

**Westfield State College**  
**Department of Sociology and Social Work**

***Social Work Program***

**FIELD MANUAL**

Department of Sociology and Social Work  
Westfield State College  
Westfield, MA 01086

FAX: 413-562-3613

[www.wsc.ma.edu/socialwork](http://www.wsc.ma.edu/socialwork)

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## Introduction to the Social Work Practicum and the Field Manual

**The Social Work Practicum:** The social work practicum provides social work students with an opportunity to demonstrate, practice, and learn social work skills; examine and test their understanding of social work values; apply and integrate classroom learning; acquire new knowledge about social work practice in a variety of substantive areas and practice settings; and develop an identity as a professional social worker. The practicum experience is an integral part of social work education and it is highly valued by social work students, field instructors, and social work educators.

The Social Work Practicum at Westfield State College is a 400 hour academic year practicum. Social work students spend an average of sixteen hours per week in the field for both semesters of their senior year. In addition to the time spent in the field setting, practicum students also participate in a weekly *Integrative Seminar*. This seminar provides students with an opportunity to discuss and compare practicum experiences, learn from and teach each other, examine personal values and ethical issues in social work practice, and further integrate knowledge and experience through structured assignments and activities.

The Social Work Program at Westfield State College is accredited by the Council on Social Work Education. The Council on Social Work Education's curriculum policy guidelines for field instruction, the objectives of the Social Work Program at Westfield State College, and the learning needs of each student are the criteria upon which placement sites are selected and assigned.

**The Field Manual:** This field manual is provided to all social work students and field instructors. It is designed to help social work students understand, apply for, and complete their social work practicum. It provides both students and field instructors with an overview of the Social Work Practicum and its objectives, expectations, and requirements.

Students will receive a copy of this manual early in the spring term of their junior year. They are advised to review the material in this Field Manual immediately so that they may be prepared to apply for the senior year practicum. Field applications are due in March of the Junior year. Application materials and instructions are included in this manual. This manual also contains important information about the practicum and includes forms that will be used by students and their field instructors during the practicum year. **Students are expected to retain and use this manual throughout their time in the Social Work Program.**

### ***Objectives of the Social Work Practicum***

The goals and objectives of the Social Work Program at Westfield State College were developed to reflect the program's mission and the Council on Social Work Education's Curriculum Policy Statement for Baccalaureate Degree Programs in Social Work Education. The objectives of the Social Work Practicum reflect the overall goals of the program and emphasize the goals that are particularly relevant to the practicum experience.

**Goal #1:** Students will demonstrate an understanding of the field of social work by being able to:

- *describe the roles that social workers perform in a variety of practice settings.*

**Goal #2:** Students will demonstrate critical thinking skills by being able to:

- *locate, critically evaluate, and use research relevant to practice with specific client populations.*
- *use empirically-based methods to evaluate their interventions.*

**Goal #3:** Students will demonstrate an ability to practice social work within the parameters established by the Social Work Code of Ethics by being able to:

- *understand and adhere to the values and ethical guidelines of the social work profession.*
- *critically assess agency policies and practices in regard to their congruence with the values and ethics of the social work profession.*
- *understand and be able to resolve ethical dilemmas in the field.*

**Goal #4:** Students will demonstrate the knowledge needed to assess problems that impact client systems of various sizes by being able to:

- *recognize and value the diversity of individuals, families, groups, and communities.*

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- *identify and work to ameliorate environmental conditions, such as oppression and discrimination, that negatively impact individuals, families, groups, or communities.*
- *describe and understand the situations and conditions that place many social service and public agency clients at risk.*
- *use knowledge about the impact of biopsychosocial factors on human behavior and development throughout the life course.*

**Goal #5:** Students will demonstrate the knowledge and skills to practice social work from a generalist perspective by being able to:

