



2023

**Social Work**

**Field Education**

**Manual**

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What's next...

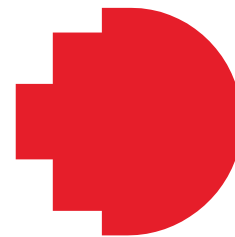
## Table of Contents

Terminology related to Field Education .....	3
Introduction .....	5
Purpose of Manual .....	6
Social Work at RMIT University .....	6
Role of Australian Association of Social Workers (AASW).....	7
Key RMIT Contacts .....	7
Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL).....	8
Part A: Before Placement .....	9
Field Education Information Systems .....	9
Preparing for Placement .....	10
Placement Allocation Process .....	12
Part B: During Placement .....	15
Learning and Assessment Framework .....	15
Field Placement Supervision.....	16
Changes to or Cancellation of Placement.....	17
Part C: End of Placement .....	18
Appendix .....	20
Information for Bachelor of Social Work (BSW) Students .....	20
Information for Master of Social Work (MSW) Students .....	21

## Terminology related to Field Education

Term	Definition
Agency	The organisation where placement will be undertaken. May also be referred to as partner or host organisation.
Australian Association of Social Workers (AASW)	AASW is the professional representative body of social workers in Australia and the accreditation body for professional social work courses in Australia.
Australian Social Work Education and Accreditation Standards (ASWEAS)	The ASWEAS set out the principles, standards, and graduate attributes for social work education in Australia.
Briefings	Compulsory sessions that provide key information about field education.
Canvas	<b>Canvas</b> is RMIT's Learning Management System (LMS).
Changes to or Cancellation of Placement	Process for managing suspension or cancellation of placement.
Equitable Learning Plan (ELP)	The ELP establishes how RMIT can provide ongoing assistance to students with a disability, long-term illness and/or mental health condition.
Field Education (FE)	The course within the Social Work program.
Field Education Integrated Learning Course (Bachelor of Social Work)	A compulsory co-requisite course alongside placement. Two seminars are held during placement and attendance is required.
Field Educator (Onsite)	A qualified agency based social worker, with a minimum of 2 years practice experience. They provide social work supervision and have primary responsibility for the student's field education.
External Field Educator (Offsite)	A qualified social worker, appointed by RMIT, with practice experience of two years or more. They provide student supervision and have primary responsibility for the student's field education where no agency-based social work supervisor is available.
Final Placement Review	The Final Placement Review within the Learning and Assessment Report confirms that the required level of practice competence has been achieved.
GUSS WIL	Team of professional staff, providing administrative support for WIL activities across the School of Global, Urban and Social Studies.
InPlace	InPlace is a web-based software system that provides RMIT staff and students a single interface for managing WIL activities.
Integrative Seminars (Master of Social Work)	The seminars are a field education course requirement and are held during placement to assist students to analyse their practice and critically reflect on their field experience. For MSW students, this seminar is part of their field education course requirements.
Field Education Liaison Officer	An RMIT appointed qualified social worker with at least five years' experience. They provide oversight and support for the student and Field Educator.
Mid-Placement Review	Mid-placement review assesses student's learning to date and refocuses learning for the remainder of the placement.
Personal Planning Form (PPF)	A document assisting the Field Education Coordinator in the allocation process. The PPF is for internal purposes only.

Placement	The individual learning opportunity (or WIL activity) at an agency.
Police Check (PC)	A statutory criminal history check.
Prep WIL Module	An RMIT training module.
Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL)	RPL for the 1st placement only may be granted to students who have significant work experience in the human services sector.
Relationship Agreement	An overarching agreement between RMIT and an agency that usually applies to all future placements with an agency (or area within the agency).
Student Undertaking	Document completed by the student where there is a relationship agreement in place.
Supervision	Supervision is an essential learning process for social work placements, offering educative and administrative support and critical reflection.
Task Supervisor	A supervisor within the agency, who is not a qualified Social Worker with two or more years' experience.
WIL Agreement Form (WAF)	A formal document, outlining each parties' (student, RMIT and agency) responsibilities and placement details. It is an AASW requirement.
WIL COVIDSafe Module	An RMIT training module.
Work Integrated Learning (WIL)	A term used by RMIT to describe workplace learning.
Working with Children Check (WWCC)	WWCC is a screening process for assessing or re-assessing people who work with or care for children in Victoria.



## Introduction

Welcome to RMIT Field Education.

I would like to acknowledge the Wurundjeri people of the Kulin Nations, who are the traditional custodians of the land on which the City Campus of RMIT University is based. I would also like to pay respects to their Elders past and present.

Field education is understood by students as the most memorable and challenging part of their social work program experience. Memorable because “it provides the opportunity to integrate classroom learning with practice and socialises students into their chosen profession through an immersion in real practice contexts. Students make sense of what it means to be a social worker by developing their professional identity, integrity and practice framework” (Australian National Field Education Network (NFEN), 2016). Challenging because field education requires students to undertake 2 unpaid placements of 500 hours and during this time must balance placement, study, work, caring and life responsibilities.

