

# Social Work and Human Services Field Education Manual



JAMES COOK  
UNIVERSITY  
AUSTRALIA

A guide for the requirements of:

WS3503/ WS5304  
Field Education 1

WS4504/ WS5605  
Field Education 2/ Advanced Practicum





***At James Cook University, we acknowledge the Australian Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples of this nation.***

***We acknowledge the Traditional Owners of the lands on which our campuses and study centres are located and where we conduct our business.***

***We pay our respects to ancestors and Elders, past, present and future.***

***JCU is committed to honouring Australian Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples' unique cultural and spiritual relationships to the land, waters and seas and their rich contribution to JCU and society.***

**Prepared for the College of Arts, Society and Education, James Cook University**

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## FOREWORD

This manual has been developed for students, field educators, task supervisors, Field Education Liaison Officers (FELOs), professional and academic staff of the Social Work Programs at James Cook University. It is aimed at providing a quick and convenient source of information about the procedures and processes of the field education component in the Bachelor of Social Work and Master of Social Work (PQ) courses.

The manual is divided into ten chapters. The first seven chapters provide general information about the Social Work Programs, the Field Education component, roles and responsibilities in Field Education and placement procedures. These should be referred to by all parties prior to and during field placements. Chapters 8 and 9 relate directly to the first and second block placement in both courses. The final chapter covers the assessment requirements for both placements. These sections are designed to provide more specific information for students, field educators, and FELOs involved in either of these two placement periods.

This manual is regularly updated. Suggestions for how the manual can be improved are welcomed from both students and field educators and can be forwarded to the James Cook University Social Work and Human Services team in either Cairns or Townsville.



## CHAPTER ONE: Introduction

### Acknowledgment - Field educators

The Bachelor of Social Work (BSW) and the Master of Social Work (Professional Qualifying) (MSW(PQ)) are professional-oriented courses, and field educators play an essential role in supporting students' development of competency in practice settings. Field educators participate in the BSW and MSW(PQ) program through supporting placement opportunities for students. They do this out of a sense of professional commitment. Without their support, the program would not be possible. The JCU Social Work and Human Services staff would like to acknowledge the important contribution that the field educators make to the success of our courses.

### Our statement

The JCU Social Work Academic Group is committed to education and practices that are informed by critical insights into structural inequalities and inequities, and which contribute at both individual and collective levels to a socially just society.

The JCU Social Work Academic Group seeks to achieve this mission through high-quality teaching and research, critical scholarship and active community service. In doing so, the academic group acknowledges the traditional owners of Australia, values diversity, and recognises the international context of practice.

Social Work and Human Services is located within the College of Arts, Society and Education. Social Work and Human Services offers undergraduate courses and subjects in Social Work and Human Services, and postgraduate coursework and research degrees in Social Work (Professional Qualifying) and Social Sciences.

Programs are offered on campus in Townsville, Cairns and Brisbane, and online through external mode of study for some subjects.

The JCU Social Work Academic Group has a substantial research profile and is also active in community service within North, Far North and Southern Queensland. Academic staff are linked to professional communities throughout Australia and internationally.

### Philosophy of the Bachelor of Social Work and Master of Social Work (Professional Qualifying) programs

The Bachelor of Social Work and Master of Social Work (Professional Qualifying) programs at James Cook University aim to educate generalist social workers who can exercise independent judgement and integrate theoretical perspectives and evidence into practice. These programs reflect a dual concern with individual needs within wider socio-political contexts. Both qualifications have been structured to position graduates to meet the requirements for membership of the Australian Association of Social Workers, the accrediting body for all Australian Social Work programs (AASW, 2020).

There are five distinct, yet related, components designed to educate generalist social workers:

1. the study of human, social, political, legal and cultural systems
2. the development of social work skills, knowledge and values
3. the study of the welfare system
4. the integration of theory with practice
5. the analysis of social work professionalism.

Having attained an understanding in the aforementioned areas, the social work graduate is expected to be able to provide a professionally competent, ethically responsible, and accountable service. Therefore, the graduate will be:

- disciplined in thought and action and place primary importance on the needs of the client
- able to involve the client fully
- work within the parameters of a social justice framework.

### Field Education goals

The primary Field Education goals are:

- To provide students with opportunities to: develop and/or expand their experience, broaden their knowledge base, be exposed to new practice experiences, and develop a greater understanding of social work through formal supervisory arrangements.
- To enable students to learn how a placement agency functions, experimenting with a variety of interventions within the organisational mandate.
- To give students an opportunity to demonstrate their levels of competence or expertise, to show evidence of action based on reflection, and to identify areas of further personal and professional learning.
- To assist students to use their personal resources effectively, enabling them to grow into the role of a social worker.
- To help students understand how their own personalities, values and experiences influence their perceptions of self and others, shaping their responses to policy and practice.
- To provide students with supervision matched to their learning needs, as well as providing them with a model of supervision for the future.
- To provide students with the opportunity to apply knowledge and skills acquired in their course to the realities of social work practice.

### Field Education learning outcomes

Students' learning in field education is practice-based in the context of the selected field of practice and human service organisation, as well as the practice standards of the profession. Bachelor of Social Work students will undertake the subjects WS3503 Field Education 1 and WS4504 Field Education 2. Master of Social Work (PQ) students will undertake the subjects WS5304 Field Education 1 and WS5605 Advanced Social Work Practicum.

The Learning Outcomes for WS3503/ WS5304 Field Education 1, WS4504 Field Education 2 and WS5605 Advanced Social Work Practicum subjects for social work students are based on the AASW Practice Standards for Social Workers: Achieving Outcomes (AASW, 2013).

**Students who successfully complete this subject will be able to:**

<b>WS3503 and WS5304</b>	<b>WS4504</b>	<b>WS5605</b>
1. Demonstrate and apply knowledge of values, ethics and professionalism in daily social work practice	1. Demonstrate knowledge of and critically reflect on values, ethics and professionalism in daily social work practice	1. Synthesise knowledge of and critically reflect on values, ethics and professionalism in daily social work practice
2. Describe and engage in culturally responsive and inclusive practice	2. Demonstrate and critically reflect on culturally responsive and inclusive practice	2. Demonstrate and critically reflect on culturally responsive and inclusive practice
3. Explain social work theories, concepts, methods and techniques, and apply to practice	3. Analyse and synthesise social work theories, concepts, methods and techniques, and apply to practice	3. Evaluate social work theories, concepts, methods and techniques, and apply to research and practice
4. Apply appropriate communication and interpersonal skills, informed by reflections on use of self	4. Apply effective communication and interpersonal skills, in a range of settings and contexts, informed by critical reflections on use of self	4. Apply advanced communication and interpersonal skills, in a range of settings and contexts, informed by critical reflections on use of self
5. Implement information recording and sharing strategies	5. Implement advanced information recording and sharing strategies	5. Implement advanced information recording and sharing strategies
6. Actively participate in professional development and supervision.	6. Actively participate in professional development and supervision through critical reflection and research.	6. Actively participate in professional development and supervision through critical reflection and research, in order to advance professional practice.

**AASW Practice Standards 2013**

1. Social workers demonstrate that the values of social work are integral to their practice, they uphold their ethical responsibilities, and they act appropriately when faced with ethical problems, issues and dilemmas.

2. Social Workers demonstrate active promotion and support of the social work profession, act with integrity and ensure accountability.
3. Social workers have adequate understanding and knowledge of cultural diversity in order to work in a culturally responsive and inclusive way.
4. Social workers have and obtain the knowledge required for effective practice.
5. Social Workers demonstrate the skills required to implement knowledge into practice.
6. Social workers demonstrate skills required to communicate and work effectively with others.
7. Social workers are accountable and responsible for the information they collect and keep in the course of their work.
8. Social workers demonstrate commitment to ongoing learning through continuing professional development and supervision.

The full document may be found at the following link:

<http://www.aasw.asn.au/document/item/4551>

## WS3503 and WS5304 Field Education 1

**Students who successfully complete this subject will be able to:**

- 1. Demonstrate and apply knowledge of values, ethics and professionalism in daily social work practice**
  - 1.1 Critically reflect on practices that are in accordance with the AASW Code of Ethics (2020) and apply ethical practices to placement tasks.
  - 1.2 Recognise and manage ethical dilemmas and issues arising in practice under the supervision of the field educator.
  - 1.3 Critically reflect on their own work within the placement context and articulate how their practice represents the social work profession with integrity and professionalism.
  - 1.4 Behave in a professional manner and be accountable to their field educator for all decisions and actions.
- 2. Describe and apply culturally responsive and inclusive practice**
  - 2.1 Name particular social work skills and values that demonstrates respectful and inclusive practice with cultural difference and diversity.
  - 2.2 Define how they will respect, strive to understand and promote the rights of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and their culture.
- 3. Explain the knowledge for practice that is required for their particular placement context**
  - 3.1 Identify higher level systemic influences on people with respect to area of practice.
  - 3.2 Name and discuss social work and other relevant theories and concepts that are used in the placement context.
  - 3.3 Understand the role of research and evaluation in obtaining and generating new knowledge for practice in relation to their placement context.
  - 3.4 Understand how and when theories, knowledge bases and knowledge sources inform practice in their placement context.
  - 3.5 Identify and use a range of specific social work methods and techniques appropriate to area of practice in the placement context.
  - 3.6 Apply critical and reflective thinking to practice in placement context.

- 4. Demonstrate an appropriate level of interpersonal and communication skills informed by reflections on use of self**
  - 4.1 Conduct an assessment and/or analysis of needs under the supervision of a field educator to inform the service being offered.
  - 4.2 Demonstrate an ability to work collaboratively with relevant people.
  - 4.3 Identify and critically reflect on communication with a diverse range of people.
  - 4.4 Identify and critically reflect the details and nature of the service offered to people.
  - 4.5 Demonstrate the capacity to work with others in a team environment.
  - 4.6 Use information technology to communicate and provide services as appropriate within the placement context.
  
- 5. Demonstrate the capacity to complete information recording and sharing strategies within the placement context**
  - 5.1 Record and manage information appropriately.
  
- 6. Actively participate in professional development and supervision**
  - 6.1 Actively participate in field education supervision.
  - 6.2 Engage in continuing professional development within the placement context and through the timely completion of Field Education coursework and assessment tasks.
  - 6.3 Contribute to education and professional development of other students where appropriate through Field Education coursework tasks.

## [WS4504 Field Education 2](#)

**Students who successfully complete this subject will be able to:**

- 1. Demonstrate knowledge of values, ethics and professionalism in social work and apply these critically reflectively in daily practice in the placement context**
  - 1.1 Critically reflect on practices that are in accordance with the AASW Code of Ethics (2020) and apply ethical practices to placement tasks.
  - 1.2 Recognise and manage ethical dilemmas and issues arising in practice under the supervision of the field educator.
  - 1.3 Critically reflect on their own work within the placement context and articulate how their practice represents the social work profession with integrity and professionalism.
  - 1.4 Behave in a professional manner and be accountable to their Field Educator for all decisions and actions.
  
- 2. Critically reflect on and demonstrate culturally responsive and inclusive practice**
  - 2.1 Name particular social work skills and values that they have employed demonstrating respectful and inclusive practice with cultural difference and diversity.
  - 2.2 Define how they have demonstrated respect, striven to understand and promote the rights of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and their culture.
  
- 3. Critically discuss social work theories, concepts and knowledge and apply a range of social work methods and techniques to practice in their particular placement context**
  - 3.1 Identify systemic influences on people with respect to area of practice.
  - 3.2 Name, practice and critically reflect on social work and other relevant theories and concepts that are used in the placement context.

- 3.3 Integrate theories, knowledge bases and knowledge sources to inform practice in their placement context.
  - 3.4 Conduct an assessment and/or analysis of needs independently (where appropriate) to inform the service being offered.
  - 3.5 Identify and use a range of specific social work methods and techniques appropriate to area of practice in the placement context.
  - 3.6 Apply critical and reflective thinking to practice in placement context and discuss how this would apply in other contexts.
- 4. Communicate effectively and apply interpersonal skills in a range of settings and contexts, informed by critical reflections on use of self**
  - 4.1 Effective communication with a diverse range of people.
  - 4.2 Effectively communicate the details and nature of the service offered to people.
  - 4.3 Effectively work with others in a team environment.
  - 4.4 Use information technology to communicate and provide services as appropriate within the placement context.
  - 4.5 Work collaboratively with relevant people.
- 5. Demonstrate advanced information recording and sharing strategies within the placement context**
  - 5.1 Record and manage information appropriately.
- 6. Successfully engage in professional development and supervision through active participation, research and critical reflection**
  - 6.1 Actively participate in Field Education supervision.
  - 6.2 Engage in continuing professional development within the placement context and through the timely completion of Field Education coursework and assessment tasks.
  - 6.3 Contribute to education and professional development of other students where appropriate through Field Education coursework tasks.

## WS5605 Advanced Social Work Practicum

**Students who successfully complete this subject will be able to:**

- 1. Demonstrate knowledge of values, ethics and professionalism in social work and synthesise these in order to apply these critically reflectively in daily practice in the placement context**
  - 1.1 Critically reflect on practices that are in accordance with the AASW Code of Ethics (2020) and apply ethical practices to placement tasks.
  - 1.2 Recognise and manage with ethical dilemmas and issues arising in practice under the supervision of the field educator.
  - 1.3 Critically reflect on their own work within the placement context and articulate how their practice represents the social work profession with integrity and professionalism.
  - 1.4 Behave in a professional manner and be accountable to their field educator for all decisions and actions.
- 2. Critically reflect on and demonstrate culturally responsive and inclusive practice**
  - 2.1 Name particular social work skills and values that they have employed demonstrating respectful and inclusive practice with cultural difference and diversity.
  - 2.2 Define how they have demonstrated respect, striven to understand and promote the rights of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and their culture.

**3. Critically discuss social work theories, concepts and knowledge and utilise research and evaluation in order to apply a range of social work methods and techniques to practice in their particular placement context**

- 3.1 Identify higher level systemic influences on people with respect to area of practice.
- 3.2 Name, practice and critically reflect on social work and other relevant theories and concepts that are used in the placement context.
- 3.3 Understand and engage with the role of research and evaluation in obtaining and generating new knowledge for practice in relation to their placement context.
- 3.4 Integrate theories, knowledge bases and knowledge sources to inform practice in their placement context.
- 3.5 Conduct an assessment and/or analysis of needs independently (where appropriate) to inform the service being offered.
- 3.6 Identify and use a range of specific social work methods and techniques appropriate to area of practice in the placement context.
- 3.7 Apply critical and reflective thinking to practice in placement context and discuss how this would apply in other contexts.

**4. Communicate effectively and apply interpersonal skills in a range of settings and contexts, informed by critical reflections on use of self**

- 4.1 Effective communication with a diverse range of people.
- 4.2 Effectively communicate the details and nature of the service offered to people.
- 4.3 Effectively work with others in a team environment.
- 4.4 Use information technology to communicate and provide services as appropriate within the placement context.
- 4.5 Work collaboratively with relevant people.

**5. Demonstrate advanced information recording and sharing strategies within the placement context**

- 5.1 Record and manage information appropriately.

**6. Successfully engage in professional development and supervision through active participation, research and critical reflection in order to critically evaluate and advance professional practice**

- 6.1 Actively participate in field education supervision.
- 6.2 Engage in continuing professional development within the placement context and through the timely completion of Field Education coursework and assessment tasks.
- 6.3 Contribute to education and professional development of other students where appropriate through Field Education coursework tasks.

### Where placement fits within the degree

Bachelor of Social Work students are required to complete WS3503 Field Education 1 and WS4504 Field Education 2 as part of their study plan.

The first placement, WS3503, occurs during the first semester of level 3 of the BSW, and WS4504 during the final semester of level 4 of the degree, allowing for the transition to practice. Students studying a full-time load will complete this subject five days per week.

Master of Social Work (Professionally qualifying) students are required to complete WS5304 Field Education 1 and WS5605 Field Education 2 as part of their study plan.

Depending on whether students start their MSW (PQ) at the beginning of the year or mid-year, the first placement subject, WS5304 Field Education 1, will take place either during the second or third semester of their study. The first placement subject is offered in Study Period 2; thus, if students commenced their degree at the beginning of the year, they would undertake their first placement in their second semester of study. Students commencing mid-year will undertake their first placement in their third semester of study. Preparation for the placement subject is included as part of the Foundation subject's (WS5517) intensive workshop.

The second placement subject, WS5605 Advanced Practicum, occurs during the final semester of the degree, facilitating transition to practice.

Students with three years of full-time equivalent or more relevant industry experience can apply for Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL) for their first placement. Further information about RPL is outlined in Chapter 3.

### Suitability to Work with Children Card

Placements are a prescribed and essential part of the degree. In order to continue to be enrolled in a social work degree, students need to be eligible for a Suitability to Work with Children Card at the time of the first enrolment; maintain that eligibility throughout the course of the degree; and apply for or acquire a Suitability to Work with Children Card prior to commencement of placement.

In the event that a student becomes ineligible for a Suitability to Work with Children Card at any time between the date of first enrolment and the date of completion of the degree, the student will not be able to complete the degree (as per JCU Enrolment Policy - Coursework Students: <https://www.jcu.edu.au/policy/student-services/enrolment-policy-coursework-students>).

Further information about Suitability to Work with Children Card, Yellow Cards (disability worker screening) and criminal history checks is provided in Chapter 7.

### References

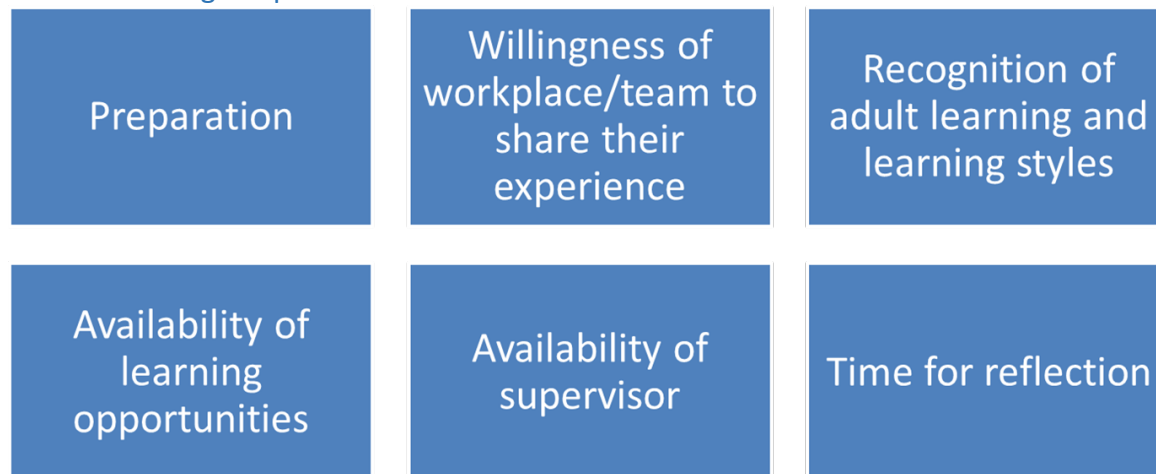
- Australian Association of Social Workers. (2013). *AASW Practice Standards for Social Workers: Achieving outcomes*. <https://www.aasw.asn.au/practitioner-resources/practice-standards>
- Australian Association of Social Workers. (2020). *Australian social work education and accreditation standards*. (pp. 1-37). AASW. <https://www.aasw.asn.au/careers-study/education-standards-accreditation>
- Australian Association of Social Workers. (2020). *Code of Ethics*. <https://www.aasw.asn.au/practitioner-resources/code-of-ethics>



## CHAPTER TWO: Placement preparation

It is important to prepare for the learning opportunities of placement. Students bring prior knowledge, skills, experiences, understandings, and insights to the placement, as well as preferred ways of learning and receiving feedback. It is useful for students to explore what they bring to the placement experience before placement commences. Leading up to placement, students will be asked to work through a range of subject materials, including learning modules and readings, and to participate in other academic learning activities of the field placement subject. These materials are intentionally designed to support students' placement learning experiences.

### What makes a good placement?



(see for example, Cleak & Wilson, 2018)

In field education training, supervisors are supported to explore what makes a good placement. Ultimately field education requires students to be active drivers of their own learning experience. It is important that students take active leadership in their placement in areas such as familiarising themselves with the subject material, creating and monitoring learning plans, seeking learning opportunities, immersing themselves in practice, linking theory to practice, exploring their learning, debriefing, seeking supervision and feedback, organising liaison meetings, setting agendas for supervision and liaison meetings, and more.

