



# Social Work Field Education Handbook 2024

Abbreviations/Glossary	7
Quick Links	8
Welcome to University of Sydney's Social Work Field Education Program	9
Acknowledgment to Country	10
Welcome to Field Education	11
The Purpose of Social Work Field Education	12
Field Education Accreditation Requirements	13
Field Education Curriculum Components	14
Roles, Relationships & Responsibilities	15
The Field Education Team 2024	16-17
Field Education relationships	18
Roles & responsibilities of the Director of Field Education	19
Roles & responsibilities of the Field Education Managers	20
Roles & responsibilities of the Unit of Study Coordinator	21
Roles & responsibilities of the Field Education Teacher	22
Roles & responsibilities of the Field Educator	23
Roles & Responsibilities of the External Supervisor	24
Roles & responsibilities of the student - Before placement, on placement & for learning on placement	25-27

# CONTENT

# CONTENT

<b>Dates &amp; Deadlines</b>	<b>28</b>
Critical Dates	29-32
Variation in placement dates	33
Completing Tasks, Meeting Deadlines & Keeping in Touch	34
<b>About Placement</b>	<b>35</b>
Placements Arrangements	36
Placement hours	37
Taking a student on placement	38
Rural placements	39
Regional & Interstate Placements	40
International social work placements	41
Placements in your place of work	42
Recognition of Prior Learning	43

# CONTENT

<b>Preparation for Placement</b>	<b>44</b>
Learning Pathway to Placement	45
Meeting inherent requirement	46-47
Undertaking student verification	48-50
The pre-placement form	51
Pre-placement allocation interviews	52-53
<b>Placement Allocation</b>	<b>54</b>
How are placements allocated	55
On receiving a placement offer	56
Rejecting a placement offer	57
Placement interview	58
After the Placement interview	59
If your first interview is unsuccessful	60
Non-progression to placement	61



# CONTENT

<b>While on Placement</b>	<b>62</b>
Conduct on Placement	63
Attendance on Placement	64
Absence and leave while on placement	65
Undertaking other University work during placement	66
Travel and other expenses on placement	67
Academic Plans & placement	68
Financial support while on placement	69
<b>Integration of Learning on Placement</b>	<b>70</b>
Classes	71
Learning Plan	72
Learning Journal	73
Supervision	74
Mid-Placement Visit	75
Mid-Placement Report	76
End of Placement Report	77

# CONTENT

Placement Difficulties	78
Steps to address placement difficulties	79-80
Withdrawn from a placement	81
What follows being withdrawn from a placement	82
If a student cannot progress on placement	83 -84
Appealing a placement decision	85
<b>Keeping Everyone Safe</b>	<b>86</b>
Student Placement Agreements	87
Workplace, Health and Safety	88
Discrimination, Bullying and Harassment	89-90
Intellectual Property	91
Driving on Placement	92
Confidentiality & Privacy	93
Phones, Photos & Social Media	94
Student Insurance Coverage	95
Accidents, Injuries and Critical Incidents	96
Counselling support	97

# Abbreviations/ Glossary

AASW	Australian Association of Social Work
ASWEAS	Australian Social Work Education Accreditation Standards
BA/BSW	Bachelor of Arts/Bachelor of Social Work
BSW	Bachelor of Social Work
Direct Placement	Placement activities involving interaction with service users (Micro Social Work)
FE	Field Education (Term used in the BA/BSW & BSW program)
Indirect Placement	Placement activities involving social research and social policy evaluation and reform (Macro Social Work)
MPV	Mid Placement Visit
MSW(Q)	Master of Social Work (Qualifying)
NPC	National Police Check
PL	Practice Learning (term used for Field Education in the MSW(Q) program)
RPL	Recognised Prior Learning
SCWK3005	Unit of Study Code for Field Education 1
SCWK3010	Unit of Study Code for Field Education 1 students enrolled concurrently in the BSW Honours Program)
SCWK4005/4006	Unit of Study Code for Field Education 2A/2B
SCWK4006/4007	Unit of Study Code for Field Education 2A/2B (students enrolled concurrently in the BSW Honours Program)
SCWK5004	Unit of Study Code for Practice Learning 1
SCWK 5005/5006	Unit of Study Code for Practice Learning 2A/2B
SONIA	Software program used to manage student placements
UOS	Unit of Study
USYD	University of Sydney
WWCC	Working with Children Check

# Quick Links

- ❑ [Faculty Handbook 2024 \(undergraduate\)](#)
- ❑ [Faculty Handbook 2024 \(postgraduate\)](#)
- ❑ [Social Work Inherent Requirements](#)
- ❑ [National Police Check](#)
- ❑ [Student Verification](#)
- ❑ [Working with Children Check NSW](#)
- ❑ [Student Code of Conduct](#)
- ❑ [Student Wellbeing Assistance](#)
- ❑ [Student Representative Council](#)



# Welcome to University of Sydney's Social Work Field Education Program

- ☐ Acknowledgment to Country
- ☐ Welcome to Field Education
- ☐ The Purpose of Social Work Field Education
- ☐ Field Education Accreditation Requirements
- ☐ Field Education Curriculum Components





# Acknowledgement to Country

We would like to acknowledge and pay respect to the traditional owners of the land.

As we share our own knowledge, teaching, learning and research practices within this University may we also pay respect to the knowledge embedded forever within the Aboriginal Custodianship of Country.

# Welcome to Field Education

Welcome to the Social Work Field Education at the University of Sydney.

To field educators thank you for partnering with us. Without you this important component of our students' learning and professional development would not be possible.

Quality field education partnerships are based on mutual respect, communication and collaboration, and commitment to student learning and professional development. We acknowledge and appreciate the generosity of agencies, staff and service users who freely give of their time, resources and expertise to contribute to the education and formation of our students - the future social work workforce and voices of social work.

To our students, those who will undertake your first placement this year as well as those progressing to your final placement, placement provides you with a unique opportunity to get an insider view of a specific field of practice, as well as to be mentored (and inspired) by experienced professionals and service users. I invite you to engage in your field education learning with open minds and hearts, curiosity and generosity of spirit.

Field Education is a distinctive pedagogy of Social Work Education. It provides rich learning opportunities for you to develop your knowledge and skills, to embody and enact the core values of social work: respect for the individual, social justice and professional integrity (AASW 2020).

It is an AASW requirement that all social work students complete 1000 hours of placement. The rationale is that it has been shown that students need and benefit from sustained immersion in a practice setting. I encourage you to see placement as more than completing 'requisite hours' but as a transformative learning experience.



Margaret Spencer PhD AASW member  
DIRECTOR OF FIELD EDUCATION

# The purpose of Social Work Field Education

Field Education is a critical component of social work studies. It is a distinctive process of learning which provides students with the opportunity to:

- Integrate classroom learning with practice
- Learn and practice new skills
- Develop attributes that reflect the core values and ethics of social work
- Develop their professional identity through mentoring and collegial and multidisciplinary practice
- Grapple with the messiness, complexity and indeterminate nature of practice
- Learn and refine the art of critical reflection both 'in' and 'on' practice.

All of this takes time. Hence why social work placements occur over a significant and sustained period of the time.



# Field Education Accreditation Requirements

All Schools of Social Work must comply with the [Australian Social Work Education and Accreditation Standards](#) (ASWEAS). This document outlines the field education requirements.

- Students will complete 1,000 hours of professional practice learning involving no more than three placements .
- At least two placements will involve distinctly different practice learning experiences .
- At least 500 hours of placement experience must be undertaken in Australia.
- No placement will be less than 250 hours.
- 500 hours of placement time will be undertaken in a direct practice role involving the application of professional interpersonal skills .
- Students will complete at least one placement in a professional practice setting with an onsite social work field educator .
- Students in employment will not have a placement in their current work role or under their current supervisor .
- All placements will involve the active involvement of the student in social work roles.

# Field Education Curriculum Components



## First Placement

August - November (See Critical Dates)

Duration for FE1 - 420 Hours  
(approximately 13 weeks based on 4-day week)

Duration for PL1 -500 hours



## Second (Final) Placement

April – August (See Critical Dates)

Duration for FE2 and PL2– 560 hours (approximately 18 weeks based on 9-day fortnight)



## Supervision

Students learn through task supervision provided regularly in the course of day-day practice.

Student learn though weekly one-hour social work specific supervision (individual and/or group mode)



## Placement Classes

**COMPULSORY** Pre-placement seminar

Placement Classes (On Campus)

FE1 undertake 6 x 3-hour classes (see critical dates)

PL1 undertake 4 x 3-hour classes (see critical dates)

FE2 undertake 6 x 3-hour classes (see critical dates).

PL2 undertake 4 x 3-hour classes (see critical dates)

Note: for 2024, NO class time is to be recorded on the placement timesheet. Class hours are now integrated into the 1,000 hours according to accreditation requirements.

