

Fact sheet for Master of Counselling program

Community partnerships - Field Education (Placement) Program

Placement Requirements

- Year-long placement completed over 2 consecutive semesters (students enrol in COUN7020A and COUN7020B).
- Minimum 182 hours attendance, typically 2 days per week, 7 hours per day for 13 weeks each semester (364 hours over the year).
- Minimum 60 client contact hours over the year.
- Minimum 15 hours of formal supervision over the year, ie 1 hour of supervision for every 4 hours client contact.
- Start/finish: usually late February - October/November corresponding with the university semester dates (students can negotiate an early start date with an agency from late January, in liaison with the Master of Counselling Placement Officer and Program Director).
- Students can negotiate with agencies to observe UQ's mid-year break (2-7 weeks in June/July) or continue placement over the break.
- Completion of a small research project in Semester 2 (to be negotiated with the agency).

Agency Requirements

- Students are to be supervised by a practitioner with an appropriate degree in the behavioural/social sciences or related areas with preference towards Counselling, Social Work or Psychology, and, in addition (for non-counselling degrees) experience in counselling and/or a counselling qualification. External supervision may be offered by UQ if necessary.
- Field Placement Supervisors are required to provide regular, preferably weekly, supervision either individually or in small groups in addition to the less formal support, supervision and day-to-day debriefing that generally occurs for students on a counselling placement.
- Field Placement Supervisors need to be able to provide learning opportunities to develop knowledge, skills and self-development relevant to counselling. Field Placement Supervisors are required to complete, normally in collaboration with the student, evaluation forms commenting on competencies and approach to counselling. These evaluations are part of the student's portfolio and are required to be signed by the supervisor/s and given to the student to meet the learning requirements dates of the MoC program.
- All new supervisors in placement agencies are required to submit a CV detailing qualifications and experience. Supervisors are approved by the Director of the Master of Counselling Program considering qualifications, experience, professional membership, evidence of a commitment to continuing professional development and professional education, and interest in developing counselling knowledge and skills.

Student Activities on Placement

Students are required to undertake a number of tasks as outlined in the UQ Master of Counselling Field Education Manual located on the UQ School of Nursing, Midwifery & Social Work Field Education website. Examples of activities (adapted from the PACFA Training Standards, 2014) include:

Client contact: real life person-to-person contact with the client

A client may be an individual, a couple, a family or a group. Clients must have no pre-existing, personal or professional relationship with the counsellor. Client contact involves a range of experiences of the trainee working directly with clients where there are no dual relationships between the client and trainee:

- One to One; Couples; Family or Group counselling.
- Co-therapy (as an active participant, up to a maximum of 50 hours).
- Facilitation of client group workshops.
- Crisis response/follow-up.
- Psychological first aid.
- Informal counselling/support.
- Supervising clients whilst they perform a task.
- Supervising child contact.
- Home visits/outreach.
- Assessments.

Note that the following forms of 'remote' counselling can only count towards hours after an initial 40 hours of direct face to face client contact has been achieved:

- Telephone counselling; skype counselling; online counselling; email counselling

Clinical Supervision: activities that directly support client work

The process of clinical supervision is an opportunity for supervisees to present relevant material regarding their clinical practice via case discussion, recordings of client sessions, role plays etc, allowing a space for reflective review by the supervisee and feedback by the supervisor. Examples include:

- One to one supervision.
- Group supervision (up to 12 members for the first 20 hours whilst in training, then up to 6 members).
- Observation of counselling.
- Formal case presentation.
- De-briefing about client issues.
- Case consultation/formulation/discussion.
- Case presentation at UQ workshops/courses.
- Role plays, practice sessions.

Note that **peer** supervision does not count unless practitioners have at least 5 years clinical experience.

Non-Contact Time

Students may be involved with any organisational activities that might be undertaken by a counsellor/worker employed by the agency. Examples include:

- Case notes, write-ups, reports etc.
- Preparation for group workshops, presentations etc.
- Research related to client issues or for agency purposes.
- Sending client feedback forms, arranging client referrals etc.
- Filing/creating resources, brochures, handouts, forms, manuals, booklets etc.
- Budgeting, data reporting, writing minutes/agenda for counselling meetings etc.
- Self-care, professional development, team building, performance review etc.
- Network meetings, Steering committees etc.
- Fire exercise/training/OH&S.

Benefits to Agencies/Supervisors

- Access to high-level students who have been carefully matched to the agency to ensure a 'good fit' of skills and interests.
- Students can bring new ideas and become an additional resource for agencies. For example, students contribute to the work of the agency in meaningful ways by building a client case-load (as appropriate) and undertaking a research project across the year which may generate useful knowledge to inform practice.
- Opportunity for supervisors to develop students' skills and support the work of the profession. Our supervisors generally enjoy being able to 'give back' by shaping students, who begin with a formalised, theoretical knowledge, into practitioners who can meet the 'real' lived needs of clients.
- Opportunity to gain Professional Development Points.
- Placements support future recruitment of staff. Many of our students have been offered, and accepted, employment with their placement agency at the end of their placement.

Other Information

The Master of Counselling program is accredited with the Psychotherapy & Counselling Federation of Australia (PACFA) and the Australian Counselling Association (ACA) accreditation standards. The UQ, MoC Field Education program is set up in accordance with PACFA and ACA accreditation standards.

Students can only conduct research or data gathering when they have developed an appropriate ethics protocol and have approval from the relevant ethics committee/authority as set out in the host organisation's policy manual.

Contacts and further information

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