**COVID-19 STATEMENT**

[**STUDENT SUPPORT MESSAGE FROM DR. DESROSIERS**](https://youtu.be/TpneHIauMvg)

Dear Social Work Students:

Understandably, in light of the recent COVID-19 Pandemic, some of you might be concerned about the potential impact on you, your families, and your college experience. I want you all to know that we value you. As educators, we are here to support our students. As social workers, we are committed to self-determination and we want to help you graduate on time with the skills you need to be an effective social worker. This demonstrates our commitment to you and the to the principle of social justice. If you graduate on time with the skills you need, not only will you be well served, but also your future clients will be.

**Because of COVID-19 social distancing requirements, in consultation with** [**WKU administration**](https://www.wku.edu/covid19/)**, the** [**Council on Social Work Education (CSWE),**](https://cswe.org/News/General-News-Archives/CSWE-Statement-on-Field-Hour-Reduction) **the** [**Kentucky Board of Social Work (BSW),**](https://bsw.ky.gov/Pages/index.aspx) **and the Kentucky Association of Social Work Educators (KASWE), the department has done the following to support students, faculty, and staff:**

* **Temporarily moved all coursework online with much support to students and instructors. See resources for WKU students below.**
* **Temporarily required field to be completed via virtual activities. See detailed message from Field Director McIntyre below.**
* **Temporarily required all faculty and staff to work from home. You may contact them via email and phone, but please be patient with response times. Many have young children currently at home due to school closures.**
* **Shared resources and information with students, staff, and faculty as clearly and quickly as possible.**
* **Extended BSW (May 15-details found below) and MSW (May 1) program application due dates.**

Please let us know if you have questions about any of these temporary changes. All have been communicated via email; however, there has been a lot of information shared in the past two weeks. Please take advantage of all of the resources available to you as needed during this pandemic event.

[**Click here for a VIDEO MESSAGE**](https://youtu.be/TpneHIauMvg)for students from Dr. Desrosiers, Department Head of Social Work.

**RESOURCES FOR WKU STUDENTS**

**Blackboard Help –** You can access [Blackboard help here](https://www.wku.edu/its/blackboard/) or by calling IT at (270) 745-7000. My rule of thumb is after 5 minutes of struggle, I call IT. You know your own limits.

**Coping with Stress -** The Counseling Center at WKU has several ideas about coping during crisis. Go here to read more about [these ideas.](https://www.wku.edu/heretohelp/resources/coping/)

**Emergency Student Assistance -** If you have experienced a significant hardship during the COVID-19 pandemic, you can email opportunityfund@wku.edu to explore possible financial relief. Information about the WKU Opportunity Fund is found [here.](https://www.wku.edu/opportunityfund/)

**Technology Access –** If you do not have broadband or laptop access.  Be aware that some internet companies in our region are offering [free broadband access to students during the pandemic](https://www.businessinsider.com/coronavirus-free-spectrum-internet-wifi-offer-student-households-promotion-2020-3). Students who need laptops should contact TopperTech via [this request](https://td.wku.edu/TDClient/Requests/ServiceDet?ID=225) so that they can provide information about our no-cost laptop checkout program.

**Zoom Help –** You can access [Zoom help here](https://www.wku.edu/its/zoom/) or by calling IT at (270) 745-7000.

**FIELD PLAN FROM FIELD DIRECTOR MCINTYRE**

Dear WKU Social Work Field Community (Field Liaisons, Field Instructors, and Task Supervisors),

I am following up on the email I sent to you on March 13th.  As you are all aware, COVID-19 continues to progress, with new information received daily.  The WKU Department of Social Work has made the very difficult decision that as of end of the day tomorrow, March 24th, all WKU social work field students must cease going to their field agency site.  All field practicum work will move to a remote format for the remainder of the Spring 2020 semester.  Students who are at approved worksite placements and those at paid placements will be permitted to continue on-site if their work requires it and safety precautions are in place.  Students with approved worksite and paid placements must check in with their field liaison to provide an update on agency safety precaution protocol during this pandemic in order to continue accruing field hours on-site.

Many of you have already ceased students on-site at your agency and have worked with the student on alternative tasks to complete remotely.  For those of you who have not ceased students on-site, the student will reach out to you as we are notifying them today that for the remainder of this semester they are to complete field placement hours remotely.  Students may assist agencies with tasks and projects remotely throughout the spring semester.  If you have tasks that students can do remotely to assist you or your agency, please feel free to work with the student on tasks they can do from home; however, if you are unsure or unable to assign them tasks, their liaison will work with them on a list of options they can do to earn field hours.