# Roles, Relationships & Responsibilities



- ☐ The Field Education Team 2024
- ☐ Field Education relationships
- ☐ Roles & responsibilities of the Director of Field Education
- ☐ Roles & responsibilities of the Field Education Managers
- ☐ Roles & responsibilities of the Unit of Study Coordinator
- ☐ Roles & responsibilities of the Field Education teacher
- ☐ Roles & responsibilities of the Field Educator
- ☐ Roles & responsibilities of the External Supervisor
- ☐ Roles & responsibilities of the student
  - ☐ Before placement
  - ☐ On placement
  - ☐ For learning on placement





# Field Education Team 2024

## Chair of Social Work

Professor Jioji Ravulo

[Jioji.ravulo@sydney.edu.au](mailto:Jioji.ravulo@sydney.edu.au)

## Director of Field Education (Academic Lead)

Margaret Spencer

Room 729 Education Building A35

[margaret.spencer@sydney.edu.au](mailto:margaret.spencer@sydney.edu.au)

## Field Education Managers

Liron Drummond BSW (First Class Hons)

Room 732, Education Building A35

[fieldeducation.manager@sydney.edu.au](mailto:fieldeducation.manager@sydney.edu.au)

Marley Benz BSW

Room 738, Education Building A35

[fieldeducation.manager@sydney.edu.au](mailto:fieldeducation.manager@sydney.edu.au)

## Field Education 1

Unit of Study Coordinator

To be advised

## Field Education 2 (A&B)

Unit of Study Coordinator

To be advised

## Practice Learning 1

Unit of Study Coordinator

To be advised

## Practice Learning 2 (A&B)

Unit of Study Coordinator

To be advised

# Field Education Teachers

**FE2**

- To Be Confirmed

**PL 2**

- To be confirmed

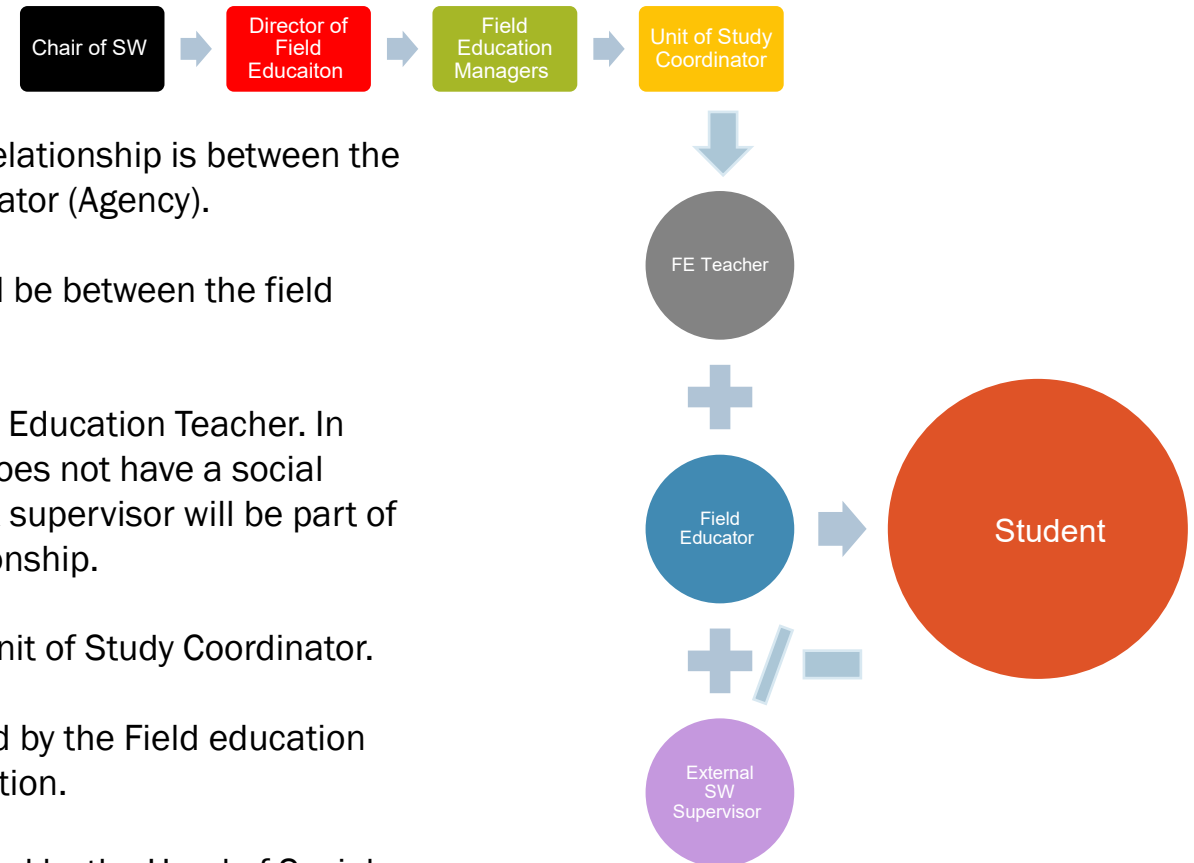
**FE 1**

- To Be Confirmed

**PL 1**

- To Be Confirmed

# Field Education Relationships



Prior to placement commencing the key relationship is between the Field Education Managers and Field Educator (Agency).

The key relationship during placement will be between the field educator and student.

This relationship is supported by the Field Education Teacher. In circumstances where the field educator does not have a social work qualification, an external social work supervisor will be part of this field educator-student learning relationship.

The Field Education is supported by the Unit of Study Coordinator.

The Unit of Study Coordinator is supported by the Field education managers and the Director of Field Education.

The Director of Field Education is supported by the Head of Social Work

# Roles & Responsibilities of the Director of Field Education

1. The Director of Field Education is responsible for leadership, research, and education innovation in field education. This includes:
  - a. Maintain the links between the academic teaching staff and the Field Education program
  - b. Ensuring that all field education placements meet with the ASWEAS requirements for students' learning experience.
  - c. Assist in the recruitment and support of Field Educators, Field Education teachers and External Supervisors
  - d. Maintain effective communication between the university, students, and Field Educators throughout the placement.
  - e. Organise and contribute to orientation and professional development workshops for Field Educators
  - f. Develop and coordinate the Field Education Curriculum in consultation with the Unit of Study Coordinators, Field Education teachers, Field Educators and students.
  - g. Support the Subject Coordinator/s as required in the management of placement subjects including
  - h. Convening and Chairing Recognition of Prior Learning Panels
  - i. Collaborate with the Unit of Study Coordinator, Field Education teacher, Field Educator and students where they is placement difficulties and/or breakdown
  - j. Make decisions about student progression
2. Approve the allocation of Kooroorra (special bequest) funds for Field Education purposes
3. Report to the Chair of Social Work on Field Education matters

# Roles & Responsibilities of the Field Education Managers

1. Arranges student placements in agencies and community groups.
2. Ensures the quality and variety of placement opportunities for student learning.
3. Consults Agencies, Field Educators, External Supervisors, Field Education teachers and students about educational and practice needs and standards in field placement.
4. Keep organisations informed of placement opportunities required and the policies and practices related to field placement; and where possible provides opportunities for agencies to discuss their role in the education and training of students.
5. Ensures that each placement has insurance coverage, and that each student holds a National Police Certificate and Working with Children Check prior to starting placement.
6. Ensures that students are aware of specific vaccination requirements for NSW Health placements.
7. Provides students with opportunities to clarify their learning goals, interests, and specific requirements.
8. Sets the learning objectives for each placement.
9. Provides clear guidelines for the planning, management, and evaluation of each placement course.
10. Informs Field Educators of current social work program content.
11. Provide consultation and support to students, Field Education teachers, Field Educators and External Supervisors



# Roles & Responsibilities of the Field Education Unit of Study Coordinator

1. Undertake the unit of study budget
2. Set up contracts for the field education teachers and external supervisors
3. Set up and manage the Canvas learning site for the unit of study, including updating the reading lists
4. Develop lesson plans for Field Education Teacher
5. Monitor students' progress through close liaison with Field Education teachers
6. Report to the Director of Field Education student and placement difficulties
7. Chair risk-of-placement breakdown meeting
8. Participate in non-progression meetings
9. Enter grades into Canvas and University grade database

# Roles & Responsibilities of the Field Education Teacher

1. Delivers course content in placement classes
2. Facilitates the integration of Learning in the placement and classroom.
3. Is the first point of contact for the student and the Field Educator (and external supervisor) during the course of the placement.
4. The Field Education teacher will:
  - a. Contact the Field Educator and student within the first week of the placement for introductions
  - b. Assist the student in developing their learning contract (later marking the learning plan)
  - c. Conduct the formal mid placement liaison visit, review, and mark the mid placement report
  - d. Work with the student and agency to resolve any difficulties that may arise during placement
  - e. Mark the students end of placement report
  - f. Ensure the student final portfolio is submitted
  - g. Recommends whether the students passes/fails

# Roles & Responsibilities of the Field Educator

1. Offer space and facilities to students in the placement.
2. Identify suitable tasks for student's level of placement and assist the student to develop an appropriate learning program within the Agency
3. Provide opportunities for students with differing needs for educational support and supervision.
4. Inform the University of specific policies in their agency relevant to student placement.
5. Participate in pre-placement planning, including interviewing the student and confirming the placement.
6. Consult and prepare other Agency staff about the student placement.
7. If possible, attend field educator pre-placement seminar and other field education related professional development seminars
8. Advise students of the agency's occupational health and safety policies and procedures.
9. Provide direction, constructive feedback and supervision to the student each week.
10. Inform the student's Field Education teacher of any difficulties that may arise in the placement.
11. Assess the student's performance in accordance with the assessment documents.
12. Contribute to the mid placement liaison visit.
13. Liaise with the Field Education teacher regarding any significant variation of placement hours or dates.
14. If a replacement of Field Educator is required due to unforeseen circumstances at the agency, advise the Field Education teacher and the student of the change in the supervision arrangements for the placement
15. Attend additional placement liaison visits in instances of student difficulties
16. Recommend a final pass/fail grade to the Field Education staff.

# Roles & Responsibilities of the External Supervisor

1. External Supervisors are qualified social workers who are contracted by the Field Education Program to provide social work supervision to students in placements setting where the Field Educator is not a social worker and there is not a qualified social worker available in the Agency to provide supervision.
2. The External Supervisor meets with the student on a weekly basis. Where there are more than one student in the same placement, the external supervisor will provide group supervision fortnightly and individual supervision on the alternative week. External Supervision will be negotiated the Field Education teacher, Field Educator and student(s).
3. The External Supervisor will attend the mid placement visit
4. Attend additional placement liaison visits in instances of student difficulties
5. Recommend a final pass/fail grade to the Field Education staff.

