

## CISVic Student Unit Model

### Roles & Responsibilities of Participants



In consultation with RMIT, CISVic is adopting a student unit model of off-site supervision of social work students on placement in CISVic agencies. For our purposes, we will call this role the Field Educator role. This off-site supervisor is the social worker responsible for providing supervision to students when no on-site social worker is available at the agency. In this situation, the student has a task supervisor (non-social worker) on-site and an off-site social worker to provide supervision. This is to fulfill the *Australian Association of Social Workers (AASW)* requirements for field education.

CISVic has engaged Deborah Rosenberg, a social worker and educator with extensive experience in CISVic agencies. Deborah was an employee of SCAAB and is well-known within the community information & support sector, as well as the broader ER and community sectors.

## Roles & Responsibilities

### Field Educator (off-site social work supervisor)

Under this model, students will be provided with 7 individual supervision sessions, and 7 group supervision sessions throughout their placement. The Field Educator's role is to:

- Understanding of learning opportunities, knowledge, skills and other requirements of agency for completing placement activities.
- Understanding of expectations of student in consultation / liaison with Task Supervisor/s
- Provision of regular formal supervision sessions and intermittent / informal individual communication as required by student
- Participation with student and Task Supervisor/s in Mid Placement Review
- Overall carriage and responsibility for report & assessments are required by the AASW.
- Availability to attend Field Education Progress Panel if necessary.

### The Task Supervisor

Task supervisors will be the first port of call for students, providing them with tasks and daily supervision and contact in their role as caseworkers. The Task Supervisor's role is to:

- Orient the student to the agency and its operations.
- In conjunction with the student and Field Educator, identify appropriate tasks and learning opportunities within the agency.
- Contribute to the student's understanding of the practice issues and methods of the agency.
- Oversee the activity of the student on a day-to-day basis.
- Participate in liaison meetings with the student and Field Educator, contributing practice experience and knowledge of the agency's operations and the student's progress.
- In conjunction with the student and Field Educator, assist in the formulation of various evaluation reports.
- Inform the Field Educator if the student is to be absent or unable to participate in scheduled supervision due to illness or other emergency.

## The Student

- Development of learning needs and objectives, within the framework of School and field expectations.
- Willingness to participate actively in the placement allocation process.
- Willingness to work within the School's and agencies' field education requirements.
- Ability to make appropriate choices about and within placement on the basis of their learning interests and needs.
- Accountability to the placement agency, including keeping the agency informed of movements related to the placement and observing normal courtesies, such as notifying the agency of sickness or inability to keep an appointment.
- Ensuring that all practical requirements (travel costs, desk space, etc) are negotiated prior to placement.
- As a representative of the agency, respect its norms of punctuality, dress and so on.
- Willingness to pursue relevant theoretical material to complement placement experiences.
- Willingness to engage in self-evaluation and receive constructive feedback.
- Availability to attend liaison sessions, informal negotiation session, integrative seminars and the Field Education Progress Panel.

## University Liaison Person

Overall, the liaison person is responsible for:

- *Educational consultation* ( as a point of contact for information and support to student, Task Supervisor, and field educator to maximise learning throughout the placement)
- *Monitoring and evaluation of student performance* ( review of learning plan and mid placement report)
- *Mediation and problem solving* (respond to any difficulties which arise during the placement)

Their primary responsibility is to ensure that the student is meeting the school's educational objectives and requirements. The liaison person is the first point of contact for students and agency/Field Educators for information, queries, concerns, etc.

A liaison person may also provide the off-site supervision. In this instance, the Field Education Co-ordinator or another member of the RMIT field education staff can be called in as an outside party to facilitate problem solving should the need arise, or should any of the parties request this.

If the liaison person is also providing off-site supervision, it is possible that there will be additional meetings, particularly in the initial phase of the placement, and that they will be more actively involved in developing the final assessment report.

## General Steps in Resolving Difficulties

If a Task Supervisor or Field Educator feels there are problems arising from the student's performance or behaviour on placement, or if students encounter difficulties on placement which they consider are affecting their learning and/or performance, they should be discussed in the first instance with the person concerned.

Students on placement are not only learning about direct client service delivery, they are learning about working in a community based, volunteer organisation. Although students are not volunteers, they are still subject to the same rights and obligations the volunteers have whilst working in your agency. Applying your policies and processes in dealing with students is recommended.

Students should be aware of existing workplace policies and processes, and particularly should understand any complaints or grievance processes in your agency. The supervisory process also contains a managerial and administrative function. Either Task Supervisor and/or agency manager should help the student gain access to information and resources, and ensures their understanding and use of correct procedures within the agency.

It is the Task Supervisor and Field Educator's responsibility to ensure that the student's learning process is consistent with the philosophy of the agency. The field education process must not infringe upon the rights of service users and staff of the organisation.

Duty of care to the service user is the guiding principle for all parties and takes precedence over the provision of learning opportunities for a student.

