



Master of Social Work

HSW714 Field Education Placement A Policy – Recognition for Prior Learning

Applications are due 30 March in the year students are due to undertake HSW714. Late applications cannot be accepted.

Recognition for Prior Learning

In accordance with the AASW Education and Accreditation Standards (2012 V1.4/revised January 2015) 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 that 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 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 or the successful completion of field education placements 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 [Social Work Academic Organisational Units] 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 health or human services 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 last three years).
- 2 Minimum three full-time equivalent years' practice in a relevant health and/or human services context, using practice skills such as assessment and counselling and methods such as case work or community work. The minimum expectation for a 'relevant health and/or human services 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 social work placement student.
- 3 Assessment of a portfolio developed by the student demonstrating how he/she has acquired a beginning capability across the AASW practice standards including the integration of theory and practice, social work ethics and values.
- 4 External, independent verification/reference from qualified practising social workers 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 make an application for Recognition of Prior Learning for HSW714 will need to contact the Unit Chair for HSW714, Dr. James Lucas at james.lucas@deakin.edu.au.
- After an initial consultation with the Unit Chair about the RPL requirements, students will be invited to submit a written application in accordance with the procedure outlined below.
- The written application must be submitted by the due date via email to Dr. James Lucas, Unit Chair for HSW714 at james.lucas@deakin.edu.au and also to the field education office at hdsdwpla@deakin.edu.au

Portfolio assessment process

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

1. Personal details; include contact details and CV.
2. An overall statement as to why they believe their work experience reflects beginning capability in demonstrating the AASW Practice Standards (2013). Students should argue their case against each of AASW Practice Standards 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. A summary of dates worked to be provided that clearly demonstrates three years. This includes job descriptions and examples from practice.
4. 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 of work experience. A letter from the 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. A 2000 word, fully referenced, critical reflection report, citing an incident within the practice context that evoked a significant learning outcome, reflecting on the student's work experience, demonstrating integration of theory and practice, social work values and ethics. Refer to instructions at the end of this guideline for an outline of the content and structure of this requirement.
6. The names and contact details of two referees are to be provided.

The Portfolio will be assessed by the Social Work Field Education Panel. Students may be contacted by the Panel and should be prepared to elaborate upon and, if necessary, defend their portfolio.

The panel may decide to:

- require major or minor revisions to the portfolio
- decline approval for RPL
- approve an application for RPL

Policy regarding subsequent placements (based on AASW 2012, Guideline 1.3, p.6).

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 and will be on direct service with individuals, families and/or communities.
- 2) On -site supervision is required for the subsequent placement unless the student is located in a remote setting where no other placement is available and high-quality external supervision is provided.
- 3) The placement setting must be markedly different to settings in the student's work history and any experience on which the RPL application was based. As such, a work-based placement option is highly unlikely as the subsequent placement.

ADDITIONAL INSTRUCTION FOR CRITICAL REFLECTION REPORT

A critical learning event may be an incident which: went unusually well; did not happen as planned; was ordinary and typical; captured the essential nature of social work; was particularly demanding; raised conflicts or doubts; caused you to reflect on the nature of social work or your role as a Social Worker.

Note: **Students need to be very mindful of the relevant privacy legislation in your state and confidentiality requirements to sufficiently de-identify any material referred to in the report.**

Presentation, word-limit requirements and submission

You must keep a backup copy of every assignment you submit, until the marked assignment has been returned to you. In the unusual event that one of your assignments is misplaced, you will need to submit your backup copy. Any work you submit may be checked by electronic or other means for the purposes of detecting collusion and/or plagiarism.

You need to address the following in your critical reflection assignment:

- Describe the context of the event (e.g. how far into the placement it happened, your role in the organisation at the time, the type of organisation).
- Describe the event itself and why it was critical to you; what you were thinking and feeling during and after the event; what you found most demanding about the situation.
- Describe what you learned about:
 - Social work as a profession e.g. values, roles, skills, ethics, code of conduct.
 - Social work theory, practice and skills
 - Yourself as a social work professional.
 - Yourself as a learner.

Discuss what aspects of your theoretical assumptions (e.g. about social work, causes of human behaviour, styles of intervention) were reflected and challenged in this incident; and how your learning from this event has changed your thinking and your practice.

Referencing

The Assignment needs to make reference to some of the key social work theory and practice literature covered in your course to date. Please use Harvard (author-date) referencing style. You should consult the Deakin University '*Guide to referencing*' for information on how to use this referencing style available for download from www.deakin.edu.au/referencing.