

UNEXPECTED ENDING OF PLACEMENT POLICY

Acronyms and Meanings

FEM = Field Education Manager

FA = Faculty Advisor

FI = Field Instructor

UPD = Undergraduate Program Director

GPD = Graduate Program Director

An **Unexpected Ending of Placement** may occur for several reasons. These reasons include (but are not limited to):

- Concern about a lack of supervision
- Availability of appropriate or robust learning opportunities
- Concern about the safety of a student due to discrimination
- Concern about fit between student and agency
- Concern about student and Field Instructor relationship
- A personal situation that is impeding the student's ability to sustain the placement
- Field Instructor no longer being able to supervise placement (and no replacement available).

Engaging in a process of mediation through collaborative meetings with the Field Instructor and Faculty Advisor can be a learning opportunity for students. If this conflict resolution process is not possible, the Field Education Office will take steps to support the student (whether this includes advocating for some reasonable adjustments to the placement OR exploring an unexpected ending).

Students CANNOT decide, on their own, to end their placement. Students have committed to a contract -the Student Practicum Agreement- and are required to fulfill obligations for a successful placement. The process of the Unexpected Ending of Placement policy must be followed before a decision to end a placement is made. Not following through with the process as outlined below can result in a placement failure.

1. Ideally, the student and Field Instructor will attempt to address the difficulties arising in the placement during supervision and develop a plan of action. The Faculty Advisor should be notified of these difficulties and of the planned steps to be taken by the student and Field Instructor. If, however, the student is not comfortable speaking with the Field Instructor alone, the student will involve the Faculty Advisor. The Faculty Advisor normally arranges a meeting with the student, the Field Instructor, and the Field Education Manager (if required or requested), to discuss the concerns and develop a plan of action.
2. Follow up should take place no more than 12 placement days (approximately 1 month) after the initial meeting.
3. If the concerns and difficulties continue to persist, a follow up meeting (Exit Interview) can be requested. At this stage, an Unexpected Ending of Placement can be explored. A reminder that **students cannot end OR stop attending their placement without the Faculty Advisor and the Field Education Manager's approval beforehand.**

4. Normally the Field Education Manager, the Faculty Advisor, the student and Field Instructor will attend the Exit Interview. The Exit Interview is designed to provide an opportunity for the student and the Field Instructor to each say a few words about why they feel the placement has ended. Other discussion points can include: a review of work completed, review of log of hours and approval of said hours; feedback about strength and areas of growth; etc. There may be times when students feel some trepidation about voicing their experiences in an Exit Interview. In these situations, both the Faculty Advisor and Field Education Manager will support the student to share their feedback. The meeting is to serve as closure for all.
5. If there is disagreement about whether the placement should be terminated, the Field Education Manager, in consultation with Faculty Advisor, will determine the course of action to be taken. Decisions will consider the best interest of the student, Field Instructor and agency.
6. The Student is required to write a reflective paper (800-1000 words in length in APA format) and submit within 1 week of the Exit Interview. This paper should outline; what they learned in placement, their perspective on why the placement ended; what they could have done differently (if anything); what they would need from a placement and placement supervisor to successfully meet the placement requirements, and any other reflections from their experience.
7. There may be cases where it appears that there are concerns regarding the agency and/or Field Instructor's suitability to supervise a social work student. In these instances, concerns will be explored by the Field Education program and Undergraduate Program Director/Graduate Program Director to assess suitability as a placement site.
8. The Faculty Advisor and Field Education Manager will determine if the student is eligible to transfer any hours from the first placement to the alternative placement. For the BSW programs a maximum of **300** hours can be carried forward, and for the MSW programs a maximum of **200** hours can be carried forward to the second placement. To have hours carried over, an approved learning contract must be online. The Field Education Office cannot carry hours into another placement if there is no account of work completed.
9. Once the Unexpected Ending of Placement process (as outlined above) has been followed and the reflective paper is reviewed, students **may be** eligible for an alternative placement and will be connected to the Field Education Coordinator to begin the process of searching for an alternative placement. **Students need to be aware that the time it takes to find an alternative placement will vary according to the availability of placement opportunities. The process of finding another placement can result in the student being deferred to another placement cycle, as such delaying a student's convocation plans and having implications for tuition and OSAP.**
10. If a student has had two Unexpected Endings of Placement, the Field Education Manager and Faculty Advisor may involve the UPD or GPD in a meeting with the student before considering another placement.

Note: Exceptions to the Unexpected Ending of Placement Policy can be made by the Field Education Program based on health and safety reasons or concerns.

Summary of Unexpected Ending of Placement (Refer to details in section above)

