



# CASWE-ACFTS

CANADIAN ASSOCIATION FOR SOCIAL WORK EDUCATION  
ASSOCIATION CANADIENNE POUR LA FORMATION EN TRAVAIL SOCIAL

**Commission on Accreditation  
Site Visit Report  
University of Toronto  
Faculty/School of Social Work  
MSW**

**Dates : March 2nd & 3rd, 2022**

**Members of the visiting team: Dr. Laura Béres and Dr. Jill Grant**

**Introduction :** The Factor-Inwentash Faculty of Social Work (FIFSW) at the University of Toronto is requesting re-accreditation of their MSW program, last accredited in 2012 for the full 8 years. The Self-Study for this review was submitted in October 2019 by then Dean Dr. Dexter Voisin and reviewed by Dr. Adje van de Sande (first reader) and Dr. Charles Grant (second reader). Readers' reports were prepared based on the self-study material in October 2019 and sent to the Dean of Social Work after review by the Commission on Accreditation (COA).

We want to thank all who worked on the self-study document for their care in organizing the material and the thoroughness with which they addressed each standard. We also want to thank current Interim Dean Dr. Charmaine Williams and Associate Academic Dean Dr. David Burnes for welcoming us and organizing the site visit (March 2nd and 3rd, 2022). We particularly thank Dr. David Barnes for all his work in planning the schedule of events for our site visit and, with the help of Sara Francis, taking care of our well-being during our visit.

**Overview and Background:** The FIFSW at the University of Toronto was established in 1914 as the Department of Social Services. It became the School of Social Work in 1941, the Faculty of Social Work in 1972, and the Factor-Inwentash Faculty of Social Work (FIFSW), as it is known today, in 2007. Initially granting diplomas until 1946, it then granted a BSW degree after 1 year of study following a BA and a MSW after 2 years of study following a BA. The BSW was discontinued in 1966. Initially accredited by US accrediting bodies from 1919-1978, it has been accredited by CASWE-ACFTS since 1978. FIFSW now offers three iterations of its MSW program: A full-time 1-year, post BSW program, a full-time 2-year program with students without a BSW, and

a part-time MSW for students with a BSW. There is one joint degree option available: the JD/MSW. FIFSW also offers a PhD.

As site visitors from COA, we were only meeting with various constituents in order to review compliance with the standards for accreditation regarding the MSW program, with its various fields of study as described below.

The Table summarizes the meetings that took place during the site visit and the number of people who attended each meeting.

*Meetings with constituents (in chronological order)*

<b>Constituents</b>	<b>Date</b>	<b>No. of Participants</b>
<b>Vice-President and Vice-Provosts</b>	<b>March 2, 2022</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>MSW Leadership Team</b>	<b>March 2, 2022</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>Dean</b>	<b>March 2, 2022</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>External Student Support Services</b>	<b>March 2, 2022</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>Students</b>	<b>March 2, 2022</b>	<b>11 (9 were via zoom)</b>
<b>Curriculum Innovation Committee</b>	<b>March 2, 2022</b>	<b>7 (2 via zoom)</b>
<b>Alumni Association</b>	<b>March 2, 2022</b>	<b>4 (all via zoom)</b>
<b>MSW First-Year Course Coordinators and Field of Study Coordinators</b>	<b>March 2, 2022</b>	<b>8 (3 via zoom)</b>
<b>Sessional Instructors</b>	<b>March 2, 2022</b>	<b>7 (5 via zoom)</b>
<b>Research Office</b>	<b>March 2, 2022</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>Faculty</b>	<b>March 3, 2022</b>	<b>13 (10 via zoom)</b>
<b>Practicum Office</b>	<b>March 3, 2022</b>	<b>6</b>
<b>Student Support Service</b>	<b>March 3, 2022</b>	<b>5</b>
<b>Individual faculty meetings offered</b>	<b>March 3, 2022</b>	<b>0</b>
<b>Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Committee</b>	<b>March 3, 2022</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>Field Supervisors and One Faculty Liaison</b>	<b>March 3, 2022</b>	<b>9 (all via zoom)</b>

<b>OASW and OCCSWSSW</b>	<b>March 3, 2022</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>Total Attendees</b>		<b>87</b>

## **Principles guiding accreditation:**

The FIFSW is to be commended on its ability to have met the principles guiding accreditation as they relate to principles of fundamental human rights and respect for diversity. All relevant principles have been met except for principle 9. The FIFSW continues to struggle to meet, and has admitted to having trouble meeting, principle 9 as it relates to the acknowledgment of the importance and complexity of the dynamics affecting Francophone people in the Canadian context. It is to be noted that the core learning objectives in the new Educational Policies and Accreditation Standards approved in 2021, under which the FIFSW will be reviewed for accreditation next time, continue to expect that social work students have the opportunity to identify and rectify the various forms of disrespect, marginalization and stereotyping towards Francophones and their communities and cultures (core learning objective 6 in the 2021 Standards). It is recommended that the FIFSW attend to developing ways to highlight and respond to the linguistic and cultural needs of French-speaking minority groups in their geographical context. Specific suggestions as to how this might be done are described below in Domain 3.

