

## Policy paper

# Rural, overseas, interstate and remote placements in the School of Nursing, Midwifery and Social Work

## 1. The Purpose of the Policy

The purpose of the policy is to clarify for students and prospective field educators the criteria and the accepted process for making an application to the Field Education Unit in the School of Nursing, Midwifery and Social Work at UQ to obtain a rural, overseas, interstate or remote placement.

## 2. Guiding Principles

- To promote social fairness for all students and to reduce barriers and expand choice and potential for all students.
- To safeguard where possible against students being sent to inappropriate placements where there is inadequate professional supervision, support and safety measures provided.
- To provide placements where there is clear potential for students to be able to gain a positive learning experience, even though placement living conditions may be quite challenging.
- To ensure that students and field educators are adequately prepared for the placement, with practical and culturally appropriate knowledge provided prior to the placement so that both parties can make an informed decision regarding the placement.
- To provide relevant information to field educators about the requirements of the placement.
- To provide background information to the students being referred for a potential placement.
- Resources available in the School's Field Education Unit are limited and the Field Education Unit Manager may reserve the right to not offer a specific rural, overseas, interstate and remote placement if the Unit is unable to provide the resources required to adhere to the above principles.

## 3. Consultation on the Policy

The Field Education Unit wishes to involve participating parties to this policy in a process of consultation, and therefore this policy may be subject to alteration, if a written submission is made to the Field Education Manager to suggest changes by participating parties to the policy. The written submission at the discretion of the Field Education Manager may go to the Teaching and Learning Committee for consultation within the School and student representatives and to the School Council for ratification.

## 4. Current Policy and Process

A student may enquire about a rural, overseas, interstate and remote placement for their final placement only.

- A Bachelor of Social Work student is required to have a GPA of 5.0 for their social work program, referring to SWSP/POLY codes 2000 and 3000.
- A Bachelor of Human Services student or dual degree Bachelor of Arts/Bachelor of Human Services student is required to have an average overall GPA of 5.0 for all courses taken in the Bachelor of Human Services program.

- A Master of Social Work Studies student is required to have an average overall GPA of 5.0 for all courses undertaken in the Masters Program.

The student is responsible for their own visa application and travel arrangements to the placement.

Where possible the Field Education Unit will make enquiries to secure appropriate accommodation for the student while on a rural, overseas, interstate and remote placement. Costs for the accommodation will normally be met by the student.

The Field Education Unit is not obliged to provide financial support in any way for the placement. The financial responsibility for the placement remains with the prospective student.

The Field Education Unit is responsible for assessing the viability of the placement in question.

The policy only applies to final year placements where the first placement has been provided within the School of Nursing, Midwifery and Social Work at the University of Queensland.

The decision to accept a student for a rural, overseas, interstate and remote placement rests with the Field Education Manager or a Field Education Coordinator and is based on the following selection criteria:

- Ability to articulate current framework for practice.
- Demonstrated aptitude for independent learning.
- Interest in exploring and engaging constructively with other cultural perspectives, taking into account the placement setting.
- Identified coping strategies for a challenging environment.
- Sound academic performance.
- No significant issues on first placement.

The selection criteria mentioned above will be addressed with the student at an interview with the Field Education Unit (comprising two either field education personnel or including an academic staff person).

As part of the selection process a student is required to submit to the Field Education Unit in the semester prior to the placement (at least 3 months prior to placement starting), a written document for an interview which includes the following points:

- Your current practice framework and its relationship with your interest in a specific placement experience.
- Your ability to demonstrate and engage constructively with other cultural perspectives and your background to this (from study or experience).
- Your understanding of international or indigenous issues, relevant to the proposal, and how inclusion in this program will build on this.
- Your rationale for inclusion in the program and your preparedness for rural/remote/interstate or international placement.
- What you anticipate you will learn from the experience of studying and doing a rural/remote/interstate or international placement.
- How rural/remote/interstate or international placement would contribute to your long-term goals.

#### 4.1 For Bachelor of Human Services and dual degree Bachelor of Human Services / Bachelor of Arts students

Ordinarily HSER3000 requires students to complete 200 hours of placement (or 30 full days) in a work placement setting, organised by the Field Education Unit. This equates to 3 days per week on placement over 10 weeks in semester 2, each year.

In order to undertake a rural/remote/interstate or international placement, preference will be given to those students who apply under this policy and agree to volunteer their time to complete additional hours in placement organisation where deemed important to do so by the individual agency in conjunction with the Field Education Unit, in order to adjust to a range of additional challenges that may face students in such a placement. This can include challenges of being in a remote setting, adjusting to a new cultural environment and any language and cultural barriers that may arise, additional travel time whilst on placement to visit remote or difficult to access communities, etc. Page 3 of 3 Formulated: 05/10 Revised: 03/13

It is envisaged that in most circumstances, students would need to allow a total of 8–10 weeks for placement in a work placement setting, on a full-time basis, which would require the students to volunteer an additional 10–20 days of their time for the placement. A student's readiness to volunteer their time in order to complete additional placement days, should be addressed in the written document (detailed above) and will be further discussed with the student during their interview with the Field Education Unit.

Students interested in completing a final placement for HSER3000 under this policy (ie in a rural/remote/interstate or international setting, are advised to make an appointment with the Program Director for the Bachelor of Human Services, at the successful completion of their first placement under course code HSER2001. This is to discuss individual progression in the degree and to ensure that students enrol in suitable courses and electives in the semesters preceding the final placement in HSER3000, to ensure eligibility to graduate on time.

A decision from the Field Education Unit regarding the student's application will be provided in writing to the student with reasons for the decision, if possible, no later than three months prior to when the placement is due to commence.



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