



Admission of Master's Degree Students with Criminal Backgrounds: Implications for Field Directors

Author(s)

Chavon D. Dottin, EdD, MEd, MSW

Delaware State University

Abstract

This study was designed to explore Master of Social Work programs' policies when admitting students with criminal backgrounds and the implications of this practice for field directors. The issue of students with criminal records is a challenging one for social work programs and the responsibility is often left solely to the field director. In this study, field directors participated in an online survey related to perceived challenges, gate-keeping practices, and policy development. Findings and recommendations are discussed.

Keywords: criminal background checks, field director, social work field education

Introduction and Background

Field directors' primary responsibility is management of the Masters of Social Work (MSW) and Bachelors of Social Work (BSW) Field Instruction Office at a college or university. This responsibility involves developing field placements that meet the criteria of the department and arranging students' field placements. This responsibility is becoming extremely difficult for field directors to meet since most agencies that serve as field placement sites for social work students now require criminal background checks (Raymond & Sowbel, 2014). Additionally, the criteria included in the employment and application process of most non-profit and state agencies require a criminal background check, which limits the number of options that students with criminal records have to complete their field education practicum requirement. There is reason for concern with field placements of such students due to some agencies' refusal

to take them on, often due to legal restraints (Haski-Leventhal, Gelles, & Cnaan, 2010). It is challenging to find field placements for students with criminal backgrounds, such as convictions involving harm to a child, physical and sexual assault, death of a child, theft, drug charges, and murder (Cobb & Jordan, 1989).

Nelson and Cowburn (2010) noted that "consideration of the suitability of individuals with criminal convictions to train and work as social workers brings into sharp focus ethical and political issues that lie at the heart of the professional identity of social work" (p. 1082). A criminal background check is often required by agencies for both ethical and political reasons as well as client safety. Given that most social work students in field practicum settings have power and authority over vulnerable populations (including older adults, individuals with disabilities, and children), it is important for agencies to put in place policies that require criminal background checks to safeguard their clients from potential harm (Madoc-Jones, Bates, Facer, & Roscoe, 2007). Field directors and agencies also have the legal responsibility to ensure that prospective students are properly evaluated through risk assessment procedures (Madoc-Jones et al., 2007).

A criminal record is a record of a person's criminal history, generally used by potential employers as an assessment tool. A criminal background/history shows if a person has ever been charged with and convicted of a crime, whether charges are for felonies or misdemeanors. Misdemeanors are less offensive crimes whereas felonies are more serious crimes such as rape and murder. Misdemeanors are punishable by fines and sometimes jail time, usually less than one year. Felonies are punishable by substantial fines and prison sentences in excess of one year.

To date, there has been limited research on the challenges that field directors face identifying field practicum settings for MSW students with criminal records (Council on Social Work Education [CSWE], 2015; Zeff, Kaersvang, & Raskin, 2014). The stigmas and biases associated with individuals who have criminal records prevent many graduate social work students from being placed in a field practicum and thus not able to obtain the MSW degree. The purpose of this study was to explore the increasing challenges that field directors face when attempting to place MSW students with criminal backgrounds into field placement settings.

Literature Review

Nationwide, MSW programs are faced with the ethical dilemma of whether or not to admit a student who has a criminal background. Social work programs which are

accredited through the Council on Social Work Education (CSWE) are required to have policies for admission; however, there is not a clear or consistent recommendation for this dilemma (CSWE, 2015). While social work programs have a responsibility to protect the public, they must also ensure due process to individuals with criminal records who want to enter the social work profession.

An applicant who is admitted into the program and re-offends creates potential liability, which could put the field placement agency and the university at a legal and ethical risk. On the other hand, ex-offenders have been shown to empower clients with similar pasts and be "effective change agents;" therefore their admission should not be outright denied without some due process (Scott & Zeiger, 2000, p. 409). Social workers are taught to empower and give people another opportunity to redeem themselves. As social work educators, they learn to believe in people's ability to recover and change. Therefore, each student who has a criminal background should be reviewed on a case-by-case basis. Another factor to consider is the disproportionate rate at which people of color, especially black males, are incarcerated. The ethical implications of excluding applicants with criminal backgrounds then include limiting the pool of diverse experiences into social work, which can be a profession dominated by white females. There is an important racial component to this discussion that must be included.

