

**PROFESSIONAL PLACEMENT HANDBOOK**  
**HUMAN SERVICES**  
**2023**



UNIVERSITY  
OF SOUTHERN  
QUEENSLAND



## STUDENT DECLARATION:

The professional placement handbook has been produced to aid students in their understanding of human services placements expectations and requirements. Every student must complete and submit the following declaration to confirm they have read and understood the entire contents of this handbook. Without completion of this declaration students will risk not being permitted to attend placement.

- I declare I have read and understood the Professional Placement Handbook for Human Services Students.
- I understand and consent to the University providing relevant personal/health (including mandatory document) information about me to placement agencies as necessary for placement purposes only.
- I understand that I must abide by the standards described within the Professional Placement Handbook for Human Services Students. I understand that I need to contact the Professional Placements Office if I am unable to meet the obligations for workplace experience at any stage of my course progression.
- I understand and accept my student responsibilities as outlined in Professional Placement Handbook for Human Services Students.

I agree to uphold the following COVID-19 requirements:

- If during the 14 days prior to the commencement of my placement, I am diagnosed with COVID-19 (Coronavirus), I will complete the USQ COVID-19 Registration form.
- If I commence a period of self-isolation or mandatory quarantine prior to my placement, I will complete the USQ COVID-19 Registration form as soon as possible.
- I acknowledge the requirement to follow advice from the Australian Government Department of Health with respect to COVID-19.

Student Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Student Signature: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_ / \_\_\_\_ / \_\_\_\_

Witness Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Witness Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

This form is part of the pre placements mandatory requirements for all students that attend placements from the University of Southern Queensland. **It must be submitted to InPlace before commencement of each placement.**

## Definitions of Key Terms:

**Professional placement:** Professional Placement means the placement of a student at an agency for the purposes of gaining practical experience in the profession of human services work.

**Agency:** Agency is the organisation at which a student completes a professional placement.

**Agency supervisor:** Agency Supervisor is an appropriately qualified employee of an agency who supervises a student engaged in a professional placement with that agency.

**Professional placement coordinator (Course Examiner):** Professional placement coordinator means a suitably qualified employee of an education provider who is employed to coordinate and supervise the professional placement arrangements of students enrolled in an approved course.

**Professional placement supervisor:** Professional placement supervisor means a suitably qualified employee of an education provider who may be employed to supervise individual professional placements of students enrolled in an approved course.

**Liaison Worker:** Liaison Worker means a suitably qualified professional who may be employed by the university to pay field visit to the agencies from time to time.

**Task supervisor:** Task Supervisor is a suitably qualified employee of an agency who may be engaged to oversee the 'day-to-day' supervision of a student engaged in a professional placement.

**External Field Supervisor:** External Field Supervisor is a person employed by the university to provide student supervision while on placement. An external field Supervisor is usually employed when the agency does not have a qualified supervisor within agency.

**Placement Officer** means the qualified administrative employee of the University to coordinate student placement.

**Learning Agreement:** The Learning Agreement is the document that records the placement plans and arrangement

**Learning Plan:** The Learning Plan is the document to record student's progression based on the seven learning attributes.

**Learning Attributes:** The Learning Attributes are the practice standards by ACWA that will be used to achieve placement outcomes/goals.

## The Professional Experience Placements Team

The Professional Experience Placements Team (PEPT) consists of Placement Officers and Professional Experience staff in Toowoomba and Ipswich. This team allocates professional placements and can help you with any questions about preparing for and attending placement.

The PEPT member managing Bachelor of Human Services (BHMS) placements is based in Ipswich & Toowoomba. You can contact staff via phone or email.

### Ipswich

**Location:** Level 2, Building I

**Phone:** 07 38126117

**Email:** [HES.support@usq.edu.au](mailto:HES.support@usq.edu.au)

### Toowoomba

**Location:** Level 1, W Block

**Phone:** 07 46312974

**Email:** [HES.support@usq.edu.au](mailto:HES.support@usq.edu.au)

## The Academic Team

The Academic Team member associated with professional experience is the Course Examiner for your Professional Placement courses. They are located at the Toowoomba Campus but can be contacted by making an appointment either by email or phone them.

### Krystal Schaffer

Lecturer – Human Services

Ph: +61 7 4631 5408

Location: Toowoomba W Block Room 564

Email: [krystal.schaffer@usq.edu.au](mailto:krystal.schaffer@usq.edu.au)

If you require support at any of stage of your study, you can access Student support services for [Health, counselling and wellbeing](#) via UConnect for *confidential* support including emergency contact details.

For an appointment phone 07 4631 2372 on Monday to Friday or email [Student.Services@usq.edu.au](mailto:Student.Services@usq.edu.au)

## Checklist for Placement

### Mandatory Requirements

[Human Services Placement Hub](#) can be found with your 'other' study desks or under 'my courses' on Uconnect and contains all the information you require to prepare for a placement.

Students are expected to access this information and ensure that they plan their enrolment in placement subjects and submission of mandatory requirements to ensure they are able to be placed in their nominated semester.

#### **Late enrolment or not submitting mandatory documents in time may make it impossible to source a placement for students in the nominated semester**

1. [Important Dates document](#) provides dates for each semester when you should be enrolled and submit your documents. This is normally the semester before you want to do placement as this allows the Placement Officer time to source an appropriate placement for you.
2. [InPlace](#) - USQ use a cloud-based program called InPlace to manage placements. Please click on the link to access the website information and instructions for uploading documents, available on the Human services Placement Hub. Your normal USQ login and password will access your InPlace file.

All mandatory documents must be uploaded to InPlace and your placement information will be recorded on this site for future reference.

3. [Mandatory Documents](#) must be uploaded to InPlace before the Placement Officer will source a placement for you. You must upload them by the due dates on the Important Dates document and must keep them current for each placement. As part of your mandatory documents you will submit a **Placement Request Form**. This gives you the opportunity to provide 3 locations or contact details of the agency where you would like to do placement. The Placement Officer will then source you a placement within an agency within one of these locations. Please make sure you are able to attend placement within all the locations nominated.

On the Human Services Placement Hub among other things, you will also find information to help you apply for a placement extension, insurance while on placement and eligibility to apply for a placement at your current workplace. Make sure you review the hub so you are well informed.