# Roles & Responsibilities of the student – before the placement

1. Participate in preplacement preparation arrangements as specified by the field education managers and program
2. Ensure that subject prerequisites are completed.
3. Completes all required documentation as specified by the field education staff by the advertised deadlines.
4. Attend the compulsory group interview
5. Attend individual interview as requested or indicated
6. Formally disclose any personal history or current issues (e.g., familial or contextual, physical, psychological, or behavioural) that may hinder them from taking part fully in a field placement.
7. Contact the agency once asked to do so.
8. Ensure confirmation of placement is communicated to the Field Education Managers.
9. Respond to communications from the University concerning the placement in a timely manner

# Roles & Responsibilities of the student – on placement

1. Conduct themselves in a manner appropriate for a student in a professional setting and in accordance with the University's and AASW's code of conduct.
2. Advise the Field Educator, External Supervisor and Field Education teacher immediately of any concern regarding their safety or wellbeing during the placement.
3. Comply with all rules, regulations, policies, and procedures of the placement agency, including dress code and punctuality.
4. Maintain an appropriate level of confidentiality in relation to their placement experiences and any information they are made privy to.
5. Inform the Field Educator of any absences and make necessary arrangements to make up time lost.
6. Provide any required documentation to the Field Educator and the Field Education teacher relating to the absence.

# Roles & Responsibilities of the student – for learning on placement

1. Attend placement for the required number of days/hours as set by the Field Education Program.
2. Attend compulsory University based integration seminars/ preparatory workshops (where applicable) and complete associated tasks.
3. Actively participate in the learning process including assigned tasks, activities, and supervision.
4. Demonstrate the capacity to take on and learn from constructive feedback
5. Inform University field education staff of any impediments to learning whilst on placement.
6. Undertake tasks appropriate to the agency and the goals of the placement.
7. Complete required assessments to a high standard and submit to Canvas
8. Prepare for the mid placement liaison visit in consultation with the Field Educator/External Supervisor and Field Education teacher.
9. Actively participate in the mid placement liaison visit and any additional visits deemed necessary to assess progress during the placement.
10. Actively participate in the process of evaluation of their learning and the preparation of the mid and end placement reports.
11. Ensure the end of placement portfolio is submitted to Canvas with all the requisite papers and signature and in accordance with the requested file name.



# Dates & Deadlines

- ☐ Critical Dates
- ☐ Variation in placement dates
- ☐ Completing Tasks, Meeting Deadlines & Keeping in Touch



# Field Education 2 CRITICAL DATES

Field Educators	Pre-placement seminar for field educators	Wednesday 3 April 2024 3-5pm (online)
BSW Students FE2 2024 SCWK4005 & SCWK4006  <b>Placements must be completed by            Friday, 9 August 2024</b>	<b>Compulsory</b> Pre-placement seminar for FE2	Monday 8 April 2024 11am – 3pm
	First day of placement for FE2	Tuesday 9 April 2024
	Forecast end date for placement for FE2	Friday 9 August 2024
	Mid placement visits for FE2	Between 3 June - 21 June 2024
	Placement classes for FE2	1. Monday 29 April 2024 (9-12) 2. Monday 20 May 2024 (9-12) 3. Monday 3 June 2024 (9-12) 4. Monday 17 June 2024 (9-12) 5. Monday 8 July 2024 (9-12) 6. Monday 22 July 2024 (9-12)

# Practice Learning 2 CRITICAL DATES

<b>MSW(Q) Students PL2 2024 SCWK5005</b>  <b>Placements must be completed by 13 December 2024</b>	<b>Compulsory Pre-placement seminar for PL2 2024</b>	<b>Monday 8 April 2024 5 – 7pm</b>
	First day of placement (unless otherwise negotiated) for PL2 2024	Tuesday 15 April 2024
	Mid Placement visits	Approximately 40 days from commencement of placement
	Placement workshops for PL2 2024	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Friday 24 May 2024 1-4 pm</li><li>• Friday 14 June 2024 1-4 pm</li><li>• Friday 12 July 2024 1-4 pm</li><li>• Friday 2 August 2024 1-4 pm</li></ul>

# Field Education 1 CRITICAL DATES

	Field Educator pre-placement seminar	Thursday 25 July 3-5 pm (online)
BSW Students FE1 2024 SCWK3005 SCWK3010(Honours)  <b>Placements must be completed by 13 December 2024</b>	<b>Compulsory</b> Pre-placement seminar for FE1 2024	Wednesday 31 July 2024 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Lecture 9 – 11 am</li> <li>Class session: 12 - 2 pm</li> </ul>
	First day of placement for FE 1 2024	Tuesday 6 August 2024
	Forecast end date for placement for FE1 2024	Friday 15 November 2024
	Mid placement visits for FE1 2024	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>16 September – 4 October 2024</li> </ul>
	Placement classes for FE1 2024	1. Monday 19 August 2024 (9-12) 2. Monday 2 September 2024 (9-12) 3. Monday 16 September 2024 (9-12) 4. Monday 30 September 2024 (9-12) 5. Monday 14 October 2024 (9-12) 6. Monday 4 November 2024 (9-12)

# Practice Learning 1 CRITICAL DATES

<b>MSW(Q) Students PL1 2024 SCWK5004</b>  <b>Placements must be completed by 13 December 2024</b>	<b>Compulsory</b> Pre-Placement Seminar for PL1 2024	Friday 26 July 2024 (2-4)
	First day of placement for PL1 2024	Monday 29 July 2024
	Forecast end date for placement for PL1 2024	Friday 29 November 2024
	Mid placement visits for PL1 2024	23 September – 11 October 2024
	Placement classes for PL1 2024	<ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>1. Monday 26 August 2024 (3-6)</li><li>2. Monday 9 September 2024 (3-6)</li><li>3. Monday 14 October 2024 (3-6)</li><li>4. Monday 11 November 2024 (3-6)</li></ol>

# Variation in placement dates

Field placements are integrated with the rest of the BSW and MSW(Q) programs, in accordance with pre-requisite and co-requisite requirements detailed in the relevant course handbooks. Significant variations to the pre-determined pattern (including commencing placement early) can therefore only be granted in exceptional circumstances. Variation in dates has implications for:

- Field Educators and agencies.
- Supervision and learning.
- Insurance coverage No student can be on placement if the University is closed, or the Field Education Program staff are all on leave and not being covered by a suitably qualified person.
- The awarding of grades which has a flow on effect for student enrolment.

Field Educators can discuss early or late starting dates with the field education managers as part of placement planning.

Students needing to request a variation to their placement start or finish dates need to communicate their request via email to the field education managers if it is prior to the commencement of the placement. Alternatively, if the placement has commenced the student needs to discuss any variation first with their Field Educator to see if this can be accommodated by the agency. The student must also send a written request to the Unit of Study Coordinator. This written request must include a timetable outlining how they will complete their placement hours by the latest finish date for their unit of study (see critical dates).

# Completing Tasks, Meeting Deadlines & Keeping in Touch.



The following expectations are integral professional social work behaviours. The one thing that service users are most critical of social worker for, is not doing what they say they will do. Not meeting deadlines in practice (completing an application or funding request) can have dire consequences for services users and for agency. Students are expected to

- Complete student verification requirements by the due date.
- Complete placement applications by the due date.
- Attend scheduled meetings with field education managers.
- Regularly check university emails.
- Be prompt in responding to emails sent from the field education team.
- Keeping the field education managers updated of any change in circumstances.
- Be prompt in accepting placement offers.
- Organise, prepare for, and turn up for placement interviews.
- Completing learning plans, reports and assessment by due dates.
- Submitting student portfolio as instructed (e.g., with all signatures).

**PLEASE NOTE**  
Meeting these expectations forms part of our assessment of your readiness for placement and graduation. Failure to meet these expectations will have consequences for your placement allocation. Repeated failure may result in being put on notice to fail.

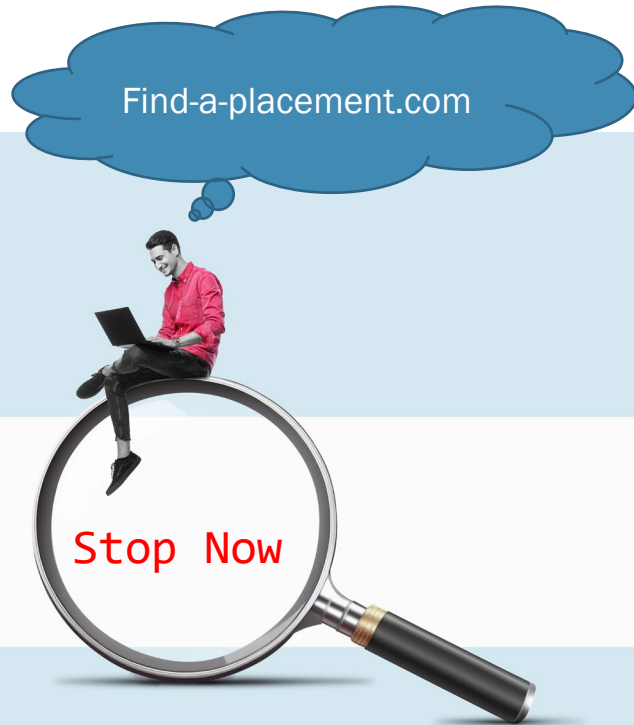


# About Placements

- ☐ Placements Arrangements
- ☐ Placement hours
- ☐ Taking a student on placement
- ☐ Rural & Regional placements
- ☐ International social work placements
- ☐ Placements in your place of work
- ☐ Recognition of Prior Learning



# Placements Arrangements



All student placements are arranged by the Field Education managers.

*Students are **not permitted** to find and negotiate their own placements.*

If a student knows of a potential agency that may offer a placement, they are welcome to share this information with the field education team for them to investigate. The sharing of such information about a potential placement does not guarantee this placement will be offered to the student.

A placement may be direct – that is, the student will interact with clients and have the opportunity to develop casework, groupwork and/or community development and skills. Alternatively, the placement may be indirect – that is the student is working as part of a team on social research, doing a program evaluation or social policy submission. Often placements are a combination of direct and indirect work.



