



Global, Urban and Social Studies - Social Work

## International Social Work Field Education Placements: Policy, Guidelines and Procedure

International placements offer exciting learning opportunities for students, however, considerable planning and preparation is required before undertaking a placement overseas. This document has been developed to give some clear guidelines, in line with the AASW standards and RMIT Social Work and WIL policies.

While this document has been written with the consideration of AASW standards and RMIT Social Work and WIL policies, RMIT Social Work as a discipline may have additional requirements to uphold the integrity of the program. All applications for overseas placements **must** be carried out in consultation with, and approved by, the Field Education Coordinator and the GUSS WIL and Mobility Team.

The document is accurate as of October, 2018. For updates on this document please refer to your program Canvas shell.

### 1. AASW and Overseas Placements

The Australian Association of Social Workers stipulates that fifty per cent (500 hours) of the Field Education program must be undertaken in Australia. If a student is granted RPL for field education they are **not** able to complete their sole placement overseas.

The AASW stipulates that:

*“Field Educators must have at least two years’ experience and be eligible for membership of either the professional social work association in the country where placement is undertaken, or the AASW. (Australian Social Work and Accreditation Standards, 2014)*

<https://www.aasw.asn.au/document/item/3553>

The placement **must** meet all general Field Education requirements in addition to this.

## 2. RMIT Social Work Field Education Requirements

### 2.1 Principles

- a) Must be supervised by a social worker onsite (in host country) who meets the AASW requirements.
- b) The Overseas Host Agency is an organisational base that a permanent RMIT staff member with an ongoing, active relationship with, or that RMIT has an MoU with.
- c) The Overseas Host Agency has key link with a permanent RMIT Social Work staff member.
- d) Ideally, there should be a minimum 2 students at the host agency at the same time.
- e) Adequate RMIT Social Work Field Education resources to maintain appropriate contact with all parties during placements.
- f) The placement must offer suitable learning that meets RMIT final placement requirements.

- g) The country in which the placement will take place must satisfy the requirements of a risk assessment conducted by the School of Global, Urban and Social Studies.
- h) Only final placement students are eligible to undertake a placement overseas.

Institutions which currently meet these requirements fall into the following categories.

- Universities with whom RMIT has global student exchange agreement.
- Universities with whom RMIT or Global Urban and Social Studies has developed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU).
- NGOs in relationship with RMIT staff, offering placements which meet the AASW / RMIT field education guidelines and with whom a formal partnership / MOU has been documented.

## 2.2 Student Eligibility

Students may be considered for an overseas placement if they have:

- a) Passed social work field education 1/A without any concerns in performance having been identified during the placement
- b) Completed their first placement in Australia (not RPL)
- c) Student has achieved at least a credit average for core social work courses

Students need to demonstrate their suitability to undertake their placement overseas through participation in pre-placement briefings and engage with the EOI process.

Please note that students planning to complete their placement while on exchange will also need to satisfy the eligibility requirements as outlined on the [RMIT Exchange page](#).

## 2.3 Graduation considerations

Please note that due to timing of various placement opportunities, there may be implications for your plans to graduate. It is advisable to meet with your Program Manager to assess how overseas placements may affect your course progression, and plan accordingly.

In addition, if you have no courses left to complete once you return to Australia following your placement, this could leave you ineligible for available funding such as [OS Help](#) or New Colombo Plan Scholarships. Please keep this in mind when planning for your placement.

## 2.4 Undertaking Placement while on exchange

It may be possible to complete your placement as part of an exchange program completed with one of the University's partner institutions. There are few factors that you need to consider before pursuing this option:

- The extent to which semester dates of overseas university can be accommodated within the RMIT program
- The requirement for enrolment in on campus classes alongside placement at exchange university
- Field education requirements of host university whilst also meeting standards of AASW / RMIT (e.g. number of hours on placement may be shorter or longer than 500 hours)

- There may be visa restrictions in country preventing you from completing your placement while on exchange (e.g. Students undertaking exchange to Singapore are not eligible to undertake placements or internships in country.)
- Some partner institutions may only provide a restricted list of courses for incoming exchange students, excluding field education courses.
- Placement Courses overseas may have prerequisites that must be completed in the semester prior which may prevent students undertaking exchange for 1 semester from completing placement.
- Course offerings at partner institutions can change at the last minute, so it is important to ensure you have back up courses available.