- *apply generalist social work knowledge and skills through supervised practice with diverse populations.*
- *demonstrate the professional use of self and an ability to work collaboratively with clients to identify client strengths, examine possible solutions to problems, and contract for, implement, and evaluate interventions.*
- *demonstrate self awareness and be able to identify the ways that clients may be affected by the student's values, beliefs, experiences, and identities.*
- *use supervision to enhance and evaluate their practice.*
- *document appropriately and communicate effectively in a professional setting.*

***THE SOCIAL WORK PRACTICUM AT WESTFIELD STATE COLLEGE***

**Responsibilities of the Westfield State College Social Work Program:**

*The Social Work Program at Westfield State College is committed to providing high quality education in generalist social work practice at the baccalaureate level. The Program will demonstrate its commitment by:*

1. initiating relationships and contacts with existing and potential practicum agencies to clarify the agency's interests and needs and the Program's expectations and requirements;
2. working collaboratively with the student to identify a practicum site that will take into consideration the student's personal goals, meet the student's educational needs, and satisfy the requirements of the Social Work Program;
3. assisting students in applying to and interviewing with identified agencies;
4. providing agencies with pertinent and permissible information about student applicants and negotiating and confirming the agency's and the student's acceptance of a practicum assignment;
5. offering a structured orientation session for field instructors at the beginning of each academic year that includes information about the objectives and requirements of the Social Work Program and the Social Work Practicum; the components, sequencing, and content of the social work curriculum; and strategies for supervising students at the baccalaureate level;
6. conducting a weekly Integrative Seminar that will offer structured assignments, informal discussions that will allow students to compare field experiences and discuss concerns, and experiential exercises that will assist students in integrating classroom and experiential knowledge, acquiring and strengthening skills, and exploring personal and professional values and ethics;
7. providing a faculty liaison who is available to the student and the field instructor on an ongoing basis, meets with the student and the field instructor at least once each semester, assists in identifying the student's educational goals and developing learning assignments, and, with the assistance of the student and the field instructor, evaluates the student's performance and assigns final semester grades.

**Responsibilities of the Field Coordinator:** The role of the Field Coordinator is to plan and oversee all aspects of the field component of the Social Work Program. In collaboration with the Program Director, the Field Coordinator: develops field-related policy, evaluations, and curricula; works together with community agencies to create and maintain practicum sites that meet the educational needs of students and contribute positively to the functioning of the practicum agencies; provides orientation and training for field instructors; and assigns students to practicum sites: The field coordinator may also serve as the faculty liaison between the college and the Practicum agencies and/or conduct the Integrative Seminar.

**Responsibilities of the Faculty Liaison**

The faculty liaison acts as the primary liaison between the student, the field instructor, and the Social Work Program. Responsibilities of the faculty liaison include assisting the student and the field instructor in identifying learning goals and developing the educational agreement; making at least one visit per semester to the practicum site to meet with the student and the field instructor; working with the student and the field instructor to clarify roles and resolve conflicts; and assisting in the evaluation of students and field experiences.

**Criteria for selection of field sites and the responsibilities of Practicum agencies:**

*By offering the skills, time, and knowledge of their staff to social work students, community agencies demonstrate their commitment to social work education. The Social Work Program at Westfield State College acknowledges and honors this commitment by establishing criteria for the selection of practicum sites that clearly and explicitly state what the Program must require from the practicum agency in order to meet the Program's goals and the standards established by the Council on Social Work Education. These criteria are:*

1. The agency must have sufficient physical space to accommodate the student intern. This should include, at a minimum, a consistently available desk or work area in which, or from which, the student can work directly with clients. Ideally, the student should have his or her own desk. If the agency requires that the student conduct business using a computer, a computer should be made available to the student on a consistent and regular basis.
2. The agency or field instructor will provide the student with information about any possible dangers associated with field assignments and with guidelines for safety and risk management specific to the agency's client populations, methods of intervention (i.e., infection control procedures, approved methods for restraint, etc.), and practice settings (i.e., home visits, travel through high-risk areas, etc.).

