



BU Wheelock Field Policies

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Introduction

The field policies below apply to all BU Wheelock academic field programs and establish a shared baseline of understanding for students in BU Wheelock pre-practicum, practicum, internship, or field work in general. They create a framework to support student success and well-being in the field. Students, site supervisors, and university supervisors need to familiarize themselves with these policies before their placement begins and refer back to them periodically as they engage in the field. Questions should be directed to the respective program directors in a timely way to ensure clarity and proper implementation.

BU Protection of Minors (POM)

Before commencing fieldwork, students in field placement must adhere to the BU Protection of Minors policy and follow the procedures set by the Professional Preparation Office; otherwise, they will not be allowed to start at their field site.

- *Minor* means any person under the age of 18 who is not a matriculated BU student and who is unaccompanied by a parent or legal guardian. Minors participating in BU IRB-approved research do *not* fall under this Policy.

Two POM Requirements

- **POM Online Training:** This training comprises two online courses, each lasting approximately 30-minutes. Students are required to complete the training and upload their Learner Transcript to the Sonia field database. The Transcript will remain valid for the entirety of their time at Boston University.
- **POM Verification Form:** This form (signed by the site) serves as proof that the BU student has met all field site requirements, such as background checks, and is now cleared to commence field placement at the site.

For More Information, please see this resources page: [BU POM AND Field Site Background Checks](#)

- If you have questions not addressed at that link, contact Paul Akoury, POM Coordinator - Field Placements (pakoury@bu.edu).

Important to Note

For students who previously completed the BU POM requirements, please keep in mind that:

- Students are welcome guests at their field site and **must always** abide by all site requirements in a timely manner before field placement begins.
- MA Public School Regulations require all students to comply with CORI and fingerprint requirements.

TITLE IX

Boston University recognizes that sexual assault, harassment, discrimination, and other forms of sexual misconduct can have a profound impact on a person's personal, academic, and work life. The University encourages students who are coping with such a situation, and who are uncertain about their options or who simply need help, to call one of the following confidential resources:

On Campus

- **BU Sexual Assault Response & Prevention Center:** 617-353-7277, sarp@bu.edu, 930 Commonwealth Avenue, Boston, MA 02215
- **Boston University Chaplains:** 617-358-3560
- **Student Health Services:** 617-353-3575
- **Behavioral Medicine:** 617-353-3569

Off Campus

- **Rape, Abuse, and Incest National Network:** 1-800-656-4673
- **Boston Area Rape Crisis Center (BARCC):** 1- 800-841-8371

Because Boston University is committed to fostering an environment that is free from all forms of sexual misconduct, any concerns, questions, or disclosures related to sexual misconduct can be directed to any of the [BU Title IX Deputy Coordinators](#) or any other [Reporting Resource On Campus](#).

All disclosures of sexual or gender-based violence or harassment on or off campus made to faculty, teaching assistants, or other university employees must be forwarded to the BU Title IX Coordinator (617-353-9286).

The information above was adapted from the [Boston University Title IX Policy](#).

Accommodations for Students with Disabilities

BU Wheelock is committed to equal access for students with disabilities. If students have a specific disability and require accommodations, they should notify their program director early in the semester so that appropriate accommodations can be made. Students must provide the program director with a letter of needed accommodations prepared by the [Office of Disability Services](#). Contact information for the disabilities office is: 617-353-3658 V/TTY or access@bu.edu. All discussions and written materials will be kept confidential.

International Students

International students have additional requirements before beginning their practicum or internship. Students are advised to speak with the [International Students and Scholars Office \(ISSO\)](#) for questions and to complete the required paperwork. Students should

review the [Curricular Practical Training](#) resource page and contact the ISSO in the semester prior to their field placement to ensure ample time to gather the required information and signatures.

International Students - Student Employment & Internships

As an international student in F-1 or J-1 status, students may qualify for certain types of employment authorization to allow them to work on campus, as well as off campus in positions related to their major field. Many internships, rotations, or curricular placements require authorization, whether paid or unpaid. Work authorization may also be approved if students are facing severe economic difficulties beyond their control. Students need to understand the options and limits of immigration status and [Employment Eligibility](#) before accepting any employment in the U.S., as work permission is tied to maintaining lawful status.

