

# Social Work Field Education Manual

*Bachelor of Social Work*

*Master of Social Work (Qualifying)*

SCHOOL OF HEALTH AND SOCIETY

FACULTY OF THE ARTS, SOCIAL SCIENCE AND HUMANITIES

UNIVERSITY OF WOLLONGONG

Prepared by the Field Education Team

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# List of Acronyms/Abbreviations

AASW	Australian Association of Social Workers
ASWEAS	Australian Social Work Education and Accreditation Standards
BSW	Bachelor of Social Work
CPL	Credit for prior learning (UOW term)
ES	External Supervisor (AASW term External Field Educator)
FEC	Field Education Coordinator
IS	Integration seminars
LT	Liaison Tutor (AASW term Field Education Liaison Officer)
MSW(Q)	Master of Social Work (Qualifying)
NPC	National Police Certificate
RPL	Recognition of prior learning (AASW term)
SC	Subject Coordinator
SOWK310	Supervised Professional Practice I (BSW)
SOWK410	Supervised Professional Practice II (BSW)
SOWK916	Professional Practice Placement I (MSW(Q))
SOWK924	Professional Practice Placement II (MSW(Q))
UOW	University of Wollongong
WWCC	Working with Children Check

# Introduction

Welcome to Social Work Field Education in the University of Wollongong (UOW) Bachelor of Social Work, Bachelor of Social Work (Honours), and Master of Social Work (Qualifying) programs. UOW Social Work programs are strong, practice-based programs that are aligned with the Australian Association of Social Workers (AASW) Practice Standards and social work professions. Field education serves as a pivotal component of students' work integrated learning, enabling students to apply social work theory as they develop their identity as social workers in contemporary professional practice contexts. The process of becoming a social worker through fieldwork experiences enables students to engage in social work supervised critical self-reflection which aligns with the AASW Practice Standards. Field Education equips students to refine their thinking, doings, and being in real world contexts as they transition into becoming critical social work practitioners.

The field education experience serves as a confirmation of student's passion for practicing human rights and social justice based social work in a range of settings. Formal student learning plans underpin placement experiences which enable students to report at mid and end placement on progress towards demonstrating they have achieved competence for each of the AASW Practice Standard practice domains. Work based experiences, combined with regular social work supervision and campus-based integration seminars, support students to develop a passion and dedication for the social work profession. Immersive field work experiences undertaking social work related tasks, develops students' confidence in responding ethically and with integrity to a range of real-world dilemmas as they embody the social work profession's AASW Code of Ethics, graduate attributes and AASW Practice Standards. Furthermore, it provides a constructive and mutually beneficial space for learning and growth via supervised critical reflection to take place and for students to also provide valuable contributions to field education agencies.

The effectiveness of UOW's field education program relies heavily on building strong partnerships and solid working relationships between UOW and placement agencies. These partnerships are founded on mutual respect, cooperation, and a shared dedication to helping students develop into confident critical social workers.

The AASW mandates that accredited social work programs include 1000 hours of field education. UOW fulfills AASW requirements through two 500-hour placements in distinctly different practice learning experiences as part of the field education subjects integrated into both Bachelor of Social Work (BSW) and Master of Social Work (Qualifying) (MSW(Q)) degree programs.

Field education courses offer students valuable professional experience across various social work settings. This includes, but is not limited to: Health, aged care, child and family welfare, mental health, community development, policy, and research. Students will acquire essential social work skills with the specific focus determined by their placement setting.

UOW's field education program adheres to the current Australian Social Work Education and Accreditation Standards (ASWEAS). UoW expects students to demonstrate competence in culturally responsive and inclusive practice; engaging with various equity groups; including the Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Trans, Intersex, Queer + (LGBTIQ+) community; First Nations people and communities; and Culturally and Linguistically Diverse (CALD) communities, including refugees and asylum seekers. Consequently, students are required to be mindful of their own biases and practice cultural humility when working with individuals from diverse backgrounds.

The Social Work Field Education team express our gratitude to the agencies, their staff, and the service users who generously devote their time, commitment, resources, and expertise to educate social work students. It is important to note that UoW does not offer any financial incentives to agencies to encourage them to accept students. Agency involvement is driven by the commitment of field educators and agencies to educating the future generation of social workers.

# Pedagogy

UOW's vision for social work education is to create a curriculum that prepares students not only for their studies but also for becoming practicing social work professionals.

UOW views learning as a dynamic process where students gradually adopt the behaviours, language, and interpersonal skills that define professional social work practice.

Student development is not something that happens in isolation, it is a collective endeavour that involves learning from real people and real-life situations. UOW's social work curriculum places great value on understanding how knowledge is used in practice, and this is achieved by studying and analysing actual social work in action. This approach helps generate social work knowledge that is deeply connected to the specific context in which it is applied (Osmond, 2005).

Social Work Field Education teaching methods involve learning from social work professionals and other related professional disciplines in how to respect and preference the stories and lived experiences of service users, caregivers, and others who are directly impacted by social work in increasingly challenging practice contexts. Underpinned by critical social work principles and practices, students can build and expand their values, knowledge, and skills within a rich and nuanced everyday context. The lived experience, expertise and insights of service users and caregivers is paramount, as it grounds curriculum and student's critical social work thinking, being and doings the real-world practice setting.

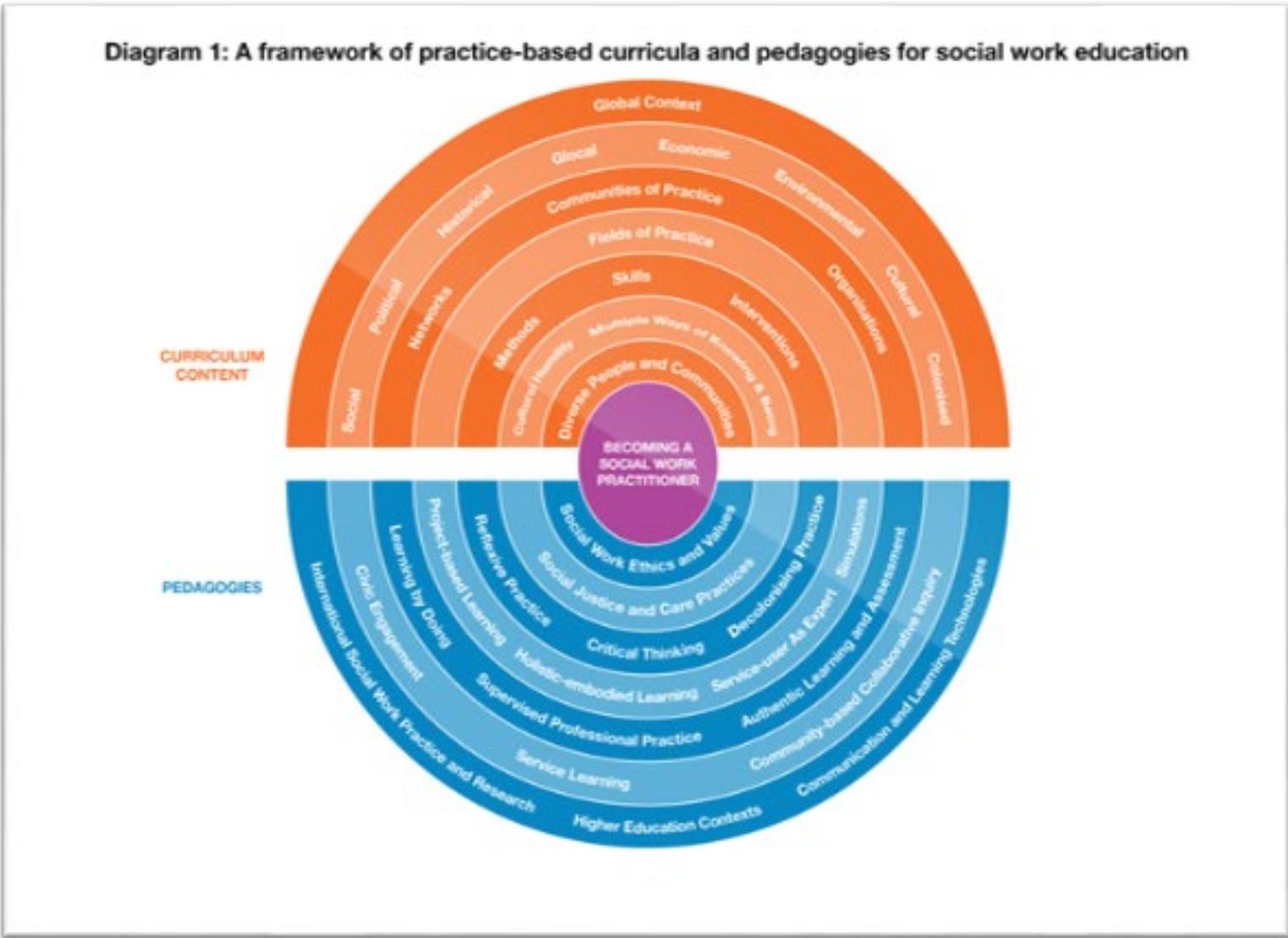


Figure 1: Social Work Field Education Pedagogy.

