



Social Work

Field Education Manual 2025-2026

Professional Placement website:
www.ecu.edu.au/sah-professional-placement

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made here.**

 134 328 | +61 8 6304 0000 (International)
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Edith Cowan University (ECU) Field Placement Welcome Message

Edith Cowan University (ECU) is committed to reconciliation and acknowledges the deep significance of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples, communities, cultures, and histories. We recognise and respect the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples as the Traditional Custodians of the land and honour their ongoing connection to Country. In particular, we acknowledge and value our continuing relationship with the Nyoongar people, on whose ancestral lands our campuses are located.

Welcome to Your Field Placement

Welcome to your field placement at ECU. This marks an important milestone in your journey as a social work professional, and we are excited to support the growth, learning, and development you will experience during this time.

This manual has been developed to provide you with key information and guidance on the expectations, requirements, and assessment processes aligned with the Australian Association of Social Workers (AASW) accreditation standards. We encourage you to read it thoroughly and refer to it throughout your placement to ensure you are prepared to engage ethically and effectively with both communities and professionals.

Your field placement is an opportunity to deepen your professional capabilities, contribute meaningfully to your host agency, and make a positive impact in the lives of individuals and communities. We hope this experience will be both personally and professionally enriching.

At ECU, we are committed to continuously enhancing the student experience. We welcome your feedback on this manual and your placement experience to help us improve our support for future students and community partners.

We wish you every success in your placement and in your future social work career.

Warm regards,
The Field Education Team
Edith Cowan University

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1.0 Introduction to Field Placement in Social Work

All Social Work students are required to complete two field placements of 500 hours each, as mandated by the Australian Social Work Education and Accreditation Standards (ASWEAS, 2024). These placements must occur in two distinctly different practice settings to ensure a breadth of professional experience and learning. In the Bachelor of Social Work, placements are typically completed in the third and fourth years, while in the Master of Social Work (Qualifying) program, they are usually undertaken in the first and second years.

Field education is a critical component of your professional development and is designed to be both supportive and appropriately challenging. It provides opportunities to engage in meaningful practice, develop core social work capabilities, and critically reflect on your experiences to deepen your professional identity and understanding.

1.1 Field Education Team Contacts

Preferred contact is via email: SAH.placements@ecu.edu.au

Field Education Team are available by appointment on the South West & Joondalup Campus. Please email the above to make an appointment.

1.2 AASW Education & accreditation Standards

The Edith Cowan University Social Work Program is accredited by the Australian Association of Social Workers. Placement requirements are aligned with the [Australian Social Work Education and Accreditation Standards \(ASWEAS\)](#). These set out the principles, standards, and graduate attributes for social work education in Australia.



1.3 Placement Attendance and Timing

Placements are generally held in Semester 2 for the BSW students and Semester 1 for MSQ students. Semester 1 enrolments for bachelor's students are considered on a case- by-case basis.

Each placement spans 500 hours, equivalent to approximately 14 weeks for full time students (part time pro rata). Placement cannot be less than 13 weeks. Attendance aligns with the host agency's regular days and hours, which may vary given the nature of the agency. For example, school placements may be on hold during school holidays.

Students must commit to the entire semester and participate in any orientation or inductions session at both ECU and the placement agency, which could occur before the official start date of Semester.

2.0 Field Placement Unit Information

All placement units comprise of two components, 500 hours supervised fieldwork, supported by field education staff; and Integrative academic study including:

- a. Integration sessions at the university (or online for remote and interstate students) to link placement learning, practice, and academic theory.
- b. A Common Assessment Tool (CAT), documenting learning and guiding students to complete a wide range of skills-focused activities over the learning areas.
- c. Additional assessment/s as per unit outline

2.1 Field Placement 1

Placement Expectations

During the first placement, students typically begin by observing experienced practitioners and undertake basic tasks such as taking minutes, report preparation and organizing meetings. As the placement progresses, students are encouraged to gradually assume more advanced tasks such as case management, conducting client interviews and co-facilitating group sessions.

In line with AASW Practice Standards 1-9, during their first placement students are expected to develop:

- An understanding of agency function processes and structure.
- An ability to interact with clients and respond to basic needs and requests.
- Knowledge and awareness of confidentiality and duty of care responsibilities.
- Awareness of legislation as a base for human service work.
- Developing knowledge of the AASW Practice Standards (2023) and Code of Ethics (2020).
- An understanding of general social work theories and how they inform practice.
- Social work practice tools such as case notes, assessments, safety plans.
- An ability to initiate and engage colleagues to build supportive relationships.
- An awareness of the need to take care of self and ensure safety.
- An ability to negotiate with the supervisor in a professionally appropriate way.
- A beginning concept of themselves as a social worker.
- Knowledge of simple group work theory and community development models.
- An ability to understand, initiate and conduct basic research.
- Capacity to reflect on practice.

2.2 Field Placement 2

Placement Expectations

During second placement it is crucial to offer students opportunities to push their boundaries and challenge themselves by undertaking tasks such as co-facilitating groups, undertaking complex casework, leading projects etc. They should demonstrate the capacity to analyse situations and provide thoughtful, professional feedback. By mid-point of the second placement students should exhibit the ability to take initiative and work independently.

In line with the AASW Practice Standards 1-9, during their second placement students are expected to be able to undertake learning tasks almost equivalent to that of a graduate social worker such as:

- Demonstrate a strong understanding of the agency and its context.
- Take on casework and projects with support.
- Analyse macro and micro practice issues.
- Demonstrate clinical skills in relation to client interactions.
- Engage in the supervisory relationship as an independent and reflective learner.
- Manage contestation and conflict in a professionally appropriate way.
- Advocate and lobby on behalf of clients.
- Demonstrate knowledge and understanding of social policy.
- Display competent research skills.
- Utilise knowledge and understanding of social work theories and how they apply to practice.
- Demonstrate an on-going commitment to self as an active professional learner.
- Demonstrate professional confidence in social work skills and knowledge.
- Have a sound knowledge of the AASW Practice Standards (2023) and Code of Ethics (2020).

Honours Structure SWK5115 (Bachelors)

Full time students undertaking the honours program will attend placement 5 days per week for the initial 4 weeks. They will then attend 4 days placement per week and 1-day independent study focused on their Honours project. If the honours project is relevant to the placement, this study day can be considered as part of their placement hours, contributing to the research learning outcome.