## Table of Contents

Student Declaration.....	2
Definitions of Key Terms: .....	3
The Professional Experience Placements Team.....	4
The Academic Team .....	4
Section 1: Introduction to Human Services Placement.....	7
Section 2: Placement Allocation Process for Students .....	11
Section 3: Important Information for Placement .....	14
Section 4: Professional Placement Roles & Responsibilities.....	19
Section 6: Overseas Placement .....	28
Section 7: Policies Relating to Field Placement .....	29
Section 8: Assessment.....	30



## Section 1: Introduction to Human Services Placement

The University of Southern Queensland has included professional placements for the Bachelor of Human Services (BHMS) in accordance with the standards set down by the Australian Community Workers Association (ACWA). The placement courses are underpinned by key teaching and learning principles such as:

- Professional placements are supported and grounded in theory directly related to the broader areas of human service practice.
- Students will learn through experience and will develop their skills for critical reflection in the professional setting and in relation to their own practice learning.
- Learning outcomes for the placements will be achieved in accordance with the core competencies developed by ACWA.
- Students will accept major responsibility for their own learning and will ensure

Critical [ACWA professional placement requirements](#) are as follows:

- Placements must demonstrate a developmental approach to learning and must differentiate between the activities undertaken across each of the placement courses (in other words, each of your placements should not be conducted in the same agency or field of practice).
- Placements must be for a minimum of 400 hours (USQ students are required to undertake 210 hours for each of two placements).
- Placements occur at least one term apart (i.e., students will have undertaken and successfully completed a semester of study in between the placement courses, HSW2299 and HSW3399) to meet program accreditation requirements.
- Placements must be undertaken for a minimum of two full days per week. A full day is considered a 7.5 hour day, which includes a half hour lunch break (the half hour lunch break contributes toward your accumulation of placement hours). No placement day can exceed more than 8 hours a day.
- Placements need to be undertaken in different fields of practice and organisations with different client groups (cannot be placed in same agency twice).
- The agency supervisor must be qualified in a relevant discipline.
- The agency supervisor must work on the majority of the days that the student attends the agency to ensure continuous monitoring of performance and professional progress.

## 1.1 Purpose of the Professional Placement Handbook

The Professional Placement Handbook is designed to provide information to students to guide them in their placement.

This handbook is to be read in conjunction with the relevant course specification for the Bachelor of Human Services professional placement course.

## 1.2 Placement Courses in BHMS/BHSH

Course	Pre-requisite/Co-requisite*	Placement Hours	Semester offerings
HSW2299 Professional Placement A	CDS2000 HSW2120	210 hours	S1 & S2
HSW3399 Professional Placement B	HSW2299	210 hours	S1 & S2

The Bachelor of Human Services is accredited with the Australian Community Workers Association (ACWA) for the following majors:

- Child and Family Studies
- Counselling (from 2022 onward)
- Community Development and Indigenous Studies
- Health and Social Wellbeing

Students pursuing the above majors who successfully complete a minimum of 400 hours of professional placement will be eligible to apply for ACWA membership. Students are also highly encouraged to complete at least 4 courses before undertaking placement.

### **Bachelor of Human Services (Counselling major): Enrolment prior to 2022**

Graduates who started studying in the BHMS (counselling major) in or prior to Semester 2 2021, who have completed all eight units within the Counselling major, and who have successfully completed one counselling field placement, will be eligible to apply for Level 1 membership with the Australian Counselling Association upon Graduation. Students should contact the Human Services Placement Team to get more information regarding the requirements of a counselling-specific placement.

In order to be adequately prepared for that placement, it is strongly recommended that students complete ALL four core courses from the counselling major before enrolling in their final placement (i.e HSW3399).

This means that students should complete the following courses prior to enrolling in counselling placement course:



- CDS1001 Human Relations and Communications
- CDS1002 Counselling Skills
- CDS3002 Counselling Theory and Practice
- CDS3004 Counselling Theory and Practice 2

In addition, it is strongly recommended that students complete the elective courses CDS3001 and CDS3005 as part of their major, as completing these courses will enhance ability to be an effective counsellor.

### **Bachelor of Human Services (Human Resource Management major)**

Accreditation is not available in the Bachelor of Human Services (Human Resource Management major).

- Credit or exemption applications will only be considered for HSW2299 Field Placement
- Where no RPL or credit is obtained, one placement may be undertaken in a student's current workplace, subject to USQ approval (you will not be eligible to complete a work-based placement if you have received RPL or credit for HSW2299)
- Students who successfully apply for RPL for HSW2299 must complete CDS2000 & HSW2120 prior to enrolling in HSW 3399

***Please contact the PEPT for more information***

### 1.3 Prior to the Placement

Prior to enrolling in placement courses, students need to be aware of the following:

#### 1.3.1 Read the course specifications:

Students will need to complete a minimum of 400 hours of placement to be eligible for [ACWA](#) accreditation. Students must check their eligibility to undertake placement by ensuring they have successfully completed the pre-requisites (if any) for their enrolled placement as described in 1.2. *Note that placement courses must be undertaken sequentially (cannot be enrolled in both HSW2299 and HSW3399 in the same semester, and where no RPL or credit obtained, HSW2299 must be completed first).*

#### 1.3.2 Reasonable adjustments:

Please note that all adjustments are made as per the USQ Students with a Disability Policy and Procedure. You can review the document here [policy](#).

To notify the PEPT of your need for an adjustment, please complete the Placement Request Form and submit this for review.

#### 1.3.3 Compliance requirements:

Before going on placement, students must complete the pre-requisite courses (if any), and meet the following requirements:

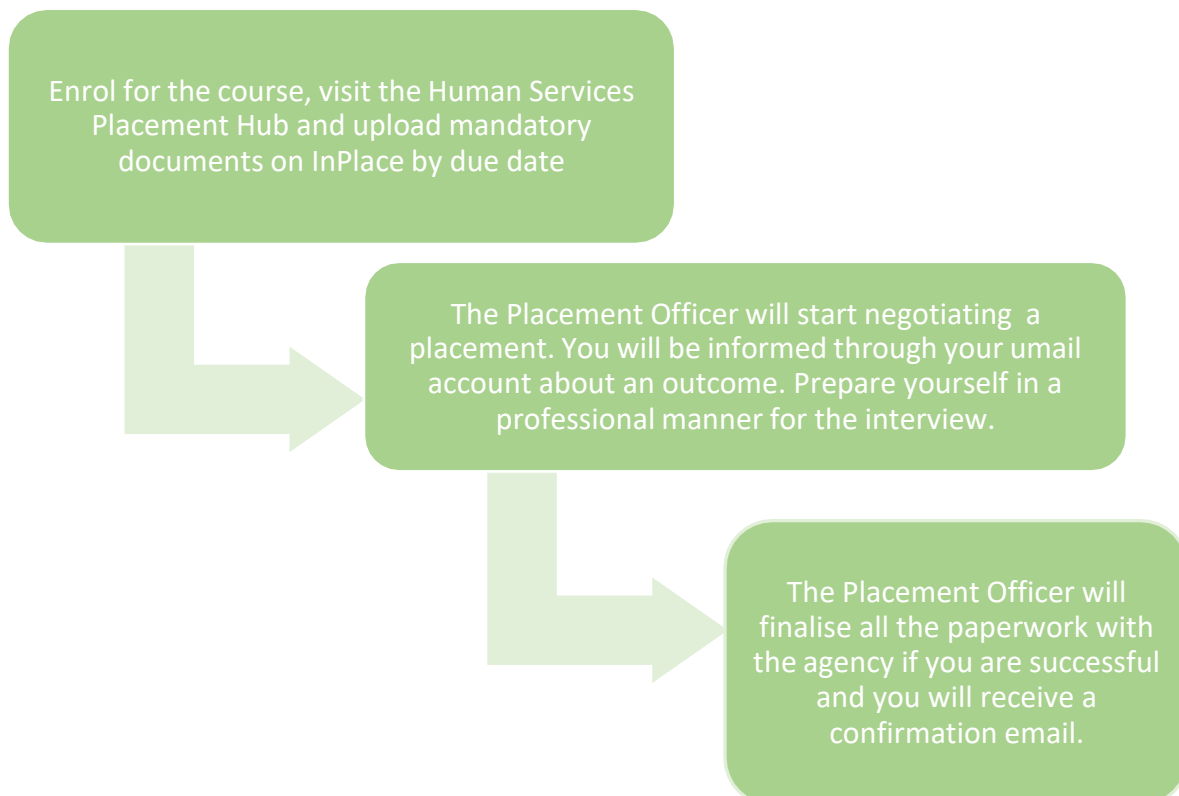
It is highly recommended that students have a **current Australian Driver's Licence**

- ✓ Prior to undertaking a placement BHMS students must supply all mandatory requirements via InPlace
- ✓ Students must attend a Professional Placement Induction Session (PEPT will advise if this is applicable).
- ✓ Students must purchase and wear appropriate clothing and footwear (closed in shoes).

## Section 2: Placement Allocation Process for Students

### Professional Placement Allocation Flowchart:

To ensure that students gain maximum benefit from their professional experience, USQ has developed processes that ensure consistent governance of professional activities and quality learning outcomes applicable to professional. The professional placement flowchart (see below) identifies tasks to be completed and should be undertaken when planning and requesting a placement.



### Organising placements is a complex process

It begins three months before the commencement of the placement semester. Pre-placement planning has a number of stages involving communication with students and agencies offering placements.

To help this process and increase the possibility of placement options, you need to enrol early and submit your mandatory documents at least one month prior to the placement commencement semester.

***Follow the steps below***

## 2.1 Enrol in the course upon meeting the pre-requisite

Students considering undertaking placement in the next semester should enrol in the placement course as soon as possible and visit [Human Services Placement Hub](#) for more information.

The main communication point for student enquiries regarding enrolment is via email to [usq.support@usq.edu.au](mailto:usq.support@usq.edu.au).

## 2.2 Complete Placement Preferences

Soon after the commencement of each academic year, students who are enrolled in the professional placement courses should complete and upload the Placement Request Form on InPlace. This form is located in the Human Services Placement Hub under students 'Other' Study Desk dashboard. Students are required to complete the Placement Request Form which is designed to collect information about preferred Locations. Every attempt will be made to secure a placement, but students should be aware that placements and placement preference options cannot be guaranteed. Students must be willing to accept any relevant placement option for the professional placement.

## 2.3 Submit mandatory documents via InPlace

Go to the [Human Services Placement Hub](#) for information, forms and links to obtain your mandatory documents:

- Apply for a Working with Children check. In Qld apply for a [Blue Card](#) or in other States or Territories apply for a relevant [Children's Check](#). Upload cards to InPlace once received (3 year expiry)
- Apply for a [Police Check](#) and upload certificate to InPlace (3 year expiry)
- Update your resume for each placement and upload to InPlace.
- Read the [Human Services Professional Handbook](#) and upload the signed Student Declaration Form to InPlace for each placement. You can find this form at the beginning of this handbook.
- The [Placement Request Form](#) must be completed for each placement before a placement can be requested.
- Please note individual agencies may require additional checks (e.g., NDIS Working Screening Checks). This will need to be discussed and negotiated with the agency, PEPT team and student. Please recognise that this may cause delay with commencement dates. Where an agency request has been made during the placement interview, please make contact with the PEPT team immediately.

## 2.4 Placement Negotiation

The Placement Officer, after receiving **all** the mandatory documents, will start to negotiate a suitable placement. This can take up to a month to negotiate and sometimes longer. Placement negotiation can take some time and students may not commence placement in the first week of semester. Once an appropriate placement has been located and negotiated, students will be informed of what they have to do through the USQ email account. Please ensure that you check the USQ email account regularly.

## 2.5 Interview with the agency

The Agency may wish to interview you prior to agreeing to take you for placement. Either the PEPT will provide you with an appointment date and time, or the agency will contact you directly to discuss a suitable time.

*Note: Students are expected to research the agency and its role in the community and consider how you can contribute to the agency during your placement, in order to be prepared for the interview. Students must also present themselves in a professional manner for the interview.*

Students must inform the Placement Officer about the outcome of the interview through [usq.support@usq.edu.au](mailto:usq.support@usq.edu.au).

## 2.6 Signing the Student Placement Agreement

USQ must have an agreement in place with any agencies where students do placement. The PEPT ensure that this is all completed prior to students commencing placement. Students will be informed about their starting date for placement through the USQ email account once the PEPT have confirmed everything is completed.

### InPlace Tips

- Use the InPlace [instructions](#) on the Human Services Placement Hub to upload your documents. InPlace will then send the Placements Team a message to go in and 'verify' or check that your documents are correct
- Go back and check a couple of days later that they have been approved
- When it's busy it might take the Placements Team longer than 2 days to check your documents
- Checking the details page of your InPlace file is a quick way of finding out when your documents will expire - make sure they are kept current for all your placements
- InPlace works best with **Google Chrome or Mozilla Firefox**
- **InPlace is a cloud-based website:** <https://inplace.usq.edu.au>
- **Password and Username:** the same as other USQ logins

## Section 3: Important Information for Placement

### 3.1 Communication during the placement allocation process

All email communication will be via the USQ email account. It is a student's responsibility to check their emails, study desk and InPlace in order to be up to date on the placement allocation process and meet their responsibilities in a timely manner. Students may send their queries through [usq.support@usq.edu.au](mailto:usq.support@usq.edu.au).