## **Domain 1 – Program Mission and Goals**

Social work academic units must have a formal written statement that outlines the overarching purpose and goals of their programs. It must be congruent with the values of social work and social work education and also reflect the unique context in which the program operates.

### **1.1 Mission Statement and Goals**

The FIFSW mission statement, academic strategic plan and MSW program goals are all consistent with social work values.

#### **SM 1.1.1**

As stated above, the mission statement and resulting strategic plan and program goals are all consistent with the values of social work. These documents also identify the impact of being located within a research-intensive university in Toronto, with its multi-ethnic and multicultural population.

During our site visit, a number of people pointed out the exceptional work the FIFSW has conducted to ensure a commitment to equity, diversity, inclusion and decolonization. In fact, the FIFSW was commended as being a guiding light in this work for the rest of the

University of Toronto. Nonetheless, it is recommended that there continue to be efforts made to include decolonizing approaches towards teaching and learning in all fields of study and MSW programs, beyond the MSW in Indigenous Trauma and Resilience. Faculty members described some innovative approaches to teaching and assessment and also indicated believing that decolonizing these practices further continues to be a goal.

### **SM 1.1.2**

The FIFSW identify their process of reviewing the mission statement and the resulting plans and goals of that mission statement, with input from its various constituents and partners.

The review process of the mission statement, strategic plan and goals was not discussed directly during the site visit. However, there was some concern raised about weak lines of communication between the Practicum office and the rest of the FIFSW, suggesting that strategic plans and goals are not considered in terms of how these will impact the ability to find further appropriate field education placement opportunities in the Toronto area which contains other Social Work programs competing for these placements.

## **Domain 2 – Program governance, structure and resources**

The University of Toronto's FIFSW is in a strong position within the broader university community and in regards its own governance, structure and resources. Senior university leadership commented on FIFSW's positive impact on the rest of the university as well as on its successes with national and international impact.

With the recent change in Dean, from a Dean with a particular external focus, to the current interim Dean following two years of being in a pandemic, it was observed by some of the constituents that it was time for more of an internal focus and rebuilding of collegial relationships at the FIFSW.

### **2.1. Program Governance and Structure**

The social work program takes a leadership position in respect to social work education. To this end, the governance and structure facilitate collaborative relationships with partners while retaining a clear identity within the university and autonomy in respect to program delivery.

#### **SM 2.1.1**

The social work program is implemented through a distinct academic unit which has a clear, and well-respected, identity within the university.

### **SM 2.1.2**

The academic unit is under the direction of a full-time Dean with demonstrated scholarly, professional and administrative competence in social work education. The current interim Dean appears particularly well-respected by senior university administration and the faculty and staff at FIFSW. She is clearly committed to the ongoing process of critically reflecting upon what Canadian social work and Canadian social work education needs to be in our ever-evolving current context.

### **SM 2.1.3**

The MSW degrees conferred are distinctive social work degrees awarded by the University of Toronto as a degree granting institution recognized by Universities Canada.

### **SM 2.1.4**

Within the policies and standards of its parent university, the FIFSW has a decisive voice in determining its structure, decision-making policies, development of its programs, and hiring of faculty and staff.

### **SM 2.1.5**

The FIFSW reported in the self-study that partners/stakeholders have the opportunities to contribute formally and informally in policy formation, program development and program evaluation.

During the site visit it certainly appeared as though the FIFSW has good working relationships with field instructors, students, alums, and leadership from OASW and OCCSWSSW. As stated elsewhere, the constituents suggested communication between students and the FIFSW, including the Practicum Office, could be improved, ensuring students' ability to contribute meaningfully.

### **SM 2.1.6**

Students, faculty, staff and field instructors are informed about policies and procedures regarding harassment, appeals, discrimination, disability accommodation and codes of conduct.

### **SM 2.1.7**

The FIFSW provides for faculty participation in the development and operation of its programs. Different constituents described there as being unsatisfactory communication between the Practicum Office and the rest of the program, while another suggested there

was a structure for this, leading to lack of clarity regarding these communication difficulties

## **2.2 Financial and Physical Resources**

The FIFSW appear sufficiently resourced to be able to deliver social work education in a way that is comparable to other academic units of a similar size and in a configuration that meets normative expectations across Canada.

### **SM 2.2.1**

The FIFSW has access to a budget and resources to assist it in being able to achieve its mission and delivery of its academic programs within the university setting. It also has many established community relationships which has allowed it to manage to meet its commitments within practicum settings. However, as is the case with many other universities at this time, there are ongoing challenges with ensuring high quality appropriately matched practicum settings. Concerns were raised regarding the matching process, wishing for a more personalized approach that takes into account past experience and requests from racialized students to be placed with racialized field supervisors. We heard from various people that a commitment to encouraging students during their studies to consider giving back to the profession of social work by becoming field supervisors at an appropriate time following graduation could begin to alleviate some of these challenges.