RMIT has a long history of engagement with the human service sector with multiple partnerships to provide quality placement opportunities for students across different practice contexts, including statutory settings, family violence, aged care, housing, mental health clinical, disability, schools, climate change, policy, ethno-specific and First Nations providers. Many agencies have recently moved into new ways of practice, including telehealth and other means of supporting service users remotely. This is an exciting way forward for social work.

This manual provides information and guidelines about the requirements of your placement, including the Australian Association of Social workers (AASW) accreditation requirements and the assessment framework. It is important that you familiarise yourself with this information before engaging and working with communities and professionals while on placement.

I encourage students to embrace their field education experience with open eyes, preparing for it, engaging in it, and learning from it. It is not what placement you are allocated but rather the learning opportunities placements offer.

Make the most of this experience.

**Ronnie Egan**

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Ronnie Egan".

Associate Professor of Field Education

## Purpose of Manual

The manual provides an overview of RMIT's placement policies and processes and should be read in conjunction with the Field Education modules (also referred to as the modules in this manual). Students need to familiarise themselves with the manual content at the start of the semester in which they are enrolled for placement. The first section offers an overview of the RMIT's Social work programs and the Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL) process. Part A explains placement preparation requirements, including pre-requisite tasks and placement allocation. Part B summarises the learning and assessment framework and assessment tools, supervision, attendance requirements and placement cancellation. Part C focuses on placement completion requirements. The Appendix provides an overview of the Bachelor of Social Work and Master of Social Work programs

At RMIT, students undertake two placements of 500 hours each. RMIT University's Field Education policies and practices are guided by the principles and minimum requirements for Field Education as stated in the Australian Social Work Education and Accreditation Standards 2020 (**ASWEAS**).

This manual has been written in line with AASW standards and RMIT WIL policies and all placements must be carried out in consultation with, and with approval of, the Dean of the Global, Urban and Social Studies (GUSS), the RMIT Social Work Field Education Coordinator and GUSS WIL Unit. This document is accurate as of March 2023.

## Social Work at RMIT University

The Social Work Discipline is located within the School of Global, Urban and Social Studies and there are three fully accredited Social Work programs currently offered at RMIT University:

- Bachelor of Social Work (Hons) – four years full time
- Bachelor of Social Work (Hons) & Psychology – five years full time
- Master of Social Work (Qualifying) – two years full time

RMIT's Social Work programs encourage students to develop the ability to critically analyse the cultural, economic, political, social, and psychological factors that structure human welfare. These programs also offer appropriate skills and strategies for use with individuals, families, groups, agencies, and communities to facilitate social change.

RMIT has built relationships agencies that offer social work placements in diverse settings and provide for the development of a range of transferrable skills. These areas include:

- Government sector
- Non-government sector
- Community sector
- Schools
- Northern Territory

RMIT has a strong partnership history with the human service industry, which encompass services in direct practice as well as research and policy. Information about partnerships is available [here](#).

## Role of Australian Association of Social Workers (AASW)

The AASW is the professional body for social workers in Australia and sets the standards for accredited social work programs, which includes placement requirements. These are known as the **Australian Social Work Education and Accreditation Standards** (ASWEAS, 2020 v2.1). Section 4.6 of the ASWEAS 2020 stipulates the provision of a Field Education Manual that includes a detailed framework of all aspects related to field education placements to all participants.

Assessment, learning goals and performance outcomes are established through a consultative process between the University, the Field Educator and the student and are based on the **AASW Practice Standards 2013** and the **AASW Code of Ethics 2020**.

The Practice Standards inform and guide the ASWEAS and outline the practice expectations and requirements for the social work profession and provide an overview of what constitutes effective, accountable, and ethical practice in all social work contexts. To ensure that graduating social workers have the required knowledge, skills and professional attitudes, students are assessed against the eight domains of practice as identified in the Practice

The ASWEAS profession-specific **Graduate Attributes** are itemised under the eight domains of practice and form the Learning Areas of the Learning Plan/Learning and Assessment Report:

1. values and ethics
2. professionalism
3. culturally responsive and inclusive practice
4. knowledge for practice
5. applying knowledge to practice
6. communication and interpersonal skills
7. information recording and sharing
8. professional development and supervision.

RMIT's quality placements satisfy the Graduate Attributes progressively over both placements. The AASW has approved some variations and modifications to the ASWEAS during the COVID-19 pandemic which can be accessed via the AASW.

## Key RMIT Contacts

Name	Role	Contact
Margareta Windisch	Academic Field Education Course Coordinator Bachelor of Social Work Program	margareta.windisch@rmit.edu.au
Rob Cunningham	Academic Field Education Course Coordinator Master of Social Work Program	rob.cunningham@rmit.edu.au
GUSS WIL Unit	Administrative Support	Contact via <b>Student Connect</b>
Ronnie Egan	Associate Professor, Field Education	ronnie.egan@rmit.edu.au
Betty Haralambous	Social Work & Human Services Professional Practice Coordinator	betty.haralambous@rmit.edu.au

## Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL)

At RMIT, Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL) is only available for a full 500-hour placement and only the first of the two Field Education placements. The current **ASWEAS** provides a detailed outline of Field Education Standards for RPL, see section 4.7

RPL may be granted to students who have at least three years equivalent full-time work experience in the health and human services sector and have demonstrated social work practice skills such as assessment, advocacy, counselling, community work and research. The equivalent of at least one year of this experience must be within three years of applying for RPL. This experience must be in a context that is equivalent to the type of setting used for a first Social Work Field Education placement.