### 3.2 Placement Request

Because of the number of students going on field placement every semester as well as the number of students each agency is able to take for placement, it is impossible to satisfy every student's placement preferences. Students can nominate three locations where they would like to be placed. Make sure you have the ability to travel to all locations nominated or have accommodation if you plan to stay. There is no accommodation associated with any placement sites and students are responsible for their own costs for travel.

Students may discuss their preferences with the PEPT for more information.

Once you have submitted your location preferences, the PEPT will source a placement for you with one of the agencies with whom we have an agreement, within one of these locations (where possible). If this is not possible, we will contact you to discuss other options.

Please make sure you have read Section 1 of this handbook regarding restrictions on placement when submitting your preferences.

If students have a particular concern regarding placement allocation, they should direct their query to the PEPT. Please note that there is no direct correlation between a placement and employment in placement organisations.

### 3.3 Organising own placements

Student placements are organised by the PEPT. If students are aware of a placement opportunity within an agency, they are able to suggest the same to the PEPT and appropriate procedures will be followed. Students are also encouraged to approach the university placement staff before initiating discussions with an agency regarding placements. **Under no circumstances is a student able to or allowed to finalise their own placement**

### 3.4 Recognition of Prior Learning

Recognition of prior learning is a process that assesses the individual's formal and informal learning and work experience in the field to determine the extent to which that individual has achieved the required learning outcomes, competency outcomes or standards to warrant exemption from a particular course. Students apply for RPL online via the Credit/Exemption Application form.

Recognition of prior learning can only be considered for one placement (HSW2299) and is granted on a case by case basis.

### 3.5 Placements at the student's current place of employment

[ACWA](#) permits only **one placement at the student's current place of employment (subject to conditions)**. This is consistent with the [USQ Policy Conflict of Interest](#). This option is not available to students who successfully apply for RPL for HSW2299. Students who intend to undertake one of their placements in their place of employment must first discuss this option with the Placement Officer, then complete and submit the *Application to Undertake Placement at the Current Work Place* form. The form is available on the Human Services Placement Hub.

Students may be allowed to undertake their placement in their workplace, unpaid, in an area that will offer responsibilities different to their current roles and responsibilities. Students will be required to provide documentation to support their request. Once the PEPT has assessed that the workplace may be able to offer appropriate learning opportunities, they will make contact with the agency to ensure that the agency will:

- recognise that the employee is in a student role
- be able to meet the educational requirements, principles and policies of the profession and the university
- agree to sign the 'Student Placement Contract' for unpaid work placement
- allow for student learning experiences that are separate to the student's routine work responsibilities
- provide the student protected time separate from the duties carried out at work, including attendance at integration seminars
- wherever possible provide a Supervisor who is not the student's line manager or usual supervisor
- ensure the student receives supervision regularly and sufficient support to complete the Learning Plan and assessments.

### 3.6 Placement Variations

Students who consider that they are experiencing 'exceptional circumstances' that requires variation to the usual placement timetable or location may apply for a variation to placement. This includes situations where a placement extends into the next semester owing to a later start date. The onus is on the student to demonstrate their extenuating circumstances and to provide appropriate evidence and/or supporting documentation. The students must complete an Extension Application before the placement semester ends and send it to



[usq.support@usq.edu.au](mailto:usq.support@usq.edu.au) for the course examiner's approval.

### 3.7 Sick Leave from Placement

If a student falls sick on placement they must:

- Comply with agency procedures on providing medical certificates
- Notify their agency supervisor immediately of absence
- Contact the PEPT and advise of the absence
- Provide a medical certificate to the PEPT if absent for more than 3 placement days
- Submit Extension Application if the placement is not completed by the designated deadlines.

### 3.8 Placement fares & expenses

Students are responsible for their own travel costs in getting to and from their field placement. Most agencies will have a policy allowing students to use the agency vehicles for client and agency work related learning tasks. Where this is not possible, a student may be required to use their own vehicle. Students should also have the appropriate license and points to drive a vehicle.

### 3.9 Withdrawal by student

Once a student has commenced a placement, if they have exceptional circumstances and wish to withdraw the student must obtain formal approval from the PEPT staff before taking any action. The placement staff will consult with the agency Supervisor and Course Examiner before granting approval for the student to withdraw.

*Without prior approval from the placement staff, withdrawal by the student will result in a Fail grade for the course.*

### 3.10 Confidentiality

Confidentiality is core to the human services profession. Students should exercise great caution before releasing any information obtained directly or indirectly about the people, projects or agency business connected with their placement, whether it relates to specific cases or to policy matters. In particular, any information related to users of the agency's services must be presumed confidential unless stated otherwise. Students should never discuss clients using identifying information at home, online or in the classroom. If in doubt about the confidentiality of material students should seek advice from their Agency Supervisor

### 3.11 Work Health & Safety

The placement agency's policy on WHS should be fully explained as part of the student's orientation and detailed in the student's Learning Agreement. Students should ensure that they fully understand the policy and approach the Agency Supervisor over any incident or issue about which they are concerned or unclear, and report any incident following the agency's WHS policy.

### 3.12 Use of social media during placement

Students are strongly advised to exercise judgement and caution in the use of social media about their placement, as well as whilst on placement. This includes but is not limited to using mobile phones for personal calls whilst on placement, ensuring the privacy and confidentiality of the agency in the use of social media sites such as Facebook, not taking photographs for personal use during placement and ensure professional use of the internet during placement.

### 3.13 Insurance: third parties

USQ students and employers engaged in USQ approved placements are covered by the University's legal liability insurance. This provides insurance for USQ students engaged in professional experience (including field placements) and the relevant employers against claims of loss or injury by third parties resulting from professional experience activity.

### 3.14 Motor vehicles

Students should be familiar with and adhere to the placement agency's motor vehicle policy. Students should be identified as a designated driver before driving an agency's vehicle. Students should also have the appropriate license and points to drive a vehicle. Where a student has a suspended license they should not drive a motor vehicle for the agency.

### 3.15 Risk and Fitness to Practice



All students who undertake professional placement as part of their USQ Human Services program, must understand the risks involved and how these risks are managed. The Professional Placement Experience Team (PEPT) reviews each placement agency against a USQ Risk Assessment Tool and ensures that agencies meet accreditation requirements. More information on insurance while on placement and incident reporting is made available on the Human Services Placement Hub.