Academic Conduct

Academic integrity is the bedrock of any scholarly community. The objective of Boston University in enforcing academic rules is to promote a community atmosphere in which learning and the pursuit of knowledge can best take place.

As articulated in the [Academic Conduct Code](#), “All students at Boston University are expected to maintain high standards of academic honesty and integrity. It is the responsibility of every student to be aware of the Academic Conduct Code’s contents and to abide by its provisions.”

In general, academic misconduct is conduct by which students misrepresent their academic accomplishments or impede other students’ opportunities of being judged fairly for their academic work. Students should pay particular attention to the rules regarding plagiarism, teamwork, submission of work to more than one course without permission, and conduct in a professional field assignment. If students have any questions about academic integrity or how it applies to the assignments in a specific course, they should consult with their instructor.

Attendance

Students are expected to be at their field site on each of their assigned days, to be punctual, and to complete all required field hours, as determined by their academic program. In addition, students must adhere to the designated timeframe – i.e., the beginning and ending of each scheduled day – as decided by their respective academic program, and when appropriate, in collaboration with the site supervisor. It is possible that these dates will not completely correspond to the Boston University fall or spring semester calendar.

In the event of illness or family emergency, site supervisors should be notified immediately so that they can make alternate plans in the student’s absence. The university supervisor should also be notified. Students should keep contact information

on file (including cell phone numbers) in case they need to make a phone call early in the morning.

The number of excused absences will be determined by academic programs. It is possible that absences will need to be made up at the end of the semester. Unexcused absences may result in removal from the internship or practicum.

In the event of a religious holiday that prevents students from being at their field site, students are expected to make arrangements with their site supervisor in advance. [Religious Holidays](#) are considered as excused absences.

In the event of a snow day, students should follow the procedures outlined by their field site, in consultation with their academic program. Students should ask their site supervisor in advance to explain the procedure and add them to the site's notification list.

Please Note:

- If both the College and field site are closed, or if the field site closes but the College remains open, students should consult with their site and university supervisors to determine if the hours need to be made up.
- If the College is closed but the field site remains open, students are encouraged to attend but should use their discretion as to whether they can travel safely to and from the field site. If students do not attend, they should consult with their site and university supervisors to determine if the hours need to be made up.
- In cases of extreme or prolonged winter weather conditions that result in an unusual number of snow days, students are still required to fulfill the minimum number of contact hours on site as set by their academic program.

Students will not receive a passing grade or become qualified for state licensure without having satisfactorily completed the pre-practicum, practicum and/or internship field experience. To receive academic credit, students must attend all scheduled days and complete as well as document in the [Sonia Field Database](#) all required field hours, as determined by their academic program and site. Lack of compliance with these policies may result in removal from the field site and/or a failing grade.

Incomplete Grade Policy

At BU Wheelock, students receiving a grade of Incomplete must complete the [Incomplete Grade Report](#). This contract should be filled out by both the student and instructor to dictate the completion deadline and circumstances of an incomplete grade. Both student and instructor will need to sign this form and the signed form should be returned to the [BU Wheelock Data and Enrollment Management Office](#), for processing. Incomplete grades should not be awarded without this contract. For more detail, please read the full policy, [Incomplete Coursework](#).

Students have one year to resolve the terms of the contract or the grade will become the grade earned at the time the “I” grade was issued.

Dropping Fieldwork Course

Students who wish to drop a field course should follow BU’s policy on [Dropping a Course](#) and should also consult with their academic advisor to clarify any relevant considerations.

Withdrawal from BU, Leave of Absence, and Reinstatement

Students who wish to withdraw from BU, take a leave of absence (including medical leave), or be reinstated should follow BU’s policy and should also contact the Wheelock Student Services office. For more information, please read the full BU policy: [Withdrawal, Leave of Absence, and Reinstatement](#).