# Practice Standards

The Australian Association of Social Workers (AASW) Practice Standards (2023) define what is expected of all social workers in their professional practice. The foundation for these Practice Standards is the AASW Code of Ethics, which establishes the core values and ethical responsibilities that guide all social work practice.

These Practice Standards play a crucial role in shaping the Australian Social Work Education and Accreditation Standards (ASWEAS). ASWEAS, in turn, provide the framework for developing the curriculum within tertiary sector social work programs across Australia. Graduates from programs accredited by the AASW can become members of the AASW in accordance with the AASW's Constitution and membership criteria.

To ensure that these practice standards remain relevant in a constantly changing social and political landscape, extensive consultation was carried out during their development. Additionally, they will undergo periodic revisions to adapt to evolving needs (AASW 2023, p.4).

Please refer Practice Standards summary table over page (figure 2).

<b>STANDARD 1</b>	Social workers conduct themselves according to the values, principles and guidelines of the AASW Code of Ethics 2020.
<b>STANDARD 2</b>	Social workers practice in partnership with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples to support their priorities and aspirations.
<b>STANDARD 3</b>	Social workers advocate for policy initiatives and approaches to practice aimed at achieving fair and equitable access for people to social, health, economic, environmental and political resources.
<b>STANDARD 4</b>	Social workers practice respectfully and inclusively with regard to culture and diversity.
<b>STANDARD 5</b>	Social workers practice within a professional knowledge framework informed by a critical understanding of contemporary social work theory and research.
<b>STANDARD 6</b>	Social workers make professional decisions on the basis of a holistic assessment of the needs, strengths, goals and preferences of people.
<b>STANDARD 7</b>	Social workers actively contribute to strengthening and promoting the identity and standing of the profession.
<b>STANDARD 8</b>	Social workers build and strengthen their practice through regular structured supervision from social work qualified supervisors.
<b>STANDARD 9</b>	Social workers monitor their skills, knowledge, and expertise to maintain, improve and broaden their professional development.

Figure 2: AASW Practice Standards (2023)

# Social Work Programs

## **BACHELOR OF SOCIAL WORK**

The four-year UOW Bachelor of Social Work (BSW) provides a balance of skills, concepts, and theory, as well as hands-on experience in professional practice. The following five areas are covered:

- Study of the individual and society: subjects such as psychology, introduction to social work and electives from a range of humanities, will introduce individuals, society and context.
- Skills for practice: students will develop skills to work effectively and use critical insights to understand people and social problems.
- Enactment of social justice: enacting social justice is a core requirement when working with individuals, families, or communities and for social researchers and policy developers.
- Engaging with the community: engaging with communities on joint projects is an important part of social work and is central in the program.
- Supervised professional practice (field education): in the final years of the degree, students will gain supervised professional practice experience in human service agencies.

## **MASTER OF SOCIAL WORK (QUALIFYING)**

The Master of Social Work (Qualifying) (MSW(Q)) is designed for graduates who are currently employed or interested in working in the community services sector. It offers a professionally recognized, advanced qualification. Those who hold a Bachelor degree in fields like Social Science, Arts, Community Welfare, Education, Nursing, Policy Studies, Psychology, or Sociology; and who have completed at least a year of social science-related work, are encouraged to apply.

This program equips graduates with the knowledge, skills, and ethical principles necessary for engaging in social work practice. This promotes the well-being of individuals, communities, and society, all from a social justice perspective.

## PLACEMENT TIMING

Students enrolled full-time in the Bachelor of Social Work typically undertake their first placement – SOWK310 Supervised Professional Practice I – in the first session (Autumn) of their third year. They then take their final placement subject – SOWK410 Supervised Professional Practice II – in the last session (Spring) of their fourth year.

Students enrolled full-time in the Master of Social Work (Qualified) will undertake their first placement – SOWK916 Professional Practice Placement I - in the second session (Spring) of their first year. They then take their final placement – SOWK924 Professional Practice Placement II – in the second session (Spring) of their second year.

Students are required to enrol in the appropriate placement subject to be allocated to an integration seminar, access Moodle site resources and assessment information and for uploading assessments, including learning contract, mid and end placement reports and timesheets.

Note: part-time progression through the BSW and MSW(Q) degrees will delay the undertaking of placements due to pre-requisite requirements.

<i><b>BSW</b></i>	SOWK310/410	Autumn	February - June
<i><b>BSW</b></i>	SOWK410	Spring	July - December
<i><b>MSW(Q)</b></i>	SOWK916/924	Spring	July - December

Figure 3: Placement timing

<i>Learning Outcomes</i>	<i>SOWK310</i>	<i>SOWK410</i>	<i>SOWK916</i>	<i>SOWK924</i>
*Pre-Requisites	SOWK140 SOWK238	HAS121 HAS200 SOWK234 SOWK238 SOWK305 SOWK310 SOWK336 SOWK337 SOWK338 SOWK340	SOWK910 SOWK915	SOWK921 SOWK923
*Note: there are additional pre-requisites for part-time progression				
Take responsibility for professional practice.	✓	X	✓	X
Take responsibility for the administrative requirement in the agency.	✓	X	✓	X
Demonstrate a commitment to professional and civic engagement in practice settings.	✓	X	✓	X
Initiate and sustain relationships with individuals, families, groups and or communities.	✓	X	✓	X
Identify, assess, and respond to risk, diversity, rights and/or responsibilities as appropriate.	✓	X	✓	X
Identify and explore needs in context with individuals, families, groups and/or communities.	✓	X	✓	X
Establish a process to observe and analyse information.	✓	X	✓	X
Set goals and monitor specific service arrangements as required in the agency context.	✓	X	✓	X
Implement appropriate and negotiated activities.	✓	X	✓	X
Construct effective practice approaches in working with diverse groups using a human rights and social justice framework.	X	✓	X	✓
Form purposeful relationships with individuals, families, groups and or communities in complex contexts.	X	✓	X	✓
Gather selective information on psychosocial issues including consumers' and community perspectives.	X	✓	X	✓
Interpret the multifaceted needs of individuals, families, groups and or communities.	X	✓	X	✓
Establish a process to synthesise information from individuals, families, groups and or communities.	X	✓	X	✓
Design plans for safe and effective practice.	X	✓	X	✓
Implement appropriate and negotiated activities with individuals, families, groups, and communities.	X	✓	X	✓
Propose models for effective practice in programs and services using evidence from practice.	X	✓	X	✓
Consult with supervisors to resolve ethical, legal, policy and administrative dilemmas in professional practice.	X	✓	X	✓
Demonstrate a commitment to professional and civic engagement in practice settings.	X	✓	X	X

Figure 4: Learning Outcomes

Field Education Staff	Responsibilities
<p>The Subject Coordinators (SC) are academic staff employed by UoW and are responsible for the overall academic integrity of the field education subjects in the BSW and MSW(Q).</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Making all decisions in relation to the overall development and coordination of the field education subjects, including the corresponding integration seminars and Field Educator supervisor training;</li> <li>2. Assessing Recognition/Credit of Prior Learning (RPL/CPL) applications for first placement subjects;</li> <li>3. Appointing and supporting Liaison Tutors and External Supervisors;</li> <li>4. Negotiating placement difficulties with support from Liaison Tutors;</li> <li>5. Assessing students have satisfactorily completed all of the field education assessments tasks including the end placement report and awarding the final grades for each student.</li> <li>6. Subject co-ordinators will escalate complex policy issues to the Head of Social Work Discipline as required.</li> </ol>
<p>The Senior Lecturer Field Education is employed by UOW and is responsible for strategic leadership, research, and education innovation in social work field education.</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Ensuring that all field education placements meet with the ASWEAS requirements for students learning experience;</li> <li>2. Assist in the recruitment and support of Field Educators, Liaison Tutors and External Supervisors and ensure they comply with ASWEAS requirements;</li> <li>3. Ensure the field education team and subject co-ordinators maintain effective communication between the university, students, and Field Educators throughout the placement;</li> <li>4. Organise and contribute to orientation and professional development workshops for Field Educators;</li> <li>5. Provide academic oversight of the content of Field Education Integration workshops for all field education subjects.</li> <li>6. Support the Subject Coordinator/s as required in the management of placement subjects including recognition of prior learning and work-based placement assessments;</li> <li>7. Maintain the links between the academic teaching staff and the Field Education program.</li> </ol>
<p>The Field Education Coordinators (FECS) are employed by U)W and are responsible for coordinating the field education placements</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Communicating AASW requirements for field placements for students and other stakeholders including field educators;</li> <li>2. Ensuring that all field education placements meet the current ASWEAS requirements</li> <li>3. Negotiating placement opportunities with agencies.</li> <li>4. Conducting preplacement consultations with students enrolled in placement subjects;</li> <li>5. Assessing individual student's learning needs and placement requirements;</li> <li>6. Allocating students to placements.</li> </ol>

