



**School of Social Work**

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**Dear MSW Practicum Summer 2021 Students,**

This purpose of this message is to provide you with information and steps related to applying for a summer term practicum (SOWK 5607).

**Please note:** As the COVID-19 pandemic continues, social work field education continues to be affected. The pandemic has significantly impacted the operations of most community settings, as well as the day to day workloads of field supervisors, and placement constraints remain a reality. The field team has been working incredibly hard to respond to the challenges posed by the COVID-19 pandemic, and to implement new placement options to meet the needs of our students and our placement partners each term. However, the situation in the community is ever-changing, and how things will unfold come the summer term remains uncertain for everyone. Your ongoing professionalism, flexibility, and understanding in regards to these realities is integral and appreciated as we work with each of you to plan your pathway in field education in a very uncertain context.

The following message provides detailed information about the summer practicum and options available. Please read carefully. These placement options and procedures are exceptional, and are designed to broaden opportunities for field placements during the COVID-19 pandemic. They should not be understood as precedent.

### **Placement Hours:**

**MSW field hours in the summer 2021 term will consist of 338 hours.**

The Canadian Association for Social Work Education (CASWE-ACFTS), our accrediting body, has reduced placement hours to 75% for any MSW placement affected by the COVID-19 pandemic. This means that placements occurring this summer 2021 term will be shorter than usual, and will consist of a total of 338 hours (rather than 450).

Summer placements will take place between May 06<sup>th</sup> and August 16<sup>th</sup>, 2021. Practicum hours will range from 21-32 hours per week.

### **Practicum Seminars:**

**You must be available for virtual practicum seminars (held in real time).**

Participation in integrative practicum seminars is a mandatory component of practicum courses. Five practicum seminars will be held during the summer term, which involve synchronous learning (they are held in real time). Students must be available to attend and participate in all five seminars,

which will be held on Friday mornings (9-11:30 am) for all students who are in Eastern Time Zone. An alternative time will be established to enable synchronous learning for students participating in different time zones.

You will be asked to indicate where you will be residing during the summer term on your Practicum Application Form/Summer 2021.

For full information on all other required course components, please read Section 5.0 of the MSW Practicum Manual: <https://carleton.ca/socialwork/wp-content/uploads/MSW-Manual-August-2020.pdf>.

### **Matching Process:**

**To proceed with a summer practicum, you must submit an MSW Practicum Application/Summer 2021 Form (attached), along with an updated social work resume, no later than January 10<sup>th</sup>, 2021.**

Please submit these two documents via email to the Practicum Administrator, Megan Stansel, at: [SSW.Practicum.Admin@cunet.carleton.ca](mailto:SSW.Practicum.Admin@cunet.carleton.ca)

In the MSW Practicum Application Form, there is a heading titled, “Placement Options.” **In this section you will rank the various placement options (outlined below) to reflect your level of interest in each.**

The matching process for the summer term will occur electronically. The School of Social Work is currently operating remotely, so there will be no meetings with Practicum Coordinators.

**To be successful in the matching process:** prepare a resume that showcases your social work education and related training, skills and experience. See the attached ‘Preparing for Field Placement’ document for resume guidelines. Your resume should include **only your Carleton email address**, which must be used for all purposes related to practicum courses.

As noted above, many of our placement agencies are unable to work at their full capacity due to the COVID-19 pandemic. Many agencies have needed to put an indefinite hold on student placements, or significantly reduce placement positions, due to current staffing, funding, and service realities. Given these factors, some agencies and areas of practice may not be available this academic year and beyond. We understand this is distressing for students. However, please rest assured the field team’s strongest commitment continues to be finding ways to respond to these factors, given that we do not control them.

The field team will aim to match you according to your areas and/or agencies of interest, however, **no specific area of practice or agency can be guaranteed to be available to you.** Students who are flexible and open to a wide variety of practicum opportunities are best positioned to be successful in being matched for the summer term.

### **Receiving a Placement Match**

**You will be advised of a potential match via email between January and April.**

If you elect to be matched, please ensure that you are checking your Carleton email regularly for news of a placement match between January and April. Once a placement opportunity is emailed to you, you will be given three days to confirm your interest in being prioritized for the opportunity before it will then be made available to another student. You will also be given a deadline to prepare a cover letter that is tailored to the specific position to which you are applying. Placement applications are time-sensitive, and many agencies invite applications from multiple programs. This process ensures that students have the best chance at being matched successfully with an open placement position.

