



WORKPLACE LEARNING FACULTY OF ARTS AND EDUCATION

Field Education at CSU Handbook 2019

For Social Work and Human
Services Student Placements

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Faculty of Arts and Education, Workplace Learning (WPL)
Charles Sturt University

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Acknowledgement

Social workers acknowledge the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples, the First Australians, whose lands, winds and waters we all now share, and pay respect to their unique values, and their continuing and enduring cultures which deepen and enrich the life of our nation and communities. Social workers commit to acknowledge and understand the historical and contemporary disadvantage experienced by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and the implication of this for social work practice. Social workers are responsible for ensuring that their practice is culturally competent, safe and sensitive. ([AASW Code of Ethics](#))

Introduction

Welcome to Social Work Field Education at Charles Sturt University (CSU).

Field Education is a collaborative venture between the Human Services Field and CSU - its staff and students. All three parties work collaboratively to create the optimum environment for your professional learning, and to assess your performance.

Field Education is the subject that students remember. It is the place where your developing professional identity, skills and knowledge all come together. This is your opportunity to find out if social work is really the career for you; it is also the time to put theory and practice together in real life situations.

The policies that govern Field Education are found in the Subject Outline – however some of these are included in this document. Use this document primarily to guide you in your preparation for the placement process. When you enrol, subject materials, assessment information and resources will be available through the subject [Interact2](#) Site.

Serena Mathews

Field Education Coordinator/Academic Lead

Explanation of Terms Used In This Document

There are two strands of study for first placement. **The Placement Strand** and the **Professional Practice Assessment Strand (PPA Strand)**.

- **Placement Strand** – students undertake a structured, individualised period of experiential learning in an approved real world work site, under the supervision of a qualified and experienced social worker.
- **Professional Practice Assessment Strand (PPA Strand)** – Eligible students undertake a reflective exploration of their existing professional knowledge, skills, practices and values and apply these to a social work framework of professional thinking, doing and being (identity) under the guidance of a social work academic.

Please be aware that these two strands have different assessment items and submission dates and are only relevant to the first placement/field education 1 students.

- **Social Work Field Education and Workplace Learning.** These are two terms that you will hear a lot about. They basically mean the same thing. Social Work Field Education is the Australian Association of Social Workers (AASW) reference to placement while Workplace Learning is the generic term that CSU uses to all placement activities in all disciplines and schools.
- **Placement vs Practicum** – again these both mean the same thing and placement is the newer term used by the AASW.
- **Supervisor vs Field Educator** – these are also the same term – the current term is Field Educator to reflect the education role of supervisor.

Field Education Subjects

Pre Requisite Subjects/Knowledge for Field Education

Student undertaking a placement for their first placement must have satisfactorily completed the first theory and practice subject. In some circumstance's students are able to be co enrolled in the theory and practice and placement subject, however the timing of the start of the placement will be at the Field Education Coordinators discretion. Decision making around this takes into account the students experience in the human services field, their progress in the course, with particular reference to foundational practice knowledge such as social research methods and micro counselling skills.

Students undertaking a second placement must have completed first placement or the Professional Practice Assessment (PPA) Strand satisfactorily or have a credit transfer from another institution or Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL).

Courses served by these subject

In the 1502SW Bachelor of Social Work (BSW) and 1708PQ Master of Social Work (Professional Qualifying) (MSW PQ) there are two social work field education subjects, over the course of which the student is required to successfully complete a total of **1000 hours** Social Work Field Education time (approximately 144 days). Other courses that may also participate in Field Education include the 1419HS Bachelor of Human Services (BHS) and 1715CA Master in Child and Adolescent Welfare (MCAW).

The subjects are:

Bachelor of Human Services

HCS303 Social Work Field Education 1

Bachelor of Social Work

HCS303 Social Work Field Education 1

HCS402 Social Work Field Education 2

SWK424 Social Work Field Education 2A (this is a one session subject)

Masters of Social Work (PQ)

HCS505 Social Work Field Education 1

HCS506 Social Work Field Education 2

SWK424 Social Work Field Education 2A (this is a one session subject)

Masters of Child and Adolescent Welfare

HCS505 Social Work Field Education 1

Details about the Field Education Subject

The Social Work Field Education 1 and Social Work Field Education 2 subjects must be completed in different calendar years. You cannot be enrolled in both subjects in the same year. Enrolment in the subject is required in both first and second sessions of each year. With the exception of SWK424, all subjects are year long.

Students who are planning to graduate must have completed their placement assessment items by the end of October each year, to allow for sufficient time to process grades for graduation.

Placements may take place outside the formal teaching sessions.

Short term international programs that are currently offered at CSU cannot have hours credited for the placement subject. This is because they do not meet the minimum AASW requirements for a placement experience.

Upon enrolment (from October onwards) in the subject, registration steps will be communicated to students via email. Students may be deemed unsatisfactory in the subject if they fail to complete these steps.

