Field-based learning is a process; in general, learning should be gradual and well-paced throughout the term. It's okay if you finish your hours before the end of placement date - but the intent or plan shouldn't be to finish by an earlier date.

Details of student hours are negotiated between agency and student - some students need lots of lead time in terms of scheduling, so expectations about this should be discussed as early as possible.

Can I contact people or agencies I know about doing my practicum with them?

Under no circumstances are students to contact potential agencies or Field Instructors directly - *all* contact with agencies and Field Instructors is made by the Placement Coordinator. Agencies and/or Field Instructors are also not permitted to request specific students for placement. This is to ensure an ethical, fair, and equitable process for placing for all students who are eligible for practicum.

Do I have to complete a criminal record check before practicum?

The Faculty of Social Work does not require a criminal record check to be admitted to the BSW program, or before you complete a practicum. Agencies who require criminal record checks and/or other screening prior the beginning of practicum will make these requests to you directly when you've been matched for a placement.

Can I be hired to work at my practicum agency?

As BSW field placements are unpaid, you are not permitted to receive payment (other than expense reimbursement) from your placement agency while you're completing practicum. Students are discouraged from applying for paid positions within their placement organization before their placement is completed and final grades are approved. If you are hired by the agency where you completed your practicum, there must be a clear boundary and transition plan between roles and relationships. If your Field Instructor will be involved in interviewing, selecting, and/or supervising you in a paid position following your placement, a clear transition plan must be developed to ensure your role as learner is clear and protected until the end of your field placement. Students and Field Instructors/agencies must also wait until the final evaluation has been submitted and approved before negotiating employment details or signing an employment contract.

Do all Field Instructors (practicum supervisors) have a social work degree?

National accreditation standards for a BSW Field Instructor are a BSW/BISW or higher SW degree, plus 2 years post-BSW degree practice experience. An equivalent or related combination of education and experience will be considered on a case-by-case basis. If you do not have on-site/in-agency SW supervision will be provided with regular SW supervision and support by your Field Liaison or the Field Education Coordinator. This time counts toward your field hours.