<p>The Field Educator (FE) is the agency staff member who provides day-to-day guidance and support to the student. The Field Educator will work with students in developing a learning plan in conjunction with the Liaison Tutor and contribute to the mid and end-of-placement reports. Field Educators can be either social work qualified, or non-social work qualified.</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Day to day management of student learning, attendance and professional conduct on placement</li> <li>2. Managing the details of the student’s placement learning contract and negotiating learning opportunities with other professionals in the placement setting</li> <li>3. Obtaining feedback from other professionals working directly with the student</li> <li>4. Guiding the student’s learning experience, through direct observation (utilising IT where appropriate), feedback and discussion</li> <li>5. Assisting the student to critique their own performance, and to obtain and learn from feedback from service users and other stakeholders</li> <li>6. Providing a minimum of 1.5 hours of formal supervision for each 35 hours of placement, at least half of which is on a one-to-one basis (* if they are a qualified social worker or external supervisor)</li> <li>7. Assessing and reporting the student’s progress throughout the placement against AASW Practice Standards and Graduate Attributes and bringing any concerns to the attention of the Liaison Tutor in a timely manner</li> <li>8. Assist the student in completing the end placement report</li> <li>9. Making a recommendation of Pass or Fail to the University at the end of the placement</li> </ol>
<p>A Liaison Tutor (LT) will be appointed by U)W for each placement. They offer students general support and grade/attend required assessments and meetings</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Contact the Field Educator and student within the first week of the placement for introductions and to assist the student in developing their learning plan/contract (later marking the learning plan via Moodle);</li> <li>2. Conduct the formal mid-placement liaison visit, review, and mark the mid-placement report;</li> <li>3. Work with the student and agency and subject coordinator to resolve any difficulties that may arise during placement.</li> </ol>
<p>In the absence of a social work-qualified Field Educator (FE) at the placement agency, UOW will appoint a qualified social worker to act as the External Supervisor for the duration of the placement.</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Provide social work supervision for students through one-one-one sessions</li> <li>2. Supporting students to critically reflect on practice</li> <li>3. To embody the AASW Practice Standards</li> <li>4. Assist students in developing their social work professional identity.</li> <li>5. In some cases, the Field Educator will also provide group supervision.</li> </ol>

Figure 5: Field Education Staff Responsibilities

# Placement Structure

In a typical field education placement, students spend about 70 days working in an agency to accumulate the necessary 500 hours of learning. Most of these field placements require students to be at the agency for at least seven hours a day, three to four days a week. However, the specific days and hours are negotiated between the agency and the student at the pre-placement interview. As a general guideline, students are expected to follow the same working hours as the agency staff on the days they are on placement.

Throughout both their initial and subsequent placements, students are required to complete a minimum of 500 hours of hands-on experience working directly with clients. Therefore, at least one of the placements must include direct intervention with clients.

## **PLACEMENT AGENCY AND SUPERVISION HOURS**

The flowchart below (*Figure 6*) shows a placement where the student has a Social Work qualified Field Educator, and one where they have external social work supervision arrangements. To keep track of hours accurately, students should fill out their timesheets based on the hour breakdown shown in figure 6.

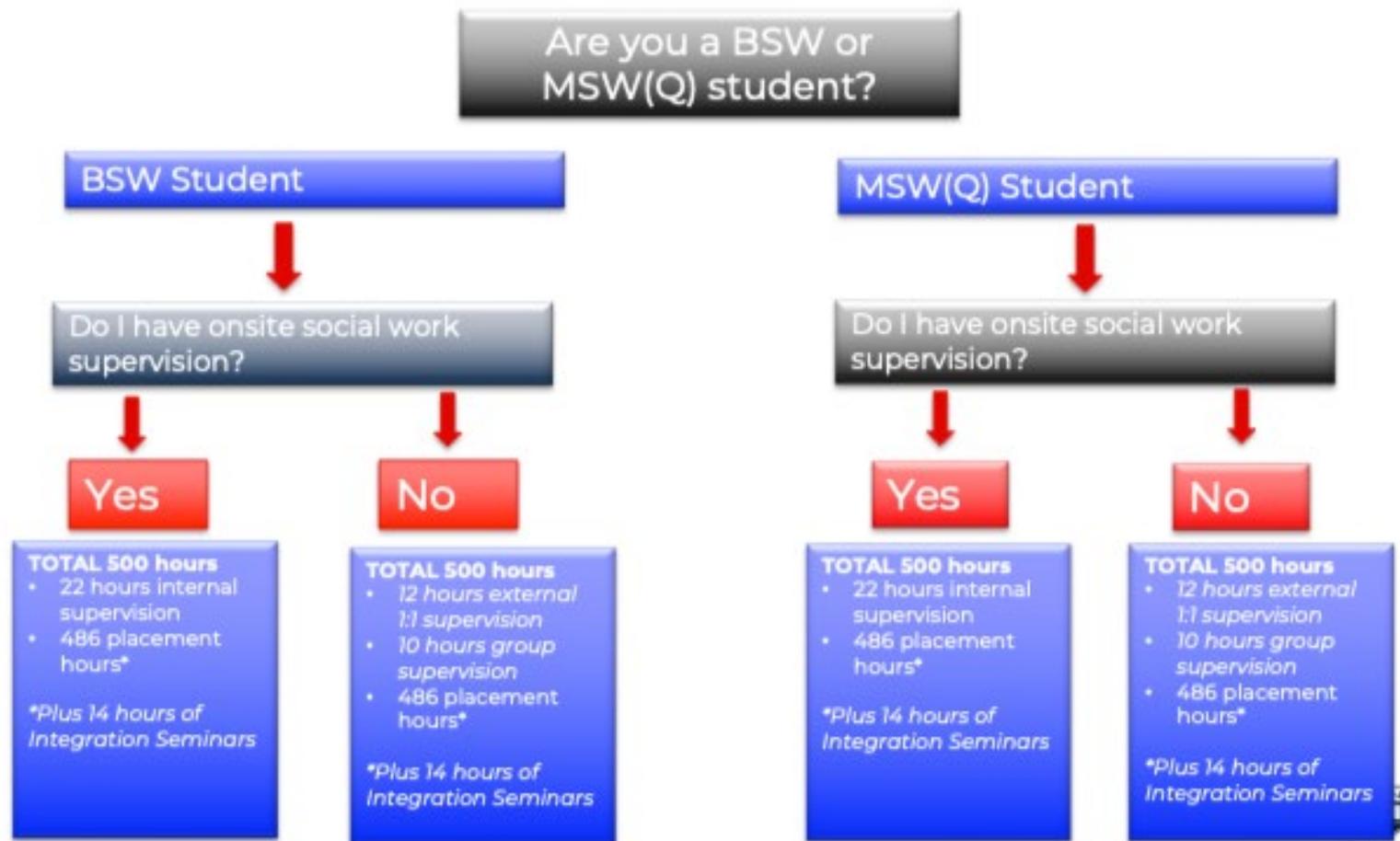


Figure 6: Breakdown of Placement Hours

## **SUPERVISION**

Australian Social Work Education and Accreditation Standards (ASWEAS) state that for every 35 hours students spend doing their placement, students will participate in 1.5 hours of supervision. As such, social work supervision requirements equate to 22 hours for a 500-hour placement. At least half of that supervision time should be one-on-one, student-with-supervisor. All time in supervision is counted toward the 500 placement hours. Students who do not attend supervision sessions risk not satisfactorily completing the placement subject.

## **EXTERNAL SUPERVISION**

When students undertake their placement in an agency where the Field Educator is not a qualified social worker, they will be assigned an external supervisor by UOW who is a qualified social worker. The student will actively participate in supervision sessions with their assigned supervisor for 12 hours of one-on-one external supervision. In addition, students must actively participate in 10 hours of group supervision, facilitated by a qualified social worker. This ensures students without social work qualified Field Educators receive the necessary guidance and support during their placement to meet the ASWEAS requirements.

## **INTEGRATION SEMINARS**

To support work-based learning, students will take part in mandatory practice-theory integration seminars, which are held at UoW. The 14 hours spent in integration seminars count as part of the 500 hours required for placement. Students will find the schedule of integration seminars in the Subject Outline. Unlike other academic subjects, integration seminars for all placement subjects have a 100% attendance requirement. If students cannot attend an Integration Seminar, they are required to request academic consideration and complete supplementary work/extra hours as directed by the Subject Coordinator. Non-attendance at integration seminars may result in a student not satisfactorily completing the placement subject.