We aim source a placement as close to your residential address as possible, obtaining a suitable placement may require you to travel. Your cooperation and understanding around this is appreciated. No student will be asked to travel further than 100kms round trip each day.

InPlace

[InPlace](#) is used by CSU to manage workplace learning experiences that our students complete during their study. It is interactive and students can log into the system upload their documentation, see whether they have met all requirements for placement, be notified of their placement allocation and view the contact information including supervisor details for their placement.

Staffing In Field Education

We have a significant number of staff involved in Field Education. Approximately half of these are sessional staff (or casual staff). Due to the range of geographical locations where students undertake placement, sessional staff based in that area, greatly facilitate the learning experience for students. You will be advised by the Workplace Learning Office (WPLO) which academic has been assigned to you for each stage of the placement experience. Your assigned academic will be your “go to person” for that part of the placement phase. Please be aware that many staff are part time and may only be available on certain days. However, we do work as a team and should you need to contact an academic urgently you can liaise with the [Workplace Learning Office \(WPLO\)](#). **All staff involved in Field Education, play a role in teaching, mentoring, supporting and modeling social work behavior.**

Listed below are some of the roles of staff in Field Education:

Field Education Coordinator/Academic Lead

The Field Education Coordinator/Academic Lead is responsible for the administration of the field education program.

Responsibilities include:

- support and assistance to students, field educators and academic staff;
- determination of grades;
- problem solving and mediation if you and/or your Academic Liaison person or Field Educator have a problem that you can't solve together;
- development of field education policy and curriculum;
- coordination of Academic Liaison and Off Site Social Work supervising staff;
- mediating resolutions in cases where difficulties arise in a placement which cannot be resolved by the student, academic liaison staff and field educator/s;
- organising field education meetings;
- involvement in field education research;
- coordination of field educator training;
- running preparation and debriefing sessions;
- advising Academic Liaison staff and or Offsite Social Work supervisors and students about research ethics procedures where necessary;
- other related administrative duties.

Placement Establishment Academic (PEA)

The Placement Establishment Academic is responsible for locating your placement, having considered your placement needs. They will contact you after you have finalised all your required registration documents in InPlace for Social Work Field Education. This person will interview you for any issues or needs you might have in relation to placement.

Professional Practice Assessment Assessor (PPA Assessor)

Assesses potential student's eligibility for the Professional Practice Assessment Strand (PPA Strand) and assesses the first assessment task for the first placement subject. The PPA assessor makes recommendations to the Subject Coordinator about the student second placement needs and hours required to be undertaken.

Professional Practice Academic (PPA)

These are either academic staff, sessional staff or practitioners from the field who assess the student Professional Practice interview and Worksheets and Orientation Plan (Assessment 1). It is a requirement of the AASW that all interviews be conducted by two social workers.

Academic Liaison Person (AL)

An Academic Liaison person is assigned to your placement from the beginning of the placement and you are advised of this in an email. They are involved in:

- formal liaison contacts with you and your field educator to assist in important decision-making points in the placement;
- informal contacts throughout the placement as you and/or your field educator require;
- responsibility for extensions for assessment due dates;
- problem solving and mediation as required;
- responsibility for re-negotiating time frames of placements including notification of absences and extension of placement length;
- marking of written requirements and recommendation of grade to the subject coordinator.

Workplace Learning Office (WPLO)

The WPLO is your first point of contact for any Field Education enquiries. The Workplace Learning (WPL) office maintains all files and records relating to placement. The WPL office maintains an extensive database of placements, field educators and liaises with academic staff.

Field Educator(s)

In all accredited Australian social work courses, each student on placement must be supervised by a qualified social worker who is eligible for membership of the Australian Association of Social Workers (AASW) and who has a minimum of 2 years' full-time experience, or its part time equivalent. Field Educators can also be qualified and experienced human service personnel who work in the field. Field educators who do not have social work qualifications work as co-supervisors in partnership with social work qualified Field Educators, due to AASW accreditation requirements.

Field Educators must have a commitment to continuing professional education and an interest in developing social work knowledge and skills. They must also have the time to meet the supervision requirements for taking on a student, set by the AASW. This involves a minimum of 1.5 hours of supervision per student for each five days (35 hours) of placement.

There are three possibilities for field education arrangements:

- a) The social work field educator meets the AASW accreditation requirements and is located on-site at the placement.
- b) An experienced non-social work field educator supervises the student's work on-site, while a local social work field educator supervises the student off-site. Normally the on-site field educator is responsible for supervising the student's day-to-day work (that is, line management). The off-site supervisor (social worker) is usually responsible for the social work side of the education and support functions of supervision. The off-site field educator is considered to be the primary supervisor in recommending grades to the university. See 'Roles and Responsibilities' in the subject materials for more information

- about co-supervision arrangements. A co-supervision arrangement is possible for one placement only.
- c) If there is no on-site or off-site field educator available, supervision may be organised under the direct auspice of the university. This arrangement is only recommended when no other options are available and is possible for one placement only. Social Work staff will be arranged by CSU to support the student placement and students learning with offsite social work supervision.

