Social Work Field Education
Information Sheet for Students:
Place of Employment Placements

1. Introduction

The field education component for both the Bachelor and Master of Social Work degrees requires the completion of two 500 hour placements. Placements in a student’s place of employment are generally not considered in order to avoid conflicts of interest between employment and education roles and to provide a broad range of learning experiences in accordance with the Australian Social Work Education and Accreditation Standards (ASWEAS) 2012, Guideline 1.2: Guidance on Field Education Programs.

However, students who are able to make adequate workplace adjustments in order to comply with the ASWEAS requirements can apply to undertake a Place of Employment (POE) placement. This information sheet provides an overview of the key steps that must be taken by students during the POE placement application process.

2. University Requirements

In addition to the ASWEAS requirements referenced above, students must also ensure that all academic prerequisites and topic requirements, including attendance at integration seminars and co-requisite topics (MSW), are met. As a result, the start date of POE placements will, as far as possible, be aligned with all other students at the commencement of the semester. Any variation is subject to the approval of the FEC.

3. Application Deadlines


Please note: applications received after these deadlines will still be considered; however we cannot guarantee they will be processed in time for your preferred semester.
4. Application Procedure

Students interested in applying for a Place of Employment placement must:

- Review ASWEAS Guideline 1.2: Guidance on Field Education Programs – 3.1: Placements in a student’s place of employment and familiarise themselves with the requirements. Final placement students who received Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL) must also review Guideline 1.3: Guidance on RPL, Articulation and Credit Transfer as additional requirements will apply in these circumstances.

- Discuss the ASWEAS requirements with their employer and negotiate adequate provisions and adjustments to their current role in order to meet the requirements (see attached checklist).

- After obtaining agreement and approval from their employer, complete the online POE application.

- Upon completing the online application, provide a copy of their current Job and Person Specification and previous RPL application (if applicable) via email.

- Exceptional Circumstances: students who are claiming exceptional circumstances to enable them to do a second field placement in their place of employment will be required to provide further documentation to meet ASWEAS and University requirements. Your POE application cannot be assessed until all supporting documentation has been provided.

  As per the ASWEAS, exceptional circumstances could include: a) Where students are living and/or working in remote areas and there is no suitable placement within a reasonable distance (> 90 kilometres travel) b) Mobility, support, access and equipment requirements of students with a disability that would exclude other placement options c) Extreme financial circumstances. This would involve a significant change to a student’s living circumstances if they were required to undertake an unpaid placement. [Please read the full ASWEAS criteria for further details].

  If you have read through the ASWEAS Guidelines and believe you have a case for exceptional circumstances due to remote location or mobility and access requirements, please contact belinda.wheeler@flinders.edu.au for details of documentation required for assessment. If you believe you have a case due to extreme financial circumstances, you will need to make an appointment with FUSA Student Assist Financial Counsellors to have your financial circumstances assessed. Please contact student.assist@flinders.edu.au or phone 08 8201 2371 for an appointment. The Financial Counsellor will make the assessment and if agreed upon will provide you with the required documentation to support your POE application. Please submit all supporting documentation (if applicable) via email.

5. Assessment of application

After an online application is submitted and all supporting documents received, the student and their employer will be contacted by the responsible FEC to discuss the proposed placement and confirm that all ASWEAS requirements can be met.

If the POE application is approved, both the student and the agency will receive email confirmation from the FEC. All other usual placement-related processes will apply.
refer to the Social Work Field Education Placements section on Flinders Learning Online for more information.

6. Contacts and Enquiries

If you require any information or wish to discuss your application further, please contact the following Field Education Coordinator:

Belinda Wheeler
belinda.wheeler@flinders.edu.au
Pre-Application Employer Discussion Checklist

Students must discuss the following items prior to completing the online application for a POE placement:

Place of Employment Information Sheet for Employers
Have you provided a copy to your employer? This document can be accessed here.

Practical Arrangements

☐ Total number of placement hours to be completed.
  - Social Work placements are 500 hours in length.

☐ Days per week.
  - Students are expected to attend placement a minimum of four days per week. Students may apply for a variation if exceptional circumstances exist – consult the Student Pre-Placement Handbook for more information.

☐ Internal/External enrolment & seminar attendance.

☐ Opportunities for new learning.
  - The ASWEAS states that an ‘allocation of learning experiences not involving the student’s routine work responsibilities, including details of the differentiation between learning goals and usual employment duties’ is a requirement of any POE placement.

Placement Roles

☐ Agency Field Educator (AFE) identified.

☐ Credentials of AFE: are they a qualified Social Worker with two years post – graduation experience? Note: if the AFE is not a qualified Social Worker, an External Field Educator will be appointed by the University.

☐ AFE Roles and Responsibilities.
  - Detailed information about placement roles and responsibilities can be found in the Field Placement Handbook which is available for download here.

☐ AASW supervision requirements: 1.5 of supervision hours for every 35 hours of placement.

Student Role and Supports by the Organisation

☐ Appropriate accommodation, orientation and safe work practices training (if required).

☐ Protected student time to complete topic requirements (i.e., reflection, field assignments).

☐ Opportunities to engage in reflection and learning.