Applying for RPL is a two-stage process and students must ensure that they are aware of the application dates for each of the two stages. Please see Recognition of Prior Learning section on the Program Canvas sites for more detailed information, including online application forms, other documents, and a comprehensive overview of RPL criteria and processes.

Students must also attend an information session. Details about the session will be communicated via Canvas.

### **Stage One** - Work Experience Hours, Role/s and Portfolio

#### *Part A - Work Experience Hours/Roles*

Students must meet the requirements of this stage and submit their application via the **Stage 1 – Part A Application Form**.

#### *Part B – Portfolio*

Students must submit the **Stage 1 – Part B Application Form**, and include the following documents:

- Portfolio addressing Field Education Learning Areas
- Cover Letter
- Resume
- Verification of Application by a Social Worker

### **Stage Two**

If students are successful with Stage One, they will be invited to an interview with a panel consisting of Field Education and Social Work Program leaders. During the interview the student's application will be discussed, clarifying questions will be asked, and students will be advised on the outcome of their application. If successful at the interview, students will need to complete the online **Credit for prior study or experience form**.



## Part A: Before Placement

This section outlines processes and requirements that students complete before undertaking placement. It includes an overview of:

- Field Education Information Systems
- Preparing for placement
- Placement allocation process

### Field Education Information Systems

There are a variety of platforms that field education uses in the allocation process. These are outlined in this section. Students need to be familiar with these processes, i.e. InPlace and Canvas.

Students are required to access the Program Canvas and InPlace at several stages during field placement.

#### Canvas

Canvas allows students to participate in course activities, undertake assessments tasks, view, and submit assignments, and receive your grades and feedback. Find out more about Canvas [here](#).

Students must access their BH105 (BSW), BH106 (BSW) or MC150 (MSW) Program Canvas for field education related information, announcements, and modules.

The Field Education Modules are accessed via Canvas and have been designed to prepare students for their field placement. The modules allow students to move through the program information at their own pace and to revisit information as necessary. Students must confirm that they have completed the modules when they submit their PPF. Students who receive RPL for Field Education A/1, must also complete these modules.

#### InPlace

**InPlace** is a web-based software system that provides RMIT staff and students with a single interface for managing GUSS WIL activities. The InPlace Student Portal allows you to nominate for an advertised WIL opportunity and review details of WIL activities that have been allocated to you.

Students will be required to upload, and update, National Police Check, Victorian Working with Children Check and immunisation declaration form (if required). The following forms will also be available within InPlace:

- Personal Planning Form (PPF)
- Allocation Update
- Self-sourced & Work-based Placement Proposal
- Student Undertaking
- Overnight Program Participation

If assistance is required in using InPlace, students can contact GUSS WIL via Student Connect.

## Preparing for Placement

This section covers the following components that students need to consider in preparation for the placement experience:

- Readiness for placement
- Communication requirements
- Driver's licence, private vehicle use, and transport costs
- Insurance
- Conflict of Interest
- Code of conduct
- Equity considerations & reasonable adjustments

This section includes both administrative requirements as well as requirements from the AASW related to professional expectations and conduct.

### Readiness for Placement

Before commencing placement, all students are required to:

- check their eligibility to enrol into the field education course
- enrol in the field education course
- read the GUSS WIL field education newsletters and information emails
- attend scheduled briefing sessions, communicated via the newsletter and Canvas program pages
- complete the *Social Work Field Education Modules* on the BH105, BH106 or MC150 program Canvas site
- complete the Personal Planning Form (PPF) in InPlace and provide a current CV (resume) via the PPF.
- complete a current National Police Check and a Victorian Working with Children Check (WWCC).
- complete any agency or placement specific requirements such as an international police check, fit testing, NDIS check or the *RMIT Social Work Immunisation Declaration* form where immunisation is required. Students can find more information about this in their Canvas modules.

We recommend that students also complete:

- complete the **RMIT Prep WIL** and **RMIT WIL COVIDSafe Module**

RMIT Social Work reserves the right to determine whether a student is ready to undertake placement, regardless of whether the student is enrolled in Field Education. Students may not be considered “ready” for placement if:

- they have been allocated a placement twice but have not received a confirmed placement offer after they have completed interviews.
- there are concerns related to the student's wellbeing; and/or
- the prerequisite courses or pre-placement tasks have not been completed.

### Communication with students

There are a range of communication processes that students must become familiar with to stay informed. These include Canvas program announcements, scheduled briefing sessions, newsletters, and other email communications.

All students who are enrolled in Field Education will be subscribed to the Social Work Field Education Newsletter.

Students will receive newsletters in the semester before they commence placement. For example, if you are enrolled in Field Education for semester two, you will begin receiving the newsletter in Semester 1.