Professional Practice Assessment (PPA) Strand

It is only available for the Bachelor of Social Work and the Masters of Social Work (Professional Qualifying).

To meet the minimum eligibility requirement to participate in the PPA strand students must have undertaken: 3 years full time equivalent (FTE) in a “relevant context” in the last seven years of which one year FTE has been in the last three years you are eligible to participate in the PPA strand **Please Note:** Students who do not meet this minimum work requirement cannot participate in this strand.

“Relevant context” is defined as being a position that either manages, or directly provides, what social workers consider to be social work or social welfare services to clients of the agency involving activities that the University regards as suitable for a field education placement and involve familiarity with and use of social work practice skills, such as assessment and counselling and a range of social work methods such as casework, group work and community work.

The PPA strand is ONLY applicable to students enrolled in the Social Work Field Education 1 subjects (HCS303 or HCS505). It can be completed in place of the Indirect placement strand. You must be enrolled in the first Field Education 1 subject in both sessions one and two, and have completed the registration steps. The AASW does not permit any credit for life experience for field education. PPA is not available for Social Work Field Education 2.

Where the clients include the staff of the agency, the applicant must occupy a designated counseling position. To determine your eligibility for the PPA strand or to obtain further information please access the [PPA Process information sheet](#).

Placement Strand

Social Work

In order to successfully complete first placement, social work students will have attained the practice standards of an entry level social worker in the assessment stages of social work practice.

In order to successfully complete second placement, social work students will have attained the practice standards of an entry level social worker in the intervention, evaluation of social work practice.

Students must undertake a total of **1000 hours** of placement which is divided across two placements of 500 hours each. The minimum hours for any placement is 280 hours according to the AASW requirements. This is deemed to be the minimum time required for the student to demonstrate the competencies. While all students are encouraged to undertake a placement of 500 hours – in circumstances where there might be issues with leave, or unexpected issues

presenting on placement, this would be the minimum hours required – in order for the placement to be finalised as a completed placement.

Students undertaking the PPA strand for first placement, must do either 600 or 500 hours in their second placement, depending on their level of attainment with the standards.

The **Timeline** which is included on the [WPL website](#) summarises the subject requirements. It will also be included in the placement details confirmation letters sent prior to you commencing your placement. **Please Note:** that the **Timeline** assumes a 72 day placement 7 hours per day. If students wish to negotiate placements of different lengths, the dates that assessment items are required are also negotiated individually, based on the time frames. Please note that this timeline begins at the point after you receive notification that you have successfully completed Assessment 1.

Human Services and Master of Child and Adolescent

Students undertaking the [Bachelor of Human Services](#) / [Master of Child and Adolescent Welfare](#) are required to undertake a minimum of 200 hours. However students are encouraged to consider doing 500 hours in case they wish to have their placement credited into a social work qualification in future.

Type of placements

For those doing two placements, each student must have placements in at least two settings, and in two different fields of practice. Practice settings for field education are usually agencies in which social workers are employed or could be employed.

These are selected from fields and practice settings with a variety of learning experiences which complement and extend the student's existing professional strengths. One Social Work Field Education placement must have a major focus on **Direct Practice Activities** e.g. clinical emphasis. The other must have a primary focus on **Indirect Practice Activities** such as community development, policy or research. Thus, each placement must involve substantial amounts of work from the corresponding group of activities.

There is no particular order in which placements are to be completed - it depends on the student's learning needs and priorities as well as what is available.

Direct Practice: Clinical, Casework, Counselling Emphasis

Casework, counselling or therapy with individuals, families, or groups which emphasise interpersonal helping skills.

In these placements, achieving practice standards in the assessment stages of an intervention could include being able to:

- independently assess a client's needs, or carry out an intake procedure, following organisational assessment protocols;
- undertake a multidimensional assessment of an individual or family;
- planning an intervention for a client, including mapping out a case plan, but not necessarily carrying out the intervention;

- assessing the needs of an existing group or the need for a new group with a clinical focus such as anger management, grief and loss, self-esteem groups etc.

Indirect Practice: Community Development, Policy or Research

Emphasis

Community development, policy work, administration, research, task focused group work or specific projects negotiated with field education staff.

N.B. Group-work may fit into either category depending on its focus.

In placements with a focus on community development or policy, achieving practice standards in the assessment stages of an intervention could include being able to:

- Plan and carry out a community needs assessment, or needs assessment for a part of a community such as the need for aged care;
- Assess the need for and plan a group program, e.g. education in substance abuse, sibling support group, parenting groups, employment preparation groups and in some cases run the group;
- Assess the needs for policy development, and in some cases develop new policy;
- Assess the needs for new services, write funding submissions, establish working parties to write submissions etc.;
- Research the need for and/or undertake some activities that have been identified as being needed e.g. developing access maps for local councils, updating resource directories, developing pamphlets to advertise services etc.;
- Develop skills in project management including time management and resource management.