People convicted of felonies who enter social work programs can also cause conceptual dilemmas and practices. Haski-Leventhal et al. (2010) conducted a study regarding people convicted of felonies into to social work programs. They asked social work program directors whether programs asked applicants about their past, how they ask, reasons for asking or not asking, what is done with the information, and what information is taken into account. What they found was that only a small majority of the responding programs have a policy of asking about past criminal records (Haski-Leventhal et al., 2010). Their study also discovered that although social work programs may ask applicants if they have criminal backgrounds and may be willing to admit students with criminal backgrounds, schools have very few decision-making guidelines.

Methodology

Research Design

This was a quantitative study of MSW field directors involving a self-reported survey. Among the benefits of a quantitative study is its ability to acquire large data samples so the data are more precise and less influenced by bias. Disadvantages of quantitative research include the risk that the categories listed may not accurately represent each

individual surveyed, as well as the difficulty in obtaining a high response rate (Gay, Mills, & Airasian, 2011).

The following were the research questions addressed in this study: What are the perceived challenges field directors' faces when placing MSW students with a criminal background in field placement settings? What are the commonly used gate-keeping practices for field directors/field placements? To what extent are MSW programs developing policies surrounding criminal background checks?

Participants

Permission was obtained from Wilmington University's Human Subjects Review Committee (HSRC) to conduct a study using human subjects. Once approved, the survey was conducted via *Survey Monkey*, an online software system for questionnaires. The participants of this study consisted of 231 field directors/ coordinators of accredited MSW programs throughout the United States. The survey was sent to field directors twice. Field directors who opted to participate were asked to indicate their willingness by checking yes or no prior to the survey and to sign the consent form. Participation was voluntary, anonymous, and confidential. There were no known ethical issues and no incentives were given. Out of the 231 field directors solicited, 100 surveys were collected.

The participants for this study were 100 field directors from different types of institutions: 71.43% public, 11.43% from private-religion affiliated, 10.48% private-other, 8.57% privately funded, 51.43% state funded, 3.81% historically black colleges and universities, 39.05% traditional (a student who enrolls in college immediately after graduation from high school and lives on campus), 0% online, and 33.33% hybrid, which adds up to more than 100% because participants were able to check all categories that applied.

Of the 231 surveys sent, 113 respondents responded to the email, representing a response rate of 43%; however, only 111 of the 113 respondents gave consent to use the responses for research purposes and only 90.91% of respondents actually checked that their institution had a MSW program.

Instrument

A quantitative survey was adapted and modified with permission from the authors of a similar study conducted on the use of criminal background checks in social work education (Zellmer & Knothe, 2011). Their instrument was reliable and validated and used for their study. Twenty-one questions were used for the instrument. Question

number ten was adapted from Brodersen, Swick, and Richman (2009). The first three questions inquired about specific social work program information and the remaining 18 questions addressed the research questions.

To determine face and content validity, the instrument was reviewed by a panel of experts consisting of three field directors and two professors. The reviewers were chosen because of their awareness of field education, research background, and a combined 85 years of practice in social work. Feedback with concerns or suggestions were given to the researcher and implemented in the construction of the final instrument.

Data Analysis

Descriptive analysis was used to describe the data and quantitatively analyze the results. The survey responses were compiled, tabulated, and compared using the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) and questions were analyzed using frequencies and percentages. The percentages reported, and all statistical calculations, are based on those responding to the survey item considered.

The collected data was recorded and organized as follows:

- Questions 1, 2, & 3: Program Information
- Questions 4, 5, & 6: Program Admissions Inquiry
- Questions 7, 8, & 9: Criminal Background Practices
- Questions 10, 11, 12, 13, & 21: Placement Challenges
- Questions 14, 15, 16, 17, & 18: Placement Policies

Responses to each of the questions were analyzed using frequencies and percentages. In the tables, the values of the scores are listed in rank order, with the lowest score value at the bottom. Frequencies were used to characterize the scores in the most significant and simplified manner. It is easier to understand, interpret, and discuss the scores when they are presented as a frequency distribution (Pagano, 2013). Tables that list the values of the scores are listed in rank order.

Results of the Study

Research question one is associated with survey questions 9, 10, 11, 12, 13, 14, and 21. Research question two is associated with survey questions 5, 6, 7, 8, 15, and 16. Research question three is associated with survey questions 17, 18, 19 and 20.