# Placement hours & duration

Unit of Study	Placement Hours
Field Education 1	420 hours
Field Education 2	560 hours
Practice Learning 1	500 hours
Practice Learning 2	560 hours

28 hours of class learning contributes to & makes up the 1000 hours of placement requirement.

The expectation is that a placement is undertaken full-time, 9 days a fortnight. The hours worked on any day cannot be less than 4 hours or exceed 10 hours. Every second Monday morning, BSW students attend classes on Campus.

Field Education 1 is approximately 60 days in duration.

Practice Learning 1 is approximately 70 days in duration.

Field Education 2 and Practice Learning 2 are approximately 80 days in duration.

Depending on a student's circumstance (e.g., caring responsibilities, disability or financial hardship) placement can be undertaken three days per week. However, the placement must be completed within the designated time period in order to progress to the next units of study.

**All placements must be completed by 13 December 2024.** For legal and insurance reasons students cannot be on placement during periods of University closure and the month of January (unless this is approved by the Director of Education)

# Taking a student on placement

The Field Education Program values our extensive and strong partnerships with a wide range of agencies involved in social work activities.

Please contact the  
Field Education  
managers – Liron  
Drummond and  
Marley Benz

The University of Sydney Field Education Program is always interested in partnering with institutions and agencies interested in taking a social work student on placement (See Roles & Responsibilities of Field Educators).

Not having a social worker in the agency or a social worker being unable to supervise a student need not be an impediment. The University can provide an external field education supervisor (See Role and Responsibilities of External Supervisors).

There does however need to be a staff member (preferably a related professional) who can provide task supervision on a day-to-day basis.

The University arranges a Student Placement Agreement (a SPA) with every agency offering placements.

The Field Education managers will send out a request for placement offers in March 2024 (for first placements semester 2 2024) October 2024 (for final placements April – August in 2024)

# Rural placement Expression of Interest



Students who come from or have family living in a rural setting and wish to do rural placement should include this on their Rural/Regional placement EOI form.

Students also have the opportunity to undertake a rural placement as part of the University Department of Rural Health program, which provides subsidised accommodation and support to students. The regular placement locations are: [Broken Hill region](#), [Orange region](#), [Emerald region](#) and [Lismore region](#). Other locations are available from time to time.

Students apply for a rural placement through the Social Work Field Education Program. The Field Education Managers send all students enrolled in a field education unit of study a Rural/Regional Expression of Interest (EOI) to complete.

The Field Education Managers invite interested students for a separate interview. Selection for a rural placement is a decision made by the field education team.



# Regional and Interstate placements



The Field Education Program supports students, particularly from country areas to return home to experience social work in the community they grew up in or that they may like to practice social work in once qualified.

The Field Education Program also recognises that undertaking field education creates financial hardship for some students, particularly for students whose families are based in regional centres and interstate, and that returning home can be a viable way to complete a placement.

Finding placements in regional centres and interstate requires a longer lead in time due to regions having existing commitment to take student from their regional social work field education programs. Hence students should contact the [field education managers](#) to express their interest in such a placement 6 months in advance of the allocation process - FE1 and PL1 in February and FE2 and PL2 early November.



# International Placements



International social work placements are arranged on a case-by-case basis. At times international field work opportunities arise and be circulated to students as an 'Expression of Interest'

There are several factors that need to be considered before an international placement is approved

- The placement provides learning opportunities to meet the AASW practice standards.
- The student will have access to professional supervision by a (AASW equivalent) social worker
- The placement allows for the student to complete the requisite hours
- The student can participate in the Unit of Study classes or be cross- enrolled in a University whereby a similar class is offered.
- The placement complies with the University's Student Global Mobility policies.
- Does not impact on other units of study

Students considering an international placement (outside of any placement offered by the Field Education Program via an Expression of Interest should contact the Director of Field Education 12 months prior to the proposed commencement of the placement



# Placement in your place of work

Placements in a student's place of work are strongly discouraged as they restrict a student's opportunity to experience essential new learning and developing an understanding of the breadth of social work practice. **Any requests to undertake placement within a student's place of employment must be made in writing to the Director of Field Education.**

Criteria for undertaking a current work-place placement.

- The student will be seconded to a separate division of the Agency.
- The work they will be doing in that division will be of a different nature to the activity they complete in their paid role. For example, casework with older persons to a division providing out of home care support or a casework role to a policy role in a different section of the agency.
- They will be seconded as a 'student on placement' and not as a paid employee.
- The student will have a different supervisor from the person who supervises them in their paid role.

# Recognition of Prior Learning

The AASW and the University of Sydney's Social Work Education Program acknowledge that students may bring skills, knowledge and experience related to social work with them to their social work degree. In recognition of a student's practice wisdom and experience, it may be possible for students to apply for recognition of prior learning (RPL). **Students in the undergraduate courses (BA/BSW & BSW) and MSWQ can apply for RPL.**

To qualify for RPL, a student must have worked for at least the equivalent of three (3) full-time years in the past seven (7) years in a setting deemed appropriate as a field education setting required for a first-placement student. At least the final year of the student's work experience will be within three years of applying for RPL.

Submit an RPL portfolio that demonstrates competencies against AASW practice standards to the [Director of Field Education](#). Applications for prior learning are assessed by an RPL panel convened by the Director of Education. This panel consist of the field education managers and at least one member of the Social Work Leadership team. At least one member on the panel will be a social worker eligible for AASW membership with at least five years post-qualifying experience, including as a Field Educator of students on first placement. RPL can be granted for part or all of the first placement. A student who is approved for RPL must undertake a final placement in an organisation that provides onsite supervision by a qualified social worker.

To apply for RPL contact the [Field Education Managers](#) for an RPL Package. Submission dates for RPL portfolios: 31 March 2024 and 30 November 2024



A man with a beard, seen from the side, is looking towards a large, ornate Gothic building with multiple spires and arched windows. The building is made of reddish-brown stone. The sky is overcast. The man is wearing a green t-shirt and is standing behind a dark railing.

# Preparation for Placement

- ☐ Learning Pathway to Placement
- ☐ Meeting inherent requirement
- ☐ Undertaking student verification
- ☐ The pre-placement form
- ☐ Pre-placement allocation interviews
- ☐ Rural placement Expression of Interest
- ☐ Placement allocation process
- ☐ Confirming a Placement offer
- ☐ Dealing with an unsuccessful placement allocation

# Learning Pathway to Placement

**BSW and BA/BSW students** undertake their first placement in Semester 2 of Year 3 (or Year 4 for students doing a BA/BSW).

By this stage they have completed a range of required social work units of study, as well as elective liberal arts units. For further details about the BSW and BA/BSW course curriculum [click here](#). By the time they go on placement, students have developing knowledge on topics such as social justice, human service organisations, social work practice theories, Australian social policy, life course development, social perspective of mental health, disability rights and social determinant of health. They also have emerging social research skills and been introduced to professional practice skills such as interviewing and assessment skills, reporting writing, group work facilitation and ethical decision making.

**MSWQ students** come into the program with a related undergraduate degree and prior experience working in human service organisations. They undertake their first placement after they have completed Social Work Theory & Practice (a pre-requisite unit of study offered in Semester 1 of the academic year.) For further information about the MSWQ program [click here](#).



Communication  
Task



Observation &  
Sensory Tasks



Physical Task



Intellectual Tasks



Interpersonal &  
Social  
Interactions

# Meeting Inherent Requirements

Wanting to effect social change for individuals, families and communities is rewarding. However, it also can be intellectually, physically, mentally, emotionally and spiritually demanding. We have a duty of care to ensure that students have the capacity to meet these demands.

For this reason, students must be able to meet the [Inherent Requirements](#) as set out for the course. On admission to the social work program, you were asked to confirm that you can meet these [Inherent Requirements](#).

As a part of your placement application, you will be asked to reconfirm that you can meet these [Requirements](#). Take time to self-reflect on whether you can meet these requirements.

If you are unsure or have concerns you may not be able to meet the Inherent Requirements, please contact the [Margaret Spencer](#) (FE Director) or [Amanda Howard](#) (BSW Director) or [Sue Heward Belle](#) (MSWQ Director)

# Questions commonly asked about the Inherent Requirements?

## **Who decides whether I am capable of meeting the inherent requirements? How is this assessed?**

It is up to you to discern whether or not you can meet the inherent requirement. If in the course of preparation for placement or during placement, you and/or others have concerns about your ability to meet the inherent requirements, you can ask to meet or be asked to meet with the relevant person(s) in the field education team. We may encourage you to speak with a health professional and provide a report regarding your ability to meet these requirements; and any recommendations about what adjustments are required.

## **What if I have a disability or health condition that may make meeting the inherent requirements?**

We are committed to working with students with disabilities, health conditions and students with lived experience; which may require reasonable adjustments in order to meet the inherent requirements. Please contact the [Field Education Managers](#) to discuss your specific issue. Alternatively contact your Program Director ([BSW](#)) or ([MSWQ](#)) or [Inclusion & Disability Services](#). Liaison will occur, if necessary, with appropriate protection for your privacy.

## **What if I have concerns, I may not be able to meet the inherent requirements because of other factors or life circumstances?**

Please contact the [Field Education Managers](#) to discuss your specific issue. Alternatively contact your Program Director ([BSW](#)) or ([MSWQ](#)) or [Inclusion & Disability Services](#). Liaison will occur, if necessary, with appropriate protection for your privacy.

# Student Verification

## Direct all enquiries and questions about the verification process

### Work Integrated Learning

#### Phone

+61 2 9114 4273

#### Email

[student.verification@sydney.edu.au](mailto:student.verification@sydney.edu.au)

#### Opening hours

9am to 5pm, Monday to Friday.

Various State and National laws mandate that persons working with persons at vulnerable stages of life, or whose vulnerability is exacerbated by disadvantage, illness and/or disability MUST have certain clearances.