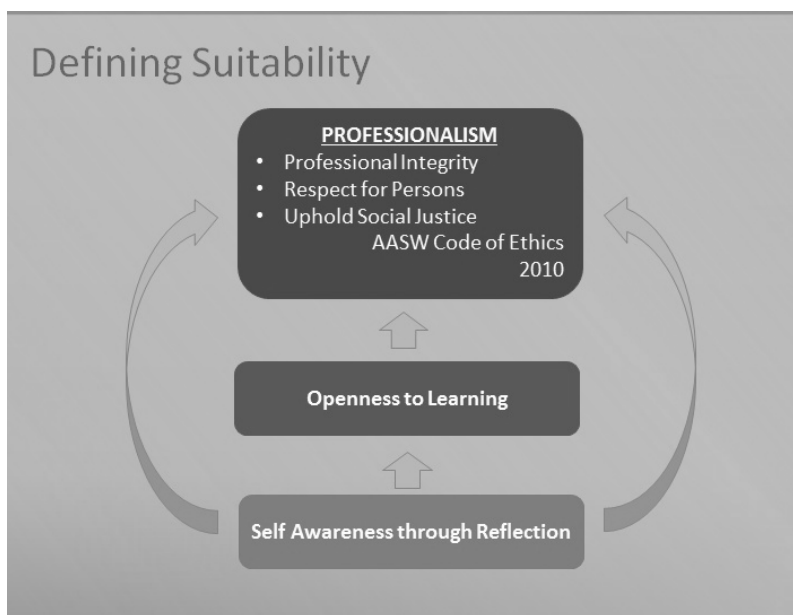
There may be occasions when not everything is going according to plan or when the field education opportunity does not work out to be a good learning opportunity. If there are concerns about the student's learning, safety or progression in the placement, it is important to contact the Field Education Liaison Officer (FELO), or, where placement has not commenced or the FELO is unavailable, a field education staff member, as soon as possible. Please see Chapter 6 for further information.

### Reflecting on suitability for placement and practice

In 2016, the JCU field education team ran workshops with field educators exploring student suitability and unsuitability for social work (Croaker et al., 2017). Based on this exploration, a model for exploring suitability was developed, defining the relevant terms. The team has continued to seek and integrate feedback from field educators, further refining the model below.

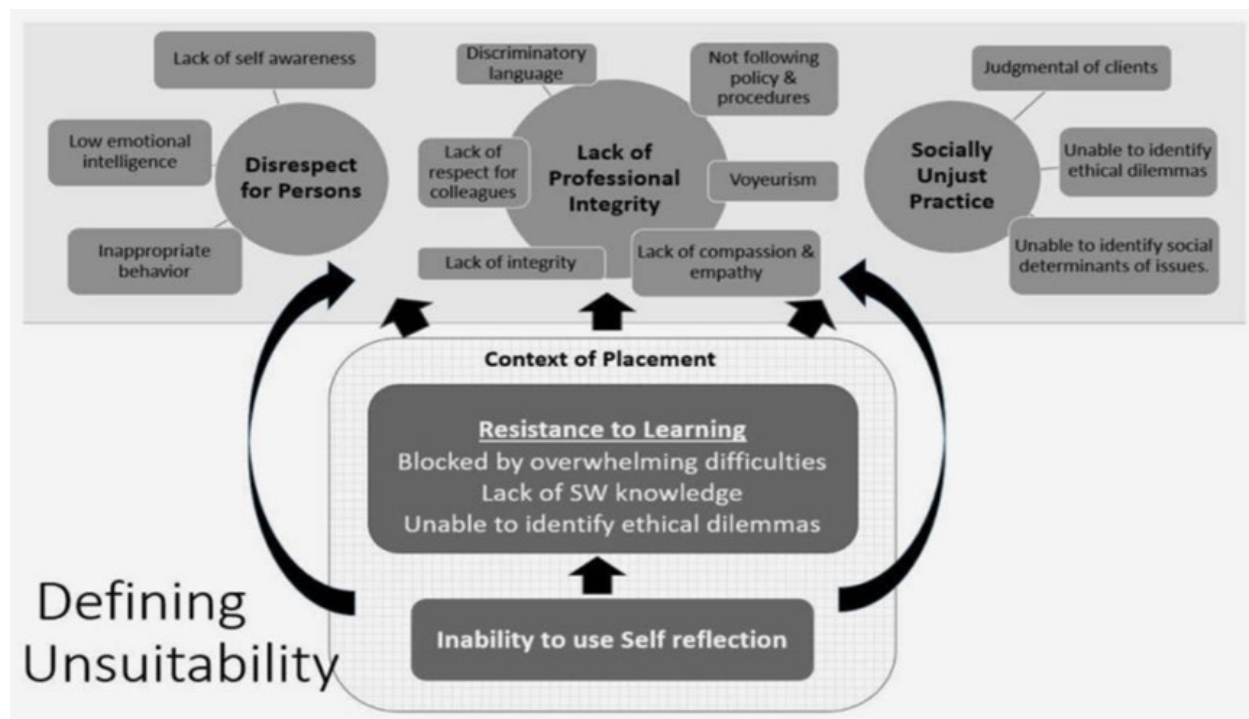
Key considerations in determining suitability are a student's willingness and ability to critically reflect on and address identified concerns. Assessing suitability for social work is presented as a joint endeavour of

students, field educators and FELOs as key stakeholders that is underpinned by professional values, ethics and standards (Croaker et al., 2017, p. 109).



(Croaker et al., 2017, p. 117).

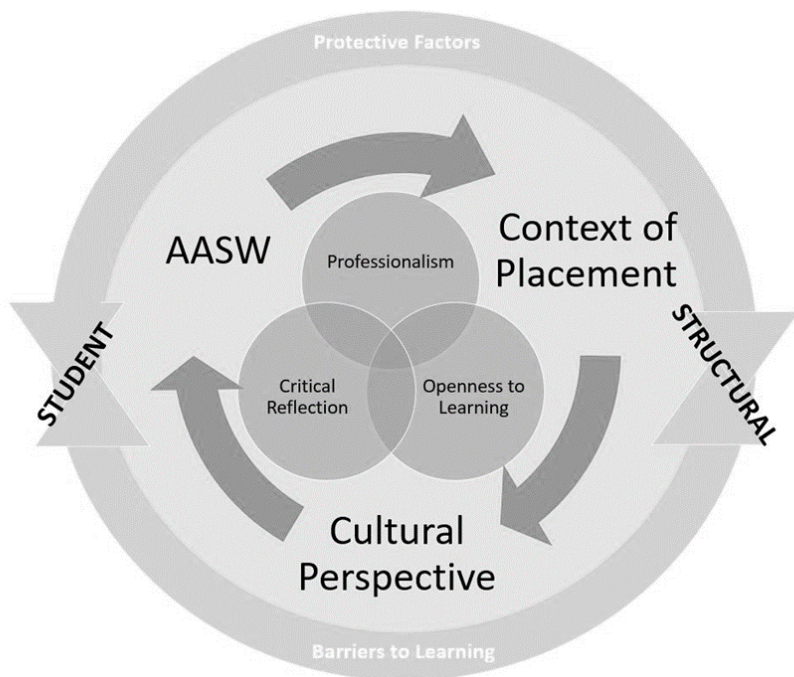
Based on discussions with field educators, the model has been further elaborated, outlining what might be deemed as *unsuitability* for field education and professional practice:



(Croaker et al., 2017, p.118).

The field education team has also explored the concepts of suitability and unsuitability with students who had completed field education (Zuchowski et al., 2019). Similar to field educators, students identified a

critical understanding of self, skills, knowledge, attitudes, and contextual factors as important when considering their suitability for field education. Similarly, lack of preparedness to learn, lack of capacity to demonstrate an understanding of professional values and ethics, and inability to maintain professional boundaries or demonstrate basic practice skills were identified as indicators of 'unsuitability'. While students overwhelmingly supported the use of the model presented to them, they made suggestions for further development of the model, particularly around the consideration of contextual, cultural and structural factors (Zuchowski et al., 2019).



(Zuchowski et al., 2017, p. 52).

Students also suggested that it would be helpful to use the model in discussions between field educators, students and FELOs early in the placement and not only when things go wrong. They suggested that the model could be used “...to address or articulate aspects of their practice, measure the quality of their work, in preparation for placement and as a reflective tool” (Zuchowski et al., 2019, p. 50).

It would be useful for students, field educators and FELOs to use these visual tools to engage in discussions about suitability for practice in a collaborative, strengths-focused endeavour.

Discussions about suitability could be useful for supervision and professional growth, and various topics could be explored. The table below provides some ideas; however, the list is not exhaustive:

Defining suitability	Discussion points:	Topics for Discussion:
<b>Professionalism</b>	Professionalism in the context of defining suitability includes the AASW social work values; <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Professional integrity</li> <li>Respect for persons</li> <li>Uphold social justice (AASW Code of Ethics, 2020)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Identifying and evaluating behaviour</li> <li>Emotional intelligence</li> <li>Use of self</li> <li>Language</li> <li>Respect for colleagues</li> <li>Compassion and empathy</li> <li>Following policy and procedure</li> <li>Recognise voyeurism</li> <li>Respectful interactions with clients</li> <li>Response to ethical dilemmas</li> <li>Meso and macro understanding of issues</li> </ul>
<b>Openness to learning</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Able to identify ethical dilemmas</li> <li>Awareness of overwhelming difficulties</li> <li>Commitment to preparation for placement</li> <li>Identified self-care strategies</li> <li>Ability to recognise balance between competing priorities</li> <li>Initiative and motivation</li> <li>AASW standards of practice that can inform their placement experience</li> <li>Application of theory to practice</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Seeking learning opportunities</li> <li>Seeking and receiving feedback</li> <li>Reflecting on practice</li> <li>Integrating observations, practice and theory</li> <li>Valuing difference</li> <li>Opportunities for new experiences</li> <li>Opportunities for peer review and evaluation</li> <li>Exploration of ethical issues and dilemmas</li> </ul>
<b>Context of placement</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Quality of supervision</li> <li>Compatibility with supervisor</li> <li>Cultural aspects</li> <li>Organisational background</li> <li>Culture within the organization</li> <li>Policy and procedure</li> <li>Restructure of organization</li> <li>Funding</li> <li>Placement within an area of interest</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The connection between professional practice and the personal self</li> <li>Hopes for learning</li> <li>Future plans for practice and the development of transferable skills</li> </ul>
<b>Critical reflection</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Awareness of personal values, beliefs and attitudes and how these impact practice.</li> <li>Skills/strengths and previous experience</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Awareness of expectations of students to have job specific skills, i.e. interpersonal skills, presentation skills, case noting, communication skills</li> </ul>

### Assessing suitability

Students need to be aware that it is important that social work graduates are able to work in a professional manner in line with the Professional Values and Ethics and Practice Standards (AASW, 2020; 2013). Should concerns about a student's suitability to practice social work arise, it may be necessary to revisit that student's suitability to continue in the professional degree. The relevant guiding principles and policy (*Review of a student's suitability to continue a course involving placement*) are university wide, and can be

accessed at: <https://www.jcu.edu.au/policy/learning-and-teaching/review-of-a-students-suitability-to-continue-a-course-involving-placement>. Please also see Chapter 6.

## PLACEMENT COMMITMENT

Students need to be aware that field placement is a substantial commitment, requiring personal, family and financial adjustments. Staff will take individual circumstances into account wherever possible; however, students should consider their life circumstances and their readiness for this commitment prior to enrolling in the program.

Students need to contact the Work Integrated Learning (WIL) team to discuss their placement options. Arranging for placement is a lengthy process, so contact needs to occur well before the study period commences.

### Please note

The JCU Field Education requirements are set out in current **Australian Association of Social Workers (AASW)** guidelines, contained in the document AASW (2020), the *Australian Social Work Education & Accreditation Standards*.

### Negotiation of placements

Negotiations with agencies about placements are carried out on behalf of students by the JCU Division of Tropical Environments and Societies (DTES) Work Integrated Learning (WIL) team, with the support of the Social Work Field Education Coordinator and field education staff. The WIL team liaises with social welfare practitioners and their managers to establish a range of placement options.

### Important

Students must not set up their own placements and expect those arrangements to be ratified unless the WIL team gives permission. All placements need to be confirmed before they can commence. When a placement is approved, the student, supervisors and FELOs will receive a confirmation letter from the WIL team, outlining the dates, location and persons involved in the placement. Placement cannot commence before a confirmation letter has been issued.

### Matching students and placements

The AASW requires that students undertake their two placements in different fields of practice, with at least one placement involving direct practice (AASW, 2020). Placements need to facilitate a student's participation in social work practices and be supervised by qualified social workers (AASW, 2020). The AASW requires that students:

... undertake a minimum of 1,000 hours in at least two, discrete, differently structured practice settings (different target populations, practice focus and/or modes of intervention), to be completed within the normal hours and days of the practice setting hosting the placement. (2020, p. 32)

To facilitate this, JCU will work with students to match them with suitable practice settings, aiming to provide the opportunity to undertake one placement in a government and one in a non-government setting, wherever possible.

While some students may be certain of their field of practice post-graduation, it is important to also gain experiences in other fields for the purpose of professional development of social work practice.

Every effort is made to secure a placement near a student's place of residence; however, this is not always possible. There may be times where students need to relocate to another area to secure an appropriate placement. In these circumstances, the involvement of travel, additional accommodation, and living expenses will be the responsibility of the student and be at their own expense. The Shirley Gilliver Memorial Fund (<https://www.jcu.edu.au/scholarships-@-jcu/search/shirley-gilliver-memorial-fund-grant>) can support students undertaking field education in a rural or remote community.

### Pre-placement tasks

Students can generally expect to begin their placement in the first week of the relevant study period. For this to be possible, students are required to complete the following tasks well before the semester commences:

- As soon as you enrol in a placement subject, check that you have access to the subject site via LearnJCU, and the InPlace database (student placement data platform)
- You need to be proactive in doing what you can to ensure that finding a placement occurs as smoothly as possible
- Complete the InPlace data base regarding your placement preferences and possibility
- Read the key subject materials and texts on LearnJCU
- Ensure that you have a Working With Children Card that it is current
- Ensure that you are up-to-date with vaccinations (including Covid-19), if your preferred placement site requires this (many State and Territory Health Departments require current evidence of your Hep B immunity)
- Check your emails regularly
- Ensure that you are actively engaged with the subject site via LearnJCU.

### The process for placement finding

The process for placement finding is as follows:

1. All students need a valid Working with Children Card (Blue Card in Queensland). If your current Working with Children Card is not showing up in InPlace, please email a copy of your card to the WIL team at [dtesplacements@jcu.edu.au](mailto:dtesplacements@jcu.edu.au).
2. The Work Integrated Learning team will start working with ENROLLED students in a placement subject 3-4 months before the placement period. **Note:** Enrolments for the following year open in December. Therefore, if you are planning to undertake placement in Study Period 1, you NEED to contact the Work Integrated Learning team by September of the prior year with your name, student ID and placement subject code. If you are planning to undertake placement in Study Period 2, please enrol in your placement subject as soon as possible.
3. Enrolled students will have access to the LearnJCU website for the placement subject. Visit the 'Getting Started' tab to learn what you can do to expedite your placement finding process.
4. Enrolled students will also have access to InPlace, the student placement data platform. You need to check that all your contact details are up to date (if not, you need to make the change on your eStudent account, which will then automatically update your personal information in InPlace).

5. The Work Integrated Learning team will email you regarding your interests and requirements and clarify any areas of concern you may have (Hint: double check your details are up-to-date in e-student and In-Place).
6. If you are studying as a distance education student away from the Townsville or Cairns campus, you will be asked to help source contact details for organisations in your area. Names and email addresses are invaluable to the placement finding process.
7. Regular email and telephone contact are the expected forms of communication between the student and the Work Integrated Learning team. This might include contacts over the holiday break as placement possibilities are sought for you. If you are likely to be away from your usual email address, please advise alternate contact details.
8. There is a specific process for placements for both Queensland Health and the Department of Communities, Child Safety & Disability Services (often referred to simply as “Child Safety”), which the Work Integrated Learning team will guide you through if you have indicated an interest for either of those agencies.
9. All other placement opportunities (outside of Qld Health and Child Safety) will be uploaded to InPlace for a set period, for your perusal. You will have the opportunity to apply for the placement opportunities you are interested in by submitting an Expression of Interest (EoI) and your resume.
10. The Work Integrated Learning team will determine, often in collaboration with Field Education staff, which student will be offered a placement interview for each placement opportunity. This decision is based on the quality of the applications we receive for each placement opportunity. The Work Integrated Learning team also takes into consideration whether the student who has applied meets all pre-placement requirements. In addition to a Blue Card, many agencies stipulate that placement students must be immunised against certain diseases or have a Police Clearance or an Open Driver’s Licence, among other criteria. Placement interviews offer both parties the chance to assess each other for compatibility. Professional conduct is expected during these interviews, with students demonstrating the ability to be punctual and well-organised for the interview.
11. After the interview, agency representatives and students should contact the Work Integrated Learning team to report back on the outcome of the interview. If all has gone well, the Work Integrated Learning team will formalise the arrangements in writing in the form of a placement confirmation email and students will commence on the agreed date as stated on this placement confirmation. The placement confirmation will contain your:
  - contact details
  - agency details
  - Field Educator contact details
  - Task Supervisor contact details (where applicable)
  - FELO’s contact details
  - starting date and approximate finishing date.

If the placement is not to go ahead, further discussions will occur.

12. Please remember that Field Education is a subject that is broader than your placement. The pre-placement tasks, the integration tasks, assessments, and indeed your interactions with key people

involved in the placement, are all part of demonstrating your professional readiness for practice. Your patience, courtesy and respectful interactions are noticed and appreciated.

## Placement seminars and teaching in the field education subjects

### WS3503 Field Education 1 pre-placement seminar for BSW students

A pre-placement planning and initial information seminar (pre-placement seminar) occurs prior to the study period in which the placement subject takes place. This seminar will be taught on-campus in the weeks before study period 1 commences and is a requirement of the subject WS3503. It is mandatory for students to attend the seminar prior to commencing placement.

The **2-day pre-placement seminar** will address topics including:

- What are the learning objectives of placement?
- Determining individual learning objectives
- Who occupies roles such as the Field Education Coordinator, Field Education lecturers, FELOs, field educators, and supervisors (task and/or professional), and what are the functions of these roles?
- Who are in the Work Integrated Learning team and how do they progress placement matching?
- What is supervision? (This involves placement-related issues such as professionalism, ethics, further practice learning, placement learning, organisational relationships, future employment etc.)
- Addressing challenges and difficulties during placement.

### WS5304 Field Education 1 pre-placement seminar for MSW (PQ) students

MSW(PQ) students will experience their pre-placement seminar as a **two-day on campus** workshop prior to commencing placement. This seminar will be taught in the weeks before the start of the study period and is a requirement of the subject WS5304. It is mandatory for students to attend this seminar prior to commencing placement.

The 2-day pre-placement seminar will address the following topics:

- What are the learning objectives of placement?
- Determining individual learning objectives
- Who occupies roles such as the Field Education Coordinator, FELO, field educators, supervisors (task and/or professional), and what are the functions of these roles?
- Who is in the Work Integrated Learning team and how do they progress placement matching?
- What is supervision? (This involves placement related issues, professionalism, ethics, further practice learning, placement learning, organisational relationships, future employment etc.)
- Organisational context for social work practice
- Addressing challenges and difficulties during placement.

### WS4504 Field Education 2 pre-placement work and tasks

All students enrolled in WS4504 are required to complete the LearnJCU placement preparation modules before placement starts. To be eligible to undertake this final placement subject, students must pass the pre-requisite subject WS4511 Professional Development for Social Work Practice, which includes a five-day on-campus workshop in Study Period 7. Students may choose to enrol in and attend the WS4511 workshop at either the Townsville or the Cairns campus (limited mode).

Visit the LearnJCU WS4504 subject site to complete all pre-placement modules.



## WS5605 Field Education 2 pre-placement work and tasks

All students enrolled in WS5605 are required to complete the LearnJCU placement preparation modules before placement starts. To be eligible to complete this final placement subject, students must pass the pre-requisite subject WS5611 Professional Development for Social Work Practice, which includes a seven-day on-campus workshop offered in SP3 and SP7.

