



Social Work Placement Manual

Program Convenor Welcome

Hello and welcome to the Social Work Field Education Program at UNSW.

UNSW is located on the unceded territory of the Bedegal (Kensington campus), Gadigal (City and Paddington campuses) and Ngunnawal peoples (Canberra) who are the Traditional Owners of the lands where each campus of UNSW is situated. The Social Work Program, along with the Australian Association of Social Workers (AASW) respectfully acknowledges Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples as the first Australians and pays respects to elders past and present. We are committed to working in partnership with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander social workers and communities to achieve our vision for reconciliation.

Thank you for collaborating with us regarding your field education experience. We are passionate about field education experience as it is a distinctive pedagogy in social work education. Placements provide opportunities for immersive learning that integrates theory with practice and enables critical reflection on ethics, values and actions. Essential principles for learning in field education include a commitment to safety, responsibility and compassion, and you will find that these commitments are the core of this document and of our placement program. As with our broader degree offerings, these commitments are grounded in the core values of the social work profession: human rights, social justice and professionalism.

This manual provides information about our placement program. Please become familiar with this resource and other supports offered during this placement experience so that together we can achieve the goals of field education and UNSW learning - working together to tackle society's most pressing problems.

We hope you find this manual informative and that it supports your relationship and engagement with us.

Dr Maree Higgins

Senior Lecturer, BSW(Hons) Program Convenor and Academic Lead of Social Work Field Education
UNSW Sydney

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Description of Social Work Placement Courses at UNSW

Our placement courses allow students to apply theoretical and skills-based learning in practice settings. Students are supervised by a qualified social worker in a human services agency offering practice-based learning, in accordance with the AASW Practice Standards. Their learning experience is supported by social work supervision promoting critical reflection which guides students through a developmental process focusing on knowledge, skills and values relevant to the social work profession.

The placement courses are Social Work Practice Level 3 Placement A and B (SOCW3012 – 12 units of credit and SOCW3013 – 6 units of credit) and Social Work Practice Level 4 Placement A and B (SOCW4017 – 6 units of credit and SOCW4018 – 12 units of credit). Both levels undertake 18 units of credit in total.

Goals for placements in the BSW (Hons):

1. Enhance student understanding of the concepts, principles and techniques presented in the classroom, through application in practice situations;
2. Develop the ability to use knowledge, values and skills relevant to social work practice in a variety of problem-solving tasks involving individuals, groups, organisations and communities;
3. Foster a sense of professional commitment to ethical and responsible practice behaviour;
4. Develop the ability to access service and community networks, and formulate critical analyses of existing welfare arrangements;
5. Promote skill and commitment in influencing welfare/organisational policy on behalf of service users;
6. Facilitate an awareness and respect for ethnic, cultural, sexual orientation and identity, and age differences in interactions with client and service systems;
7. Develop a sense of professional identity.

Statement of intent:

Learning opportunities in Social Work Placements enable BSW (Hons) candidates to:

- Approach practice tasks in a spirit of inquiry
- Grasp theoretical ideas relevant to different needs/problems and their socio-political context,
- Transfer applicable concepts and skills to specific situations and settings,
- Seek and acquire the knowledge required for professional practice
- Act in accordance with social work values in a diversity of practice contexts;
- Display responsibility for analysing practice and developing professionally
- Demonstrate competence, responsibility, and autonomy as a practitioner.

Placement Arrangements

Social Work Placement courses uphold the Australian Association of Social Workers (AASW) Practice Standards (2023) in establishing specific arrangements for placements including:

Length of placements:

- Students complete a minimum of 1000 hours of supervised instruction in two placements that occur in Level 3 and Level 4 of their degrees.
- The placement experience comprises a minimum of 972 hours equally distributed across the two years and a minimum of 28 hours of classroom-based instruction.
- Placement supervisors warrant that students have completed these minimum attendance requirements by verifying the timesheets prepared by students, which are then submitted by students to the Placement Moodle page.

Attendance arrangements:

- Placements are normally completed over two terms.
- Each placement is 70 days in duration with each day generally 7 hours in length. The hourly count does not include lunch breaks.
- If students require a variation to the placement arrangements set out in the placement calendar, for example, if they are completing a co-requisite course or are balancing caring or work responsibilities, they are asked to complete a [variation of placement](#) form to enable the Work Integrated Learning (WIL) Team to develop and communicate a suitable plan well in advance of the placement.
- Students will accrue hours more quickly if they remain at work longer than 7 hours in a day or attend placement more days per week. UNSW and agencies share the responsibility for student wellbeing in the placement and provide guidance regarding the accrual of time-in-lieu. Students are encouraged to follow agency protocol regarding flex-time or time-in-lieu arrangements. Please note, however, that accruing hours to complete placement more than one week early is not permitted by UNSW. Thus, the Social Work Placement may be completed in less than 70 days, but not less than 66 days.