2.3 Recognised Prior Learning

Some students may be eligible for Recognised Prior Learning (RPL) for their **first** Field Placement SWK3116 or SWK6440. RPL is not available for SWK4116, SWK5115 or SWK6450.

The RPL information and application form can be found on the [Professional Placement Website](#).

Submission Dates

RPL applications for Semester 1 must be submitted by **15th November of the previous year** to placement. Applications for Semester 2 must be submitted by the **15th of March of the same year**. Late applications **are not accepted**. RPL queries can be directed to SAH.Placements@ecu.edu.au

3.0 Roles in Field Education

3.1 Students

ECU has a [Student Charter](#) and [University Rules](#). Even though students are participating in a workplace away from campus, the Student Charter and University Rules still apply.

It is expected that students will be active agents of their own learning and development as a social worker within the agency. Whilst your previous experience is valuable, your role during placement is to always maintain a learning position. Students are responsible for informing their placement of any learning needs or adjustments needed.

Supervision

Students must be active participants in supervision and book these sessions with their Field Educator in advance. It is suggested that the same time is booked each week to plan around, so it isn't accidentally missed. Students need to receive and give feedback in a professional and reflective manner. As part of a working team (i.e. student, field educators, liaison officers and university), students will have to balance their availability and other needs against those of all stakeholders.

Students should send a supervision agenda, preparing relevant material for discussion. Students are responsible for recording minutes of discussions, sending these to the supervisor for clarification. Supervision hours should be logged in the student timesheet each week.

It is recommended an agreement is signed by the student and supervisor, outlining the mutual expectations. It is the supervisor's discretion which supervision agreement they would like to use. A suggested agreement is included within Sonia, which the student can access.

3.2 Agencies

Agencies accept students for placement have responsibility of the following:

- Preparation and planning of appropriate student activities.
- Provide a suitable workplace induction that includes policies (general, occupational health, safety procedures) and procedures relating to the agency including adequate time for the student to read and comprehend the material.
- Provide a safe and healthy work environment, free from discrimination and harassment.
- Make agency resources available in line with what a staff member would have access to.
- Recognising student placement as education, with different expectations than paid staff.
- Provide learning opportunities by including them in their day-to-day work.
- Provide formal supervision for the student each week – different expectations if social worker or not.
- Attend progress meetings with student and university staff.
- Ensure student is reimbursed for any expenses incurred while undertaking agency business as directed by agency staff.

3.3 Field Educator (FE)

The Field Educator (FE) must be a **qualified social worker with a minimum of two years post qualifying practice experience and be eligible for membership of the AASW**. Each student will be appointed a FE, either internal or external to the agency, to supervise their placement.

The responsibilities of a FE include:

- Provide the student with regular formal supervision – 1.5 hours per 35 hours completed.
- Facilitate learning opportunities to help the student acquire skills required
- Ensure student's tasks are manageable and expectations of the student are realistic.
- Give constructive feedback to the student on their tasks and professional behaviour.
- Ensure that the student links theory to practice and can reflect on their learning experience.
- Complete comments and score the CAT before the mid placement and final placement progress meetings.
- Inform the university of changes taking place in the agency which could affect the placement.

- Work alongside the Task Supervisor, Liaison Officer and University staff as needed.

It is recommended a supervision contract is created and signed to set expectations about supervision.

3.4 Task Supervisor

This role is only assigned where there is no on-site Field Educator available. The task supervisor is the agency employee who provides day to day support and plays an important role in the development of the student. The task supervisor works in partnership with the Field Educator and Liaison Officer, regularly discussing student performance and learning on placement. Task supervisors should be working closely with students and providing day-to-day task supervision.

It is recommended to reserve the part of each supervision for a group discussion with the task supervisor and FE together, to ensure collaboration.

Task supervisors are required to complete a mid- and final placement report before the 2nd and 3rd progress meeting, discussing the student's progress up to that point. This should include areas they are doing well, areas they need to develop, and a plan on how to meet the areas that need development.

3.5 Liaison Officer (LO)

The LO is a qualified social worker with **minimum of five years' post qualifying experience**.

The LO's role is to oversee the placement, ensuring it is meeting all requirements of ECU and AASW, as well as supporting the student and supervisors as needed.

The LO acts on behalf of the University as a representative for the field placement team. The responsibilities of the LO are:

- Develop and maintain collaborative working arrangements with all parties.
- Support, monitor and evaluate the placement as required.
- Chair at least 3 placement progress meetings and complete summary report after each.
- Review and assess the CAT document in consultation with all parties.

As the LO represents the ECU placement team, students or supervisors must attempt to contact the LO first to discuss any issues arising from placement.

4.0 Preparation for Placement

4.1 Enrolment

Students should enrol as soon as possible, preferably 6 months prior to placement commencing.

Students enrolled in the unit will receive Student Information forms, with completion and return expected around February for semester 2 enrolments and October for semester 1 enrolments. While late forms will be accepted, students will have less chance of being matched with their preferences.

4.2 Personal Preparation & self care

The 500 hour commitment to placement is considered a full time workload and students should ensure they plan early for this. Placement is normally 14 weeks (cannot be less than 13 weeks), beginning early July or February, and you should ensure arrangements such as leave from work, childcare etc. are made well in advance.

It is important for students to put self-care strategies in place to manage fatigue and to reduce the risk of burnout.

All students are encouraged to develop and maintain self-care plans which can be done through [student success](#) or using online resources.

Some Bachelor's students may need to put their placement on hold at the end of semester to complete the block units (SWK3121 & SWK4121). Students are responsible for communicating this with their agency.

4.3 Conflict of Interest

Students should declare any potential conflict of interest in their Student Information Form.

Examples of a conflict of interest for a student might include:

- Being or having a family member who is a staff member of an agency.
- Current volunteering arrangements within an agency.
- Being a current client of an agency.

A conflict of interest does not necessarily mean the student cannot be placed there, as arrangements can sometimes be made to mitigate these. If you are considering a placement at your workplace, see the "Work Based Placement" section of this document.

4.4 Emails and Social Media

Students should ensure that they use appropriate email and social media etiquette. Due to confidentiality, students are advised to not share details of their placement on social media. ECU policy on this can be found at: [ECU Legislation and Policy Directory](#)

Email signatures must be included in all communication from students. They should include the following details:

Student Full Name
Course, Student Number
Contact Phone Number

For emails outside of the university, the student may wish to include "Edith Cowan University" in their signature.

4.5 Insurance & Risk Management

The Risk and Assurance Services Unit is responsible for administering the University's insurance program. Please refer to their [FAQ's](#) for further information & guidance.