## Teaching and learning in the field education subjects during placement

Please remember that Field Education is broader than your placement. It is an academic subject that facilitates the integration of theoretical knowledge in the practice setting through a placement experience and integration of that knowledge (AASW, 2020; Cleak & Wilson, 2018). The pre-placement tasks, and your interactions with key people involved in the placement, are all part of demonstrating your professional readiness for practice. While on placement in a host organisation, students will be expected to engage in the assessment, teaching activities, and readings of the subject. (Please see also Chapters, 8, 9 and 10)

## References

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## CHAPTER THREE: Roles, responsibilities and expectations

### THE STUDENT

Field education is the opportunity for the student to advance their learning about social work practice. It is important that the student takes responsibility and initiative in advancing their learning in placement. In practice, this means, for example, that the student considers learning, discusses learning, needs and ideas with the supervisors and FELO, compiles a learning plan in conjunction with others, and initiates contact and meetings with others.

The Social Work Program prescribes certain expectations of students on placement. It is important that field educators and students establish a positive working relationship early in the placement, and clarify mutual expectations, goals for learning and skills development, and the general conditions for a mutually acceptable teacher/learner relationship. Once this agreed framework for the Field Education experience has been negotiated, it is recorded in a written statement (Learning Plan) during the first three weeks of placement. This document is signed by all parties, with copies held by field educators, task supervisors, student and the FELO. These learning plans will be reviewed during the placement and may be altered where necessary with mutual consent. This is discussed fully in Chapter 10.

Throughout the placement, students are expected to be directly responsible, and fully accountable in practice, to their field educator, and to work in accordance with the arrangements negotiated between the parties and recorded in the learning plan.

### Confidentiality

Students are required to observe professional standards and agency protocols, and this includes maintaining confidentiality regarding all agency matters during placement. Being open and accountable, including towards relevant key stakeholders in decision making, “while observing appropriate confidentiality and duty of care requirements” (AASW, 2020, p. 11) is key to ethical practice. The JCU Social Work Program requires field educators and students to share sufficient information on a need-to-know basis (with the FELO and/or Field Education Coordinator/field education staff) to ensure that the learning requirements of the field placement subject are being met. This can take place as part of your journal writing and liaison meetings, or as part of your integration sessions. The need for confidentiality extends to any information concerning clients, whether received during interviews, given over the telephone, in written documents, in meetings with university staff, or in discussions with other students. Confidentiality also applies to agency personnel, other students, and the community.

Please also refer to the AASW Code of Ethics and Practice Standards (AASW, 2013; 2020).

### Dress

It is expected that students will dress in accordance with agency dress standards. It is important that students are aware of the possible differences in dress codes among cultural, ethnic and religious groups. Students are encouraged to discuss agency dress standards at the initial meeting/interview prior to placement. If either student or supervisor has concerns about this issue, it should be discussed together as soon as possible.

### Punctuality

Students are expected to develop appropriate work habits and to be punctual. It is important to advise the supervisor should an instance arise when they might be late or cannot make a commitment.

### Journal, project reflections and time logs

Students are required to complete the written assessment requirements of the Field Education placement, and it is recommended that time be set aside for students to do this as part of the placement time.

### Other assessments

Students are allowed to complete **placement-related** assessments only during the placement hours.

### Negotiating the workplace

It is important to understand that there will be other workers within the agency who may not be social workers, and that colleagues from other disciplines have their own professional codes of ethics. This needs to be understood, respected, and appreciated by social work students. It is also important to respect the workspace of other staff and students.

### Use of agency resources

Agency resources are provided for agency staff for the provision of service as per the agency's goals. As such, these resources remain the property of the agency and are to be used solely for the purpose for which they are intended. These resources include staff time, equipment, phones, faxes, photocopiers, computers, stationery supplies, and cars (this is not an exhaustive list). Use of any of these resources will need to be negotiated with your agency supervisor.

### Hours and agency attendance

Students need to be aware that the placement experience is intended to reflect the reality of the workplace and the typical work hours for the placement agency. These may vary in different settings. However, AASW guidelines suggest that an average **minimum of a 7-hour workday** is required over the entire placement.

In accordance with AASW guidelines, BSW/MSW(PQ) field placements consist of two separate placements totalling **1000** placement hours:

WS3503/ WS5304:                      First Placement: 500 Hrs

WS4504/ WS5605:                      Second Placement: 500 hrs

**When undertaken full-time, each placement will be approximately 14 weeks. Students cannot undertake more than 40 hours per week during placement. Part-time placements may be negotiated with a minimum of 3 days per week.**

#### **Time in lieu**

Should students be required to work overtime, they are entitled to the same non-monetary conditions covering other staff in the agency. **Time in lieu** should be taken provided this is negotiated in advance with the supervisor. Any time in lieu applied for by the student without negotiation will not be accepted.

#### **Lunch breaks**

All students must take a minimum half hour lunch break each day; e.g. this means if the normal agency hours are 8.30am – 4.00pm the student has completed 7 hours in total (7 hours per day plus a minimum half hour lunch break).

Students are required to attend the placement setting for the full number of days unless negotiated/explained by the student's need to work in the library, visit other agencies, conduct home visits, or carry out some other bona fide activity outside the agency etc. Any deviation from the agreed placement arrangements must be negotiated and agreed to between individual student, their field educator, the task supervisor and the FELO.

## Placement credit

The JCU *Social Work and Human Services*' policy regarding credit is stated in the *University Handbook*: "It should be noted that the Australian Association of Social Workers does not permit credit to be given for field education undertaken in non-social work programs." Students can apply for Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL) for their first placement only if they have a **minimum of three full-time equivalent years' practice in a relevant context in the previous seven years, in which at least one year of full-time-time equivalent has occurred in the last three years.** The JCU Field Education RPL guidelines, based on the *Australian Social Work Education & Accreditation Standards* (AASW, 2020) are available on the LearnJCU site for the first placement subject and on the JCU website.

## FIELD EDUCATORS

Field educators are also referred to as field supervisors. They are social work practitioners who have eligibility for membership of the AASW, with at least two years of field experience (AASW, 2020).

Field educators have the important task of helping students develop their knowledge, understanding and skills through the supervisory process. This is achieved by providing support and guidance, in addition to clear feedback about students' strengths and limitations. Field educators are also responsible for assessing the progress of students within the organisation and providing a recommendation to university staff (usually the FELO) about whether students have satisfactorily completed the placement. The FELO receives the recommendations and establishes the grade by taking into consideration relevant factors including liaison visits, written work, and integration attendance and participation.

### **The role of the field educator in relation to students on placement is to ensure:**

- the provision of a work setting conducive to developing sound work habits
- the orientation of the student into practice such that the student can obtain a perspective of the agency - its structure, procedures and personnel
- the drawing up of a learning plan between student and field educator and task supervisor in the beginning phase of placement
- arrangements for regular supervisory sessions with the student are defined and ensure provision for emergency access to another field educator if needed
- a variety of tasks and progression of tasks and learning activities
- a favourable environment for the student's development as a practitioner
- structured supervision providing regular direct advice to students on their strengths, limitations and scope for improvement

- the FELO is kept informed of concerns and problems involving the student as soon as possible when they arise, so that appropriate intervention can take place
- opportunities are made available for students to have involvement in the general functions of the agency and in the community
- that personal and professional standards of practice are identified and modelled
- opportunities are made available for the student to become familiar with the broader social issues pertaining to practice
- involving the student at mid-placement and final assessment in a review of the student's level of competence to date, and
- the completion of written assessments at mid-placement and end of placement.

### TASK SUPERVISORS

In addition to the social work field educator, in some agencies students will have one or more day-to-day task supervisors.

Task supervisors work in conjunction with the field educator, the student and FELO to provide access to educational opportunities for the student to develop the knowledge and skills necessary for effective social work practice. The aim of the task supervisor role is to help the student with the day-to-day placement learning experience. The task supervisor supports and guides the student based on their professional experience and expertise and within the organisation's framework.

#### **The role of the task supervisor in relation to students on placement is to assist in:**

- Providing a work setting conducive to developing sound work habits
- Orientating the student into practice such that the student can obtain a perspective of the agency - its structure, procedures and personnel
- Providing a favourable environment for the student's development as a practitioner
- Making opportunities available for students to have involvement in the general functions of the agency and in the community
- Offering a variety of tasks and progression of tasks and learning activities
- Assisting in the drawing up of a learning plan in conjunction with the student and field educator in the beginning phase of placement
- Reviewing and debriefing
- Assisting students in their skill development as practitioners in the field, including:
  - the student's integration in the organisation and the team
  - setting of and progression of tasks

- the student's placement experience and learning.
- Assisting in mid- and end of placement assessment by:
  - Providing feedback on the student's participation in the organization and activities, and
  - Providing feedback on the student's integration in the organisation and team, and the student's performance.

Students and task supervisors need to maintain regular contact to facilitate the student's learning experience. It is the expectation of JCU Social Work and Human Service that students treat task supervisors with respect for their expertise and experience and acknowledge the contribution that task supervisors provide to their learning.

#### FIELD EDUCATION LIAISON OFFICER (FELO)

On behalf of the Field Education Program, the JCU Social Work staff maintain communication with students and field educators. Field Education Liaison Officers (FELOs) are members of the Social Work and Human Services' academic staff team and sessional teaching staff. The ultimate responsibility of a FELO is to ensure that students are provided with the educational opportunities to develop the knowledge and skills necessary for effective social work practice. The AASW highlights (2020) that the role of the FELO is to maintain:

... general oversight of the progress of the placement and consulting with the Field Educator and student about structure, learning goals and assessment processes; and to respond... to concerns and issues raised by student, Field Educator or other parties to the placement, in consultation with the Field Education Coordinator. (p. 31)

FELOs have the following responsibilities:

- to maintain regular contact with the field educator, task supervisors and the student in order to review the student's progress during placement
- to receive and evaluate the assessment requirements of the placement, including assisting in the development and assessment of the learning plan
- to check whether the Field Educator is satisfied that the student is progressing appropriately in placement, and that any problems perceived by either the Field Educator or the student are being addressed promptly and effectively
- to monitor that the placement meets the requirement of Social Work Accreditation Standards, for example: no placement can be observational only; that regular supervision by a qualified social worker is provided; that students have adequate space, resources and support to complete their learning experience (AASW, 2020)
- to provide recommendation to the subject coordinator on the results for WS3503/ WS5304: Field Placement I and WS4504/ WS5605: Field Placement II, based on consultation with Field Educators and the students about:
  - the assessed quality of the prescribed Field Education and assessment tasks
  - their interaction with the student and feedback from key stakeholders
- to assist field educators in their skill development as educators and as social work practitioners as and when required.

### FELOs' role in assessing suitability

Students need to be aware that the Social Work and Human Services academic group reserves the right to assess the suitability of students for a social work placement and to continue in their social work degree.

Assessment of students' performance during placements occurs at the mid-placement and end-of-placement review. FELOs will make a recommendation to the JCU field education team, based on the students' self-assessment and the field educator's evaluation.

Should there be an assessment that a student is not suitable to continue the degree, the academic group will follow the JCU policy on review of a student's suitability to continue a course involving a placement as outlined here: <https://www.jcu.edu.au/policy/learning-and-teaching/review-of-a-students-suitability-to-continue-a-course-involving-placement>

### FELO visits

Each student is assigned a FELO from the university. FELOs will have contact with the student and field educator (and task supervisors where applicable) during the placement, usually when signing off on the student's learning plan, for mid-placement and end-of-placement assessment. FELO will meet at least twice on site, or online/face to face with the student and supervisors during placement (AASW, 2020).

**Please note** that it is the responsibility of **students** to ensure that an appointment time is made with the field educator/s, and the FELO and that space is made available within the placement setting for the visit to take place.

FELOs are also available for consultation with the field educators and/or the student as the need arises.

The primary purposes of the FELO's visits/contacts are to:

- Assist in the clarification of expectations and the finalisation of the Learning Plan:
  - by emailing the learning plan to the FELO
  - by discussing with the field educator and student via phone contact or in person the progress of the placement.
- Monitor the student's progress using the mid-placement evaluation and to review the student's learning objectives for the remainder of the placement. FELOs will ask field educators whether it is likely that they will recommend a satisfactory grade given the student's performance to date.
- Evaluate the student's placement performance based on the assessment schedules and to identify the student's future learning needs.

Only those students who demonstrate competent performance commensurate with their year level will be given a satisfactory grade.

**Remember:** it is the responsibility of students to present prepared material during the FELO's visits. For most students, this will involve organising notes relating to the work they have undertaken to date, possibly an agenda, charts or any other diagrammatic depictions of key points that evidence their areas of progress.

## Suggested format for FELO's contacts

### a. Student input:

Students:

- provide an overview of what they have been doing on placement so far, covering the tasks they have undertaken, the agency business they have been involved with, details of any project work, client contact, etc.
- provide an assessment of their performance to date, discussing specific cases they have been involved with and the practice framework they have been working from. This needs to be demonstrated with direct reference to the completed evaluation forms and the learning objectives set down in the learning plan.

### b. Field educators and task supervisor input

Field educators and task supervisors provide an overview of their perception of the student's work to date, identifying strengths and weaknesses of the student's practice, drawing on comments made through the evaluation forms provided by students.

### c. FELO's input

After hearing all parties' input, the FELO will reflect on the key points raised, identifying whether there have been any omissions or areas of work not already addressed. It is the responsibility of both the FELO and the field educator/s to assess students' levels of perceived competence. Should there be a discrepancy between the field educator's and the FELO's assessment after discussion and negotiation, the Field Education Coordinator may be invited to assist in a resolution.

**Note:** These assessment visits are formal opportunities for any issues/areas of concern to be raised by any one of the parties. A field educator or student can contact the FELO at any point during the field placement.

## Ensuring adequate liaison is provided

The importance of FELOs' visits must be emphasised. The AASW (2020) accreditation standards for social work programs require a minimum of two meetings on site, or online/face to face.

If there are concerns that the liaison process is inadequate, the following steps should be taken:

1. The concerned party should contact the other two parties to discuss the situation and come to some agreement regarding future liaison processes.
2. If the situation does not improve, the WIL team should be notified by any party who has continuing concerns.
3. The WIL team (or a nominated representative from the field education team) will then meet with all parties to discuss the liaison arrangements and negotiate agreement between all parties regarding future liaison process.

## The Field Education Coordinator and field education team

**The Field Education Coordinator** carries overall responsibility for the Field Education Program.

**The field education team** has responsibility for the following:



- Liaising with agencies and field educators to meet field placement needs
- Handling the overall management of the Field Education Program
- Preparing students prior to the commencement of field placement
- Organising meetings and seminars to assist field educators in their skill development
- Providing resource material to field educators
- Being available for consultation with field educators, the University FELOs and students in the event of difficulties arising during placement
- Recommending to the Head of Social Work and Human Services and the examiners' meeting the results for both Field Placement I and Field Placement II, based on recommendations from the FELO and field educator
- Reviewing and revising the *Field Education Manual* and the evaluation instruments.

**Activities carried out by the Field Education Coordinator include the following:**

1. Assessing and selecting agencies to provide Field Education to BSW and MSW(PQ) students
2. Evaluating and consulting with field agencies on a continuing basis to upgrade the Field Education Program
3. Ensuring that social work educational standards are maintained by the Field Education Program.

**The Work Integrated Learning (WIL) team**

**The WIL team has responsibility for the following:**

1. Seeking placement opportunities and liaising with agencies to maintain a pool of suitable placement opportunities
2. Allocating/appointing field educators and FELOs as required
3. Handling the day-to-day management of the Field Education Program
3. Working with students to find and match them to placement opportunities
4. Supporting the Field Education team to organise meetings, seminars and distribute resource materials
5. Receiving placement records and recommendations and recording these
6. Maintaining and using the databases of records associated with placements to inform ongoing work

7. Responding to student, field educator, FELO, and agencies' general queries about the Field Education Program, progress and requirements.

### Field Education policy

There are two major forums where JCU Social Work and Human Service policy is decided. These are:

- JCU Social Work and Human Services twice yearly workshops
- JCU Social Work and Human Services Advisory Committee.

## Purpose and Terms of Reference of JCU Social Work and Human Services Advisory Committee

Students, field educators and community members are welcome to join the Social Work and Human Services Advisory Committee. The Committee helps to guide the educational endeavour of the academic group.

### Purpose

The Committee will advise and inform the academic group on relevant content and processes to enable the development of graduate skills and competencies that reflect the contemporary needs of the human services sector.

### Terms of Reference

The Advisory Committee will provide advice on:

- The knowledge, skills and abilities required of graduates
- The nature of the human services environment.

### Representation

The Committee will represent service users, students, service providers and educators.

### Meeting and contact schedule

The Committee meets twice a year, either face to face or via online platforms. These meetings will precede JCU Social Work and Human Services staff workshops. At other times communication will be via an Advisory Committee e-mail list.

### Australian Association of Social Workers (AASW: [www.aasw.asn.au](http://www.aasw.asn.au))

The AASW accredits the Bachelor of Social Work and the Master of Social Work (professional qualifying) degrees at James Cook University according to its policy guidelines. All graduates are eligible for membership of the Association. Further information is available on the following AASW site: <https://www.aasw.asn.au/membershipinfo/membership-eligibility>).

### References

- Australian Association of Social Workers. (2013). *AASW Practice Standards for Social Workers: Achieving outcomes*. <https://www.aasw.asn.au/practitioner-resources/practice-standards>
- Australian Association of Social Workers. (2020). *Australian social work education and accreditation standards*. (pp. 1-37). AASW. <https://www.aasw.asn.au/careers-study/education-standards-accreditation>
- Australian Association of Social Workers. (2020). *Code of Ethics*. <https://www.aasw.asn.au/practitioner-resources/code-of-ethics>

## CHAPTER FOUR: SUPERVISION

### Supervision models

Supervision during placement can be provided via a variety of models. Students could be supervised on a one-on-one basis with a field educator (social work qualified) on-site, or they could have an internal task supervisor on-site, and additionally receive weekly supervision by a field educator (social work qualified), who is off-site. The latter is generally called external supervision and more guidance about these placements is provided in Chapter 5. Students could also receive group supervision or be in a rotational placement, where they change teams or supervisors part-way through the placement. Supervision is generally delivered face-to-face, but may involve online meetings (for example, via Skype or Zoom). The AASW (2020) requirement is that students receive at least half of their supervision sessions on a one-on-one basis during placement, and that supervision is weekly and a minimum of 1.5 hours.

The AASW (2020) provide guidelines for supporting placement supervision models in Field Education to ensure that quality educational standards are maintained. Thus, there are some limitations around the use of placements with external supervision, work-based placements or the provision of credit for recognised prior learning, placements with external supervision, and work-based placements (Zuchowski et al., 2019). For example, a student can only undertake one work-based placement and only one placement should be supported through external supervision (AASW, 2020).

### APPROACHES TO SUPERVISION

#### Individual differences

Students and field educators are individuals and will have their own style of engaging with others, learning and teaching. Methods of supervision adopted need to be those most suited to the people involved and the agency context. For instance, some students prefer to reflect upon a situation from many angles before they feel confident to take action, while others are more action oriented. Similarly, field educators vary in their teaching style and their expectations of students. To ensure there is a common understanding about what is expected of students, it is important that the placement requirements and ways of working are discussed in considerable detail as the placement proceeds. The primary means of doing this is by negotiating and reviewing the learning plan for the placement.

**Importantly**, the AASW requires all supervisors to attend preparation and training for Field Education and supervision.

#### Learning plan

Students on placements are adult learners responsible for their own learning. They specify in their learning plan areas of learning they want to pursue, and these are negotiated with their field educators regarding what is possible and appropriate within the placement agency. Negotiating the learning plan in the initial stage of the placement provides the opportunity for expectations about the placement to be clarified. Learning plans have been designed to integrate the AASW Practice Standards, as students must attain the ability to meet these by the completion of their degree (AASW, 2013; 2020)

#### Structure of supervision

Each student is assigned a field educator (social work supervisor) who is responsible for overseeing the student's work and professional development. Both parties need to meet prior to the commencement of placement to assess whether this is a suitable arrangement and whether it is likely that they can build and maintain a respectful relationship that will support the learning process. This may mean meeting with two supervisors in the workplace if a task/professional supervisory split needs to take place.