As a student, you must also maintain standards of conduct, performance, compliance and health. Therefore, when you are enrolled in a placement course or enrolled in a program that has a placement component, you must observe the following: USQ's *Student Code of Conduct Policy* (<https://policy.usq.edu.au/documents/142753PL>), USQ's *Qualities of a Graduate Policy* (<https://policy.usq.edu.au/documents/13420PL>), industry expectations of professionals and accreditation body guidelines. These standards are taken very seriously and the university has a responsibility to balance student learning support with harm prevention. If concerns are raised about your fitness to practice, USQ responses may include: extra learning support, formal interventions, creation of alternative academic arrangements (if possible) within the program or placement termination. Concerns regarding fitness to practice may arise due to, but not limited to the following:

- Conduct and/or performance that is inconsistent with acceptable standards for your chosen profession i.e. Human services practice
- Any criminal history that you may have in Australia and/or overseas
- Inability to meet, or disregard for, the compliance requirements of USQ, the placement agency or of the broader Human Services profession
- A health condition or disability – (chronic or transient) that is likely to affect your capacity to undertake placement/ practice in the profession

If you have concerns regarding any of the above with regard to your capacity to practice the profession or engage in professional placement, please contact the PEPT team and/or the Course Examiner prior to placement allocation or as early in the program as possible. Any information you provide will be treated confidentially, and in accordance with the privacy policy of the University.

### **Reasonable adjustments to academic arrangements**

Any student with a disability who may require alternative academic arrangements in the program and/or specific arrangements for placement is encouraged to seek advice from the PEPT team or the Course Examiner. If a Learning Support Plan has already been devised, it may need review in relation to placement requirements and further consultation with the Program Director and/or Academic Team Leader will be required. Please note that all adjustments are made as per the USQ Students with a Disability Policy and Procedure. You can review the document here [policy](#).

## Section 4: Professional Placement Roles & Responsibilities

When a student undertakes a professional placement, the various parties assume particular responsibilities for the placement. The parties are the Student, Agency and University. The Agency Supervisor and the University PEPT are the key contacts throughout the professional placement.

The outcomes of placement reflect the above collaborative arrangements. However, it remains the responsibility of the University, in all instances, to determine the final grade/outcome for the placement.

### 4.1 Students

A professional placement is an important part of the BHMS course. An overview of the process and requirements is presented in Figure 4.1. Students are expected to complete the following checklist in order to be prepared to successfully complete their placements:

1. Provide all mandatory documents via InPlace by the appropriate date.
2. Once the PEPT advise you of a planned interview with an agency prepare for the interview by familiarising yourself with their website and their programs and purpose so you can demonstrate an understanding and interest in the work they do.
3. Attend the interview dressed professionally and at the time and date agreed.
4. Demonstrate a professional attitude, be respectful and appreciative of the opportunity you are being offered and be open to the learning opportunities available at the facility
5. After your interview, please advise the PEPT of any outcomes.
6. Once an agency has confirmed your placement the PEPT will confirm your start date by email via your umail account.
7. Complete Learning Agreement with your Supervisor and submit via InPlace by placement day 5.
8. Attend placement a minimum two full days per week. A standard placement work day is defined as 7.5 hours which includes a 30 minute lunch break, which can contribute toward your placement hours.
9. Ensure you schedule a mid-placement review meeting with your agency supervisor, and the placement course examiner. To do so, you will need to liaise with your supervisor and placement examiner about suitable times. This typically occurs after you have attained 105 placement hours, or roughly mid-way through your placement. This is an accreditation requirement.
10. Ensure you complete all assessments by the due date and enlist your Supervisors assistance where required.
11. Ensure you log your placement hours via LogBook (accessible via InPlace). Please note, you do not need to enter in your break times when logging your placement hours (if you do, the system will automatically deduct this from your accumulation of placement hours). When logging your hours, you will also need to include a break down of activities engaged in during the placement day. Further instruction on logging placement hours will be provided via the course examiner.
12. Take any opportunities for learning and professional development that are available during your placement.
13. Make yourself available for supervision meetings with your agency supervisor and complete any activities or tasks as requested and in the timeframe required.

14. Make yourself available for evaluation meetings and/or teleconferences with the Agency supervisor and USQ staff as required. Prepare for these meetings with any materials requested.

☆ Demonstrate a **professional attitude** in all areas of your placement and be open to opportunities to learn and take on board feedback from your supervisor.

☆ Work within the **Code of Ethics** and the Australian Community Workers Association guidelines.

## 4.2 Agency

An Agency is an organisation that provides structured and supervised practical experience for students for the purposes of enhancing their work readiness. The complex nature of the agency's role is shown in Figure 1 below.

The agency must sign a Student Placement Agreement prior to any students attending placement and they nominate an appropriate individual/s to supervise, support and mentor the student while in the workplace. They must advise the Placement Officer who this person will be.

**Examples of suitable learning experiences for students include but are not limited the following (students are encouraged to review these and discuss relevant option with their agency supervisor):**

- Participate in supervised interviews with clients and service users
- Intentional engagement with clients under the agency practice framework i.e., casemanagement, counselling, community development and so on
- Assist in group meetings and community consultations
- Document client engagement by writing social histories, case notes and other relevant reports
- Administration and scoring of assessments, questionnaires and surveys specific to placement agency
- Support in the facilitation of or facilitate activities and programs pertaining to advocacy, training or educational outcomes
- Review new educational material and videos for potential use with clients and provide sound advice to relevant personnel
- Observe, plan and/or conduct non-therapy group sessions specific to placement agency (for example, social skills, budgeting information or new mum nutrition sessions)
- Plan, develop and/or assist with the implementation of special projects (for example, program evaluation, preparation and organisation of an event, development of a new program or service)
- Undertake administrative duties such as preparing client information kits, staff resource kits, maintaining records and reports, including reviewing files and preparing summary reports
- Gather data for/ assist with writing research reports and/or funding submissions
- Attend conferences, seminars and training sessions and engage with other agencies and services specific to placement agency

### 4.2.1 Agency Supervisor

Agency Supervisors are individuals with qualifications and professional backgrounds in human services employed by agencies to administer, deliver or develop social welfare, health or education programs. The Agency Supervisor plays a key role in shaping students the placement experience.

#### ***Pre-placement arrangements:***

- Ensuring that a 'Student Placement Contract' is in place and current with their agency prior to a student commencing placement.
- Ensuring that management and staff within the office agree to the student placement.