Most placements with an indirect focus (community development, policy work, research or evaluation) will have a substantial project for you to complete.

Important: any research involving human participants will need approval from the [CSU ethics committee](#).

Social Work Field Education in your place of employment

Generally, field education must be undertaken in a practice setting and field of practice which is different from your place of employment or regular voluntary work.

Under **exceptional** circumstances only one may be undertaken in an agency where employment or voluntary work is being, or has recently been, undertaken. This depends on all other AASW requirements for field education is met. Any placement undertaken in a student's place of employment or voluntary work will be for a maximum of 72 days (500 hours). If you complete the PPA strand you are then ineligible to complete a placement in your place of work.

In these circumstances, the PEA must be satisfied that the following conditions have been met:

- The student has been in their place of employment for 12 months or more.
- The student will have appropriate learning opportunities and educational goals, and that sound educational processes are in place.
- The student will be allocated tasks or projects in a field of practice which is different from the field of practice this student is employed in.

4. The student is not carrying any workload related activities while they are on placement.
5. The field educator is a social worker who is not the student's usual supervisor.
6. Completion of the Agency Agreement for Social Work Placement in Student's Place of Work form (emailed to you by your PEA).
7. Completion of the Workplace Placement Plan form (emailed to you by your PEA).

Students wishing to undertake a placement in their place of employment are advised that the negotiation of such a placement will be a lengthy process due to the complexity of issues and number of people involved. The assessment of a potential workplace placement is the responsibility of the PEA, and involves a written contract (as per point 6 above) between the employing agency and CSU. A placement will not be established in a student's place of employment unless the PEA is convinced that all the conditions, stated above, can be met. All parties to the placement are expected to sign an agreement for meeting the above conditions.

As part of CSU's duty of care, the student is not permitted to undertake a combined working/placement week of more than a standard working week.

Overseas placements

This option is only available to student undertaking Field Education 2, second placement and who have previously undertaken a direct placement with a social worker onsite. Other criteria that is considered:

- Supervision can be arranged which meets AASW accreditation requirements
- CSU staff are convinced, based on previous placement reports, you have sufficient level of practice, autonomy and professional skills and confidence in challenging situations to undertake a placement remote from direct university support.
- Overseas placements cannot be more than 72 days (500 hours) in length.
- You have to be able to speak the local language.

Please Note:

- a) If you are an Australian resident and have RPL or completed the PPA strand for your first field education subject, you are ineligible for an overseas placement. The AASW requires that at least one placement must be completed in Australia.
- b) Students enrolled in SWK424 are unable to be supported for overseas placements due to the limited administration timeframes in a single session and eligibility to graduate for the August graduation ceremonies.

It may be possible to obtain some funding to assist in overseas placements, for more information you can visit the [CSU Global](#) website.

Assessments in Field Education

All students undertaking a placement for the first time at CSU must complete the *Worksheet and Orientation Plan* (Assessment 1). This assessment is a reflective tool designed to assess a student's readiness for placement. Once this is completed all other assessments for field education are completed as part of the placement hours.

Please refer to [Interact2](#) for all assessment items. This includes assessment items, such as the Mid Practicum Presentation, Field Educators feedback and student journal.

Getting Ready for Placement the Compliance Process

All students are required to supply **mandatory compliance documents** and a **current resume** to be eligible to complete the Field Education subjects. As students will be working with vulnerable adults and children, the process of screening is critical. Students who do not meet these requirements are generally unable to proceed onto placement. It is the students' responsibility to ensure that current copies of these documents are provided to the WPLO by uploading them to their InPlace record and that they remain current for the duration of the placement period.

It is possible that an agency may require a different kind of check and you will need to comply with that agency's policy if you wish to undertake a placement with them.

National Police Checks (NPC)

Most agencies accepting students on placement require a National Police Check (NPC) (also known as a criminal history check). Students can [apply online](#). The NPC remains valid for 3 years. Any disclosures can be discussed with the Academic Lead.

Working With Children Checks (WWCC)

Students must make their own application. You should do this once you have enrolled in your first field education subject. The WWCC remains valid for 5 years. There is [no fee](#) for students.

The online application form can be found at <https://www.kidsguardian.nsw.gov.au/>

Students in other states need to provide their [state equivalent](#).

Health Compliance (Immunisations) optional

All CSU students considering eligibility to complete a placement in a health facility, regardless of their residing state, MUST also be registered with NSW Health and meet the [NSW Health compliance guidelines](#).

This meets two purposes:

- enables eligibility to register for Field Education placements in health facilities
- meets risk compliance assessment requirements for NSW Health, other state health facilities and organisations requiring health compliance

Students in other states will also need to provide additional documents for compliance, such as Code of Conduct and evidence of completion of orientation modules.