### When and where should supervision occur?

The guidelines of the AASW (2020) require 1.5 hours per 35 hours. A regular time for supervision in the placement needs to be set aside for students and field educators to consider students' learning needs and how these are being met. This should be organised without other distractions.

**Remember:** Ad hoc supervision often occurs regarding tasks requiring immediate attention, **but this does not** replace the need for formalised time to plan and to reflect.

### How to prepare for supervision

#### Set an agenda

Students and field educators need to prepare for supervision sessions. They are jointly responsible for setting an agenda for each session. An agenda gives a focus to the supervision session, but it does not mean there is a rigidity that cuts out responsiveness and spontaneity. Without an agenda, the session can easily be spent focusing exclusively on the immediate task demands. A supervision agenda could, for example, propose one-third of the session for the review of tasks, one-third for student presentation and analysis of one aspect of the work, and the final one-third for reviewing the learning plan. If an item is not completed it can be deferred to the next session.

When formulating an agenda, guidance can be found in the topics in the final evaluation document. As the individual learning goals form the basis of evaluation, it is important they are all reviewed regularly throughout the placement.

### What is the best way for field educators to teach?

Every field educator will use their own style and assessment skills to ascertain at which level an individual student is working and the methods most helpful to the student. Ideally the field educator works toward assisting students to take increasing responsibility for their own learning.

The methods listed below are suggestions for ways of working with and teaching students.

- 1) Allowing students to sit in and observe interviews by field educators
- 2) Co-working with students in interviews, co-facilitating groups, joint preparation of material or allowing students to make telephone calls and write letters on behalf of field educators
- 3) Setting a task where students would be required to analyse a case and present their analysis using a particular theoretical perspective
- 4) Engage them with role-plays of situations either past or anticipated
- 5) Have students provide written diary entries where selected issues are considered and reflected upon, using the headings "What Happened?" "Why did it happen?" and "What feelings resulted?"
- 6) Write up a process report/record where a segment of an interview is selected and written down verbatim on one half of the page, along with the corresponding thoughts, considerations and feelings on the other side
- 7) Video or record student's work or role plays for later review and discussion.

Field educators need to gain a clear and accurate picture of what students have been doing and how they approach their work so that they can provide feedback to the student. Discussion of the work undertaken is one way of achieving this, but there are many others as well. While individual preference will dictate which methods are chosen, experimenting with different methods is encouraged and support should be given to overcome the natural shyness many students feel when exposing themselves through their work. The willingness of field educators to have students observe their work or work cooperatively together models professional accountability and will be useful learning for students.

Before students undertake tasks, a briefing needs to occur where:

- the field educator's expectations are clarified
- how the task is to be achieved is explained
- any information required to complete the task is discussed.

A debriefing session should also occur where issues arising and learning that has occurred can be reviewed.

### Three aspects to learning

It is considered there are three aspects to learning, including changes in:

1. **thinking** (cognitive)
2. **feeling** (affective)
3. **doing** (behavioural).

Supervision is most effective when it assists students to review progress in all three areas.

### What will be covered in supervision?

The ongoing tasks undertaken by students will be reviewed and it is important that discussions are not restricted to the administrative details of what was done and how it was achieved. Therefore, after students have undertaken tasks, they are invited to share their thinking and their emotional responses about those situations. The tasks undertaken need to be considered with regard to the learning it has offered. One way to do this is to continually review the learning plan and check which learning areas have been enhanced through the tasks that were undertaken.

Consideration of the theoretical perspectives used by field educators and those covered at university should also be included when reviewing these tasks. Students may be asked to review their course notes and prescribed texts and readings to consider what theories have relevance to the tasks undertaken on placement.

It is important that a supportive relationship is built as this will enable students to review their personal responses to placement experiences.

### Questions that may be explored in supervisory sessions include, for example:

- How has the student adapted to the organisational setting?
- How has the student's time been spent?
- Are the activities/tasks/experiences that the student is engaged with aligned with the learning goals set down in the Learning Plan?
- What progress is being made in relation to the particular case/project/piece of research a particular student is engaged in?
- Are there any specific problems or difficulties that need to be addressed?
- How is the student relating theoretical ideas to practice?
- How much insight is the student developing in relation to:
  - use of self
  - analysis of the organisation
  - understanding of the client group
  - intervention methods
  - role of social work within the current setting?
- How is the student progressing overall?

## Ensuring adequate supervision is provided

The importance of a **set** formal supervision session must be stressed. While we appreciate the high level of demands placed on workers' time, it is in both the student's and educator's interests to have such an arrangement as it ensures proper supervision will take place.

### Process report

As part of the supervision process, field educators may suggest that students have the option to write one or more process reports during their placement. This is not directly assessable. However, this learning tool allows students to develop valuable reflection skills.

#### Process Report (example)

The process report, should, where possible, contain the following factors:

- Identifying information (i.e.) name, date of interview, setting (eg "This was the first contact with Mrs. X at Z agency").
- a word-for-word description (or close to) of the verbal interaction
- identification of non-verbal behaviors
- student's reactions and responses, for example, feelings, thoughts and actions
- identification of theoretical information the student did use (actual)
- identification of theoretical information the student could have used (on reflection)
- a short concluding summary of what the student has learnt from this session.

This example is based on Geldard: Basic Personal Counselling

Verbal content	Non verbal content	Student's reactions (eg feelings, actions, thoughts)	Skills used and reasons	Skills that could have been used and reasons for this choice	Tutor's comments
<p><b>Worker:</b> Seems like there's a barrier between us.</p> <p><b>Simon:</b> Ah what ... what da ya mean?</p>	Quiet tone of voice	<p>Immediacy – sharing my feelings in the here and now to open up the barrier</p> <p>He sounds defensive</p>			
<p><b>W:</b> Like we're separated by a barrier</p> <p><b>S:</b> Separated?</p>	Gesture with hands to show a barrier	Immediacy – sticking with this theme			
<p><b>W:</b> Yes, I feel shut out by an invisible barrier. Sometimes you open it up a ...</p> <p><b>S:</b> No, no it's a double brick wall with a door in it. The door is usually closed and that's because it keeps me safe.</p>	Interrupted, spoke heatedly	He's talking about himself, not the relationship between us.	Immediacy		

### How should feedback be given in supervision?

Feedback for students is essential for their learning. It is most helpful if clear, concise, immediate comments can be given on specific behaviour that has been observed. Non-specific feedback does not assist students

to reflect on how to change. Reciprocal feedback can be encouraged where students are also asked for their opinions.

Feedback needs:

- to be balanced with positive elements so these can be built upon
- to be directed towards behaviour over which the person has some control
- to lead to suggestions that the person can realistically implement.

If changes are suggested, these should be discussed with the student immediately. Any issues of concern should be discussed with the student as soon as they arise and prior to liaison meetings and the end-of-placement assessment. Plans to address the issues of concern should be developed as soon as practical and collaboratively by the field educator and the student. Mid- and end-of placement-evaluations should evolve from ongoing discussions and should contain no surprises.

If insufficient time is being allocated for supervision, or if students consider there are other problems, it is essential that:

1. They discuss the matter with the field educator, emphasising the personal and professional need for supervision
2. If this situation does not improve (regardless of the reasoning), it is critical that the student alerts the FELO about the lack of or limited supervision.
3. The FELO will then make an appointment with the field educator and the student to discuss the professional requirements of the field placement.
4. If at this point the situation is not rectified, again the student must inform the FELO about the lack of progress made.
5. It is then the responsibility of the FELO to decide which response is most appropriate. It may be possible to put in additional support, or necessary to withdraw the student from the placement if the agency cannot provide a suitable level of supervision.

#### Difficulties between student and field educator

The relationship between the student and field educator can involve tensions because new learning often raises anxieties. There is also the added tension of assessment and evaluation. Considerable learning often results when concerns can be discussed and resolved in a frank and respectful manner. If a satisfactory outcome is not achieved, the university staff should be consulted and included in discussions. The first contact person is the FELO.

#### The dividing line between personal reflection and counselling of the student

While placement focuses on professional tasks, personal attitudes and feelings play a part in how the tasks are carried out. Sometimes a student's personal issues impinge on tasks to the extent that the work is no longer effective. It is appropriate to point this out in supervision and to briefly explore what issues lie behind the difficulties. It is the student's responsibility to resolve the difficulties, and this may require personal counselling sessions away from the placement. The supervisor needs to ensure the student can undertake the tasks required with information, support, and encouragement, **but it is not appropriate for the supervisor to enter the role of a personal counsellor.**

#### Recording supervision sessions

While it is not an essential requirement to record supervision sessions, it is part of good professional practice. Moreover, recording the supervision session can also be a good exercise for students to practice. Thus, we

would suggest that the student and the supervisor agree on a recording format. Two possible examples are provided below:

### Supervision record template 1

#### Supervision notes

Attendees:

Date and time:

General discussion:

Values and ethics (i.e. - Demonstrate and apply knowledge of values, ethics and professionalism in daily social work practice)

Culturally responsive practice (i.e. - Describe and engage in culturally responsive and inclusive practice)

Knowledge (i.e.- Explain social work theories, concepts, methods and techniques and apply)

Skills (i.e. - Apply appropriate communication and interpersonal skills)

Methods and processes (i.e. - Implement information recording and sharing strategies)

Awareness of self (i.e. - reflections on use of self, participation in supervision process)

Other comments



Supervision record template 2

<b>Supervisee name:</b>		<b>Date:</b>	
<b>Supervisor name:</b>		<b>Duration:</b>	
<b>Topic/s discussed:</b>			
<b>Action items:</b>			
<b>Agenda for next session:</b>			
<b>Practice standards addressed:</b>			
<b>Comments:</b>			
<b>Student signature:</b>			
<b>Supervisor signature</b>			

References

Australian Association of Social Workers. (2013). *AASW Practice Standards for Social Workers: Achieving outcomes*. <https://www.aasw.asn.au/practitioner-resources/practice-standards>

Australian Association of Social Workers. (2020). *Australian social work education and accreditation standards*. (pp. 1-37). AASW. <https://www.aasw.asn.au/careers-study/education-standards-accreditation>

Zuchowski, I., Cleak, H., Nickson, A, & Spencer, A. (2019). A national survey of Australian social work field education programs: Innovation with limited capacity. *Australian Social Work*, 72(1), 75-90. <https://doi.org/10.1080/0312407X.2018.1511740>

## CHAPTER FIVE: Parameters/variations in placement

The Field Education subjects are developed to integrate theoretical and practical components, including pre-placement, integration workshops, assessment and post-placement reflection, as well as the placement itself. The importance of bringing practice and theory together is imperative and reflected in the requirement to undertake 500-hour field placements during set dates each year.

### Out of sync placements

Students who are unable to undertake a placement at the scheduled time may be disadvantaged as the teaching and learning tasks which surround the placement are not easily available at different times of the year. Students also miss out on essential peer support from other students undertaking field education. In addition, it can be extremely difficult to find agencies, field educators and FELOs who are available during different periods of the year. Unfortunately, this can mean that students who are unable to undertake field placements within set dates may have to wait until the equivalent placement period the following year.

This is not to say that individual student's requirements and special circumstances will not be taken into consideration. The JCU Social Work and Human Services staff recognise that exceptional circumstances can arise for students. Students who believe they have a strong case for consideration regarding an out-of-sync placement should follow the process below.

**Note:** Placements out of usual time frames will only be agreed to under special circumstances. Students are expected to make a written application to undertake their placement out of the usual time and forward this application to the Field Education Coordinator.

Students are asked to address the following questions:

- \* What are the exceptional circumstances that have led you to apply to complete a Field Education subject out-of-sync with the scheduled subject? Please attach any supporting documentation, e.g. medical certificates, support letters from cultural advisors or mental health professionals, communications with potential Field Educators etc.
- \* How will studying this subject at a different timeframe impact your overall study plan? Please attach a draft study plan for the next 12 months, should your application be successful.
- \* How will you manage the requirements for the theoretical aspects of the Field Education subject without easy access to LearnJCU resources, peer support and pre-placement preparation?

Applications will be reviewed by the Field Education team and the student will be notified of the decision as soon as possible.

Please note that if the student is given permission to undertake placement out of sync, the Field Education Coordinator will set additional preparation tasks, integration activities and extra readings to be completed within an agreed upon timeframe. All additional tasks must be emailed to the Field Education Coordinator.

The field education team's agreement to students undertaking placement out of the usual time frame is dependent on their ability, as well as the students', to ensure appropriate resources can be provided.

These resources include:

- availability of appropriate placements
- availability of suitable professional supervision
- appropriateness of the placement to the student's learning needs
- ability of the university to provide FELO support.

Students wishing to undertake placements in a location where another university or a TAFE college is providing social welfare and/or social work education need to be aware that students enrolled in the local course may be given priority for placements.

### Part-time placements

In **exceptional circumstances**, a case can be made for entering into a part-time placement arrangement. Part-time placements can be fraught with difficulties as a student may find their placement extending for months on end, while their peers move on from their placement experiences. There are other difficulties associated with part-time placements:

- field educators might not be able to commit to what could become a very lengthy placement
- other students may not be able to access a placement opportunity because a long-term placement exists.

We realise, however, that there may be rare cases where students will need to apply for a part-time placement as the only way for them to complete course requirements.

The JCU Social Work and Human Services team has a strong preference that placements **are no less than 3 days a week**. Therefore, students can make a case, in consideration of their particular circumstances, to have a 3 day a week placement approved, **but** they need to be aware that there can be significant difficulties for all involved in carrying out such a placement successfully. Students who have been approved to undertake their placement, need to be aware that **two one-week periods of any placement will have to be full-time**.

### Placements in students' place of employment

The prerequisite for granting a work-based placement is a written agreement between the HEP, the student and the employer. The signatory on behalf of the employer must not be the student's immediate manager. Senior management confirmation is required to ensure the employing organisation's willingness to commit resources to the student's placement. (AASW, 2020, p. 33)

Field placement is significantly different from paid employment. The central point of the placement is to enable a student to pursue learning objectives relevant to social work rather than simply getting through agency work. The placement process should be a time of experimentation and analysis of how one intervenes and what outcomes are possible/likely.

Before any student commences a workplace placement, special attention must be paid to:

1. clarifying the goals of the placement
2. determining the learning opportunities that will be available
3. determining the educational processes that will be used
4. ensuring that the student is allocated learning experiences not involving their routine work responsibilities
5. ensuring that while undertaking placement they should not carry any other workload, and
6. ensuring as far as possible that the field educator is not the worker who is the student's usual supervisor
7. a contract is required for any work-based placement (available on the LearnJCU site or by emailing the Work Integrated Learning team or the Field Education Coordinator)

8. the job description needs to be provided in conjunction with the work-based learning contract and the new learning possible needs to be outlined.

The AASW (2020) stipulates that “the employer must agree that:

- a. The student is located in a work setting away from their normal employment setting
- b. Their student status will be protected, and they will not be expected to meet normal work commitments as an employee of the organisation when undertaking their placement hours.”  
(p. 34)

**NOTE:** Only one placement may be taken at the student’s workplace (AASW, 2020).

### Other employment during placement

While we appreciate that studying is a costly exercise, it is important to realise that outside employment cannot be allowed to infringe on the Field Education subject. The university has a duty to ensure that all Field Education requirements are met and **absences from placement sites or integration seminars and other subject requirements cannot be legitimately explained by paid work commitments.**

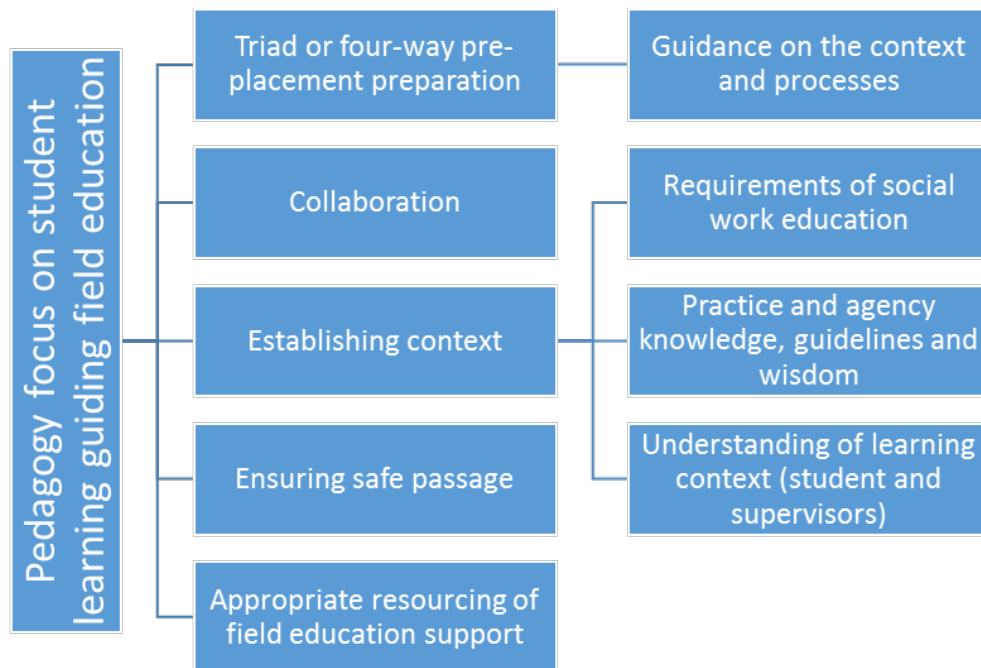
### Placements with off-site (external) supervision

There are many positive learning opportunities for innovative student placements in non-traditional agencies and settings (for example, a community work placement with a rural Shire Council). However, it is not always possible to secure accredited social work supervision within the agency, as some agencies do not have accredited social workers employed. This means a task/professional field educator split is required.

### Task/professional field educator arrangements

The Field Education team can make arrangements whereby students are supervised conjointly by a local social welfare practitioner (task supervisor) and an accredited social worker (professional supervisor). The social worker may be employed in a nearby agency or a member of the Social Work teaching staff, or a sessional appointed social worker.

Field education placement with external supervision can work well, provided the key stakeholders collaborate and maintain ongoing communication. The following practice principles are important in guiding placements with external supervision:



(Zuchowski, 2019, p. 38).

External supervision can be used to strengthen the placement experience. External supervisors need to become familiar with the student agency and task supervisor context, and provide supervisory support and collaboration with the task supervisor (Zuchowski, 2019). This requires ongoing contact and collaboration, and it might be particularly useful to undertake a number of joint supervision sessions throughout the placement, between the external supervisor, the internal task supervisor and the student.

Placements with external supervision should consider the triad or four-way preplacement preparation, including collaboration, relationship building and maintenance and establishing the context of the learning experience. They should also ensure students’ safe passage and require appropriate resourcing of field education support. (Zuchowski, 2019, p. 38).

It is essential that both the task supervisor and the external field educator are present at the liaison meetings with the student and the FELO. This will ensure the information about the placement is shared and everyone is aware of how placement is progressing and what is being discussed and explored. Moreover, it will facilitate discussions about roles and responsibilities and assessment.

Students need to be active drivers in their placement journey. In placements with external supervision, it can sometimes be complex to organise everyone for meetings. It is important to be organised and persevere!

### Placements out of the Townsville/Cairns localities

Placement opportunities may be available for students in regional and rural areas. Wherever possible, students will undertake placements in their local communities. There might be times where students need to relocate to another area to secure an appropriate placement. This may involve travel and additional accommodation and living expenses, which are the responsibility and at the expense of the student. The Shirley Gilliver Memorial Fund (<https://www.jcu.edu.au/scholarships-@-jcu/search/shirley-gilliver-memorial-fund-grant>) can support students if they are relocating (temporarily or permanently) to a rural or remote community to undertake field education.

The WIL team compiles information relating to location of placements, field educator and liaison information and accommodation details, where available.

## International placements

International placements can offer valuable learning opportunities. Students undertaking their second placement can consider the opportunity of an international placement. This is in accordance with the AASW (2020): “Only students who have successfully completed one field placement within Australia may undertake an overseas placement” (p. 36).

### Placement opportunities in Kerala, India

It may be possible for the JCU Social Work & Human Services team to offer students studying in the BSW and MSW(PQ), in their final year, the opportunity to complete an international field education placement in India. This opportunity is available as part of an ongoing relationship between our discipline and partner institutions and organisations in Kerala, India. To ensure that these placements are meaningful, positive experiences, a set of guidelines/policies has been developed.