# Attending Placement

## **MINIMUM ATTENDANCE**

In some circumstances, students are given permission to attend their placement only 2 days a week. If this is the case, students will also need to attend field placement 5 days a week for two separate blocks. This approach is not recommended as it stretches the end date of placement beyond the usual schedule, which can lead to insurance, legal, and ethical concerns.

Additionally, this arrangement may affect student's graduation and degree conferral.

Students will need to provide reasons in writing indicating why they cannot attend placement for four to five days per week to the Field Education Team. Acceptable reasons include:

- Students who have been granted an Access Plan to support their studies.
- Students with medical conditions.
- The placement agency cannot accommodate the student for three to five days per week.

## **GENERAL SICK/CARERS LEAVE**

There are no sick leave or carers leave provisions for student placements. If a student is unwell or needs to care for an unwell child/dependant and unable to attend placement, they are responsible for notifying their Field Educator that day. Any lost time will need to be made up. Students will need to advise the Field Education Team via email if their placement end date will exceed the time indicated in their Placement Confirmation Form.

## **LEAVE/HOLIDAYS**

There are no provisions for annual leave. Small timeframes of leave can be negotiated with the placement agency if, for example:

- A close friend or relative is getting married interstate.
- A student needs to travel for a funeral.
- A student becomes unwell.
- Cultural purposes for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students.

## **EXTENDED ABSENCES**

In some instances, students may need to extend their placement to make up time lost due to unforeseen circumstances such as illness. The student is expected to make up all the hours they are absent, regardless of the reason.

However, it is essential to understand that agencies and Field Educators may have limitations when it comes to granting extensions. When an agency agrees to host a student, it is typically with the expectation that the placement will conclude on a specific date. If any unexpected circumstances arise, new dates can be discussed and negotiated with Field Educators at the agency as soon as feasible.

If a student anticipates a lengthy absence, it is crucial to address this issue promptly as it may impact the feasibility of the placement. In such cases, students should have a conversation with the Subject Coordinator as soon as possible to work out a suitable solution.

## **VARIATION OF PLACEMENT DATES**

Field placements are integrated with the rest of the Bachelor Social Work and Masters Social Work (Qualified) programs, in accordance with pre-requisite and co-requisite requirements. Making significant changes to the predetermined placement schedule is typically allowed only in exceptional situations. If students wish to request such changes to their placement, they should put their request in writing and send it to the Subject Coordinator and Academic Program Director for evaluation and consideration.

The following factors are considered regarding variation of placement dates:

- Reason for request of variation of placement dates
- Implications for University requirements
- Resource implications for field education staff and agency staff
- Placement tasks and supervision needs

# Recognition/Credit for Prior Learning

The AASW and UOW acknowledge students may bring skills, knowledge and experience equivalent to social work practice experience with them to their social work degree. In recognition of a student's practice wisdom and experience students are able to apply for recognition/credit for prior learning (RPL/CPL).

RPL/CPL evaluations are applicable only for the first placement subjects, that is SOWK310 for Bachelor Social Work and SOWK916 for Master Social Work (Qualified).

<b>Type of RPL/CPL</b>	<b>Requirements</b>
<b>Full RPL/CPL</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The student has demonstrated that their skills, knowledge, and experience meet the criteria as set out by AASW and UOW.</li> <li>SOWK310 or SOWK916. The student will receive specified credit for the subject on their UOW enrolment record.</li> </ul>
<b>Part RPL/CPL 25% (125 hours)</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The student has met some of the RPL/CPL assessment criteria.</li> <li>The student will need to be enrolled in and complete SOWK310 or SOWK916 and attend the integration seminars for this subject.</li> <li>The student's placement hours will be reduced to 375 hours.</li> </ul>
<b>Part RPL/CPL 50% (250 hours)</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The student has met half of the RPL/CPL assessment criteria.</li> <li>The student will need to be enrolled in and complete SOWK310 or SOWK916 and attend the integration seminars for this subject.</li> <li>The student's placement hours will be reduced to 250 hours.</li> </ul>
<b>No RPL/CPL</b>	The student has not satisfactorily demonstrated how they have met at least 25% of the RPL/CPL assessment criteria. Students will need to be enrolled in and complete SOWK310 or SOWK916, attend the subject integration seminars and complete the full 500 hours of placement.

Figure 7

## RPL/CPL APPLICATION PROCESS

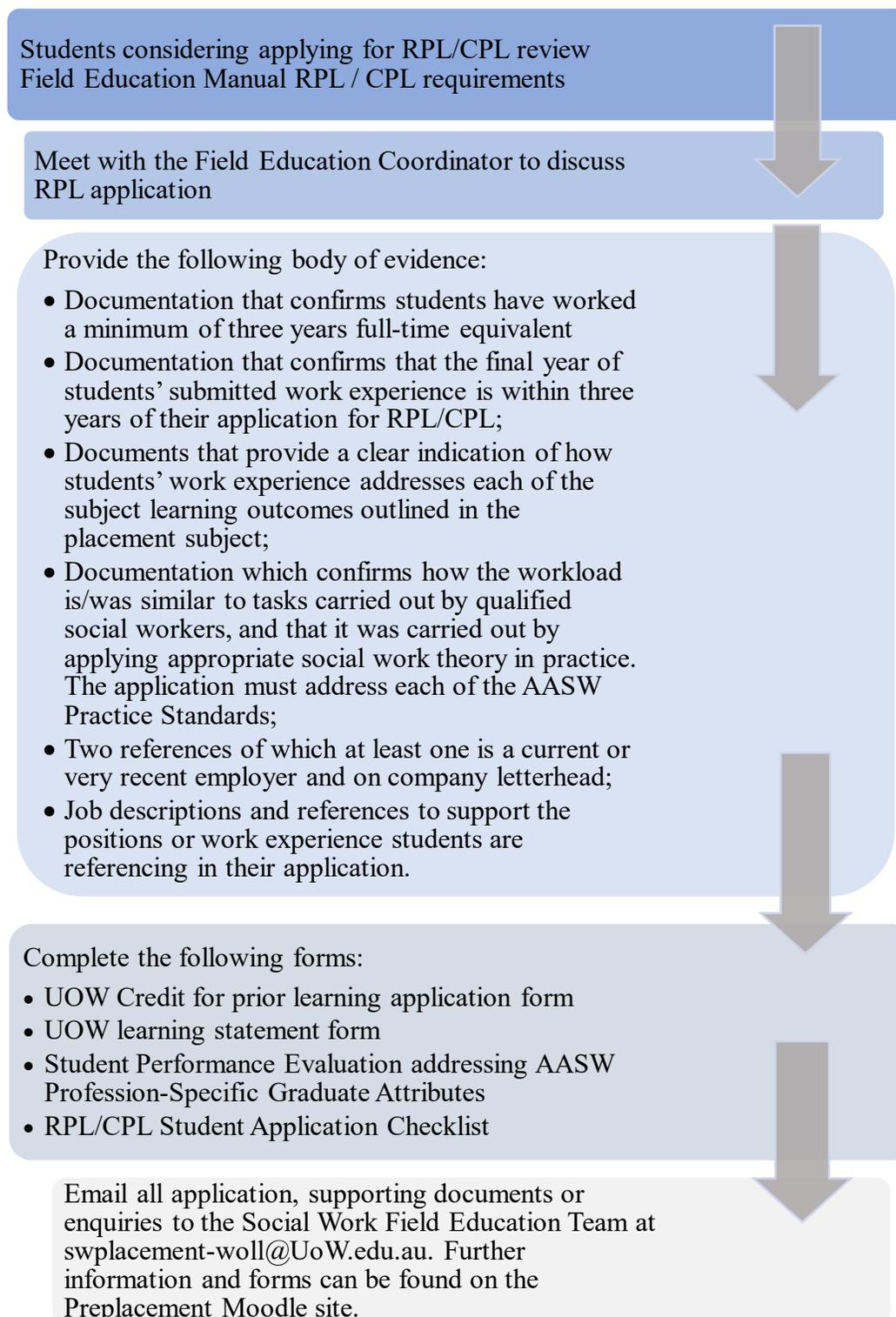


Figure 8: RPL/CPL Application Process

# Work-based Placements

In some circumstances a student may be able to complete their placement in their current workplace. To comply with the AASW requirements for a work-based placement, the following criteria from the current ASWEAS must be met:

- A student will undertake no more than one field education placement in their place of employment.
- The prerequisite for granting a work-based placement is a written agreement between UoW, the student, and the employer. The signatory on behalf of the employer must not be the student's immediate manager in their employed role.
- Senior management confirmation is required to ensure the employing organisation's willingness to commit resources to the student's placement.
- The employer must agree that:
  - The student is in a work setting away from their normal employment setting.
  - Their student status will be protected, and they will not be expected to meet normal work commitments as an employee of the organisation when undertaking their placement hours.
  - Attendance and learning requirements for students on placement in their workplace are the same as those required of other students.
  - The student must not be supervised by their current supervisor.

