**APPLICATION FOR CONVERTING AN EXISTING UNPAID PRACTICUM TO PLACEMENT AT EMPLOYMENT**

University of Vermont

Undergraduate and Graduate Social Work Programs

For a student to be eligible to convert an existing unpaid placement to one that is paid via employment, *both* agencies and students must be in good standing with UVM’s Department of Social Work Practicum Education program. This means that for students, there are no concerns regarding student practicum performance or academic progress within the Practicum course, etc., and for agencies, there are no concerns about the agency setting, scope of work, supervision, etc.

As with traditional Placement-at-Employment scenarios, students may apply to request consideration one (and only one) year of their social work practicum in their current place of employment, regardless of whether the employment was certified as a placement prior to the beginning of the academic year or was converted from unpaid to a paid practicum partway through.

The basic rationale for this policy is that for maximum educational growth, students must be exposed to a range and diversity of practice experiences to support their professional development, and the roles of student and employee differ within agency culture. As an internship is primarily an educational experience, social work educations (Practicum Instructors and On-Site Supervisors, if applicable) and students share the goal of protecting the “student status” of the student for the student’s educational requirements to be met and goals to be preserved.

Agency- and student-specific responsibilities regarding this process are delineated below.

Specifically, **agencies must**:

1. Continue to offer the student opportunities (tasks, assignments and learning experiences) that will allow them to **fulfill the nine (9) CSWE Competencies**[[1]](#footnote-1) and **requisite levels of practice** (with or on behalf of individuals, as outlined in the student’s Learning Agreement.
   1. If any competencies and/or level(s) of practice are not included in the current Learning Agreement, agree to **work with the student to develop Engagement Assignments** to meet these requirements.
2. **Negotiate directly with the student** the rate of pay (and any included benefits), the job description, and the length of employment (temporary or permanent) for the employment-based practicum.
3. Agree that students can complete ***all* required practicum hours** at the agency **as paid employment-based practicum**.
4. **Provide social work-specific supervision** *in addition to* required employment supervision.
   1. Per accreditation requirements, **while** **a student’s Practicum Instructor or On-Site Supervisor *may* be the same person as their work supervisor, this is to be avoided as much as possible.** If it cannot be avoided**, supervision time for placement-specific learning *must be separate from* (and *in addition to*) employment supervision.**
5. Work with the student to **complete and sign** the student’s completed “Conversion from Unpaid to Placement-at-Employment” application, and if needed, discuss information contained within with the Practicum Education Coordinator prior to approval.

Specifically, **students must**:

1. **Negotiate with the agency** the rate of pay (and any included benefits), the job description, and the length of employment (temporary or permanent) for the employment-based practicum,
2. Work with appropriate agency personnel to **complete and sign** the “Conversion from Unpaid to Placement-at-Employment” application and, if needed, discuss the information contained within with the Practicum Education Coordinator prior to approval.
3. **Inform their placement Liaison** of details related to the new arrangement in advance of the change.
4. **Update their Learning Agreement (LA) assignment (or Spring Learning Agreement Addendum [LAA])** to account for changes to existing scheduling arrangements, Engagement Assignments, and/or supervision.
   1. The updated LA/LAA must also include a comprehensive explanation of the monetary arrangements (including rate of pay and any benefits and the expected timeline for employment, such as post-practicum or over University breaks).
5. **Adhere to existing guidelines for employment-based placements** (For more information, see the policies “Placement Within Student’s Current Place of Employment [Placement-at-Employment]” and “Termination of Student Employment in Placement-at-Employment” on the UVM Department on Social Work Practicum Education Resources [website](https://www.uvm.edu/cess/socialwork/resources-social-work-students-field-instructors-and-supervisors) or in the Practicum Education manual.)

**NOTE: Students may not begin receiving employment compensation prior to the Practicum Education Coordinator’s formal approval of the student’s “Conversion from Unpaid to Placement-at-Employment” application (see next page).**

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**Directions:** Please add your text to the gray boxes below.

*Student:* *Please check this box to acknowledge you have read and fully understand the application text above in its entirety.* (Any lingering questions can be directed to the Practicum Education Coordinator for clarity.)

**Student information**

**Student Name:**   BSW  FMSW  SPMSW

**Student Contact Information:**

**Cell Phone:**

**UVM Email:**

**Work Phone:**

**Work Email:**

**Practicum/Employment information**

**Employing Agency/Organization**

**Employing Program:**

**Agency Main Address:**

**City/State/Zip**

**Main Phone:**

**Website:**

**Program Site Address (if different):**

**City/State/Zip**

**Site Phone (if different):**

**Student Job Title:**

**Employment Supervisor**

**Name**

**Title:**

**Work Phone:**

**Cell Phone:**

**Work Email:**

**Practicum Instructor**  **On-Site**  **Off-Site**

**Name:**

**Title:**

**Work Phone:**

**Cell Phone:**

**Email:**

1. **What are the terms of your employment**? Please indicate:
   1. **For how long** (e.g., duration of the academic year, post-practicum, etc.) **Temporary or permanent**?