Newsletter content will include:

- key dates and timelines
- information about key processes and required tasks
- dates of briefings and “drop in” sessions
- agency profiles
- support services
- any changes to conditions impacting on placements

### **Driver’s licence, private vehicle usage and transport costs**

Most agencies require students to have a full driver’s licence if they are to drive the agency vehicle. Please note that students are not permitted to transport clients in their own private vehicle. Students should note that their placement options may be limited if they do not possess a current Victorian Drivers’ licence.

Costs associated with travel to and from placement are the student’s responsibility. There is an expectation that agencies will fully reimburse students for travel costs incurred during the working day for agency purposes.

### **Agency and Placement Requirements**

Agencies often have additional requirements for placements. These requirements might apply to all placements within an agency or only to a particular placement setting. Example requirements may include immunisations, fit testing, training modules and additional checks (e.g. NDIS check; international police check). If there are any additional requirements, they will be listed in the Placement Offer Board, which is sent out to students when a nomination period opens.

Many of these requirements must be completed by a deadline or before the placement commences. Failure to meet the deadline may lead to a placement start date being delayed or the placement being cancelled.

### **Insurance**

RMIT has insurance policies to cover students undertaking approved WIL activities. A list of the insurance policies can be found in the WAF. If an agency requires a certificate of currency, they may request one from the GUSS WIL Unit.

### **Conflict of Interest**

Placements will not be approved in agencies where students have had personal ties as a client, relative or close friend. Students must declare any conflict of interest that may influence the sourcing, negotiation, and finalisation of a Field Education placement. RMIT also expects the host agency to declare any conflict of interest as soon as possible. This means students must discuss any previous, current and/or ongoing relationship with a supervisor or an agency that has been nominated for a potential placement.

### **Student Code of Conduct**

RMIT students’ conduct must be consistent with the **University’s policies** and the **AASW Code of Ethics (2020)**. At all times, students are expected to behave and communicate in a respectful and professional manner. Students are also expected to abide by the host organisation’s code of conduct. Failure to do so may lead to the placement being cancelled early and the matter dealt with under RMIT’s Student Conduct policy. *See section on Changes to or Cancellation of Placement.*

If an agency has any concerns about a student’s behaviour while on placement, they should notify the allocated Field Education Liaison Officer.

### **Equity Considerations & Reasonable Adjustments**

RMIT University is committed to supporting student diversity and inclusion and provides support to students with a disability, long-term illness and/or mental health condition. Students can register with the Equitable Learning Services (ELS) who will work with the student to develop an Equitable Learning Plan (ELP) to be shared with their School. The plan will include any adjustments that are required for study and/or assessment conditions. See the ELS page for more information: [www.rmit.edu.au/students/support-and-facilities/student-support/equitable-learning-services](http://www.rmit.edu.au/students/support-and-facilities/student-support/equitable-learning-services).

A copy of the ELP will be sent to the Field Education Course Coordinator. As the Field Education team commence planning for Field Education the semester prior to enrolment in Field Education, it is recommended students contact their Field Education Coordinator to discuss their ELP as early as possible. It is important that the Field Education Coordinator is aware of any reasonable adjustments during the allocation process. Students are also encouraged to note any reasonable adjustments in their Personal Planning Form.

Please note: The Field Education team does not make these ELP details available to external parties without student consent but may discuss with the student how to raise any required adjustments. A copy of the ELP will be provided to the RMIT employed off-site supervisor and Field Education Liaison Officer.

Within Field Education reasonable adjustments are made to placement and other activities to ensure students with a disability, long-term illness, or mental health condition, can participate in the Field Education course. An adjustment is deemed reasonable if it meets the needs of the student, and the host agency has the capacity to provide the necessary adjustments. For Social Work Field Education, the performance standards required by the AASW must still be met. Students should be aware that planning for reasonable adjustments may impact on the type of placement that they are able to undertake, and that additional time may be required to organise appropriate supports.

## Placement Allocation Process

This section provides students with an overview of the types of placements and key tasks associated with placement allocation. It is important that students are familiar with each stage of the process and the associated requirements. Students must ensure they have complied with each of the identified requirements.

The section focuses on

- Different types of placements
- Placement allocation
- Pre-placement interview
- Relationship agreement and student undertaking
- Confirmation of placement

## Different types of placements at RMIT University

While most students are allocated placements sourced by the Field Education team, a small number arrange their own placement, through the self-sourced or work-based placement process. Interstate and overseas placements are also offered, subject to RMIT and government advice.

Placements can be undertaken in diverse practice fields and settings, such as

- |   |                                 |
|---|---------------------------------|
| ■ Emergency relief                                | ■ Ethno-specific settings       |
| ■ Case work/counselling                           | ■ Community Development         |
| ■ Housing and homelessness                        | ■ Policy, Project, and Research |
| ■ Child Protection                                | ■ Disability                    |
| ■ Mental health                                   | ■ Aging                         |
| ■ Domestic and Family Violence and Sexual Assault | ■ Youth                         |
| ■ Alcohol & Other Drugs                           | ■ Environmental social work     |
|   | ■ Education/Schools             |

### *Self-sourced Field Education Placements*

Students may source their own placements either through their own workplace or informal professional networks. Some students will have personal contacts that may allow them to negotiate a specific placement option and agencies will occasionally offer a direct application process.