### **SM 2.2.2**

Each of the MSW programs and fields of study are achieving the same standards of academic proficiency and professional competence. However, there were some wishes expressed regarding incorporating some of the individualized student attention for practicum matching, and flexibility and creativity for pedagogical approaches possible in the MSW in ITR into the other MSW fields of study.

### **SM 2.2.3**

The physical space, although sufficient for meeting many of the FIFSW's needs, was otherwise described as not meeting all the needs related to today's MSW student cohorts and pedagogies. Specially, it is difficult to encourage and maintain seminar-style interactions in some of the long classrooms, and there is insufficient physical space for breakout rooms when practicing skills. In addition to this difficulty with space for small breakout groups

was the added problem that there is no auditorium or space big enough in FIFSW's primary building to hold meetings with all students. Meeting with all students needs to occur after classes and then space has to be found elsewhere, making these meetings more challenging to facilitate.

### **2.3 Faculty and Professional Staff**

Faculty and staff are fully competent to fulfill their duties and represent a range of experience and perspectives. The FIFSW's faculty are recognized within the University of Toronto, nationally and internationally for their expertise in their individual areas of research.

#### **SM 2.3.1**

The FIFSW has sufficient number of qualified tenured/tenure track and teaching stream faculty to deliver its programs.

The Practicum Office would benefit from further support and resources, as described above. They have been managing remarkably well with two of their staff on leave, and with the described challenges of the PAS. It is recommended that these challenges be addressed moving forward, either by updating the automated system or by hiring further staff, or a combination of these approaches.

There are sufficient field instructors/supervisors for the delivery of practicum placements, but this continues to be a challenge to maintain, as is the case in many social work programs across Canada, and particularly in southern Ontario where there are so many university social work programs situated. The FIFSW is encouraged to consider approaches to ensure graduates will be willing to offer field supervision to future students and ways to recognize and celebrate field supervisors' contributions. Some suggestions are provided in Domain 3.

#### **SM 2.3.2**

Hiring practices have resulted in a good representation of diversity within faculty and professional staff. Faculty have a range of diverse skills and engage in a range of creative teaching practices and assessments.

#### **SM 2.3.3**

Productivity of the social work faculty indicate they have been able to very successfully engage in research, scholarship and publication. There were no concerns raised regarding teaching, service to the university or contributions to the profession and community. Tenured/tenure stream and teaching stream faculty all appeared highly engaged and committed to their roles and responsibilities at the FIFSW, with no concerns raised regarding

workloads. It is noted that there appeared to be a number of administrative positions at the assistant and associate dean level in the FIFSW, which indicated the possibility for faculty members to gain experience in administration. However, the FIFSW could assess whether this many administrative positions are required.

#### **SM 2.3.4**

Faculty and professional staff are to engage in continuing professional development particularly in new areas of importance in the community, regionally and nationally. However, the mentoring system was described as having become somewhat confusing under the previous Dean. It is recommended that the mentoring system could be streamlined and improved, and greater clarity regarding the mentoring system be particularly ensured for the teaching stream faculty. They could benefit from greater support in integrating their teaching and research responsibilities.

#### **SM 2.3.5**

The FIFSW encourages excellence and innovation in teaching, scholarship, research and community participation. These skills, as described above, were pointed out in several meetings and the FIFSW are to be commended for these.

#### **SM 2.3.6**

No concerns were raised regarding faculty/student ratios, which are consistent with other similar academic units across Canada. They are able to offer their PhD students the opportunity to assist with teaching responsibilities.

#### **SM 2.3.7**

No concerns were raised in relation to class sizes, which are consistent with other similar academic units across Canada.

#### **SM 2.3.8**

The number of tenure track and teaching stream faculty in relation to the student body appeared consistent with other social work academic units of a similar size across Canada.

### **2.4 Student Development**

The FIFSW should ensure all students, regardless of their background or program, have equal opportunity to be involved in all aspects of the program, with high expectations for both academic and professional performance.



#### **SM 2.4.1**

The FIFSW clearly states the academic and professional requirements and admission policies for its programs.

#### **SM 2.4.2**

Taking into account their mission and the mission of CASWE-ACFTS, the FIFSW has made exceptional improvements in the process of reviewing and admitting students who are Black, Indigenous, and People of Colour. They could improve their process of recruiting Francophone students.

International students continue to be admitted into the program, but the FIFSW continues to reflect upon how to best learn from international students, and also whether they are providing international students with everything they need to succeed.