Responses to Research Questions

Descriptive statistics: Perceived challenges. Research Question 1 asked: "What are the perceived challenges field directors' face when placing MSW students with a criminal background in field placement settings?" This question was answered with survey items displayed in Tables 1 to 3.

Table 1 displays the frequency counts for selected variables pertaining to question one. Ninety-four percent of the directors reported that a criminal record would impact field placements. The estimates for the percentage of field sites that required a background check ranged from 1-25% (19.0%) to 76-100% (32.0%) with a median estimate of 58%. Sixty percent of the field directors indicated that over half of the agencies require a criminal background check. Most (83.0%) reported having challenges placing students with criminal backgrounds. About a third of the field directors (34.0%) reported that they had negative experiences for placing one or more students with criminal backgrounds. Fifty-three percent answered that they had seen an increase in MSW students with criminal backgrounds.

Table 1 Frequency Counts for Selected Variables (N=100)

Variable	Category	n	%
Believe a discovered or reported criminal record impacts field placements (Survey Question # 9)	Yes	94	94.0
	No	6	6.0
Percentage of field sites that require a criminal background check on students (Survey Question # 11)	1-25%	19	19.0
	26-50%	21	21.0
	51-75%	28	28.0
	76-100%	32	32.0
Have challenges placing students with criminal backgrounds (Survey Question # 13)	Yes	83	83.0
	No	17	17.0
Experience negative ramifications for placing students with criminal backgrounds (Survey Question # 14)	Yes	34	34.0
	No	66	66.0
Find an increase in MSW students with criminal backgrounds (Survey Question # 21)	Yes	53	53.0
	No	47	47.0

Table 2 displays the frequency counts for specific crimes leading to the rejection of applicants. The two most frequently reported crimes were child molestation (66.0%) and forcible rape (62.0%) while the least reported crimes were underage drinking (12.0%) and prostitution (27.0%). The data suggest that more field placements would be less likely to accept someone who has a child molestation and forcible rape conviction than someone who has committed homicide.

Table 2 Frequency Count of Specific Crimes Leading to Rejection of Applicants (N=100) (Survey Question # 10)

Item	<i>n</i>	%
Child molestation	66	66.0
Forcible rape	62	62.0
Homicide	58	58.0
Kidnapping	54	54.0
Statutory rape	52	52.0
Accomplice to a murder	52	52.0
Nonviolent sex offense	48	48.0
Aggravated assault	48	48.0
Voluntary manslaughter	48	48.0
Drug manufacturing	46	46.0
Drug dealing	46	46.0
Robbery	45	45.0
Arson	43	43.0
Illegal sale of weapons	43	43.0
Involuntary manslaughter	42	42.0
Embezzlement	40	40.0
Possession of illegal weapons	39	39.0
Burglary	37	37.0
Simple assault	36	36.0
Welfare fraud	36	36.0
Auto theft	35	35.0
Possession of illegal drugs	35	35.0
Driving under the influence	35	35.0
Forgery	34	34.0
Larceny	31	31.0
Public indecency	30	30.0
Possessions of stolen goods	28	28.0
Prostitution	27	27.0
Underage drinking	12	12.0

Table 3 displays the frequency counts for the field placements most likely to require a background check. The most commonly reported placement sites were child welfare (85.0%) and schools (84.0%), while the least reported sites were rehabilitation (24.0%) and domestic violence services (26.0%).

Table 3 Frequency Counts for Field Placements Most Likely to Require a Background Check Sorted by Highest Frequency ($N=100$) (Survey Question # 12)

Item	<i>n</i>	%
Child welfare	85	85.0
Schools	84	84.0
Hospitals	78	78.0
Prison/ Corrections	67	67.0
Group homes	63	63.0
Mental health agencies	56	56.0
Military social work	43	43.0
Aging	37	37.0
Alcohol, drug, substance abuse	30	30.0
Public health	30	30.0
Shelters	28	28.0
Domestic services	26	26.0
Rehabilitation	24	24.0
Other	5	5.0

Gate-keeping practices. Research Question 2 asked: “What are the commonly used gate-keeping practices for field directors/field placements?” This question was answered with survey items contained in Tables 4 to 7.