5.0 Placement Types

5.1 General Placements

Students are allocated a placement based on several factors including agency capacity, student location, sector preferences and learning needs. Placements are sought within a reasonable distance. For metro students, this is generally up to 50kms/1 hour travel time each way. For regional students, this may be further depending on local agency availability. Allocation process is explored further in section 8.

5.2 Part Time Placements

Placement is full time for all students, except for those with a Learning Access Plan (LAP) or extenuating circumstances. These are also dependent on agency and supervisor availability, which is often limited.

Part time placements are usually planned for 4 days a week (17 weeks). 3 day a week placement (22-23 weeks) can be considered on a case-by-case basis.

5.3 Work based Placements

Applications for field placement in a student's workplace are assessed on a case-by-case basis considering the following:

- ASWEAS guidelines – student needs to be placed in a different role with a new Line Manager
- ECU requirements for Field Placement.
- Student's identified learning needs.

- Agency capacity including learning opportunities available.

The Work Based Placement Information Form will be emailed to you from the Field Placement Team if you indicate this on your Placement Preference application form. Approval for this is required prior to commencement of placement, so applications should be submitted as soon as possible.

Students who are paid by their workplace for placement hours are ineligible for ECU insurance and need to consider any conflicts of interest around this.

5.4 Rural and Remote Placements

There are opportunities for students to undertake placements in rural and remote areas across Australia, with different levels of support available. To be considered, students need to demonstrate resilience, maturity, autonomy, and professionalism.

Students interested in a rural placement should select this within their Student Information Form. Applicants will be interviewed by the placement team for suitability and informed of next steps.

Supports are mostly available for domestic students including free or heavily subsidised accommodation and reimbursement of travel costs. These placements are highly sought after by students from many universities as they provide excellent practical experience and professional development opportunities. Interstate placements are possible; however, travel is only subsidised within the state of the placement, with the student responsible for funding their transport to the capital city of that state.

Current rural placements for ECU students include:

Region	Town	Program
Mid West	Geraldton	https://www.wacrh.uwa.edu.au/
	Mullewa	
	Mt Magnet	
	Canarvon	
Pilbara	Karratha	https://www.notredame.edu.au/majarl/in/student-placement
	Newman	
	Headland	
Kimberley	Broome	https://www.notredame.edu.au/majarl/in/student-placement
	Kununurra	
	Derby	
South West	Bunbury	https://www.udrhsw.ecu.edu.au/
Goldfields	Kalgoorlie	TBC

The Wheatbelt and Great Southern occasionally have placements with free or subsidised accommodation for any student (including international). However, these are supported by individual placement agencies, not a specific program.

5.5 Overseas Placements

The Field Placement team is currently trialing a very small placement program to Nepal. This is currently only available for final year bachelor's students at this time.

6.0 Sonia Placement Management System

Sonia is computer software for students to easily maintain their requirements, record learning and upload documents. Students will gain access to Sonia once enrolled in the placement unit and will be provided additional information as and when required. Sonia resources including instruction videos will be emailed. It is important students familiarise themselves with this program as it is used for various functions throughout the placement.

6.1 Logging in

To access Sonia

1. Go to <https://Sonia.ecu.edu.au>
 - OR go to the ECU intranet, click “other logins” and select “Sonia Online”.
2. Click on “SAH Placements”
3. Select your role (student) and then click “University Sign In”.
4. This will take you to the login page where you log in using your ECU Username and Password.

6.2 Checking Placement Details

Once a placement is allocated, it will appear in the “Placements” tab. Students will be also sent an email at this time. Click the red “Details” button to see the agency contact details and allocated supervisors.

When the placement is confirmed, students must ensure that the details of the placement and supervisors are correct in Sonia. This is important as these parties require access to the Common Assessment Tool. If the details are incorrect or change part way through placement, please email SAH.Placements@ecu.edu.au

7.0 Pre-Placement Checks

All students require an up-to-date CV, National Police Clearance and Working with Children Check (WCC). Some agencies have additional requirements including immunisations, mask fitting, NDIS clearance and other screenings. **All costs related to placement are the responsibility of the student.**

Students are also required to complete the Work Integrated Learning (WIL) Modules on canvas. The link to these modules will be emailed to students and must be complete prior to placement.

All required checks can be found in Sonia under the ‘Checks’ tab. Check this tab regularly as it will indicate any checks that may be expiring, or have expired and need to be completed.

Once uploaded, these are verified by the placement team, which can take up to 5 business days. Placements are unable to be confirmed until all clearances have been verified. Further information on checks is available on the [Social Work Placement website](#).

7.1 Resume/ CV

All students require an up-to-date resume. Please upload your resume to Sonia as soon as possible, as it plays a vital role in securing your placement. Agencies often reject resumes that do not meet a sufficient standard. Your resume should be no more than 4 pages long and must include the following:

- Employment history (agency name, role title, timeframe, summary of key responsibilities)
- Degree title
- Details of previous placements or relevant volunteer experience
- Any other relevant information

Microsoft Word offers several free resume templates, and the Career Hub at ECU provides a [resume writing guide](#). Additionally, they conduct free resume writing workshops and offer 1-1 consultations, both of which we highly recommend. To book a session, contact careers@ecu.edu.au

7.2 National Police Clearance

All students require a National Police Clearance (NPC) before commencing placement. NPCs **cannot be** applied for earlier than 6 months prior to placement commencement. However, they need to be received to secure a placement and can sometimes take up to 8 weeks to arrive. Therefore, students need to be diligent to apply for their NPC to ensure it arrives in time but doesn't expire.

Please apply **online** where possible, as these are often processed faster than paper applications. Students are generally welcome to go through any company to apply for an NPC, such as VeritasCheck.com.au, CvCheck.com, NationalCrimeCheck.com.au, etc. Students are often eligible to apply for the cheaper volunteer rate. Please note that if you apply through the WA Police/ Australia Post, students are ineligible for their volunteer rate. These generally cost between \$23-\$60.

Students who have lived overseas within the last 5 years may need to apply for an International Police Clearance in some circumstances.

Students who have a criminal record of any kind need to contact the Field Placement Team. We cannot guarantee a placement for students with criminal records.

7.3 Working with Children (WWC) Check

All students are required to have a Working with Children Check (WWC) or the equivalent check for their state. This application can take several months to process in busy periods, so students are asked to apply as soon as

possible. The card lasts 3 years, so can be used for both placements and costs \$11. WWC applications are available at ECU Student Hub, local post offices or online.

