



## Master of Counselling Student Placements Fact Sheet | 2022

Thank you for considering hosting a UQ Master of Counselling placement student at your service or agency. The placement is a crucial experience to bridge the gap between academic learning and the real-life application that prepares students for the realities of being qualified counsellors in the field. Our placement partners and supervisors hold a critical role in the education and preparation of the next generation of professionals in the field. As the program is accredited with the Psychotherapy & Counselling Federation of Australia (PACFA) and the Australian Counselling Association (ACA), we aim to deliver training and placement experiences that prepare students for a high standard of practice.

This fact sheet is designed to give you some key information on student placements in the counselling program. If you would like more information, or to express interest in hosting a student, please contact the placement team listed on page 2.

### What do UQ Master of Counselling students study?

Counselling students in the Masters program complete their placement in their final year of the program. In order for students to be able to come onto placement, they have completed learning and assessment in:

- Basic and advanced interpersonal skills and therapeutic processes (assessed through live competency assessments)
- Major theories and modalities of psychotherapy
- Ethics and professional practice for counsellors
- Counselling in the context of mental health, grief and loss, and working with children, young people and families.

### What do students need to do on placement?

- Students complete their placement across two consecutive semesters. This effectively means that the student is in your agency through most of a calendar year (most commonly from February-October, though earlier starts can be arranged).
- Over the year, they need to complete a minimum of 364 hours of attendance at placement (182 hours per semester). This typically equates to two 7-hour days per week, over a total of 26 weeks. Within those overall hours, they need to complete a minimum of:
  - 60 direct client-contact hours
  - 15 hours of formal supervision (i.e. approximately one hour of supervision for every four hours client contact)
  - *See page 3 for examples of activities that constitute these hours*
- Students can negotiate with agencies to observe UQ's mid-year break (2-7 weeks in June/July) or continue placement over the break.
- Students also receive ongoing learning activities through their enrolment in their placement course (COUN7021). This course gives students information on key professional practice processes like counsellor development, reflective practice and supervision, self-care, and putting theory into practice. Students also participate in small tutorial groups to enhance peer support and reflection on practice (e.g. case presentations and discussions).



## What is required of the placement setting?

- **Provision of an appropriately qualified supervisor.** Students are to be supervised by a practitioner with an appropriate degree in the applied social or behavioural sciences (preferably counselling, psychotherapy, social work or psychology), and experience in counselling.
  - If you are interested in taking a student, but are unsure whether you meet the supervisor guideline, please feel free to be in contact. External supervision may be offered by UQ if necessary.
- **Support and direction for the student.** 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.
- **Opportunities for learning, feedback and assessment.** 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 student's achievement of their required hours and their professional practice competencies.

## What are the benefits to agencies and supervisors?

- **Student contribution to service provision.** Students can bring new ideas and become an additional resource for agencies. In particular, students contribute to the work of the agency in meaningful ways by building a client caseload (as appropriate). Students can often bring ideas or research from their recent studies to inform the service provision of the agency.
- **Opportunity to contribute to 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. The training provided on placement will form the foundation of their practice throughout their careers. Most students reflect on this as the most important part of their program.
- **Development of the supervisor.** Opportunity for the supervisor to continue to expand their experience in supervision and development of other professionals, through supporting an early-career counsellor in their development.
- **Potential future recruitment of staff.** Many of our students have been offered, and accepted, employment with their placement agency at the end of their placement.
- **Develop relationship with a major tertiary education body.** The Master of Counselling program greatly values the relationship we have with our placement agencies and always welcomes opportunities to explore ways we can work together to support your valuable work in the field (e.g. research; professional development; etc.)

## Where can I go for further information or to express interest in hosting a student placement?

- Further information: [Counselling Placement Website](#)
- UQ Master of Counselling Placements Officer: Naomi Hansar  
E: [n.hansar@uq.edu.au](mailto:n.hansar@uq.edu.au)  
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## Student Activities on Placement

The following list provides some examples of the types of activities that students can do to meet the various placement requirements.

<b>Placement Requirements</b>	<b>Possible Activities</b>
<p><b>Client Contact: real life person-to-person contact with the client (60 hours)</b> A client may be an individual, a couple, a family or a group. 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</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Direct counselling – Individuals, couples, family or group counselling</li> <li>• Co-therapy (if the student is an active participant in the counselling, i.e. not just an observer)</li> <li>• Facilitation of client group workshops</li> <li>• Crisis response/follow-up</li> <li>• Psychological first aid</li> <li>• Informal counselling/support</li> <li>• Supervising clients whilst they perform a task</li> <li>• Supervising child contact</li> <li>• Home visits/outreach</li> <li>• Intakes and assessments</li> </ul> <p>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:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Telephone counselling; skype counselling; online counselling; email counselling</li> </ul>
<p><b>Clinical Supervision: activities that directly support client work (15 hrs)</b> Opportunities 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.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• One to one supervision</li> <li>• Group supervision (up to 12 members for the first 20 hours whilst in training, then up to 6 members)</li> <li>• Observation of counselling</li> <li>• Formal case presentation</li> <li>• De-briefing about client issues</li> <li>• Case consultation/formulation/discussion</li> <li>• Role plays, practice sessions</li> </ul> <p>Note that <b>peer</b> supervision does not count unless practitioners have at least 5 years clinical experience.</p>
<p><b>Non-Contact Time</b> Students may be involved with any organisational activities that might be undertaken by a counsellor/worker employed by the agency.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Case notes, write-ups, reports etc</li> <li>• Preparation for group workshops, presentations etc</li> <li>• Research related to client issues or for agency purposes</li> <li>• Sending client feedback forms, arranging client referrals etc</li> <li>• Filing/creating resources, brochures, handouts, forms, manuals, booklets etc</li> <li>• Attending meetings and other agency requirements</li> <li>• Self-care, professional development, team building, performance review etc</li> <li>• Network meetings, Steering committees etc</li> <li>• Fire exercise/training/OH&amp;S</li> </ul>