

[insert organisation logo]

Student Practice Placement Policy & Procedure

Document Status: Draft or Final

Date Issued: [date]

Lead Author: [name and position]

Approved by: [insert organisation name] Board of Directors on [date]

Scheduled Review Date: [date]

Record of Policy Review

Review Date	Person Initiating/Leading Review	Other People Consulted

Triggers for Policy Review (tick all that apply)

- Standard review is timetabled.
- A gap has been identified
- Additional knowledge or information has become available to supplement the policy.
- External factors
 - Policy is no longer relevant/current due to changes in external operating environment.
 - There are changes to laws, regulations, terminology and/or government policy.
 - Changes to funding environment, including requirements of funding bod(y)ies
- Other (please specify).
- Internal / organisational factors
 - A stakeholder has identified a need, eg by email, telephone etc
 - A serious or critical incident has occurred, requiring an urgent review.
 - Need for consistency in service delivery across programs and organisations.
 - Separate, stand-alone policy is now warranted
 - A near miss has occurred, requiring a review to prevent a serious/critical incident in the future

Additional Comments

[for example, policy now covers details related to new legislation].

1. Purpose and Scope

[insert organisation name] is committed to supporting practice placements for the development of an appropriately experienced and qualified professional community mental health sector workforce.

The purpose of this policy is to ensure practice placements at the organisation are guided by fair and consistent principles and sound administration so that there is a positive experience and outcome for both the student and **[insert organisation name]**.

This policy applies to all staff and to all students on placement at **[insert organisation name]**. The policy encompasses but is not limited to:

- Student entry to practice placement
- Supervision and management of students on placement

This policy does not provide detailed guidance on:

- Human resources management – see the *Human Resources Policy*
- Workplace environment – see the *Work Health and Safety Policy*
- Privacy and confidentiality – see the *Privacy and Confidentiality Policy*
- Complaints handling – see the *Feedback and Complaints Policy*
- Volunteering – see the *Volunteer Policy*

2. Definitions

A **student** is an unpaid person undertaking an approved course of study which requires workplace practical experience.

An **approved course of study** leads to a recognised qualification in the health and/or community sector.

3. Principles

[insert organisation name] is committed to providing an environment for students that is safe, conducive to learning, values the contribution of the student, and is in line with current strategic objectives and organisational priorities.

[insert organisation name] ensures that students on placement are provided with opportunities to undertake activities which provide them with relevant workplace training aligned with their current educational requirements.

Students on placement are not substitutes for paid staff members: they are supernumerary and will be adequately supported and supervised.

[insert organisation name] provides an equitable, safe and encouraging workplace environment.

4. Outcomes

Practice placements are consistent with the objectives of a student’s course as well as adding value to the work of the organisation.

Students on placement are supported to achieve their educational outcomes and will be provided with relevant workplace training and experience for their professional development.

[insert organisation name] maintains links with appropriate academic institutions and courses which reflect our organisation’s guiding principles.

5. Functions and Delegations

Position	Task/Delegation
Board of Directors	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Endorse <i>Practice Placement Policy</i>. • Ensure compliance with relevant legislation. • Be aware of practice placements and how the placement aligns with the organisation’s strategic plan.
Management	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Compliance with the Practice Placement Policy and relevant legislation. <p><u>CEO/Manager</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensure a <i>Practice Placement Agreement</i> with relevant Higher Education Providers is in place, monitored and reviewed • Ensure the placement educator is equipped to supervise the student by: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> (a) stating required core competencies (b) arranging appropriate training (if required) and adequate, ongoing support (c) defining expectations, including statement of their role and responsibilities (d) supporting the placement educator to allocate enough time for core work and practice placement responsibilities. • Ensure [insert organisation name] practice placement capacity is identified 6-12 months in advance <p><u>Line Manager</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensure the placement coordinator allocates enough time for core work and practice placement coordination responsibilities • Responsible for making final decisions in regard to the placement educator’s capacity for practice placements (e.g. number of students, hours of attendance, length of placement)