Student Hub staff are required to authorise the form prior to you submitting the application. For online WWC renewal, students must enter ECU's authorised representative details as:

- Organisational representative: Edith Cowan University
- Job Title: **Student Hub**
- Name of Organisation: Edith Cowan University
- Email Address: enquiries@ecu.edu.au
- Address: 2 Bradford Street, Mount Lawley

The placement team staff are **not** authorised to sign WWC applications. Putting placement team details on your form will lead to your application being delayed and then rejected.

7.4 Immunisation Requirements

Some placements have specific vaccination requirements. This is especially relevant for hospital/health-based placements (including Department of Health, WACHS & Mental Health).

The Student Serology & Immunisation Form to be completed by your GP can be downloaded and submitted by logging into Sonia and going to the 'Checks' tab.

Students wanting to be considered for a hospital or health-based placement, need to be aware that the immunisations will need to be **completed and evidence uploaded to Sonia**.

Students unable to be vaccinated for medical reasons may need to provide a medical certificate outlining this. ECU is unable to guarantee placements for students who refuse to be vaccinated without medical reason. Other agencies may also require immunisations, students will be advised if this is the case.

7.5 Driver's License and car

Whilst having a driver's license is not mandatory for placement, many agencies will only accept students who have one. Students who do not have a license, need to ensure this is made clear to the placement team in their Student Information Form, as it will limit the placement options available and will likely lead to additional travel time.

Some agencies may require students to use their own car for placement. Students should enquire with the agency at interview if this is required and if there is mileage reimbursement available.

8.0 Placement Agency Allocation

Students are not permitted to contact agencies directly to request placements.

The Field Placement team have many contacts who maintain placement processes on behalf of their agencies. Students contacting agencies can jeopardise the relationship between the University and agencies. Students who have been approached by an agency should contact the field placement team to discuss.

Placements are hard to obtain, with less agencies often expressing interest than the number of enrolled students each year, and other universities competing for these limited spots. If you lose a placement opportunity due to unprofessional behaviour or generally expressing to the agency that you aren't interested in the placement offered, another placement may not be sourced.

8.1 Preferences and Learning Needs

The Field Education Team will send out a Student Information Form approximately 6 months before the commencement of placement. This is for students to express their preferences and disclose any learning needs, conflicts of interest or anything else the placement team needs to be aware of.

While preferences are taken into consideration, they cannot be guaranteed. Placement availability is dependent on local agency capacity and learning needs of the wider cohort. Final year students must include details of their first placement or RPL application in their Student Information Form to ensure the placement meets AASW requirements.

8.2 Pre-Placement Interviews

ECU will notify students via email if a placement has been identified for them. **Students are required to contact their allocated agency within 2 business days** of being emailed to organise a pre-placement interview. The agency is emailed at the same time as the student and if not contacted promptly, they may assume the student is not interested.

This should be treated as a job interview. Students should research the organisation and practice standard interview questions. While it is recognised that a student may not be allocated to their preferred agency, it is important to go in with an open mind and act professionally. Agencies do not want to take students who are uninterested in the placement offered.

Interviews are an important process to securing a placement and for student professional development. The interview does not guarantee placement, and some agencies may require multiple interviews before confirming placements. Some interview questions may include:

- Why do you want a placement with our organisation?
- What is your understanding of social work theory and its application to practice?
- What social work theories most resonate with you?
- Where/what sector do you want to work upon graduation?
- What unit/s have you enjoyed the most and/or struggled with so far?

Students must discuss at interview:

- Any individual learning needs or reasonable adjustments they may require
- Any immunisation requirements specific to the agency
- Additional clearance requirements such as NDIS screening, mask fitting, hand hygiene certificate, etc
- Potential conflicts of interest

ECU's [Career Hub](#) are available for free in person and online interview preparation, including mock interviews.

8.3 Post Interview Notification

Agencies are asked to notify the ECU field placement team of the interview outcome as soon as possible. This will be recorded for students on Sonia. An automated email is then sent to the student and agency with confirmation. Successful students should then contact the agency to:

- Confirm placement start date and times.
 - If part time, confirm which days.
- Confirm first day expectations such as what to bring, where and when to meet, dress code, etc.
- Send through any additional clearances needed such as NDIS screening, mask fitting, hand hygiene certificate, etc.

8.4 Agency declines to proceed with placement

If an agency declines to take the student following an interview, the field placement team will contact the agency for feedback and discuss this with the student.

If the interview failure is through no fault of the student, the field placement team will do their best to find another placement. It is noted that placements can take time to be sourced, therefore, students should do their best to impress on their first interview to ensure placement begins in line with the rest of the cohort.

Should interview failure be due to unprofessional conduct, lack of preparation or for other reasons that the student is responsible, a meeting will be held with the student and the Field Education Coordinator to determine if a second placement interview will be sourced from another agency.

Should the student fail a second interview, the student may be excluded from placement and be required to achieve outcomes as per a Structured Learning Plan, developed in consultation with the Field Education Team. Consideration of a new placement will depend on the successful achievement of SLP outcomes. Undue delay in meeting the learning outcomes may result in the student not being allocated a new placement that semester.

8.5 Interview Declined by Student

Students can only decline a placement offer in extenuating circumstances.

The field placement team attempts to match students with their preferences; however, this is not always possible. Placements are challenging to find and therefore, not to be refused by the student on reasons such as personal preference, agency values or travel time (within reason). Students are not to decline placements directly to the agency.

A placement is deemed suitable if it meets the following criteria:

- The AASW requirements for a social work placement can be met.
- Appropriate and adequate supervision can be provided to the student, whether this is internally or externally to the organisation.
- Appropriate learning opportunities are available to the student as per the learning outcomes.
- Placement location is reasonably accessible (generally up to 50kms/ 1 hour travel time each way).

Placement suitability is assessed by the field placement team and supervisors.

Students need to act professionally in all communication with the agency. If the student has specific concerns, they need to raise this first with the field placement team before attending the interview.

9.0 During Placement

9.1 Daily Hours

Full time students are generally expected to do approximately 37.5 hours a week (8 hours a day minus 30min lunch break), which is just under 14 weeks of placement. Excessive hours that are beyond this limit are discouraged due to occupational health and safety concerns. All placement hours must be approved by the Field Educator and timesheet signed by an agency representative.

Students are expected to attend placement during the regular operational hours of the agency. For example, if the agency' hours of operation are 8am to 4pm, students should adhere to this schedule, unless they have obtained prior approval.