#### **SM 2.4.3**

The FIFSW encourages the participation of all students in school governance and in the evaluation of teaching and learning in the classroom and in field education settings. The participation of students could be further supported, ensuring students feel as though their contributions and concerns are being acknowledged. Concerns were particularly raised about the process of matching field education placements, as discussed above. There were many concerns also raised in relation to unpaid field education placements, and/or the number of hours required to be in placement thereby limiting students' ability to engage in part-time paid employment. These are clearly concerns students experience in other university settings across Canada also, but what is important is that FIFSW develop a mechanism for students to engage in discussion with faculty and professional staff regarding these issues and clarity on responses to their issues.

#### **SM 2.4.4**

The FIFSW uses the University of Toronto's Standards of Professional Practice for all Health Professional Students. The challenge of how to operate within these Standards was discussed as the student body continues to attempt to manage more mental health concerns. Currently there is only one person available to offer accessibility advising to social work students, and this person also provides services to three other departments. Despite a 24/7 helpline, more student support is needed.

### **SM 2.4.5**

The FIFSW has a policy regarding the professional suitability of the student for the profession of social work. Students are made aware of the consequences of serious or repeated violations of the Code of Ethics.

### **SM 2.4.6**

The FIFSW has a policy regarding the ethical use of all forms of social media.

### **SM 2.4.7**

The FIFSW provides academic advising and support to students regarding their program and progress. The more personalized attention provided students in the MSW-ITR field of study is of particular note. As indicated above, this greater individualized attention for placement matching would be appreciated in the other fields of study.

Although supports are available to students within the broader University of Toronto community, it appears that an accessibility counsellor and a mental health counsellor dedicated to providing supports to the social work student body would be well utilized.

## **Domain 3 – Program Content: Curriculum and Field Education**

### **3.1 Curriculum**

#### **The Core Learning Objectives for Students are as follows:**

- 1. Identify as a professional social worker and adopt a value perspective of the social work profession**
- 2. Adhere to social work values and ethics in professional practice**
- 3. Promote human rights and social justice**
  
- 4. Support and enhance diversity by addressing structural sources of inequity**
- 5. Employ critical thinking in professional practice**
- 6. Engage in research**
- 7. Participate in policy analysis and development**
- 8. Engage in organizational and societal systems' change through professional practice**
- 9. Engage with individuals, families, groups, and communities through professional practice**

## **MSW Curriculum**

The FIFSW offers a two-year MSW, a one-year MSW, and a two-year MSW focused on Indigenous Trauma and Reconciliation.

Since the last accreditation, the FIFSW underwent an extensive curriculum review with key constituents (e.g., students, alum, community partners, practicum sites). As a result of this review, the Faculty committed to increasing focus on these areas: experiential learning, competencies, increased Indigenous content, and an increased focus on diversity and inclusion. These commitments are being realized with a very strong program, rooted in the competencies, that provides a simulation program and integration of diversity and inclusion content. The FIFSW continues to consider ways to increase diversity and inclusion content.

The 2-year MSW Indigenous Trauma and Reconciliation (MSW ITR) field of study was developed in consultation with Indigenous partners. This two-year master's field of study is dedicated to preparing advanced social work professionals to work with individuals, families and communities who have been affected by historical and multigenerational trauma. There is desire to integrate the practices of this field of study more fully into the other MSW fields of study. Faculty members are considering ways to approach this in a decolonizing way.

The curriculum content is well-structured around the competencies and, for the most part, meets the accreditation standards and core learning objectives. The FIFSW identifies that content about Francophone realities is not covered in the curriculum. The site visitors recommended a book that will help with that. Attention should be paid to the lack of an integration seminar, as highlighted below.

### **SM 3.1.1**

The second year of the 2-year MSW/the Advanced standing program provides students with the opportunity to specialize in one of the Faculty's five fields of study: Children and their Families, Human Services Management and Leadership, Social Work in Gerontology, Mental Health and Health, or Social Justice and Diversity. Because of their focus on increasing content on equity, diversity, inclusion and decolonization, the Social Justice and Diversity content is also infused throughout the curriculum.

We support the Faculty's desire to more fully integrate teachings and practices from the MSW ITR into the other 5 MSW fields of study and appreciate their reflexive approach to this.

### **SM 3.1.2**

The FIFSW offers its MSW as a 2-year or as a 1-year advanced standing

program. The MSW ITR program is offered as a 2-year program. Students enrolled in this field of study/program who have a BSW are required to complete only one practicum.

### **SM 3.1.3**

Students complete 21 credit hours of coursework in the advanced standing year/program, along with 518 hours of practicum (450 hours for the MSW ITR).

There is an option of a thesis, which replaces two half courses, but very few students pursue this option, according to the Research Office.

### **SM 3.1.4**

Year 1 of the two-year program includes 8 one semester courses and 469 hours of placement, while Year 2 includes 7 one semester courses and 518 hours of practicum.

In year 1 of the MSW ITR, students take 8 one semester courses and 450 hours of practicum, while in year 2, they take 6 one semester courses and 450 hours of practicum.

