MALPRACTICE MEMORANDUM SUBJECT:

Malpractice Liability Insurance for Field Students

Both the University and field agencies require that all social work students in field placements be covered by a professional malpractice liability insurance policy to protect both the agency and the individual against malpractice liability claims. The current proof of malpractice insurance is available to all students and field instructors in the field database Resource Library > Helpful Field Information and verifies that all SHSSW interns are covered by a blanket liability program which provides coverage of $2,000,000 per occurrence or $6,000,000 total.

The effective date of coverage under this policy is inclusive from the first day of class through the last day of the student’s field placement which must be prior to the day grades are due in the internship’s terminating semester. Grades are typically due the Tuesday before graduation or in the summer, the last day of the nine-week summer session.

One significant exception to this is for MSSW Final Field Clinical and Administration and Policy Planning interns: For these students only, malpractice coverage begins the first business day of the calendar year, typically, January 2. Student and agencies are strongly encouraged to wait to begin field on the first day of the spring semester. However, agencies and students may have mutually beneficial needs to begin onboarding, orientation, and training earlier than the first day of classes. All students are expected to intern for the duration of their assigned semester(s) and to complete the required number of hours. Students may not terminate field more than one month prior to the day grades are due for their terminal field semester.

Students can anticipate a $14 charge on their What I Owe page payable with their other registration fees to cover their portion of this group liability policy prior to the start of each internship. A change in placement does not require additional liability payment. An incomplete internship that extends beyond the academic year will require an additional $14 payment, e.g., incomplete fieldwork that extends into the fall semester after the spring or spring/summer.

Please note: Students are not covered for any claims relating to the operation of motor vehicles, whether personal or agency vehicle. Thus, students may not transport clients within field as part of their internship program.

If there are any questions about the policy or the requirements for participation, please contact the Office of Field Education at ssw-field@austin.utexas.edu.