Nature of placements:

- Students engage in social work learning experiences during placement that address a range of methods of social work intervention including counselling, casework, group work, research, policy, community development and administration/leadership.
- Each placement involves distinctly different practice learning experiences, taking into account the methods of practice, social issues, and populations engaged.
- We warrant in accordance with Professional Standards that not less than 486 hours of the total 972 hours of student placement time is undertaken in a direct practice role involving the application of professional interpersonal skills. Also that students will gain sufficient clinical and non-clinical experience across the total 1000 hours of placement learning.

Location of placements:

- The UNSW maintains a database with details of partner agencies and provides information about these agencies to students who are preparing for placement.
- UNSW WIL Staff collaborate with Field Educators to ensure that the work proposed and undertaken is appropriate according to both the agency and the University. A fuller discussion of Staff Accountabilities is provided in the next section (from pp 9 onwards).
- At least 500 hours of placement learning are undertaken in Australia according to the AASW social work education standards.
- Students may undertake Level 4 Placement in rural and remote areas of NSW or interstate. These placements are subject to eligibility criteria and an expression of interest (EOI) process. The specific match is organised by WIL unit staff in consultation with the student. For details, please see Appendix 3.
- Placements are allocated by the WIL team, students should not organise their own placement, but can discuss their preferences with WIL staff.
- Work based placements are not standard; students can apply to undertake a work-based placement in particular circumstances (see Appendix four).

Placement Compliance Procedures

UNSW WIL staff support student compliance for placement by verifying student compliance with:

- Social work program conditions for progression require pre-requisite and co-requisite courses.
- National Criminal Record Check, Working with Children Check and, in some circumstances, Vaccination certification is required for placement (for details, see Appendix 1).
- Conditions for the granting of an Exemption from a Component of Placement (cf. Recognition of Prior Learning, Appendix 2).

At times, agencies may require that students fulfil additional compliance procedures prior to attending placement. The WIL Team will work with agencies and students regarding any compliance procedures.

Placement allocation

WIL staff meet with each student prior to placement to develop an understanding of each student's learning needs, with a focus on student centred practice, capacity building, problem solving, and strengths based collaborative support.

Transport and travel for placement

Students are usually expected to travel up to 1 hour from their home to placements. Variations can be discussed with the WIL team. The cost of travel to and from placement is met by students. Travel and sundry items of expenditure connected to the completion of placement tasks are expected to be borne by the agency. Students and Field Educators should discuss expense claiming and reimbursement policies prior to students spending money while completing placement tasks.

Placement supervision:

- The allocated Field Educator plans and supervises work undertaken by the student and provides a supportive environment in which the student can develop and demonstrate knowledge, skills and values as set out in the AASW Practice Standards document (2013).
- Students complete at least one placement with an onsite social work Field Educator (eligible for membership of the AASW) and has at least 2 years of practice experience.
- Students will receive external supervision if they do not have an onsite social work field educator. External Supervision is intended to complement and not replace task supervision that students receive in their placement agency.
- UNSW provides cultural supervision for First Nations students as part of our commitment to decolonial educational practices. For further information, please contact the WIL Team (socialwork@unsw.edu.au).

Student health, safety and welfare

In the event of any incident or concern regarding student safety or well-being, students or field educators should immediately contact the WIL team on and (02) 9385 9388; the course convenor and liaison tutor. Please see **Essential Principles for Learning** (pp11-16), for information about work, health and safety, placement risk assessments, and other aspects that support student well-being, including financial support mechanisms, student and field educator responsibilities, and processes to follow if concerns arise.

Placement assessment:

- Placements are assessed formatively and summatively. Assessment pieces are explained in the course outline and the course Moodle site. They include:
 - Learning contract
 - Placement journal
 - Mid placement report
 - Mid placement visit
 - End placement report
 - Placement timesheet
- All assignments for placement courses are hurdle requirements, that is, they must be submitted and deemed satisfactory for the student to pass the placement.
- Students prepare their assessment submissions in accordance with the instructions provided on the course Moodle site.
- Student submissions are graded by Liaison Tutors who provide feedback to students within two working weeks of assessment submission.
- The overall quality of submissions is moderated by the Course Convenor, who arranges moderation meetings for staff and liaises with students whose performance is in question.
- A result of Satisfactory (SY) for the placement courses demonstrates satisfactory performance against the Program and Course Learning Outcomes.

Placement records and grades

- A formal record of placement is maintained for each student. Access to this record is restricted to the Program Convenor, Course Convenor and WIL Staff.
- A record of the placement grade is submitted to the School of Social Sciences at the end of the relevant term and entered into the student degree record.
- Information about how students may request a review of their placement result is available [here](#).