### **SM 3.1.5**

Transfer credits are subject to the rules of the Faculty of Graduate Studies: a maximum of one two semester course or 25% of the degree course load (whichever is higher) may be transferred from another institution if it isn't part of a program for which the student received a degree. Both the Faculty of Graduate Studies and the FIFSW must approve the transfer.

## **3.2 Field Education**

The Field Education program is well-developed, with clear and thorough policies, procedures, and documents. The Practicum Office enjoys strong relationships with practicum sites and provides training and support to their Field Instructors.

In the self-study, the FIFSW reported:

“The FIFSW uses a competency model as the framework for field education. Students are evaluated according to their ability to develop and demonstrate:

- His/her professional identity as a social worker in respect to commitment to and the provision of service to people
- The ability to function within an organizational context
- The ability to function within a community context
- The ability to identify, assess, formulate, implement and evaluate strategy on behalf of the user system
- Effectiveness in communication skills”

Staff, faculty, students, and community partners expressed that the Field Office is quite separate from the rest of the FIFSW. There is a feeling that decisions and procedures don't always recognize Field Education as an essential part of the Social Work programming.

No faculty members are involved in Field Education and there is no longer a faculty member with a focus on Field Education since the passing of Marion Bogo.

### **SM 3.2.1**

The Field Education program is consistent with the Faculty's mission statement. In the self-study, the Faculty describes the ways in which the Field Education program is consistent with the CASWE Principles. For example, they write: "The FIFSW prioritizes the development of competence in general and specialized practice. The Field Education curriculum is designed to achieve these goals, and – as emphasized in CASWE Principles 1 & 2 – is anchored in the integration of theory, research, practice, and self-reflection. The site visitors were not clear that the integration of theory and practice is as strong as it could be. The FIFSW no longer has an integration seminar; rather, they leave it to individual courses to provide the opportunity for integration of theory and practice. It is worth noting that the new accreditation standards will be clearer about the need for structured integration opportunities.

### **SM 3.2.2**

The first year of the 2-year program requires 469 hours of placement, while the one year/advanced year requires 518 hours of practicum. This is different for the MSW ITR field of study, where students are required to complete 450 hours each year of the 2-year program.

Students told us that they are feeling very burdened by the practicum hours and the expenses incurred and that they are interested in exploring the possibility of paid placements. It is important to note that CASWE does not prohibit paid placements, despite students' impression that this was the case. It is also acknowledged that the FIFSW pointed out that some MSW students do have paid practicum placements but most of these are within the ITR field of study.

### **SM 3.2.3**

Please see above.

### **SM 3.2.4**

In the first year of the MSW program, students take a course, SWK 4605H (Social Work Practice with Individuals and Families), while they are completing their practica. The course is structured to encourage integration of theory and practice and takes the place of an Integration Seminar course. It is not clear that the replacement course is enough for students, who often need help adjusting to and understanding organizational dynamics, along with opportunities to integrate learning about supervisory relationships, policies, and funding.

The FIFSW also highlights their well-developed use of simulation activities as a key

component of teaching students to integrate theory and practice. This is a strength of the program, but this still does not develop the types of relationships and opportunities for critical reflection that can come about in smaller practicum integration seminars.

The FIFSW pointed out that that SWK 4654 Social Work Practice with Organizations and Communities also provides opportunities for some integration of theory into practice.

In the second year, Practice Fridays, guest speakers, professional development workshops, mid-term evaluation discussions, and assignments are meant to serve the role of helping students to integrate theory and practice.

The Practicum Office has clear policies and procedures that meet the requirements of CASWE.

With responsibility to place over 400 students, Field Education at the FIFSW is led by the Assistant Dean, Field Education. This is a position focused solely on Field Education, leading a team that includes:

- Practicum Coordinators, MSW – 1.8 FTE
- Practicum Assistants, graduate degree – 1.6 FTE
- FIFSW Coordinator, Indigenous Initiatives, MSW – 1.0 FTE (though this position is not completely focused on Field; .4 FTE is dedicated to Field Education)

While the self-study reported increases to the resources of the Practicum Offices, it remains under resourced. The automated matching process for students with placements does not work well for staff or students. Staff are working toward replacing the system, which they estimate will cost several hundred thousand dollars. Students and staff expressed that they would prefer a system similar to that used for the MSW ITR field of study, where Practicum staff meet with students to get to know their interests, experiences, and goals through the matching process. This would require increased staff.

### **SM 3.2.5**

The Practicum Manual is readily available online and provides clear information about the Practicum objectives, learning objectives for students, procedures, expectations, administrative structures, and evaluation processes

### **SM 3.2.6**

The FIFSW uses the Placement Agreement template approved by the Governing Council of the University of Toronto which includes a section that addresses Human Rights and Equity Laws along with Complaints of Discrimination, Harassment or Workplace Violence.