Failing a Fieldwork Course or Removal from a Field Site

In the event that a student fails a fieldwork course or is removed from a field site, the program director must clarify in writing the reasons. In turn, students who wish to re-enter the field must submit a written petition to the program director, department chair, and associate dean of academic affairs, clearly describing why they feel that they are ready. Students will be notified in a timely manner as to (a) whether they will be permitted to re-enter the field, and if applicable (b) the date for re-entry.

Note: Program directors should notify the Professional Preparation Office regarding any change of status for students who are in the field.

Student Responsibilities to Begin Field Experiences

To enroll in the field experience students must:

- Be matriculated, in good academic standing, and have a minimum GPA as defined by the [Student-Teaching Practicum and Clinical Experience](#) policy (*Note:* program-specific requirements may apply);
- Complete their respective program’s intake and placement process;
- Successfully complete an interview with a site supervisor;
- Complete all university and site requirements for BU’s Protection of Minors, including but not limited to the POM online training course and POM CORI verification form;
- Familiarize themselves with site policies and procedures; agree to abide by the regulations, procedures, practices, professional and personal expectations of the particular site and Boston University;
- Adhere to the daily schedule and calendars of the assigned site;
- Review and understand the criteria by which their performance will be evaluated.

Professional Behaviors

It is essential that students display actions deemed acceptable during a field experience. This includes but is not limited to academic qualifications; concern for others; effective and appropriate interpersonal interactions; adhering to appropriate ethical codes of conduct; professional self-presentation; fulfilling commitments; maintaining professional boundaries; taking responsibility; fostering self-care and emotional wellness; being able to receive and apply feedback willingly as well as to give feedback constructively; and a focus on continued personal and professional growth.

Students must demonstrate the following professional behaviors and dispositions:

- Adhere to all site policies including the site's professional code of conduct;
- Agree to abide by the regulations, procedures, instructional practices, professional and personal expectations of the site;
- Dress professionally by observing the site's professional dress code;
- Understand that the field experience will be terminated if the student's personal or professional behavior or ability to work effectively is not compatible with the expectations of the college, the site, or the site supervisor;
- Organize time and materials, prioritize tasks, perform several tasks at once, and be readily able to adapt to changing situations;
- Demonstrate flexibility and sound judgment under stress (e.g., complete work within time constraints; maintain concentration during distracting situations; cope with diverse workloads; maintain personal and professional composure as well as respond appropriately in urgent situations);
- Demonstrate compassion, empathy, integrity, responsibility, honesty in addition to emotional health in meeting the varying demands of the student role;
- Use strength-based approaches and developmentally appropriate language;
- Accept and respond in a professional manner to constructive feedback from the site supervisor and academic supervisor;
- Demonstrate self-reflective practice as well as the desire for continued learning and professional development;
- Demonstrate flexibility and cooperation with others to work collaboratively.

Communication

Students must demonstrate sufficient oral, written, and nonverbal communication skills and must proactively:

- Communicate effectively, accurately, respectfully, and sensitively;
- Recognize and respond appropriately to non-verbal communication, including facial expression, body language and affect;
- Document information accurately and clearly as well as communicate effectively in various forms of verbal, written or electronic media.

Confidentiality

Students have an ethical responsibility to protect the privacy of the children, adolescents, and families with whom they interact in schools, hospitals, clinics, and community organizations. BU Wheelock takes this responsibility seriously by reminding students to hold any personal information that they have about specific children/adolescents and their families in confidence. Information may only be shared when authorized by the parent or guardian or by the client in the form of written consent. Maintaining confidentiality is important in building trust and in earning respect from the populations that students serve.