#### ***Orientation and induction:***

- Providing an orientation session including agency policies on confidentiality, privacy and WHS.
- Ensuring student safety and adherence to WHS legislation and agency procedures and guidelines, both with respect to the place of work and the type of work they are asked to undertake.
- Assisting students to complete the Professional Placement Learning Agreement.

#### ***Learning and development:***

- Identifying potential learning opportunities for the student.
- Focusing learning on the needs of students, based on the level of student ability rather than the agency or client setting the pace of practice.
- Assisting the student to identify concepts and integrate theory into practice.
- Facilitating the development of values, knowledge and skills through a process spanning elementary and complex work.
- Ensuring opportunities are provided to the student for meeting their learning needs and placement objectives.

#### ***Supervision:***

- Holding weekly supervision sessions with the student regarding their learning and practice experience and to offer clear feedback. Supervision should include a mix of formal and informal supervision of up to 1.5 hours per week and may be offered individually or in groups.
- Keep a written record of supervision and evaluate student performance at regular intervals and at the end of the placement.
- Make themselves available for discussions regarding student progress (with notice).
- Ensuring that the PEPT is alerted to any concerns at the earliest possible time in relation to the student's practice performance, behaviour or ethical conduct on placement.

#### ***Assessment:***

- Provide formative comments in relevant assessment tasks.
- Provide comments regarding the student's performance during the professional placement. If a recommendation is likely to be made that the student fail the placement, it is expected that this decision will be communicated at the earliest possible point during the placement to ensure ample opportunity for intervention. A fail grade should not come as a surprise to the student at the end of placement.



## 4.2.2 Task Supervisor

A Task Supervisor is a suitably qualified employee of an agency who is responsible for the 'day-to-day' supervision of a student engaged in a professional placement. They may be assigned by the Agency Supervisor. For courses at Bachelor degree and above, a task supervisor must have a minimum of diploma level qualification in community services and have at least three years of practical experience in a community services setting.

The agency supervisor should remain responsible for weekly supervision.

## 4.3 University

### 4.3.1 Course Examiner

The Course Examiner is the qualified academic who will work in conjunction with the PEPT to secure suitable placements as well as supervise and monitor students' placements progress and final assessments. This role may be delegated out amongst other academics from time to time.

#### ***Learning and development:***

- Assisting the student to link theory and practice.
- Supporting the student to become a professional human services provider.
- Assisting the student to navigate through systems and relationships in the placement.
- Supporting students to become more self-aware and insightful, and able to cope with the usual stresses and anxieties that a placement might provoke.
- Ensuring that the Placement Officer is alerted to any concerns in relation to the student's practice performance, behaviour or ethical conduct on placement.

#### ***Assessment:***

- Ensuring that assessment is based on learning attributes and specified observable evidence.
- Assessing relevant reports, provide feedback and recommend appropriate grade for placement.

### 4.3.2 Liaison Workers

Liaison Workers are suitably qualified professionals who may be employed by the university to make scheduled visits and liaise with the students and agency supervisor. If assigned, liaison workers have the following responsibilities:

- Provide educational consultation and facilitate the learning process occurring on the professional placement.
- Assist in the formative evaluation of the student's performance in conjunction with the agency supervisor and the student – this will largely occur in the context of the liaison visit(s). A written record of liaison visits will be forwarded to the student and agency supervisor.
- Provide any support and liaison to the student and agency supervisor, and assist in resolving any difficulties which may develop during the professional placement including raising any concerns with the course examiner.

### 4.3.3 External Field Supervisor (EFS)

External Field Supervisors may be allocated in an agency where there are no qualified supervisor available within the agency. Roles and responsibilities for the same will be determined on a case by case basis.

### 4.3.4 Placement Officer

Placement Officers are the qualified administrative employees of the university who are responsible for coordinating the professional placement arrangements for the students. An important element of professional coordination is fostering productive and reciprocal partnerships between agencies, the university and students. Placement Officers ensure that all professional participants (student, liaison workers, supervisors, and other staff members) are adequately qualified, trained, inducted and supervised to undertake the proposed professional.

Placement Officers have responsibility for the following areas:

- Developing and maintaining resources to ensure best practice during the professional placement.
- Ensuring that all information has been provided to the students, agencies and supervisors, with the placement arrangements confirmed in writing.
- Managing the mandatory documents associated with professional placements on InPlace.
- Ensure equitable opportunities are available for each student.
- Ensuring availability for consultation and support to the agency supervisors and the students.
- Responding to agency supervisor or student problems in a timely manner.
- Evaluating strengths and weaknesses of placements to ensure ongoing quality improvement.
- Ensuring professional experiences are inclusive for students and cater to student diversity by making reasonable adjustments.
- Ensuring that the agency supervisor has an educational qualification in a welfare or community work- related discipline that is equivalent to or higher than the qualification level they are supervising plus a minimum of at least three years practical experience in a community services setting including at least 2 years post-qualification experience.
- Collaborating with professional agencies to formulate solutions to complex professional issues.