Placement Coordinator	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Obtain written evidence that the Education Provider has current insurance policies • Ensure practice placement information is available to prospective HEPs and students • Ensure all [insert organisation name] staff involved in the practice placement process are aware of, and abide by, the practice placement agreement • Ensure [insert organisation name] contributes to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> (a) evaluation of the practice placement (b) clarification of the placement facilitator's and placement educator's role expectations • Liaise with the Placement Educators to determine practice placement capacity 6-12 months in advance
Placement Educator	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Allocate time for practice placements at least 6-12 months in advance and, following approval from line manager, inform the Placement Coordinator of capacity • Day-to-day management of practice placement: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> (a) contribute to the learning agreement for each student (b) orientation, including emergency procedures (c) provide corrective feedback to the student if required and report such to the Education Provider (d) will not engage in counselling of students, but will refer such students to the Education Provider (e) enable student access to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ consumers ○ facilities and equipment, relevant policies, procedures and opportunities for practical experience ○ an appropriate and safe physical environment (f) provide consumer support by: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ obtaining consumer consent ○ ensuring that duty of care is balanced with dignity of risk (including the provision of clear expectations for ensure service delivery requirements are met).
All staff	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Identify possible placement activities • Liaise with the Placement Coordinator and Placement Educator • Support the supervision of practice placements when required i.e. in absence of the placement educator. • Participate in continuous quality improvement initiatives to review this policy and supporting documents • If applicable, be aware of, and abide by, the practice placement agreement
Student	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Comply with <i>Practice Placement Policy</i>, other [insert organisation name] policies and procedures, and relevant legislation • Agree to and sign a <i>Student Agreement</i> (Where the academic institution does not provide a document outlining the learning goals and outcomes, the organisation will provide a section in the <i>Student Agreement</i>) • Sign and adhere to the [insert organisation name] <i>Code of Conduct</i> • Understand and comply with policy and procedures of the Education Provider that relate to practice placement

6. Risk Management

Relevant screening checks, such as [*state which apply: referee checks, criminal record check, working with children check/declaration, immunisation*] will be carried out prior to commencement of the practice placement.

The higher education provider with which the student is studying will sign the *Practice Placement Agreement*, which has provisions for insurance and indemnity.

Students undertaking placements will be involved in activities that align with their learning goals.

A staff member with relevant supervision skills will supervise students.

Expectations of the placement from the student, education provider and **[insert organisation name]** will be made clear at the outset, as will the process by which the practice placement may cease.

7. Policy Implementation

This policy is developed in consultation with higher education providers, employees and consumers and is approved by the Board of Directors. All employees, and students on placement are responsible for understanding and adhering to this policy. Implementation issues may be raised when required at the Human Resources item of staff meetings.

8. Policy Detail

8.1 Practice Placement Agreement

Prior to accepting any students for practice placement, the higher education provider and **[insert organisation name]** will enter into a *Practice Placement Agreement* which specifies terms, conditions and areas of responsibility and engagement between them.

8.2 Legal Responsibilities

[insert organisation name] requires all staff and students on placement to contribute to a safe work environment, free from discrimination. All staff and students must comply with relevant legislation including:

- Age Discrimination Act 2004 (Commonwealth)
- Anti-Discrimination Act 1977 (NSW)
- Disability Discrimination Act 1992 (Commonwealth)
- Human Rights and Equal Opportunity Commission Act 1996 (Commonwealth)
- Racial Discrimination Act 1975 (Commonwealth)
- Sex Discrimination Act 1984 (Commonwealth)
- Work Health and Safety Act 2011 (NSW)

All students on placement must sign and adhere to the *Confidentiality Agreement* and the *Code of Conduct*.

Where incidents of discrimination are suspected or identified, the placement educator must notify the student's academic liaison person. The *Feedback and Complaints Policy* and related procedures must also be followed.

8.3 Role of Academic Liaison

Most academic institutions have a liaison person to provide a bridge between students and the organisation. **[insert organisation name]** will utilise this position to assist when necessary with a range of issues including:

- development of a clear learning agreement
- clarification of issues in relation to the evaluation, assessment and supervision of the student
- resolving difficulties that may occur during placement
- general problem solving on matters related to the student's placement.

8.4 Insurance

[insert organisation name] will choose academic institutions which provide insurance coverage for students on placement. In the case of negligence, this would be decided by a court of law.

Students will not be permitted to use their personal vehicle for **[insert organisation name]** activities, nor will they be permitted to drive a **[insert organisation name]** vehicle unless adequate insurance coverage is in place.

8.5 Remuneration

There is no remuneration for students on practice placement.

Reimbursement of personal expenses for practice placements will occur only if approved in writing by the placement educator in advance of expenditure. Travel expenses to and from the workplace and home are not reimbursable.

8.6 Informing students and higher education providers of placement opportunities

[insert organisation name] provides an overview of the organisation and potential practice placement activities to higher education providers and students.