Confidentiality Guidelines

- Follow site policies and procedures as well as program specific policies for written permission from a parent or guardian before using a photograph, work sample, assessment, interview, video-clip, audiotape, or any item produced by the child for a Wheelock-BU university course assignment;
- Use a substitute name (pseudonym) to protect the identity of children and clients in case studies, papers, or university assignments;
- Refer to children, clients, and families by their first names, by a pseudonym, or by initials in verbal exchanges or in written assignments and reflections;
- Protect confidentiality when emailing and refrain from sending text messages with any information regarding children and/or clients;
- Refrain from discussing personal information found in records, such as Individualized Education Programs (IEPs), psychological assessments, medical records, or court documents, with colleagues or others who are not directly involved in using the information to provide professional services; in addition, when information is discussed, it should be done in a confidential setting;
- Refrain from posting any client information, including photographs, work samples, writing, or video-clips, on the Internet or on any social media, even in privatized settings.

Please Note: Certain clinical sites may request relevant information maintained by the University about a BU Wheelock student's educational record in connection with a placement. Any such request should be shared with the student, and the student's consent should be received before such information is disclosed. This requirement does not apply to information that is deemed "directory information", such as the student's dates of attendance, local address, and BU directory phone number, unless such data has been specifically restricted. In addition to these guidelines, students must also adhere to their specific profession's Code of Ethics, as well as other relevant guidelines (e.g., [HIPAA](#), [FERPA](#)).

Exception to Confidentiality: The only exception to this rule is if a child, adolescent, family member, or client shares information that leads one to believe that harm may result to oneself or to others; in this case, students are required by law to disclose the

information to an authority. In counseling contexts, exceptions to confidentiality are explicitly explained to clients in advance. In other settings, such as educational institutions, interns and student teachers along with all school professionals are deemed [Mandated Reporters](#) and must follow the school, hospital, or institution's guidelines for reporting. If reporting procedures are not explained during site orientations, it is the students' responsibility to learn about these procedures and to follow the protocol at the school, hospital, agency, or organization. If students are concerned or unsure of how to act, they should seek assistance from their university supervisor, site supervisor, or the Professional Preparation Office at BU Wheelock.

Internet/Laptop/Cell Phone Policy

Students must consider how information that is shared via the Internet, texting, and email as well as all forms of social media may be interpreted by those around them. Students must therefore maintain appropriate boundaries for technology use and must adhere to site and university expectations at all times.

Guidelines for Technology Use:

- Maintain separate sites for professional and personal use;
- Keep usernames or personal web-addresses private;
- Arrange for social media accounts to be readable only by friends or chosen members;
- Ensure that no one posts on one's site unless they have approval first;
- Maintain professional boundaries. If one is contacted by the child, adolescent, or client via social media, it should be made clear that social media is an unacceptable forum to communicate with them;
- Restrict phone calls, text messages, and emails to appropriately designated times such as prep period or lunch break.

Student Injuries

If injured at a field site, the Wheelock student should request an incident report from the site administration. Students should immediately notify their university supervisor and then provide the Professional Preparation Office and university supervisor with a copy of the completed incident report.

Emergency Situation Field Protocol

An emergency situation for purposes of this protocol is defined as any event, occurrence, or circumstance that:

- Presents danger to the wellbeing or safety of the student; or
- Significantly impacts the ability of the student to conduct fieldwork; or
- Is unusual or disturbing that causes the student suffer fear or emotional distress.

Procedure for Immediate Threat to Safety

In the event of a crime or immediate threat to the safety or wellbeing of the student or other person, the student should immediately contact:

- If at Boston University, the [Boston University Police](#) at 617-353-2121;
- For all other locations call local police at 9-1-1.

Following the call to the police the student, when safety permits, will notify the [Professional Preparation](#) of the situation. Students should:

- Seek medical attention if needed;
- If experiencing any emotional distress or other mental health problems seek assistance from the [Boston University Student Health Services](#); and
- Remove themselves from any hazardous or dangerous situation.

