**Acknowledgement of Risk in the Field Placement**

This document is designed to inform you of the potential risks associated with the field placement (SW 530-533/ SW 630-633), which is required for graduation with a Master of Social Work (MSW). It is the Social Work Program’s belief that you have a right to be informed of risks that are associated with this aspect of your educational and professional preparation and that with proper knowledge and preparation, risks can be minimized.

1. **Liability Insurance:** Professional liability coverage is required for most hospital settings. In addition, it is required that all students carry professional liability insurance. Coverage is available through membership in NASW. Membership applications are available in the Social Work Office. Because of the time required for processing membership applications, it is recommended that students apply for insurance as soon as possible after the first field orientation meeting. An important aspect of professional practice is knowing the limits of your knowledge and skills and avoiding helping situations that are not within your area of competence. Whenever you have a question about the handling of a particular case and whether or not a given intervention is appropriate, see your agency supervisor.
2. **Automobile Liability Insurance:** If you will be using your personal vehicle in the field, it is recommended that you check with your insurance company for a clear understanding of your coverage. Ask specifically what coverage you have if something happens while transporting a client.
3. **Background Checks:** Some agencies require official criminal background checks as well as drug screens. There may be a fee required with this requirement.
4. **TB Skin Test (PPD-S):** The prevalence of TB in society has seen an increase in recent years. If you anticipate a field practicum setting that serves populations at risk TB, it is recommended that you take this test prior to entering the field. Some settings may require this test.
5. **Client Office Visits:** Sometimes you may have a client in your office that become agitated or hostile. It is important that you discuss matters with your agency supervisor early in your internship to be informed of agency policy and recommended courses of action should such an event happen.
6. **Institutional Settings:** Mental health and correctional institutional settings serve a client population whose behavior may be unpredictable. Whenever you feel uncomfortable with a client, inform your supervisor. It is acceptable to have your supervisor or another staff person accompany you when visiting such clients.
7. **Home Visits:** It is not uncommon for social workers in a variety of social service settings to conduct home visits. Such visits do expose you to risks. It is important that all home visits be made with full knowledge of your agency supervisor – time of departure, time of return, other activities while on the trip, etc. Do not conduct a home visit when you feel uncomfortable or threatened in the situation. Return to the agency and report your experiences to your supervisor. Beware of dogs or other household pets that might be a threat. Do not make a visit when the presence of alcohol and drugs is detected. It may be appropriate for you to make visits accompanied by your supervisor or other agency staff. Do not take risks. Know who to call or what steps to take if you should experience a vehicle breakdown.
8. **After Hours Meeting:** Some social service settings have activities that occur beyond normal office hours. Be aware of the location of neighborhood where such activities take place, no street lighting, open spaces, shrubs, and other growth that might impair vision. It is suggested that you always be accompanied by your supervisor or someone else when going to your car after dark. Don’t take risks.
9. **Hepatitis B Vaccine:** If you anticipate a placement setting where there is the chance of being exposed to blood born pathogen, it is recommended that you get this vaccination. This involves a series of three injections over a 6-month period of time; the second injection is given 1 month following the first, with the third coming 5 months later. Given the time requirements for this protection, it is important that you begin immunizations at a time that would give you protection when you enter the field.

I have read the above, discussed these risks with the Director of Field Education or other field faculty and understand that the field practicum does present some risks. I further understand that participating in the field practicum may involve other risks and dangers, whether known or unknown nor reasonably foreseeable. I also understand that prudent choices and exercising caution can minimize these risks. I further recognize that it is my responsibility to become informed of agency policy and practices regarding the above situations. I fully understand the scope of the field practicum and the risks involved and voluntarily accept and assume all risks arising out of my participation.

Student: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Field Director: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

\*Adapted from James Madison University