If these requirements are met, the student can discuss this option with the Field Education Team and subsequently complete the Work-Based Placement Agreement. The Field Education Coordinator will liaise with the agency to finalise the placement details and confirm the suitability of the work-based placement. Final approval for the Work Based Placement is the responsibility of the Subject Coordinator in consultation with the Senior Lecturer Field Education.

# Remote, Rural, and Overseas Placements

There may be opportunities to undertake a remote, rural, or overseas field placement in the final year of study. In these instances, the student must cover the cost of travel, insurance, accommodation, and all other costs involved. To undertake an overseas placement, the student will have to meet additional guidelines set by UOW and the AASW. The Field Education Coordinators can provide further information on the criteria for remote and overseas field placements as required.

If a student is interested in a rural placement, this must be discussed with the Field Education Coordinator at the first placement consultation. Otherwise, the team cannot guarantee to have an AASW remote/rural/overseas compliant placement available. These types of placements typically take longer to source and plan so it is best to begin discussions with the Field Education Coordinators a few months before start of placement.

A student must ensure that they have completed the relevant subject/s for their second placement. Students are encouraged to view the [course handbook](#) for the year they enrolled in their degree.

Students undertaking a remote field placement in Australia may be eligible to apply for a scholarship. Please visit the following for further information:

- Health Education and Training Institute ([HETI](#))
- Services for Australian Rural and Remote Allied Health ([SARRAH](#))

# Placement Communications

Field education subjects require a long preparation period to ensure a smooth placement experience. The Field Education Team will offer information sessions about placement at various times during student's study. Students will receive notifications about these via UOW Mail, SOLS mail or during other subject tutorials. When students are eligible to commence placement, they will receive emails to their UOW Mail with important forms and deadlines for placement and recognition of prior learning applications (if applicable).

## PLACEMENT ENQUIRIES

The Field Education Team makes every effort to respond to student inquiries regarding field education within 24 hours. Direct all placement enquiries to: [swplacement-woll@uow.edu.au](mailto:swplacement-woll@uow.edu.au).

All communications regarding placement will be sent to the student's UoW Mail account. This is different to SOLS mail, but the login can be found on the same UoW [Current students webpage](#).



It is extremely important that students check UOW Mail and SOLS mail regularly to ensure important communications or deadlines are not missed, as this may result in not being able to complete placement when planned and having to wait for the following year.

All placement communications sent from Sonia are available via the Documents heading on the Sonia homepage for reference. This will include bulk emails sent by the Field Education Team with important deadlines, forms, and placement allocation information.

## SONIA – PLACEMENT MANAGEMENT SOFTWARE

UOW makes use of a placement management software called Sonia - Social Work, to handle all aspects of placement preparation and communication. Any UOW student can access Sonia using their UoW username and password. Different disciplines at UOW use Sonia, so it is crucial to log into the Social Work discipline to receive accurate information. Even before students begin placement preparation, Students can find introductory placement information on the Sonia homepage.

Sonia updates its information every night from the University Student Online Services system (SOLS). If students' details in Sonia are not correct, they will need to update them in SOLS to ensure they are accurate in Sonia as well.

If students are having trouble logging into Sonia, they should instead try to log into SOLS. Students are encouraged to reach out to the Field Education Team for assistance if they can log into SOLS but not Sonia. However, if students are unable to log into either SOLS or Sonia, it is likely an issue with the university login, and Student IT Support should be contacted.

### **PRE-PLACEMENT PREPARATION MOODLE SITE**

The Pre-Placement Moodle site serves as a resource hub where students can access information about placement prerequisites, mandatory checks, adhering to NSW Health standards, and the processes and forms for seeking recognition or credit for prior learning. The link is at [https://www.uow.edu.au/student/health-placements/social-work/ Pre-Placement Moodle site \(TRNG056\\_19\)](https://www.uow.edu.au/student/health-placements/social-work/Pre-Placement%20Moodle%20site%20(TRNG056_19))

Once students are assigned a placement, they are required to enrol in the specific Moodle site for that subject.

# Placement Allocation Process

## **UOW PRE-PLACEMENT CONSULTATION**

The Pre-placement Consultation is a chance for students and Field Education Coordinators to discuss the following:

- Student learning goals
- Areas of potential improvements
- What students are interested in within social work practice
- Any specific student needs
- Anything that might affect student's placement
- What students hope to achieve during placement

The consultation is also a chance for the Field Education Coordinator to:

- Check if students are ready for placement. If a Field Education Coordinator believes a student is not ready for placement, they may discuss this with the Subject Coordinator.
- Furthermore, if a student is not demonstrating a readiness for placement, a plan will be put into place to advance the student's knowledge and skills, in line with social work requirements.
- A rubric is used during the preplacement consultation to assess the student. Each point is marked as either satisfactory or unsatisfactory.

## **PRE-PLACEMENT ALLOCATION**

Following the pre-placement consultation, the Field Education Coordinators, in consultation with the Subject Coordinator, allocate students to agencies. Students will be allocated a placement based on specific criteria including, but not limited to:

- Learning opportunities available in the agency
- Student learning needs
- Student capabilities
- Student area of practice interest

- Geographical location
- Transportation method
- Specific agency requirements
- NSW Health verification status
- AASW guidelines for field education
- Supervision requirements

Whilst the Field Education Team try and allocate students to an area of interest they have specified, the main goal is to allocate students two placements that will enable them to graduate from UoW with an accredited degree. Due to the number of students undertaking placement across UoW degrees and campuses, it is impossible to satisfy every student's placement preference. Keep in mind that an accredited social work degree is a generalist degree that equips students with transferrable skills to work in any area of social work practice – all placements will be an opportunity for learning and advancement of skills.

### **PLACEMENT ALLOCATION EMAIL**

Students will receive a placement allocation email to their UoW Mail. This email contains particularly vital information and students should read the email thoroughly to ensure they are fully prepared to contact the placement agency in an appropriate manner and follow the instructions and deadlines set out in the email.

Students will need to [login to Sonia](#) to see the full placement allocation details (including placement address and contact details). There is a guide on the students Sonia home page, on how to view placement allocations.

Students should be aware that the placement allocation process can take several weeks and not all students will receive their placement allocation email at the same time.

Agency Field Educators will also receive a placement allocation email when a student has been allocated to their agency.

The placement allocation email will include the following information:

- Student name and email
- Information about how and when the student will contact the placement agency to arrange the preplacement interview
- UoW Insurance documentation
- Student Professional Experience
- Appendix 2 Organisation Workplace Health and Safety Information Sheet
- Social Work Field Education Manual
- Placement dates calculator
- Link to the social work placement webpage
- Pre-placement agency interview assessment rubric

### **AGENCY PRE-PLACEMENT INTERVIEW**

For a placement to be confirmed, students are required to attend a pre-placement interview at the prospective agency and be accepted for the placement by the agency. Please note the following regarding this interview:

- In the MSW(Q) program, this interview is also an assessment task. Students who do not conduct a satisfactory preplacement interview will not be able to commence placement.
- Contact the agency Field Educator within five days of receiving the allocation email to schedule the interview promptly.
- The interview is an opportunity to discuss learning opportunities, skills, and interests.
- You are representing yourself, UoW, and the social work profession so be respectful.
- The placement agency will assess students based on a rubric (please see below); satisfactory or unsatisfactory marks are given.
- If deemed unsatisfactory, the placement will not proceed; the Subject Coordinator will determine if the student can continue with placement in the same period.
- If not placement ready, students may need to defer placement to a later period when they are better prepared.