If you are a student unable to attend the full day due to other commitments, your day will still end at the close of business for the agency. For example, if the agency is open from 8 to 4, and you are required to drop a child at school and unable to attend until 9am, the placement day would still end at 4pm. This means you may have to attend additional days to make up the total 500 placement hours.

9.2 Orientation/ Inductions

The compulsory ECU orientation held before commencement of placement, as well as any agency-based orientations/inductions held once placement has commenced, can all be counted towards placement hours.

9.3 Leave and Public Holidays

Students must advise their placement agency if they are not going to be at placement for any reason. Placement hours are only counted when the student is doing approved placement related activities.

In the case of illness, where you are unable to attend, students are to notify their agency supervisor immediately. Students are only required to advise the field placement team ([via SAH.Placements@ecu.edu.au](mailto:SAH.Placements@ecu.edu.au)) of any extended absence from placement that may impact their placement completion date past the end of semester.

If the agency is closed due to a public holiday, students are unable to count that day towards their hours. However, if the agency is running a relevant out-of-hours event, students can attend and count these hours, if they have prior approval from their Field Educator.

9.4 Working from home

If the placement agency has work from home (WFH) options for their staff, this can be considered for students on a case-by-case basis. Students and supervisors should discuss these opportunities at the start of placement as a backup in the case of lockdown or similar where the student is able to do work but unable to attend in person.

All WFH needs pre-approval from both the agency and Field Educator. The work must be measurable with regular check ins by the supervisor. Work from home may not be possible in some placements.

9.5 External training and agency visits

Students are encouraged to discuss with their supervisors the prospects for additional learning opportunities. This may be through external training, online webinars, visiting other agencies, etc. These tasks all require pre-approval from the Field Educator. It is necessary to not just attend but demonstrate what you learnt from these opportunities and how it applies to the placement. This could be demonstrated in several ways, such as a written reflection, a conversation in supervision, etc.

Agency visits are a great opportunity for networking and learning client referral pathways. ECU insurance only covers your activities for being a student at your allocated agency. Students are not authorised to complete placement tasks at another agency. Therefore, visits are purely observational and should be in line with what a visit from their supervisor to that agency would be able to do.

While there is no specified limit on training and agency visits, these should only be to supplement knowledge for placement. The placement agency is where the student should receive most learning experiences.

9.6 What is not included in placement hours

- Lunch breaks – it is a Fair Work requirement to have a 30min break for every 5 hours of work.
- Travel time to and from your regular placement location and home
- Working on assessments unrelated to placement
- Leave of any kind including public holidays

9.7 Timesheets

Students are to maintain a timesheet as a record of placement hours. This needs to include weekly sign off by an agency representative. The collection of timesheets is uploaded to the CAT in Sonia upon conclusion of the placement to demonstrate the completed 500hours. Students can use a timesheet provided by the agency or use the ECU template within Sonia.

9.8 Integration Sessions

Integration sessions are mandatory and held twice throughout the placement for each cohort, to link placement learning, practice, and academic theory. They also serve as a great opportunity for peer support and networking. Integration is counted towards placement hours. It is important that students notify their agency of the integration session dates at the start of placement, and book them out in their calendars, as these sessions need to be prioritised over placement tasks.

These need to be attended in person where possible, with an online option available for remote students only. In person attendance is still required for students who are generally enrolled as “off-campus”. Sessions are often organised at both Bunbury and Perth.

10.0 Progress Meetings

Progress meetings are held for all students in weeks 4, 8 and 12 (part time pro rata) to ensure requirements are being met and address concerns as early as possible. All 3 meetings should be initiated by the **student** and booked in the **first week** of placement.

Refer to and print Appendix 3 – [Progress Meetings Preparation & Requirements](#)

Attendance should include Task Supervisor (if applicable), Field Educator, Liaison Officer, and the student.

It is preferred that all parties will attend these meetings in person. However, online attendance may be required at times, especially in instances such as remote placements.

After each meeting, Liaison Officers are required to complete a progress report for each student.

11.0 Assessments

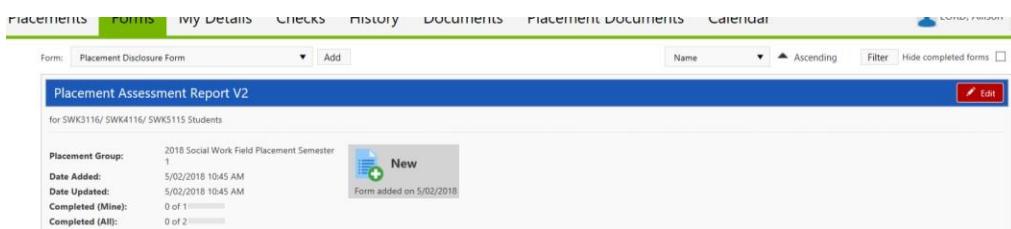
All Field Placement units are recorded on transcripts as undifferentiated pass/ fail (UP/UF) only. However, learning areas are scored to identify strengths and areas for development. The Common Assessment Tool (CAT) is the main assignment for all students on placement. Details of other required assessments are available in Canvas.

11.1 Access to the CAT

The CAT is completed electronically in Sonia. It will available when the placement commences.

To access the CAT, students need to log into Sonia using your ECU username and password.

1. Click on the “Forms” tab
2. Click on the red EDIT button to access the form.



Placement Disclosure Form

Placement Assessment Report V2

for SWK3116/ SWK4116/ SWK5115 Students

Placement Group: 2018 Social Work Field Placement Semester 1

Date Added: 5/02/2018 10:45 AM

Date Updated: 5/02/2018 10:45 AM

Completed (Mine): 0 of 1

Completed (All): 0 of 2

New Form added on 5/02/2018

11.2 Common Assessment Tool

The CAT guides the student to complete a wide range of skills-focused activities that are generic across all placement settings. The CAT ensures that the learning needs and goals are the same across all WA universities who offer the BSW and MSQ of Social Work. This was previously known as the Placement Learning Record (PLR).

Learning Areas

The CAT has seven learning areas based on the unit learning outcomes and AASW Practice Standards. Each area has sub-learning areas that unpack these further.

Learning Area 1: Values, ethics, and professional practice.

Learning Area 2: Organisational, legal, and political contexts.

Learning Area 3: Social Work processes, practices and communication skills, group and teamwork.

Learning Area 4: Culture and Identity.