8.7 Ascertaining practice placement capacity

The Placement Coordinator will:

- liaise with the Placement Educators to determine practice placement capacity 6-12 months in advance of placement opportunities
- make realistic commitments about the number and length of practice placements that can be offered at any one time and over the course of a calendar year.

There may be occasions on which [insert organisation name] is asked to provide a practice placement at short notice. The Placement Coordinator may approach the Placement Educator to ascertain capacity.

The Line Manager is responsible for making final decisions in regard to the placement educator's capacity for practice placements (e.g. number of students, hours of attendance, length of placement).

8.8 Applications for student entry to practice placement

[insert organisation name] will accept expressions of interest for practice placement from:

- Higher Education Providers on behalf of students
- students directly
- other approved entry pathways

8.9 Student Requirements

Potential practice placement candidates are required to provide [insert organisation name] with:

- evidence that all pre-placement conditions are fulfilled [*state which apply: referee checks, criminal record check, Working with Children check/declaration, immunisation*]
- contact details for the higher education provider's liaison person
- evidence of their capability (e.g. scope of practice from course coordinator)

- proof of identification
- an indication of how they envisage learning outcomes will be met
- name and contact details of two referees *if asked to do so*
- curriculum vitae *if asked to do so*.

8.10 Student Selection

The decision to accept a particular student for placement rests with **[insert organisation name]**.

[insert organisation name] may accept students from an educational institution providing there is sufficient evidence that all pre-placement conditions have been met. Where demand is greater than **[insert organisation name]**'s capacity to provide practice placements, and/or at **[insert organisation name]**'s discretion, further selection processes may apply. These include:

- review of curriculum vitae
- student interview with **[insert organisation name]** placement coordinator.
- reference checks.

The selection of a student is based on the student's potential to undertake tasks that are consistent with progressing the organisation's objectives, and at the same time provide relevant training for the student's course of study.

8.11 Orientation

All students must complete orientation at the beginning of the placement.

The placement coordinator will ensure:

- all relevant tasks are undertaken in accordance with the *Practice Placement Orientation Checklist*
- the *Confidentiality Agreement*, *Code of Conduct* and *Student Agreement* are signed during orientation (and a copy of each provided to the student)
- students are aware of all policies and procedures relevant to their placement
- suitable resources and equipment/office space is available for the student on commencement of placement
- student feedback is sought on the orientation process.

8.12 Student Documentation

Practice placement documentation will be filed in the appropriate student file on the secure human resources drive and/ or a locked and secure filing cabinet.

8.13 Placement educator

The placement educator is the primary contact for the student when on-site.

The placement educator ensures that:

- mechanisms are in place to enable tailored learning goals for the student
- discipline-specific and interprofessional learning opportunities are provided
- environmental adjustments are implemented as required
- student progress is monitored during placement and regular supervision is provided
- students on placement are encouraged and supported to be part of the team: this may include participation in staff meetings, events and training.

If unable to provide supervision (due to external meetings, sick or holiday leave, for example), the placement educator will ensure the student has adequate supervision from other staff. If this is unavailable the student will be informed as soon as possible and alternative arrangements will be made.

Other details of placement support should be noted in the *Student Agreement*.

8.14 Resolving Difficulties on Placement

If there are problems arising from a student's performance or behaviour on placement, these should be managed as specified in the *Student Agreement*.

[insert organisation name] will provide corrective feedback to students when needed, and report to the academic liaison person when appropriate.

Students experiencing personal issues will not be provided with counselling by **[insert organisation name]**, but will be referred to the academic liaison person who will arrange for pastoral care and counselling if required.

If the student is experiencing difficulties with the placement educator or any member of staff, s/he should inform the academic liaison person and follow the *Dispute Resolution Procedure*.

8.15 Variation or Cancellation of Placement

The placement may be altered or cancelled at any time by the student, higher education provider or **[insert organisation name]**.

[insert organisation name] will have a valid reason for altering or cancelling the placement.

(a) Variation of Placement

Any variation may be discussed between relevant parties, noted on the *Student Agreement*, with the variation signed by both parties. The student and placement educator will ascertain the need to inform the academic liaison.

(b) Termination of Placement

The placement will be terminated in the event that the student breaches the *Code of Conduct*, *Student Agreement*, or **[insert organisation name]** policies.