3. The agency must be interested in, and committed to, professional education and the application of research-based knowledge.
4. The agency's policies must be consistent with the pedagogical philosophies of Westfield State College and the values and ethical guidelines of the social work profession.
5. The agency must have clearly defined professional standards for social work services and practices and, if it is not primarily a social work agency, must integrate social work services with the work of other professionals within the agency.
6. The agency must be able to provide field instructors who have strong practice skills, are able to plan and implement structured learning experiences, have demonstrated commitment to their own professional development, and have had prior supervisory experience or will have access to experienced supervisors who will assist them in developing their supervisory skills.
7. The agency must be able to allow the field instructor sufficient time to respond to the student's need for direction, including at least one hour a week of uninterrupted time for formal supervision, to review and evaluate the student's written work, and to participate in field-related meetings and conferences.
8. The agency must be able to offer the student the opportunity to attend appropriate staff and in-service training meetings.
9. The agency must be able to provide the student with an opportunity to work with diverse client populations.
10. The agency must provide an agency vehicle or reimburse the student reasonably for mileage and other incurred expenses that are directly related to agency business.

**Criteria for selection of field instructors and the responsibilities of field instructors:**

The field instructor plays a pivotal role in the development of a student's skills and professional identity and field instructors must be carefully selected. The Social Work Program at Westfield State College and the Council on Social Work Education expect that field instructors have a master's degree in social work from a certified school of social work. A field instructor who has a bachelor's degree in social work and/or a graduate degree in another human service field will be considered *if* the field instructor is able to meet a specific student's learning goals and no master's level social work supervisor with a comparable level of skill in

the same area of practice is available in the geographic area. Field instructors who have the personal and professional qualities required for competent social work will be able to:

1. plan and coordinate learning experiences that are consistent with the Program's requirements and the student's learning objectives;
2. provide at least one hour of uninterrupted supervision time weekly and ensure that a total of at least one additional hour of supervision by the primary supervisor or other professional staff is available to the student on a weekly basis;
3. ensure that the student is oriented to the agency's facilities, services, and policies;
4. make sure that the student is or has been provided with information about any possible dangers associated with field assignments and with guidelines for safety and risk management specific to the agency's client populations, methods of intervention (i.e., infection control procedures, approved methods for restraint, etc.), and practice settings (i.e., home visits, travel through high-risk areas, etc.) and do everything possible to ensure the student's safety;
5. make time to learn about the social work program and the social work curriculum;
6. participate, whenever possible, in field-related meetings and events offered by the college;
7. meet with the student and the faculty liaison at least one time per semester.
8. commit to providing continuity of supervision throughout the practicum year;
9. complete evaluation forms and other reports required by the Social Work Program on a timely basis;
10. notify the field coordinator in advance of any staffing changes that may affect the student's supervisory relationship.

**Responsibilities of the student:**

The student will demonstrate a commitment to his or her personal and professional development by:

1. being actively involved in the process of agency assignment and in the development of learning objectives.
2. completing the Educational Agreement in a timely manner and adhering to the terms of that agreement.
3. regularly attending and participating actively in the Integrative Seminar.
4. becoming familiar with, and be able to work within, agency expectations and policies.
5. actively participating in evaluative activities.
6. being familiar with and meeting the expectations of the Social Work Program as they are described in the Student Handbook and the Field Manual.

**Requirements for students planning to enter the field:**

Students should submit their practicum application forms as early as possible in the second semester of their junior year. Applications must be received **no later than the end of the sixth week of the Spring term**. The Field Coordinator, in consultation with other social work faculty, is responsible for deciding whether or not a student is ready to enter the field. Decisions are made on the basis of the following criteria:

**Readiness:** Students must have met all necessary program requirements and completed all prerequisite courses before they begin their practicum. Students who plan to finish prerequisite courses during their senior year will need to have approval from their advisors to enter the field. Information about course sequencing and other program requirements is available in the Social Work Program Handbook. Student are responsible for being familiar with the social work program's policies and procedures as described in the program handbook and field manual. **Responsibility for seeking clarification about program policies or procedures lies with the student.**

Students are expected to meet with their advisor at least once each semester to ensure that they will have met the necessary program requirements. Students are encouraged to discuss any questions they may have about the Social Work Practicum with the Field Coordinator or with their advisor.

