Social Work Field Education 2 (Advanced)

**Teaching Period:** Sem 1 2012

**Course Code:** HWSS2114

**School:** 365H Global Studies, Social Science & Planning

**Career:** Postgraduate

**Campus:** City Campus

**Learning Mode:** Workplace

**Primary Learning Mode:** Primary learning mode is face to face through a 70 day supervised placement, preceded by a briefing the previous summer semester. Integrative seminars will be held on campus during semester 1.

**Credit Points:** 36

**Teacher Guided Hours:** 36 per semester

**Learner Directed Hours:** 99 per semester

**Course Coordinator:** Judy Williams

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**Course Coordinator Location:** 8.7.16

**Course Coordinator Availability:** By appointment

**Additional Staff Contact Details**

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**Pre-requisite Courses and Assumed Knowledge and Capabilities**

Social Work Field Education 1 (adv). Previously completed undergraduate degree, 2 years work experience & completion of relevant MSW courses.

**Course Description**

Field Education 2 is a major component of the Masters of Social Work program. Through this course, and the previously completed Field Education 1, students will have the opportunity to strengthen and develop their professional skills, knowledge and values within a workplace-learning environment. In Field Education 2 there is an emphasis upon preparing students for enhanced professional practice. It builds on the learning of Field Education 1 and provides opportunity to develop enhanced beginning practice skills. Students will be required to demonstrate an understanding organizational and community contexts of practice, as well as effectively dealing with the ethical dilemmas that are likely to be encountered. Placements may focus on community organization, program development, policy
development and/or research and may include a component of direct practice work. Students will be expected to analyse the practice setting by drawing on a range of theoretical perspectives, in particular those concerning power and exclusion, and to develop appropriate responses.

The Field Education course requires students to actively draw from previous knowledge and experience when determining their specific learning goals while they are on their field placements. This includes integrating previously studied material, especially in social work theory and practice and in field education as well as prior workplace learning.

Students in MSW Field Education courses will be expected to show a level of critical and creative capability, and fluency in reflective and ethical practice, that is beyond that expected of students completing the Bachelor of Social Work. Building on their prior studies and work experience and Field Education 1 placement experience, students will be required to demonstrate a standard of practice that at least meets the Australian Association of Social Work practice standards (the professionally accrediting body).

Objectives/Learning Outcomes/Capability Development:

The Field Education courses (1 & 2) occupy a special and central place within the RMIT MSW program. Between them, they encompass most of the capabilities of the program that inform student experiences. Field education is weighted this way (72 credit points in total) because it provides students with opportunities to develop and integrate their professional capabilities in practice. It also allows students to demonstrate their ability to be assessed across the range of capabilities while working within at least two different workplace settings.

Both Field Education courses are linked to core courses scheduled in the MSW program. These links are important because they allow students to integrate their knowledge, skills and values into practice. Students are expected to connect their practice experiences with their classroom based learning, and vice-versa. This requires students to import academic learning (undertaken in their undergraduate courses and the current MSW course) into the field, as well as bringing their field learning in to the academy.

Ordinarily, Field Education 2 has an emphasis on macro level practice, mostly in areas dedicated to developing policies, conducting research or building communities whereas Field Education 1 has an emphasis on direct work with service users. This means that Field Education 2 has a broader focus and has particular linkages with Policy Making Processes, Social Work with Groups (Social Work Theory and Practice III), Research Strategies and Community Development Strategies (Social Work Theory and Practice IV).

In some cases students will have had a broader focus for Field Education 1 and would then have a direct practice focus for FE2. This would be negotiated with the Field Education Coordinator and would depend on relevant undergraduate studies, prior work place experience and relevant courses undertaken in MSW program. It is also possible to have a placement that combines macro practice with further experiences in direct practice.

Because they are Masters’ students, they are required to demonstrate professional competencies above
the baseline standards expected from undergraduate (BSW) students. They are expected to do so because students who enter the MSW program will have significant work experience to draw on, in addition to having completed an undergraduate degree.

**At the conclusion of the course, students will have demonstrated:**

Advanced competency, appropriate to the placement setting, in all 7 areas of assessment outlined below. This includes taking maximum responsibility for their own learning and professional development and to be able to perform at an advanced level of beginning professional social work practice.

Students will together with their field educator develop a learning plan that identifies tasks and way to measure performance against each of the broad assessment areas.