#### Guidelines:

- Students must be available for second/final placement only, in both BSW and MSW programs.
- Students must have completed (or be on-track to complete prior to placement) all of their other core Social Work subject requirements in order to be eligible to apply for international placement.
- Placements must be taken during study period 2.
- Students will be required to complete a set of Intercultural Learning Modules in preparation for their placement.
- Students will need to plan and budget to meet their own costs of travel, including airfares, accommodation, food etc. OS-HELP, and in some cases New Colombo Plan funding, may be available to support coverage of these expenses.
- In the first instance, interested students should contact the Field Education Coordinator to express an interest in an international (India) placement, and for an initial check of eligibility.
- The students will then be referred to a member of the ‘International Team’ to discuss options and expectations in more detail.
- If a student remains interested in this opportunity, they will then complete an Expression of Interest (Eoi) application, which will be considered by the Field Education and International teams.
- Prospective students will be required to consider and acknowledge the conditions and risks involved in the placement, and how they plan to approach these, prior to detailed negotiations with Indian partners commencing. These include issues such as:
  - language challenges
  - cultural expectations
  - standards of accommodation
  - food and drink, including water issues
  - transport issues
  - personal safety
  - access to the Internet.
- Final confirmation of the placement is dependent on international travel possibility and risk assessment, the capacity of our international partners to accommodate the student(s), the available support from JCU FELOs, and the assessment of the student’s capacity to undertake the international placement.
- Placements will normally involve being located in an agency, but with regular contact/integration conducted through De Paul Institute of Science and Technology (DIST) in Angamaly, Kerala. This may

involve spending some time in the DIST social work classroom as well as attending an initial orientation week at DIST. Regular travel from the placement site to DIST in Angamaly will be required (e.g., on a fortnightly basis). Some opportunities may exist for placements in other parts of India, subject to availability and arrangements.

- FELOs for international (India) placements must be JCU profile staff and therefore placement may be subject to the availability of such staff.
- JCU reserves the right to decline any application for international (India) placement in response to concerns about the suitability or any of the issues identified above, or newly emerging issues.

#### **Commitment:**

Students are required to thoroughly work through the *Intercultural learning* e-book and complete the reflection and discussion exercises prior to commencing placement, as well as fulfil all the other required assessment requirements of their placement.

Students are required to act respectfully and with cultural sensitivity during placement. They need to carefully prepare themselves for acting appropriately in a culturally different setting and consider their own position as a learner in this new context.

During and after the international placement, students will be given the opportunity to debrief about the experience with their FELO.

It is expected that the students share their learning with their fellow students, potentially through a short online presentation or video that can be shared with other field education students. This task should be negotiated with the FELO and will align with the requirements of the final assessment item in the field education subject – the placement presentation.

#### **Process:**

1. Information about potential international (India) placements will be circulated to students finishing their 3<sup>rd</sup> year (BSW)/level 1 (MSW) placements, and at the end of SP2 subjects (for applications in the following year).
2. Students are to contact Field Education Coordinator to check eligibility based on enrolment, study plan, AASW requirements etc.
3. If eligible, the student should then contact a member of international team to discuss possibilities for placement.
4. If still interested, the student then completes and submits an EoI, assessed by the Field Education and International teams.
5. Successful applicants will be asked to acknowledge the conditions and risks associated with the field placement and how they might approach/respond to these.
6. The international team will then contact Indian partners to begin negotiating the placement details.
7. If our partners indicate that a placement is possible, then details will be confirmed and a contract issued etc., as per normal policy and procedures.
8. A JCU staff member will be identified as the FELO.
9. Prior to departure, the student will supply the Indian agency with an introduction to themselves via a short video (YouTube link), and they will be assisted to schedule a Skype meeting with their field educator in India to discuss the placement context.
10. The student must complete the preparatory *Intercultural learning* e-book to JCU staff satisfaction.
11. The student will then travel to India.
12. Students will be required to obtain an Indian SIM card, with a data allowance, as soon as possible upon arrival.
13. In addition to professional supervision provided in the agency, students will maintain regular contact with staff at DIST and with their JCU FELO (i.e., above the usual number of contacts).

### International placements – elsewhere

If a student has lived or worked in another country and/or has links with agencies in another country, it may be possible to do an international placement elsewhere. It is the student's responsibility to contact the agency to see if a social work student placement may be possible. A social worker whose qualifications are either recognised by the AASW, or by the professional association in the country where the proposed placement will occur, is required. It is the student's responsibility to locate such a supervisor, who could be external to the agency, but must be in the same country as the agency.

Contact should be made with the JCU field education team early to discuss the possibility of undertaking such a placement. The JCU field education team will liaise with the agency and supervisor and will arrange a FELO. Liaison contacts are by phone or Skype. All costs for travel, accommodation, visas, vaccines and living expenses are the student's responsibility. The usual student placement insurance during placement is covered by JCU for overseas placements, but there are some countries excluded, specifically the USA and Canada. This needs to be checked at the time of considering the country. Students may wish to consider travel and additional medical insurance.

Student preparation for cross-cultural awareness and language will be required prior to commencing the placement. Students will have to work through the modules available. Some successful placements in previous years have occurred in Vietnam, Indonesia, and Fiji.

### Field Education [WS3503, WS5304, WS4504, & WS5605] attached to international student exchanges

On occasions, there are opportunities to integrate a short-term international exchange experience into placement.

Bachelor of Social Work students (WS3503 and WS4504) may have an opportunity to enrol into WS2008 'international student exchange' and integrate this into their placement. This needs prior approval from the Field Education Coordinator and Subject Coordinator of WS2008, Academic Group Head and College Dean. The condition of approval for integrating WS2008 into the Field Education subject is that the student is able to integrate the learning from their international experience into their placement.

For Master of Social Work Students (PQ), exchange may be integrated into their field education subject (WS5304 or WS5605) if the study exchange is offered by Social Work and Human Services. This needs prior approval from the Field Education Coordinator and facilitator of the international student exchange, as well as the Academic Group Head and College Dean. The condition of approval for integrating the international exchange into the field education subject is that the student can integrate the learning from their international experience into their placement.

Integration of the learning from the international exchange requires the student to:

- negotiate this possibility with their potential field educator; a good strategy might be exploring options with a Field Education staff member prior to talking to the potential field educator
- obtain support/approval from the field educator to integrate the learning abroad experience into the field education experience
- integrate learning outcomes relating to the international experience into their learning plan
- reflect on and theorise how the international experience is relevant to the context of their Australian based placement learning experience
- present their reflections and theorisation in an agreed format to the placement agency/field educator.



The placement then becomes a joint placement between JCU and the Australian placement agency, meaning that the placement contract needs to be signed off prior to the overseas travel. The student will be assigned one FELO for the entirety of the placement. Most likely, the FELO will be based in Australia and must receive at least one journal reflection in regard to the overseas learning experience. The academic accompanying the students overseas will act as the field educator for the duration of the travel and as the task supervisor for the remainder of the placement.

Students need to have learning goals pertaining to the overseas experience included in their field education learning plan. These goals need to be discussed with the potential Australian placement agency in the context of how this overseas experience will be meaningfully integrated with the Australian based placement experience.

For the Thailand student exchange, for example, up to 112 hours can potentially be counted towards placement time; however, this needs to be confirmed with the field education team and the placement organisation. Hours credited depend on time spent on social work relevant international exchange activities on the exchange, and they do not include travel and leisure time. If students have been granted RPL for their first placement, no hours from the international exchange can be counted as placement hours as AASW requires 500 hours of placement in Australia. Students in this situation may still undertake the travel as a part of their placement fulfilling all the requirements described above, and the exchange hours as additional to the minimum requirements for placement.

#### Student Field Education file

Electronic individual files are created when student placements are confirmed. These files are initiated by the WIL team ([dtesplacements@jcu.edu.au](mailto:dtesplacements@jcu.edu.au)). The files include the confirmation of the student placement, and a record document of the student's assessment - including copies of timesheets, learning plan, mid- and end-of placement assessment, a recommendation for the placement result and a record that the journals were submitted and the end-of placement presentation was presented - plus any other documents, such as work-based placement contracts, notes, and memos to prospective FELOs. As students move through the placement process, their FELO is required to keep a copy of the learning plan, completed evaluation forms, and a summary of their assessment visits on file, attaching it electronically to a Placement Record Form and emailing it back to the WIL team once all the work from the placement is completed.

These files are kept for five years, as a requirement of the AASW which accredits the course and may audit the files at any time; and in case students require a reference for employment.

Students have access to their field education files.

#### References

Australian Association of Social Workers. (2020). *Australian social work education and accreditation standards*. (pp. 1-37). AASW.

<https://www.aasw.asn.au/careers-study/education-standards-accreditation>

Zuchowski, I. (2019). Clarifying placement team relationships: The place of external supervision. In F. Gardner, J. Theobald, N. Long & H. Hickson (eds.). *Creating successful placements* (pp. 33-45). Oxford University Press.

## CHAPTER SIX: Difficulties on placement

### Initial protocols

There are occasions where difficulties arise between parties within the supervisory relationship. We encourage both parties to resist the temptation to deny/overlook/avoid the difficulty. If addressed early, difficulties may have a better chance of being overcome. Therefore, we urge students and field educators to follow the protocols outlined below:

1. Should there be any cause for concern, either party should raise it at the earliest moment, firstly with each other, and with the assistance of another staff member if appropriate.
2. If a resolution cannot be reached between the student and field educator, the FELO should be informed by either party. Together the informant and the FELO will need to decide whether a formal meeting needs to be scheduled to address the difficulty.
3. If a formal meeting is required to address the difficulty, the FELO should arrange the meeting at the earliest convenience. A Field Education staff member may also be involved if serious difficulties are expressed and additional support is deemed necessary by the FELO.

### Students not performing satisfactorily

Both the student and the Field Education Coordinator needs to have sufficient advance advice notice if a student's work is not satisfactory due to their learning being inadequate and/or conflict between the field educator and the student, which threatens the progress of the placement.

If the field educator considers that the student is not performing satisfactorily due to the reason outlined above, this information should be relayed **immediately** to the FELO and the student. An early conference should then be arranged to review the student's situation, involving all parties including the Field Education Coordinator or another Field Education staff member where necessary.

The following should be discussed and recorded:

- What is/are the area(s) of concern?
- How is this evidenced?
- What needs to change?
- What is the plan of action and timeframe for change?
- What does the student need to achieve to demonstrate the ability to achieve the placement learning and how can this be evidenced?
- How will the student be supported to achieve the required improvement?
- When will this be reviewed?

The FELO will place a record of the discussion taken place during the conference, and the agreed action plan, on the student's file and distribute a copy to all parties involved in the placement (field educator, task supervisor, and student).

### Placement breakdown

Field educators vary in their practices, ideologies, and methods. Students will also bring to the placement their own set of values and opinions relating to welfare, so there exists a potential for conflict. Sometimes, the way students learn and the way field educators teach are different. However, one of the purposes of placement is to expose students to alternative stances and methods of practice, and open discussion is therefore encouraged. Nevertheless, students are required to respect the responsibilities and organisational

constraints of those with whom they are placed. If a resolution of such conflict does not seem possible, they should contact their FELO as soon as they can.

If a student's performance or learning continues to be assessed as unsatisfactory, or if the conflict remains unresolved after undergoing the above process, the field educator and FELO will discuss this with the student at the earliest opportunity. Staff will complete the Placement Breakdown Form available from the Field Education Coordinator or other Field Education staff and observe the following protocols:

1. The student will be advised that the placement is in possible danger of breakdown (details given) and a plan to address concerns will be devised jointly.
2. The student will be advised that the placement is in grave danger of breakdown (details given) and a plan to address concerns will be devised jointly.
3. The student will be advised their performance in the placement is not satisfactory.

Should any plans to address concerns not be met or if the student is advised their performance is not satisfactory, the most usual course (especially in the latter instance (point 3)) is that the placement will be terminated.

An immediate cessation of placement will occur in situations of serious breakdown where the relationship has become non-functional, where there has been a criminal action, or where there is some form of significant risk to at least one party in the situation or an associated party (e.g., a client of the placement organisation) while the matter is investigated or resolved.

**Note:** The implementation of field placement policies set out above is at the discretion of the Field Education Coordinator. Students have the right to appeal to the Head of Social Work and Human Services, should they believe they are disadvantaged in some way by the implementation of these policies.

#### After a placement has broken down

The field education team will work with the student to assess ways forward. Sometimes students might be ready to undertake another placement; at other times, they may need to engage in further work or preparation to be ready for another placement experience. The Field Education team, jointly with the student, will consider the best way forward.

This assessment will take into account the reports, evaluations and recommendations from the field educator, task supervisor and FELO. They will be asked to provide written feedback about the student's learning and performance during the placement. This will be placed on the students' placement file.

The student will be asked to write a critical reflection on their placement experience addressing the following points:

- What did I learn about social work during the placement?
- What did I learn about myself during placement?
- What do I already bring to social work practice?
- What aspects of my social work practice require further growth?
- What are my learning needs and requirements to successfully progress in a placement?
- What supports and structures might be useful and which of those might be essential to my learning?
- **Please end with a summary:** A placement that would support me well in my learning would....

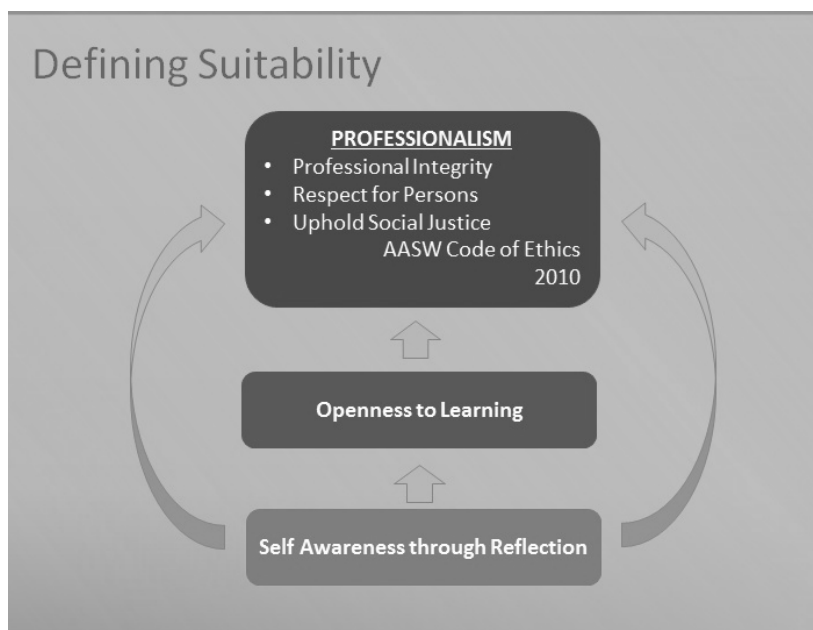
The critical reflection aims to discern where the student is at in their learning and whether they are suitable and ready for another placement experience. Field Education staff will assess the critical reflection and discuss it with the student before making a recommendation about future placement progression. The reflection will be assessed in regards to:

- Student’s ability to critically reflect on self
- Students’ understanding of social work practice in the organisational context
- Student’s awareness of self and impact on others
- Student’s awareness of support strategies
- Student’s understanding of professional social work practice and ways in which they can or are already participating in it
- Student’s engagement with feedback from others

The Field Education team staff member will meet with the student and discuss recommendations for ways forward.

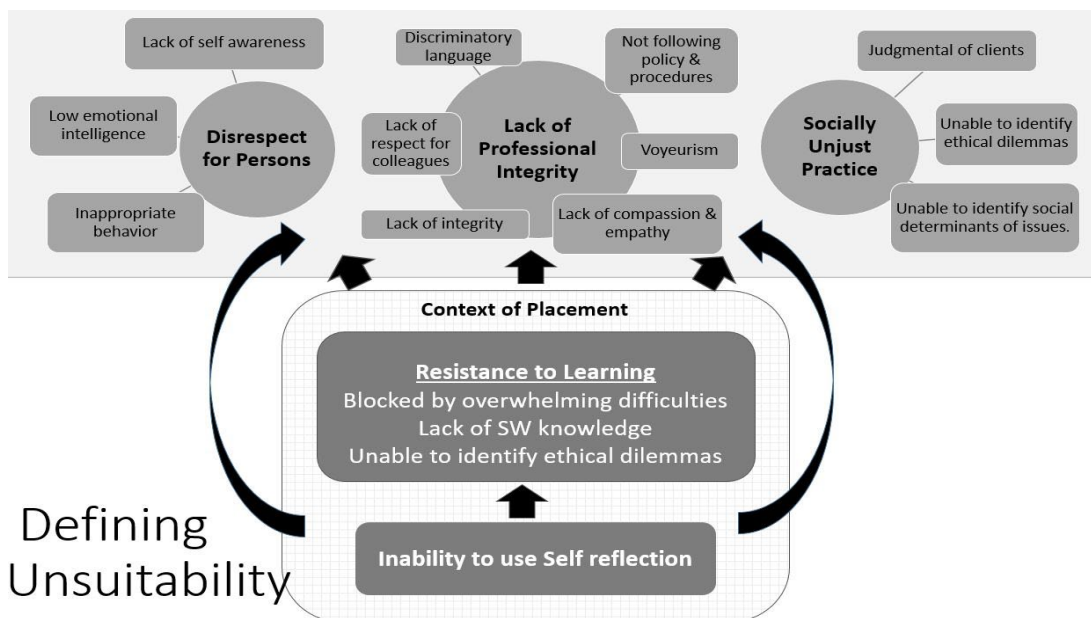
### Student suitability for field education

Some students may not be ready or suitable for professional social work practice. Key indicators that guide field educators’ sense of social work professional identity are reflective of the professional values and ethics, and they include professional integrity, respect for persons and upholding social justice (AASW, 2020). Students deemed suitable for the profession demonstrate commitment to these indicators.



Self-awareness and reflective practice are critical to developing and upholding these values in practice for both practitioners and students. Self-awareness could be developed with reflective practice and demonstrated by showing a capacity for non-judgemental, compassionate and empathic practice, and by identifying your own challenges within practice. Importantly, students need to demonstrate an openness to learning on placement, by for example being open to feedback, taking the initiative around their own learning experience, and respecting colleagues’ diversity in practice (Croaker et al., 2017).

Some students show an inability to demonstrate key values, skills and knowledge required for practice. It seems that this is often displayed by a lack of professionalism, showing disrespect for others (clients or colleagues) and delivering socially unjust practice. Students who are not prepared or not willing to address behaviour may not be suitable for professional social work practice. (Croaker et al., 2017, p. 118).



Feedback from field educators and FELOs has been that the lack of willingness or ability to address areas of concern can make students unsuitable to continue in field education, and in some circumstances, in the Social Work Program.

See also Chapter 1 for further discussion on exploring suitability for practice.

### Suitability to continue in the Social Work Degree

If suitability for placement or progression in the degree is in question, the concern will be addressed in accordance with the university's policy. The JCU policy *Review of a student's suitability to continue a course involving placement* can be found at

<https://www.jcu.edu.au/policy/learning-and-teaching/review-of-a-students-suitability-to-continue-a-course-involving-placement>

### Harassment and discrimination

Students on placement are subject to the university policy on bullying, discrimination, harassment, and sexual misconduct: <https://www.jcu.edu.au/policy/student-services/bullying-discrimination-harassment-and-sexual-misconduct-policy-and-procedure>

In addition, if students are the victims or perpetrators of harassment, processes to address this will be per the agency's policy.

### Managing abusive behaviour

James Cook University is committed to fostering a community that features, at its core, respect, inclusion and safety for all. We support gender equality as a foundation for respectful relationships and an underpinning principle for change. This means a strong and enduring commitment to the elimination of sexual harassment and sexual assault. (<https://www.jcu.edu.au/safety-and-wellbeing/jcu-respect-now-always-commitment-and-reviews> )

Bullying, discrimination and harassment matters are covered under JCU's *Bullying, discrimination, harassment and sexual misconduct policy* (<https://www.jcu.edu.au/policy/student-services/bullying-harassment-and-sexual-misconduct-policy>) Updated February 2022

discrimination-harassment-and-sexual-misconduct-policy-and-procedure), with the *Bullying, discrimination and harassment complaint procedure for staff and affiliates* (<https://www.jcu.edu.au/policy/procedures/corporate-governance-procedures/discrimination-bullying-and-harassment-complaint-procedure-for-staff-and-affiliates>). *Student complaint management policy and procedures* (<https://www.jcu.edu.au/policy/student-services/student-complaint-management-policy-and-procedures>) applies to students.