Learning Area 5: Using knowledge (theory or evidence) for practice

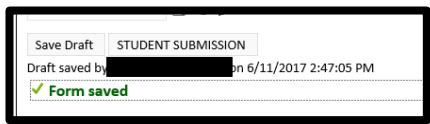
Learning Area 6: Self-directed learning, professional development, and conduct

Learning Area 7: Social Policy

Students should be working on their CAT throughout their placement.

Please remember to **SAVE SAVE SAVE!** When you click “save draft”, **await confirmation that the page has saved (image below) before closing**. Closing before this confirmation can cause information to be lost. We

recommend saving a copy of all work in a word document or similar, as there has been times Sonia has lost work.



11.3 Strategies and Evidence

Students must articulate their strategies and then evidence each sub-learning outcome. All sub learning outcomes should contain:

- Two strategies
- Two sections of evidence (one per strategy)

Evidence might include deidentified case notes or client assessment, a written reflection after attending a workshop, supervision notes, etc. Attachments are not required for every sub-learning outcome. However, they may be used to supplement the evidence paragraph/s. The following learning areas require a critical reflection as evidence, with a minimum word count of 300 words (1.2, 2.2, 3.6, 4.2, 6.4, 7.1) which will count as one piece of evidence.

[Appendix 3](#) outlines the amount of progress on the CAT expected to be completed before each meeting.

References are not required for each area, unless referring to a particular piece of formal literature such as the AASW Code of Ethics.

See [Appendix 5 – Daily Dairy: Integrating Knowledge to Practice](#) – for further explanation on strategies and evidence, and to see how to integrate practice and theory.

11.4 Rankings for Field Placement

Please ensure to read ranking descriptions as they are different for first and final placement students.

Students and Field Educators (onsite or external) are both required to rank against each sub-learning area prior to the mid and final Placement Progress Meetings. Field Educators are often unable to complete ratings without the student doing their sections first. Therefore, it is recommended that students complete their sections at least 1 week before each meeting.

First Placement Ratings

RATING	LEVEL	DESCRIPTION
Capability not met	1	Performance not at basic level expected. Poor understanding of requirements. Practice unsafe or inappropriate. Knowledge or skills undeveloped. Little application to learning. No capacity for development demonstrated.
Some capability	2	Performance not yet capable. Some requirements understood. Further work needed to demonstrate beginning capability.
Beginning capability	3 (pass)	Performance at beginning level. Requirements understood. Practice capable under close guidance and supervision. Demonstrates some adaptability.
Capable	4	Performance beyond the level expected. Requirements integrated into practice. Can perform independently with supervision. Demonstrates adaptability and critical appreciation of own/others' practice with some guidance.
Unable to be assessed (This ranking should NOT be used to highlight performance issues and only applies in the first half of placement)	U/A	The work has either not been undertaken, an opportunity has not been available to the student or the supervisor has not had an opportunity to assess capability in this area.

Final Placement Ratings

RATING	LEVEL	DESCRIPTION
Capability not met	1	Performance not at basic level expected. Poor understanding of requirements. Practice unsafe or inappropriate. Knowledge or skills undeveloped. Little application to learning. No capacity for development demonstrated.
Some capability	2	Performance not yet capable. Some requirements understood and practice capable under close guidance and supervision. Further work needed.
Capable	3 (pass)	Performance at level expected of newly qualifying practitioner. Requirements integrated into practice. Can perform independently with guidance and supervision. Demonstrates adaptability and critical appreciation of own/others' practice.
Highly capable	4	Performance beyond level expected of newly qualifying practitioner. High levels of independence. Engages strongly in critical reflexivity. Exhibits ethical fluency with minimal supervision. Ability to generate new understandings or practices developing.
Unable to be assessed (This ranking should NOT be used to highlight performance issues and only applies in the first half of placement)	U/A	The work has either not been undertaken, an opportunity has not been available to the student, or the supervisor has not had an opportunity to assess capability in this area.

To pass placement, all students must reach a level of “3” for all areas by the end of the placement. This rating is applicable to **both** first and final students. Given the ranking descriptors, there is a higher expectation of final placement students to be able to achieve a score of 3.

11.5 Finishing placement

After the 500 hours are completed, the following steps must be taken:

Student

1. Uploads combined timesheets in pdf format to the CAT.
2. Confirm they have read the current comments by their FE and LO and press “Student Submission”.
 - NOTE: Once this is submitted, the document will become “read only” to the student
3. Informs their FE and LO that they have submitted their CAT

Once the FE & LO have completed their requirements, the **Student** will then:

1. Save the CAT as a pdf and upload this pdf to Canvas:
 - Top right corner of page has print option where you can “print to pdf”.
 - When uploaded, unit coordinator will receive a notification that the placement has concluded and is ready for marking. Ensure pdf is uploaded within 7 days of placement conclusion.

12.0 Resolving Difficulties on Placement

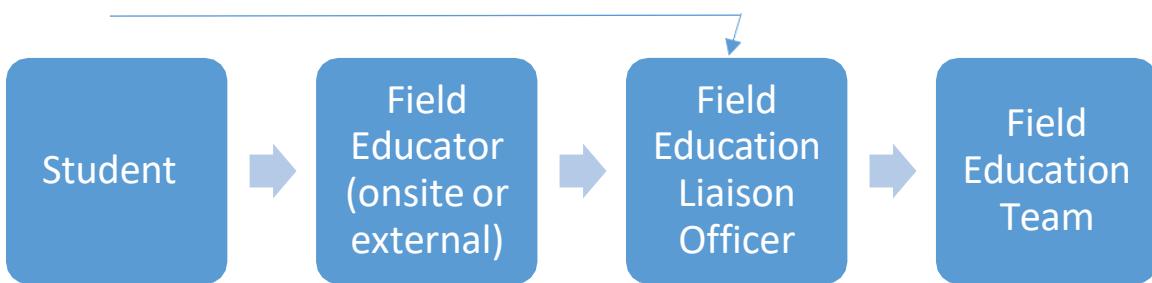
It is normal for students to encounter some difficulties during placement. Importantly, conflict is not always negative. When a student and a Field Educator can respectfully challenge one another in a supportive environment, new ideas and learning can be cultivated. In most cases, issues are minor and can easily be resolved between the student, agency supervisor and/or Field Educator.

The University can provide extra support for students experiencing difficulties impacting their ability to succeed in their studies, but that may also be impacting on the health, safety, or wellbeing of others in the learning environment.