**Learning Area 1 - Values, ethics and professional practice:**

Awareness of contextually relevant ethics in accordance with the AASW Code of Ethics

1.1 – Demonstrates an awareness of the relevance of the AASW Code of Ethics within the placement setting (e.g., promotion of social justice and commitment to the dignity, value and uniqueness of individuals, social units, communities and cultures).

1.2 – Demonstrates an understanding of power relationships and structures that can give rise to and perpetuate relationships of inequality and social marginalisation for the target population, and demonstrates an ability to work constructively with issues of power and authority.

1.3 – Maintains an open and respectful perspective towards the values, views and opinions of others and is able to seek to incorporate notions of individual rights and needs, and collective responsibilities.

1.4 – Demonstrates an ability to recognise and understand one’s own assumptions and values and their ability to impact on practice (especially within situations of conflicts of values and interest).

1.5 – Demonstrates an understanding of social work as a profession and how it differs from other related professions.

1.6 – Demonstrates an understanding of issues such as privacy and confidentiality in relation to the ethical management of client records, including relevant legislation and agency policies.

**Learning Area 2 - Organisational context:**

An understanding of the organisational, legal and political contexts of human services processes.

2.1 – Demonstrates an understanding of the local and wider context in which the organisation operates (in particular the direct practice and social policy priorities of people living in the local region).

2.2 – Demonstrates an appreciation of the connection between individual problems, public issues and structural disadvantage.

2.3 – Demonstrates an ability to develop working relationships to deliver services to clients.

2.4 – Demonstrates an awareness of and adherence to, duty of care, risk management and organisational policies and procedures, including the legal rights of consumers.
2.5 – Demonstrates an understanding of current debates, social issues and/or politics which influence the field of practice.

**Learning Area 3 - Use of knowledge in practice:**

An understanding of theories and methodologies relevant to practice and ability to reflect critically upon their use and application.

3.1 – Demonstrate the ability to identify a range of social work theories relevant to the practice setting.
3.2 – Demonstrate the ability to clearly articulate a sound understanding of the relationship between theory and social work practice within the practice setting, and also at a macro level.
3.3 – Demonstrate an understanding and ability to use procedural knowledge in the completion of learning tasks

**Learning Area 4 - Processes, skills and relationships:**

An ability to form constructive relationships with individuals, groups and communities including user groups, colleagues, professionals and people in other significant roles / positions.

4.1.1 – Communication Skills:
4.1.2 – Demonstrates clear and effective interpersonal communication skills (both verbal and non-verbal) with individuals, groups and communities.
4.1.3 – Demonstrates purposeful and effective strategies to engage individuals, groups or communities.
4.1.4 – Demonstrates an ability to conduct single or joint interviews and demonstrates the ability to practice strategically (to engage, mobilise, challenge and encourage people in the change process).
4.1.5 – Demonstrates the capacity to deal with situations involving anger, conflict and challenging behaviour.
4.1.6 – Demonstrates an ability to write analytically and to distinguish between fact and opinion.
4.1.7 – Demonstrates an ability to incorporate formal knowledge and professional principles into documentation.
4.1.8 – Is able to prepare written assessment reports that demonstrate the ability to gather relevant information about and with the client/ group/ or community.
4.1.9 – Demonstrates an ability to use information technology for recording information, word-processing and data analysis.
4.1.10 – Adheres to documented policies within the agency: necessary recording processes – reports, assessment schedules, administrative documentation, statistical procedures, letters, etc.

**4.2 – Assessment, Intervention, Referral and Evaluation:**

4.2.1 – Demonstrates an ability to undertake an assessment of individuals and groups across a diverse range of life circumstances.
4.2.2 – Demonstrates an ability to use relevant organisational assessment and referral frameworks
4.2.3 – Demonstrates understanding of both formal and informal methods for evaluating Social Work interventions and ability to articulate these to both service user and supervisor.

4.2.4 – Demonstrates an ability to implement the intervention plan, engaging in activities such as: facilitation, mediation, negotiation and advocacy on behalf of service users; counselling, education and skills transference; coordination and liaison with other service providers (in collaboration with the client/service user); crisis intervention; working with an interpreters.

4.2.5 – Demonstrates and ability to implement strategies to support and assist clients to find new ways of coping

4.3 - Group & Team-work Skills:

4.3.1 – Demonstrates an understanding of group processes within organisational groups and committees.

4.3.2 – Demonstrates competence in participation in group discussions.

4.3.3 – Demonstrates an ability to initiate group approaches to problem-solving.