The social work faculty recognize that all students come to the field experience with some areas of strength and some areas that need to be developed further. The purpose of the field placement is to *practice* and *learn* social work skills. Students are not expected (and should not expect) to be expert practitioners at the beginning or at the end of their practicum. However, it is the responsibility of the Social Work Program and of each student in the program to make sure that students do not enter the field until they have achieved the level of maturity and skill that is required for the protection and promotion of client, agency, and student well-being, and will reflect positively on the Social Work Program and Westfield State College.

By the time a student applies to go into the field, the Social Work Program faculty have had many opportunities to observe and interact with the student within and outside of the classroom. Faculty will draw upon these experiences to assess a student's readiness for field.

**Faculty may judge a student to be unready for the field if:**

- the student has had a pattern of excessive unexcused absences
- the student has repeatedly come to class late or unprepared
- the student has repeatedly turned assignments in late;
- the student has been observed by a faculty member behaving in a *significantly* inappropriate way (for example, coming to class intoxicated)
- the student is unable to commit to the values and ethics of the social work profession.

Students who suspect that they may have issues that could affect their work with certain clients, students who may be affected by alcohol and/or other drug use, and students who are experiencing severe emotional stress or distress should discuss their situation with the Field Coordinator or the Program Director as soon as possible so that the faculty can assist them in identifying an appropriate course of action and determine their readiness for field.

Students who disagree with a faculty decision about readiness for field have the right to appeal the faculty's decision through the academic appeals process.

**Preparation:** Students should begin to think about the kind of field experiences they would like to have soon after they have been accepted into the program. Students who are interested in working with specific populations (i.e., children, the elderly) or with specific problems (i.e., domestic violence, substance abuse) may wish to explore these interests by using their course assignments to learn more about these areas. Students are encouraged to discuss their interests with the Field Coordinator as soon as possible. Students applying for field may also wish to talk to students who are already in the field to find out more about the practicum experience. Students may also, by arrangement and with agency

consent, accompany a current intern to his or her internship for a day to learn more about an agency or placement.

**Application:** Students who expect to do their practicum the following year **must** fill out the *Practicum Application form* and hand in the completed form and a current resume to the Field Coordinator **NO LATER THAN THE END OF THE SIXTH WEEK OF THE WINTER SEMESTER**. Students will indicate their preferences for specific practicum sites or specific client populations on this form. The Field Coordinator will make every effort to place each student in the kind of setting that the student has requested. However, students must understand that locating and establishing new practicum sites can take several months. The Field Coordinator will not be able to accept practicum applications that are late except in extreme circumstances. **Students who leave at the end of Winter term without a confirmed practicum assignment will NOT be able to go into the field in the Fall unless** the student has been actively working with the Field Coordinator to locate an appropriate placement.

**Interviewing:** Once the student has received a tentative agency assignment, he or she is responsible for contacting the agency to set up an interview. Both students and agencies have the right to decline an assignment but students who reject an assignment may find that alternative assignments offered do not necessarily fit as closely with their stated preferences. The final decision about a student's placement is made by the Field Coordinator. Students may request assignment to agencies that do not have an existing relationship with the Social Work Program. The Field Coordinator will explore the feasibility of these requests, but cannot promise that these agencies will be judged suitable for a placement or be willing to accept a student. Students are strongly discouraged from requesting placements in an agency where they are or have been employed

To prepare for a pre-placement interview students should attempt to find out as much as they can about the assigned agency. Students should be prepared to answer questions about: why they want to be a social worker; why they wish to do their practicum at that particular agency; what skills or experiences (personal strengths, coursework, employment or volunteer work) they will bring to the field; what their learning goals are, and what their long-term professional goals are. Since the student is also evaluating the agency as a possible practicum site, the student should come to the interview prepared to *ask* as well as *answer* questions. Asking thoughtful questions about the agency's services and policies will convey to the agency representatives that the student is genuinely interested in the placement.