Table 4 displays the frequency counts for selected variables pertaining to this question. All field directors (100.0%) reported that their program admits students who have a criminal background while only (18.0%) required a criminal background check prior to being placed in the field. About two-thirds of the field directors (65.0%) stated that there was a program policy for background checks at their school.

Table 4 Frequency Counts for Selected Variables ($N=100$)

Variable	Category	<i>n</i>	%
Students with criminal backgrounds are admitted (Survey Question # 5)	Yes	100	100.0
	No	0	0.0
Background check required of applicants prior to being placed in the field (Survey Question # 6)	Yes	18	18.0
	No	82	82.0

Program has policy for criminal background checks (Survey Question # 15)	Yes	65	65.0
	No	35	35.0

Table 5 displays the frequency counts for when background checks were required. The most common times for background checks were after admission to the program but prior to field education (18.0%) and during field practicum (16.0%). Among those respondents who included an open-ended "Other" response (52.0%), the most commonly given answers pertaining to the timing of the background check were: they advised students to get a criminal background check even if the field agency did not request the criminal background check to be completed.

Table 5 Frequency Counts for When Background Check is required Sorted by Highest Frequency ($N=100$) (Survey Question # 7)

Item	<i>n</i>	%
After admission to the program but prior to field education	18	18.0
During field practicum	16	16.0
At time of application to the program	5	5.0
Other	52	52.0

Table 6 displays the frequency counts for who is responsible for obtaining the background check. The most frequent answers were the field placement agency (57.0%) and the student (54.0%). Seventy percent of the field directors selected the response of "Other" which could indicate the following options that were not included in the survey.

Table 6 Frequency Counts for who is Responsible for Obtaining Background Check Sorted by Highest Frequency ($N=100$) (Survey Question # 8)

Item	<i>n</i>	%
Field placement agency	57	57.0
Student	54	54.0
Social work program	7	7.0
Other	7	7.0

Table 7 displays the frequency counts for informing students about the background check policy. The most common methods were the student handbook (62.0%), information provided during orientation meeting or program meeting (58.0%), and

admissions material (47.0%). Twenty-two percent of the field directors selected "Other" and indicated: field agency, field manual, field director and field application.

Table 7 Frequency Counts for Informing Students about Background Check Policy Sorted by Highest Frequency ($N=100$) (Survey Question # 16)

Item	<i>n</i>	%
Student handbook	62	62.0
Provided during orientation meeting or program meeting	58	58.0
Included in admission materials	47	47.0
Program website	25	25.0
Advisor	24	24.0
Program brochure	5	5.0
We do not inform applicants about criminal background checks	3	3.0
Other	22	22.0

Policy development. Research Question 3 asked: "To what extent are MSW programs developing policies surrounding criminal background checks?" This question was answered with survey items contained in Tables 8 and 9.

Table 8 displays the frequency counts for selected variables pertaining to this question. Ninety-one percent of the field directors indicated they have a policy that explains the implications of the background check, while 30.0% indicated that they had a review process for students with a criminal background, and 14.0% reported their program had faced at least one legal/ethical challenge to the background policy.

Table 8 Frequency Counts for Selected Variables ($N=100$)

Variable	Category	<i>n</i>	%
Does your policy explain implications of criminal background check (Survey Question # 17)	Yes	91	91.0
	No	9	9.0
Does your policy include a review process for students with criminal background (Survey Question # 18)	Yes	30	30.0
	No	70	70.0

Program faced legal/ethical challenge to background policy (Survey Question # 20)	Yes	14	14.0
	No	86	86.0

Table 9 displays the frequency counts for how the background check was formulated. The most common sources of input were field directors (49.0%), attorneys (22.0%), and copied policies from other schools (15.0%). Thirty-two percent chose "Other" which included: consultation with other schools, MSW program director, MSW faculty, field advisory committee, and admission committee and provost office.

Table 9 Frequency Counts for Formulation of Background Check Policy Sorted by Highest Frequency (N=100) (Survey Question # 19)

Item	<i>n</i>	%
Field directors	49	49.0
By attorneys	22	22.0
Copied from other schools	15	15.0
Other	32	32.0

Summary of Research Findings

Perceived challenges. Most field directors confirmed that a student having a criminal background will make it harder to place that student since over half of their field placement sites require a criminal background check. The majority of field directors also reported that they have experienced challenges placing students with criminal backgrounds and, depending on the students' convictions and the field placement setting, there would be limited field placement options for those students. Additionally, the options for a field placement in a school or child welfare agency will rule out 85% of students who have a criminal background. Recommended field placement opportunities for students with criminal background records include: churches, a service grant opportunity with a professor, or allowing the student to use his or her current workplace. The Council on Social Work Education (2015) allows students to use an employment site as a field placement, provided that the site meet specific criteria. Two additional field placement settings that can be considered are shelters and substance use and addiction treatment agencies.