To arrange a self-sourced placement, students must first contact their Field Education Course Coordinator. Your Coordinator will review any arrangements and partnerships in place with the agency and advise you if a placement can be considered there.

Students are then required to complete the *Self-Sourced Placement Proposal* form, which is available in InPlace. During this period, students will not participate in the internal nomination process. Students must ensure that they are aware of the GUSS WIL timelines and cut-off dates for the self-sourced placement process.

### *Work-Based Field Education Placements*

Students can undertake one work-based field education placement, provided it meets current ASWEAS (2020) requirements. Students are required to complete the *Work-based Placement Proposal*, which is available in InPlace. Students and their managers must confirm that the student will be located away from their normal employment setting, differentiating their responsibilities as an employee and their placement learning responsibilities. Upon approval of work-based placement by the Field Education Course Coordinator, the *Work-based Placement Agreement* must be signed by all parties.

### *Interstate & International Placements*

The RMIT Field Education program has developed a partnership with an interstate agency, the **Tangentyere Council** in Alice Springs. These placements are available for second placement students in the BSW and MSW. Students must attend a compulsory briefing the year prior to the placement occurring. Students will also complete an application process and participate in an interview with the Tangentyere Women's Family Safety Group staff, prior to allocation.

**Please note:** Students who have been granted RPL are not eligible to apply for interstate placements.

Overseas placements will not be available in 2023.

## **Placement Allocation Process**

Students nominate for available placement offers via our online system, InPlace, during a set period of time. Students are notified of key dates and information through newsletters.

Students receive an email alerting them to the opening of the placement offers for nomination. Placement offers include details of the placement and any criteria outlined by the agency. The criteria may include certain checks (such as an international police check), specific knowledge and/or access to a car.

Students should only nominate for placement offers where they satisfy the following:

- educational needs and learning goals
- the placement criteria
- the placement location
- placement start dates
- number of days per week

The Field Education Coordinators then allocate students according to a placement offer, based on the student PPF, current CV, the placement criteria and the student's availability.

### *Direct allocation*

Students who were not allocated a placement via the nomination process will be directly allocated to a placement based on their PPF, CV, placement availability and criteria.

If a student has not been matched to a placement, the GUSS WIL Team will be in contact prior to the census date. Students, unable to proceed with an allocation, must discuss this with their Field Education Course Coordinator and notify GUSS WIL within one working day from the date of the allocation outcome email

### **Pre-Placement Interview**

All students must complete a pre-placement interview with the agency to assess suitability.

Upon allocation, GUSS WIL will send the student the agency contact details. Students must then email the agency, with a copy of their CV attached, and request an interview. Students need to prepare for the interview by researching the agency and reviewing the placement description.

A placement allocation can only be confirmed, and the Student Undertaking completed, if the interview was successful. Completing an interview does not guarantee a student will be placed in that agency. It is expected that the agency interviewer will provide feedback to the student if they were unsuccessful.

### **WIL Agreement Form (WAF)**

RMIT requires completion of a WIL agreement form (WAF) prior to the commencement of placement. The WAF is a formal document, outlining each parties' (student, RMIT and agency) responsibilities. It also contains details about the focus of the placement, major learning objectives, days, and dates during which the placement will be undertaken, nature of supervision agreed upon and other information relevant to the proposed agreement. This is also a requirement of the ASWEAS (**Australian Social Work Education and Accreditation Standards**).

The WAF includes the following information:

- Agency and student details
- Placement type, duration, field educator, task supervisor, liaison, offsite, specific dates
- Aims and tasks
- Supervision arrangements
- RMIT responsibilities
- Agency responsibilities

## Relationship Agreements and Student Undertakings

From 2023, RMIT Social Work has moved to completing relationship agreements with agencies. A relationship agreement is an overarching agreement that usually applies to all future placements with an agency (or area within the agency). Once a relationship agreement is in place, it replaces the standard WIL agreement form and only requires the completion of the Student Undertaking by the student for future placements.

If RMIT Social Work is partnering with a new agency, GUSS WIL will contact the agency to complete the relationship agreement.

The Student Undertaking is completed by the student, with input from their agency supervisor, and must be submitted to GUSS WIL in InPlace at least **two weeks (10 working days)** prior to the proposed start date.

### Confirmation of Placement

Once the Student Undertaking has been approved by the School, the GUSS WIL Team confirms the placement in an email to all parties (student, Field Educator/Task Supervisor and Field Education Liaison Officer), including a copy of the approved Undertaking, and other key documents.

Students cannot begin placement before the start date listed in the finalised Student Undertaking and must wait to receive the confirmation email before commencing placement. If a change to the start date is required, students must contact GUSS WIL.

## Part B: During Placement

This section outlines processes and requirements during the placement experience. It includes an overview of:

- Learning and assessment framework
- Field Placement Supervision
- Offsite (External) Supervision
- Summary of Roles and Responsibilities
- Hours and attendance
- Placement attendance and record of attendance
- Public holidays and sick leave
- Overnight attendance
- Changes to or Cancellation of Placement

### Learning and Assessment Framework

All students are required to complete an individualised Learning Plan and Assessment report that outlines specific learning goals and performance expectations for their placement. The report is underpinned by the AASW Practice Standards (2013) and Profession-Specific Graduate Attributes (ASWEAS 2020, section 2.2). It is the main learning instrument that guides each placement and helps measure and assess the student's performance against the identified learning areas.