The procedures set out three options:

- an information complaints process
- a formal complaints process
- referral to external bodies.

(Note: These processes do not apply to issues of sexual harassment and sexual assault.)

The Queensland Human Rights Commission (<https://www.qhrc.qld.gov.au/>) has information and reporting options that are available to all staff and students.

#### [AASW complaints process \(By-Laws on Ethics\)](#)

“Under the Constitution of the AASW the Association must maintain a written Code of Ethics and By-Laws on Ethics. The Code of Ethics of the AASW expresses the values, principles and ethical practice responsibilities of the social work profession and is used as a tool for adjudication when alleged breaches of the Code’s provisions are brought to the attention of the AASW. The By-Laws establish the process through which the National Ethics Committee and Branch Ethics Committees are constituted. Their terms of reference and the procedures include:

- a) ensuring that ethically accountable standards of conduct are developed and maintained throughout the profession of social work
  - b) providing consultation regarding ethical social work practice and practice standards and complaints about alleged unethical conduct
  - c) investigating and adjudicate complaints about alleged unethical conduct.
  - d) disciplining members when breaches of the Code of Ethics are substantiated”.
- (AASW By-Laws on Ethics, 2000)

The By-Laws set out procedures for:

- ‘the promotion and maintenance of the principles outlined in the Code’; and
- the handling of matters relating to ‘ethical and professional standards’.

The Board of Directors of the AASW delegates these responsibilities to the National Ethics Committee and Branch Ethics Committees, through the By-Laws.

Any person wishing to make a complaint against a member of the profession will have their complaint dealt with by an impartial committee. A complaint can be lodged either through contacting the head office of AASW or by contacting any branch or branch member.

The branch relevant to most students of JCU will be the North Qld branch of the AASW. Contact details are:

P: 03 9320 1000 or 1800 630 124 (toll free alternative)

E: [aaswnqld@aasw.asn.au](mailto:aaswnqld@aasw.asn.au)

[www.aasw.asn.au/nqld](http://www.aasw.asn.au/nqld)

<http://www.aasw.asn.au/north-queensland/about-us>

An initial request to the branch to be contacted by a member of the Ethics Sub-Committee should be sufficient. This member will offer support and explain the process for lodging a complaint and resolution of the complaint.

The AASW By-Laws on Ethics can be viewed on the AASW website: <http://www.aasw.asn.au/practitioner-resources/related-documents>

## References

- Australian Association of Social Workers. (2020). *Code of Ethics*. <https://www.aasw.asn.au/practitioner-resources/code-of-ethics>
- Croaker, S., Dickinson, T., Watson, S., & Zuchowski, I. (2017). Students' suitability for social work: Developing a framework for field education. *Advances in Social Work and Welfare Education, 19*(2), 109-124. <https://search.informit.org/doi/10.3316/aeipt.219530>

## CHAPTER SEVEN: Essential general information

### INSURANCE

As members of the James Cook University Student Association, students receive limited insurance cover for accident and disablement under the Association's Accident Insurance Scheme. This cover provides personal protection for the student both inside and outside the university, including field placement. This does **not** cover insurance for damage to property.

In addition, the university carries insurance cover for both public liability and professional indemnity, which provides some protection for students.

**Note:** Students and field educators should be aware that there is no cover for students' personal property. Students need to consider private cover for private vehicles or personal effects. Should a student be involved in a situation where an insurance claim is likely to result, the FELO and the Head of Social Work and Human Services should be informed as soon as possible.

### Travel and the use of private vehicles

It is usually the student's responsibility to carry the costs associated with travel to and from the site of the placement. Students and the Work Integrated Learning team need to bear this in mind when negotiating a potential placement. Applications for some support funds (e.g., Shirley Gilliver fund) need to be considered well in advance of the commencement of the placement.

The university does not pay mileage allowance to students. Since a major part of student travel during field placement is undertaken in carrying out work for the agency, it is expected that a student will either use an agency vehicle, public transport, or be compensated for the use of a private vehicle by the agency. Students using their own vehicle to undertake agency work **must** have comprehensive insurance.

### Criminal history check

Some organisations require that students undergo a criminal history check before they commence placement. Students will be advised of agencies that require these checks during preparation for placement. If the organisation asks you to provide a criminal history check, please find out from the organisation what type of criminal history check they require, for example, a Queensland Criminal History Check or a National Criminal History Check. Please be aware that unless the organisation pays the cost of this check, you will need to pay the fee.

To apply for a criminal history check you need to go to your local police station. You will need to provide, as a part of the application, identification, such as a current driver licence, passport or other photo ID, and pay an application fee.

Information about fees and process is available here: <https://www.qld.gov.au/law/crime-and-police/criminal-records-and-history-checks/criminal-history-checks>

### Working with children checks: Blue Card

The application process for a Queensland's Working with Children Check (Blue Card) has changed in 2020. All applications will now be completed online, and new Blue Cards will now display your photo.



**It is your responsibility to maintain a current Blue Card and ensure your contact details are up to date throughout your course.**

Updated information about Blue Card and relevant links can be found on: <https://www.jcu.edu.au/college-of-arts-society-and-education/case-student-resources/Work-Integrated-Learning/blue-cards>

**James Cook University Policy**

The James Cook University Policy on University Requirements for Undergraduate Coursework – Professional Experience states that:

11.3 Where a course includes a prescribed professional or clinical placement(s) and where that placement(s) may involve contact with young people, a student’s initial enrolment and continuing enrolment in that course will be conditional upon the following:

- i. eligibility of the student for a working with children check at the time of first enrolment
- ii. maintenance of that eligibility throughout the whole of the course
- iii. actual application for or acquisition of a working with children check prior to commencement of placement

**Remember:** In the event that a student becomes ineligible for a working with children check, at any time between the date of first enrolment and the date of completion of the course, the student will not be able to complete the degree.

Students need to check the requirements regarding working with children checks in their state or territory.

Jurisdiction	Act	Type of program	Valid for
ACT	Working With Vulnerable People (Background Checking) Act 2011 (ACT)	The ACT Working With Vulnerable People Background Check requires that individuals engaging in regulated activities or services, including where these are provided to children, must be registered. A statutory Screening Unit within the Office of Regulatory Services, Justice and Community Safety Directorate is responsible for applications for registration. There are three types of registration administered to individuals: general registration, which is transferable across all roles and organisations; role-based registration; and conditional registration.	3 years
NSW	Child Protection (Working with Children) Amendment (Statutory Review) Act 2018 (NSW)	Individuals are responsible for their own application for certification and are also legally required to update their contact details, including any name or address changes within three months. Employers must verify that their workers or volunteers who work with children have had a check or applied for one. Employers operating within a child-related industry are required to register online with the NSW Office of the Children's Guardian (OCG) and are required to subsequently conduct online verification of new paid employees' clearance. Existing paid workers and all volunteers (new and current) also need to have their clearance validated online. Parent	5 years

Table 1. Relevant legislation and state and territory screening programs

Jurisdiction	Act	Type of program	Valid for
		volunteers attending overnight children's camps are required to have a WWCC. NGOs are required to provide information relevant to an assessment of whether a person poses a risk to the safety of children in response to a request from the OCG.	
NT	Care and Protection of Children Act 2007 (NT)	Individuals are required to apply for a WWCC, known as an 'Ochre Card' or Clearance Notice in the NT. It applies to employees and volunteers in child-related employment settings.	2 years
QLD	Working with Children (Risk Management and Screening) Act 2000 (Qld)	Individuals are required to apply for a WWCC, known as Blue Card in Queensland. Blue Cards allow individuals to engage in child-related occupations/volunteering. Organisations providing child-related services must also have policies and procedures in place to identify and minimise the risk of harm to children. These policies and procedures are monitored by the Public Safety Business Agency.	3 years
SA	Children's Protection Act 1993 (SA)	The South Australian system is an employer-driven system requiring employers and responsible authorities to obtain National Police Checks and conduct wider child-related employment screening for those engaging in child-related occupations/volunteering.	3 years
Tas.	Registration to Work with Vulnerable People Act 2013 (Tas)	Individuals who work or volunteer in the childcare or other child-related sectors are required to apply for a Working with Vulnerable People check. Registrations are valid for three years or as determined by the Registrar.	3 years
Vic.	Working with Children Act 2005 (Vic)	Individuals are required to apply for a WWCC. The check allows individuals to engage in child-related occupations/volunteering and practical training.	5 years
WA	Working with Children (Criminal Record Checking) Act 2004 (WA)	Individuals are required to apply for a WWCC. The check allows individuals to engage in child-related occupations/volunteering.	3 years

Source: Australian Government. (2020). *Pre-employment screening: Working with children checks and police checks*.

<https://aifs.gov.au/cfca/publications/pre-employment-screening-working-children-checks-and-police-checks/part-overview>

#### Yellow Cards

Students who plan to undertake a placement in the disability or aged care sector will need a Yellow Card before they can commence placement.

Application or renewal:

Download an application form: <https://www.communities.qld.gov.au/industry-partners/criminal-history-screening/forms/application-criminal-history-screening-prescribed-notice-yellow-card-form-10-1>

If you already have a Blue Card, you can apply for an exemption notice:

<https://www.communities.qld.gov.au/industry-partners/criminal-history-screening/forms/application-criminal-history-screening-exemption-notice-form-10-11>

### Immunisation

It is in students' interests to be immunised against major communicable diseases that they may be exposed to on field placement. Any agency expectations regarding immunisation for students will normally be discussed at the first meeting with the supervisor. Students' attention is drawn to the university policy to be found at:

<https://www.jcu.edu.au/professional-experience-placement/conduct-and-expectations>.

Visit <https://www.health.qld.gov.au/> or your local state health field placement website for information on the eligibility requirements for student placement. For example, students must undertake the HepB vaccination process and obtain a blood test verifying that they are HepB immune. This process can take up to six months. All students should contact the Social Work Field Education Unit to register their interest, discuss current requirements, and obtain forms to confirm immunity status in preparation for a Health Placement.

It is likely that organisations will require students to get Covid-19 immunisations. Queensland Health is one of the organisations that currently require students to be fully (double-vaccinated) Covid-19 immunised before they commence placement. Other organisations could follow suit, so it might be advisable to consider getting the immunisation.

### Ownership of work done while on placement

Although case notes, project reports, research papers etc., completed by students during placement, will remain the property of the placement agency, it is expected that recognition of students' work will be ensured by field educators. For example, if a student has written a research report, they should be afforded recognition as author or co-author.

## CHAPTER EIGHT: First placement (WS3503/ WS5304)

### INTRODUCTION

This placement is an introduction to social work practice. It will give students the opportunity to use the placement experience to gain greater confidence and to expand their beginning orientation to the profession. The expectation is that students will do this through the application of the theoretical knowledge they have gained in their pre-requisite studies prior to enrolment in the placement subject.

#### First field placement pre-requisite subjects.

##### **Undergraduate students**

Prior to undertaking placement, undergraduate students must have satisfactorily completed levels one and two of the BSW degree. They **must** have completed the requirements for **WS2510 Interpersonal Skills**, **WS2511 Values and Ethics** and **WS3515 Social Work & Welfare Practice** before commencing placement.

##### **Postgraduate students**

Professional qualifying Master of Social Work students **must** complete the requirements for **WS5517 Foundation for Social Work Practice**, and at least two other subjects, before commencing placement.

All Students are advised that they **must not** undertake more than one subject concurrently with their field placement.

After completing the prerequisite subject first placement, students should be familiar with some basic models of social work practice and have an idea of some theoretical concepts. When undertaking the first placement, students are only expected to have a beginning understanding of social work theories. The first placement is an opportunity for students to acquire a beginning understanding of social work theories and how they apply to the particular placement practice setting. It is important that both students and field educators are aware of this and that expectations are accordingly appropriate.

#### First placement period – WS3503 Field Education 1 (BSW)

The first placement for BSW students is a full-time placement of 500 hours, which takes approximately 14 weeks to complete. The AASW recommends a minimum working day of seven hours.

Students usually undertake this subject in the fifth semester of the course, with pre-placement planning starting at the end of students' second year level of study. Compulsory pre-placement preparation and a mandatory two-day workshop needs to be completed prior to the commencement of Study Period 1. Placement commences usually in week 2 of Study Period 1. Students completing the placement full-time should be finished before the commencement of Study Period 2.

#### First placement period – WS5304 Field Education 1 MSW (PQ)

In 2020, the Master of Social Work (PQ) degree study plan changed. Student feedback from prior years highlighted that due to the subject workload, it was important to increase the foundation subject WS5517 to 6 credit points and move the theories subject into SP2 so that it runs parallel with the Field Education subject WS5304. Students indicated that they struggled to complete the theories subject while still gaining an understanding of the foundation knowledge for social work practice. Thus, from 2020 the first field education subject code will be WS5304, and it is a 6-credit point subject.

The first placement for MSW(PQ) students enrolled into the course prior to 2020 requires the completion of 500 hours, which takes approximately 14 weeks to complete when being on placement 5 days/week. The AASW recommends a minimum working day of seven hours.

The first placement for MSW(PQ) students enrolled in 2020 (subject code WS5304) requires students to undertake placement on 4 days/week, leaving one day per week for completion of the concurrently offered theory subject WS5514 and WS5005 Social Policy.

A mandatory two-day pre-placement workshop is held prior to the start of the study period, usually during the week prior to O-week (orientation week), which is the week before a study period commences. It offers students the opportunity to familiarise themselves with the campus and meet other students through social activities. The placement itself commences in week 1 of study period 2. Students undertaking the placement on a full-time basis (4 days/week) should be completed in November.

### Students commencing first placements

Many students come to placement with an untested potential for practice. They will be at different levels of intellectual and emotional maturity; some may be in their late teens and preparing for their first encounter with clients in day-to-day practice. Ideally, students need the opportunity to:

- develop their communications skills
- to be appropriately oriented to the agency
- to have their learning opportunities phased in over time.

### The importance of orientation and phased learning

Students entering their first placement may be nervous, uncertain and lacking in self-confidence during the orientation period (i.e., first two or three weeks) and field educators need to keep this in mind. The student needs reassurance from the field educator that personal involvement is necessary for learning how to work with individuals, groups and communities. It is helpful for the student to be phased into working with people through activities such as reading case records and relevant agency data, observing social workers in action, and sitting in on interviews.

During the orientation phase, the student will be learning about the agency including staff roles and responsibilities, agency methods and practice frameworks, record keeping, networks of internal and external communications, confidentiality requirements, client groups, and community resources. Proceeding from relatively simple to more complex tasks, the student will begin to learn practice skills - becoming aware of the impact of self in interactions, formulating plans of action, learning to utilise resources, and participating in teamwork. The closer supervision of the initial period should reduce as the student orients to agency methods and practice frameworks, becomes familiar with work systems, and responds to the opportunities to develop independence, responsibility, and resourcefulness in practice.

### Developing communication skills

The Social Work Program views communication skills as central to effective social work practice. During the first placement, it is desirable for students to be able to develop their skills in all of the major modes of communication, i.e. oral and written communication with field educator, clients, peers, people in authority, other service groups and the community. Skills fundamental to social work, such as the ability to be articulate and expressive in speech and in writing, will be naturally cultivated in Field Education.

Oral skills are developed through:

- frank and honest discussions with the field educator
- case and project presentations
- committee work

- organisational exercises
- meetings and public speaking.

Written communications of significance in student learning include:

- process recordings
- logs
- case studies
- social histories
- correspondence
- memoranda
- summaries
- submissions
- journals
- placement presentation.

### Learning outcomes of first placement

During the first placement, the learning outcomes listed below provide a framework to guide field educators and students' expectations for the learning experience and development of the learning plan.

#### BSW students: WS3503 Field Education 1 learning outcomes

Students who successfully complete this subject will be able to:

- demonstrate and apply knowledge of values, ethics and professionalism in daily social work practice
- describe and engage in culturally responsive and inclusive practice
- explain social work theories, concepts, methods and techniques, and apply to practice
- apply appropriate communication and interpersonal skills, informed by reflections on use of self
- implement information recording and sharing strategies
- actively participate in professional development and supervision.

#### MSW (PQ) students: WS5304 Field Education 1 learning outcomes

Students who successfully complete this subject will be able to:

- demonstrate and apply knowledge of values, ethics and professionalism in daily social work practice
- describe and engage in culturally responsive and inclusive practice
- explain social work theories, concepts, methods and techniques, and apply to practice
- apply appropriate communication and interpersonal skills, informed by reflections on use of self
- implement information recording and sharing strategies
- actively participate in professional development and supervision.

These learning outcomes are based on the AASW Practice Standards (AASW, 2013) which can be accessed here: <https://www.aasw.asn.au/practitioner-resources/practice-standards>. Please note that these are currently under review. Students need to access these to understand and become familiarised with the practice expectations of social workers in Australia.

### Placement activities

Placement learning objectives can be achieved via placement activities that are:

### **Procedural**

- ensure observation of agency procedures and practices while carrying out work tasks
- establish methodical work habits including observation of hours, keeping appointments, responding to emails and phone messages in a timely fashion
- begin to develop the ability to set priorities and deal with contingencies
- ensure that records, files, case notes and other documentation are well organised, kept up to date and appropriately stored or filed.

### **Reflecting on policy/practice**

- identify and articulate the agency's main functions and relate those to the goals of the agency
- articulate understanding of the agency's role in the local welfare and community context
- consider the major political, social and economic factors, past and present, that impact the policy and practice of the agency
- demonstrate an understanding of the ways in which policy is translated into practice, and/or is influenced by practice
- start recognising how social work roles and functions relate to the agency's services and objectives.

### **Interactive**

- develop the ability to understand 'use of self' in practice
- seek awareness of self in interactions with clients and others
- develop sensitivity to the situations of clients and others
- develop confidence and competence in working with individuals and groups, including families and colleagues
- gain an appreciation of the use of teamwork, including interdisciplinary teams in planning and problem solving
- develop the ability to reflect on, evaluate and change the interaction between self and others.

### **Practicing communication skills**

- develop the capacity to be articulate and expressive in both oral and written communication
- develop report writing skills as required by the agency
- make oral presentations as required/opportunities arise within the agency.

### **Focused on intervention**

- gain experience in assessment of psycho/social, community, organisational needs
- formulate and implement initial intervention processes
- develop knowledge and skills in the identification and utilisation of community resources.

### **Reflective of professional application**

- begin to apply course theory to practical situations and seek opportunities to extend this knowledge base
- demonstrate accountability to clients and be responsible to the agency for decisions and actions taken
- ensure that practice reflects the AASW Code of Ethics (2020)
- take responsibility for ensuring that the supervisory relationship is engaged in a professional manner.

### **Skills and expectations of 'use of self' in first Placements**

Students should be able to communicate clearly with the agency staff, service users and the general public. They should demonstrate respect for the integrity and dignity of the individual in all relationships even if conflict emerges. Students must show an ability to work cooperatively with others and be able to identify areas of conflict or potential conflict and use the conflict constructively to initiate change. Demonstrating an awareness of personal beliefs, values, biases and actions which may have an effect on their relationships with others, listening, understanding and responding clearly and appropriately to others is also essential. Understanding how one's personal style impacts on one's relationships are another feature of the aspect described as "use of self" and this will form a fundamental part of the placement assessments.

### References

- Australian Association of Social Workers. (2013). *AASW Practice Standards for Social Workers: Achieving outcomes*. <https://www.aasw.asn.au/practitioner-resources/practice-standards>
- Australian Association of Social Workers. (2020). *Australian social work education and accreditation standards*. AASW. <https://www.aasw.asn.au/careers-study/education-standards-accreditation>



## CHAPTER NINE: Second placement (WS4504/ WS5605)

### “Transition to practice” focus

The second placement marks the transition from student to a professional social worker and therefore the field, and JCU’s Social Work and Human Services have a higher expectation of students’ performances. Field staff must be satisfied that at the end of this placement, students are equipped for autonomous, beginning practice. The AASW (2021, p. 5) expects “... that graduate social workers are ready for professional practice” and have attained the professional specific graduate attributes based on the practice standards (2013).

The Social Work Program recognises the valuable learning experiences provided for students in both field placements. This recognition is reflected in the allocation of substantial credit points for each of the field education subjects.