The results of this study provide helpful information for field directors working with students with criminal backgrounds. The results prove that field directors are faced with challenges when placing a MSW student with a criminal background in a field placement setting. Unfortunately, "accommodating students often leads to an

educationally compromised field arrangement" (Wayne, Bogo, & Raskin, 2006, p. 164). Field directors should consider a plan of action; accordingly, having a non-traditional setting option and being innovative are going to be essential in problem solving. Crime types and field placement settings will be mitigating factors while trying to place students in the field. A student with criminal convictions that involve harming a child in any way, including physical and sexual assault, is the number one crime type that a majority of field agencies will not accept. In addition, a student with forcible rape or homicide convictions will be challenging to place.

Field directors will have to develop relationships with some agencies that will be open to students with criminal backgrounds. There are some agencies that will accept a student with a lesser violent crime type but every agency is different in what crime type they will accept. Just because a student may have a Driving Under the Influence (DUI) or underage drinking charge does not mean they will be any easier to place. In fact, looking at recidivism plays an important role in agencies deciding who they will accept. Based on Langan and Levin (2002), young offenders are more likely to reoffend. Since the final decision is up to the agency whether to accept a student with any charge it leaves the field directors in an ethical and legal dilemma. Usually, field agencies will only accept students who they consider to have minor crimes and what they view as less risk (Gelman & Wardell, 1988).

Based on this study, results showed that hospitals and any setting working with children are among the least likely to accept a student who has a criminal background. The researcher has had the most success placing students with criminal backgrounds in shelters, non-direct services, and addiction treatment agencies for their field placement settings. Shelters and substance use and addiction treatment agencies tend to recognize and reward a person's capacity and prediction for change. Field directors must be mindful and encouraged to think and implement innovative and non-traditional ways to meet challenges faced by schools of social work and by the practicing community (Wayne, Bogo, & Raskin, 2006).

Gate-keeping practices. Based on the study's results, field directors are limited to their own gate-keeping practices. The data showed that 100% of field directors reported that their school admits students who probably have a criminal background and 94% reported that if a criminal background record is reported, it affects their ability to place their students. According to Nelson and Cowburn (2010), social work has major concerns with social justice and the importance of widening the capacity of socially excluded groups. However, social work has also taken on the role of protector to vulnerable and at risk of harm populations (Nelson & Cowburn, 2010). Potential conflict could arise when assessing if the empowerment of one group can increase the vulnerability of another group (Nelson & Cowburn, 2010). This is the major conflict that the admission process faces when deciding if a student qualifies for social

work education (Nelson & Cowburn, 2010). For this reason many schools revealed that the criminal background check is not required at the time of admission. Many schools leave the responsibility of requiring a criminal background check to the field placement agency and let them make the decision to accept the student or not for a field placement (Cole, 1991; Langhauser, 2001).

Policy development. Findings for this study suggest that there are MSW programs that do not have policies regarding criminal background checks. The university's legal counsel, social work department chairperson, program director, faculty, and field director should be involved in the process of policy development, which should include issues related to due process violations, privacy invasions, discrimination, and state and federal laws. "Policies may be laws, public or private regulations, formal procedures, or simply normatively sanctioned patterns of behaviors" (Popple & Leighninger, 2008, p. 34). While formulating the policy consultation with other schools, the chairperson, program director, faculty, field advisory committee, admission committee, and possibly even the provost's office should be consulted to protect the program legally. The field director should not solely develop the policy because it should be a department decision as it impacts the overall program. The researcher recommends that the policy consider the following: (1) Advising students to be proactive in sharing criminal background information even if it is not requested by the agency, (2) Advising students to notify the social work program if they are arrested while in the program, (3) Advising students that the program has the responsibility to share their criminal background information with the potential field placement agency.

