

Master of Social Work

HSW 714 Professional Practice in Social Work
Recognition for Prior Learning



Applications are due 30 March in the year students are due to undertake HSW714.

Late applications will not be accepted.

Recognition for Prior Learning Policy

In accordance with the Australian Association of Social Workers (AASW) *Australian Social Work Education and Accreditation Standards (ASWEAS) (2020)*, credit for the first field education placement may be possible for students who are able to demonstrate that their prior work experience has provided them with the knowledge and experience that would normally be provided in the first placement.

AASW ACCREDITATION POLICY

In the *ASWEAS*, the AASW states under Standard 4.7 that:

“The conditions under which work experience may be recognised as credit for prior learning will ensure that students can achieve the learning outcomes of the program” (2020:13).

It states further that:

- 4.7.1. Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL) can be used only for part or all of the first placement.
- 4.7.2. A student who is approved for RPL must undertake a final placement in an organisation that provides onsite supervision by a qualified social worker.
- 4.7.3. The student must have worked for at least the equivalent of three full-time years in a setting deemed appropriate as a field education setting required for a first placement student and demonstrate competencies against AASW practice standards.
- 4.7.4. At least the final year of the student’s work experience will be within three years of applying for RPL.
- 4.7.5. Assessment of applications for prior learning will be undertaken by a social worker eligible for AASW membership with at least five years post-qualifying experience including as a Field Educator of students on first placement.

Source: AASW 2020, *Australian Social Work Education and Accreditation Standards*, p 13.

Assessment conditions for granting Recognition for Prior Learning (RPL)

The following assessment conditions need to be satisfied for a student to be granted RPL:

1. Demonstrate minimum of three full-time equivalent years’ practice in a relevant health and/or human service settings, of which at least one year of full-time equivalent has been in the last three years of making the RPL application. The work experience must include practice skills such as assessment and counselling and methods such as case work or community work. The minimum expectation for a ‘relevant health and/or human services setting is that it includes an organisational context and similar kinds of professional work experience that correspond to what would be expected of a first social work placement student.

1. Demonstrate beginning capability across the *AASW Practice Standards (2013)* including the integration of theory and practice, and social work ethics and values.
2. Have received at least 21 hours of professional supervision in the past 3 years, delivered by a qualified social worker who is eligible for membership with the AASW, and has at least 2 years of post-qualifying social work experience.
3. External, independent verification/reference from qualified practising social workers as to accuracy of student's claims and in support of the RPL application.

How to Apply

- **MSW** students intending to make an application for RPL for HSW714 will first need to email the Academic Lead for MSW Field Education at mwfieldedlead@deakin.edu.au to submit an intention to apply for RPL. A copy of the student's resume needs to be attached outlining each position title, employing agency, month and date started and finished and time fraction (equivalent full-time) for each role.
- After reviewing the resume, the Academic Lead will advise the student about the RPL requirements and whether they recommend submitting a full application.
- The application must be submitted by the due date via MSW Field Education at mwfieldedlead@deakin.edu.au.

RPL Portfolio Assessment Process

Students are required to submit a portfolio as their RPL application comprising the following documentation for assessment:

1. Personal details; including contact details and CV. CV is to include:
 - Details of relevant work experience, including dates of work and the EFT of role (for example, full time, part time (.6 EFT, .8 EFT)
 - Copies of job/position descriptions and examples from practice to be included.
 - The names and contact details of two referees.
2. A capability statement detailing skills, knowledge and work experience for each of the nine learning areas of a first placement, which align with the *AASW Practice Standards (2013)* and *ASWEAS (2020) Profession-Specific Graduate Attributes*. Each of the nine statements will include specific examples of the use of social work skills and knowledge. *A template is provided for completion of this task.*

3. Confirmation of at least 21 hours of professional supervision by a qualified social worker including support from a qualified social worker for student skills and knowledge in relation to the nine learning areas. A signed letter from the social worker who has delivered the supervision needs to include:
 - the number of hours and timeframe of the supervision
 - the qualification of the person providing the supervision
 - support for the student's RPL application and attesting to skills and knowledge in the nine learning areas.
4. A 2000-word, fully referenced critical reflection report citing an incident within the practice context that evoked a significant learning outcome, reflecting on the student's work experience, demonstrating integration of theory and practice, social work values and ethics. **Refer to instructions at the end of this guideline for an outline of the content and structure of this requirement.**

RPL Portfolio Requirements

The Portfolio will be assessed by the Social Work Field Education Review Panel. Students may be contacted by the Panel and should be prepared to elaborate upon and, if necessary, defend their portfolio.

The panel may decide to:

- require major or minor revisions to the portfolio
- decline approval for RPL
- approve an application for RPL

Policy regarding subsequent placements (based on ASWEAS [2020]).

If RPL is granted, the following conditions apply for the final field placement. The meeting of these conditions must be considered prior to the granting of RPL for first placement.

1. The final placement must be undertaken in an Australian setting where the student can gain extensive experience with human services agency clients and practice case work, group work or community practice skills. The primary focus of the placement will be on direct service with individuals, families, and/or communities.
2. On-site supervision is required for the subsequent placement unless the student is located in a remote setting where no other placement is available and high-quality external supervision is provided.
3. The placement setting must be markedly different to settings in the student's work history and any experience on which the RPL application was based. As such, a work-based placement in a similar work environment is unlikely as the subsequent placement.

ADDITIONAL INSTRUCTION FOR CRITICAL REFLECTION REPORT

As part of your RPL portfolio application, you are required to submit a **2000-word, fully referenced, critical reflection report**, citing an incident within the practice context that evoked a significant learning outcome, reflecting on your work experience, demonstrating integration of theory and practice, social work values and ethics.

A critical learning event may be an incident which: went unusually well; did not happen as planned; was ordinary and typical; captured the essential nature of social work; was particularly demanding; raised conflicts or doubts; caused you to reflect on the nature of social work or your role as a Social Worker.

You need to address the following in your critical reflection assignment:

1. Describe the context of the event (e.g. how far into the placement it happened, your role in the organisation at the time, the type of organisation).
2. Describe the event itself and why it was critical to you; what you were thinking and feeling during and after the event; what you found most demanding about the situation.
3. Describe what you learned about:
 - Social work as a profession (e.g. values, roles, skills, ethics, code of conduct)
 - Social work theory, practice, and skills
 - Yourself as a social work professional.
 - Yourself as a learner.
4. Discuss what aspects of your theoretical assumptions (e.g. about social work, causes of human behaviour, styles of intervention) were reflected and challenged in this incident; and how your learning from this event has changed your thinking and your practice.

REFERENCING

The Critical Reflection Report needs to reference some of the key social work theory and practice literature covered in your course to date, as well as the *AASW Code of Ethics* (2020) and any other key AASW documents that will inform your reflection.

Please use APA7 referencing style. You should consult the Deakin University '*Guide to referencing*' for information on how to use this referencing style available for download from <https://www.deakin.edu.au/referencing>

Reference:

AASW. (2020). Australian social work education and accreditation standards. V.2.1 Updated March 2021. <https://www.aasw.asn.au/careers-study/education-standards-accreditation>