Work Integrated Learning Procedure

The UNSW Work Integrated Learning Procedure provides a framework for the procedures and approaches set out in this Manual. A copy of this document is available at the following link:

<https://www.unsw.edu.au/content/dam/pdfs/governance/policy/2022-01-policies/wilprocedure.pdf>

Staff Accountabilities

Field education staff collaborate to advance student learning at every opportunity. These staff include:

Field Education Director

Dr Maree Higgins (Senior Lecturer and Program Convenor) (m.higgins@unsw.edu.au)

Field Education Director key accountabilities include:

- affirming ASWEAS requirements are met
- fostering the integrity of social work field education
- strategic development of training for internal and external stakeholders
- recruitment of Liaison Tutors

School Manager, School of Social Sciences

Ashleigh Hamilton

School Manager key accountabilities include:

- fostering the integrity of Work Integrated Learning in the Arts, Design and Architecture (ADA) Faculty
- managing and directing WIL Officers (Social Work/Social Sciences)
- strategic development of WIL administrative processes

Course Convenor

Jenni Graves

Course Convenors' key accountabilities include:

- educating and supporting students throughout the placement
- providing field educator training and support
- gathering Liaison Tutors together throughout the term for moderation purposes
- discussing student progress with Liaison Tutors and coordinating the dissemination of

- information about student learning throughout the term
- advancing student learning at every opportunity in collaboration with the Field Education Director, Liaison Tutors, Field Educators, and WIL Officers
- affirming that course learning outcomes are met and allocating placement grades.

WIL Officers (Social Work/Social Sciences)

Robin Webb and Martina Josephson (E: socialwork@unsw.edu.au or Tel: 02 9385 9388)

WIL Officer (Social Work) key accountabilities include:

- developing and maintaining partnerships with agencies to arrange social work student placements that offer suitable tasks and learning opportunities for social work students
- fostering relationships with students to understand career goals and learning needs
- confirming placement arrangements and approving any placement variations
- allocating liaison tutors
- assessing the safety and quality of all placement matches
- providing field educator training and support
- advancing student learning at every opportunity in collaboration with Course Convenor, Liaison Tutors and Field Educators

Both WIL Officers are responsible for social work placements and are experienced social workers. In collaboration with the Program Convenor, they ensure the incorporation of a human rights and social justice lens and an ethic of care in all aspects of placement planning and implementation.

Senior WIL Officer – Operations and WIL Assistants - Operations

The WIL Operations Team socialwork@unsw.edu.au or Tel: 02 9385 9388

Senior WIL Officer and WIL Assistants; key accountabilities include:

- maintaining student placement files
- administering placement compliance and ensuring students are eligible for placement
- disseminating clear, timely and respectful information to facilitate WIL experiences
- supporting student assessment processes, including timesheet verification
- facilitating casual staff onboarding and payments

Liaison Tutors

Liaison Tutors' key accountabilities include:

- educating, supporting and assessing students throughout the placement
- advancing student learning at every opportunity in collaboration with the Course Convenor, Field Educators, External Supervisors, and WIL Officers
- dynamically assessing the student experience, prioritizing safety and quality of placement

External Supervisors

External Supervisors' key accountabilities include:

- providing regular professional supervision to students to enable the placement to meet AASW requirements
- advancing student learning in collaboration with the Course Convenor, Liaison Tutors, Field Educators, and WIL Officers

Essential principles for learning

Partnerships and collaboration between students and educators are particularly important in social work learning. As well, to maintain our accreditation as a provider of social work education, it is important that each student finds themselves in an environment where they are able to experience all content to a high level of depth and engagement. The following principles for learning are relevant to placement management and will be discussed in this section:

- Safety
- Responsibility
- Compassion

Principle 1: Safety

We appreciate and value the integral and important role of our field education partners, including students, field educators, liaison tutors, external supervisors, and all UNSW staff who contribute to placements, in ensuring safe, enjoyable, rigorous learning experiences for our students. Relevant guidelines are discussed in this section, including Work Health and Safety, allocation of clinical work, home visitation and contact visits, use of agency vehicles, UNSW indemnity arrangements, sexual assault, harassment and misconduct, use of social media and intellectual property, as set out below:

Work, Health and Safety (WHS)

WHS for students in placement is supported by:

- Agency completion of a risk assessment regarding tasks and learning opportunities prior to placement commencement. Information on relevant Work Health and Safety policies and expectations can be found at <https://safety.unsw.edu.au/> and in the Field Educators Module.
- Student completion of a WHS orientation covering organisational policies and procedures, by the end of their placement orientation period (ideally, by Day 10)
- Continued attention to WHS throughout the placement, including attention to the protocols discussed in this section.

Allocation of clinical work

Clinical work undertaken by students in their UNSW placement is required to meet the following standards:

- Agency policies regarding the principles of working with the specific client base are explained to the student in advance and tasks are scaffolded to support adherence to them (for example, dignity,

informed consent, confidentiality, meeting mandatory reporting obligations etc);

- Students observe clinical work by the Field Educator prior to conducting clinical work independently, with client and/or parental consent sought, and the student's learner status explained.
- The student is assessed and observed by the Field Educator step by step developmentally and reflexively (including developmental learning regarding meeting a client, interviewing, supporting, referring, assisting with intake etc).
- The experience is modulated in relation to student capacity and readiness for the particulars of the clinical work;
- A risk assessment of clients allocated to the student is completed, **ensuring no or low risk.**

With respect to some placements at the Department of Communities and Justice (child protection) if all of the above is done, it may be suitable for students to supervise "contact time" independently at the agency.