In addition, the Practicum Manual includes a section called “Guidelines for the Resolution of Problems in the Practicum” and the University policies are outlined there, along with information about sexual violence and harassment.

The FIFSW has also created a safety checklist, which students and supervisors must complete.

### **SM 3.2.7**

Students with disabilities are the first to make their self-selections on the FIFSW placement database. If needed, the Practicum Office works directly with the Accessibility Services when a more individualized approach is needed. Accommodations are provided when students request that they be implemented.

### **SM 3.2.8**

The University of Toronto maintains a policy of comprehensive general liability insurance, in an amount not less than \$2 million per occurrence.

### **SM 3.2.9**

The Practicum Manual addresses confidentiality through reference to CASW code of ethics, OCSWSSW code of ethics and standards of practice, and FIPPA guidelines. In addition, the University of Toronto’s extensive confidentiality policies are outlined. FIFSW reports that these points are emphasized at the first student meeting with the Faculty Field Liaison:

- “The University of Toronto requires encryption of all personal and confidential electronic information kept outside of secure U of T servers
- The Practicum Office recommends that NO practicum related information is removed from the setting – in hard copy, memory key, laptop, or smart phone
- Privacy protection of the practicum organization’s information and privacy of the people they serve is paramount
- When in practicum, students are expected to familiarize themselves with the policy of the practicum setting in terms of how the setting handles electronic and hard copy data”

The FIFSW’s Social Media policy addresses social media use in the context of practicum. When in practicum, students are expected to review, understand and comply with the Social Media policy of their practicum agency. In the absence of a social media policy at their practicum agency, the FIFSW’s Social Media policy acts as a minimum standard to guide student behaviour.

### **Field Education Faculty**

The Field Education staff are qualified, experienced, and committed to the development of students.

### **SM 3.2.10**

The FIFSW clearly outlines the educational (MSW), practice experience (5 years for Coordinators), supervisory experience, and healing (MSW ITR) required for the Field Education positions.

### **SB/M 3.2.11**

The Assistant Dean, Field Education, is a staff position with human resources, budget, and management responsibilities for the Practicum Office. The current Assistant Dean has a MSW and a MBA, along with extensive Social Work practice, administrative, and training experience.

### **SB/M 3.2.12**

All Field Education positions require an MSW, and the Faculty Field Liaison positions require Field Instructor experience.

### **SB/M 3.2.13**

The Practicum Administration System (PAS) is a database system used to place students in field except for the MSW ITR students, who are placed through matching interviews with the Field Coordinator. Using the PAS, students self-select ten practicum sites to begin with and the algorithm matches students so that the maximum number receive a high choice.

While staff praised the “objective” approach to placement matching, both staff and students reported many issues with this system. Some students reported having to go through the process several times, noting that by the time one gets to their 10<sup>th</sup> choice and beyond they are not particularly attracted to the placement. They noted that diversity factors are not recognized or considered with the current system. Students and staff expressed that they would prefer a system similar to that used for the MSW ITR field of study, whereby Field Education staff meet with students to get to know their interests, experiences, and goals.

### **SB/M 3.2.14**

Faculty members are not involved in Field Education activities and Field Education staff do not hold teaching responsibilities. The FIFSW did point out that some faculty offer field placement opportunities to MSW students through their research projects, through the Talk it Out Clinic and in Practice Friday offerings.

### **SB/M 3.2.15**

Each student and Field Instructor is assigned a Faculty Field Liaison, who monitors, consults, reviews, advises, evaluates, and provides a link with the FIFSW. Field Instructors expressed appreciation for the support provided by the Faculty Field Liaison.



## **Field Placements**

The FIFSW provides placement opportunities in a wide range of settings. The Practicum Office feels the pressure of inadequate numbers of Field Instructors.

### **SB/M 3.2.16**

The FIFSW competency approach ensures that students experience a broad range of Social Work roles over the course of their placements, including direct and indirect practice.

### **SB/M 3.2.17**

The FIFSW describes: “Practicum settings are required to accept students without discrimination as defined by the Charter of Rights and Freedoms and the Ontario Human Rights Code. In addition, they must be free from discriminatory practices with respect to personnel and service delivery.” They note that this is consistent with University of Toronto policy.

### **SB/M 3.2.18**

The FIFSW is very thorough in ensuring that the Field Instructors understand and follow through on their commitment and the clear expectations for supervision. Field Instructors noted that they had a strong dedication to teaching and preparing new Social Workers and that this helped them to commit to the high expectations. They also described feeling very supported by the Practicum Office, specifically by the Faculty Field Liaisons.

### **SB/M 3.2.19**

The FIFSW has multiple mechanisms to ensure that the needed facilities, equipment, and learning materials are available at each field site. Field Instructors are provided with a clear list of expectations and are supported to find ways to provide them. Field Instructors stated that they thought the expectations were reasonable and important.

