Stipends and Paid Internships

The foundation of the internship in social work education revolves around the dynamic of the student’s learning process being “at the center” of the experience. Payment of any kind (i.e. stipend, hourly, per diem, gas/travel expenses not otherwise covered, etc.) can tempt this dynamic to look more similar to employment than to student learning. Therefore, a shared knowledge of payment creates the opportunity for intentional discussion and possible planning so that the sacredness of “being a student rather than an employee” remains intact.

Any field agency that will be offering payment of any kind (stipend, hourly, per diem, gas/travel expenses to and from the site) to a social work student during the dates of the formal internship must submit a statement to the field education coordinator prior to the confirmation of the student intern. This statement shall include the amount, the payment process, and the agency policy/practice that accompanies this decision.

If this is a placement working with undergraduate or foundation year students, it will be important for the field instructor to talk with the field education coordinator to discuss the complexities of this practice. Unlike concentration year students who all have an opportunity to apply and be accepted to a paid placement, these students do not have a choice in placement. This invites a cautionary stance, as it sets up a situation where some students would be picked for a “paid” placement and others would not.

Additionally, all field students who are receiving payment from their field agency must talk about this with their faculty field liaison and put the details of this arrangement in their learning agreement.