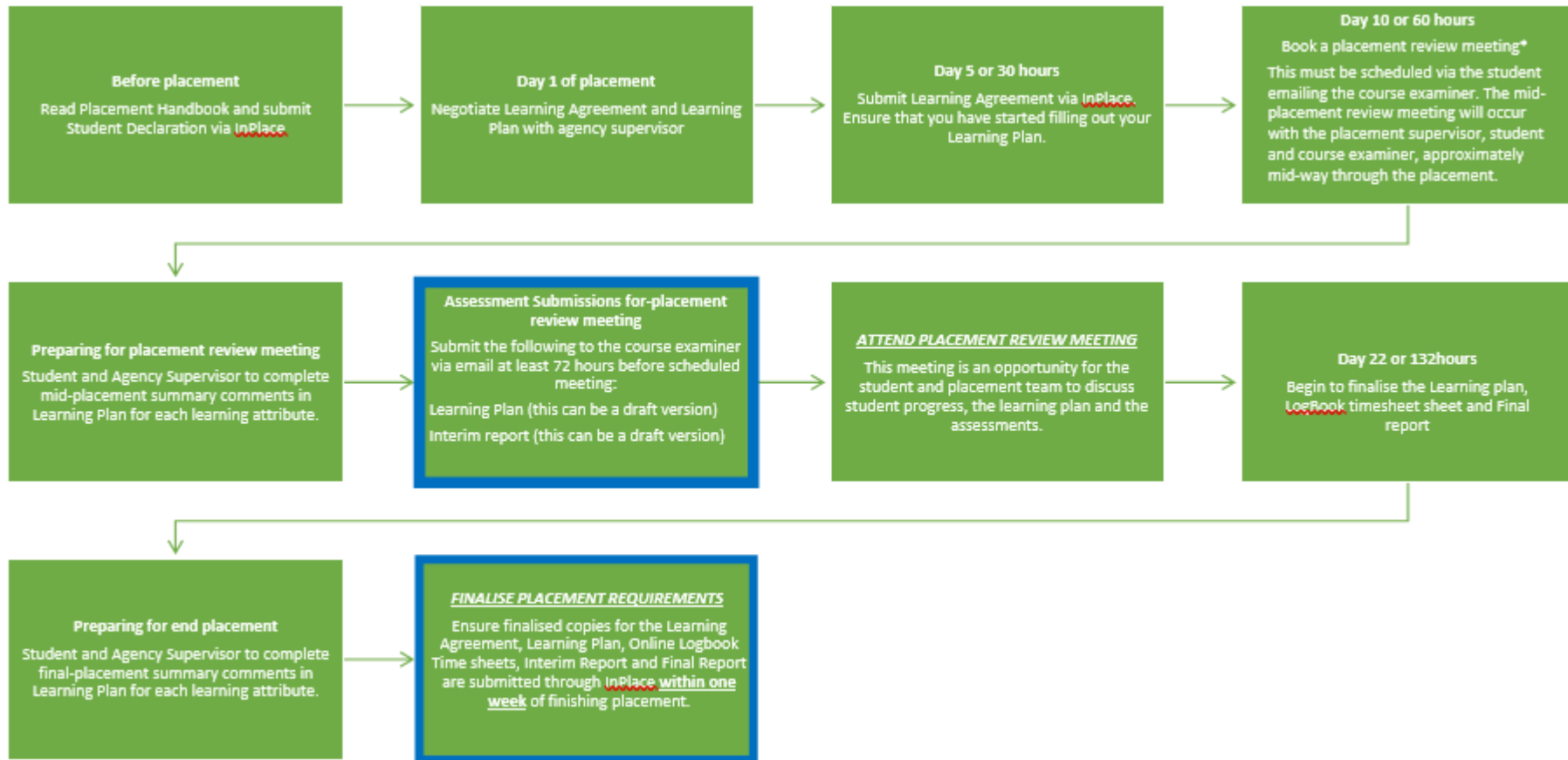
### 4.3.5 University Visits

The PEPT and/or course examiner and supervisors will engage with the placement agencies physically (in person) or virtually (Skype or Zoom) in the initial stages, at mid-placement and towards the end of placement. They will also make themselves available when a student has been identified as requiring additional support.

#### ***Additional meetings***

Additional meetings may be required if there are concerns about a student's conduct or progress. These can be initiated by student, agency or placement team through phone or skype.

#### 4.1 A Placement Overview and process (applicable for HSW2299 and HSW3399)



## Section 5: Resolving Difficulties during Placement

While most placements proceed without incidents, it is important that all concerns are responded to in a timely manner and principles of natural justice and procedural fairness applies. Where possible placement difficulties will be addressed by using the steps below to ensure the placement continues and the student has the opportunity to demonstrate competence and pass their placement.

It is important to note that:

- Some issues may also be dealt with through an agency's policies, grievance and complaint processes (e.g. harassment and discrimination, breach of confidentiality or privacy)
- Students are on placement at the invitation of the agency and on a voluntary basis. An agency may decide not to follow due process and terminate a placement immediately.

### **STEP 1: Student and the Agency Supervisor discuss difficulties**

If either the student or agency supervisor identifies issues arising from the student's performance, or if the student is experiencing difficulties affecting learning, **a discussion should be held directly between the student and the agency supervisor**. This should happen as soon as possible after the issue has been raised and strategies developed to address concerns and help improve the student's performance. Strategies and expectations should be documented and reviewed in supervision sessions. The course examiner should be advised and kept informed of the situation.

### **STEP 2: Student, Agency Supervisor and the Professional Supervisor (Course Examiner)**

If following Step 1 doesn't resolve the issue, or if more serious issues arise (e.g. the student has breached professional conduct or finds meeting the Practice Standards especially challenging, or the placement is at imminent risk of being terminated), or the student feels they can't raise the issue with their agency supervisor, a meeting should be arranged with the Professional Supervisor and/or Placement Officer, student and agency supervisor as soon as possible. This meeting can be called by the student, agency supervisor, Professional Supervisor or Placement Officer. The Placement Officer and the Professional Supervisor should be advised in writing about the issues including details such as what, when, where and who.

A range of outcomes may be determined as a result of the meeting (see 5.1). The outcomes of the meeting should be documented, including strategies to address issues and review dates.

### **STEP 3: The situation is monitored and reviewed**

Depending on the outcome of Step 2 a follow up meeting should be held between the student, Course Examiner and /Placement Officer to monitor the situation. The Program Coordinator may also be included if required. The outcome of any meeting should be documented and further action and/or strategies actioned if required and appropriate. If

further issues are identified prior to the review date, a meeting of the parties will be called together as soon as possible. In some circumstances the placement will be terminated.

### 5.1 Outcomes from the resolution process

The outcome of attempts to resolve issues will vary depending on the nature and seriousness of problems raised and could include:

- i) The student being provided with additional information and guidance about agency or university policies
- ii) Clarification of expectations and changes to the students Learning Plan or supervision arrangements
- iii) Placement breakdown or termination. In this event, the University will discuss with the student their future placement options. A number of complex factors will be considered, including the reasons for the placement breakdown, the prior experience of the student, and the further learning needs of the student.
- iv) Assessing the student's performance during the professional placement, the Board of Examiners will decide whether the student be provided with another opportunity to undertake an alternative professional placement in that year or to recommend a fail grade for the placement. The Board of Examiners includes the Program Coordinator, Course Examiner & Placement Officer.
- v) In the event of a fail grade for the professional placement, the student is required to enrol again in the unit the following year and to undertake another placement.

### 5.2 Student initiated placement termination

A student may not simply 'quit' from a placement without first discussing the matter with the Agency Supervisor, Placement Officer and Liaison Officer. This is because the student's reasons for withdrawal need to be discussed in order to assess subsequent academic action that is appropriate to the circumstances. Failure to comply with this requirement could result in a fail grade.