The table below outlines the tools required during the placement learning and assessment phase. It also stipulates the purpose of these tools.

Tool	Purpose
Learning and Assessment Report	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Learning goals and tasks will be developed by the student in consultation with the Field Educator, Task Supervisor and Field Education Liaison Officer. The draft <i>Learning and Assessment Report</i> is provided to the Field Education Liaison Officer for feedback prior to the first liaison visit scheduled between days 10 and 15 of commencement)</li> <li>■ Written feedback and ratings on student performance will be provided by the Field Educator and Task Supervisor (where applicable) in the Mid placement review and Final placement review.</li> <li>■ The student will self-assess their performance via comments and ratings in the Mid placement review and Final placement review.</li> <li>■ The Final review, prepared by the Field Educator, Task Supervisor (where applicable) and student, is assessed as Satisfactory/Unsatisfactory. The Field Education Course Coordinator reviews the report and submits the final grade.</li> </ul>
Mid Placement Review	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ The <i>Mid-Placement Review</i> (approx. day 35) assesses the student's progress and level of performance attained. In this formative assessment, students must document examples of the ways in which they have demonstrated practice competence across the learning areas and achieved the learning goals outlined in the <i>Learning and Assessment Report</i>. A copy of the Mid Placement Review must be provided to the Field Education Liaison Officer.</li> </ul>
Final Review	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ As a summative assessment, The <i>Final Review</i> includes ratings for each learning area and a summary statement in relation to the final grade (satisfactory/unsatisfactory) prepared by the Field Educator, Task Supervisor (where applicable) and student. The report needs to be completed and signed before the placement end date. The <i>Learning and Assessment Report</i> must be submitted within two weeks of the end of placement and uploaded to Canvas. Students will not pass the Field Education course until a satisfactory report has been received and assessed by the Field Education Course Coordinator.</li> </ul>



## Field Placement Supervision

Below is an overview of the supervision requirements during the field placement process.

In line with AASW accreditation requirements, Field Educators for social work students need to be qualified social workers with at least two years of work experience post qualification and be eligible for AASW membership (i.e. have completed an accredited Social Work degree) (ASWEAS, section 4.5.5). As outlined in the **ASWEAS** (section 4.5.6), Field Educators are required to provide a minimum of 1.5 hours of supervision per student for every 35 hours of placement. At a minimum, half of this supervision must be provided on a one-to-one basis. The Social Work Field Educator will observe the student's practice in placements.

### *External (Offsite) Supervision*

The Social Work Field Educator can be either onsite or a university appointed offsite Field Educator (**ASWEAS**, 4.5.7). Where there is no qualified social worker at the host agency to provide onsite social work supervision to students, and yet there are good learning opportunities, supervision may be provided through offsite supervision arrangements by a qualified and suitably experienced social worker nominated by RMIT. External supervision can only be used for one of a student's two placements. If a student is at a placement with external supervision, the student must participate in all individual and group sessions provided. Note: At RMIT, External Field Educators commonly undertake the liaison role.

The table below outlines the roles of each of the key players in supervision.

### Summary of Roles and Responsibilities

Title	Role
Academic Field Education Course Coordinator	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Coordinates the undergraduate or postgraduate field education program at RMIT.</li> <li>■ Responsible for educational aspects of the field education experience.</li> <li>■ Contact if Field Education Liaison Officer is not available.</li> </ul>
Field Education Liaison Officer	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ RMIT staff member who is the first point of contact for the student and agency.</li> <li>■ Assists with the development of the Learning Plan.</li> <li>■ Undertakes liaison meetings with the student and supervisor at least twice during the placement.</li> </ul>
Field Educator	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ A qualified social worker (with two or more years' experience), who is based in the agency and will be supervising the placement.</li> <li>■ Assists with the development of the Learning Plan and participates in the review at the mid and final report stages.</li> </ul>
External Field Educator	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ An experienced, social work-qualified RMIT staff member, who provides supervision where there is no Social Worker available within the agency to provide supervision.</li> <li>■ Assists with the development of the Learning Plan and participates in the review at the mid and final report stages.</li> <li>■ At RMIT, the External Field Educator (offsite) may also be the Field Education Liaison Officer.</li> </ul>
Student	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ During your placement, you are responsible for your professional conduct and ensuring your preparedness for your placement in accordance with the specific discipline-related expectations and codes for appropriate behaviour as outlined by your School (Global Urban and Social Studies).</li> </ul>

Task Supervisor	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ A supervisor within the agency, who is not a qualified social worker with two or more years' experience.</li> <li>■ Provides day to day supervision, assists with the development of the Learning Plan and participates in the review at the mid and final report stages.</li> <li>■ Where the Task Supervisor is the primary supervisor, a social work-qualified staff member will provide additional supervision.</li> </ul>
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## Hours and attendance

The ASWEAS (2020, section 4.1) requires all social work students to complete 1000 hours of field placement. RMIT has divided this requirement into two 500-hour blocks, comprising approximately 70 days of field placement. The start date and required days of attendance are determined by the host agency and can vary. At RMIT, students commonly undertake placement from February to June (Semester 1) and from July to December (Semester 2).

