
Master of Social Work
HSW714 Field Education Placement A
Policy- Recognition for Prior Learning

Applications must be submitted by 31 March 2016.

In accordance with the AASW Accreditation Standards (2012) credit for the first field education placement may be possible for students who are able to demonstrate that their prior experience has provided them with the knowledge and experience which would normally be provided in the first placement.

AASW Policy

The AASW supports the recognition of prior learning (RPL) as a basis for application for credit in one (the first) field education subject in a social work program. Guideline 1.3: Guidance on RPL, articulation and credit transfer, Sections 2.1 and 2.2 of the AASW Accreditation Standards (2012) refers to 'Credit Transfer and Recognition of Prior Learning in Field Education'. The Guideline states:

2.1. Decision-making principles

- 1) Credit for the first field education placement, may be possible on the basis of recognition of prior work experience completed prior to entry into the social work program.
- 2) Recognition of Prior learning for field education must be thoroughly assessed.
- 3) Performance outcomes for first placement based on the AASW Practice Standards and Code of Ethics must be used to assess students for RPL. Guideline 1.2 Guidance on Field education programs should be referred to with respect to assessment in field education.
- 4) In order to be granted RPL for field education the student must provide evidence that they have met the standards and performance outcomes for the first placement.
- 5) Granting of RPL for a complete field education subject should be considered very carefully and granted only if the SWAOU is certain the person will meet all learning outcomes of the program by the time they complete the program.
- 6) Only formal work experience, tasks, and duties in line with social work roles, tasks and functions must be considered when granting RPL for field education credit.

2.2. Assessment conditions for granting credit

Assessment conditions for granting credit will include:

- 1) Currency of the work experience (with a minimum of three full-time equivalent years' practice in a relevant context in the previous seven years of which at least one year of full-time equivalent has been in the three years prior to commencing the degree.
- 2) Minimum three full-time equivalent years' practice in a relevant context, using social work practice skills such as assessment and counselling and methods such as case work or community work. The minimum expectation for a 'relevant context' is that it includes an organisational context and similar kinds of professional work experience that correspond to what would be expected of a first placement student.
- 3) Assessment of a portfolio developed by the student demonstrating how he/she meets the practice standards and demonstrates the integration of theory and practice, social work ethics and values.
- 4) External, independent verification/reference as to accuracy of student's claims.
(AASW 2012, AASW Accreditation Standards Guideline 1.3: Guidance on RPL, articulation and credit transfer, pp 5-6)

Deakin University Hurdle Requirements

- Any student wishing to have RPL applied for first placement is required to make a formal application for RPL to be considered.
- Students will be invited to submit a written application in accordance with the procedure outlined below.
- Applications to be submitted to the Bachelor of Social Work, Field Education Unit Chair (Sevi Vassos) electronically on sevi.vassos@deakin.edu.au, with a cc copy to the Social Work Field Placement Coordinators, hsdswpla@deakin.edu.au

Students should submit a portfolio comprising the following forms of evidence for RPL:

1. Personal details; include contact details and CV.
2. Overall statement as to why they believe their work experience reflects beginning capability in demonstrating the AASW Practice Standards (2013), giving examples of their use of social work practice skills such as assessment and counselling and further demonstrating familiarity and use of a range of methods such as case work and community work.
3. Details of relevant work experience with a minimum of three (FTE) years practice in a relevant context in the last seven years. This includes job descriptions and examples from practice. It is expected that social work supervision would have been provided for a minimum of 25 hours and have occurred during the last seven years.
4. A letter from a qualified Social Worker who has provided this professional supervision needs to be included with this application noting details of the time frame and approximate frequency of that supervision. *The letter should also verify the claims outlined by the student against the Practice Standards (refer item 2)*
5. 2000 word fully referenced critical reflection report, citing an incident within the social context that evoked a significant learning outcome, reflecting on your work experience, demonstrating integration of theory and practice, social work values and ethics.
6. The names and contact details of 2 referees are to be provided.

The Portfolio will be assessed by a panel of Deakin social work staff and/or senior agency social workers. Students may be required to meet with this panel and should be prepared orally to elaborate upon and if necessary defend their portfolio.

Policy regarding subsequent placements

The AASW policy regarding subsequent placements is contained in Section 2.4 as follows:

If partial or full RPL is granted, the following conditions apply for the second field placement. The meeting of these conditions must be considered prior to the granting of RPL for first placement.

- 1) The second placement must be undertaken in an Australian setting where the student can gain extensive experience with human services agency clients and practice case work, group work or community practice skills. The prime focus of the placement cannot be policy or research.
- 2) Strong preference is for on-site supervision unless in a remote setting where no other placement is available and high-quality external supervision is provided.
- 3) The placement setting must be different to settings in the student's work history and any experience on which the RPL application was based. (AASW 2012, Guideline 1.3, p.6)