### 5.3 Agency and or Liaison Officer initiated

Agencies may request termination of a student's placement for the following reasons:

- The Agency terminates the placement due to changes in their capacity, availability or other operational reasons not associated with the student (for example, lack of appropriate work experiences, staff changes or sickness/ill health of field educator)
- An Agency may request and / or a Liaison Officer may withdraw a student from a placement where:
  - i. the student is consistently unable to perform satisfactorily with an appropriate or a reasonable level of supervision
  - ii. the student performs in a manner detrimental to the professional experience of other students
  - iii. the student breaches the legal, ethical or professional codes of the organisation providing the placement
  - iv. the student demonstrates gross negligence in the performance of an assigned duty

- v. the student behaves in a manner deemed to constitute misconduct or gross misconduct
- vi. the student fails to disclose information prior to commencing placement that impacts on their ability to meet duty of care requirements to themselves and agency clients or staff.

**5.4 Information that must be provided to the university by the agency following a placement termination includes**

- Agency name
- Days completed
- Nature of the practice
- Learning outcomes achieved
- Learning outcomes not attempted
- Learning outcomes attempted and not achieved, and where appropriate the reasons why outcomes were not achieved.

The outcome of the placement conflict resolution process will be recorded on the university system.

## Section 6: Overseas Placement

Being exposed to a work environment in a different country with a different culture and language highlights to students the importance of cultural awareness and competence, good communication skills and can enhance global citizenship. There are several steps that need to be considered by the interested students before they decide to go overseas for their placements. Students are encouraged to contact the Placement Officer at [HES.support@usq.edu.au](mailto:HES.support@usq.edu.au) as early as possible (at least six months before they intend to start the placement) to explore overseas agencies that are willing to offer student placement to USQ students **and the implications of an overseas placement on ACWA accreditation.**



## Section 7: Policies Relating to Field Placement

### 7.1 Australian Community Worker Association

Students must adhere to the [ACWA Code of Ethics](#) and [Practice Standards](#) for community work. In accordance with these policies, behaviours that may result in harm to other students, professionals and/or clients and or inappropriate conduct including unsafe, illegal, unprofessional or unethical practice may result in students being withdrawn from field education, receiving a fail grade for the placement topics and no credit for hours worked. The Practice Standards are used as the Learning Attributes for the placement assessments.

### 7.2 University Policies

There are several policies to ensure that students get proper support and perform their placements upholding university's reputation. These are as follows:

[Equity in Education Policy and Procedure](#)

[Harassment and Discrimination Complaint Resolution for Students Policy and Procedure](#)

[Student Code of Conduct Policy](#)

[Student General Misconduct Procedure](#)

[Assessment of Compassionate and Compelling Circumstances Procedure](#)

[Students with a Disability Policy and Procedure](#)

## Section 8: Assessment

### 8.1 Assessment requirements

Assessment items for professional placements include the following documents:

- Professional Placement Learning Agreement
- Learning Plan
- Interim Assessment Report
- Final Assessment Report
- Logging of placement hours via LogBook.

Students must also engage with the course examiner and participate in the Mid-Placement Review meeting. Details about the above items are given below and an overview of the assessment process is provided in Figure 4.1. Templates for the Assessments are provided in the Professional Placement Student Portfolio (available on the Human Services Placement Hub).

#### LEARNING AGREEMENT AND LEARNING PLAN

The Learning Agreement functions as the contract between the student and the agency and should be used as a guide for identifying the activities that will be undertaken on placement. Prior to commencing the professional placement, students should be thinking about their learning goals and/or what they wish to achieve during the professional placement and note these (in consultation with their agency supervisor) in the agreement. The student must advise the Course Examiner of any changes to the Learning Agreement.

The Learning Plan builds on the Learning Agreement and is aligned with the learning attributes (see Section 8.2 in the Professional Placement Handbook). More details are provided in the Placement Orientation session. While students fill this out in the first few days of the placement, it may be revised as the placement progresses.

#### ENGAGEMENT AND PLACEMENT REVIEW

Engagement for professional placements provides the student and other stakeholders with the opportunity to discuss the placement process, raise concerns and provide feedback about student capabilities. It may include but is not limited to face-to-face meetings, video conferencing and telephone.

Critical to the engagement process is the **mid-placement review meeting**. This meeting is conducted upon completion of approximately 100 hours of placement and must be booked by the student (details about how to book a placement review meeting are available on Study Desk.). The meeting must be attended by the Student, Agency and/or Task Supervisor, and Course examiner.

#### FINALISE PLACEMENT REQUIREMENTS

**Students must submit all assessment documents within one week of the last day of the professional placement to the study desk. It is the responsibility of the student**

to ensure the timely submission of these documents.

Feedback collected during the placement, evidenced completion of total hours, satisfactory submission of assessments will together contribute to determining if a student has achieved the required learning outcomes.

## 8.2 Professional Learning Attributes

The following table serves as a guide for the achievement ACWA practice standards throughout the placements. The learning attributes and outcomes correspond and align with ACWA guidelines (see <http://www.acwa.org.au/resources/ACWA-Practice-guidelines-Feb-2017.pdf>). Students are also strongly encouraged to access ACWA Community Work Practice Guidelines independently.

<b>Attributes</b>	<b>Outcomes</b>
1. Ethical practice	A community work practitioner, in providing services to individuals and communities, should work in accordance with a code of ethics and in agreement with the principles of individual worth and the individual's right to social inclusion.
2. Provision of services and supports	A community work practitioner should base her or his professional practice on the theory of community work and the principle that individuals, families, groups and communities have a fundamental human right to access appropriate services and support.
3. Confidentiality in the workplace	A community work practitioner should understand and comply with all legislation and guidelines that provide for confidentiality and privacy of service users, colleagues and employers.
4. The regulatory framework	A community work practitioner often works within complex organisational structures governed by legislation or statute. The practitioner must, therefore, understand the sometimes seemingly contradictory frameworks that impact either on service provision or the service users with whom they work.
5. Diversity	A community worker works within diverse communities and should demonstrate in all of her or his professional practice an understanding and sensitivity to diversity in all forms and her or his compliance with all relevant legislation.
6. The workplace	A community work practitioner rarely works alone and should treat her or his workplace with respect and take personal responsibility to ensure that it is a productive, safe and healthy environment within which they, service users, colleagues or residents can work or live.
7. Professional development	The education of a community work practitioner does not cease upon graduation. It is incumbent on the community worker to undertake relevant professional development throughout her or his career to ensure their knowledge remains current and informs their everyday practice.
8. Professional standing	Community work practitioners not only represent the interests of service users and employers but are also representatives of the community work profession. Community workers should therefore, practice with integrity and not engage in any behaviour that brings the profession or other practitioners into disrepute.

THIS PAGE INTENTIONALLY LEFT BLANK