It is your responsibility as a student undertaking exchange to investigate the placement courses available at your host institution and to seek approval from your Program Managers and where necessary, the Social Work Field Education Coordinator, for your study plans prior to departure for exchange. If you encounter problems with this process or have any questions, please contact the GUSS WIL and Mobility Team via [guss.wil@rmit.edu.au](mailto:guss.wil@rmit.edu.au).

Please note that approval of a placement is subject to the approval of the Field Education Coordinators and is assessed on a case by case basis.

## **2.5 Procedures - EOI / Selection process**

### **1. EOI Process and Selection Process**

It is important to note that each opportunity for overseas placement will have an expression of interest and selection process. The initial expression of interest is typically by way of a Jotform or Mobi portal page, sent to students via promotions. It is a requirement that you engage fully with the process paying attention to deadline and response requirements, and check your student email frequently for communications.

### **2. Engagement with GUSS Mobility processes**

Students must ensure that they engage fully with the GUSS Mobility processes for registration of their overseas placement. Students are reminded to check their student email frequently and respond in a timely manner to ensure their placement is approved, registered and covered by the relevant RMIT insurance policies.

### **3. Compulsory attendance at the preliminary briefing session**

Students must ensure that they attend all briefing sessions related to their placement. These sessions provide important information regarding the logistics and preparation for your placement.

## **3. RMIT Context**

### **3.1 Registering your approved international placement**

After your overseas placement is approved, it is important to ensure that your experience registered in the University's international mobility management system, [Mobi](#). This is to ensure that you are covered by the University's complimentary travel insurance.

To register your placement, please:

1. Visit [www.outbound.rmit.edu.au](http://www.outbound.rmit.edu.au)
2. Select "Global Exp. Registration: Other Short Programs" from the left hand menu bar.
3. Click "Apply/register now"
4. Enter your RMIT student login credentials
5. Select the year of your placement and then click apply.
6. Click on "OE| Global Experience Registration: Other Short Programs" (listed in red) and complete the Application Submission Terms and Conditions, and 2 application questionnaires listed on the right hand side.

### 3.2 Travel Insurance

Students who have registered their international placements via Mobi and are enrolled as a current RMIT student are automatically covered by the [University's travel insurance policy](#). Under the policy, students are covered for up to 180 days which can include any travel taken either side of their placement program.

Please note that due to legislation requirements, the University's travel insurance policy **does not** extend to international students returning to their home country.

Please also note that there are some exceptions to coverage and you may wish to seek additional coverage for items such as mobile phones and laptops. For a list of inclusions and exclusions, as well as further information on insurance matters, please see the [RMIT Travel Insurance Page](#) for further information.

### 3.3 Services Provided by International SOS

RMIT's partner [International SOS](#), provides a variety of services to students undertaking international mobility activities, and are available at all times for any medical, security and logistical questions or concerns you may have while away.

It is quite common for students to encounter feelings of homesickness and culture shock while overseas, particularly for prolonged periods of time. Students can feel free to reach out to the Global Experience Office for advice on resources closeby, or alternatively, you can use the services provided by [International SOS](#).

### 3.4 Expectations while on placement

While you are on placement, it is important to remember that you are a representative of RMIT University and are required to adhere to the Student Responsibilities as outlined in the [Student Charter](#)

## 4. Available funding/scholarships

Ensuring that you can finance your overseas placement is another important consideration. The below options may be available to you depending on the program you are participating in, and your eligibility for the funding.

### 4.1 New Colombo Plan Mobility Grants

The New Colombo Plan (NCP) is an initiative of the Australian government which aims to lift knowledge of the Indo Pacific in Australia by supporting Australian student participating in semester-based or short-term study, internships, mentorships, practicums and research in 40 host locations across the Indo-Pacific region.

If you choose to undertake your placement in India, facilitated by Centurion University in Bhubaneswar, you could be eligible for NCP funding of \$7,000 to assist you with costs for the program.