### *Placement attendance and record of attendance*

Students are expected to attend placement for the duration and working hours documented in their Student Undertaking. If these details change, the student must notify the GUSS WIL Team to make the amendments.

### *Public holidays and sick leave*

During placement, public holidays and sick leave are not counted toward placement hours, as per requirements outlined in the **ASWEAS** (2020, section 4.1.1). If students are absent from placement due to illness, the host organisation's process for notifying of their absence must be followed (e.g. medical certificates to be provided to supervisors). If students are absent for longer than five consecutive business days, they must notify their Field Education Liaison Officer.

### *Overnight attendance*

A request for overnight attendance as part of the Field Education experience must be received at least two (2) working days prior to the camp. Participation in camps or overnight events as part of placement will only be approved if the event is part of the agency program and appropriate student supervision is provided. The student is required to complete the **Overnight Placement Form** in InPlace.

Please note that hours will only be credited for the duration of placement activities. Hours completed during the overnight program should be in line with agency requirements. Students should record only actual hours of placement activities on their log sheets.

## Changes to or Cancellation of Placement

Issues arise on placement which generally can be dealt with in conversation between the student and field educator. When these issues cannot be resolved, the Field Education Liaison Officer has responsibility for responding to issues or concerns raised by either the student or field educator. Such concerns may include but are not limited to student progression, student health, organisational changes, student conduct or supervision arrangements.

The RMIT Field Education Course Coordinator is responsible for the educational aspects of the field education experience and will be a contact point for students on placement if the Field Education Liaison Officer/External Field Educator is not available. In circumstances where a placement may be suspended or cancelled, they will liaise with the parties and coordinate next steps.

RMIT's **WIL Procedure** outlines the process for changes to or cancellation of a WIL activity.

## Suspension of Placement

If you are concerned that your health and/or wellbeing is impacting your capacity to complete placement, you must contact your Field Education Liaison Officer/External Field Educator and/or your RMIT Field Education Course Coordinator. There are also **support services** available through RMIT.

## **You cannot suspend or withdraw from your placement without first speaking to your Field Education Liaison Officer/External Field Educator or Field Education Course Coordinator.**

The RMIT Field Education Course Coordinator will organise a meeting (either face to face or virtual) to discuss options and next steps. If a suspended placement can't be resumed, then the Field Education Course Coordinator will need to consider whether the placement is cancelled.

### **Cancellation of Placement**

Under RMIT's **WIL Procedure**, RMIT, or the agency, can cancel a student's placement in response to poor performance on placement or conduct. RMIT Social Work may also cancel a placement in other circumstances, such as the agency no longer able to offer supervision or appropriate learning activities; where there are organisational factors impacting the placement; and where RMIT and/or the student has concerns about the safety of the placement environment.

If you have concerns or are uncertain about continuing with your placement, please contact your Field Education Liaison Officer/External Field Educator as soon as possible. If your Field Education Liaison Officer/External Field Educator is unavailable, you can also contact your RMIT Field Education Course Coordinator. You must not withdraw from your placement without having first spoken to your Field Education Liaison Officer/External Field Educator or Field Education Course Coordinator.

#### *Cancellation of Placement Process*

- Where RMIT Social Work is considering cancelling a placement, the RMIT Field Education Coordinator will discuss the placement with the student, the Field Education Liaison Officer/External Field Educator and agency supervisor.
- RMIT Social Work will determine whether a meeting will be convened to discuss the placement learning experience and student performance.
  - Students will receive at least five working days' notice of the meeting unless the parties agree to meet earlier.
  - The agency supervisor may be invited to attend the meeting to provide feedback on the learning opportunities and student performance.
- The meeting will be an opportunity to discuss next steps.
- GUSS WIL will update their records to reflect the end of the placement.

If the placement was cancelled due to conduct, the Chair may refer the matter to be dealt with under RMIT's **Student Conduct policy**.

Poor performance will be managed in accordance with RMIT's **Assessment and Assessment Flexibility Policy**.

## **Part C: End of Placement**

This section focuses on

- Final Report
- Log Sheets
- Liaison Records
- Review of Final Report and Final Grade

### **Final Review**

The Final Placement Review is a reflection on your placement experience as a whole and how each learning area has been achieved. It is the core assessment document for the Field Education course and involves discussing and writing the Final Assessment Report section in each of the 8 learning areas on the learning plan. You and your supervisor(s) must give a final rating for each area. The Final Review needs to be completed and signed **before the placement** end date and submitted to the program canvas site within two weeks of the end of placement. You will not pass the Field Education course until a satisfactory report has been received and assessed by the Field Education Course Coordinator.

The Final Review is important not only for assessment purposes. You and your supervisors will be asked to provide feedback on your placement experiences. This is important feedback for the Field Education team and can influence future delivery of the Field Education program.