If a program establishes a policy and procedures to review criminal background checks and rejects student admission admittance due to a criminal record, the program should also develop a policy in place for due process. The *Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act* (FERPA) allows records to be shared with "other school officials, including teachers, within the agency or institution whom the agency or institution has determined to have a legitimate educational interest" (FERPA, 1974, 99.31 [1] [i] [A]). The policy may possibly make the agencies safe, serve as a gate-keeping tool, and reduce the liability for social work programs.

This study showed that MSW programs are developing policies around criminal background checks. However, many do not have review processes, because every situation and circumstance is different for students who have criminal backgrounds. Field directors have an ethical responsibility to prepare and counsel students regarding potentially damaging effects of background issues.

Implications for Further Research

This study suggests a need for additional and continuous research on the use of criminal background checks in social work field education. The following questions still need to be answered:

- To what degree do criminal backgrounds predict harmful behaviors?
- Under what circumstances are agencies and field program making exceptions?
- How do students with criminal backgrounds perform in the field?
- Are students with criminal backgrounds getting hired and becoming licensed in social work?

Recent literature raises concerns about criminal background checks disproportionately affecting minority applicants (Zellmer & Knothe, 2011). Research on the use of criminal backgrounds in social work programs, if disproportionately affecting minority applicants, would be fascinating. A replication of the research being conducted for the BSW programs would substantiate the findings of this study. A qualitative study should be conducted. This would allow for field directors' experiences, suggestions, and recommendations to be included in the research. A case study on an actual student who has a criminal background while in the field would also provide more information and detail on the topic.

Discussion

The determination is ongoing of whether it is ethically and legally acceptable to grant or deny students' acceptance in a MSW program based on a criminal background screening. This study was not to debate whether a student with a criminal background should or should not be admitted into a MSW program, but rather to explore the challenges that field directors have when placing these students in a field practicum. The fact that field directors reported an increase in the number of MSW students who have criminal backgrounds suggests that this problem is not going away, and in fact it is increasing. The current study identified a number of issues related to criminal background checks and how the issue impacts social work education. By exposing the ethical and legal dilemmas related to admitting students who have a criminal background and the implications for field directors, the researcher encourages more discussion and research. It seems clear that members of admission committees and social work programs lack knowledge concerning the risk factors for students who have a criminal background and their behavior. Members of admissions and social work programs also appear to lack the understanding of the pressure it puts on the field directors. It also appears members of admission committees and social work programs are more concerned with quantity than quality. As long as social work programs continue to not have policies that evaluate applicants with criminal records, applications and gatekeeping may remain a process of personal biases.

It is critical that social work programs examine the professional moral base and obligation to assist the marginalized groups in society while finding a balance between applicants' rights and the need to protect social work programs, the wider profession, and ultimately clients. Social work programs must understand the legal responsibility and liability the university has for perspective students. Requiring criminal background checks for all incoming students ensures that those being accepted are responsible and in good standing with the law. Whether any specific program decides to exclude those with criminal backgrounds or give them a second opportunity is a matter for further discussion.

Field directors have a responsibility to their department, but also to the community to protect its best interests. Field directors must rise to the challenge of systematic issues. A balance must be found between the applicant's rights and the need to protect social work programs, the wider profession, and the clients served (Haski-Leventhal et al., 2010). The researcher's concern is that something unfortunate may have to happen before social work programs will handle this situation consistently as a whole and for the Council on Social Work Education to get involved and provide resources. This is why the sense of urgency is needed in social work education. "Sometimes without a sense of urgency, people won't give that extra effort that is often essential" (Kotter, 1996, p. 5). Many social work programs are encouraged to have autonomy by the CSWE; however, this one topic, for legal reasons, should be up for discussion. More than half of our nation's social work programs are encountering individuals who may experience the gatekeeping issues addressed in this study. More than half of our field directors are experiencing perceived challenges while placing a student who has a criminal background. The fact that field directors reported an increase in the number of MSW students who have a criminal background suggests that this issue remains relevant. Unless addressed, the issues brought on by lack of consistent policies in gatekeeping and criminal background checks will continue to gravely affect students, social work programs, agencies, and universities.