All students must complete student verification. This involves obtaining a:

- [National Police Check](#) (domestic students ) or [International Police Check](#) (international students).
- [Working with Children Check NSW](#) . While you are on placement you are considered a volunteer, so do not have to pay an application fee for your check.
- Downloading and completing the [NSW Health student verification pack](#) This pack outlines the Vaccination requirements in further detail and outlines the appropriate evidence/documents required, necessary to meet the verification standards set by the NSW Ministry of Health.



# The Student Verification Process

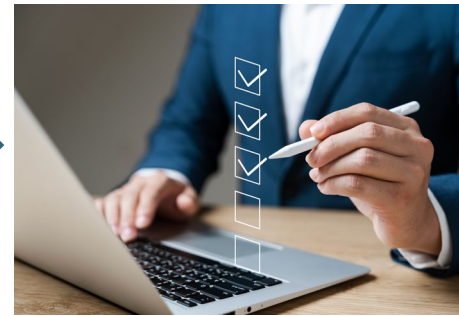
Student verification is processed by the University's Student Verification Office. This process is separate from the Social Work Field Education Program.



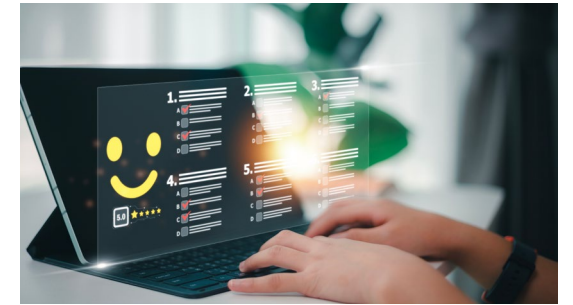
Student completes verification pack & uploads documents to Faculty of Medicine and Health (FMH) SONIA site (access granted and instructions will be automatically sent to all enrolled students by verification team).



Student verification checks all documentation is complete and correct. Send this to NSW Health



NSW Health confirm verification and student is entered to 'Clin Connect' (a database)



Field Education Manager check Clin Connect to confirm student is verified and can be placed in a NSW Health setting

**Direct all enquiries and questions about the verification process to**

Work Integrated Learning Phone +61 2 9114 4273 Email [student.verification@sydney.edu.au](mailto:student.verification@sydney.edu.au)

# Common Verification Issues

If a student has a criminal record or is unable to obtain a Working with Children Check, they should contact the [field education managers](#) to discuss this matter. Any disclosures will be handled sensitively and confidentially.

Often a student may have a specific question about vaccinations, they should direct these questions to [student.verification@sydney.edu.au](mailto:student.verification@sydney.edu.au)

**Completing the vaccination record can take up to 6-8 months therefore start the process early.** If a student has trouble completing their vaccination record by the time they need to submit their preplacement form, they are to submit the form by the due date regardless. Mark on the form verification status incomplete or in progress or leave blank. You can update your verification status on SONIA or inform the field education managers.

If at the time of placement allocation, a student is in the process of gaining compliance and just waiting on one more result or vaccination, NSW Health may offer a student temporary compliance. This will depend on the Local Health District and placement setting. If temporary compliance is granted, the student needs to ensure they complete their compliance (e.g., have serology result added to their record) in the time specified or they may risk being withdrawn from placement.

If a student is not compliant for first placement, they can become complaint for their final placement. Once compliance is met it is valid for both placements.



Let us know about:

Previous work history

Outside work commitments

Caring responsibilities

Financial concerns that may impact on your placement

Personal relationships with others working in a social work

context (e.g., a close relative or you are a service user with

a potential placement agency, a parent or sibling is

employed at an agency that takes USYD students; You

have been a service user)

As a child and/or caregiver you have been or are subject to

a DCJ child protection notification

Practice context that may trigger personal experience (e.g.,

DFV, oncology, palliative care or sexual assault)

Disability

Health considerations

Travel considerations

Cultural and/or religious considerations

Language skills (and willingness to use this language on  
placement)

Anything else you consider relevant

# Completing your pre-placement application form

All students enrolled in a field education unit of study, will automatically be sent to their student email a preparation for placement email. Within this email will be information about how to access the pre-placement form via SONIA. **Read the email carefully and in its entirety. Please complete the form accurately and thoroughly and ensure you click "submit" at the end.**

See the adjacent box that outlines important things for the Field Managers to know and that you should include on the form. The more the Field Education team know about you, will assist the allocation process. On this form, particularly for final placement students, it is helpful for the allocation process to include [professional practice standards](#) you wish to develop. You can state a field(s) of practice you are interested in (for example, child protection). However, this does not mean you will be allocated in this area (See: allocation process) **Ensure you submit the form by the due date as stated in the preparation for placement email.**

# Pre-placement allocation interviews

The Field Education managers conduct preplacement small group interviews with students enrolled in FE1 and PL1. Students will be sent a list of dates for these interviews and asked to book in a suitable time.

## Group Interviews

All students are required to participate in a small group interview. This interview allows the Field Education managers to put names to faces, get to know each student better and assists in the placement allocation process. The interviews provides students with the opportunity to discuss in safe space their emerging understanding of social work, what they have enjoyed in the course to date, and their hopes and concerns regarding placement. It provides you with the opportunity to hear other students' responses and ask question that might be easier to ask in a small group. This interview also serves as a rehearsal for your interview for your placement confirmation. Student feedback about this group process is very positive. Students tell us it is good to realise you are not alone, and that others share common thoughts and feelings.

## Individual Interviews

Students enrolled in FE1 and PL1 can request to have an individual interview with the Field Education Managers if there is something that they wish to share privately. Individual interviews are not to be used to lobby for a particular placement. The Field Education Managers may also invite a student for an individual interview to discuss specific pre-placement information or something that was raised in the group interview that requires further discussion on a one-on-one basis.



# Interviews with FE2 & PL2 Students

Interviews with students enrolled in FE2 and PL2 are *only undertaken on a case-by-case basis and only after* students have submitted their placement application form (see completing the preplacement application form). Unlike for FE1 and PL2 there is no small group interview process. This is because by this stage, the Field Education Program will be aware of you and your progression needs.

The Field Education Managers may invite a student for an individual interview to discuss specific pre-placement information or based on information related to their first placement.

Students enrolled in PL2 with RPL credit for PL1 will have an individual interview with the Field Education Managers.

Student requesting a rural or regional, interstate placement will also have an individual interview with the Field Education Managers



# Placement Allocation

- ☐ How are placements allocated
- ☐ On receiving a placement offer
- ☐ Rejecting a placement offer
- ☐ Placement interview
- ☐ After the Placement interview
- ☐ If your first interview is unsuccessful
- ☐ Non-progression to placement



# How are placements allocated

Much consideration goes into allocating placements to each students. Allocations are based on

- Placement offer description and learning opportunities
- The field educator/agency's particular requests
- Information provided by the student in their preplacement forms and in interviews
- Previous paid and unpaid work experience and (for FE2 & PL2 student's previous placement)
- In placement supervision (for FE2 & PL2 if the student has already had external social work supervision)
- Student Verification status
- Student's place of residence
- Travel Capacity (e.g., driver's licence)
- Placement availability

# On receiving a placement offer



Placement offers are sent to students via their University student email

Placement offers are not sent out to the whole student cohort all at once, rather over a period of weeks. This is because each placement has to be negotiated and confirmed prior to being offered.

All students are guaranteed of being placed. Do not be concerned if your placement is not sent at the same time as your peers.

On receiving a placement offer, students are expected to read carefully the description of the offer and act promptly on the instruction. This is viewed as an indicator of a student's readiness for placement.

Failure to act promptly on the placement instructions may lead to the withdrawal of the offer and a student being placed on notice and at risk of not proceeding to placement.



# Rejecting a placement offer

The Field Education Program encourages students to focus on the learning opportunities all placements offer.

The Field Education Program's priority is on placing students in social work-related settings to develop generic social work knowledge and skills in accordance with the practice standards. A student employment prospects will be best served by the competencies attained while on placement rather than where they are on placement.

If a student is unhappy with their offer, they should reflect on the reasons they are unhappy prior to contacting the Field Education Managers. Valid reasons for rejecting a placement offer include

- The travel time for the placement (is greater than 60-90 from home) AND will cause financial strain AND/OR impact on caring responsibilities.
- The student has a conflict of interest in being placed at the agency; for example, they or a family member or significant other is on staff or is or has been a client of the agency.
- The placement context, learning and activities are identical or is very similar to a student's first placement.

If a student rejects their first placement offer, the Field Education Program will only offer the student one more placement. If the student rejects that offer, they will need to withdraw and re-enrol the next time the Unit of Study is offered.



# Placement Interview

On receiving a placement offer, be open to the potential social work learning the placement has to offer.

Students are to promptly contact (within 3 working days of receiving the offer) the nominated person at the placement agency to arrange a placement interview.

Prior to the interview:

- Carefully read the placement offer
- Research the agency in question
- Consider and research the social work learning in this practice context
- Familiarise yourself with the location of the Agency
- If nervous about doing the interview or if you have additional questions or concerns, contact the Field Education Managers.

The day of the interview

- Dress in smart work casual clothes
- Turn up for the interview 15 minutes ahead of the scheduled time
- Be open to find out more about the potential social work learning the placement has to offer

# After the placement interview

## Successful pre-placement interview

The field education managers, request that field educators advise them via email if the interview has been successful after the interview has taken place.

However, as field educators are often busy with competing demands, if you have not received a confirmation of placement email from the field education managers within 5 days of completing your interview, please email the field education managers with this information.

**It is the responsibility of the student to ensure that their placement is confirmed in a timely manner.**

**Failure to do so may delay the start of placement.**

## Unsuccessful pre-placement interview

Some of the reasons why a pre-placement interview may not be successful.

Student went in with a disinterested attitude

Student was un-prepared for the interview

The field educator did not think that they were the right person to meet the student's needs and/or facilitate their learning.

Student was unable to make links between learning at University and practice within the field

The field educator may tell the students at the end of the interview that they are unsuccessful and provide feedback as to why this is the case.