Home Visitation and Contact visits

For WHS reasons, students are not permitted to conduct home visits alone during their placement.

In addition, students can only conduct home visitation or contact visits if the agency has completed a client risk assessment following established agency protocols and deemed by the agency to be **no or low risk**. All home visitation conducted must also follow agency protocols for offsite work and must be completed with another staff member or student present.

For home visitation and contact visits, agencies ensure that:

- The student is adequately briefed on WHS protocols prior to conducting a home visitation or contact visit.
- Any client, irrespective of age, to be visited by a student has been assessed by the agency as "no or low risk" and suitable for student visitation.
- The student is trained on the relevant protocols for home visitation or contact visits, including how to assess risk, and on what steps to take if the assessed level of risk changes while the visit is occurring.
- The student has notified their Field Educator of their time of departure and estimated time of return and their location whilst offsite, and has access to a mobile phone and emergency plan (including emergency contacts and phone numbers) for any issue that may arise whilst offsite.
- All students working with children have received training about disclosure and mandatory reporting.
- All clients in the care of students have provided informed consent for such and are aware that the care is being provided by a student who is undertaking a placement (or parental/guardian approval for minors).

Use of agency vehicles

Students may only drive agency vehicles if the agency has approved vehicle use by students, and the vehicle is fully insured by the agency. In addition, UNSW requests that any vehicle use involving the transportation of clients is undertaken with a staff member present and follows agency protocols for offsite work.

UNSW Indemnity arrangements

If a student sustains an injury on placement, please contact the WIL Officer (Social Work/Social Sciences) as soon as possible (socialwork@unsw.edu.au). The Senior WIL officer (Operations) can advise about the conditions of coverage, how to make a claim, as well as obtain confirmation of insurance coverage for placement students and WIL partner organisations.

UNSW Insurance Policies for social work placements include:

- Personal Accident Policy: This policy provides a range of benefits in the event of accidental death or accidental bodily injury whilst undertaking placement. It does not cover claims arising from sickness, illness or disease. For information about what is covered and how to make a claim please go to: <https://www.fin.unsw.edu.au/services/insurance/personal-accident>
- Protection for claims by third parties made against students on placement seeking compensation for negligence in the provision of professional services. For information about what is covered and how to make a claim please go to: <https://www.fin.unsw.edu.au/services/insurance/professional-indemnity>

A Letter of Indemnity is included in the Placement Confirmation Pack that is sent to Field Educators prior to the commencement of each placement. If a placement commences early or extends beyond the scheduled completion date, the Work Integrated Learning Unit can update the insurance period to ensure appropriate student coverage for the entire placement.

Sexual Assault, Harassment & Misconduct

All students have the right to feel safe and secure at all times and to be able to fully participate in all aspects of life on and off campus. Unwanted sexual attention including harassment, stalking and assault can prevent a student from taking part in activities and involvement in the placement. We support students who report sexual harassment or sexual assault.

- For information about what to do following an experience during placement of sexual harassment or sexual assault please go to: <https://student.unsw.edu.au/harassment>.
- For information about the Respect. Now. Always. campaign to prevent sexual assault and harassment please go to: www.universitiesaustralia.edu.au.
- To access Sexual Misconduct Training for WIL Experiences please go to [InPlace](#) and log in using your zID and zPass.
- To report incidents of sexual misconduct please go to: www.student.unsw.edu.au/harassment.

Principle 2: Responsibility

Active participation and commitment to placement is expected from all involved in the field placement. The following guidelines support upholding these responsibilities:

Guidelines for Students

Student responsibilities include:

- ✓ Completing course pre-requisites and enrolling in the correct courses.
- ✓ Completing pre-placement compliance checks.
- ✓ Participating in a pre-placement appointment with the WIL Officers (Social Work).
- ✓ Participating in a pre-placement interview with the proposed agency supervisors.
- ✓ Placement planning, attendance, understanding and completing placement tasks, engaging in placement supervision, completing all class work and assessment pieces.
- ✓ Participating in co-requisite courses including Ethics and Reflective Practice (Level 3) and Honours Courses (Level 4) which provide ethics-based learning alongside both placements.
- ✓ Communicating proactively about any barrier to attendance, wellbeing, depth of engagement in, or continuation of the placement, enabling a collaborative plan to be developed to work around these barriers.
- ✓ Complying with the AASW Practice Standards, the UNSW Student Code of Conduct, and agency standards and norms, including those relating to dress code, punctuality, confidentiality, etc.