If a faculty or staff member is notified by a student or learns of a crime or immediate threat to the safety or wellbeing of the student or other person, the faculty or staff member will:

- Ensure that the appropriate police department has been notified;
- Ensure that the student is receiving medical attention if needed;
- Consult with the [Boston University Police](#) to ensure all immediate needs are met; and
- Immediately notify the [Professional Preparation](#)

Procedure for Situations *Not* an Immediate Threat to Safety

In the event of a situation that does *not* involve a crime or an immediate threat to the safety or wellbeing of the student or other person, the student will immediately notify the [Professional Preparation](#) of the situation. Students should:

- Contact the local police department if there are any concerns about safety;
- Seek medical attention if needed;
- If experiencing any emotional distress or other mental health problems seek assistance from the [Boston University Student Health Services](#); and
- Remove themselves from any hazardous or dangerous situation;

If a faculty or staff member is notified by a student or learns of an emergency situation *not* an immediate threat to the safety or wellbeing of the student or other person, the faculty or staff member will repeat the steps as previously noted.

Follow-up Procedure

Following any incident reported under the above procedures, the department chair will review the incident with the Professional Preparation Office, the program director, the site supervisor or designee, and the university supervisor to determine any follow-up action needed and to evaluate any needs of the impacted student. Based on this review the university supervisor and site supervisor will conduct a meeting with the student to

discuss any changes, offer any recommended services, and learn of any additional needs or concerns of the student.

Essential Safety Resources

[BU Wheelock COVID Related Safety Resources for Field Placement](#)

[BU Wheelock Safety Resources for Field Placement](#)

Concern about Wheelock Student's Performance

The following is a suggested path to be followed by site supervisors when there is a serious concern about a BU Wheelock student (though, of course, the particular circumstances of the concern may necessitate adaptations). All steps below should be documented with written plans and summaries of meetings.

- First, express the specific concern directly to the Wheelock student, and identify an action plan for the student to make improvements. The specific concern may be related to the student's behavior and/or skills. Examples of skills that might necessitate an action plan include:
 - Lack of content knowledge in specific areas; difficulty with implementation of skills; and difficulty attaining professional standards;
 - Lack of/delayed response to communication from site supervisors/university supervisors; utilizing phone/laptop in the field when not appropriate;
 - Difficulty building professional relationships with students/clients in the field;
 - Violating rules of professional conduct related to confidentiality.

Note: Some behavior is so grievous that it will result in immediate termination from a placement. Such behavior includes, but is not limited to, inflicting or threatening to inflict injury to a client, agency staff member, or other person; abusing controlled substances or alcohol; becoming sexually involved with clients or site personnel; engaging in inappropriate use of social media; or engaging in illegal activities that reflect negatively upon the student's ability to perform professionally or upon BU Wheelock and the profession.

- If the concern persists, the site supervisor should reiterate the concern to the student and also notify the university supervisor and/or academic program director and others, as applicable. It is also recommended that the university supervisor or program director submit the online [ATLAS Referral Form](#) to make a record of the concern.
- If necessary, a meeting with the site supervisor, university supervisor and/or program director will take place, and an improvement plan for the student will be developed.
 - **Note:** The Professional Preparation Office should be contacted to determine if additional supports may be appropriate.

- If a substantial concern continues, and if there is no evidence that the student is able or willing to address the concern, depending on the timing, the site supervisor and/or the university supervisor can recommend termination of the practicum to the academic program director.
- A meeting between the academic program director and site supervisor will occur to decide about terminating the placement.
 - **Note:** The field experience will be terminated if the student's personal or professional behavior or ability to work as an effective prospective professional is not compatible with the expectations of the site and/or site supervisors.

Student Employment at Placement Site

Boston University Wheelock College of Education & Human Development (the "College") believes field training is an integral part of a student's professional preparation and development. To this end, the College conducts "Academically Approved Field Programs," a collection of practicum, internship, and other off-campus learning experiences. Through its Academically Approved Field Programs, the College places students in educationally suitable positions, or "placement sites," at various public and private institutions and at other locations.

On occasion, placement sites hire students to perform work outside of an Academically Approved Field Program and beyond the College's oversight or control. Provided that such employment does not interfere with or contradict the educational goals, expectations, or requirements of the Academically Approved Field Program, the College expresses no opinion and makes no representation, either explicit or implicit, that a student is qualified to perform work at a placement site.. However, the College reserves the right to change a student's placement if, in the College's opinion and in its sole discretion, it determines that a student's outside employment at a placement site compromises the learning experience of the Academically Approved Field Program.