Please Note: Health placements will be cancelled if health compliance is not finalised or your National Police Check expires (i.e. is more than 3 years past the date of issue).

Further information on the required documentation is available and updated on the [Workplace Learning webpages](#).

When you have completed NSW Health package you will need to upload this as [one file](#) to [InPlace](#) in order for this to be verified by the NSW Health coordinator.

CSU also offer support for students with questions about immunisations for clinical placements, please contact the [CSU Health Promotion Officer](#). Please consult with your health provider or general practitioner (GP) for professional medical advice.

Professional Behavior

Ethical Behavior

Failure to behave in accordance with the [AASW Code of Ethics](#) at any point in Social Work Field Education will result in an unsatisfactory grade for the subject. This includes behavior such as racist comments. You must ensure that you are familiar with the [AASW Code of Ethics](#), which is provided as part of the subject package. Unprofessional behaviour will not be tolerated.

Code of Conduct

As a training professional it is important that you comply with the universities policies around student behavior as outline previously. In addition many of you will also need to comply with specific agency requirements around behavior. Failure to comply can result in an unsatisfactory grade for the subject. This extends to behavior whilst on the placement and may also include your interactions on social media.

Students are strongly advised to review these Codes of Conducts when signing them and to understand their content. **For example:** you must not name the agency that you are undertaking your placement at on social media or speak or post about them in a negative way. While you may see Facebook as a personal and private place for your thoughts, this is not how placement agencies or potential employees may view this. Please ensure you review the [CSU Student Charter](#).

Occupational Health and Safety

An important part of your safety is getting to and from workplace learning safely. As part of CSU's duty of care to students, we remind students that the combined number of hours spent working in paid employment and on placement should add up to a standard working week. It is important that students negotiate this as part of organising their placements.

Students should spend no more than ten (10) hours of combined work and travel per day, if the person working is also the person driving.

In addition, students are required upon commencing placement to become familiar with the following agency policies and practices which may be in place. Worker and Workplace Safety and Security policies and Vehicle/Travel Safety policies.

Students need to report to the University of any incident, accident or potential hazard, as soon as practicable, by using the [Report an incident online form](#).

Equal Opportunity and Anti-discrimination Policies

Students are required upon commencing placement to become familiar with the agency Equal Opportunity and Anti-discrimination policy. You can also refer to the [CSU Equal Opportunity policy](#).

Disclosure of Personal Information, Health and Wellbeing

On behalf of their staff and clients, placement agencies have an expectation that the University does not place students who are ill-prepared, threatening, or unlikely to be able to cope with professional work activities in a human service environment.

The University is also concerned for the welfare of students who are likely to find the experience of placement to be personally and professionally challenging at times. For this reason the CSU staff need to be aware of any personal issue or condition of the student that may be adversely affected by the experience of undertaking placement. This is an advisory warning to students that placement is challenging and students are expected to be accountable for their conduct and self-care on placement.

If you have a condition of any kind (a mental health issue, a learning disability, a hidden physical disability such as epilepsy) that you think might impact either on you, the placement organisation, or your future clients, we advise you to discuss this with your PEA before you start a placement. Together you can decide if you need to formulate strategies that will help you to do deal with this, or manage it constructively, throughout your professional career. As part of this discussion, you may decide that either you, your PEA, or both of you, will discuss this with your field educator before you begin placement. Past students with a mental health issue have done this successfully, and negotiated, firstly with their PEA and later with their placement field educator, about how to detect early warning signs, and how to intervene in an episode early, before it impacts on clients or staff. This kind of negotiation has meant that the students successfully completed their placements, rather than failing or having to withdraw on health grounds.

Privacy Considerations

The University will handle student information according to the [Privacy Management Plan](#).

Use of the Charles Sturt University, InPlace System is subject to your consenting to Charles Sturt University providing some information about you to external agencies. It is the student's responsibility to determine the necessity for the disclosure.

When you log into InPlace, you would have agreed to the following:

- release relevant information concerning professional placements to relevant placement agencies as necessary;
 - advise external agencies, prior to the commencement of the professional placement, whether you have a current [National Police Check](#) and whether it contains any disclosable outcomes. **Please Note:** it is your responsibility to have a current National Police Check at the commencement of each academic year and produce a copy for the relevant placement agency as required (excluding the Faculty of Education students);
 - advise external agencies, prior to the commencement of the professional placement, whether you have a current [Working with Children \(WWC\) Check](#) Card.
Note: it is your responsibility to have current WWC at the commencement of the academic year and present this upon request from a relevant placement agency as required;
 - release contact details (telephone & mobile number; LTU student email address and address where appropriate) to external supervisors/agencies for professional placement purposes only.
- Please Note:** this information will be kept private and confidential by the placement agency and the placement agency will be instructed to destroy all contact details once the placement is completed; and,

Students are responsible to ensure that they understand that a breach of the Terms and Conditions as agreed to in InPlace, may impact on the right to privacy of an individual or Agency and may lead to legal and/or disciplinary proceedings.