### **Placement Hours and Supervision Recording Sheet**

The *Placement Hours and Supervision Recording Sheet* demonstrate that students have completed 500 hours of placement and the required supervision and must be submitted to Canvas with the Final Report. All sheets must be signed by the student and the agency supervisor. Students will not pass the Field Education course until this document is submitted and reviewed by the Field Education Course Coordinator.

### **Liaison Recording Sheets**

Your *Liaison Recording Sheets* must also be submitted with your *Learning and Assessment Report* and *Placement Hours and Supervision Recording Sheet*.

### **Review of Learning and Assessment Report and Final Grade**

The Field Education Course Coordinator will assess the *Learning and Assessment Report* and *Placement Hours and Supervision Recording Sheet* and will enter a final grade (Pass or Fail).

## Appendix

### Information for Bachelor of Social Work (BSW) Students

#### Academic Requirements

The Field Education courses in BH105 and BH106 are as follows:

##### *Co-Requisite Courses:*

1<sup>st</sup> placement (Field Education A):

- Social Work Field Education A (HWSS2220)
- Field Education Integrated Learning 1 (HWSS2218)

2<sup>nd</sup> placement (Field Education B):

- Social Work Field Education B (HWSS2221)
- Field Education Integrated Learning 2 (HWSS2219)

##### *Pre-requisite Courses:*

- Field Education A: Casework and Advocacy (HWSS1135)
- Field Education B: Community Work (HWSS1139), Social Work Field Education A (HWSS2220), Field Education Integrated Learning 1 (HWSS2218)

#### Field Education Integrated Learning 1

HWSS2218 Field Education Integrated Learning 1 is a co-requisite with Social Work Field Education A (HWSS2220) and focuses on consolidating and enhancing critical reflection skills and examining professional practice issues in an organisational context. The course requires participation in two interactive seminars and submission of two assignments.

Field Education Integrated Learning 1 Seminars are held during placement to assist students to analyse their developing practice and critically reflect on the field education experience with their peers and the academic field education team.

Please note that attendance is compulsory and counted as placement time, the equivalent of one day.

In conjunction with *Social Work Field Education A*, on successful completion of this course a student will be able to:

- reflect on the placement experience and identify value dilemmas, role ambiguity, ethical issues, and a variety of practice issues.
- analyse their direct practice through mutual problem-solving feedback and critical analysis across different organisational settings.
- critically examine their development of a professional social work identity.

#### Field Education Integrated Learning 2

HWSS2219 Field Education Integrated Learning 2 is a co-requisite with Social Work Field Education B (HWSS2221) and focuses on advanced practice skills, as well as examining students transition to the workplace and post-qualifying practice. The course requires participation in two interactive seminars and the submission of two assignments.

Field Education Integrated Learning 2 Seminars are held during placement. The seminars provide students with an opportunity to critically reflect on their placement experience with their peers and the academic field education team. This includes analysing the practice setting by drawing on a range of theoretical perspectives, particularly those concerning power and exclusion and developing appropriate responses to practice issues they identify while on placement.

Please note that attendance is compulsory and counted as placement time, the equivalent of one day.

In conjunction with *Social Work Field Education B*, on successful completion of this course a student will be able to:

- demonstrate graduate social work capability as documented in your placement learning and assessment report
- articulate and critically reflect upon your professional learning and development with reference to social work theories practice approaches and research
- apply contextually relevant ethics and standards for social work practice in accordance with the *AASW Code of Ethics and Practice Standards* in all areas of engagement
- identify and critically appraise the organisational, legal and political contexts of human services policy and practices

## Information for Master of Social Work (MSW) Students

The Master of Social Work (MSW) program is a two-year full time or four-year part time degree.

### Academic Requirements

#### *Pre-requisite & Co-requisite Courses*

- For Field Education 1 (HWSS2206), the pre-requisite courses are: Critical Social Work; Casework Counselling and Advocacy; and Ethical, Legal and Organisational Contexts of Practice.
- For Field Education 1 (HWSS2206), the co-requisite (pre-requisite if part time) is: Discourses of Care; Control and Protection.
- For *Field Education 2 (HWSS2207)*, it is assumed that you will have completed all courses in the Master of Social Work (MSW) program, except *Professional Project*.

### Integrative Seminars

Integrative seminars form part of the MSW field education course requirements, aligning with ASWEAS practice theory integration guidelines (**ASWEAS appendix 3, section 8.11**). Attendance is required and is counted towards a student's placement hours (the equivalent of one day for attendance at the two seminars).

- The integrative seminars provide students with an opportunity to critically reflect on their placement experience with their fellow students and the academic field education team.
- Two integrative seminars (3 hours each seminar) are held for both Field Education 1 and Field Education 2.
- Field Education 1 seminars focus on consolidating and enhancing critical reflection skills and examining professional practice issues.
- Field Education 2 seminars focus on advanced practice skills, as well as examining students transition to the workplace and post-qualifying practice.
- For further information on these integrative seminars, please review module content on **Canvas**.

For MSW students, this seminar is part of their field education course requirements. Attendance is counted as placement time, the equivalent of one day.





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## Acknowledgement of Country

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Image credit: Lou Bloomer (Kamilaroi/Bundjalung)