* 1. Is the arrangement **full- or part-time?** H**ow many hours/week?**

* 1. What is the **rate of pay**? Hourly or salaried?

* 1. Are any **benefits** included? If so, what do these entail? If none, just write “N/A”.

* 1. Please share any other details of the employment arrangement not otherwise indicated.

1. a) Is there a **change in supervision** due to your being hired? **Yes**  **No**

b) If yes, **please indicate the specifics** of this supervision change.

1. Please **indicate briefly how becoming employed within your placement setting will change your existing practicum.** (If there will be no changes, just write N/A.)

1. a) Does your current Learning Agreement offer **opportunities to demonstrate *all* nine (9) social work education competencies**?  **Yes**  **No**

b) If no, **which competencies are not currently included**?

c) For **any competency (or competencies)** you noted as not included in your current Learning Agreement, you will need to develop an engagement assignment(s) to specifically to meet these requirements. **Please use the space below to indicate what new engagement assignment(s) could be added to your current Learning Agreement to meet any competencies not included.**

1. a) Does your current Learning Agreement offer you **exposure to** each of the following levels of practice(working with or on behalf of) at some point during their practicum: **individual work, family (or family systems) work, group work, community work, and organizational (inter- or intra-) work**?  **Yes**  **No**

b) If not, which level(s) of practice are not included?

c) For any **level(s) of practice** not included in your current Learning Agreement, you will need to develop an engagement assignment(s) specifically to meet these requirements. **Please use the space below to indicate what new engagement assignment(s) could be added to your current Learning Agreement to incorporate the level(s) of practice not previously included.**

1. As noted above, a social work internship is primarily an *educational* experience. As such, both social work educators—both Practicum Instructors and On-Site Supervisors (if applicable)—and students share the goal of preserving the student’s “student status” in this context. **How will you** and your Practicum Instructor (and on-Site Supervisor, if applicable) **ensure that your learning as a practicum student will be prioritized** now that you are also an employee?

1. Per the terms of this agreement (see above, or the “Converting an Existing Unpaid Practicum to Placement-at-Employment” policy on the UVM Department of Social Work Practicum Education Resources [website](https://www.uvm.edu/cess/socialwork/resources-social-work-students-field-instructors-and-supervisors) or in the Practicum Education manual), students converting an unpaid placement to placement-at-employment must be permitted to complete all of their practicum hours within the context of their employment. However, if the student is work, students may only count the expected weekly hours (~14-16/week for BSW, and MSW students, or ~20/week for Advanced Standing MSW students) towards their total required minimum hours for the academic year (450/600 respectively).
2. When submitting this completed application to the Practicum Education Coordinator, **please include a write-up of the job description** for the employment position upon which the student’s placement is/will be based.

**Organizational Endorsements**

*We, the undersigned, attest to the accuracy of the attached statements and have read the proposed plan. We understand and will support the academic needs of this employee that go beyond and are in addition to the ordinary requirements of employment.*

*We agree to provide the experiences noted in the attached application.*

*The student agrees to adhere to existing guidelines for employment-based placements and is aware that any changes in their employment must immediately be reported to their assigned placement Liaison, who will inform the Practicum Education Coordinator, and that loss of employment may also affect the internship placement.* (See the policies “Placement Within Student’s Current Place of Employment [Placement-at-Employment]” and “Termination of Student Employment in Placement-at-Employment” on the UVM Department on Social Work Practicum Education Resources [website](https://www.uvm.edu/cess/socialwork/resources-social-work-students-field-instructors-and-supervisors) or in the Practicum Education manual.)

***All requisite (typed) signatures must be included for application consideration.***

**Students may not begin receiving employment compensation prior to the Practicum Education Coordinator’s formal approval of the student’s “Conversion from Unpaid to Placement-at-Employment” application.**

**Please complete and email this application to the Practicum Education Coordinator,** [**Jean Sienkewicz**](mailto:jsienkew@uvm.edu) **as soon as possible*.***

Student

Proposed Practicum Instructor

On-Site Supervisor (if applicable)

Practicum Education Coordinator

(upon approval)

Date

Date

Date

Date

1. For more information about the Council on Social Work’s 9 social work education competencies, see the [2022 *Educational policy and accreditation standards for baccalaureate and master’s social work programs*](https://www.cswe.org/accreditation/standards/2022/), pp. 8-13. [↑](#footnote-ref-1)