If concerns arise about your ability to continue successfully in your studies, you may be invited to a fitness to study meeting, a formal yet supportive meeting that focuses on understanding your challenges and finding ways for the university to support you in your continued success.

Please refer to the [fitness to study](#) page and [fitness to study policy](#) for further information.

12.1 Solution Focused, Problem Solving Approach



It is recommended that all parties adopt a solution focused problem-solving process to address issues that arise on placement.

1. **The student and Task Supervisor/ Field Educator (onsite or external) must attempt to address and resolve any minor issues that arise through discussion and/or supervision.**
2. For any issues not resolved at this initial level, discussions should be held with the Field Education Liaison Officer who can provide direct assistance.
3. The Liaison Officer will attempt to resolve this themselves and may decide to escalate this to the field education team if required.
 - Students are asked to not escalate issues directly to the field placement team as they will be redirected to their FE and/or LO.
4. Significant issues that may result in a student not satisfactorily completing a placement **must** be brought to the attention of the field placement team as soon as possible. The team will work with the FE, LO and agency to determine a strategy to manage the issues in accordance with the AASW standards and university policies and procedures.

No placement is to be terminated without prior consultation with the university.

The field education team must be informed if there is a **significant** placement concern.

Examples of significant concern are:

- Sexual or other harassment of/by a student.
- Unsafe working conditions.
- Discriminatory behaviour.
- Serious or deliberate breach of relevant codes on conduct, policy, procedure or legislation.
- Falsification of records.
- Breakdown of the placement.
- Likelihood of the student failing the placement or being asked to leave.
- Noncompliance of AASW field placement requirements.

12.2 Structured Learning Plans

If a placement is deemed to be at risk of not passing, a clear and transparent process is to be employed as early as possible. It is important that the student and the university are aware of the concerns and in a position to remedy. As such, a Structured Learning Plan (SLP) is to be utilised.

SLPs are developed in consultation with all stakeholders: student, task supervisor, Field Educator (internal/external), Liaison Officer and member of the field placement team. A SLP can be implemented at any time. However, it is recommended they are put in place as soon issues are identified.

The plan will explicitly detail the areas of concern and the expected outcomes to be achieved over a set period (generally 1-4 weeks). Suggested tasks will be included in the plan for the student to demonstrate learning in the relevant areas. A meeting will be organised for the end of the allotted period to discuss whether outcomes have been achieved and the plan for moving forward i.e.: Achieved – further structured learning tasks OR not achieved – placement to be recorded as a fail.

The student must be supported with their learning. The only occasion that a Structured Learning Plan is not required is if the student has acted in such a manner that would warrant immediate failure (such as serious breach of confidentiality, misconduct, Code of Ethics, OH & S requirements etc.).

12.3 Unsatisfactory Grade

All students require a minimum score of 3 for each sub learning area to pass their placement. If any sub-learning area is recorded below this minimum score, the student has not passed the CAT assessment and therefore has not passed the unit. Field Educators make a recommendation on the pass/ fail result. However, ECU has the responsibility for deciding and awarding the final mark. Students will be given all opportunities to pass the unit and the result should not come as a surprise.

Students who do not pass their placement have the right to request a review under the [Admission, Enrolments and Academic Rules policy](#).

The Common Assessment Tool (CAT) document will be used to assess the learning objectives from the unsatisfactory placement and will influence the allocation of the repeat placement. The student must have an interview before re-enrolment with the Field Education Coordinator to demonstrate what change has occurred, to ensure any subsequent placement is viable.

Appendix 1 – Placement Preparation

Placement Preparation

Agency Allocation

Beginning Placement



- Review your personal capacity to complete 500 hours of placement
- Review the ECU [Social Work placement website](#) including essential documents such as this manual
- Enrol in the placement unit as early as possible & check your contact details are correct in SIMO
- Complete the Student Information Form
- Obtain required checks and upload to Sonia

- Make contact with the agency via email to arrange your pre-placement interview within 2 business days
- Research the agency to gain insight to the agency setting
- Attend your interview.
- Confirm if your placement requires additional checks or vaccinations, dress code, start times, etc.

- Commence as per scheduled date or discuss with placement team if alternate date is required
- Note in diary all integration and communicate them with the agency
- Book times for all placement progress meetings in week 1
- Reading the unit plan on Canvas for assessment requirements
- Complete Common Assessment Tool regularly throughout placement
- Keep a record of placement hours and get them signed each week

Appendix 2 - Placement Schedule/Checklist

This should be used in conjunction with the Common Assessment Tool (CAT).

*Please note that this schedule is based upon full time placements, those in part time placements should adjust accordingly.

WEEK	STUDENT
Pre-placement	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Read placement manual <input type="checkbox"/> Organise and attend placement interview. <input type="checkbox"/> Familiarise self with the CAT in Sonia. <input type="checkbox"/> Contact agency before start date to confirm details.
1-3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Attend agency- based inductions including OH&S <input type="checkbox"/> Meet with FE (and task supervisor) to clarify placement expectations. <input type="checkbox"/> Book in all 3 progress meetings in consultation with all parties. <input type="checkbox"/> Familiarise self with the CAT on Sonia and the Canvas site <input type="checkbox"/> Prepare for first Progress Meeting (completed draft strategies for at least 2-3 sub learning areas)
4 130-180 placement hours complete.	<p>Placement Progress Meeting #1</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Student to discuss learning from placement so far <input type="checkbox"/> Verbal Presentation: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Role ▪ Organisation <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▫ Funding & Structure ▫ Legislation ▫ Clients ▫ Policies
5-7	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Complete “strategies” section in each sub-learning area <input type="checkbox"/> Complete a strong draft of at least half of the “evidence” sections. <input type="checkbox"/> Self-score on progress <input type="checkbox"/> Write critically reflective comment in preparation for mid-placement meeting.
8 275-325 placement hours complete.	<p>Placement Progress Meeting #2</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Discussion on placement ratings and plan to address learning areas needing support or development.
9-11	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Finalise all sections of CAT (approximately 1-2 weeks before Placement Progress Meeting #3) including scorings, evidence sections and critically reflective comment.

