

BSSW Credit-earning Out-of-region and International Coursework Policy

In keeping with University strategic priorities, College mission and goals, and Departmental goals, the Department has established the following policies in regards to BSSW student participation in credit-earning out-of-region (i.e., outside a 150 mile radius from Minnesota State University, Mankato) and or international educational opportunities. While there are myriad ways a student might want to use out-of-region or international experiences to earn credit toward an undergraduate social work degree, the following policies represent the types of opportunities that the Department endorses to provide sound academic experiences consistent with curriculum requirements and CSWE accreditation standards.

While some students may choose to use out-of-region or international opportunities to directly enhance their social work curriculum, other students seek additional travel experiences through the International Programs Office and other colleges and universities that, while not social work credit-earning, nonetheless enhance their educational experience. Students are encouraged to avail themselves of such educational experiences. Students may also want to talk with their advisor about adding the opportunity for credit by developing an academic component to their travel plan if one does not exist. *These policies are not intended to usurp the opportunity for student appeal (see Student Handbook).*

I. International and Domestic Credit-earning Opportunities

A) Students may elect to complete an out-of-region or international experience to meet the **Junior Field Experience, SOWK 312**. The student must complete all the standard paperwork requirements in advance, in consultation with their advisor and the instructor of record. Students will complete all the standard reports, evaluations, and logs, and submit those in the manner outlined in the SOWK 312 manual, including six email assignments in lieu of missed seminar.

B) Students may elect to complete an ***Exploratory Studies (SOWK 291)*** or ***Social Work Honors Paper (SOWK 495)*** or ***Individual Study (SOWK 499)*** in an international setting. The student must develop this study or paper with a social work faculty person who will be reviewing the finished study or paper and assigning the grade. This study or paper may be in conjunction with an experience through the International Programs Office or developed around international travel that the student plans privately. These experiences can be planned any time in the student's academic program as long as the student can negotiate that time frame with a social work faculty person.

C) Students who elect to do additional field placement hours may develop an ***Internship: Social Work (SOWK 497)*** in an out-of-region or international setting. This will not substitute for the required Social Work Practicum (SOWK 455). SOWK 497 will be planned with a social work faculty person who will be responsible for negotiating the number of credits, assignments, monitoring the internship, collecting the necessary paperwork and or assignments, and assigning the grade.

II. General Policies regarding BSSW Credit-earning Out-of-region and International Coursework

The following general policies apply to all credit-earning out-of-region (i.e., outside a 150 mile radius from Minnesota State University, Mankato) and or international educational opportunities.

A) Students must begin the planning process for any out-of-region or international social work credit-earning experience by formally contacting their advisor with a dated letter or other application materials, three (3) months in advance of the planned experience. The advisor will work with the student or make a recommendation to work with a different faculty member. All paperwork for the experience must be completed by end of the semester *before* the planned experience.

B) If contact with an international or out-of-region institution is required for the credit-earning experience to occur, the institution must have reliable access to, minimally, telephone and email. The reliability of any technology will be demonstrated by the use of the technology during the planning process with the faculty member with whom the student is planning the experience.

C) Students are expected to comply with Department of Social Work, MSU,M and or International Program Office policies for international travel, including but not limited to those policies related to conduct, liability, and documentation. Students are required to complete all documentation required by the International Program Office.

D) Students should be aware that adding an out-of-region or international experience may extend their academic program beyond the typical 4 – 4 ½ years for most undergraduates. Students should work carefully with their advisor and other faculty involved to integrate a credit-earning opportunity into an appropriate place in the curriculum sequence.

E) Evaluations of the domestic or international experience will be conducted by the involved faculty person for benefit of feedback to the Department regarding international and out-of-region credit-earning opportunities, and for ongoing assessment of the accomplishment of Departmental goals and objectives.

III. Social Work Practicum (SOWK 455)

Students must complete (*senior*) **Social Work Practicum, SOWK 455** within a 150 mile radius of Minnesota State University, Mankato. All policies and procedures for undergraduate field education, as outlined in the BSSW Student Handbook and the BSSW Field Manual, apply.

(Senior) **Social Work Practicum, SOWK 455**, is significantly integrated with two other courses; SOWK 450, Integrative Field Seminar, and SOWK 447, Social Work Practice IV. The agency at which the student is completing the practicum is the ‘laboratory’ setting for observations, application, and practice for course related learning activities. Integrative Field Seminar provides the opportunity for students to meet face to face to discuss and process their field experiences and Practice IV uses the student’s practicum agency to address

organizational content. Practice IV is only offered on-campus and must be taken concurrently with SOWK 450 and SOWK 455:

Students must request an exception to BSSW Field Education policy regarding SOWK 455, if a plan for SOWK 455 is outside of the 150 mile radius.

Requests for exceptions to this policy must be related to one or more of the following justifications:

Significant change in personal and/or family responsibilities, AND/OR
Significant economic/financial need, AND/OR
Access to practice experiences that is significantly different from those available within the 150 mile radius.

This request for an exception must be presented in writing three months in advance, for review on a case by case basis, by the BSSW faculty. The student making this request must also present a written plan which demonstrates that the courses, SOWK 447, SOWK 450, and SOWK 455, and related activities and/or field instruction responsibilities for these courses can be met.

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