4.3.4 – Demonstrates an ability to work effectively in teams and networks by establishing relationships with colleagues and/or team members, consumers, consumer groups and authority figures.

4.3.5 – Demonstrates an ability to participate in the management of meetings through assuming formal roles, e.g. secretary/scribe, note-taker, chairperson.

4.3.6 – Is able to reflect on, critique and maintain productive and purposeful working relationships with colleagues and other key stakeholders of the placement agency.

4.3.7 – Demonstrates ability to co-ordinate and liaise when necessary with other service providers, in collaboration with the client/service user.

**Learning Area 5 - Self learning and professional development:**

The ability to take responsibility for one’s own learning and development, and to perform at a level of competence appropriate to a beginning social work practitioner, including the skills to manage one’s future career and the transition from university to professional practice.

5.1 – Demonstrate the ability to participate proactively in negotiating and developing the supervisory relationship.

5.2 – Demonstrate an ability to formulate and articulate one’s own learning needs and objectives.

5.3 – Demonstrate a willingness to take risks and expose own practice for scrutiny from supervisor.

5.4 – Demonstrate an awareness of personal feelings and experience and how these affect practice.

5.5 – Demonstrate understanding of the theory of critical reflection & an ability to use this approach to critically examine own practice.

5.6 – Demonstrate the capacity to work with increasing autonomy and professional responsibility.

5.7 – Demonstrate an ability to function effectively in complex practice situations.

5.8 – Identify areas for future learning & development & recognise the importance of future professional development as a social worker.
5.9 – Manage workload efficiently and effectively.
5.10 – Ability to demonstrate appropriate responsibility, accountability, reliability and initiative within the work setting.

**Learning Area 6 - Research:**
Recognition of research as an integral part of social work practice; demonstrating knowledge and understanding of all types and stages of social research.
6.1 – Demonstrates the ability to effectively engage stakeholders in the research and/or evaluation process.
6.2 – Demonstrates the ability to undertake, critically assess and draw upon relevant literature searches to plan and conduct research.
6.3 – Demonstrates the ability to conduct research and program evaluation with groups and communities using sound methodological approaches.
6.4 – Demonstrates the ability to analyse and communicate results of research through preparation of clear, concise, organised and well argued research reporting.
6.5 – Demonstrates an understanding of how research knowledge informs practice.
6.6 – Demonstrates an understanding of how research and evaluation techniques/frameworks can assist with broader knowledge development within practice (e.g. consulting published literature, question formation and data gathering techniques etc).

**Learning Area 7 - Social policy:**
An understanding of the legislative and social policies which influence the different fields of practice including knowledge of relevant legislative and policy frameworks.
7.1 – Demonstrates an ability to identify relevant legislation, policies and regulations, and to interpret and analyse the impacts of these on practice.
7.2 – Demonstrates an ability to understand policy development, community and political processes involved in linking direct practice experience with broader social change objectives.

**Overview of Learning Activities**
In accordance with the requirements of the professionally accrediting body for fieldwork (AASW), the learning activities will be provided through a placement structure that consists of 70 days (or equivalent) supervised practice in a relevant organization.

- Field Briefings and other preparatory work;
- 70 Day Field Placement
- Integration seminars
- Learning/Educational Plan
- Mid and End of Placement Reviews
- Critical Analysis -3,000 words
Details of Learning Activities

In accordance with the requirements of the professionally accrediting body for social work education (Australian Association of Social Workers - AASW) the principal learning activities for Field Education 2 will be provided through a placement structure that consists of 70 days (or equivalent, of the total 140 days stipulated for the MSW), in supervised practice in a relevant organisation. Field Educators who meet the accreditation requirements of the AASW will provide supervision. Through this course students will have the opportunity to strengthen and develop their professional skills, knowledge and values within a workplace-learning environment. Students will be required to demonstrate an understanding of organisational and community contexts of practice, as well as effectively dealing with the ethical dilemmas that are likely to be encountered. Placements may focus on community organisation, program development, policy development and/or research and may include a component of direct practice work. You will be expected to analyse the practice setting by drawing on a range of theoretical perspectives, in particular those concerning power and exclusion, and to develop appropriate responses.

This course requires students to actively draw from previous knowledge and experience when determining their specific learning goals while they are on placement. This includes integrating previously studies material, especially in social work theory and practice and in field education as well as prior workplace learning.

Teaching Schedule

Preliminary consultation leading to placement allocation and referral.