See the attached 'Preparing for Field Placement' document for cover letter guidelines, as well as sample cover letters for field placement positions.

**Fully Remote Placements / In-person Placements:**

**Both fully remote and in-person options may be available. Please indicate your preference for these options in the attached MSW Practicum Application Form.**

Some settings are fully remote at present, which means that all placement activities are occurring from home (telephone and teleconferencing activities, web-based work, research and special projects, etc.). These placements do not involve in-agency activities or face-to-face contact. Students may elect to be considered for fully remote opportunities only. Students must be able to fully participate in remote work (i.e. ability to work from home, reliable access to a computer and wifi, good self-management, organization and written communication skills, and consistent availability for a *minimum* of 28 hours each week during standard work hours).

As settings begin to reopen more fully, some in-agency placements are becoming available. These placements include face-to-face activities. During the COVID-19 pandemic, participation in face-to-face activities is voluntary, and contingent on public health and university policies. Students who elect to participate in agency-based placements must sign COVID-19 waivers/releases and attestations indicating their awareness of the risks related to COVID-19, and full assumption of the risks and liabilities associated with in-person activities, prior to beginning any field placement hours. Should there be additional closures or a reactivation of strict social distancing directives related to public health during the summer 2021 term, in-agency placements may be affected. The School would notify students of any changes as they arise.

Most settings are offering a combination of remote and in-person activities.

**Students are asked to indicate their interest in remote and in-person options on the MSW Practicum Application Form by checking the applicable boxes.**

Please note that the School matches students with settings in Ottawa and immediate surrounding regions only. The School does not match students with placements in other cities or provinces. Should you wish to pursue a placement in another region in which you are residing due to the pandemic, please select an alternative option below.

#### **4 Placement Options and Timelines:**

- **In addition to the School providing a match for you, there are 3 other placement options.**
- **These additional options require you to find your own opportunity (#2, 3, and 4).**
- **Please rank your level of interest in these options on the attached MSW Practicum Application Form, due by January 10<sup>th</sup>.**

These options are being made available as a result of the significant impact of COVID-19 on field education. During the pandemic, CASWE-ACFTS guidelines enable the temporary reduction in field hours and establishment of remote and alternative learning plans. It is not possible to guarantee the availability of these options in future terms. Please read the details of each carefully below, and respect the stated deadlines.

The four placement options are:

##### **1. Matched by the School (the usual process):**

The Practicum Coordinator will email you with a placement option when one becomes available between January and April, as per the process noted above ('Receiving a Placement Match').

Once your tailored cover letter and resume are received, they will be submitted by the Practicum Coordinator to the agency. All decisions to extend an interview and/or placement offer will rest with the placement agency.

**\*Your tailored cover letter and resume must be returned to the Coordinator in Word format. Failure to adhere to this format will result in your application being returned to you by the field team**

**To be successful at a placement interview:** Students must fully prepare to engage in a professional interview process (e.g. complete research on the setting and the specific position to which you are applying; be prepared to fully speak to your interest and relevant work, volunteer, and educational experience; and, be prepared to provide 2-3 professional references upon request). Please see the 'Preparing for Field Placement' handout for common interview questions.

Once a placement offer is extended to you and you accept it, please inform the Practicum Coordinator, who will direct you on the required documents/steps to finalize your field placement with the School.

Interviews with placement agencies are likely to occur between late January and April.

#### **Student instructions:**

- Please confirm your interest in this option via the attached MSW Practicum Application Form due by January 10<sup>th</sup>.
- Monitor your email closely from January to April for news of a match. Respond to the Practicum Coordinator in regards to placement matches within three days. Be prepared to promptly follow up with a cover letter tailored to the specific learning opportunity.
- Fully prepare to engage in a professional interview as part of the placement process.

