

Social Work Field Education

Information Sheet for Students: Interstate Students placements

1. Australian Association of Social Workers & Social Work Education

Students enrolled in the Master of Social Work degree are required to undertake two field education topics, SOAD9107 (First placement) and SOAD9208 (Final placement). Placements are an integral part of Field Education topics and enable students to integrate theory into practice in real life situations by providing them with the opportunity to:

- Critically reflect on the interface between learning in the classroom and the field; and
- Develop a range of practice skills including, but not necessarily limited to, critical reflection, relational, assessment, intervention, research, policy and administrative skills.

2. How are placements structured?

The Australian Association of Social Work (AASW) stipulates standards for Social Work education which must be adhered to by Australian Social Work programs. The Australian Social Work Education Accreditation Standards (ASWEAS) 2021 describes guidelines for field education.

These guidelines influence the structure, duration and location of placements and inform our pre-placement processes and decisions. A summary of key guidelines impacting on the organisation of placements is outlined below.

Length of placement: Students are required to complete two 500-hour placements within normal working days and hours.

Placement attendance: At Flinders students undertake placement 4 days per week during the academic year:

- Semester One: Mid February – July
- Semester Two: Late July – December

Variations to placement attendance may be considered (e.g. three days per week). Students requesting a variation or consideration of other accommodations to their placement, must have a current Disability [Access Plan](#). Please follow the prompts on InPlace to upload required documentation or contact swplacements@flinders.edu.au for further information.

Placement learning requirements:

Students must undertake field placements in at least two different fields of practice and organisations, with different client groups, using different methods of social work practice and with a different field educator for each placement. At least one placement will be in direct practice (using professional interpersonal skills) and no placement should be observational only.

Work-based placements:

Placements in a student's place of employment can be considered when there is a clear distinction between a student's employment role and their placement role. These are assessed against ASWEAS 2021 guidelines. Application deadlines apply to enable sufficient time to assess an application before a placement commences. For more information please read the Work-based Placements Information Sheets on the [FLO](#) site under *Work-based Placements*.

Social Work supervision:

Students on placement are required to be supervised by a Social Work Field Educator and receive 21.5 hours of supervision. In the event a host organisation does not have a Field Educator with social work qualifications, Flinders will appoint an External Field Educator (EFE) to provide professional Social Work supervision. The host organisation is required to appoint a task Field Educator to oversee the day to day management of the placement.

3. Where are placements undertaken?

First placement students:

Students mostly undertake their first placement in non-government human service organisations such as Anglicare, Centacare, Mission Australia, The Smith Family, aged care organisations, schools, community centres and neighbourhood houses and so on. Some government human service organisations offer first placements, but these are very limited.

Final placement students:

Final placement students undertake their placements in government and non-government settings. Placements are offered in more complex practice settings and require advanced social work knowledge and skills, and higher levels of autonomy and self-initiative.

Opportunities for placements in child protection or health organisations are particularly difficult to source because, not only are they limited, local students from state and territory Social Work programs are prioritised. Placements in VicHealth are usually not available to Victorian students as there is a fee for placement.

As a reminder to meet the ASWEAS requirements for a final placement:

- The placement must be in a different organisation, with different client groups, using different methods of social work practice and with a different field educator for each placement. The final placement must be a direct practice placement if this wasn't the method of practice for the first placement.
- If RPL has been granted for a first placement there must be an onsite Social Work Field educator for a student's final placement.

4. How are interstate placements organised?

Interstate students are required to find their own placements with the support of the WIL team. This is because interstate placements are highly competitive, and students often have local knowledge that can assist in securing placements - particularly in rural locations.

A Work Integrated Learning (WIL) staff member will work with you to secure your placement.

Interstate students need to email swplacements@flinders.edu.au as soon as possible in the semester before they intend to undertake their placement. In the Subject box of the email write the title: Interstate Student Query adding your student name and ID, with questions related to placement process and requirements.

The WIL team is responsible for ensuring students meet all compliance requirements before commencing their placements and that host organisations have a Letter of Agreement in place.

Contact swplacements@flinders.edu.au and in the Subject box write the title: Interstate Student Query adding your student name and ID, with questions in relation to compliance. There may be a delay in responding to your email if you do not title your email correctly.

5. Are Compliance requirements different for interstate students?

Yes, and this can be confusing for interstate students. Students need to obtain a National Criminal History Check (NCHC) and undertake Safe Environment training (mandatory reporting/child protection training) or their interstate equivalent. Criminal History checks and screening requirements and processes vary from one state to the next.

Students must upload compliance requirements onto InPlace, and meet any additional requirements requested by an organisation, (e.g. immunisations for health and aged care placements). These compliance requirements are compulsory regardless of the kind of placement you are undertaking (First, Final, Work Based Placement).

6. How do I find a placement?

The process for finding a placement is as follows:

- Start your search as soon as possible.
- Draw up a list of organisations you are familiar with, that engage in human service work and that are geographically accessible. Consider organisations where you may know a staff member or where you have volunteered.
- Using the template Introduction to Organisation email (under *Interstate (Non SA) Students* on the [FLO](#) site) identify a social work or leadership contact within the organisation, and email the organisation directly with the placement request. Attach a copy of the Social Work Placement Handbook and Agency Information Sheet (available on the [FLO](#) site under *Placement Documents and Information*.)
- Follow up with the organisation via email and telephone routinely after your initial contact.
- Once you have interest and beginning commitment from an organisation to host your placement, using the self-placement portal on InPlace, submit your proposed placement details as per InPlace Self-Placement Users Guide.
- The WIL team will then assess the placement and confirm the organisation's interest in hosting a student.
- Sometimes the WIL team, through their interstate networks, are provided with a suitable placement offer in a state or territory that meets ASWEAS requirements. If such an offer has been made the WIL team will make contact with students in the area to match them to this placement. There would then be no requirement for a student to source their own placement.

Note:

- The WIL team will only assess and confirm interest with one organisation at a time. Once a placement is confirmed no further leads provided by students will be considered by the WIL team.

7. Cross Institutional Transfer

It is possible for some students who wish to undertake their placements outside of South Australia to apply for Cross-institutional Transfer (enrolling in the topic at another University). This is preferable when considering a placement in another capital city. Contact Ask Flinders if you have a query about Cross Institutional Transfer.