Reporting Adverse Incidents

The University has a duty of care in relation to the health and safety of its staff and students. Harassment that occurs within CSU or is related to University activities is of concern as it can create an intimidating, hostile, offensive or distressing work or study environment and impact on the health and well-being of staff and students.

Students need to report to the University of any incident, accident or potential hazard, as soon as practicable, by using the [Report an incident online form](#).

Sexual Harassment

If students experience any incidents of Sexual Assault or Sexual Harassment please refer to the web links below. Alternatively, if students need to speak to someone about sexual assault or sexual harassment please call 1800 961 991 (business hours) or for urgent support or to make a report. This phone number goes through to the CSU student counselling team. If student require 24hr support please contact the National Support line 1800 572 2247.

- http://www.csu.edu.au/_data/assets/pdf_file/0005/2826986/Protocol.pdf
- <http://student.csu.edu.au/services-support/student-central/askcsu#/article/14887>

Harassment

Harassment refers to unwelcome behaviour that makes a person feel offended, belittled, intimidated or apprehensive; and that a reasonable person, taking into account all the circumstances, would expect to cause offence, intimidation or apprehension and includes bullying and victimisation.

Bullying can be described as unreasonable behaviour that intimidates, demeans or humiliates a person, putting their health, safety or welfare (including psychological welfare) at risk.

If you believe that you are being harassed or bullied, you should not ignore the problem. In the first instance, if you feel safe to do so, it may be sufficient to make it clear to the other person that their behaviour is unwelcome, offensive or distressing. If you do not feel comfortable with this approach or if it is not effective, you should contact the Academic Lead at the University without delay.

For more information and for the guidelines which outline behaviours that constitute sexual, racial, and other forms of harassment covered by legislation, including bullying, and the options for resolving complaints, please refer to the [CSU Policy library](#).

Negotiating Your Placement

Successful negotiation of your placement is a subject requirement and assessment item.

Placement opportunities are limited. It is your responsibility to discuss any barriers preventing you undertaking placement either in specific field of practice (e.g. child protection) or agency (e.g. mental health facility)

While we endeavor to source placements for students within the academic year, high numbers of students seeking placements from all universities across Australia and pressure in the field to do more with less, can impact on start and end dates. In some instances depending on your location it may be even difficult to source a placement for you. Your Subject Coordinator and the PEA are the staff to discuss this with. Please remember that CSU is committed to sourcing you a placement and your cooperation and understanding about these issues are appreciated. In some remote locations social workers may not be available. CSU will do what we can to support placements, but we are limited by the options available in your community. Each year CSU offers placements which include accommodation. If you are in a remote location it may be worthwhile you considering one of these options.

Negotiating placements involves a collaborative process between CSU, students, agencies, and field educators. **The final responsibility for endorsing each placement rests with CSU.** Given the limited number of placement options, especially in rural and isolated areas, and the employment and other constraints of some students, it may not always be possible to meet your priorities.

Due to competition for the limited pool of field education placements across Australia, and requirements by most agencies that schools of social work observe certain protocols, **students are not allowed to canvas agencies for field placements.** This is a serious matter and students who do canvas can face disciplinary action.

Confidentiality is also involved in this CSU policy. AASW requires that field educators be suitably qualified and have at least two years' experience. Field educators' qualifications and experience are private matters, not open to investigation by unknown students.

Having established this principle, we recognise that distance education students in the BSW often come from isolated areas and/or are already experienced workers in welfare, with knowledge of local resources and networks. Field education staff will be happy to follow up any suggestions students may have, and understand that students may make initial enquiries to people and agencies already known to them.

Student Placement Support and Review Process

Should a social work or human services student experience any difficulties in the professional experience component of Field Education and/or be identified as being "at risk", the Student Placement Support and Review Process (SPSRP) will be instigated.

Support to the Student and Host Organisation

It is recognised that occasionally a student's placement can be at risk due to student conduct, host organisational changes and/or unforeseen circumstances. It is recognised by CSU that a placement which is at risk can cause the student confusion and, at times, distress. On these occasions, the student will be supported by CSU staff who are liaising with the student and host organisation. CSU staff who support the student placement include the Academic Liaison, Subject Coordinators/Convenors and Academic Lead.

CSU acknowledges and understands the importance of engaging with staff from the host organisation to ensure they are supported in the process of resolving and responding to issues that present during a student placement.

The following review process will be facilitated by the Workplace Learning (WPL) Academic Lead, who will liaise and coordinate with staff to participate in this process.

