

Social Work Students on Placement: Opportunities and Survival Strategies

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Overview

- How a student can benefit your organisation
- Opportunities
- Survival strategies



The benefits of student placements

- Professional development of staff
- Completion of agency work
- Recruitment strategy
- Workforce development



Professional development of staff

A newly energetic and excited student within a team can kind of energise the team, and invite people to look at things a bit differently. There's nothing like a student who's observing somebody practising, and asking why you doing that, and why you doing it that way? (Sam)

I don't see how you can lose from a good placement... it should be a part of professional development for organisations and staff because I believe it will always add value...I think it's something that is really inspirational to people working within the field when they have new people come in and see how things are done. I think practice should always be challenged ... (Imogen)



Completion of agency work

*Also gives you an extra pair of hands...it's still an extra body on the floor .
(Imogen)*

*Another pair of eyes and ears in meetings and assessments. (Field
Educator)*

*They contribute towards the contract in terms of completing work that some
other staff don't have the time to do. They are useful in a support role for
the organisation. (Field Educator)*

Recruitment

It gives us not only an opportunity to find someone who would be a great fit for the organisation, but it also gives the opportunity for the student to find out if this is the type of work that's for them. (Anyia)



Workforce Development

The other longer term bigger picture advantage is just in terms of supporting the workforce development in the sector. (Sam)

...it's also about our commitment as members of ANZASW and supporting and growing social workers within the social service environment. (Elizabeth)

I'd like to think that we have a bigger picture and vision which is around the wider sector of social work you know so I think it's good for us to be supporting the development of social workers in the future. (Don)



Opportunities

- At Massey: 50 hours of voluntary work by 2nd year BSW students
- At Massey and other tertiary institutions: usually a 60 day supervised practice placement. Either Bachelors or Masters students – wide range of students.



What can students do?

- Direct client work
- Case notes
- Policy and funding work
- Group facilitation
- Administration
- Scoping work
- Projects

Survival strategies

Support at every stage of the placement

Training

Massey University: Field Education handbook, resource book and online resources.

Mid-placement review visit and other visits as needed

It keeps me on my toes. I have to keep up my practice because these buggers will challenge you, they will want to know and if they're any good they're going to ask you the hard questions and they're going to keep pushing you. So it keeps me alive you know? And it keeps me engaged in my social work practice, keeps me current (Sam)



Any questions?

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