Guidelines for Agencies

Agency and Field Educator responsibilities include:

- ✓ Identifying suitable tasks for student's level of placement and design an appropriate learning program in consultation with student(s).
- ✓ Establishing a safe and healthy environment in which students can develop professional skills.
- ✓ Participating in placement planning, training, and orientation sessions provided or arranged by the University to support the development of this environment.
- ✓ Communicating about and managing internal compliance processes.
- ✓ Ensuring the student is eligible to attend and has appropriate organisational access.
- ✓ Recognising placement teaching as integral in the Field Educator's workload.
- ✓ Offering space, facilities and travel costs for work undertaken by students during the placement.
- ✓ Providing at least 1.5 hours per week of planned teaching time and supervision to students.
- ✓ Communicating proactively about any barrier to attendance, wellbeing, depth of engagement in, or continuation of the placement to the liaison tutor, enabling a collaborative plan to be developed to work around these barriers.
- ✓ Providing summative and formative feedback to the student, including completing the Learning

Contract, Mid and End Placement Reports by the due dates and contributing to the Mid Placement Liaison Visit.

- ✓ Providing opportunities and affirmative action for students with differing needs for learning and supervision.
- ✓ Advising and managing compliance with Work Health and Safety Policies and Procedures.

Specific responsibilities of all parties include:

Responsibility in the use of mobile phones and social media whilst on placement

Responsibility is required in relation to the use of mobile phones and social media whilst on placement. UNSW strongly advises agencies to explain their policy on the use of mobile phones in the workplace to students at the beginning of placement and advises students to be guided by this policy throughout their placement.

In general, students are advised by UNSW to limit their mobile phones for personal reasons whilst accruing placement hours, although this might vary from student to student and placement to placement. If a student has a personal emergency that requires them to be in contact with significant others via their personal mobile phone, this should be explicitly negotiated with their Field Educator.

Under no circumstances is content regarding the Social Work Placement from a personal mobile phone (e.g., photos, text) to be uploaded to social media as this could potentially breach the confidentiality of the agency and the clients of the agency. If students are found to be breaching confidentiality, consideration will be given as to whether they are permitted to continue in the Social Work Placement course. For information on this, please review the UNSW Student Code Policy found at <https://student.unsw.edu.au/conduct> and the UNSW Student Social Media Guide found at <https://student.unsw.edu.au/social-media-guide>

Responsible management of intellectual property and confidential material

Students often contribute to research, policy analysis, program development and other written or creative work while on placement. In many cases, responsible management of intellectual property and confidential material are important considerations.

Human service agencies make placements available to social work students on condition that the agency has a claim to the intellectual property created by the student where the intellectual property:

- a. has been created utilising substantial resources of the Agency.
- b. is created because of pre-existing Intellectual Property owned by the Agency.
- c. has been created by a team of the Agency, of which the student is a member; or
- d. has been created because of funding provided by, or obtained by, the Agency.

Responsible management of intellectual property entitles students to be listed as co-authors on such works and may cite co-authored works as achievements within their CV, and in the Mid or End Placement Report.

If there is a possibility that the placement may result in students having a more pressing claim to intellectual property to which the agency may also make a claim, the student should explicitly discuss their concerns with the agency and try to reach an agreement with their agency as to how the intellectual property rights will be dealt

with. If necessary the student may wish to seek independent legal advice. Students should consult the Course Convenor as soon as possible if they think this may apply to them. In addition, both the student and the Liaison Tutor may be asked to sign a non-disclosure form or confidentiality agreement. Some agencies may also require students to complete agency-specific documents upon commencement which include content relating to intellectual property and ownership of generated documents and resources.

Principle 3: Compassion

UNSW equity provisions for student placements and how we celebrate merit are outlined in this section, then our approach to addressing learning barriers. Compassion and concern for student welfare underpin all our placement protocols. As stated earlier, this is consistent with our broader commitment to the core values of the social work profession: human rights, social justice, and professionalism.

UNSW Equity Provisions

The faculty offers Equity Awards to support current placement students, as outlined below:

Brenda Smith Award in Social Work (\$5000)

Brenda Smith was a teacher and researcher in the Social Work Practice strand of the BSW who died in 1989. During her decade of teaching - which she came to from social work practice in women's health - she inspired students through acceptance, encouragement, and energy for action. She was an excellent teacher who was flexible enough to change the agenda if something wasn't working or if a particular area needed more attention. Brenda wrote: *The ideal of a 'well society' is one where men and women have equal access to the positive aspects of family, work and leisure. This can only become the case if patriarchal power to assume for women positions in society that they would not choose for themselves is exposed and challenged.*

Brenda left a legacy of thought, humanity, kindness, warmth and generosity for staff and students of the BSW.

For information on how to apply for this scholarship please go to <https://www.scholarships.unsw.edu.au/unsw-equity-scholarships>

Theresa Lindsay Hayward Indigenous Social Work Award (\$5000)

This award supports a currently enrolled Indigenous Australian student undertaking their third or fourth year field placement as part of the UNSW Bachelor of Social Work program. For information on how to apply for this scholarship please go to <https://www.scholarships.unsw.edu.au/unsw-equity-scholarships>

UNSW Arts, Design and Architecture Equity Award (\$5000)

This award provides support to disadvantaged, low socio-economic status (SES) candidates or candidates who have suffered hardship to undertake undergraduate studies within the Faculty of Arts, Design & Architecture.