Students should plan to arrive for their interview early, dress appropriately (too formal and "conservative" is better than too casual), make eye contact with interviewers and other agency staff, and be enthusiastic. It is not recommended that students offer unsolicited personal information or answer any personal questions that seem inappropriate. Any interview experiences that seemed

strange or felt strangely uncomfortable should be discussed with the Field Coordinator.

**Following up:** It is strongly recommended that students follow up an interview with a brief note thanking the interviewer for his or her time. Students who decide not to pursue a placement where they have interviewed should let the agency representative know **as soon as possible** about this decision so the agency can make the placement available to another student. Students who accept (and are accepted by) an agency should let the agency representative know how they can be reached over the summer. Students who do not hear back from the agency representative or are unclear whether or not they have been accepted should *call to clarify their status*. All students should discuss possible work hours and start dates with the practicum representative within the first two to three weeks after the interview. Students should call or write the practicum agency representative again in August to let the agency know when they will be back on campus, their campus address and phone number (if known), and when they hope to begin their practicum. In the event that things become unclear or confusing at this or at any other point in this process, students should ask the Field Coordinator to assist them. Placements sometimes “fall through” when, for example, a staff person dies or leaves the agency. If this appears to be happening, the student should contact the Field Coordinator as soon as possible so that an alternate placement can be found without delay.

### **The Practicum Year**

*The practicum year spans both semesters of the senior year. Students will register for the six credit course SOCW 0351 in the first semester and the six credit course SOCW 0352 in the second semester. They will spend a minimum of two hundred hours in the field each semester for a total of 400 hours of actual field experience. In addition, they will participate in weekly meetings of the Integrative Seminar. Specific goals for each semester of field instruction, including the seminars, will be stated on the course syllabi.*

**The Practicum Courses, SOCW 0351 and SOCW 0352:** The senior field experience provides opportunities for students to learn how to apply knowledge and values and further develop skills in social work practice by providing services to clients in an agency setting under the supervision of a qualified agency field instructor. The purpose of the seminars is to help students make connections between their academic work in social work and their field experiences. In addition, by bringing students together from many different field work agencies, the seminars offer an opportunity to broaden each student’s exposure to the field of social work through the sharing of experiences and ideas in the seminar sessions.

**Guidelines for professional behavior in the field:** Students are expected to behave professionally at all times while they are in the field. In order to remain in the field, students must maintain an agreed upon schedule, arrive and leave at the proper time, contact the agency as soon as possible if they need to be absent, and follow a written agreement for making up missed time. Students are expected to conduct themselves at all times in a manner consistent with the values and ethics of the social work profession. A copy of the current NASW *Code of Ethics* is provided in the student handbook.

Students should dress in a manner consistent with agency practice, but should not dress more casually than the *majority* of the staff in the agency. Attire such as jeans is rarely appropriate for students. Students who dress in an overly casual way are usually perceived negatively by clients and staff, even if some staff dress in a similar way.

Students must follow NASW guidelines for dual relationships and other inappropriate behaviors with clients. It is also important that students take great care in monitoring their relationships with agency staff. Students sometimes are pulled unwittingly into agency “politics” or into conflicts between staff. To avoid this kind of involvement, students should not participate in discussing staff members “behind their backs” except when it is appropriate to do so with their supervisor. It is usually safest for students not to disclose a great deal about themselves or to become overly friendly with agency staff. Concerns about relationships with clients and staff should be discussed with the field instructor and/or the Field Coordinator.