<b>Rubric - Professional behaviour</b>	
<b>Satisfactory</b>	<b>Unsatisfactory</b>
<b>1a</b> - Take initiative in organising the interview	Made no effort made in organising the interview
<b>1b</b> - Prepared for the interview	Was not prepared for the interview
<b>1c</b> - Attended the interview	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Did not attend interview nor follow up the lack of attendance with the agency</li> <li>• Did not reschedule another time</li> <li>• Did not attend rescheduled interview or clearly communicate reasons for nonattendance</li> <li>• Please mark as other if the student missed interview/s but did eventually attend and explain in the response section below</li> </ul>
<b>1d</b> - Was punctual	Was late for interview without communicating or providing justifiable explanation
<b>1e</b> - Was professionally attired	Was not professionally attired
<b>1f</b> - Actively engaged in the discussion: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Responded to questions with more than just yes/no</li> <li>• Engaged in a two-way dialogue</li> <li>• Took initiative to ask questions and seek clarification</li> <li>• Used inclusive language</li> </ul>	Unable to engage in the discussion: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Only provided yes/no responses</li> <li>• One-way communication only or dominated the discussion</li> <li>• Did not take initiative to ask questions</li> <li>• No evidence of inclusive language</li> </ul>

Figure 9: Rubric Professional Placement

Interview Outcomes	
What happens if the agency does not want to proceed?	If the student fails their initial agency interview, the Field Education Team will make a second attempt to find a new placement, but only after assigning placements to other students. If the student fails again with a second agency, their continuation in the program and the possibility of finding additional agencies will be assessed, considering any mitigating circumstances. Feedback on unsuccessful interviews will promptly be shared with the student.
What if the student does not want to proceed?	In exceptional cases, students may wish to change their assigned placement. Placements are carefully chosen, considering AASW Guidelines, student interests, and personal situations. The university will only consider changes if there are valid reasons, such as: A conflict of interest with the agency. Placements located more than 1.5 hours away from the student's residence. Requests for changes must be submitted via email to the Field Education Team, explaining the reasons in detail. Please note that we cannot guarantee alternative placements for the current period, and students may need to wait for the next placement period.
What if the agency cancels the placement?	Sometimes, unforeseen issues at an agency may prevent a placement. In such cases, the Field Education Coordinator will find a new placement for the affected student.
What if a student is unable to proceed?	In some cases, placement issues may arise due to student-related factors, including personal issues, professional conduct, or inadequate performance. The University values agency relationships and expects students to engage professionally and meet agency expectations. The University may be unable to place a student in a field education agency if: The student cannot meet the core expectations of agency work. The student behaves unprofessionally or poses a risk. The student has not met social work subject requirements. The student has been unsuccessful in multiple agency interviews. In such cases, a meeting with the Subject Coordinator and a Field Education Coordinator will be arranged to address the issues and create a suitable plan. Students may need to provide medical certificates or other evidence to support their readiness for placement decisions.

Figure 10: Interview Outcomes

## CONFIRMATION OF PLACEMENT

Once a student is accepted at the pre-placement agency interview, students **must** promptly submit the Placement Confirmation Form through their UoW student email to activate insurance coverage. This form confirms:

- The pre-placement agency interview details and outcome
- Placement start and estimated end dates
- Learning contract submission deadline
- Mid-placement and End placement report deadline

Upon submission, students will receive an email to their UoW student email with insurance documents and confirmation to begin placement. Commencing placement is contingent on receiving this compliance email. Failing to submit the form may delay or terminate the placement.

## Mandatory Pre-placement Compliance

All students must comply with the below mandatory requirements to be allocated a social work placement. If an eligible student has not completed all the below requirements by the advertised deadline for the placement group, they will not receive a placement allocation and will need to wait until the next placement intake to complete placement.

For all Mandatory Pre-placement Compliance, students should be mindful of the following:

- Students are to upload all documents in PDF format to Sonia. Students should keep original compliance documents, as they may be needed before placement or by future employers. Students are responsible for keeping and producing these documents when required.
- Students can monitor their NSW Health checks through Sonia's check screen, but note that these are automatically updated by NSW Health and cannot be edited.
- Further information can be found at <https://www.uow.edu.au/student/health-placements/social-work/> Pre-Placement Moodle site (TRNG056\_19) and for detailed checklists, visit the NSW Health Student Compliance webpage.

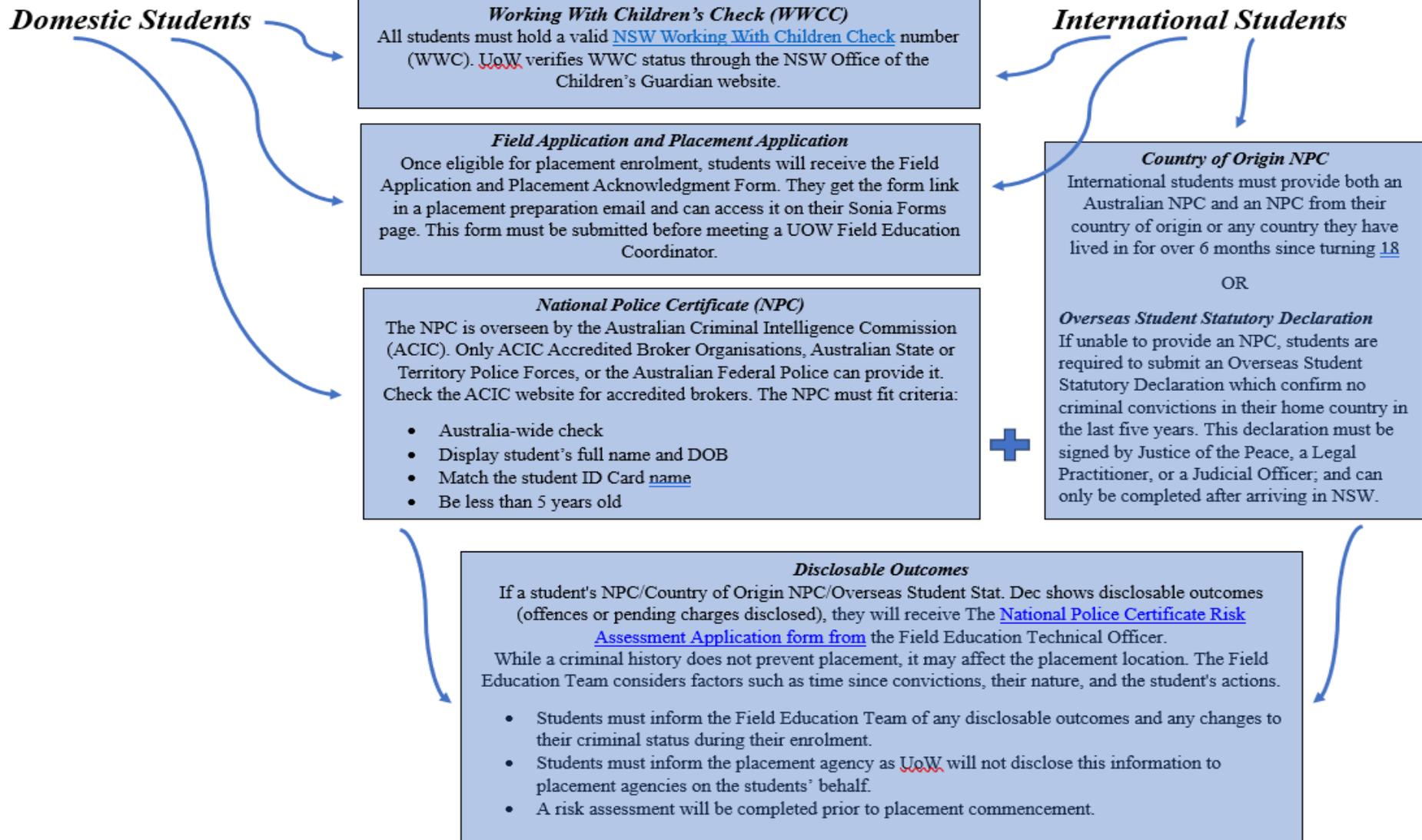


Figure 11: Mandatory Preplacement Compliance

## **MANDATORY PREPLACEMENT COMPLIANCE – NSW HEALTH STUDENTS**

Students placed in NSW Health facilities, such as hospitals or community health centres, must comply with the Department of Health screening and vaccination schedules, known as the *NSW Health Student Compliance process*. This process may take up to five months. Non-compliant students will not be considered for NSW Health placements.

The UoW Verification Team manages this compliance process independently. The UoW Verification Team requires the following documents:

- Student ID card (matching the Australian NPC)
- Australian National Police Certificate (matching the student ID card)
- Country of origin National Police Certificate or statutory declaration (for international students)
- Relevant NSW Health forms (refer to the NSW Health Student Compliance webpage)
- Vaccination record card with evidence of vaccinations and/or serology for specified diseases, including the following:
  - dTpa (diphtheria, tetanus, pertussis)
  - MMR (measles, mumps, rubella)
  - Varicella
  - Hepatitis B
  - COVID

## **DRIVER'S LICENCE AND ACCESS TO A VEHICLE**

A NSW driver's license and access to a vehicle is not mandatory for placement, however students who have a current drivers licence will have the opportunity to undertake a placement at a wider range of agencies. Some agencies for example the Department of Communities and Justice and child protection agencies may require students hold a valid driver's license.