For information on how to apply for this scholarship please go to <https://www.scholarships.unsw.edu.au/unsw-equity-scholarships>

Celebrating merit

The School of Social Sciences recognises students who have completed their placement with merit via the following awards:

The Sinja Kusljic Certificate of Merit in Field Education in Social Work (Level 3 Placement)

This certificate was established in 2010 following the death of Sinja Kusljic, who was a Level 3 social work student. Sinja died shortly after completing her Level 3 Placement. For those who taught her and for her student peers, the loss of Sinja was profound because of the personal characteristics that she displayed including her enthusiasm and dedication to her study and to her placement. They believed that Sinja would have made a significant contribution to social work in the broader community if she had gone on to practice.

Sinja's example was so inspiring that it was deemed appropriate to establish a lasting commemoration of her in the form of a Certificate of Merit. This is awarded on a yearly basis to a Level 3 Placement student who, like Sinja, demonstrated the personal characteristics of professionalism, a passion for social work and social justice issues, determination, and strength.

The Barry Bell Memorial Award for Excellence in Field Education Practice Learning (Level 4 Placement)

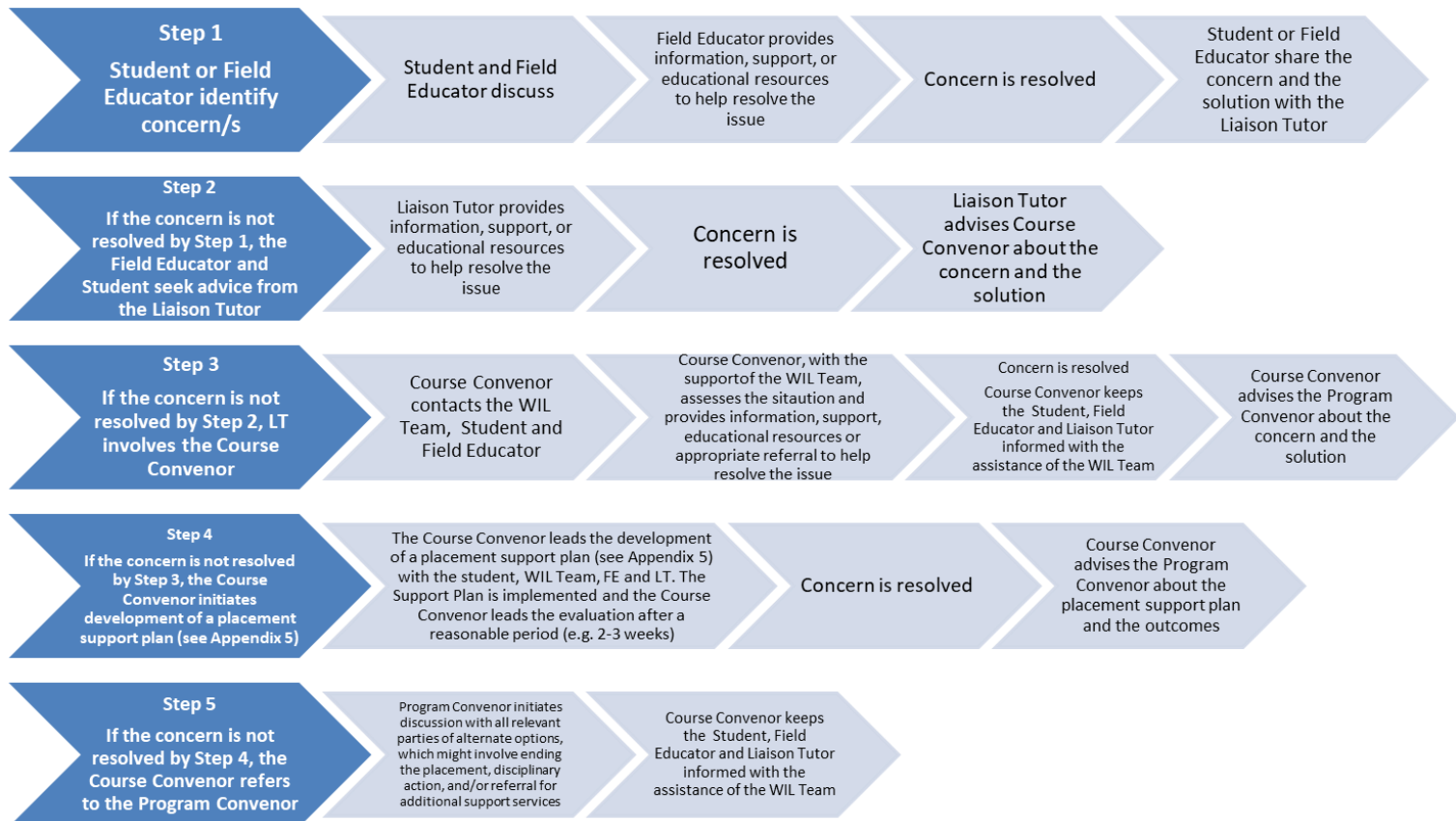
Barry Bell was a Liaison Tutor for the Placement Program in the Social Work Discipline who died in September 2013. In this role Barry worked with many students whilst they were on placement developing their professional identity and professional competence. Prior to this role Barry was a veteran social worker who had a long history working in corrective services, with Aboriginal communities, and with the LGBTQI+ population. Throughout his professional career and even in his retirement, Barry continued to contribute towards social justice on all levels, embodying the dual identities of the personal member of humankind and the professional social worker.