### Second field placement prerequisite subjects

Students **must not** undertake more than one subject concurrently with their field placement.

Prior to undertaking the second placement, undergraduate students must have satisfactorily completed the academic requirements up until the end of semester seven of the BSW degree.

Professional qualifying masters students must have satisfactorily completed the academic requirements up until the end of semester four of the MSW (PQ) degree prior to undertaking the second placement.

### Second placement period

The second placement is a full-time placement of 500 hours, usually completed over 14 weeks full time. Students who undertook a first placement that was shorter than 500 hours need to complete the remaining hours in the second placement to ensure that their total placement hours over both placements reach 1000 hours.

Undergraduate students usually undertake this subject in the eighth semester of the course, with pre-placement planning starting during the seventh semester of study. The Australian Social Work Education & Accreditation Standards (AASW, 2021) require a total of 1000 hours to be completed over the course of two or more placements.

Postgraduate students usually undertake this subject in the fourth semester of their course with pre-placement planning starting during the third semester of their study.

### Honours students

Students who are undertaking honours will need to change their course enrolment. For Field Education, this means that they will be required to complete the second placement subject WS5605 to reflect the learning expectations, rather than WS4504. As outlined below, the learning outcomes, and therefore also the learning plan, are different for the two subjects.

Honours students have two options for completing their theses and placements. They can either:

1. negotiate to complete their Honours work prior to commencing placement. If they choose this option they will likely begin and finish placement later than their cohort, OR

2. complete their Honours while on placement. “Fourth year undergraduate Social Work students are entitled to spend one week (40 hours) of their final field placement on their Honours thesis” (JCU Honours Handbook: <http://www.faess.jcu.edu.au/downloads/2005HonoursHbook.doc>). Students have flexibility around how to utilise the 40 hour for their thesis. Some may choose to do this on a daily basis as suits. For example, there may be scattered days of intensive Honours supervision and writing. Or students may prefer to negotiate with their field educator and FELO, an arrangement where they can take the five days, during placement, as a block close to the period when they need to submit their theses.

### Students commencing second placement

It is expected that the first placement will have provided students direct experience in interpersonal, group or community work. Within a specific agency, the student will have become aware of agency goals and processes, the nature of social work intervention and the professional role of the social worker. From practical experience gained during the first placement, students should be able to:

- understand the social work role in an agency,
- accept more complex assignments,
- assess client / organisational / community needs/ deficits,
- select and apply appropriate intervention strategies,
- evaluate and record processes and outcomes,
- be responsible to the agency and the social work profession.

In effect, students should be progressively able to assume professional responsibilities.

### Expectations of achievement

#### **First Placement**

Students should be able to link their observations, experiences and reflections to their studies. Students are able to identify practice strategies that fit with their personal practice.

#### **Second Placement**

Students should demonstrate how their studies inform their practice  
Students are able to explain their practice  
Students are at a level of ‘beginning professional.



### Objectives of the second BSW placement (WS4504)

The second placement is intended to prepare students for entry into professional social work. Building upon the objectives of the first placement, the second placement demands the development of practice knowledge, practice skills, and professional growth.

During the second placement the learning outcomes listed below provide a framework to guide field educators' and students' expectations for the learning experience and development of the learning plan:

1. demonstrate knowledge of and critically reflect on values, ethics and professionalism in daily social work practice
2. demonstrate and critically reflect on culturally responsive and inclusive practice
3. analyse and synthesise social work theories, concepts, methods and techniques, and apply to practice
4. apply effective communication and interpersonal skills, in a range of settings and contexts, informed by critical reflections on use of self
5. implement advanced information recording and sharing strategies
6. actively participate in professional development and supervision through critical reflection and research.

These learning outcomes are based on the AASW Practice Standards (AASW, 2013), which can be accessed here: <https://www.aasw.asn.au/practitioner-resources/practice-standards>. Please note that these are currently under review. Students need to access them as they are outlining the practice expectations of social workers in Australia. The learning outcomes are aimed at meeting the AQF level 7 criteria of a Bachelor's degree (Australian Qualifications Framework Council, 2011).

### Learning objectives of the second MSW (PQ) placement (WS5605)

1. synthesise knowledge of and critically reflect on values, ethics and professionalism in daily social work practice
2. demonstrate and critically reflect on culturally responsive and inclusive practice
3. evaluate social work theories, concepts, methods and techniques, and apply to research and practice
4. apply advanced communication and interpersonal skills, in a range of settings and contexts, informed by critical reflections on the use of self
5. implement advanced information recording and sharing strategies
6. actively participate in professional development and supervision through critical reflection and research, in order to advance professional practice.

These learning outcomes are based on the AASW Practice Standards (AASW, 2013), which are currently under review, but can be accessed here: <https://www.aasw.asn.au/practitioner-resources/practice-standards>. Students need to access them as they are outlining the practice expectations of social workers in Australia. The learning outcomes are aimed at meeting the AQF level 9 criteria of a Master's degree (Australian Qualifications Framework Council, 2011).

### Placement activities

These objectives can be achieved via placement activities related to:

#### Practice knowledge

- ability to apply relevant theory to practice settings
- ability to identify problem areas
- working knowledge of when, how and to what degree to intervene in client systems
- awareness of community resources and helping networks

- understanding of the roles and functions of social work in social, economic, political and legal contexts
- understanding of broader societal factors and their effect on client systems
- appreciation of policy formulation in the agency, and the ways in which policy is translated into practice and is determined by practice.

### Practice skills

- ability to conduct single, joint or multiple interview
- negotiating appropriately with clients, agency and community
- discernment of client/community strengths, using these optimally to effect client adjustment, self-direction and self-sufficiency
- competence in participation in group discussions, in initiating group approaches to problem-solving and in utilising teamwork methods
- proficiency in verbal and written communication skills
- ability to undertake social research on specific agency and community issues
- flexibility and adaptability in practice based on experience with different client systems
- ability to consider agency function, knowledge and value base, and intervention methods in defining the task
- knowledge of, and ability to, utilise community resources
- ability to evaluate the outcomes of the intervention process
- ability to evaluate the functions and objectives of the agency
- a developing ability to use more complex social work processes.

### Skills and expectations of use of self in the second placement

Upon completion of **WS4504/ WS5605**, students are beginning social workers. They are expected to have an advanced ability to understand and apply the concept of 'use of self' to their practice. Students are expected to have higher-level insight and self-awareness, modelling cooperative and respectful work practices, the ability to identify areas of potential conflict and deal with them appropriately and or use them to initiate constructive change, an understanding of one's 'personal style' and how it impacts on one's relationships and an ability to articulate a personal practice framework.

### Professional growth

- ability to examine critically ethical issues as they relate to practice
- development of self-planning and organisational skills
- capacity for reflection and self-evaluation
- ability to take initiative, to be accountable and to work independently
- capacity to use supervision constructively
- recognition of knowledge and skills limitations and willingness to engage in continued learning
- development of a sense of professional identity and commitment.

### Completion of placement and degree requirements.

Students may request a letter from the enrolment team stating that they have completed the requirements for the degree once the results of their final subjects have been released and they have met the requirements of the degree. This can be used as documentation for potential employers.

If students require this letter, they **must ensure that all written work for WS4504/ WS5605** is submitted to the FELO by the last day of placement. Work for all subjects must be marked and results ratified before this letter can be issued.

### Pauline Lawrence Social Work Practice Prize

Pauline Lawrence was a social worker in Far North Queensland who is committed to social work education and in particular social work field education. Commencing from 2019, Pauline is sponsoring the Pauline Lawrence Social Work Practice Prize for a social work student who, in their final placement, made a significant contribution to improved service delivery and/or outcomes for clients.

This is an annual student prize of \$500.

The Pauline Lawrence Social Work Practice Prize is awarded to a James Cook University Social Work student graduating in Far North Queensland. Students must have completed WS4504 or WS5605 Field Education 2. The prize rewards the student's ability to contribute to improved service delivery and/or outcomes for clients.

In October of each year, the James Cook University Social Work Field Education Unit will call for student nominations for the award. The applications will be assessed by two (2) Far North Qld field educators as determined by the JCU Field Educators Unit. The decision of the panel will be final.

### Selection criteria and application – 300 words

The prize is awarded to a student on the basis of their demonstrated ability to contribute to improved service delivery and/or outcomes for clients by applying theory to practice within the placement setting. Students are asked to prepare their application in consultation with their university FELO, field educator and task supervisor (if applicable). The application should be completed on the official form and address the following criteria:

- What the applicant did to contribute to improved service delivery and/or client outcomes whilst on placement.
- How this work relates to professional social work practice, social justice and/or human rights.
- Written evidence of stakeholder support for the applicant's work.
- Application information will be distributed via the LearnJCU subject sites. Please contact the Field Education unit for more information.

### References

Australian Association of Social Workers. (2013). *AASW Practice Standards for Social Workers: Achieving outcomes*. <https://www.aasw.asn.au/practitioner-resources/practice-standards>

Australian Association of Social Workers. (2020). *Australian social work education and accreditation standards*. (pp. 1-37). AASW.

<https://www.aasw.asn.au/careers-study/education-standards-accreditation>

Australian Qualifications Framework Council. (2021). *Australian Qualifications Framework First Edition July 2011*. [www.aqf.edu.au](http://www.aqf.edu.au)

## CHAPTER TEN: Assessment requirements

### OVERALL ASSESSMENT REQUIREMENTS

The process of evaluation commences with pre-placement requirements being completed by the student, the arrival of the student on placement, and it continues throughout the placement period. Alongside assessing competence in practice theory skills, the student's performance is evaluated in terms of their:

- use of self
- sensitivity to others
- ability and initiative
- commitment to practice
- adherence to, and respect for, agency policy
- propensity for field learning and responsible action-taking
- demonstrated ability to adhere to the AASW (2020; 2013) Code of Ethics and Practice Standards.

Placement subjects are academic subjects and students are required to complete a number of assessment requirements. While this chapter provides an overview of the assessment in the stated subjects, please be aware that the assessment pieces can change from time to time. For the most up-to-date information, please refer to the current subject outline to get an overview of the actual assessment pieces for that specific study period.

#### **Assessment requirements for first placement - BSW (WS3503)**

Prior to the placement each student is required to attend the compulsory on-campus workshop.

During this 500-hour placement each student is required to complete:

- (a) A learning plan with student self-assessment at mid-placement and end of placement
- (b) Weekly time logs
- (c) 3 integration sessions
- (d) 3 journals
- (e) Placement presentation

#### **Assessment requirements for first placement MSW(PQ) (WS5304)**

Prior to the placement each student is required to attend the compulsory two-day field education workshop:  
Work through the pre-placement modules and activities

During this 500-hour placement each student is required to complete:

- (a) A learning plan with student self-assessment at mid-placement and end of placement
- (b) Time logs
- (c) 3 integration sessions
- (d) 3 journals
- (e) Placement presentation

**Assessment requirements for second placement BSW (PQ) (WS4504)**

Prior to the placement each student is required to complete pre-placement modules.

During this 500-hour placement each student is required to complete:

- (a) Learning plan with student self-assessment at mid-placement and end of placement
- (b) Time logs
- (c) 3 integration sessions
- (d) 3 journals
- (e) Placement presentation and theory analysis

**Assessment requirements for second placement MSW (PQ) (WS5605)**

Prior to the placement each student is required to complete pre-placement modules.

During this 500-hour placement each student is required to complete:

- (a) Learning plan with student self-assessment at mid-placement and end of placement
- (b) Time logs
- (c) 3 integration sessions
- (d) 3 project reflections
- (e) Placement presentation and project report

Students' successful completion of field placements will be determined on the basis of:

- development of a relevant learning plan including self-assessment at mid- and end-of-placement;
- the field educator's mid- and end-of-placement assessment;
- assessment material (including journals and placement presentation, time logs);
- in-placement discussions between the field educator, student and FELO; and
- and participation in integration activities (The Field Education Unit will monitor participation and contact the FELO if there are concerns).

To assess the student's performance on placement, the Field Education team is asked to evaluate the student's performance based on the AWEAS (AASW, 2012, p. 11):

Rating	Level	Description
Not capable	0	Performance not at basic level expected. Poor understanding of requirements. Practice unsafe or inappropriate. Knowledge or skills undeveloped. Little application to learning.
Some capability	1	Performance not yet capable. Some requirements understood. Further work needed to demonstrate beginning capability.
Beginning capability	2	Performance at beginning level expected. Requirements understood. Practice capable under close guidance and supervision. Limited adaptability.
Capable	3	Performance at level expected of newly qualifying practitioner. Requirements integrated into practice. Can perform independently. Demonstrates adaptability and critical appreciation of own/others' practice.
Highly capable	4	Performance beyond level expected of newly qualifying practitioner. High levels of independence. Engages strongly in critical reflexivity. Exhibits ethical fluency. Generates new understandings or practices.
Unable to be assessed	U/A	The work has either not been undertaken or the supervisor has not had an opportunity to assess capability in this area.

To pass the first placement, students must at least reach a level of 'beginning capability' (2) for all learning outcome areas appropriate to the setting by the end of the placement.

To pass the final field education placement, students must at least reach a level of 'capable' (3) across all learning outcome areas, relevant to placement setting, by the end of the placement.

The FELO will recommend a grade of satisfactory or unsatisfactory (informed by the field educator's recommendation and the student's assessment tasks) to the subject coordinator, who then submits a recommended grade to the examiners meeting and the Head of Academic Group.

It is important to approach this as a collaborative, transparent process to reach the final decision. Should there be differences in assessment, it would be important for the FELO to discuss this and consider the views of the student and the field educator. During liaison visits it is important to highlight the need for early notice should any difficulties or performance issues arise.

### The learning plan

The Social Work Field Education Program requires a written agreement/contract, known as the learning plan, to be drawn up by the field educator and the student during the first two weeks of placement.

#### Aims of the agreement (known as the learning plan):

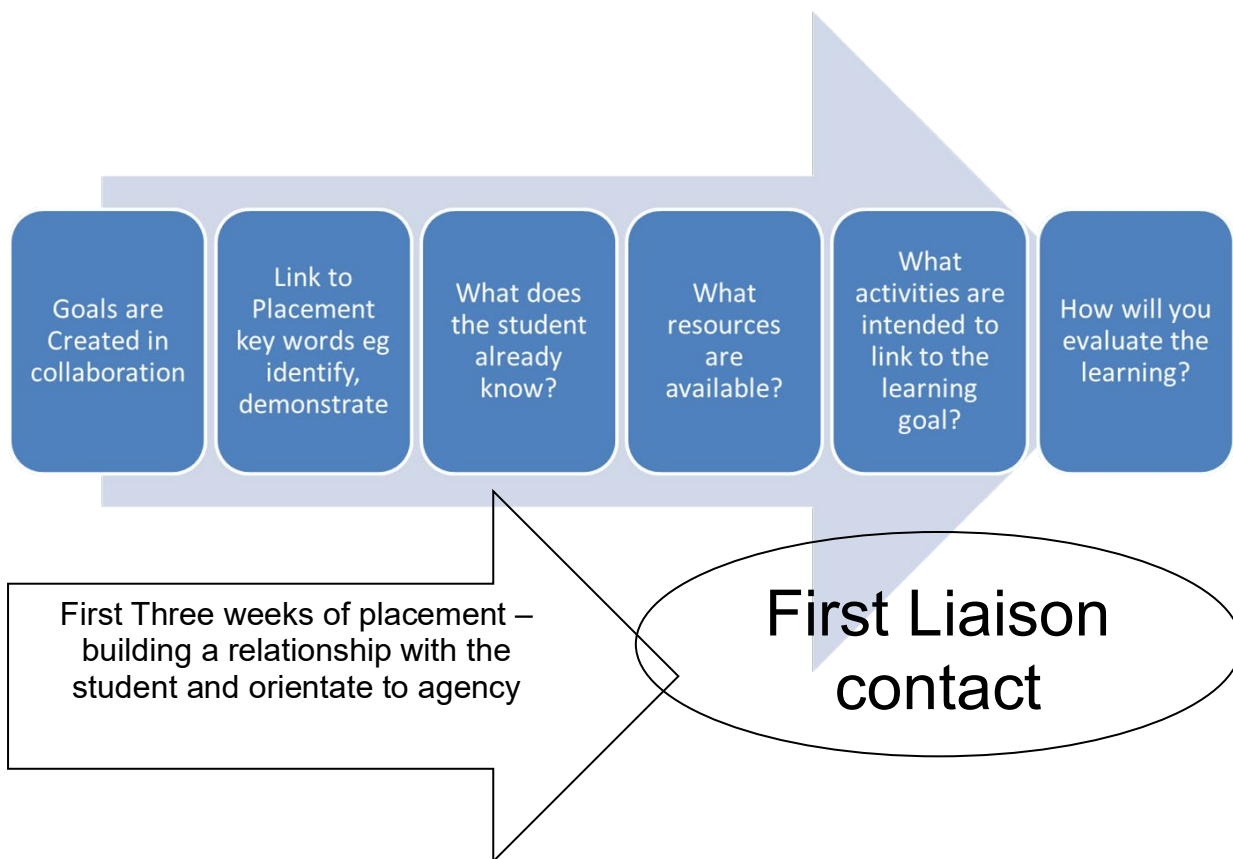
- To ensure that students take primary responsibility for identifying their learning objectives; and that they draw up their plans in collaboration with the field educator so that the learning opportunities are maximised and the requirements of the agency, the educator and the teaching staff are met.
- To document clear aims and goals for the placement experience.
- To ensure that students' learning objectives are clearly defined and linked to the AASW practice standards and the concrete methods of attaining and evaluating these learning objectives are documented.
- To ensure all parties understand their rights and responsibilities in relation to the placement.
- To define the supervisory arrangements.

### The learning plan process

The learning plan is written within the first two weeks of commencing field placement. Students should be able to provide their field educator, task supervisor (if relevant) and FELO (at the first liaison visit) with a first draft that incorporates key ideas about their learning objectives. These ideas should be linked to the student's field placement tasks. It is to be anticipated that the field educator, task supervisor (if relevant) and the FELO will contribute additional or alternative suggestions, requirements and or learning tasks that may enrich the learning plan. The learning plan and the mid- and end-of-placement assessment are integrated into one form, facilitating the integration of learning and assessment and providing a comprehensive summary of those.

Students are asked to remember that the individual learning goals developed must be devised in conjunction with the objectives of the (first or second) placement subject as well as the functions of the agency and the skills and competence of the field educator. They must also be achievable in the context of what the agency can offer. In other words, the learning plan should be devised to optimise the "fit" between the student's desired learning outcomes and the agency possibilities for learning.





While the learning plan should be finalised within the first three weeks of commencing, new goals, areas of interest and opportunities may emerge at subsequent points of the field placement. Learning plans may then be modified to incorporate the new directions.

**Remember:** the plan is designed as a guide to action and not as an inflexible document. It may be reviewed, and if necessary, modified throughout the placement, but only after discussion and agreement by the student, field educator (and if relevant, the task supervisor) and the FELO.

### A guide to developing 'learning objectives'

The following framework that identifies conceptual objectives, skills-based objectives, and personal objectives may provide useful guidance.

#### Conceptual objectives

These are concerned with the acquisition of knowledge, including:

- relevant theories of society and behaviour
- relevant theories, frameworks and models of social welfare and community work practice
- relevant legislation and social policies that underpin agency's practice
- specific agency policies and procedures, and
- knowledge of available community resources.

#### Skill-based objectives

These may be concerned with learning skills such as:

- communication
- counselling
- group work, including facilitation or effective participation in small groups committees and meetings

- community development
- community education
- conflict management
- assessment
- research and coordination
- training.

### Personal objectives

These may be concerned with:

- values - for example: challenging 'long held' family of origin beliefs
- attitudes and 'use of self' - for example: behaviours, attitudes and value stances or conflicts which are barriers to learning, or which, when developed, would enhance learning
- transition from student to practitioner
- developing as a reflective practitioner.

### Writing up the learning plan

#### The student:

During the period of orientation, students need to refine their learning needs for that particular agency. The pre-placement preparation tasks and the overarching objectives of the field placement (referred to at the beginning of this chapter) should assist in this process. For students who are undertaking their second placement, it is advisable to revisit the work undertaken during their first placement, with a view of extending, consolidating or elaborating skills/knowledge/insight developed earlier.