## 2. Place of Employment:

Find and secure a placement within your current place of employment. To have your paid employment count towards your field hours, OR to establish a separate, unpaid opportunity within your workplace, several criteria must be met:

- a. You will need to demonstrate that you will be engaged in **new** work activities that allow you to develop **new** learning at an MSW level. This new learning may occur within your current position and/or within a new area within your organization.
- b. Your proposed activities must consist of 25-30 hours per week, to take place between May 06<sup>th</sup> and August 16<sup>th</sup>, 2021, for a minimum total of 338 field hours.
- c. Given health/safety/insurance realities, students must be paid employees for the entirety of the placement hours, OR establish a separate, unpaid placement opportunity for the entirety of the placement hours.
- d. You will need to negotiate placement supervision by someone who has either supervised you before or is a new supervisor. This person should have a BSW or MSW degree. If this is not possible, other supervisors may also be acceptable depending on the nature of the work. Please discuss with the Practicum Coordinator the supervisory criteria.
- d. The placement supervisor and agency will need to agree to the usual responsibilities of field sites: weekly supervision, approval of the student's learning contract, completion of mid-point and end-point evaluations, and two consultation visits with the student and Faculty Liaison (to be held by telephone). They will be asked to sign a letter of agreement attesting to this in order to finalize the field placement.

**\*If you have recently started employment and your organization is willing to meet the requirements of a field site, please put forward a workplace placement proposal (document attached here)**

### Student instructions:

- Please confirm your interest in this option as soon as possible via the attached MSW Practicum Application Form due by January 10<sup>th</sup>.
- If this option is of interest to you, please have the needed discussions with your employment setting as soon as possible.
- Proceed to complete the attached "Workplace Placement Proposal" in full and submit to Allison Everett no later than **February 26<sup>th</sup>**: [Allison.everett@carleton.ca](mailto:Allison.everett@carleton.ca)
- Clearly indicate whether your placement position will be paid or unpaid. The position cannot consist of both paid/unpaid hours.
- Once your proposal is reviewed, you will be notified by the Practicum Coordinator regarding next steps.

## 3. Distance Placement:

If you are residing in another city or province **due to the COVID-19 pandemic**, you may be permitted to find and secure a placement within your current region. Several criteria must be met:

- a. You must have good academic standing, have successfully completed all prerequisite course work, and have demonstrated your ability to consistently meet course deadlines and attendance requirements during your involvement in the MSW program.
- b. The placement opportunity must allow you to engage in relevant field learning activities at the MSW level.
- c. Your proposed placement must consist of 25-30 hours per week, to take place between May 06<sup>th</sup> and August 16<sup>th</sup>, 2021, for a minimum total of 338 field hours.
- d. You will need to be supervised by someone who has a BSW or MSW degree. If this is not possible, other supervisors may also be acceptable depending on the nature of the work. Please discuss with the Practicum Coordinator the supervisory criteria.
- e. The placement supervisor and agency will need to agree to the usual responsibilities of field sites: weekly supervision, approval of the student's learning contract, completion of mid-point and end-point evaluations, and two consultation visits with the student and Faculty Liaison (to be held by telephone). They will be asked to sign applicable documents attesting to this in order to finalize the field placement

Student instructions:

- Please confirm your interest in this option as soon as possible via the attached MSW Practicum Application Form due by January 10<sup>th</sup>.
- If this option is of interest to you, please identify and apply to positions immediately. Contact Allison Everett should you have any questions about your eligibility for a distance placement, and/or the suitability of a particular position for a social work field placement.
- Once you have a placement offer, proceed to complete the attached "Distance Placement Proposal" in full and submit to Allison Everett as soon as possible and no later than **February 26th**: [Allison.everett@carleton.ca](mailto:Allison.everett@carleton.ca)
- Once your proposal is reviewed, you will be notified by the Practicum Coordinator regarding next steps.

**4. Mixed Delivery Practicum:**

Find and secure a relevant social work volunteer position that would enable the completion of a minimum of 220 field hours during the summer term. Students must find and secure a volunteer position directly. Your volunteer hours will count toward your required practicum hours, and supervision and integration activities will be provided by the School. If the volunteer position will be outside of Ottawa, a distance placement proposal (see above) is required.

Some helpful links to locate volunteer opportunities include (but are not limited to):

- Volunteer options through CUSA's Service Centres on-campus:  
<https://www.cusaonline.ca/services/servicecentres/>

- Volunteer options available via Volunteer Ottawa:  
[https://www.volunteerottawa.ca/Search\\_Volunteer\\_Opportunities.html](https://www.volunteerottawa.ca/Search_Volunteer_Opportunities.html)
- Certified Listeners Society:  
<https://certifiedlisteners.org>

With this Mixed Delivery Practicum (MDP) option, the school provides the supervision and evaluation externally (through the Faculty Liaison). Attached is a handout that describes this option, as well as what you need to do if you wish to pursue it.