At all times Barry was an example to UNSW Social Work students of professionalism, empathy, intuition and had a deep regard for marginalised populations. This Award recognises Level 4 students who demonstrate similar traits of professionalism and regard for marginalised populations during their Level 4 Placement.

Addressing learning barriers in the placement

Communication is especially important when a student is experiencing learning barriers, particularly those which affect placement performance or attendance, seminar/tutorial attendance, engagement in supervision, and/or completion of independent learning tasks. A list of resources to support placement is provided at Appendix 6.

To address concerns that arise in the placement, please follow the process outlined in this placement flow chart:



Appendix 1: Student placement compliance processes

National Police Check requirements and Working with Children's Check

Students are required to produce a valid National Police Check prior to starting each placement. Students can apply for a Check from an Australian State or Territory Police Force, an Australian Criminal Intelligence Commission accredited body or the Australian Federal Police. Please refer to [National Police Checks](#)

Students are also required to produce a Working with Children's Check number. The placement agency is responsible for verifying the student's Working with Children's Check status. Please refer to the [NSW Office of the Children's Guardian website](#).

As the University has a duty of care to both agencies and members of the public, it is compulsory for all students to undergo this process no matter whether they are undertaking a placement in Australia or overseas.

Vaccination Requirements

Students who undertake placements in a NSW Health facility must be verified by a NSW Health staff member and registered with the NSW Health ClinConnect system. All students are to provide evidence of compliance with screening and vaccination schedules, regardless of their placement preferences, unless they have conscientious objections to vaccines or are physically unable to receive vaccinations. Please see the NSW Health circular, which can be accessed at [Health, Education & Training - Student Compliance](#).

Appendix 2: Exemption from a component of coursework

Students may apply for exemption from a component of coursework (cf Recognition of Prior Learning). In keeping with AASW standards, this option is only available to students undertaking the Level 3 placement (SOCW3012 and/or SOCW3013).

Students with formal work experience that aligns with tasks undertaken by social work students or qualified social workers can be considered for an exemption from the hours component of coursework but must still enrol in the relevant courses and undertake the set classwork that supports placement learning.

A minimum of three full-time equivalent years' practice in a relevant context in the previous seven years is required and at least one year of full-time equivalent must have been in the last three years. Practice must be in a relevant context, using social work practice skills such as assessment and counselling and methods such as casework, research 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.

If an exemption for a component of coursework is granted to the student, the following conditions apply for the second field placement. The meeting of these conditions must be considered prior to the granting of an exemption for component of coursework in SOCW3012 and/or SOCW3013:

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.

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.

The placement setting must be different to settings in the student's work history and any experience on which the Exemption for Component of Coursework in SOCW3012 and SOCW3013 was based.

Students will submit an Application, accompanied by a portfolio which should include for example, job descriptions accompanied by referee reports; skills assessment and critical reflection on placement or work experience to be assessed.

To qualify for an Exemption from a Component of Placement, the student must first provide initial information regarding the work undertaken and the extent of their work experience. Once approved for the Exemption in-principle, the student will develop and submit a portfolio demonstrating their development according to the AASW Practice Standards, explaining how they are integrating theory and practice in their work, and providing evidence of the influence of social work ethics and values on their practice.

Verification/reference as to the accuracy of the student's claim by a qualified social worker who has supervised the student in their practice is required.

For more information about the Exemption from a Component of Coursework, please contact the WIL Team.

Appendix 3: Rural, remote, or interstate placement planning

Rural, remote, or interstate placements are available for Level 4 placements only.

Field placements that occur rurally, remotely, or interstate must provide a student experience of equivalent quality to that of a local setting and will meet all ASWEAS requirements.

Placement in rural and remote areas

These placements are subject to eligibility criteria and an EOI process. The specific match is organised by Work Integrated Learning team in consultation with the student. Students undertake a pre-placement appointment, before the placement is confirmed. For more information about rural and remote placements, please contact the WIL Team (socialwork@unsw.edu.au)

Information sessions for rural, remote placements

A briefing seminar is offered to students in the year prior to their Level 4 placement.

All students who are interested in completing a rural, remote placement will submit an informal EOI to the WIL team. Because of the longer timeframes established by the university for planning an overseas placement experience and overseas exchange, EOIs are required in early Jan of the Level 4 placement year.