The field educator may withhold their decision and contact the field education managers to discuss reasons and/or concerns for not accepting the student. *If your interview is unsuccessful see next page*

# If your first interview is unsuccessful

As already stated, there are many reasons for an unsuccessful interview.

While it is understandable you may feel despondent and concerned, try not to be despondent, or for that matter, defensive. Treat this incident as a learning experience.

If your interview is unsuccessful the field education managers will be in touch with you. They may ask to meet with you to discuss the feedback they received from the field educator.

They will work with you to address issues that may have impacted on how you interviewed.

You will be given a second placement offer. **The Field Education team is only obligated to provide a student with two placement offers.**

You will need to go for another pre-placement interview. If you are successful in securing a placement from this interview. You need to follow the steps outlined (in red) on the previous page

**If you are unsuccessful on securing a placement from this second interview,** the field education managers will be in touch with you. Depending on the reason(s) your second interview is unsuccessful, you may not be permitted to proceed with placement that year.

# Non-progression to placement

The Field Education Program reserves the right not to place a student in a social work field education placement in any instance where the performance, personal or professional conduct of the student does not meet the Inherent Requirements for coursework award courses in Social Work, regardless of the fact that the student may be enrolled in the Unit of Study. Agencies are accountable for their quality of service and need to be confident that any student placed under their supervision can meet all agency expectations in terms of professional behaviour.

The Field Education Program may refuse to place a student in a field education agency or refuse permission for a student to undertake or continue in the Field Education Program in situations where:

- the Field Education Manager and the Unit of Study Coordinator have repeatedly attempted but failed to place a student. In these circumstances there will be a maximum of two attempts made to locate a suitable placement;
- a student has presented such difficulties that no agency is prepared to accept them;
- the student is not meeting the Inherent Requirements for Coursework Award Courses in Social Work;
- the student is regarded as a potential danger, nuisance or risk to others.

In order to assist with these complex decisions, students may be required to provide medical or other evidence of their readiness and/or fitness to undertake or continue in placement. If you are not permitted to proceed to placement, the Director of Field Education and Field Education Manager(s) will meet with you to discuss ways of enhancing your 'readiness for placement' and/or discern your career path.



# While on Placement

- ☐ Conduct on Placement
- ☐ Attendance on Placement
- ☐ Absence and leave while on placement
- ☐ Undertaking other University work during placement
- ☐ Travel and other expenses on placement
- ☐ Academic Plans & placement
- ☐ Financial support while on placement

RULES

VALUES

ETHICS

CODE  
OF  
CONDUCT

# Conduct on placement

While on placement students are expected to act and behave in a manner appropriate for a student in a professional setting and in accordance with the [University's Student Charter](#)

Students are also expected to demonstrate an understanding and willingness to comply with the [AASW Code of Ethics](#)

Furthermore, students are to comply with the placement agencies workplace policies and protocols.

A serious breach of conduct may result on a student being put on notice to fail. If the breach is significantly harmful the student may be withdrawn from the placement immediately. (See section Placement Issues)



# Attendance on placement

1. Students are to be punctual and accountable for their time on placement.
2. It is expected that students will attend placement during the normal business hours of the agency or as negotiated with their Field Educator. The details of the actual hours to be worked should be negotiated with the Field Educator, recorded in the learning plan and the time sheet.
3. No working day (time counted as being on placement) will be less than a 4 hours period and no greater than a 10-hour period. Students are only permitted to work 10 hours day only as an exception (e.g., to attend a meeting or event or critical incident).
4. Time taken in both on-site and external supervision contribute towards the total hours.
5. On campus class time is not counted as placement hours. (The time spent in classes is factored into the overall 1000 hours in accordance with ASWEAS guidelines).
6. Students may not undertake placement hours from home, except in exceptional circumstances. The student must apply to the Unit of Study Coordinator for permission to complete placement hours from home. Placement hours completed at home must be documented on the time sheet.



# Absence and leave while on placement

The time frame for completing placements to fit in with commencement other units of study, the University Closure and the Programs agreement with the placement agency allows for little flexibility for absences and leave

1. Students must negotiate all absences and leave with their Field Educator
2. Time taken off for any reason must be made up.
3. Students are allowed Public holidays observed by the agency during the placement period. Student may also negotiate with their Field Educator to take additional religious holidays. These days must also be made up.
4. Students are not to pre-arrange extended leave (particularly interstate and overseas holidays) during placement.
5. Any leave of more than 3 days duration needs to be approved by the Field Educator and Unit of Study Coordinator. Only in extenuating circumstances will leave be considered and approved, such as a
  - a) family illness or bereavement
  - b) unforeseen carer responsibilities
  - c) medical and dental treatment that *cannot be scheduled* before or after placement
6. Medical Certificates must be provided for more than 3 days of sick. Medical Certificates are to be attached to the student's time sheet.
7. If a student is taking regular leave and absence during the placement due to health or wellbeing issues, they may be asked by the Direct of Field Education to provide a health report to confirm the student can meet the inherent requirements. If a student is unwilling or unable to provide such documentation they may be placed on notice to fail.



# Undertaking other University work during placement hours

Student may seek permission from their Field Educator to use placement time to work on learning plans, Mid placement reports and End placement reports but must not prioritise this work above placement learning opportunities and practice.

It is not appropriate for students to use placement hours to do any other university work. Honours students must do the same number of placement hours.

If the students honours project is linked to the placement, for example the student is undertaking research of which their honours project is a discrete component, the student can negotiate with their Field Educator to undertake work related their honours research in the placement. However, this is not to be at the expense of the student placement tasks set by their Field Educator.

Honours Classes cannot be counted as placement hours

# Travel and related expenses on placement

Travel expenses to and from placement are the responsibility of the student. The Field Education Managers attempt to place students in agencies that are within one-hour travel time by public transport from their registered home address.

Expenses related to the student's work in the agency, including travel required during the course of placement work, are to be met by the agency in which the student is placed.

Students may be required by some placement agencies to have their own car. It is expected that students will be reimbursed by the placement agency for the cost of using their private vehicle for placement purposes. Most agencies will require students to have comprehensive motor vehicle insurance.

Students are not permitted to transport clients, including children, in their own vehicle at any time. They may do so, under the direction of the Agency, in the Agency's vehicle.

# Academic Plans & placement

The Field Education Program is committed to ensuring that students with disabilities can successfully undertake placements. A student's University Academic Plan covers the class learning and assessment component of the Unit of Study but not adjustments required in the placement setting.

If a student knows they may need adjustments to be made in their placement setting, it is important that this is mentioned on the pre-placement form. This student should also ask to meet with the Field Education Managers prior to placement allocation to discuss any adjustments they may need. Sharing this information will enable the Field Education Managers to better allocate the student.

The Field Education Program will not disclose information about a student, including about their disability, health or personal issues, without their permission. The Field Education Managers will encourage a student to decide what they wish to share with their Field Educator and others in the placement agency in relation to a disability, health or personal issues.

# Financial support while of placement



The Field Education Program recognises that undertaking full-time field education placements creates significant financial hardship and distress for some students.

Students are encouraged to financial plan for placement from the beginning of their social work degree. Students are also encouraged to discuss their financial concerns with the Field Education Field Managers.

There are several University scholarships and bursaries available for MSWQ and BSW students. There is also financial support available through Student Services. Go to [Scholarships and Financial Support](#). Specific Scholarships for Social Work Placements are regularly announced on Canvas sites and via email.

Students completing a placement can also apply for Kooroora funds. This fund partially reimburses for students experiencing financial hardship for their placement travel cost. Details of how to apply for Kooroora Funds is available of the Canvas Site. Also you can contact the [Field Education Managers](#) for further details.





# Integration of Learning on Placement

- ☐ Classes
- ☐ Learning Plan
- ☐ Learning Journal
- ☐ Supervision
- ☐ Mid-Placement Visit
- ☐ End of Placement Report



# Classes



Students are to attend a **compulsory** pre-placement seminar.

Students are also expected to attend field education (practice learning) class throughout the placement. See critical dates for each Unit of Study.

To pass the unit of study students must satisfactorily engage in these classes and submit all assignments.

Class hours are **NOT** counted as placement hours.

Students can negotiate with their field educator to attend placement before or after class. However, the time they spend doing placement-related activities on the day of class must be no less than 4 hours.

# Learning Plan

The learning plan outlines a student's learning goals for placement and how these goals will achieve them. The student is to submit their learning goal within 3 weeks of commencing placement.

The Learning Plan needs to be written using the Learning Plan template, which can be uploaded from the Unit of Study Canvas site. The Learning Plan template corresponds with the AASW Practice Standards 2013. Students should use the AASW Practice Standards 2013 as a guide for what to include in their Learning Plan, however, goals should be personalised and tailored to the particular placement setting and their learning needs.

Students are encouraged to discuss with their field educator their learning goals and the strategies and activity undertaken to achieve these goals. The student and field educator should also be specific about the indicators by which the learning goals can be evaluated. In other words what will we observe or use to demonstrate the strategies and activities are being implemented and moreover resulting in the learning goals being achieved. about plan is to be completed

The learning plan must be signed by your field educator, external social work supervisor (if relevant) and the student. **Signatures can be handwritten or in e-signature format. Typing your name or the supervisor's name is not accepted.**

# Learning Journal



Students are to keep a learning journal, in which they reflect on their placement experiences and note their development as a practitioner during the placement.

Field Educators are encouraged to support the student use the journal on a regular basis as a learning tool that can be use in preparation for supervision and in supervision , to assist in the student's preparation for the mid placement visit, as well as completing the mid and end placement reports.

Entries in the journal are to be kept by the student and excerpts can be requested to be viewed by the Field Educator and/or Field Education teacher for the purposes of teaching and learning.





# Supervision

Regular supervision is integral to learning on placement.

Student undertaking placement full-time should receive 1-hour of focused or planned supervision per week from their field educator (or external supervisor).

Where there is more than one social work student in a placement agency, supervision may take the form of group and individual supervision. Individual supervision should account for half the student's supervision over the course of the placement.