### **SB/M 3.2.20**

Learning outcomes for students in field placement include competencies related to equity, diversity, and inclusion. To help them support students in meeting these mandates, FIFSW has provided some EDI training to Field Instructors.

Some students raised concern about the lack of diversity among Field Instructors, and Field Education staff acknowledged that some students have told them it is important to have a similarly raced Field Instructor in order to feel supported in their learning in field. The Practicum Office reports a shortage of Field Instructors and says that this request is

difficult to fulfill in this climate.

### **Field Instructors**

The FIFSW field instructors are well qualified and committed to student success. The Faculty provides many useful resources to ensure quality field instruction.

#### **SM 3.2.21 & SM 3.2.22**

Field Instructors for the first-year placement must have a BSW or MSW degree, while those for the advanced year placement must have a MSW. Additionally, the FIFSW states that Field Instructors must have two years' experience. They report that those who don't fit these requirements may be accepted in a co-supervisory role or that the Faculty may use an external MSW supervisor.

#### **SM 3.2.23**

FIFSW provides a well-developed suite of professional development opportunities for Field Instructors, who can tailor these according to their level of development. Providing professional development through a hybrid model has been particularly important for Field Instructors in the MSW ITR field of study, most of whom are not in the Toronto area.

In addition, Field Instructors are offered a 10% discount on fees for Social Work Continuing Education, access to library resources, invitations to various workshops and events, and are eligible to apply for adjunct status if they make a commitment to supervise students for 3 years.

Finally, the FIFSW offers grants from the Bertha Rosenstadt Trust: "Through the trust, organizations that agree to take a prenegotiated number of practicum students for three consecutive years receive a three-year grant (\$5,000 per year for a total of \$15,000) to conduct research, developed in consultation with the FIFSW, that expands social work field education knowledge."

Despite these opportunities, FIFSW struggles with a shortage of Field Instructors according to Field Education staff, Field Instructors, and students. Students told us that they experience the shortage of Field Instructors in two ways: 1) lack of ability to match with a same raced Field Instructor, and 2) the use of field sites that students believe are of such low quality that they should not be used.

Field Education staff and some Field Instructors suggested that the solution to the shortage of Field Instructors was to add to the curriculum learning that it is a Social Worker's responsibility to become a Field Instructor. Other Field Instructors and students noted that providing further methods to show appreciation to Field Instructors might make it more appealing to fill this role.

### **SM 3.2.24**

Field Instructors for the FIFSW are provided with the Practicum Manual, the learning contract template, a practice-based evaluation tool, and course descriptions. In addition, the Practicum website offers a rich array of resources aimed at supporting Field Instructors and providing information about practicums and supervision. Each first-year student provides the Field Instructor with their lab evaluation summary, which outlines areas to work on arising from the simulation experience. These are incorporated into the learning contract.

### **SM 3.2.25**

Both formal and informal mechanisms are available for students to provide feedback about their practicum experience. The availability of informal meetings with Field Education staff is augmented by formal mid-term and final reviews.

### **SM 3.2.26**

At the end of the placement, students are invited to complete the practicum feedback survey assessing the learning experience at their practicum site. With students' permission, the Practicum Office may share feedback directly to practicum sites. Serious issues are discussed with the Dean. In addition, the FIFSW has developed a method to share aggregate data from the surveys in the form of a document called "What Students Appreciate." They add to this document as needed, and it is shared with Field Instructors.

Field Instructors are also asked to undertake a self-assessment of their own organization as an effective placement site.

## **Domain 4 – Program Evaluation and Assessment**

### **4.1 Program Evaluation/Assessment**

It is evident that the FIFSW prioritizes ongoing assessment of their programs through collection of multiple sources of data. This is an apparent strength of the program and the site visitors appreciated the commitment to evaluation of many areas of the programs. The strength of the commitment is apparent in the documented changes that have been implemented as a result of feedback.

### **SM 4.1**

The FIFSW has adopted a reflexive approach to their development, wherein multiple sources of data are regularly reviewed by the Management Team and adjustments are made as appropriate. Collaboration with partners both internal and external to the university allows for a robust assessment of their programming. For example, the collaborative work the Faculty undertook to develop competencies provided them with a framework to redevelop and refine courses and then to assess those courses.

#### **SM 4.2**

The FIFSW makes its openness to feedback, particularly from students, evident through a document linked on their website (<https://socialwork.utoronto.ca/wpcontent/uploads/2019/01/How-Can-I-Give-Feedback-2019-2020.pdf>) providing information about the various ways to give feedback to the FIFSW.

The FIFSW creates an Academic Plan with the Provost at regular intervals, at which time they review the mission statement. The current Academic Plan (“Transforming Lives, Connecting Communities”) includes a set of measures against which they assess their progress. As part of the self-study process, the Faculty collaborated with multiple stakeholders to review and refine their mission statement.

