



School of Social Work

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To BSW students preparing for the fourth-year practicum course (SOWK 4600 or SOWK 4601-4602) this fall term:

The following message provides detailed information about the fourth-year practicum courses (beginning in fall 2021) 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.

NOTE: The COVID-19 pandemic has significantly impacted the operations, funding, and staffing levels and workloads in most community settings. Placement constraints continue to be a reality. The field team has been working continuously to respond to the challenges posed by the pandemic, and to implement new placement options to meet the needs of our students and our placement partners every term. However, the situation in the community is ever-changing, and how things will unfold come the fall and winter terms 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.

General course information:

Practicum II (SOWK 4600 or SOWK 4601-4602) is a two-credit mandatory practicum course, normally taken in the fourth year of the program.

Students must meet the following prerequisites to be eligible for Practicum II:

- 3rd year standing in the BSW program
- Good academic standing
- Completion of SOWK 2001, SOWK 2005, SOWK 2100, SOWK 2202, SOWK 2203, SOWK 3100, and SOWK 3600 or SOWK 3601 or SOWK 3602
- Must formally apply by **March 10, 2021** (See: Application & Matching Process below)

Practicum II consists of the following components:

- Field placement in a community setting (between 264 to 352 field hours)
- Mandatory attendance and participation in concurrent Practicum Seminars
- Faculty Liaison consultations
- Completion of all written requirements (learning contract, theory-to-practice assignment, mid- and end-point evaluations, record of hours)

There are two options for Practicum II: SOWK 4600 and SOWK 4601-4602.

Students in **SOWK 4600** (2.0 credits) complete their field placement over one term (September – December) on a 3-4 day per week basis, or the equivalent of 21-32 field hours per week, excluding meal breaks. (SOWK 4600 is offered in the fall and summer terms only.)

Students in **SOWK 4601-4602** (1.0 credit each term) complete their field placement part-time throughout the full academic year (September – April) on a 2 day per week basis (14-16 field hours per week, excluding meal breaks). Students must register for SOWK 4601 (1.0 credit) in the fall term, and SOWK 4602 (1.0 credit) in the winter term. The field placement is completed in one setting over both terms. **Note:** There are fewer part-time placement options than full-time ones at the fourth-year level.

Practicum II is graded on a satisfactory/unsatisfactory basis.

Placement Hours:

In 2021-2022, BSW field placement hours will consist of a minimum of 264 hours, up to 352 field hours.

The Canadian Association for Social Work Education (CASWE-ACFTS), our accrediting body, has reduced the minimum requirement for placement hours to 75% for any BSW placement affected by the COVID-19 pandemic. This means that placements occurring during the fall-winter of 2021-2022 will consist of a minimum of 264 field hours, and up to a maximum of 352 field hours (100% of normally required field hours per practicum).

SOWK 4600 placements will take place between September 08th, 2021 and December 10th, 2021.
SOWK 4601-4602 placements will take place between September 08th, 2021 and April 12th, 2022.

Practicum Seminars:

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

Participation in integrative practicum seminars is a mandatory component of practicum courses. For SOWK 4600, five practicum seminars will be held during the fall term. For SOWK 4601-4602, six practicum seminars will be held over the fall-winter terms.

The practicum seminars involve synchronous learning (they are held in real time). Students must be available to attend and participate in all scheduled seminars, which will be held on Friday mornings (9-11:30 am).

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

Application & Matching Process:

To proceed with a SOWK 4600 or SOWK 4601-4602 practicum, you must submit a BSW Practicum Application/F2021 Form (attached), along with an updated social work resume, no later than March 10th, 2021.

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

In the BSW 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 fall-winter practicum 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: you must 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.

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.** Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, many of our placement agencies are unable to work at their full capacity and have needed to significantly reduce placement positions or put an indefinite hold on student placements. Given these factors, some agencies and areas of practice may not be available. Additionally, some settings require specific knowledge, skills, abilities or level of study. Students who are flexible and open to a wide variety of practicum opportunities are best positioned to be successful in being matched for the fall-winter terms.

Receiving a Placement Match

You will be advised of a potential match via email between March- July.

If you elect to be matched, please ensure that you are checking your Carleton email regularly for news of a placement match between March and July. 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, as well as ensures an equitable and fair process for all students.

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 BSW Practicum Application Form.

Some settings are offering fully remote placements at the present time, 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. However, please note that remote placements are limited and cannot be guaranteed to be available at all times. Most settings that are offering remote placements at the present time do plan to reopen to in-person activities at some point in the future. When available, priority for remote placements will be given to students with demonstrated need. In selecting this option, students must be able to 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 availability for the minimum required field hours each week (21 hours for SOWK 4600, and 14 hours for SOWK 4601-4602) during standard work hours).

Some settings are offering in-person placements. These placements include face-to-face activities. During the COVID-19 pandemic, 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 fall-winter terms, in-agency placements may be affected. The School would notify students of any changes as they arise, and work with students, wherever it can be arranged, to transition to remote and online activities to continue their field hours.

Please note that most settings are offering a combination of remote and in-person activities. More options will be available to you if you are open to both remote and in-person options. **Students are asked to indicate their interest in remote and in-person options on the BSW 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 BSW Practicum Application Form, due by March 10th.**

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 beyond April 2022. 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 March and July, as per the process noted above ('Receiving a Placement Match'). You must respond within three days to maintain priority, and submit your tailored cover letter and resume by the stated deadline.