1. It is proposed that this activity is conducted in consultation with the Course Director, WPL Academic Lead, and Sub Dean of Workplace Learning to review the placement concerns.
2. The student is notified by the Academic Liaison, Academic Subject Coordinators/Convenor and/or Academic Lead that there are areas of significant concern related to placement and a Notification Form will be completed. The Academic Liaison will provide the Field Education supervisors a copy of the Mid Prac Field Educators Report (Assessment 5 & 6) to complete and review.
3. The student, Academic Liaison and Field Education supervisors will review the student Learning Plan (Assessment 3) and identify activities and outcomes to assist the student to make immediate and sustained improvement. The student is also requested to provide copies of Journal or Log Submissions (Assessment 8) to demonstrate and support their progress. The Subject Coordinators/Convenors and Academic Lead will be advised of all concerns, supports and reviews about the student's progress. The Subject Coordinators/Convenors will support Academic Liaison and Field Education staff for preliminary concerns. Should the concerns become more complex they will be escalated to the WPL Academic Lead to support and coordinate the student.
4. If the student is unable to demonstrate improvement and there are exceptional circumstances associated to the placement, the student is requested to complete the Summary of Learning and Development (Assessment 7) and provide copies of their Journal or Log Submission (Assessment 8). The assessments will be moderated.
5. If the Learning Plan activities and outcomes are demonstrated successfully, the student will receive a progress summary and be expected to satisfactorily complete their placement.
6. If the Learning Plan activities and outcomes are not satisfactorily demonstrated, the student will receive an email notification that the placement has been cancelled from WPL Office and the Academic Lead will inform the Subject Coordinators/Convenor finalise a US grade for the student's enrolment in the subject.

Awarding an Unsatisfactory Grade

A student can receive an Unsatisfactory (US) Grade when:

- a. The student is unable to demonstrate satisfactory progress during the placement after appropriate support has been provided by CSU and the Learning Plan is not met or the student has withdrawn from the placement; OR
- b. The student displays unacceptable professional behaviour, or exhibits behaviour that is not in keeping with the [AASW Code of Ethics](#); or [CSU Student Charter, CSU Student General Misconduct](#); [CSU Student Academic Misconduct](#); OR

Immediate Termination of Placement Process

1. A host organisation has the right to terminate a placement at any time. Where unforeseen circumstances or events beyond the control of the Agency cause/or threaten major disruption to the provision of Workplace Learning, the Agency may, in its discretion, defer, suspend or amend previously agreed placements by immediate written notice to CSU. If the Agency takes such action, the parties agree to work together, in good faith, to arrange alternative placements for those affected student's at the Agency.
2. This may also be the result of misconduct and can occur without the SPSRP being followed or any warning being given to the student. In this case, a US grade will be awarded following review of the student placement.

Review of Grade

A student can request a review of grade in line with the [CSU Assessment Policy](#) and [complaints processes](#).

The Placement Process

Step 1

Once you are enrolled in a Field Education subject the Workplace Learning (WPL) office will email instructions to upload mandatory compliance documents directly to [InPlace](#).

To assist with planning please ensure you begin to collate the following registration and compliance documents required for your student placement:

- Current - [National Police check](#)
- Current - [Working with Children Check](#) or state equivalent
- Current - [Resume / CV](#)
- [Health compliance documents \(optional\)](#)

Step 2

The Workplace Learning (WPL) office will email further instructions to submit online **Part 1. Registration information** details using the self placement tool, once all mandatory compliance documents have been uploaded and verified [InPlace](#). Self placement does not mean that you will source your own placements, CSU will source the placement for you. Students are not to canvas their own placements. This is an opportunity for you to provide potential contacts and nominate your preferred locations. Please refer to the attached guides in the emails from the WPL office. Placements in Field Education 1 will not commence until April or later, subject to the satisfactory completion of *Worksheets and Orientation plan* (Assessment 1)

Additionally, students who have not previously undertaken a placement at CSU, or who have RPL or if it has been more than two years since the assessment was originally completed are required to submit the *Worksheets/Orientation Plan* (Assessment 1).

Step 3

The WPL office will assign a Placement Establishment Academic (PEA) to you and they will contact you to arrange an interview. During the meeting, student and field educator decide whether the placement would be a suitable learning experience in which agency requirements, student learning needs and constraints, and CSU policy can all be met.

The PEA will then determine placement options and use the online **Part 2. Placement Negotiation Form (PNF)** within [InPlace](#), to communicate options, changes and updates.

Step 4

Once this is complete the WPL office is advised of the final Placement Negotiation. The WPL office requires a minimum of 10 working days notice to process these details and a minimum of 28 days for all health facility placements across Australia.

Step 5

CSU confirms the placement dates with the agency, field educators and the student by email, endorsing the proposed social work field education arrangements, advising of the insurance cover and contact details for all involved. The confirmation letters also include the [WPL Padlet website](#) with resources available to all parties involved in the student placement. The student is then expected to ensure the 10 day first liaison meeting is arranged with all parties, Academic Liaison, Supervisors within the first few days of placement.