References

- Brodersen, M., Richman, J., & Swick, D. (2009). Risks and mitigating factors in decisions to accept students with criminal records. *Journal of Social Work Education, 45*(3), 349-363. doi:10.5175/JSWE.2009.200800081
- Cobb, N. H., & Jordan, C. (1989). Students with questionable values or threatening behavior: Precedent and policy from discipline to dismissal. *Journal of Social Work Education, 25*(2), 87-97. doi:10.1080/10437797.1989.10672117
- Cole, B. S. (1991). Legal issues related to social work program admissions. *Journal of Social Work Education, 27*(1), 18-24. doi:10.1080/10437797.1991.10672165

- Council on Social Work Education. (2015). *Educational policy and accreditation standards*. Retrieved from https://www.cswe.org/getattachment/Accreditation/Accreditation-Process/2015-EPAS/2015EPAS_Web_FINAL.pdf.aspx
- Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA). 20 U.S.C. § 1232g; 34 C.F.R. pt. 99. (1974).
- Gay, L. R., Mills, G. E., & Airasian, P. W. (2011). Descriptive research. In L. R. Gay, G. E. Mills, & P. W. Airasian (Eds.), *Educational research: Competencies for analysis and applications* (10th ed., pp. 159–165). Upper Saddle River, NJ: Pearson.
- Gelman, S. R., & Wardell, P. J. (1988). Who's responsible?: The field liability dilemma. *Journal of Social Work Education, 24*(1), 70–78. doi:10.1080/10437797.1988.10672099
- Haski-Leventhal, D., Gelles, R. J., & Cnann, R. A. (2010). Admitting convicted felons to social work programs: Conceptual dilemmas and practices. *International Social Work, 53*(1), 87–100. doi:10.1177/0020872809348949
- Kotter, J.P. (1996). *Leading change*. Boston, MA: Harvard Business Review Press.
- Langan, P. A., & Levin, D. J. (2002). *Recidivism of prisoners released in 1994* (Bureau of Justice Statistics Special Report No. NCJ 193427). Washington, DC: U.S. Department of Justice. Retrieved from <https://www.bjs.gov/content/pub/pdf/rpr94.pdf>
- Langhauser, D. (2001). Use of criminal convictions in college admissions. *West's Education Law Reporter, 154*, 733–744.
- Madoc-Jones, I., Bates, J., Facer, B., & Roscoe, K. D. (2007). Students with criminal convictions: Policies and practices in social work education. *British Journal of Social Work, 37*(8), 1398–1403. doi:10.1093/bjsw/bcl028
- Nelson, P., & Cowburn, M. (2010). Social work admissions: Applicants with criminal convictions – The challenge of ethical risk assessment. *British Journal of Social Work, 40*(4), 1081–1099. doi:10.1093/bjsw/bcq022
- Pagano, R. R. (2013). *Understanding statistics in the behavioral sciences*. Belmont, CA: Wadsworth.
- Popple, P.R., & Leighninger, L. (2008). *The policy-based profession: An introduction to social welfare policy analysis for social workers* (4th ed.). Boston, MA: Allyn & Bacon.

- Raymond, G. T., & Sowbel L. R. (2014). Gatekeeping. In C. A. Hunter, J. K. Moen, & M. S. Raskin (Eds.), *Social work field directors: Foundations for excellence* (Chapter 9). Chicago, IL: Lyceum Books. Retrieved from <http://www.socialworkfielddirectors.com/chapter-9/social-work-field-directors-book/chapter-9>
- Scott, N., & Zeiger, S. (2000). Should convicted felons be denied admission to social work education program? No! *Journal of Social Work Education, 36*(3), 409–411. doi:10.1080/10437797.2000.10779190
- Wayne, J., Bogo, M., & Raskin, M. (2006). The need for radical change in field education. *Journal of Social Work Education, 42*(1), 161–169. doi:10.5175/JSWE.2006.200400447
- Zeff, R., Kaersvang, L., & Raskin, M. (2014). Placing students. In C. A. Hunter, J. K. Moen, & M. S. Raskin (Eds.), *Social work field directors: Foundations for excellence* (Chapter 5). Chicago, IL: Lyceum Books. Retrieved from <http://www.socialworkfielddirectors.com/chapter-5/social-work-field-directors-book/chapter-5>
- Zellmer, D. D., & Knothe, T. E. (2011). The use of criminal background checks in social work education. *Journal of Baccalaureate Social Work, 16*(2), 17–33. doi:10.5555/basw.16.2.b44t18268523v76n