If you are undertaking placements in Victoria a series of three integrative seminars will be held monthly, dates to be advised. You are expected to attend seminars held whilst on placement.

You will be assigned a liaison person responsible for: educational consultation, monitoring, evaluation of learning opportunities and performance, mediation and problem solving.

Overview of Learning Resources

MSW Field Education 2 Course Guide
MSW Field Education Manual
Student -directed reading (see list of references below as a starting point.)

Other Resources

RMIT University MSW Field Education Manual 2012
Course documents and pro formas - www.rmit.edu.au/gsssp/fielded/sw

RMIT Library

The University Library provides extensive services, facilities and study space as well as comprehensive collections of books, periodicals and other course related materials, such as DVD’s,
magazines, slides, films etc. Computer laboratories with access to a wide range of desktop publishing software are also available. The library also has an expanding virtual collection of electronic resources and networks, including product data, e-books, electronic journals and newspapers, web based tutorials, online reference and document delivery services etc., all of which are accessible on campus, and off campus 24 hours per day. More information on library resources and services can be found at: http://www.rmit.edu.au/library

If you need additional support, visit RMIT’s Learning Lab, either in person or online: http://www.dlsweb.rmit.edu.au/lsu/

Overview of Assessment

The assessment of Field Education 2 comprises:

- Active participation at placement orientation session/s
- Active participation at integration seminars
- Satisfactory completion of 70 days on placement, or equivalent
- Satisfactory completion of an evaluation report on placement performance
- Satisfactory completion of a Critical Analysis- 3,000 words submitted within two weeks of the end of the placement.

Active participation at placement orientation session/s

Students will demonstrate this by attending the session/s, raising relevant questions, interacting respectfully and sensitively with others in the group; and engaging in any preparatory work deemed necessary.

Active participation at integration seminars

Attendance at all sessions and respectful, engaged participation is not the only requirement for integration seminars. Students will also need to demonstrate their learning through the presentation of case studies or other ‘pieces’ of work that they are undertaking. Being prepared to give and non-defensively receive feedback to/from others is part of the process.

Satisfactory completion of 70 days field placement, or equivalent

In line with the expectations outlined above (and below), students must complete their seventy-day field placements. The Placement Report is central to this requirement.

Placement Report

The report will be completed by the student and Field Educator, and signed by both. The Field Educator will be a qualified social worker with a minimum of two years post-qualifying professional work experience.

A learning agreement between the student and Field Educator will provide opportunity to prioritise significant areas for learning and development. Students are expected to draft these documents and tailor them to their strengths, needs, interests and areas on which they need to work. The Field Educator will act as a mentor and facilitator of learning, as well as a resource, and will ensure ongoing assessment and feedback.
The report will contain a recommendation on pass / fail grading, to be considered by the Field Education Course Coordinator. The report shall include a factual summary of the placement (what was done) and comments by both the field educator and student on the quality of the placement and field education course. Crucially, it shall provide an evaluation of the student’s performance as social worker, with special reference to macro level practice. For MSW students, this evaluation is to be informed by the Australian Association of Social Workers Practice Standards. (See Practice Standards for Social Workers: Achieving Outcomes AASW September 2003).


**Critical Analysis (Macro practice) 3,000 words:**

The Critical Analysis in Field Education 2 usually focuses on a specific piece of work undertaken by the student in macro level practice. Where a student’s placement has a direct practice focus their Critical Analysis should follow guidelines for a Critical Analysis (Direct practice) as outlined in FE1 course guide. University-based staff will use a pass/fail grading system to assess the work. The assignment requires students to present and examine a form of macro practice they have undertaken in their placement. Because is set at the Masters’ level, students are required to show an enhanced capability for critical analysis and ethical practice in their written work.

**Students should provide:**

- A background to the project/practice
- The student’s assessment of the situation
- A presentation and discussion of the plan of action
- A critical analysis of the strategies used to carry out the plan
- An evaluation of the outcome of the action

**Assessment criteria:**

For students to achieve a pass in this piece of work they must show:

- Evidence of ability to provide a comprehensive and focused description of the practice
- Evidence of ability to critically reflect on the actual practice approaches the student used, and the influence of the student’s values, knowledge and assumptions on the work they did
- Evidence of ability to link theory and practice
- Evidence of critical analysis of the situation and of their own practice, with reference to issues of power and exclusion
- Evidence of ethical understanding and reasoning in relation to the student’s practice and their self-evaluation
- Evidence of utilization of and reference to appropriate literature

Submission date: within two weeks of completion of placement.