12 450 placement hours complete.	Placement Progress Meeting #3 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Discussion on placement including ratings and general feedback, plan for client handovers/ returning equipment, and any recommendations for future placement or work opportunities. <input type="checkbox"/> Student to present second assessment – portfolio or selection criteria – and seek feedback. <input type="checkbox"/> Presentation to FELO <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ First Placement students – PowerPoint Presentation ▪ Second Placement students- Selection Criteria (as per Assignment 2)
No later than 1 week post placement	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Confirm to have read all FE/ LO comments. <input type="checkbox"/> Scan timesheets as 1 pdf document and upload to CAT <input type="checkbox"/> Press “Student Submission” at the end of CAT IN Sonia <input type="checkbox"/> After LO has submitted, save whole CAT as a pdf and upload to Canvas

Appendix 3 – Progress Meeting Preparation & Requirements

Meeting 1 Week 4/ 130-180 hours	
Preparation	
Student to have completed at least 2 days prior to meeting: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • First page sections of the CAT (names, dates, supervisors, etc) • Complete draft “strategies” for at least 2-3 sub-learning areas for each main learning area in the CAT (minimum 14 strategies completed) 	
Meeting	
Student to discuss: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Agency context - what they do, how they are funded, legislation they come under, etc. • Learning opportunities so far • Gaps in their knowledge • Focus and goals for the remainder of placement • Student to provide timesheets to LO to check progress with hours 	
Meeting 2 Week 8/ 275-325 hours	
Preparation	
Student to have completed at least 1 week before the meeting: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Minimum 2 “strategies” for every sub-learning area of the CAT • Strong draft of at least half of the “evidence” sections <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◦ <i>Any evidence sections that are not complete need to have a clear plan in the strategies section about how they are going to evidence.</i> • Initial self-scoring of progress for each sub-learning area • Mid-placement progress review comment/ critical reflection 	
Meeting	
Group to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Review scoring and comments. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◦ <i>If the FE has scored any “1”s and/ or if there is a concern that student is at risk of not passing placement, LO to consult with placement team about a Structured Learning Plan.</i> • Create a written plan on how the students could demonstrate meeting any learning areas not yet achieved or evidenced. 	
Student to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Student to provide timesheets to LO to check progress with hours 	
Meeting 3 Week 12/ 450 hours	
NOTE	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Meeting should be postponed if preparation tasks have not been completed by all parties. • Schedule meeting at least 1 week before placement finishes in case learning areas are identified as incomplete or if it needs to be rescheduled 	
Preparation	
Student to have completed at least 1 week before the meeting: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Final version of all “strategies” and “evidence” sections in every sub-learning area • Final scoring for each sub-learning area • Final placement progress review comment/ critical reflection. • Draft version of Assignment 2 and sent to supervisors for feedback in the meeting 	
Meeting	
Group to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Review scoring and comments. • Create a plan on how to meet any learning areas not yet achieved or evidenced. • Provide feedback for student’s Assignment 2 (presentation or selection criteria) • Review process for student to finish placement such as handing over clients, returning keys, etc 	
Student to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Student to provide timesheets to LO to check progress with hours 	

Appendix 4 - Common Assessment Tool Guide

What is a strategy?

A strategy is a carefully planned approach or method designed to achieve a specific goal. What are you going to do and why you are going to do it? For instance, in social work, a strategy might involve developing strong communication skills and building rapport with clients to enhance the effectiveness of interventions and support services.

What is evidence?

Evidence involves the collection and presentation of relevant information to demonstrate your understanding of your chosen strategy. This can be in the form of *supervision notes, meeting minutes, case notes, assessments, written reflections, critical reflection, feedback from others, presentations and brochures designed by student, reports, genograms, ecomaps, mapping organisation, intervention plans relevant to the organisation, support letters, research log, summary of reading, self-care plan*.

An example of what would not constitute evidence is the following, if you attended cultural competency training, the uploading of a certificate does not demonstrate your understanding. Instead, you could write a reflection, explaining what you learnt from the training and how you will implement this into your future practice.

Example

Articulate the purpose and function of social work in the context of your placement and how it relates to your emerging professional identity as a social worker.

Strategies (planned activities):

- I will draft a short introduction outlining my role as a student social worker, which will be included in the school newsletter. The draft will be reviewed and approved by my supervisor prior to publication.
- To demonstrate my understanding of the school social work role, I will create and present a PowerPoint outlining its purpose and key functions. This will be shared with my liaison officer and supervisor during our first liaison meeting.
- I will introduce myself and my role as a student social worker to a client and seek feedback to ensure they understand my role and purpose. If needed, I will rehearse this interaction through role play in supervision prior to the conversation

Evidence:

- **Refer to Field Education Liaison Officer Report 1**, which includes feedback on my presentation outlining the purpose and function of social work within the context of my placement.
- **Refer to my Portfolio of Evidence (POE)** for the published article in the organisation's newsletter, along with the supervision record dated 07/07/23, in which I discussed my professional identity and its role within a multidisciplinary team.
- **Refer to POE supervision record dated 14/07/23**, which documents a role-play exercise where I practised introducing myself and my role as a student social worker to a client.

What is critical reflection?

Critical reflection is a fundamental aspect of social work practice, involving a thoughtful examination and evaluation of one's experiences to foster professional growth. This process goes beyond self-awareness, delving into an in-depth analysis of values, assumptions, and theories that underpin practice. There are various reflection tools and models that can be used for critical reflection.

The Gibbs Reflective Cycle is a widely used model in social work. It facilitates this reflective process through six stages. Beginning with a detailed description of the experience, it moves through exploring emotions, evaluating the situation, analysing underlying assumptions, drawing conclusions, and formulating an action plan for future practice. This structured framework empowers social workers to learn from their experiences, refine their skills, and promote ongoing professional development, ultimately enhancing their ability to empower clients and contribute to social justice.

Appendix 5 - Daily Diary: Integrating Knowledge into Practice

Student Name: _____ Organisation: _____

Date	Activity	Theory	AASW Practice Standards	Section of the CAT	Evidence	Readings/Organisational Procedures
01/01/24	<p>Completed a psychosocial assessment with a patient on the older adult ward.</p> <p>Main discussion points were their feelings regarding loss of mobility and community connection.</p>	<p>Grief and Loss Theory Kubler- Ross</p>	Standard 6	3.3	<p>De-identified Psychosocial assessment. Case notes (ISOBAR)</p>	<p>Scott, J. E., Luszcz, M. A., Walker, R., Mazzucchelli, T., & Windsor, T. D. (2023). Barriers to activity engagement in older adulthood: Results of a community survey. <i>Australasian Journal on Ageing</i>, 42(1), 176-184.</p>

Edith Cowan University – School of Arts and Humanities
Social Work Field Placement

MORE INFORMATION

Student Recruitment Telephone: 134 ECU (134 328)

Email: enquiries@ecu.edu.au

Web: www.ecu.edu.au

