Guidelines for assessing recognition of prior learning for first social work placement

Background

The School of Nursing, Midwifery & Social Work recognises that some social work students bring with them substantial experience in the human services sector. Students can apply for credit or exemption on the basis of recognised prior learning (RPL). These guidelines set out the criteria against which these applications will be assessed.

Applications are assessed with regard to the AASW Accreditation guidelines and UQ's Recognition of Prior Learning policy.

UQ allow for recognition of prior work experience as credit towards specified courses, ie SWSP3155 or SWSP7155.

According to the AASW guidelines, assessment of credit for prior learning involves consideration of:

• Credit for the first field education placement or part thereof, may be possible on the basis of recognition of prior work experience or the successful completion of field education placements completed prior to entry into the social work program Only placements of equivalent Australian Qualifications Framework (AQF) level will be considered.

• Performance outcomes for first placement based on the AASW Practice Standards and Code of Ethics must be used to assess students for RPL.

• In accordance with the policies in this document credit applications for the first field education placement or part thereof that are made on the basis of prior work experience (not previous field education placements as part of another degree), will take account of:

  – The currency of the work experience (minimum 5FTE in last 10 years).

  – The length of practice (a minimum of three years full time practice in a relevant context, and at least the final year of the student's work experience must be within three years of applying for RPL).

  – Use of social work practice skills such as assessment and counselling.

  – Familiarity and use of a range of methods such as case work and community work.

  – Verification of student's claims by a qualified social worker who can attest to its accuracy

• Recognition of Prior learning for field education must be thoroughly assessed.

- In order to be granted RPL for field education, the student must provide evidence that they have met the standards and performance outcomes for the first placement. This should include for example, job descriptions accompanied by referee reports; skills assessment and critical reflection on placement or work experience.

Courses

This policy relates to SWSP3155 Field Placement 1 (#6) in the Bachelor of Social Work and SWSP7155 Field Placement 1 (#6) in the Master of Social Work Studies programs. The AASW accreditation standards specifically rule out credit for the final placement.

Amount of placement that can be credited

Depending on the level of competence demonstrated in prior work experience, the school may credit all of the first placement, or part of the placement. If partial credit is granted, students will be required to complete 280 hours of placement over a ten-week period (4 days per week) or a variation on this providing that placement is no less than 3 days per week.

Criteria for RPL

In order to meet university and professional obligations, a number of criteria have been set in assessing a student's RPL application. The minimum criteria are:

- 5 years full time (equivalent) general work experience over the past 10 years; INCLUDING

- 3 years full time (equivalent) practice experience in a field directly relevant to social work, using social work practice skills, of which the last year must be within three years of applying; PLUS

- A current curriculum vitae which details the student's past work experience in relation to the points above; PLUS

- An RPL portfolio which demonstrates achievement of the first social work placement learning objectives; PLUS

- Completion of an Assessment of Competencies for RPL form by a person who has acted as a work supervisor in relation to the relevant social work practice experience; PLUS

- Completion of the Application for Recognition of Prior Learning for First Social Work Placement form, demonstrating the above.

In order to be eligible for **partial credit** for first placement, the Assessment of Competencies for RPL must evidence satisfactory progress in no less than three out of the six listed competencies and associated criteria.

In order to be eligible for **full credit** for first placement, the Assessment of Competencies for RPL must evidence satisfactory progress in no less **than five out of the six listed competencies** and associated criteria.

Applying for RPL

The student submits a **<u>Credit or Exemption Request Form</u>** through my.UQ > My requests and attaches the RPL Portfolio as evidence.

Applications will be assigned to the School of Nursing, Midwifery and Social Work for assessment. Applications will be assessed jointly by the Program Director of the relevant program and the Manager of the Practice Education Team (PET). In cases where information is not clear or further information is required the student may be required to attend an interview with the Program Director and the Manager of the Practice Education Team.

The application must be submitted a minimum of **three months** prior to placement starting and must be noted on the student's pre-placement information form. This is to assist in the School's placement planning process.

Format for the RPL Portfolio

The RPL Portfolio should contain:

Six statements (300-400 words each) evidencing achievement of the following first placement learning objectives:

1. Understanding of the purpose and role of social work in society;

2. Understanding of and competence in the organisational aspects of social work practice;

3. Capacity to form and maintain purposeful and ethical professional relationships;

4. Competence in assessment and planning, drawing on professional knowledge;

5. Skills in planned intervention with individuals, groups or communities;

6. Commitment to ongoing professional learning and capacity to adjust practice in response to feedback.

Each statement should include:

1. Examples from the student's practice experience which evidence the level of competence; PLUS

2. A critical reflection on the practice experience with links made to the AASW Social Work Practice Standards and Code of Ethics; PLUS

3. Priorities for future learning.

Application Checklist for Recognition of Prior Learning for first social work placement

Name: ....

Student Number: ....

Program: ....

Please indicate your agreement with the statements below by ticking the box.

I have…

☐ A minimum of 5 years full time (equivalent) general work experience over the past 10 years; INCLUDING

☐ A minimum of 3 years full time (equivalent) practice experience in a field directly relevant to social work, using equivalent social work practice skills; PLUS

☐ Attached a current curriculum vitae which details my past work experience and explains the equivalent social work skills and methods used; PLUS

☐ Attached an RPL portfolio which demonstrates achievement of social work competencies equivalent to those expected at the completion of the first placement; PLUS

☐ Attached an Assessment of Competencies for RPL form completed and signed by a person who has been in a work supervision capacity with me

Signature: ....

Name: ....

Date: ....

This checklist, and the RPL portfolio, must be submitted with the online application for RPL via my.UQ
no later than three months prior to the start of your first placement