Here are some simple steps that you could use to guide students in how to deal with conflict:

Express your view of the conflict and feelings about it and at the same time invite the other person to do the same.

Step 1 - Jointly define the conflict.

Step 2 - Communicate positions and feelings.

Step 3 - Communicate co-operative intentions.

Step 4 - Take the other's perspectives.

Step 5 - Communicate motivation to negotiate in good faith.

Step 6 - Reach an agreement (Johnson & Johnson, 1987).

If, after applying some simple steps, the problem persists, or if the issue cannot be resolved, then the liaison person should be consulted. As far as possible, the resolution of difficulties will be attempted through a three-way discussion between Task Supervisor and/or Field Educator, liaison person and student.

For common examples of difficulties on placement, please refer to pp.46-49 of the *RMIT BSW Field Education Manual 2012* or pp.50-53 of the *VU Social Work Field Manual 2012*.

Generally, disputes or difficulties should be dealt within the agency in the first instance, applying existing policies and processes in a fair and supportive environment. Where problems remain unresolved, the Liaison Officer should be notified and the matter dealt with between all parties.

## Reporting & Assessment

Under this model, the Field Educator has overall carriage and responsibility with Report writing and assessment. However, as an off-site supervisor, there are aspects of the student's learning that the Field Educator cannot oversee – such as the day to day observation or supervision of the student. The table below provides a rough demarcation, and is meant as a guide for Task Supervisor and Field Educator in meeting the learning objective requirements and assessments of students. We understand that there may be overlaps between the Learning Areas, and students, Task Supervisors and Field Educator are strongly advised to collaborate closely in establishing tasks and methods of assessment. Ultimately, it will be the Field Educator who will be responsible for the submission of reports.

This is a working document that can morph and change over the placement period.

The minimum requirement for the Learning Plan is identification of at least one objective in each learning area.

### Task Supervisor & Student

- Identifies tasks & methods of assessment
- Task Supervisor provides comments & collaborates with Field Educator during mid-placement and final reports

Learning Area	Learning Objectives	Examples of tasks & method of assessment
Learning Area 2	<b>Organisational context:</b> <i>An understanding of the organisational, legal and political contexts of human services processes.</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Eco-map of the agency &amp; its context</li> <li>• Attend and report on ER or other network meetings</li> <li>• Set up resources folder of relevant referral agencies</li> </ul>
Learning Area 4	<b>Processes, skills and relationships:</b> <i>An ability to form constructive relationships with individuals, groups and communities including user groups, colleagues, professionals and people in other significant roles / positions.</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Case presentation</li> <li>• Observe an interview with a client</li> <li>• Record minutes at team meeting</li> <li>• Clear, comprehensible case notes</li> </ul>
Learning Area 6	<b>Research:</b> <i>Recognition of research as an integral part of social work practice; demonstrating knowledge and understanding of all types and stages of social research.</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Present information on a relevant practice topic at an in-service to staff</li> <li>• Locate literature relevant to a practice problem</li> <li>• Designing or analysing client feedback surveys</li> </ul>
Learning Area 7	<b>Social policy:</b> <i>An understanding of the legislative and social policies which influence the different fields of practice including knowledge of relevant legislative and policy frameworks.</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Attend and report on caseworkers network meetings</li> <li>• Attend and report on CISVic and/or ER regional network meetings</li> <li>• Maintain your agency's social media or website</li> </ul>

## Field Educator & Student

- Identifies tasks & methods of assessment
- Task Supervisor provides comments & collaborates with Field Educator during mid-placement and final reports

Learning Area	Learning Objectives	Example of tasks & method of assessment
Learning Area 1	<p><b>Values, ethics and professional practice:</b>  <i>Awareness of contextually relevant ethics and practice standards in accordance with the AASW Code of Ethics and Standards of Practice</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Identify and discussing ethical dilemma in casework through journal writing, case presentation or discussion in group supervision</li> <li>• Documenting client interactions, processing and filing</li> <li>• Observe student behaviour towards clients, staff and other workers</li> </ul>
Learning Area 3	<p><b>Use of knowledge in practice:</b>  <i>An understanding of theories and methodologies relevant to practice and ability to reflect critically upon their use and application.</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Presentation of case study at group supervision</li> <li>• Discussions with Field Educator about client processes &amp; practice</li> <li>• Debriefing with task supervisor</li> </ul>
Learning Area 5	<p><b>Self learning and professional development:</b>  <i>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.</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Attending training and/or workshops</li> <li>• Keep a journal that draws themes from casework practice</li> <li>• Create digital story for uploading on the Peer Support Forum</li> </ul>
Learning Area 7	<p><b>Social policy:</b>  <i>An understanding of the legislative and social policies which influence the different fields of practice including knowledge of relevant legislative and policy frameworks.</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Participate in group supervision</li> <li>• Debrief with Field Educator during individual supervision</li> </ul>