For those of you who have been able to allow students to continue on site, I know this may be disruptive to your plans for providing services during COVID-19.  We understand and sincerely regret the disruption this decision is likely to have on your agency, vulnerable clients, and direct service opportunities. Assessing all factors, we made this decision with heavy hearts knowing that it is not without consequence. We appreciate your patience, your flexibility and your care for each other as we navigate these challenging days!  Faculty field liaisons will be reaching out to their students to let them know that on-site hours must cease after March 24th.

Please reach out to your student’s field liaison or me if you have any questions.  Please know how grateful we are for our agency partnerships and the excellent training opportunities you provide our students!  I know that our students will continue to learn much as they participate in the responses to this time of crisis.  The learning will look different, as does the day to day for each of us currently.

Thank you for your patience and for your support of field students during these ongoing challenging times!

Kellye

Kellye McIntyre, CSW

Field Director

Social Work Department

Western Kentucky University
Direct Office Line: 270-745-5049

Fax:     270-745-6841

webpage: <http://www.wku.edu/socialwork/field/>

**Applications to the Social Work Major/BSW Program**

**Applications for Fall admission to the Social Work Major will be accepted at any time between now and May 15th.** The application form and application essay should be submitted to bswadmissions@wku.edu. Applicant interviews will be conducted via Zoom. To learn more about applying to the BSW Program see here: <https://www.wku.edu/socialwork/bsw/applicationprocedures.php>

**Council on Social Work Education Accreditation Updates**

[**CSWE and Commission on Accreditation Statement**](https://cswe.org/News/General-News-Archives/CSWE-Statement-on-Field-Hour-Reduction)

**March 25, 2020, Alexandria, Va.**

*The following statement is being shared with you in advance of a full statement from CSWE that is coming later today:*

The safety of students, educators, social workers, and their clients and communities are paramount to the Council on Social Work Education (CSWE) and its Council on Accreditation (COA). In response to the continuing impact of the COVID-19 pandemic, we are committed to supporting social work education programs as follows:

1. Student safety. *AS 2.2.7* requires that field education programs specify policies for

supporting student safety in field. Programs are encouraged to safeguard student safety

during the COVID-19 pandemic to the greatest extent possible, including suspending or

delaying field education placements when necessary for student safety.

2. Reduction in field hours. Under *AS 2.2.5*, field education programs provide a minimum of 400 hours of field education for baccalaureate programs and a minimum of 900 hours for master’s programs. Due to the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic, students who have completed 85% of the required placement hours (i.e., 340 hours for baccalaureate programs and 765 hours for master’s programs) to a satisfactory level may, at program discretion, be evaluated as having met the field placement requirements. *This option for reduced hours is for students whose field*

*completion dates occur by December 31, 2020.* Students whose field placement completion dates occur after December 31, 2020 will be expected to complete the full 400 or 900 hours in compliance with *AS 2.2.5.* Remote field activity, as well as field supervision and field seminar hours, may be counted toward the accrual of field hours.

3. Remote field activity. Although *AS 2.2.4* requires field education through “in-person

contact,” the Commission on Accreditation will broaden its interpretation to include

remote-based field activity. Remote field activity can include engagement such as field related assignments, trainings, and virtual meetings. Client-related virtual meetings

should be in accordance with field site policies for secure communications.

4. Candidacy or reaffirmation materials that are due in spring or summer 2020. Extensions will be granted for programs whose submission of materials has been disrupted by the COVID-19 pandemic. If your program needs an extension, please request an extension by email to MKurfess@cswe.org and copy your accreditation specialist. Please include a brief description of the program’s situation. The accreditation specialist will respond with the approved extension date.

5. Program site visits. Reaffirmation and candidacy site visits will be conducted through

virtual meetings, instead of on-site meetings, through December 31, 2020. The virtual

meeting directive may be extended as the COVID-19 situation warrants.

6. Assessment. Programs are encouraged to continue with their assessment plans to the extent possible. The Commission on Accreditation recognizes that assessment outcomes will likely be impacted by disruptions to class instruction and field. Programs who are in the process of reporting assessment outcomes as part of their candidacy or

reaffirmation self-studies are encouraged to provide context relative to the impact of

COVID-19. Programs may also address the impact of COVID-19 in implications for

program renewal and program changes explicit curriculum assessment and implicit

curriculum assessment.

We recognize these are extraordinary times and we will remain vigilant in supporting social work education programs and providing additional guidance as the COVID-19 pandemic continues to unfold.

Sincerely,

Deana F. Morrow, PhD, LICSW, ACSW

Chair, CSWE Commission on Accreditation

Mary Deffley Kurfess, MSSW, LCSW-C

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