<i><b>Roles</b></i>	<i><b>Responsibilities</b></i>
<i><b>Students</b></i>	<p>Before the placement:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Participate in preplacement preparation arrangements as specified by the field education staff.</li> <li>• Ensure that subject prerequisites are completed.</li> <li>• Enrol in the subject before commencing placement.</li> <li>• Complete all required documentation as specified by the Field Education Team by the advertised deadlines.</li> <li>• Formally disclose any personal history or current issues (e.g., physical, psychological, or behavioural) that may hinder them from taking part fully in a field placement.</li> <li>• Contact the placement agency once allocated a placement</li> <li>• Respond to communications from the University concerning the placement.</li> </ul> <p>During the placement:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Conduct themselves in a manner appropriate for a student in a professional setting and in accordance with the University’s and AASW’s practice standards and code of conduct.</li> <li>• Advise the Field Educator and Liaison Tutor immediately of any concern regarding their safety or well-being during the placement.</li> <li>• Comply with all rules, regulations, policies, and procedures of the placement agency, including dress code and punctuality.</li> <li>• Maintain an appropriate level of confidentiality in relation to their placement experiences and any information they are made privy to.</li> <li>• Refer to Academic Consideration guidelines and make necessary arrangements to make up time lost.</li> <li>• Inform the Subject Coordinator of absence and apply for academic consideration.</li> <li>• Provide any required documentation to the agency relating to the absence.</li> </ul> <p>In relation to their learning:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Attend placement for the required number of days/hours as set by the Field Education Team.</li> <li>• Attend compulsory University based integration seminars.</li> <li>• Actively participate in the learning process including assigned tasks, activities, and supervision.</li> <li>• Undertake tasks appropriate to the agency and the goals of the placement.</li> <li>• Complete quality written assessments and timesheets and submit them to Moodle.</li> <li>• Inform the Field Education Team of any difficulties that arise whilst on placement.</li> <li>• Prepare for the mid-placement liaison visit in consultation with the Field Educator/Liaison Tutor.</li> <li>• Actively participate in the mid-placement liaison visit and any additional visits deemed necessary to assess progress during the placement.</li> <li>• Actively participate in the process of evaluation of their learning and the preparation of the mid and end-placement reports.</li> <li>• Inform the Field Education Team if intending to withdraw from placement.</li> </ul>
<i><b>Agencies/ Field Educators</b></i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Offer space, facilities and travel costs for work undertaken by students in the placement.</li> <li>• Participate in preplacement planning and orientation sessions for the placement.</li> <li>• Identify suitable tasks for student’s level of placement and assist the student to develop an appropriate learning plan.</li> <li>• Locate relevant educational opportunities in the agency setting.</li> </ul>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Provide direction and supervision to the student each week.</li> <li>• Inform the University-appointed Liaison Tutor of any difficulties that may arise in the placement.</li> <li>• Assess the student’s performance in accordance with the assessment documents.</li> <li>• Provide ongoing feedback to the student.</li> <li>• Contribute to the mid-placement liaison visit.</li> <li>• Where possible, attend drop-in sessions provided field education.</li> <li>• Liaise with the Subject Coordinator regarding any significant variation of placement hours or dates.</li> <li>• Liaise with the Subject Coordinator as soon as possible if the Liaison Tutor or onsite Field Educator intends to be away during the placement.</li> <li>• If a replacement of Field Educator is required due to unforeseen circumstances at the agency, advise the Subject Coordinator and the student of the change in the supervision arrangements for the placement immediately.</li> <li>• Collaborate with the Liaison Tutor if difficulties arise.</li> <li>• Provide opportunities for students with differing needs for educational support and supervision.</li> <li>• Advise students of the agencies occupational health and safety policies and procedures.</li> <li>• Complete the end-placement report and recommend a final pass/fail grade to the Field Education staff.</li> </ul>
<p><b><i>University of Wollongong</i></b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Arranges student placements with agencies and community groups.</li> <li>• Ensures the variety of placement opportunities is as wide as possible.</li> <li>• Consults agencies, Field Educators, Liaison Tutors, and students about educational and practice needs and standards in field placement.</li> <li>• Where necessary, supports Field Educators and Liaison Tutors in relation to their employing organisations and student social work practice.</li> <li>• Keeps 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.</li> <li>• 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.</li> <li>• Ensures that students are aware of specific vaccinations required by the agencies.</li> <li>• Provides students with opportunities to clarify their learning goals, interests, and specific requirements.</li> <li>• Sets the learning objectives for each placement.</li> <li>• Provides clear guidelines for the planning, management, and evaluation of each placement course.</li> <li>• Informs Field Educators of current social work program content.</li> <li>• Provides consultation and support to students, Field Educators, and Liaison Tutors when requested during placement.</li> <li>• Provides opportunities for training in supervision.</li> <li>• Awards the final pass/fail grade to students in each placement</li> </ul>

Figure 12: Responsibilities

# Field Education Policies

In regard to all the policies below, UOW recognizes the rights and responsibilities of students as consumers of educational services, as well as the rights and responsibilities of placement stakeholders. In cases of conflicting interests, obligations to other parties may take precedence over student rights.

## **PLACEMENT TERMINATIONS**

In case of placement termination, the transfer of completed hours to a new placement depends on specific circumstances and will be evaluated using the following criteria:

- Agency report on the student's performance and termination reasons.
- Consultation with the Liaison Tutor, External Supervisor, and Student.
- Student's 500-word critical reflection on the learning experience.
- Compliance with the AASW's minimum 250-hour requirement in one agency.
- Successful mid-placement report completion.
- Review of the student's learning plan (if applicable).
- Verification through signed timesheets.

The Subject Coordinator, Senior Lecturer Field Education, and the Field Education Team will review the placement termination situation. The student will receive guidance on learning requirements for the next placement, including potential approval for carrying over hours.

## **SITUATIONS WHERE A STUDENT PLACEMENT MAY END EARLY**

If the Field Education staff receive information indicating unprofessional or inappropriate behaviour or potential harm to any party including the student, the Subject Coordinator, in consultation with the Field Education Team, may choose not to assign or even withdraw a student from an agency during placement.

Discrimination: All students must experience a safe and respectful environment at their placement agency. According to Fair Work Australia, employers are prohibited from taking adverse actions based on race, colour, sex, sexual orientation, age, physical or mental disability, marital status, family responsibilities, pregnancy, religion, political opinion, or national or social

origin (Fair Work Ombudsman 2020). Adverse actions encompass unlawful discriminatory actions such as termination, injury, unfavourable position changes, unequal treatment, or non-hiring (Fair Work Ombudsman 2020). It is not discrimination if differential treatment is fair and based on performance or behaviour.

Workplace discrimination laws protect students during placements according to Fair Work Australia. If a student believes they have experienced discrimination during placement, they should promptly contact their Liaison Tutor.

Bullying and Harassment: Students have the right to a safe work environment free from harassment and bullying. Continuing a placement in the presence of harassing behaviours like victimization, humiliation, intimidation, or threats is unreasonable (Fair Work Ombudsman 2021).

Workplace bullying poses risks to physical and mental health and is unacceptable. Examples include abusive language, aggressive behaviour, belittlement, practical jokes and unjustified criticisms. However, having a different opinion or reasonable performance monitoring by a supervisor is not considered bullying (Safe Work Australia 2021).

If a student suspects they are experiencing bullying or harassment at the placement agency, they should urgently inform their Liaison Tutor for support and resolution to ensure a safe placement environment.

# Health, Safety and Insurance

UoW and placement agencies have 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. Relevant UoW documents include, but are not limited to:

[Work health and safety procedures for work-integrated learning \(professional experience\)](#)

[Code of practice – work integrated learning \(professional experience\)](#)

## **INCIDENT MANAGEMENT**

If an accident or incident occurs for a student whilst carrying out placement duties, students and Field Educators must take the following action as required:

- Ensure first aid or medical attention is sought
- Follow the agency protocol for reporting procedures/documentation
- Contact the UoW Subject Coordinator/Field Education Team to advise of the incident

The following actions are required to report an incident/lodge a claim:

- Student to report the incident, with support from the Subject Coordinator or Field Education Team as relevant via UoW's [SafetyNet](#) online portal
- If a claim is required, email [UOW Financial Services](#) (and cc student) to request a claim
- UoW Financial Services will provide the relevant information and claim form
- Student completes their section of the claim form and attaches any supporting documentation
- Subject Coordinator completes their section of the claim form
- Subject Coordinator emails form and supporting documents to UoW Financial Services to lodge claim. If a claim is made, students will be required to provide full details of the incident and Doctors certificates (if applicable) to support the claim. UoW Insurance Services will provide the relevant documentation to be completed.