Students may be paid for their work in an internship. To be considered an internship it still must meet the following requirements:

- a. Students are not expected to carry the same workload as regular employees. An internship is a place for students to practice new skills and integrate new knowledge. It is not reasonable to expect the student to work at the same rate or pace as an employee.
- b. Students will be provided with levels of support and supervision that maintain the integrity of the learning experience, which usually equates to more supervisory time than a regular employee receives.
- c. If a student is completing an internship in his/her current work place, the internship must have work assignments that are different from the student’s normal work assignments and the student must have a different supervisor than his/her normal supervisor. *This part of the policy does not apply directly to students doing internships for teacher certification, an experience recognized by the state Department of Education for individuals already employed in the school setting.*

Students are expected to maintain complete confidentiality in regard to agency clients. Clients should not be discussed in the presence of **anyone** (including agency employees) who is not directly involved in the case except in

case conferences or supervision. Students should avoid discussing the “particulars” of cases with friends (and partners) and should **never** disclose client names to others or use actual client names in their process recordings, journals, course notebooks, papers, etc.

***The Educational Agreement:*** Students are expected to complete a draft of a “learning contract” or *Educational Agreement* no later than the end of their sixth week of their practicum. This document should reflect the student’s goals for the practicum experience, the agency’s expectations, and the Social Work Program’s requirements. The learning contract will be drafted in the integrative seminar and discussed with the field instructor. A completed Educational Agreement must be signed by the student, the field instructor, and the faculty liaison by or at their mid-term meeting.

***Supervision:*** Agency staff who supervise students are called field instructors. A student may be supervised by more than one person at an agency but should be able to meet at least once a week for a minimum of an hour with his or her primary social work supervisor. The student and the field instructor will work together to develop appropriate learning goals and learning activities for the student. The student should come to supervisory sessions prepared to discuss specific issues, cases, concerns, or questions.

***Use of student vehicles for agency business:*** The agency will provide students with an agency vehicle for the purpose of conducting agency business if at all possible. Use of student vehicles for transporting clients is discouraged and students and field instructors must understand that transporting clients may involve increasing the student’s automobile insurance coverage. If this is the case, the student and field instructor must discuss who will be responsible for the increased cost. **Students may only transport clients in their own vehicles if they have been authorized to do so by the Field Coordinator.** Permission to do so will only be granted after the student has provided the Field Coordinator with evidence that the student carries automobile insurance that covers business use of the vehicle. Students who use their own vehicles for agency business should be reimbursed by the agency for all expenses incurred, including reasonable mileage. Students themselves are responsible for any expenses, including parking, associated with transporting themselves to and from the practicum site.

***The faculty liaison and the mid-term meeting:*** The faculty liaison is the faculty member who helps the student develop the educational agreement, assists the field instructor and student develop appropriate learning activities, meets with the student and field instructor at least once every semester to evaluate progress and offer feedback, and coordinates the evaluation processes. The faculty liaison, in consultation with the field instructor, is also responsible for assigning the student's final semester grade. Currently the faculty liaison role is performed by the Field Coordinator.

***Resolving difficulties that arise in the field:*** Students who are having difficulty in the field should attempt to resolve these difficulties with the assistance of the Field Instructor. If this does not resolve the problem, the student should request assistance from the faculty liaison. In most cases, difficulties can be resolved through the combined efforts of the student, the faculty liaison, and the field instructor. If the difficulty is sufficiently severe and cannot be resolved in this manner, the Field Coordinator will consider a change of placement. If the student and the Field Coordinator cannot agree on an appropriate course of action, the student may involve the Program Director or initiate an academic grievance procedure.