The Faculty’s efforts to diversify their student body were tracked by asking demographic questions of applicants to the program and monitoring the changes to the make-up of their student body, which have been substantial.

Curriculum and student experience are thoroughly assessed using a multi-pronged approach.

- Individual courses are assessed using a university-wide system. The results from these evaluations are reviewed by the Associate Dean, Academic, who meets with faculty members to discuss them. New courses may be exposed to a more in-depth evaluation, tracking outcomes and collaborating with partners for input.
- When educational workshops, conferences, and other events are held, the Faculty collects feedback from participants.
- At the end of first year, students are invited to complete a survey, which enquires into their assessment of their learning in multiple areas. The Associate Dean, Academic reviews the results and discusses with faculty members.
- Similarly, at the end of their MSW, students are invited to complete a survey asking them to rate skill development in multiple areas and to rank their experience with the FIFSW in several areas.
- The MSW ITR has developed internal reflection processes to review the student development. In addition, the Ontario Federation of Indigenous Friendship Centres leads a thorough evaluation process of the program.
- The Field Education program regularly collects assessment data from multiple sources, including students, placement sites, field instructors, faculty field liaisons, and other partners (see section 3).

### **SM 4.3**

The Faculty Council and Committees include multiple partners and provide opportunities for regular and ongoing consultation with alumni, OASW, field instructors and multiple internal groups.

Additionally, systematic processes (development of the Academic Plan, the University of Toronto Quality Assurance Process (UTQAP), and CASWE accreditation) are informed by consultation with a broad range of partners.

Those partners the site visitors had the chance to meet expressed that, overall, the FIFSW provides them with opportunities to give feedback, though some members of the Alumni Committee expressed that they would appreciate strengthened opportunities to provide feedback about the program.

### **SB/M 4.4**

The FIFSW provided abundant evidence of the impact of recommendations from CASWE, UTQAP and other evaluations. These changes can be seen in program structure, curriculum, EDID initiatives, supports to faculty and students, and special initiatives.

## **Conclusion**

The Factor Inwentash Faculty of Social Work is a well-functioning and well-resourced unit with strong leadership and a recognized position within the broader University. Faculty and staff are qualified and contribute meaningfully to national and international social work knowledge. Since last accreditation, the FIFSW has worked diligently to improve the diversity of their students and their curriculum. Their student body now reflects the diversity of the City of Toronto. Overall, the MSW programs meet the curriculum standards of the Canadian Association for Social Work Education and students are, for the most part, provided with meaningful practicum opportunities. A reflexive program, the FIFSW regularly assesses its programs and makes adjustments as needed.

Attention to partnerships, curriculum diversity, placement processes, and relationships among stakeholders will contribute to the ongoing development of this very strong Faculty of Social Work.

*Accreditation recommendations (updated following Commission on Accreditation meetings June 1-4, 2022.)*

We recommend that the FIFSW is reaccredited with the following condition and recommendations, requiring a progress report in 4 years, at which point, if the condition is met, reaccreditation will be granted for an additional 4 years.

### *Condition*

1. In relation to SB/M 2.2.2., which states, “Where the academic units increase accessibility of their programs to a range of students through all forms of

program delivery, all iterations of the program achieve the same standards of academic proficiency and professional competence”, we ask that the FIFSW direct more resources to the Field Education portion of the MSW. These resources should be used to either replace the outdated database or to hire more Field Education staff so that a more personalized approach to placement is possible. This is to ensure all students across all fields of study have a similar student experience, which is also related to the SB/M 2.4 preamble which states “all students, regardless of their background or program delivery, have equal opportunity to be involved in all aspect of the program.”

### *Recommendations*

1. We recommend that the regular review of the FIFSW’s mission statement, strategic plan, and program goals include input from the Practicum Advisory Committee
2. We recommend that the FIFSW strengthen communication channels between the Practicum office and the academic committees.
3. We recommend that, as part of ongoing review of space needs, consideration be given to accommodating larger groups in an auditorium type space.
4. We recommend that the FIFSW consult with international students about their support needs and whether these are being met.
5. We recommend that the FIFSW advocate more strongly for resources to meet the mental health needs of their students.
6. We recommend that the FIFSW use resources about active offer and consultation with Francophone organizations in Toronto to add content about Francophones’ status as a linguistic minority in Canada. (“Active offer” refers to the requirement to offer services from the federal government to the public in both official languages.)
7. We recommend that the Field Education/Practicum Office review the 518 placement hours required and consider whether it would be possible to reduce these (the CASWE requires a minimum of 450 hours).
8. We recommend that the FIFSW reintroduce the Integration Seminar course or another method to ensure that students are supported in a more fulsome approach to integration of theory and practice.
9. We recommend that FIFSW consider more ways to demonstrate appreciation of Field Instructors. Some possibilities include awards, appreciation events, gifts (e.g., faculty members’ books), and/or a small stipend.