Good supervision occurs when:

There is a dedicated time set for supervision each week and this is kept.

The field educator and student set an agenda for supervision ahead of time, The student is an active contributor to the supervision process ,

The student comes prepared for supervision bringing the results of journaling using a reflective learning process (Davys & Beddoe 2009) ; research on a topic pertaining to the placement context to be discussed in supervision

Feedback is timely and constructive and received with an openness to learning.

The student takes responsibility for summarising the supervision session, recording this in their learning journal



# Mid Placement Visit

The purpose of the mid-placement visit is to assess the student's learning to date. It will be arranged by the Field Education Teacher, approximately 7-9 weeks into the placement. This will be a face-to-face meeting at the placement agency attended by the Field Educator, the Student and the Field Education Teacher. If a student has an external supervisor, they will also participate in the meeting. If the meeting cannot occur face to face, the visit will be conducted online. Prior to this meeting the student should:

- Read over their learning journal
- Assess their learning against the goals and outcome indicators in the learning plan
- Consider how they will demonstrate their learning in the meeting.
- Consider what they hope to learn and achieve in the second half of their placement.

Prior to this meeting the field educator and external supervisor should:

- Provide the student with constructive feedback about their performance and progress;
- If they have concerns about their performance or progress these should be constructively discussed raised with the student.
- Discuss plans for the second half of the placement.

Ideally there should be no surprises going into this meeting for anyone, particularly the student. If the student, field educator and/or external supervisor have concerns, they should flag these concerns with the field education teacher in advance. This way thought can be given to the facilitation of the meeting to ensure, there is a process in place and time allocated for supportive and constructive discussion.

# Mid-Placement Report

The mid-placement report is to be written by the student, following the placement visit and further discussions with the Field Educator. Students are encouraged to write this report in a critically reflective style (i.e. not in the format of the original learning plan). Students can use the following list as subheadings to structure their report

The mid-placement report should include:

- Description of the main tasks on placement.
- Knowledge being developed of the placement agency and field of practice.
- Progress of learning plan, any changes made and how the learning plan is being used.
- Examples of working towards the following: professional behaviour, openness to learning, communication skills, personal/professional growth and change, reflection of self as a worker, ethical practice, teamwork, integrating theory and practice
- Examples of making the most of supervision and any changes to supervision for the second half of placement.
- Areas for focus of learning in the second half of placement.
- Comments from Field Educators and External Social Worker Supervisor(if relevant)

The Report is usually 1,000- 1,500 words in length and is submitted via Canvas

It needs to be Signed by Student, Field Educator, (and External Supervisor, if relevant).

Signatures can be hand-written or in e-signature format. Typing your name or the supervisor's name is not accepted.

# End of placement report

Students are encouraged to write this report in a critically reflective style and to do this in this over the last two weeks of placement in consultation with their Field Educator (and External Supervisor). The focus of this report should be on the professional and personal growth achieved by the student during their placement and their readiness to proceed to the next stage of learning and practice.

The end of placement report includes

- emerging social work identity and strengths
- transferrable skills and knowledge for future social work practice
- examples of critical reflection and how it has changed/informed practice
- one or more social work theories or practice approaches that have informed their practice, knowledge and professional identity on placement.
- reflection on a placement experience where values and assumptions were challenged.
- Field Educator's (and External Supervisor's) comments, which should include a statement that the student has satisfactorily completed the required placement time, and a recommendation whether or not the student should pass the placement

The average end of placement report is about 1500–2000 words.



# Placement Difficulties

- ❑ Steps to address placement difficulties
- ❑ Withdrawn from a placement
- ❑ What follows being withdrawn from a placement
- ❑ If a student cannot progress on placement
- ❑ Appealing a failed placement decision

# Step 1: Student & Field Educator Talk

In the first instance, concerns should be discussed by the student and the Field Educator. It is best to raise any concerns early. It is best to approach concerns constructively. Students should prepare for such a meeting by undertaking critical reflective journalling. Concerns should be shared in a non-confrontational manner – for example:

1. Avoid reacting and making assumptions.
2. Start from a position of seeking clarification ('help me understand') ;
3. Use I statements (e.g, I feel or I felt; I thought...)
4. Be specific about what you are concerned about (provide examples)
5. Separate the concern from the person and their personality;
6. Provide constructive feedback (i.e., feedback that is balanced and solution focused)

Difficulties which are satisfactorily resolved through discussion between the student and Field Educator should be documented, raised at the mid-placement liaison visit (if the difficulties occur in the first half of the placement), and included in the placement reports.

# Step 2: Talk with Field Education Teacher

A student who feels unable to raise their concerns with the Field Educator should consult their Field Education Teacher.

**A Field Educator who, after discussion with the student, is concerned about the student's progress should immediately contact the student's Field Education Teacher.** The Field Education Teacher may ask the Field Educator to document their concerns.

The Field Education Teacher may visit the placement or zoom with the Student and Field Educator to discuss concerns.

If the difficulties can be resolved at this first visit, then the placement will proceed with the decisions clearly recorded and a copy placed on the student's file. The student's progress will continue to be monitored by the Field Education Teacher and Field Educator.



## Step 3: UOS Coordinator Steps in

If the concerns cannot be resolved following steps 1 & 2 or concern are significant in nature, the Field Education Teacher will refer the matter to the Unit of Study Coordinator.

The Placement Class Teacher will arrange a meeting with the Unit of Study Coordinator, Field Educator and student to discuss the issues on placement.

This meeting will be minuted by the Unit of Study Coordinator. These minutes will be shared with all parties and the Field Education Director and Field Education Managers.

If the concerns are about a student's performance, a performance management plan may be put in place. This objective of the plan is to support the student to improve their performance within a 2 to 3-week period and demonstrate they are on track to proceed on the placement.





# Withdrawn from the placement

A student may be withdrawn from a placement because the Agency is unable to support the student due to:

- Changes in staffing or Agency's operations
- Staff not feeling safe having the student remain in the placement,
- Agency staff and particularly the Field Educator, determining a period of performance management is unlikely to result in the student making the gains required to be track to pass.

A student may also be withdrawn from a placement because:

- There are significant concerns about the student's wellbeing and/or safety if they were to remain in the placement
- There are significant concerns that service users may be adversely impacted if the student were to remain in the placement
- There is evidence that the student is unable to meet the inherent requirements
- There is evidence the student has seriously breached agency protocols and policies, the AASW Code of Ethics and the Student Charter.

# Following being withdrawn from placement



Following being withdrawn from the placement, a student is not to return to, email or contact the Field Educator or any person in the placement Agency without the permission of the Director of Field Education.

Following being withdrawn from the placement, a meeting will be convened by the Director of Field Education. In attendance will be the Unit of Study Coordinator and the student, and any other member of the Field education team the Director of Field Education invites (e.g. the field education manager). A student may bring a support person (e.g., a member of the Student Representative Council). A student cannot have a fellow student as their support person for confidentiality and privacy reasons.

At this meeting, the reasons for the student being withdrawn from placement will be discussed. This meeting will be minuted by the Unit of Study Coordinator. Following this meeting, the Director of Field Education will inform the students how their progression will be addressed.

This may be provided at the conclusion of the meeting, on the day of the meeting or within five working days of the meeting. The Director of Field Education will tell the student orally as well as send the decision to the student in writing.





# Possible outcomes:

- 1. The student will be offered another placement.**  
According to AASW guidelines, no placement can be less than 250 hours. If the student has completed 250 hours or more in the placement they were withdrawn from, they will need to complete 250 hours in the new placement. If the student is withdrawn from the placement before completing 250 hours, they are not automatically credited for the hours they have spent in the placement they have been withdrawn from. The crediting of hours will be at the discretion of the Director of Field Education and based on reasons for the placement being terminated and the student's learning needs.
- 2. The student may be informed they have failed, suspend their studies and enrol in the Unit of Study in the following year.**

# If a student cannot progress on placement



The Field Education Program is committed to enabling all students to succeed in developing their competencies and finding their place in social work through their placement experience.

Withdrawing voluntarily or being withdrawn from placement by the Program can be very disappointing not only for a student but for everyone involved. Our experience, however, is it can also be very transformative, enabling students to take time to address issues that may have prevented them from meeting practice standards.

The Field Education Program will assist a student not progressing to access support and work with them to consider what they may do between enrolments that may make them placement-ready.

On re-enrolment, the Field Education Managers may request the student provide health reports to verify they can meet inherent requirements.



# Appealing a failed placement decision



Appeal



Students who are informed that they have failed placement may appeal to the BSW or MSW(Q) Program Director on the grounds that:

- due process has not been followed; and
- there has been failure to examine all the evidence.

Such an appeal must be made in writing, giving full documentation substantiating the student's opinion that the decision is incorrect.

Please visit: <https://www.sydney.edu.au/students/academic-appeals.html>

Students who have failed are also advised to seek support and guidance from the [Student Representative Council](#).



# Keeping Everyone Safe

- ☐ Student Placement Agreements
- ☐ Workplace, Health and Safety
- ☐ Discrimination, Bullying & Harassment
- ☐ Intellectual Property
- ☐ Driving on Placement
- ☐ Confidentiality & Privacy
- ☐ Phones, Photos & Social Media
- ☐ Insurance
- ☐ Accidents, Injuries and Critical Incidents
- ☐ Counselling support

# Student Placement Agreements

The University of Sydney requires all placement agencies to have overarching written agreements between the two parties. This agreement sets out:

- the responsibilities of each of the University and the external party;
- the insurance requirements for each of the University and the external party;
- the level of supervision which will be provided to participating students ; and
- the applicable intellectual property, confidentiality, and privacy obligations.

If an agency has already signed an agreement with another faculty or area of the University, typically this covers all placements, and you would not need to sign a new agreement. Please let the [Field Education Managers](#) know if a SPA is already in place.

The Student Placement Agreement must be signed before students commence their placements.