To be eligible for NCP funding you must:

- Currently enrolled in a bachelor or bachelor with honours program
- Be an Australian citizen; and
- Not have received an NCP grant previously

There is no application form for New Colombo Plan mobility grants. If you are successful in obtaining a placement with Centurion, your eligibility will be assessed by our Scholarships office and you will be contacted directly with an offer.

### 4.2 OS-Help Loan

Students who choose to undertake a WIL opportunity overseas may be eligible for a loan up to \$7,880 for destinations in Asia and \$6,567 for non-Asian destinations under the [OS- Help loan Scheme](#). To be eligible for this loan, you must:

- be an Australian citizen or hold a permanent humanitarian visa
- have not received OS-HELP on more than one previous occasion
- be enrolled in an undergraduate or postgraduate by coursework program at RMIT
- be a Commonwealth-supported student
- be eligible for HECS-HELP
- have successfully completed the equivalent of at least two full-time semesters of study (96 credit points) towards your RMIT program
- be studying full time while overseas for credit which counts towards your RMIT program
- have at least 12 credit points of study to complete your program at RMIT when you return
- provide a Tax File Number
- not receive an OS-HELP loan from another higher education institution for an overlapping period
- receive approval from [RMIT Global Experience](#) for your overseas mobility activity
- not apply after the completion of your overseas mobility activity.

For further information on the OS Help Loan Scheme, and to apply, please visit the [RMIT Travel Scholarships Page](#)

### 4.3 RMIT Equity Travel Grant

If you will be participating in an international mobility activity for credit in your program in 2019 and can demonstrate financial and educational disadvantage, the [RMIT Equity Travel Grant](#) could assist you in funding your overseas placement. This grant provides up to \$4000 depending on your mobility activity and destination.

For details on eligibility and how to apply, please visit the [RMIT Travel Scholarships Page](#)

### 4.4 Other Funding

There may be other ways to fund your mobility experience. For information on other travel scholarships please visit the [RMIT Travel Scholarships Page](#).

RMIT Field Education Overseas placements Requirements overview	
Host Agency requirements 2.1.a)	Must be supervised by a social worker onsite in host country.
Host Agency requirements 2.1.a)	<i>"Field Educators must have at least two years' experience and be eligible for membership of either the professional social work association in the country where placement is undertaken, or the AASW"</i> <a href="https://www.aasw.asn.au/document/item/3553">https://www.aasw.asn.au/document/item/3553</a>
Host Agency requirements 2.1.b)	Must be placed in an organisational base that a permanent RMIT staff member has an ongoing, active relationship with or that RMIT has an MoU with.
Host Agency requirements 2.1.c)	Must be within an overseas Host Agency that has key link with a permanent RMIT Social Work staff member
Host Agency requirements 2.1.d)	Ideally, there should be a minimum 2 students at the host agency at the same time
Host Agency requirements 2.1.e)	Adequate RMIT Social Work Field Education resources to maintain appropriate contact with all parties during placements
Host Agency requirements 2.1.f)	The placement must offer suitable learning that meets RMIT Social Work final placement requirements, in line with the AASW standards
Host Agency requirements 2.1.g)	The placement and placement organisation must satisfy the requirements of a risk assessment conducted by the School of Global Urban and Social Studies.

<b>Student eligibility Criteria 2.1.h)</b>	Only final placement students are eligible to undertake a placement overseas
<b>Student eligibility Criteria 2.2.a)</b>	Passed social work field education 1/A without any concerns in performance having been identified during the placement
<b>Student eligibility Criteria 2.2.b)</b>	Completed first placement in Australia
<b>Student eligibility Criteria 2.2.c)</b>	Student has achieved at least a credit average for core social work courses
<b>Student eligibility Criteria 2.2.</b>	Must attend pre-placement briefing and engage with the EOI process
<b>Students not eligible 2.1</b>	Students who have been granted Recognition of Prior learning (RPL)
<b>Students not eligible 2.2</b>	Not enrolled in RMIT Social Work Field Education
<b>Final approval</b>	RMIT Field Education Course Coordinator