The placement educator will inform the student and academic liaison person as soon as possible if cancellation of the placement is to occur. A letter will be provided to inform of the reasons for cancellation of placement.

The student should inform the academic liaison person and the placement educator as soon as possible if they wish to cancel their placement.

If the academic liaison person initiates cancellation, they will inform the student and the placement educator. **[insert organisation name]** will confirm the cancellation of placement in writing with the academic liaison person.

The student may appeal a decision for the cessation of the agreement by notifying **[insert position]** in writing. The educational institution and **[insert organisation name]** will consider such an appeal; consideration will occur between the educational institution and **[insert organisation name]**. After further consideration, the final decision rests with **[insert organisation name]**.

Documentation regarding cancelation of placement by any party will be filed in the human resources drive and/or a locked and secure filing cabinet.

8.16 Completion of Placement

A final supervision session will be held between the placement educator and student.

The student should complete a *Practice Placement Evaluation Form*, which will be stored in the student file on the human resources drive and/or a locked and secure filing cabinet. This completed evaluation form will be provided to the **[relevant position]** or an alternative appointed staff member at the completion of the placement.

Any anecdotal or other feedback supplied from the student or academic liaison should be noted by the placement educator for evaluation. The completed evaluation forms will then be used to review the Practice Placement Policy documents and the practice placement program.

9 References

9.1 Internal

Code of Conduct
Feedback and Complaints Policy
Guidelines for Approaching Practice Placement
Practice Placement Capacity Considerations
Practice Placement Enquiry Form
Information for Education Providers
Practice Placement Agreement
Student Interview Questions
Practice Placement Orientation Checklist
Tips for Students (handout)
Student Agreement
Practice Placement Evaluation Form

9.2 External

Legislation

- Age Discrimination Act 2004 (Commonwealth)
- Anti-Discrimination Act 1977 (NSW)
- Disability Discrimination Act 1992 (Commonwealth)
- Human Rights and Equal Opportunity Commission Act 1996 (Commonwealth)
- Racial Discrimination Act 1975 (Commonwealth)
- Sex Discrimination Act 1984 (Commonwealth)
- Work Health and Safety Act 2011 (Commonwealth)

- Work Health and Safety Regulations (NSW – due 2012)

Resources

- NSW Health, 2006, Drug and Alcohol Clinical Supervision Guidelines, NSW Health, Sydney.
- NSW Industrial Relations website www.industrialrelations.nsw.gov.au
- Workcover NSW 2004, *The Community Services Safety Pack: A Guide to Occupational Health & Safety*, Workcover NSW, Gosford.
- Workcover Authority of NSW website www.workcover.nsw.gov.au
- New South Wales Association of Drug and Alcohol Agencies (NADA) 2010, Student Placement Policy and Procedures¹.
- MHCC 2013, Student Placement Policy and Student Placement Procedure. Policy Resource

9.3 Quality and Accreditation Standards

EQUIP4

Provided by the Australian Council on Healthcare Standards (ACHS)

Standard 2.2: Human resources management supports quality health care, a competent workforce and a satisfying working environment for staff.

Criterion 2.2.1: Human resources planning supports the organisation's current and future ability to address needs.

Criterion 2.2.2: The recruitment, selection and appointment system ensures that the skill mix and competence of staff, and mix of volunteers, meet the needs of the organisation.

Criterion 2.2.3: The continuing employment and performance development system ensures the skill and competence of staff and volunteers.

Criterion 2.2.4: The learning and development system ensures the skill and competence of staff and volunteers.

Criterion 2.2.5: Employee support systems and workplace relations assist the organisation to achieve its goals.

Health and Community Service Standards (6th edition)

¹ New South Wales Association of Drug and Alcohol Agencies NADA 2010. *Policy Toolkit*. viewed February 2013, <http://www.nada.org.au/resources/nadapublications/resourcestoolkits/nada-policy-toolkit/>

Provided by the Quality Improvement Council (QIC)

Standard 1.3: Human resources are managed to create an effective and competent service.

Evidence questions: What is the evidence that:

a) all staff are professionally qualified and experienced, able to work with consumers and willing to engage with CQI?

b) the organisation's structure and environment encourage staff responsibility, initiative and cooperative work practices?

c) administration and personnel systems operate efficiently to support the work of staff and the organisation's effective functioning?

d) orientation, support and development needs of staff are systematically identified and met in a way that supports the organisation's goal?

e) a system exists to remedy situations where staff have acted inappropriately, or provided poor or unacceptable services?