

CARRICK INSTITUTE : DISCIPLINE BASED INITIATIVES



Work Integrated Learning : A national framework for initiatives to support best practice

Griffith University – School of Human Services



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Vignette title and details	Field Placements in Human Services - undergraduate and postgraduate (Placements from 5 weeks – 18 weeks) Semester-long placements aimed at examining the theory and practice of human service organisations and the provision of human services. It focuses on the political, social, cultural and economic aspects of human service delivery. The course provides professional education and practical instruction in a range of areas - child and family Studies, community development, community and family studies; rehabilitation counselling; disability studies; studies in ageing, education, social work, crime and justice, law and government, youth justice.
Discipline	Human Services and Social Work
Employment sector	Employment is across multiple areas in the government and non-government sector Human Services, Education, Health, Corrective Services, Rehabilitation Counselling
Student numbers	300 plus students per year
Optional/compulsory	Field Education is a compulsory component of the degree programs.
Credit bearing	Courses range from 10 – 30 credit points
Assessment	Learning Plan with objectives and weekly evaluations, Project Report
Payment	There is no payment attached to our programs for anyone – students or supervisor
Number of staff involved	2 academic staff and 1 administrator manage the program, All fulltime academic staff visit the students in the field. 20 visiting academic staff 150 workplace mentors

Weblink	http://www.griffith.edu.au/school/hsv/
Key Words	Human Services; Social Work; field placement; compulsory; assessment

Overview

The program has a strong commitment to the principles of empowerment and social justice, and to providing a learning community based on equity, tolerance and shared learning. These principles are reflected in the school's key learning objectives, which are to produce human service practitioners who can:

- Employ an ethical approach to practice, valuing the rights, needs and uniqueness of individuals, groups and communities
- Effectively employ a variety of interventions and approaches to human service delivery
- Work effectively within a broad range of organisational settings
- Critically articulate their social analysis and practice frameworks
- Respond to the challenges of working in a rapidly changing industry
- Understand and appreciate the importance of research to inform and improve human service practice
- Effectively engage in the process of reflective practice and have a commitment to on-going professional development

Structure of program

The range of human services is so diverse and we have to cater for a wide range of professional knowledge and practices. Some of our sectors require specific competencies/ knowledge and practice to be accredited with certain legislative or professional bodies

Special features

Each year we have a Field Supervisors' Forum. Everyone is invited but it is not compulsory. We tried to provide speakers that are of interest. It is our way of saying thank you – by providing a form of professional development. It is also a chance to keep the lines of communication open and for all our supervisors to understand the diversity of the sectors in which field education occurs

Future work

Learning to deal with confronting experiences:

Students undertaking field placements in human service organisations often encounter experiences that are confronting for novices, yet comprise routine aspects of human service work. Students often refer to being ill-prepared for the challenges they experience in their field placements. The field education unit is developing and trialling strategies to guide students' learning in order to be prepared for, respond appropriately to and maximise the professional learning from these experiences. This project seeks to engage students in an honest appraisal of the professional issues and assist them to develop personal strategies for effective practice and personal coping. The goal of the project is to ensure that students then feel well equipped to understand and respond effectively to situations which require them to facilitate change for individuals, groups and communities. In all, these strategies aim to enhance students' capacities to respond productively to these confronting experiences as 'agentic' professional learner. The development of this 'agentic' quality is essential for a productive and healthy professional life in human services