Some Placement Organisations also have their own Student Placement Agreements, which they expect students and the University to sign at the commencement of the placement. Organisations should send this form to the [Field Education Managers](#) prior to the commencement of the placement. This form will be signed by the [Director of Field Education](#) on behalf of the University.





# Workplace, Health and Safety

The University of Sydney has a responsibility to safeguard the health, safety, and welfare of its students for the duration of their placement.

Agencies offering placement are required to orient students to the relevant workplace health and safety policies and procedures currently in place in their agencies.

Students should always work within these guidelines.

If a student is directed by another employee of the placement agency to undertake a task or activity that falls outside these guidelines, or the student feels unsafe about undertaking, they should first seek advice from their field educator.

# Discrimination

All students should feel safe and respected in their placement agency. According to Fair Work Australia an employer cannot 'take adverse action' against a person because of their; race, colour, sex, sexual orientation, age, physical disability or mental illness, marital status, family or carer's responsibilities, pregnancy, religion, political opinion or national or social origin. Students are protected by workplace discrimination laws while on placement.

If a student is concerned that they are experiencing discrimination in the placement agency, they should speak to their Field Educator as soon as possible. If the student does not feel they can speak to their Field Educator, the student should contact their Field Education teacher as a matter of urgency so support can be put in place. Such matters are to be reported to the Unit of Study Coordinator.

The Unit of Study Coordinator will convene a face-to-face or online meeting with the student as soon as possible. Depending on the nature of the allegations and the student's wellbeing, they may be instructed to take time off from placement while the matter is investigated. The Unit of Study Coordinator will investigate the allegations by speaking to the Field Educator. If the allegations are about the Field Educator's behaviour towards the student, the matter will be discussed with the Field Educator's manager. Following these investigations, the Unit of Study Coordinator will consult with the Director of Field Education to decide how to proceed. If it is determined the allegations cannot be substantiated or appear to be perceived rather than actual, the Director of Field Education and the Unit of Study Coordinator will facilitate a further meeting with the student. Efforts will be made to resolve the student's concerns so the student may return to the placement, with monitoring by the Field Education Teacher. If the claims of discrimination are substantiated, and cannot be resolved, the student will be withdrawn from the placement and a new placement found for the student by the field education managers.

# Bullying & Harassment

Students have a right to work in a safe work environment free from bullying and harassment . Examples of bullying and harassment include abusive or offensive language and comments, aggressive and intimidating behaviours, belittling, or humiliating comments, threats or unjustified criticisms and complaints . It is important to note it is not bullying for someone to have a different opinion than you or disagree with you, it is also not bullying for a Field Educator to take reasonable action in monitoring a student performance and to provide feedback.

If a student is concerned that they are being bullied or harassed in the placement agency, they should speak to their Field Educator as soon as possible. If the student does not feel they can speak to their Field Educator, the student should contact their Field Education teacher as a matter of urgency so support can be put in place. Such matters are to be reported to the Unit of Study Coordinator.

The Unit of Study Coordinator will convene a face-to-face or online meeting with the student as soon as possible. Depending on the nature of the allegations and the student's wellbeing, they may be instructed to take time off from placement while the matter is investigated. The Unit of Study Coordinator will investigate the allegations by speaking in the first instance to the Field Educator. If the allegations are about the Field Educator's behaviour towards the student, the matter will be discussed with the Field Educator's manager. Following these investigations, the Unit of Study Coordinator will consult with the Director of Field Education to decide how to proceed. If it is determined the allegations cannot be substantiated or appear to be perceived rather than actual, the Director of Field Education and the Unit of Study Coordinator will facilitate a further meeting with the student. Efforts will be made to resolve the student's concerns so the student may return to the placement, with monitoring by the Field Education Teacher. If the claims of bullying and harassment are substantiated, and cannot be resolved, the student will be withdrawn from the placement and a new placement found for the student by the field education managers.



# Intellectual Property

Field Educators are encouraged to discuss matters of intellectual property with students particularly where students are engaged with research and/or document production on behalf of the agency. Where students have made a significant written contribution in the agency, Field Educators are encouraged to acknowledge this work.

For guidance about intellectual property Field Educators should consult relevant organisational policies. Click here for the Univeristy of Sydney's [Intellectual Property Policy](#)

All documents, learning and assessment tools used by agency or developed as part of the placement tasks are the intellectual property of the agency and cannot be used by the student in a different placement or work setting, unless with permission.

# Confidentiality and Privacy

During the course of a placement, students may have access to private and confidential information about clients, communities, or public issues. This information is confidential to the agency and students are directed to not disclose any of this information outside of the placement agency.

When sharing placement experience within the classroom all names of clients, relatives, and significant others mentioned by name in a case record or recording must be altered. Pseudonyms can be used. If it comes to a choice between presenting accurate recordings in the classroom and preserving privacy and confidentiality, the latter must take priority.

Material of a highly confidential or incriminating nature should not be taken into the classroom at all. A student who is not certain whether the recording fits into this category should consult their Field Educator or Placement Class Teacher for guidance.

Information about a client should be retained by the student. They should be given to the Field Educator when their usefulness has ended or at the termination of the field placement and should be stored separately from the official case record.

If a student is concerned that they may have breached confidentiality or privacy throughout their placement, they should discuss this with their Field Educator immediately.



# Phones, Photos & Social Media

Students are not to use their phones for personal reasons whilst undertaking placement tasks. If the student has a personal emergency, which requires them to be in contact via their personal phone, the process for this should be explicitly negotiated with their Field Educator.

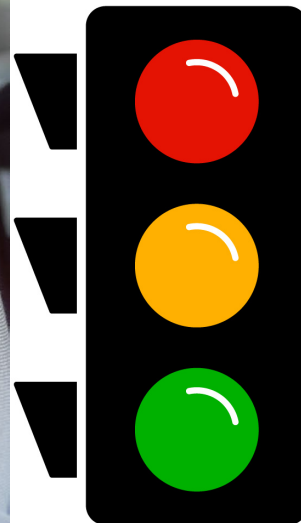
Under no circumstances is content about field placement from a student's personal phone (e.g., photos, text) to be uploaded to social media as this could potentially breach the confidentiality of the agency and the clients of the agency with which the student is placed.

If a student is found to be breaching confidentiality by their actions, the Field Educator this matter will be referred to the Field Education Teacher. The matter will be dealt with as a breach of conduct. The student may have their placement terminated.



# Driving on placement

Some placement agencies may require students to have their own car. The placement agency is expected to reimburse students for the cost of using their private vehicle for placement purposes. Most agencies will require students to have comprehensive motor vehicle insurance.



Students are not permitted to transport clients, including children, in their own vehicles at any time.

Under the Agency's direction, students may transport clients, including children, in the Agency's vehicle.



**TO WHOM IT MAY CONCERN****INSURANCE FOR STUDENTS ON WORK EXPERIENCE/PLACEMENT**

Stated below are the insurance details which currently cover students of the University of Sydney whilst on work experience/placement. These policies apply to:

- a) activities that are a course requirement or are sanctioned by the Dean of the Faculty, authorised officer for the Faculty, or Head of School concerned, and;
- b) students who are not employees or workers of the organisation they are placed with for the purposes of or Workers compensation legislation.

**INSURED:** THE UNIVERSITY OF SYDNEY

**Policy:** Public Liability Insurance

Insurers: LLOYD'S SYNDICATES & OTHERS

Sum Insured: \$20 Million any one occurrence

Policy No: CSINT2302441

Period: 31.10.2023 to 31.10.2024

**Policy:** Professional Indemnity

Insurers: Vero

Sums Insured: \$20 Million any one claim and in the aggregate

Policy No: LPP012483456

Period: 31.10.2023 to 31.10.2024

**Policy:** Personal Accident

The University has in place personal accident cover for students whilst on authorised Work Experience/Course related activities and who are not employees or workers for the purposes of the Workers' Compensation legislation.

Subject to the terms, conditions, limitations and exclusions contained in the relevant policy wording this policy provides the following benefits:

- Death & Capital benefits
- Weekly benefits
- Non Medicare medical expenses

**Please note that this is a summary only. All insurance cover referred to in this advice is subject to the terms, conditions, limitations and exclusions contained in the relevant policy wording.**

# Insurance

Students on field education placements are covered by the University's Public Liability and Professional Indemnity policies. The Public Liability policy covers the liability of students on field education placements and indemnifies the organisation providing the field education placement for damage to property or personal injury that is caused by the negligent act, error or omission of the student.

The Professional Indemnity policy provides coverage to students on field education placements for breach of their professional duty by reason of any negligence, whether by way of act, error or omission.

The University's Insurance policy also covers students for personal accident or injury whilst on placement.

Click here for details about [Student Insurance](#) or phone the University Risk Management office on 9351 4127

# Following an accident, loss of property or any event likely to cause an insurance claim

A student who has an accident, loss of property or is involved in any event likely to cause an insurance claim should observe the following steps:

1. Seek help. If injured, call an Ambulance or seek medical assistance. If you have been in an incident where property has been stolen, contact the Police.
2. Notify your Field Educator;
3. Contact the Field Education Managers and your Field Education teacher. The Field Education Teacher. They will inform the Unit of Study Coordinator, who will file a report in [RiskWare](#).
4. Do not delay taking action.
5. Do not wait to find out whether or not the liability will be accepted by the insurers.
6. Go to [Student Insurance](#)
7. Or phone 1800 SYD UNI (1800 793 864) as soon as possible. This puts the matter on notice. Follow up on all telephone calls in writing.
8. Gather any written evidence relating to the accident or loss of property
9. Do not accept any rejection of your possible claim given over the telephone.





# Counselling Support for students on Placements

Being on placement can be stressful for some students and impact on their sense of wellbeing.

Students who have any personal or family issues which may impact negatively on their performance on placement should contact the [University's Student Counselling Services](#).

The counselling service is both free and confidential and students are encouraged to ask for help as early as possible before placement begins. The counsellors can also provide support for students already on placements.