In summary, the Mixed Delivery Practicum is made up of 4 specific and required components:

1. Direct social work practice experience (220-310 hours)
2. A tailor-made training agenda (10-30 hours)
3. Weekly field practice supervision (14-21 hours)
4. Engagement with the Practicum Learning Portal (up to 70 hours)

#### Student instructions:

- Please confirm your interest in this option via the attached MSW Practicum Application Form due January 10<sup>th</sup>. (Please read the MDP handout in full).
- If this option is of interest to you, please identify and apply to volunteer positions directly. Ensure any volunteer opportunity to which you apply could enable completion of a *minimum* of 25 hours per week from May 06<sup>th</sup> to August 16<sup>th</sup>, 2021.
- You must inform the Practicum Coordinator of your progress in identifying a relevant volunteer option no later than **February 26<sup>th</sup>**. Your volunteer position must be fully confirmed and established no later than April 01<sup>st</sup> (may begin in mid-April or May).
- Once your placement component has been approved, you will be notified by the Practicum Coordinator regarding next steps.

#### **For Options #2, 3, and 4:**

If you are interested in options #2, 3 or 4, (workplace placement, distance placement, or the Mixed Delivery Practicum) **start looking for the placement opportunity/practice component immediately.**

If you are unable to find this opportunity before **February 26<sup>th</sup>**, please advise the MSW Practicum Coordinator Allison Everett at [allison.everett@carleton.ca](mailto:allison.everett@carleton.ca) so that you can be included in the matching process at the School.

**February 26<sup>th</sup>** is the final deadline to inform Allison Everett if you wish to be matched by the School. Please note that after this date matches will occur based on placement availability.

#### **Deferral of Your Practicum to a Subsequent Term**

Please advise the field team as soon as possible if you intend to defer your practicum to a subsequent term. SOWK 5607 practicum offerings beginning in 2021 are as follows:

- a) Fall 2021 (SOWK 5607): Full-time placement. Students will also be required to notify the Graduate Administrator, Stephanie Mulville on their decision to defer their practicum. Stephanie's email address is: [stephanie.mulville@carleton.ca](mailto:stephanie.mulville@carleton.ca).

### **Placement Reminders:**

#### **Prerequisites:**

Students must meet the following prerequisites to be eligible for SOWK 5607:

- Good academic standing in the MSW program
- Completion of the Foundation year OR BSW degree
- Successful completion of the following courses:
  - SOWK 5011 Social Justice Intensive
  - SOWK 5012 Research
  - Minimum of 2 credits of electives

#### **Matching Policy:**

In order to ensure equity and fairness for all students and to retain our valued field partnerships, students are permitted to apply to one setting at time only when being matched by the School. If a student elects to apply to a 'matched' agency, the student will not be permitted to simultaneously pursue other opportunities, or to withdraw from a confirmed placement for another option at a later time.

For all other practicum policies and course components, please see the MSW Practicum Manual: <https://carleton.ca/socialwork/wp-content/uploads/MSW-Manual-August-2020.pdf>.

### **To Conclude:**

We appreciate your ongoing understanding that the COVID-19 pandemic means inevitable uncertainties about placement availability. Much remains unknown and evolving about this situation. However, the field team is committed to maintaining the integrity and consistency of social work field education and to developing high-quality field learning opportunities for social work students during the pandemic. This includes establishing the above remote/alternate practicum options and related policies and guidelines, as well as building and sustaining supportive relationships with community partners to enhance their capacity to onboard and supervise social work students during the current times.

We are keenly motivated to place as many of you as possible, and to provide solid support both up until such time as your plan is clear, and over the course of your placement.

It may not be possible for all students to secure field placements for the summer term in spite of all efforts made to identify options. If this turns out to be the case for you, we will continue to work together to explore your options for the 2021 academic year.

At this time, we look forward to receiving your MSW Practicum Application/Summer 2021 Form and current social work resume by January 10<sup>th</sup>, and to working with you this winter term.

Kindest regards,

Allison Everett, MSW, RSW  
MSW Practicum Coordinator and Instructor  
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