Record of Attendance

Students must keep an accurate record of their hours spent on Social Work Field Education. Any change to the length of a placement once the student has commenced their placement must be negotiated in advance with the Academic Liaison in writing. A placement will only be extended if there are sound educational reasons for doing so. Any additional hours, including those worked from home or other organisations with the permission of the field educator, may be included upon approval of Academic Liaison or Academic Lead.

If the organisation does not have time sheets, use the time sheet contained in the forms section of your subject site. You may use an agency tool for recording your attendance provided it can be confidentially copied for your records. i.e. workplaces that have a common sign in book should not be copied and if necessary you may need to use a personal recording system in addition to the agency one.

Length and Timing

Placement times and length are individually negotiated and agreed upon by the student, agency, field educator and CSU field education staff.

Please see the **Timeline** on the website for details of subject requirements and milestones during a placement.

The timeline assumes a 72 day (500 hours) placement. Variations may be negotiated as part of the learning plan depending on individual circumstances and learning goals. No placement will be less than 280 hours or 40 days, in order to ensure an educationally viable placement.

No placement will exceed 103 days (720 hours).

It is in students' best interest to choose the 72 day placement, as it is very difficult to successfully negotiate placements longer than 72 days.

The time commitment to field education must be educationally viable; e.g. blocks of full time (Monday-Friday) weeks and/or 2-3 days per week, with these days being consecutive.

Placements must be continuous, that is, there can be no lengthy breaks.

A minimum of 2 days per week or a total of 15 hours is required. Students who wish to undertake their placement 2 days a week must undertake two one week blocks, usually at the beginning and end of the placement.

Please Note: that public holidays or absences due to sickness or other causes must be made up so that the negotiated number of hours on placement completed. Meal breaks and travel to and from the placement are not to be included in placement hours. Travel as part of the placement activities is included.

Students may not work more than 8 hours in an ordinary working day on placement and no more than 10 hours including travel.

Planning Your Social Work Field Education Experience

Work Out Your Learning Needs

There are several ways of planning for your social work field education:

- Think about the kinds of learning experiences you need which will point you towards the sorts of social work in which you are interested.
- Assess your existing skills and identify gaps which will make you more employable.
- Another important aspect to think about is the sort of field educator and type of supervision which will work best for you.
- A good place to start when planning your placement is to identify your existing skills and strengths.
- You will be completing exercises at the first residential school to assist you to plan for your first placement. There may also be other activities in your studies that might be helpful to review.

Your Five-Year Plan

Once you have thought about your existing skills and strengths and formulated some ideas about your learning needs, it is a good idea to think ahead to when you graduate. What kind of work would you like to be doing as a social worker?

If you have a clear idea of the area in which you would like to work, plan to undertake Social Work Field Education 1 in this area. That way, you can build networks, become known and develop skills to make you more competitive when positions become available in your chosen field at the end of your course.

Think about any gaps you may have in your professional repertoire which will be barriers to you getting a job in social work or in the specific area in which you wish to work. Social Work Field Education 1 provides an ideal opportunity to gain experience in areas in which you have gaps.

If you have little experience in the social work field and do not yet know what the possibilities are for the sort of work you will want to do, it is best to base your choice of placement (at least the first one) on the field educator available. Also core areas such as income security, mental health and child protection are always good areas to consider.

The quality of the educational relationship you develop with your field educator is possibly the most important factor in determining how well your placement will go and how much you will learn. If after your negotiation interview with a potential field educator you have any doubts about your compatibility with them or the organisation, speak to the CSU staff member who organised the interview immediately.

Contact Procedures

Academic Enquiries

Any questions concerning the teaching of this subject can be made by contacting the Field Education Coordinator.

Field Education Coordinator/Academic Lead: Serena Mathews

Email smathews@csu.edu.au

Phone (02) 69334352

Campus Wagga Wagga

Building/Room number 26/143

Workplace Learning Office (WPL)

The Workplace Learning (WPL) Officers are available by phone or email from Monday to Friday:

Email HumanServices-WPL@csu.edu.au

Phone (02) 6933 2784

Campus Wagga Wagga

Building 26 and Room number 147 or 148

Text and Learning Materials

Prescribed text(s)

Your textbook for Social Work Field Education 1 and 2 is:

Cleak, H & Wilson, J (2013). *Making the most of field placement* (3rd ed.). Australia: Thomson.

Please note: You will need to refer to texts from other subjects also.

Required Reading / Resources

Core and supplementary readings are supplied on the Interact2 site.

Recommended Reading / Resources

Baird, BN (1999) *The internship, practicum, and field placement handbook: A guide for the helping professions* (2nd ed.) New Jersey: Prentice Hall.

Cooper, L & Briggs, L (2000) *Fieldwork in the human services*. St. Leonards: Allen and Unwin.