The College assumes no responsibility for providing insurance for students against harm suffered, or for liability incurred, as a result of employment outside of an Academically Approved Field Program. Such insurance and any liability resulting from such employment is the responsibility of the student and the employer.

Students seeking employment outside the scope of an Academically Approved Field Program at a placement site are responsible for obtaining a signed [Student Employment Acknowledgment And Release Form](#) from the placement site and uploading the completed form to the Sonia Field Database. The student must also sign the release form agreeing to this policy. Students under the age of 18 must provide the College with an acknowledgment and release signed by their parents or legal guardians.

Field Associate Scholarship Program

The Field Associate Scholarship (FAS) Program acknowledges practitioners who

supervise BU Wheelock students during their professional preparation and training. BU Wheelock recognizes these practitioners by providing scholarship assistance as appropriate for qualified supervisors. For more information, please see the [FAS Resources Webpage](#), which includes [FAS Policies](#), [Frequently Asked Questions](#), [How to Redeem Your FAS](#), and [How to Identify Potential Courses](#).

State Authorization and Distance Education

For students participating in practicum that occur outside of Massachusetts, information regarding Boston University's state authorization approval and related complaint resolution process can be found on the State Authorization and Distance Education website at www.bu.edu/state-authorization.

Serving as Substitute Staff at the Field Site

BU Wheelock students (herein noted as "Student") should **not** serve as substitute staff, unless the Student is in a job-related placement, i.e., their place of employment serves as their placement site (for example, a teacher with a provisional teaching license uses their classroom as a practicum site).

In placements not considered job-related, the Site may assign substitute responsibilities to the Student **only if all of the following conditions are met:**

- The Student is in a post-baccalaureate program or higher (masters, certificate of advanced graduate study, or doctoral program)***
- The Site agrees to provide consistent supervision, i.e., daily oversight and guidance by staff who meet program minimum standards (e.g., a classroom teacher with 3+ years of teaching experience)
- The BU Supervisor and Site Supervisor jointly determine and agree that the Student can manage the substitute responsibilities
- The Student has demonstrated evidence of success with key program benchmarks. For example, in education full practicum, the Student has been observed twice; scored proficiently on the mid-term assessment; and logged 100-150 practicum hours
- The substitute arrangement does **not** interfere with the program requirements for the Student's academic fieldwork

*** Exceptions for undergraduate students to serve in a substitute capacity **on rare occasion only** may be considered on a limited, case-by-case basis if circumstances warrant and via joint deliberation between the Program Director and Professional Preparation Office.

Scheduled Breaks During Site Visit

Students in full-day placement should be given time to eat lunch plus short breaks. At the baseline minimum, students need to have **at least 15-20 minutes to eat lunch** within a full day's visit, even if short breaks are not feasible. Students should be proactive and (a) discuss a plan with their site supervisor early on; (b) raise any

concerns as soon as they arise; and (c) consult with their BU supervisor to help problem solve as needed.

If A Fight Occurs At Field Placement

BU Wheelock students (herein noted as the “Student”) should **not** physically intervene if/when a fight or physical altercation occurs at field placement. The Student should seek immediate assistance. ***

Before field placement begins, the Student should ask the site supervisor or administration (e.g., front office) to clarify the following questions:

- What is the site policy and procedure for *paid* staff when a fight occurs?
- What resources are in place to prevent situations from escalating or to intervene when a fight does occur?
- What is the expectation for the Student if they witness a fight or an escalating situation that could result in physical altercation?

BU Wheelock asks our site partners to assist the Student so that they are clear about site policies and feel prepared to abide by site procedures in relation to fighting and de-escalation. A site partner’s policy should **not** require BU Students to physically intervene when a fight occurs.

*** Students in job-related placements (i.e., their place of employment serves as their field placement) need to follow policies and procedures for paid staff or personnel at their site.