***Probation/dismissal policies for students in the field:*** Since the Social Work Practicum is considered an essential component of the social work student's academic preparation for social work practice, all reasons for being placed on probation or for being dismissed from the program, including unsatisfactory performance in the field, are considered to be academic reasons. The reasons for being placed on probation or being dismissed from the program and the student's rights during the processes of ameliorating problems, establishing probationary conditions, and dismissal, are described as follows:

Reasons for termination from the field

1. Serious or repeated violation of social work ethics as outlined in the NASW Code of Ethics.
2. Breaking a law in an agency-related matter or conviction of a felony during the practicum year. (If it is discovered while the student is in the field that the student has failed to disclose a prior serious criminal conviction, this may also be considered grounds for action.)
3. Evidence of chemical dependence or illegal use of drugs while enrolled in the program.
4. A serious breach of the practicum agency's policy.
5. A hostile or resistant attitude toward learning or supervision.
6. An inability to carry out assignments in the practicum.
7. Behavior that is emotionally or physically dangerous to agency clients.

8. Failure to achieve a passing grade in the Social Work Practicum seminar due to repeated unexcused absences from the field or the Practicum seminar or because of repeated failure to complete work assigned for the field and/or seminar instructor.

#### Probation/dismissal procedure

If a problem occurs in the field that cannot be resolved by the student and the field instructor, the faculty liaison may be contacted by either party and will meet with the student and the field instructor to try to resolve the problem. If these efforts are unsuccessful, the faculty liaison or the student may involve the field coordinator (if different from the faculty liaison) and the admissions committee. The admissions committee will examine the situation and, based on the severity of the problem, may require the student to develop a plan with the field coordinator and program director (probation) or may dismiss the student from the program. In the case of probation, the student will be required to develop a timeline for resolving the problem that is acceptable to the admissions committee. At the end of this period the admissions committee will review the student's status in the program.

If a student feels he or she was unfairly treated during the probation process or the dismissal process, he or she has the right to have his/her situation reviewed through the college's academic appeals process.

***The supervisor's evaluation of the student:*** Evaluation is a semester-long process that actively involves the student, the field instructor, and the faculty liaison. Students and field instructors will be provided with information early in the practicum about the evaluation process. In addition to the general evaluation form included in this Field Manual, the faculty liaison will assist the student and field instructor in evaluating the student's progress towards meeting the specific learning goals that the student identified in his or her Educational Agreement.

***The student's evaluation of the field experience:*** Students and field instructors will be provided with criteria for evaluating various aspects of the practicum experience at the time of the second liaison visit to the agency.

***Malpractice and liability:*** Lawsuits against social service agencies and colleges and universities are becoming more common in our increasingly litigious society. Students need to be aware that they may be sued individually or become involved in lawsuits against entire agencies or programs. The College also may be held liable for student misbehavior or malpractice in the field or for any perceived failure on the part of program faculty to provide the student with sufficient information, training, or appropriate protection of confidentiality. For this reason, students are required to purchase malpractice insurance. Low-cost

student malpractice insurance for students who are NASW members is currently available from NASW. The Field Coordinator also has information about other insurance options.

Students can limit their own risk and liability by being familiar with the NASW *Code of Ethics* and with the policies and expectations of Westfield State College, the policies and expectations of the Social Work Program as outlined in the Field and Program Manuals, and the policies and procedures of the agency where they are doing their internship.

Students who are concerned about the ethics of specific agency practices or specific assignments, students who experience discrimination, and students who experience sexual or other forms of harassment from supervisors, agency staff, clients, fellow students, or college staff, are urged to bring these concerns to their Field Instructor and the Field Coordinator (for internship related concerns), or to the Program Director (for concerns that are not related to the internship) as soon as possible.

***Student membership in NASW:*** All students are encouraged to join NASW and will need to be NASW members to be eligible for NASW student malpractice insurance. Students who are members will gain access to a great deal of information about local social work events and state and national issues affecting social workers. This information is provided by the national and state publications that are mailed to the student and through access to the "members only" sections of the NASW website. Applications for NASW membership and for NASW malpractice insurance are available from the Field Coordinator and may also be found on the NASW website ([www.socialworkers.org](http://www.socialworkers.org)).