The EOI for rural, remote placements includes:

- An informal EOI sent to WIL team indicating interest in a rural, remote or overseas placement.
- A meeting with WIL team to discuss the process and any other factors to be considered in a rural, remote placement.

Costs associated with rural, remote placements.

Students bear all costs associated with rural, remote, placements – financial assistance may be available. Further information is provided to students at a rural, remote information session by the WIL team.

Scholarships and Bursaries are available to defray the costs of rural, remote or overseas placements. Please see the following websites for more details:

- <http://www.scholarships.unsw.edu.au/>
- <https://www.heti.nsw.gov.au/Placements-Scholarships-Grants/scholarships-and-grants>.
- <http://sarah.org.au/#>
- [NSW Rural Allied Health Clinical Placement Grants](#)

- [University Centre for Rural Health \(UCRH\)](#)

Students who undertake rural, remote and overseas placements will enrol in Level 4 core courses as normal.

Appendix 4: Workplace-Based Placements

Placements are not usually undertaken in an agency or organisation in which the student is employed, in line with Australian Social Work Education and Accreditation Standards (ASWEAS). However, exceptions can be made if UNSW Staff are satisfied that the student can meet the educational goals of the workplace-based placement, and if the Social Work program can fairly and effectively assess the student's performance in the agreed environment. Criteria for workplace-based placements (WBP) include:

- The student is allocated tasks different from those they undertake in the course of their paid work.
- Work based placement hours are not considered paid employment.
- The student is provided with supervision during the placement that meets placement requirements, from a qualified social worker who is not their usual supervisor.
- For the most part the student is located in a different team than their usual work team.
- Where possible, the physical location of the placement is different to the student's usual employment location.

Students interested in workplace-based field placement are encouraged to identify this at the time of their placement appointment with the WIL Unit.

Students will then be required to apply and obtain approval from the Program Convenor as early as possible before the commencement date of the placement. They will be asked to complete a Workplace-Based Placement Agreement and liaise with all stakeholders to understand and minimise conflicts of interest.

Appendix 5: Placement Support Plan

This planning tool can assist agencies and the university where support needs are present that affect the viability of the placement.

Date:

Student Name: _____ Student Email: _____

Agency Name: _____

Field Educator Name: _____ Field Educator Email: _____

Summary of concerns:

Learning Components of Practice to be addressed (please tick those which apply):

- | | |
|--|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Professionalism | <input type="checkbox"/> Communication and Interpersonal Skills |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Values and Ethics | <input type="checkbox"/> Knowledge for Practice / Applying Knowledge to Practice |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Professional Development and Supervision | <input type="checkbox"/> Culturally Responsive and Inclusive Practice |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Information Recording and Sharing | <input type="checkbox"/> Other (Please describe) |

Actions to be undertaken by student:

Actions to be undertaken by Field Educator:

Review of placement support plan (to be undertaken two weeks from date of plan or 3 weeks if part time placement):

Agreed Date: _____

Review Feedback

Outcome (Please Select):

- Improvements observed and placement on track for completion
- Additional improvements required for the remainder of placement (should these not be met at any point, the placement may result in immediate cessation)
- Placement to be ceased.

Optional comments:

Field Educator Name:	Field Educator Signature	Date Signed
Student Name:	Student Signature	Date Signed
Liaison Tutor Name:	Liaison Tutor Signature	Date Signed

Appendix 6: Additional Resources for Placement

UNSW provides a range of resources that support the placement experience:

- BSW (Hons) program information: www.handbook.unsw.edu.au
- The UNSW Code of Conduct: <https://student.unsw.edu.au/conduct>
- Students with disability, caring responsibilities, or any condition that may require some adjustment to their placement learning environment are encouraged to engage with Equitable Learning Services (9385 4734) in the lead-up to their Level 3 and Level 4 placements. The Equitable Learning Services webpage provides detail about processes and the kinds of support that can be offered: <https://student.unsw.edu.au/els/services>
- Educational Support Advisors can assist students experiencing personal and health issues which are impacting their studies or course attendance. Contact 9385 4374 or go to the support page: <https://student.unsw.edu.au/educational-support-advice-personal-and-health-issues>
- UNSW Psychology and Wellness provides a free and confidential counselling service. For information, please go to: <https://www.student.unsw.edu.au/counselling/appointment>
- A range of academic supports are provided to UNSW students including 1:1 academic consultations. These can be useful to support development or polish assessment pieces and/or work the student is required to produce in the placement. For details, please go to: <https://www.student.unsw.edu.au/skills>
- Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students can gain support from Rebekah Torrens, ADA's dedicated Indigenous Student Support and Engagement Specialist. For more information, please go to: <https://www.unsw.edu.au/arts-design-architecture/about-us/commitment-to-indigenous-communities>
- Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students can also gain support from Nura Gili, which provides pathways to learning opportunities that embrace Indigenous knowledge, culture and histories. Nura Gili can be contacted on 9385 3805 and at <http://www.nuragili.unsw.edu.au>