<b><i>Insurance Specifications</i></b>	<b><i>Details</i></b>
<b><i>Insurance Protections</i></b>	<p>The following may be applicable for students undertaking their placement:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• General and product liability protection</li> <li>• Professional liability protection</li> <li>• Malpractice protection</li> <li>• Student personal accident insurance</li> </ul>
<b><i>In order to be covered by UoW insurance, the following must be adhered to</i></b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The student must be enrolled in the correct placement subject via UoW's enrolment system by the required date</li> <li>• The student must be on a placement deemed appropriate by UoW</li> <li>• The student must advise the Field Education Team of the placement dates negotiated between themselves and their agency</li> <li>• The placement dates negotiated must be within the UoW general placement dates. If they fall outside of the general placement dates, the student must seek approval from the Subject Coordinator who will inform the field education team to ensure the dates are recorded in Sonia.</li> <li>• The student must not be receiving remuneration for their placement. If they are receiving remuneration, they are covered by the insurance of the agency providing the remuneration.</li> </ul>
<b><i>Certificate of Currency</i></b>	<p>Insurance and supporting placement documents are automatically emailed to students and the assigned Field Educator for the agency when the student and/or agency confirms the placement is going ahead by submitting the placement confirmation form. The student can forward their copy of the insurance and supporting documents to the placement agency if requested by the placement agency. In the email the student receives with the documents, the name of the Field Educator is specified so the student is aware of who received the placement confirmation and supporting documents.</p>
<b><i>Insurance Renewal</i></b>	<p>UoW undertakes renewal of all insurances on an annual basis. UoW's certificates of currency expire each year in October. UoW confirms that cover will extend to all placement students undertaking placement activities from the expiration date of the certificate issued to students and agencies until the new certificates are issued to the University. New certificates of currency will be available and issued to all applicable parties at this time.</p>
<b><i>Insurance Coverage for Students</i></b>	<p>Students are covered by UoW insurance whilst on placement on the proviso that the activities are deemed necessary and within the requirement/scope of the placement. This extends but is not limited to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Home visits to/social support for clients less than 50 kms from placement agency (personal injury only, not damage to vehicle)</li> <li>• Overnight trips deemed necessary (in conjunction with the UOW Travel Insurance Policy)</li> <li>• International placements (in conjunction with the UOW Travel Insurance Policy)</li> </ul>
<b><i>Driving Whilst on Placement</i></b>	<p>UoW insurance does not cover student or agency vehicles. Students must have their own motor vehicle insurance if they use their car for placement activities. Note that travel to and within a 50 km radius of the placement workplace is not covered. If the agency requires students to use agency vehicles, the agency must ensure adequate insurance. In case of a motor vehicle accident during required placement activities, UoW insurance may cover student injury not covered by Medicare or private health insurance.</p>
<b><i>Making an Insurance Claim</i></b>	<p>If an incident has occurred on placement, please see the <a href="#">incident management</a> section regarding how to make a claim. In the event of a claim, the student is required to pay for all medical expenses and claim the expenses back from UoW.</p>

Figure 13: Insurance Procedures13

# Additional Support Needs

## **STUDENT SELF CARE**

Students typically find placements rewarding and professionally satisfying. However, issues may arise, whether within the placement or externally, impacting a student's performance and well-being.

Students experiencing stress should first seek support from their Field Educator. Students can also contact the Subject Coordinator or Liaison Tutor to discuss the issue.

UoW can assist students to access a wide range of [support services](#) via Access Plans.

## **STUDENT ACCESSIBILITY & INCLUSION ADVISORS**

Students with additional needs are encouraged to contact a [Student Accessibility & Inclusion Team](#).

The Accessibility and Inclusion Adviser and Field Education Coordinator can work together with agencies to ensure that students with specific needs are supported in their placement. This can include mobility support, assistive technologies, flexible working arrangements etc.

Students with support needs not already connected to UoW student support services, can [register online](#).

## **STUDENT SUPPORT ADVISORS**

UoW's [Student Support](#) Coordinators (formerly known as Student Support Advisors) are available to provide students with advice, information and assistance including:

- Issues affecting health or welfare that are inhibiting a student's capacity to study
- Assisting students who are new to Australia to access services that help them to settle into life in Australia and to study at UoW
- Providing guidance in understanding the whole picture

The Field Education Team are here to explore options with all students, including linking them to a range of other services and assistance.

## **STUDENT ADVOCACY SERVICE**

The [Student Advocacy Service](#) (SAS) is free, confidential, and independent service for all UoW students.

The SAS provides advocacy and referral for a range of academic, procedural, and administrative issues.

## **CONFIDENTIALITY AND PRIVACY**

During the course of placement, students may become aware of identifying features of 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. 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.

## **INTELLECTUAL PROPERTY ON PLACEMENT**

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.

## **USE OF MOBILE PHONES AND SOCIAL MEDIA WHILST ON PLACEMENT**

Students are not to use their mobile 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 mobile phone, the process for this should be explicitly negotiated with their Field Educator/Liaison Tutor. Under no circumstances is content about field placement from a student's personal mobile phone (e.g., photos, text) to be uploaded to social media. If a student is found to be breaching confidentiality by their actions, this is grounds for immediate termination of the placement and failure of field education subjects. In addition, students are to follow the agency's policy on the use of mobile phones in the workplace.

## **TRANSPORT AND TRAVEL TO PLACEMENT**

UoW aims to secure placements primarily in the Illawarra, Shoalhaven, South-Western Sydney, and Sydney regions, with the exception of rural placements. Some placements may require travel beyond these areas, with a recommended maximum travel time of 1.5 hours each way. The total placement hours, including travel, should not exceed nine hours per day or forty-five hours per week. Students are responsible for all travel costs, including attending integration seminars on campus.

# Frequently Asked Questions

## **WHEN CAN I COMPLETE MY PLACEMENT?**

Students can enrol in a placement subject when they have satisfied all prerequisite subjects. The field education team manages a master list of students to track their placement eligibility. When students have satisfied the prerequisite subject and placement preparation begins, students will start to receive communications regarding the placement process.

## **CAN I FIND MY OWN PLACEMENT?**

UOW Field Education Coordinators source placements that can provide students with the required learning opportunities to satisfactorily complete their degree. To avoid overwhelming placement agencies, and to maintain agency relationships, students cannot secure their placements independently without the prior approval of a Field Education Coordinator. Field Education Coordinators handle all negotiations on students' behalf. Students can suggest potential placements to the Field Education Team for assessment of compliance with ASWEAS requirements and suitability for their learning needs.

## **WHAT ARE THE PREREQUISITE SUBJECTS FOR PLACEMENT?**

Prerequisite subjects for every subject can be found by searching the [UOW Course Handbook](#).

## **MY WORKPLACE HAS DONE A POLICE CHECK FOR EMPLOYMENT, CAN I USE THAT ONE FOR PLACEMENT?**

No, students need to have their own NPC check in order to obtain an original copy of the NPC certificate. Any NPC an employer has completed, belongs to them/their service.

## **WHAT HAPPENS IF I DO NOT SATISFY THE DEADLINES FOR PLACEMENT PREPARATION FOR MY PLACEMENT GROUP?**

If students have not completed one or more of the mandatory placement checks, they will not be eligible to attend/complete placement. If this is the case, students will receive communications when the next placement cohort is scheduled to commence preparation, which could be up to one year later.

### **CAN I COMMENCE MY PLACEMENT EARLIER THAN THE GENERAL PLACEMENT START DATE?**

As a rule, students are not able to commence placement earlier than the advertised start date for a number of reasons:

- Integration seminars may not run concurrently to the placement timeframes
- Students will not have been allocated a Liaison Tutor and External Supervisor (if applicable) in order to have the learning contract finalised by the required due date
- Students may not be covered by UoW Insurance

However, some acceptable examples of why students might start placement early are:

- The agency has requested an early start date to align with their project goals
- Pre-placement training with your placement agency
- Health or extenuating circumstances

### **MY PLACEMENT AGENCY IS OFFERING TO PAY ME FOR PLACEMENT AFTER I HAVE STARTED, IS THIS OK?**

In rare circumstances, agencies may suggest providing a basic salary due to student financial hardship. However, all placements are negotiated as unpaid by the university, ensuring students are covered by UoW Insurance. If a student receives payment during a placement, it voids UoW Insurance and Fair Work Act (2009) vocational placement status. Students opting for paid placements must secure full insurance coverage through the agency.

All UoW placements adhere to Fair Work Act (2009), qualifying as lawfully unpaid vocational placements if they meet the following criteria:

- Arranged by the School of Health and Society at the University of Wollongong for Bachelor Social Work or Masters Social Work (Qualified) courses.
- Are a required component of the course.
- Conducted in an approved setting determined by the University and AASW.
- There is no entitlement to pay for the student's work.

- Receiving payment during placement transforms it into an employment relationship, no longer considered a vocational placement (excluding pre-authorised Work Based Placements meeting AASW requirements).
- For compliance with AASW guidelines, any payment during placement should be negotiated and authorised by the Subject Coordinator beforehand.