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 then rest with the placement agency.

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 about 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.

Student instructions:

- Please confirm your interest in this option via the attached BSW Practicum Application Form due by March 10th.
- Monitor your email closely from March to July 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 that is 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 a current or former place of employment. To have your paid employment count towards your field hours, OR to establish a separate, unpaid opportunity within a current or former 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 a BSW 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 the minimum required hours for your course: **SOWK 4600**: Minimum of 21 field hours per week (does not include meal breaks), to take place between Sept. 08th, 2021 and Dec. 10th, 2021, for a minimum total of 264 hours, and up to 352 hours.

SOWK 4601-4602: Minimum of 14 field hours per week (does not include meal breaks), to take place between Sept. 08th, 2021 and April 12th, 2022, for a minimum total of 264 field hours, and up to 352 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. Wherever possible, your field placement should be completed under the supervision of someone who has not previously supervised your work in the agency. This person should have a BSW or MSW degree. If this is not possible, other supervisors (including current or former supervisors, and/or individuals with other educational qualifications) may also be acceptable depending on the nature of the agency and work. Please discuss the supervisory criteria with the Practicum Coordinator.
- 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 BSW Practicum Application Form due by March 10th.
- 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 Brooke Eagle at the earliest opportunity, and no later than **April 28th**:
Brooke.eagle@carleton.ca
- Clearly indicate whether your placement position will be paid or unpaid. The placement 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 BSW program.

- b. The placement opportunity must allow you to engage in relevant field learning activities at the BSW level.
- c. Your proposed activities must consist of the minimum required hours for your course:
SOWK 4600: Minimum of 21 field hours per week (does not include meal breaks), to take place between Sept. 08th, 2021 and Dec. 10th, 2021, for a minimum total of 264 hours, and up to 352 hours.
SOWK 4601-4602: Minimum of 14 field hours per week (does not include meal breaks), to take place between Sept. 08th, 2021 and April 12th, 2022, for a minimum total of 264 field hours, and up to 352 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 agency and work. Please discuss the supervisory criteria with the Practicum Coordinator.
- 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 BSW Practicum Application Form due by March 10th.
- If this option is of interest to you, please identify and apply to positions immediately. Contact Brooke Eagle 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 Brooke Eagle as soon as possible and no later than **April 28th**: Brooke.eagle@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 170 field hours, and up to 250 field hours, during the practicum term (September – April). Students must find and secure a volunteer position directly. The opportunity may include fully remote and/or in-person activities. However, do note that during any periods of closures, in-person activities may be affected. Your volunteer hours will count toward your required practicum hours, and supervision and integration activities will be provided by the School.

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
- Certified Listeners Society:
<https://certifiedlisteners.org>

With this Mixed Delivery Practicum option, the school provides the supervision and evaluation externally (through the Faculty Liaison). Attached is a handout that describes this option in detail.

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

1. Direct social work practice experience (170-250 hours)
2. A tailor-made training agenda (10-30 hours)
3. Weekly field practice supervision (14-21 hours)
4. Engagement with the online Practicum Learning Portal (up to 70 hours)

Student instructions:

- Please confirm your interest in this option via the attached BSW Practicum Application Form due March 10th. 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 the minimum required field hours for your course per week, during the applicable placement timeframe for your course.
- Proceed to complete the attached “MDP Proposal” and submit to Brooke Eagle at the earliest opportunity, and no later than **April 28th**: Brooke.eagle@carleton.ca
- It is understood that your volunteer position may only be tentative as of April 28th. This is acceptable. However, your volunteer position must be fully established and confirmed (e.g. completion of a criminal record check and all other volunteer requirements, such as volunteer training) no later than August 01st (to begin accruing field hours from September to April). By submitting an application for an MDP as of April 28th, you are indicating your commitment to proceeding with this option. A “match” at a later date will not be possible.
- Once your volunteer 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 **April 28th**, please advise the BSW Practicum Coordinator Brooke Eagle at brooke.eagle@carleton.ca so that you can be included in the matching process at the School. **April 28th is the final deadline to inform the Field Coordinator if you wish to be matched by the School.** Please note that matches as of April 28th onwards will occur based on placement availability only.

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 year. Again, please note, SOWK 4600 is offered in the fall and summer terms only.

Placement Policies:**Matching Policy:**

In order to ensure an equitable and fair process for all students, and to ensure we retain our valued field partnerships, students are permitted to apply to one setting at a time only. Once you elect to apply to a setting, you will not be offered alternative options. You are expected to review the placement information and website fully in preparing your tailored cover letter. In submitting your application, you are demonstrating your full commitment to proceeding with the setting. Please note that all decisions to extend an interview and placement offer rest with the setting. If you are offered and accept a field placement position following an interview, you would not be permitted by the School to withdraw from that position for another opportunity at a later date, as, at that point, you are making a professional commitment to the setting in accepting the student placement position.

For all other practicum policies, please see the BSW Practicum Manual:

<https://carleton.ca/socialwork/wp-content/uploads/BSW-Practicum-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 fall-winter 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 with you to establish alternative course sequencing options should a practicum deferral be required.

At this time, we look forward to receiving your BSW Practicum Application/F2021 Form and current social work resume by March 10th, and to working with you this spring/summer.

Kindest regards,

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