The essential features of the learning plan include the following components:

#### Learning goals that consider:

- **WHAT** we want to learn: the list of learning objectives to be accomplished during the field placement
- **WHAT** is the subject learning outcome that is relevant to the learning objective identified by the student and **WHICH** AASW practice standards will be covered
- **HOW** we will learn it: the corresponding ways in which these learning objectives will be reached (the methodology). These are the actual tasks that will be carried out to arrive at the objective
- **HOW** we and others will know that we have achieved it: how progress towards the objectives will be assessed
- **WHEN** we will complete it by: the time frame in which the student will work on a particular objective.

#### The learning agreement covers:

- the expectations, rights and responsibilities of all parties (including student, task supervisor (if relevant), field educator/s and FELO)
- supervision arrangement, including frequency and length of supervisory sessions
- the signatures of the student, the field educator(s), task supervisor (if relevant) and the FELO.

### Field educator and learning plan

While most field educators provide general support to students while they are devising learning plan, there is one section of the contract that requires specific input by field educators and task supervisor (if relevant). This input should cover the following areas:

- the designation of the student's workplace, work period, time schedule
- the accessibility of the supervisor for formal and informal supervisory sessions
- the student's preparation for supervision sessions
- the field educator's and task supervisor's (if relevant) expectations of the student's management of written work, including record keeping and the like
- agency-specific procedures to which the student is expected to conform
- explicit expectations agreed to by the field educator, task supervisor (if relevant) and student need to be set down with mutually signed copies of the contract held by the supervisors, the student and the FELO.

**NOTE:** The expectation is that in second placement, students will identify learning objectives that are more complex and sophisticated than those they devised for their first placement.

### Journals

The reflective journals contain reflections on practice. They are personal, reflective and analytical exchanges between the student and the FELO. The purpose of the journal is to ensure students take the time to reflect seriously on the work they are undertaking, contemplating how such experiences fit with their previous life history, professional development as a social worker and personal understanding of the world. It is one way of organising and examining one's professional experience to learn from that experience.

Each journal should address a specific situation experienced on placement. The entry should be critically analytical, identifying how a situation or critical incident was understood, dealt with and re-evaluated. The focus should not only be on the actual experience or event but also include the student's reactions to those events. For example, what did the student feel, think and do during the event? Students should also be making links between their practice experience and what is informing their practice (i.e., their knowledge base); in other words, linking to their academic knowledge.

By reflecting on their experiences in this way, students should be able to identify areas of learning. Some students have found it useful to include in their reflection journals media articles, cartoons, agendas or summaries of specific incidents which highlight a particular understanding or experience.

**LearnJCU will provide you with templates for your journals.**

### Content of journals

Students are encouraged to honestly record their personal responses to placement experiences and to **critically analyse** these experiences and responses.

Students should focus on:

- reflection on feelings, thoughts and actions
- organisational issues
- professional and personal issues/dilemmas regarding values and ethics
- reflection on supervision sessions, both process and content
- integration of practice and theory
- identified learning experiences.

**Remember:** Reflective journals are personal, confidential documents intended to be shared only with your FELO. The journal can be shared with the field educator to stimulate discussion in supervision if you so choose but that this is not a requirement. If the field educator asks to see your journals you have the right to refuse.

**IMPORTANT:** For the purpose of confidentiality, all students should use their JCU student email address to submit journals to the FELO.

The following prompts may stimulate your thinking about what to include in your reflective journal:

- 1. Identification of personal and organisational values:**  
What values lie behind the way I performed?  
Whose values are these? What do they imply?  
Is there a value conflict? If so, how do I deal with this?
- 2. Information on how you, as a 'worker', operated in this agency reflecting on how you coped, used skills, and applied theoretical knowledge:**  
Which theoretical ideas could apply to this situation?  
What were the key requirements for the intervention?  
What do I need to know before I will manage such a situation better?
- 3. The dynamics of working relationships:**  
What client groups and organisations have I interacted with today? (examples: staff meetings, bureaucracies, home visits, case work, group work, supervision).  
You could explore, for example, the issues that unite or divide the staff; the ways in which conflict is dealt with; the ways in which power and competing interests can be seen in the operation of the agency.
- 4. Skills and strategies:**  
What skills have I practised?  
How well did I do this?  
How else might I have practised?  
What further developments in my knowledge and skills are necessary?
- 5. Self-evaluation:**  
What are my strengths and weaknesses?  
How am I dealing with feedback about myself from others?  
What do I like and dislike about myself as a practitioner?  
How does my use of self-impact on what I am trying to achieve?
- 6. Issues to be raised with supervisor and/or FELO.**

The LearnJCU subject site offers three different journal templates for reflection. Students should choose a template that best supports them through the process of critical reflection. This process should be supported and informed by the FELO's feedback.

## Project reflections

As MSW (PQ) students, students are expected to apply advanced levels of skills, knowledge and understandings. In their final year placement (WS5605), Masters (PQ) students are asked to include a small project in their placement. This is work that needs to be relevant to the placement setting and organisation and therefore discussed with their placement supervisor.

This could be part of a larger research agenda of the agency students are placed in or a small stand-alone project. Possibilities could include, but are not limited to:

- a small literature review and summary of current research in the field of practice of your placement
- a systematic literature review to answer a question pertinent to the field of practice
- a feedback survey or other form of evaluation
- a research or project proposal
- an ethics application
- data collection, analysis or dissemination
- writing a small report, blog or article
- a policy analysis
- a review of procedures and guidelines
- an opinion survey
- a content analysis
- a resource development
- a summary of the findings of an article in an easy-to-read poster for the agency
- an analysis of how theory is applied in your field of practice
- a process review of an intervention, interview or meeting with a critical analysis.

The actual project/research activities that suit the student's learning, agency and field of practice needs to be negotiated at the beginning of the placement with their agency placement supervisor. It will be important to develop a project idea that is useful to the agency and the people who use the service. A core imperative for social work research is that it is do-able, has a valid purpose, makes a positive difference and increases social justice. Students are required to report on their project/research progress at the end of their placement.

The project reflections provide students with a legitimate reason to stop and take a breath and reflect on the integration of research/ project work in professional practice, promoting and establishing the habits of being a reflective practitioner.

Templates and training resources are available on LearnJCU.

## Submitting journals or project reflections

Students are required to submit their reflective journals and project reflection to their FELO at regular intervals throughout the placement, to enable the FELO to review the journal reflection and to provide feedback on the student's engagement with the process of critical analysis and reflection. It is the student's responsibility to ensure that their reflective journals/project reflections are sent to the FELO. It is the FELO's responsibility to ensure that they review and return the journals to students promptly. If this does not occur, students are asked to discuss the issue with their FELO, and if not satisfactorily resolved, to contact the Field Education Coordinator.

### Time log

While on placement, students are expected to be accountable for their time and to this end, they are required to keep a written record of the activities they have participated in, and the tasks they have undertaken. Students must record their daily activities in the time sheet book provided through LearnJCU. Weekly time sheets must be signed off by the student's field educator/task supervisor. They should be regularly provided to the FELO, as negotiated at the first liaison meeting, and will be recorded on students' field placement files.

### Absences from placement

Extraordinary and unavoidable circumstances, such as illness, personal crises and emergencies, may arise that will require changes to ordinary schedules. Should this occur for students, they will need to juggle the difficulty with the need to behave professionally. For instance, students are expected to notify their field educators and task supervisor (if relevant), arrange to have appointments cancelled or rescheduled, extend deadlines and appropriately transfer or defer any other duties and responsibilities through their field educator and task supervisor (if relevant).

Where students lose days through illness or other unavoidable circumstances, negotiations will have to be made with both the field educator and the FELO to make up the lost time, to meet the requirements of the Australian Association of Social Workers (AASW, 2020). If students are likely to be absent for more than three days, the FELO must be notified.

Absence from placement for more than a fortnight will require consideration of the viability of the placement continuing. The field educator, task supervisor (if relevant), the student, the FELO and possibly the Field Education Coordinator or other Field Education staff will need to be involved in this discussion.

### Time for research (library work)

Time for research (library work), reading and reflection are important to each placement, because **WS3503/WS5304** and **WS4504/WS5605** are academic subjects. A reasonable amount of time would be up to 4 hours per week for this activity. This time must be taken week by week (and recorded appropriately in the time log), and cannot be used to shorten the length of the placement at the end. Where students are able to utilise research time, they should integrate discussion about their library time/research time in supervision.

This time is separate from the time allowed for journal and placement assignment activities. It would be useful if students recorded some of their learning from the library work in their reflective journal linking theory to practice. If the field educators, task supervisor (if relevant) and/or FELO become aware that students are spending more time than recommended, the student's time management skills (or lack thereof) might need to be reconsidered, and the student is supported to take necessary steps to address the situation.

Students engaged in a research-focused placement will obviously be involved in library searches, research activities and writing for the majority of their placement, and this would necessitate a different structure of time/activities on placement.

**Remember:** you need to record appropriately all absences and library time in your time log.

## Mid and final placement assessments

Field educators and students participating in placement are required to undertake formal assessment of the student's placement performance. They must complete them at two intervals during placement, one halfway through placement, and one close to the end of the placement period.

Students need to initiate preparation for the mid and final placement assessment and organise the evaluation meetings between supervisor(S), FELO and themselves. Ideally, the evaluations are an interactive process between the field educator/task supervisor and student, developing naturally from the reflection and feedback which has occurred during supervision throughout the placement.

Students will complete the self-assessment section in their learning plan as a basis for discussion of the assessment and to encourage the professional skill of critical reflection.

Following the student's self-assessment, the field educator will record their assessment of the student's performance in the field educator assessment report.

## Mid placement assessment

The mid placement assessment provides the means for the field educator, the student and the FELO to know how the placement is progressing, and it encourages assessment as a continuous process of reflection and feedback throughout the placement. It also provides a formal indication of students' progress to that point and allows for students' learning goals to be reviewed and, if necessary, revised for the remainder of the placement. The student needs to complete their reflection in the learning plan (see above) prior to the meeting and forward the learning plan with the completed reflection and the mid and end of placement assessment form to the field educator and task supervisor, if one is allocated to the placement. The learning plan and the completed assessment form will then be discussed at the mid placement meeting.

### ***Mid Placement and Final Evaluation process:***

- ✓ A grading of **SATISFACTORY** means that progress *so far* is satisfactory and the learning goals are being achieved. (Obviously, further work will be expected during the remainder of the placement).
- ✓ A grading of **DEVELOPING** serves to remind both field educator and student to give attention to these aspects over the remaining weeks. Contact with the University liaison person may be of value.
- ✓ A grading of **UNSATISFACTORY** indicates need to contact with the University liaison person *immediately* to review the current Learning Plan and the student's learning needs.

*NB The Field Educator/Task Supervisor is able to select the appropriate grading on the form by a drop down box selection by clicking on 'choose an item'.*

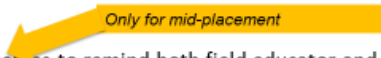
### **The James Cook University Field Education Team expects:**

1. Students initiate preparation of the Mid Placement and Final Evaluation. Ideally it is an interactive process between Field Educator/Task supervisor and student developing naturally from the reflection and feedback which has occurred during supervision throughout the placement
2. Students to self-assess on PebblePad template initially to provide a basis for discussion and encourage the professional skill of being a reflective practitioner
3. The Field Educator/Task Supervisor should provide a written assessment of students learning performance for both Mid placement and Final Evaluation.
4. Comments should relate to the student's performance against:
  - a. the specific learning goals for this placement,
  - b. the key aspects and concepts of the AASW Practice Standard
5. The Mid Placement and Final Evaluation report should be completed prior to meeting with the Liaison
6. Students attach the completed report to their Learning Plan in PebblePad and submit to the appropriate section of ATLAS (mid-placement or final review) 2 days prior to the meeting for review

Field educators and task supervisor(s) (if relevant) are asked to familiarise themselves with the contents of the pro-forma assessment documents at the commencement of placement. At mid placement the assessment pro-forma needs to be completed. The assessment should consider the prescribed learning


objectives, the placement-specific learning goals and methods, the AASW Practice Standards (2013), and how the student has performed in relation to these.

## Evaluation Framework

- ✓ A grading of **SATISFACTORY** means that progress *so far* is satisfactory and the learning goals are being achieved. (Obviously, further work will be expected during the remainder of the placement or future professional career).   
  Only for mid-placement
- ✓ A grading of **DEVELOPING** serves to remind both field educator and student to give attention to these aspects over the remaining weeks. Contact with the University liaison person may be of value. *only for mid-placement review*
- ✓ A grading of **UNSATISFACTORY** indicates the student will not meet Satisfactory by the end of placement. The Field Educator and student need to contact the University liaison person *immediately* to review the current Learning Plan and the student's learning needs.

### Final assessment

The purpose of the final assessment is to assess the student's level of skill and professional development through placement performance and to identify areas of professional development for the future. The final assessment is ideally an interactive process between field educators and task supervisor (if relevant) and students, developing naturally from the reflection and feedback, which has occurred during supervision throughout the placement. The student needs to complete their reflection in the learning plan (see above) prior to the meeting and forward the learning plan with the completed reflection and the mid and end of placement assessment form to the field educator and task supervisor (if relevant). The learning plan and the completed assessment form will then be discussed at the end-of-placement meeting.



Final Evaluation			
Student Name.....			
	Evaluation (Satisfactory or Unsatisfactory)	Level of Capability Using the ASWEAS, 2012 Guideline 1.2, p 11	Field Educator/Task Supervisors Comments
Values & Ethics	Choose an item.	Choose an item.	
Culturally Responsive Practice	Choose an item.	Choose an item.	
Knowledge	Choose an item.	Choose an item.	
Skills	Choose an item.	Choose an item.	
Methods & Processes	Choose an item.	Choose an item.	
Awareness of Self	Choose an item.	Choose an item.	
Final Evaluation Recommended Grade Choose an item.			
Signed.....			

It may be useful for field educators and task supervisor(s) (if relevant) to use specific examples of their student's tasks and/or reflections to support evaluative comments. The assessment should consider the prescribed learning objectives, the placement-specific learning goals and methods, the AASW (2013) practice standards, the recommendations from the mid placement assessment and how the student has performed in relation to these.



At the completion of field placement, field educators will make a recommendation to the FELO as to whether the student's performance is satisfactory.

#### Disagreements about assessment

The FELO should be notified if there is a disagreement between field educators, task supervisor(s) (if relevant) and students about the assessment. The FELO will then meet with both the student and the field educator to discuss the points of disagreement. If there is no resolution, both the field educator and the student should provide separate reports to the FELO, who will discuss the situation with, and seek guidance from, the Field Education Coordinator or other Field Education staff.

#### Integration sessions

Participation in all integration sessions is **COMPULSORY** for all students and as such is to be accorded priority by both students and field educators.

Integration seminars are part of the placement process **and up to 4 hours spent participating in integration sessions can be counted as placement hours.**

Students are expected to enter integration dates into their diaries at the start of placement to ensure there are no clashes between integration dates/times and placement activities.

Further, students are expected to explore issues through:

- peer-tutorial groups (if there are 2 or more students on placement in the same locality)
- supervision and liaison sessions
- subject online chat sessions.

#### Failure to participate in integration

- If students miss a session for any reason, including illness or a critical event, they must notify the subject coordinator to make arrangements to undertake make-up work, which will be in the form of written work addressing the integration topic they missed.
- If no arrangements have been made, students' absence from integration sessions will be considered in their overall placement assessment.

#### Functions of the integration sessions

Integration sessions, while remaining focused on the subject objectives, seek to provide students with the opportunity to relate theoretical knowledge with their practice experience.

#### Placement presentation for WS3503 & WS5304

The student's presentation is expected to be professional and respectful towards all stakeholders in the placement.

As part of the final liaison meeting, students are required to present a reflection on their learning experience, the progress made, and the identified areas of continuing professional learning needs, to their FELO and field educator and task supervisor (where applicable). The presentation format is the choice of the student in negotiation with the FELO and field educator and task supervisor(s) (if relevant). The student needs to identify the anticipated format of presentation at the mid-placement liaison meeting.

**Assessment criteria** to be addressed:

- Outline key skills obtained or consolidated

- Identify significant knowledge acquired
- Reflect on value dilemmas raised
- Demonstrate an understanding of how the social problems addressed within the organisation can be viewed from different perspectives
- Contemplate your 'use of self'
- Identify significant areas for professional development.

The placement presentation should be referenced in accordance with the standard academic manner. Students need to use specific examples to evidence their learning. Students must also link the discussion about their progress with the learning plan developed at the beginning of the placement. As the learning plan provides the guideline for the placement in terms of tasks, activities and processes of evaluation, students may choose to format the presentation by addressing each learning objective in turn. This is not to deny that other learning may have been experienced during placement.

**Length of presentation:** 15 minutes followed by questions and answers.

[Placement presentation and theory analysis for WS4504](#)

The presentation consists of two components. **Part A** is a placement presentation as outlined in the previous section and **Part B** is a social work theory analysis.

#### **Part A**

The presentation format is the choice of the student in negotiation with the FELO and field educator. The student needs to identify the anticipated format of presentation at the mid-placement liaison meeting.

**Assessment criteria** to be addressed:

- i. Outline key skills obtained or consolidated
- ii. Identify significant knowledge acquired
- iii. Reflect on value dilemmas raised
- iv. Demonstrate an understanding of how the social problems addressed within the organisation can be viewed from different perspectives
- v. Contemplate your 'use of self'
- vi. Identify significant areas for professional development.

The placement presentation should be referenced in accordance with the standard academic manner. Students need to use specific examples to evidence their learning. Students must also link the discussion about their progress with the learning plan developed at the beginning of placement. As the learning plan provides the guideline for the placement in terms of tasks, activities and processes of evaluation, students may choose to format the presentation by addressing each learning objective in turn. This is not to deny that other learning may have been experienced during placement.

#### **Part B: Social work theory analysis**

The social work theory analysis requires students to reflect on how social work theory applies to practice. While considering their own framework for practice, students are asked to identify one social work theory that has been relevant to the work undertaken in their placement agency. Students need to critically reflect on how the social work theory does or may assist the agency in meeting its objectives.

The presentation is expected to be professional and respectful towards all stakeholders in the placement

**Length of presentation Part A and Part B:** 15 minutes followed by questions and answers.

### Placement presentation and project report (WS5605)

The presentation consists of two components. **Part A** is a brief report on the project and **Part B** is a critical reflection about their learning during placement. The overall presentation time should not exceed 15-20 minutes.

#### **Part A: project report (25%)**

The project report requires students to pre-reflect on whether and how the project/research has contributed to their learning and the agency.

#### **Part B: critical reflection on placement learning (75%)**

As part of the final liaison meeting, students are required to present a reflection on their learning experience, the progress made and the identified areas for continuing professional learning needs to their FELO and field educator and task supervisor(s) (where applicable). The presentation format can be chosen by student in negotiation with the FELO and field educator. The student needs to identify the anticipated format of presentation at the mid-placement liaison meeting.

**Assessment criteria** to be addressed:

- Outline key skills obtained or consolidated
- Identify significant knowledge acquired
- Reflect on value dilemmas raised
- Demonstrate an understanding of how the social problems addressed within the organisation can be viewed from different perspectives
- Contemplate their 'use of self'
- Identify significant areas for professional development.

The placement presentation should be referenced in accordance with the standard academic manner. The presentation is expected to be professional and respectful towards all stakeholders in the placement

**Lengths of presentation Part A and Part B:** 15-20 min followed by questions and answers.

**Note:** Final time logs and reflective journals must be completed and submitted to the FELO within **3 weeks** of completion of placement unless alternative arrangements have been made in writing. **Failure to do this may lead to a grade of UNSATISFACTORY.**

#### References:

- Alston, M., & Bowles, W. (2018). Research for social workers: An introduction to methods. *Aotearoa New Zealand Social Work*, 30(3), 96-97. <https://doi.org/10.11157/anzswj-vol30iss3id549>
- Australian Association of Social Workers. (2013). *AASW Practice Standards for Social Workers: Achieving outcomes*. <https://www.aasw.asn.au/practitioner-resources/practice-standards>
- Australian Association of Social Workers. (2020). *Australian social work education and accreditation standards*. (pp. 1-37). AASW. <https://www.aasw.asn.au/careers-study/education-standards-accreditation>
- Australian Association of Social Workers. (2020). *Code of Ethics*. <https://www.aasw.asn.au/practitioner-resources/code-of-ethics>