

QUT FEU Snapshot Report

STUDENT PLACEMENT EXPERIENCES 2017

Field Education Unit SPSW
QUT

Table of Contents

Infographic Summary	3
FEU SNAPSHOT REPORT 2017	4
STUDENT PLACEMENT ENROLMENT NUMBERS (FROM SAMS) – 2017	4
SURVEY RESPONSE RATE AND DEMOGRAPHIC DATA	4
SATISFACTION WITH PRE-PLACEMENT PROCESSES.....	5
FINAL PLACEMENT STUDENTS – 2017 TOTAL	5
SUPPORT DURING PLACEMENT	6
* REMAINDER OF PERCENTAGES INDICATES NO COMMENT OR NEUTRAL	6
SUITABILITY OF PLACEMENT MATCHING KNOWLEDGE AND SKILL ABILITY.....	6
MAXIMIZING LEARNING OPPORTUNITY DURING PLACEMENT	7
INTERNAL ONSITE SUPERVISION.....	7
EXTERNAL PROFESSIONAL SUPERVISION.....	8
CHALLENGES DURING PLACEMENT	9
EXPERIENCES OF SUPPORT PROVIDED TO MANAGE CHALLENGES.....	13
<i>ALLS Support.....</i>	<i>13</i>
<i>Liaison Visitor</i>	<i>13</i>
<i>Assignment Extension</i>	<i>13</i>
<i>Supervisor.....</i>	<i>13</i>
<i>Peer Support.....</i>	<i>14</i>
<i>Bursary/Financial Support.....</i>	<i>14</i>
<i>Counselling</i>	<i>14</i>
<i>Placement Agency.....</i>	<i>14</i>
<i>FEU & University.....</i>	<i>15</i>
REASONS FOR NOT ACCESSING SUPPORT OR SUPPORT NOT HELPFUL	15

QUT FIELD EDUCATION UNIT SNAPSHOT REPORT: STUDENT OUTCOMES 2017

We offer our sincere appreciation to the agencies & supervisors that volunteered their time to support QUT social work and human service students during 2017

114,450 HOURS

Students during placement contributed 114,450 hours of work to the sector and 169 agencies contributed to students educational experience and professional development.



**322 STUDENTS COMPLETED
PLACEMENT**

180 new practitioners are ready to join our community services and health workforce with 83% satisfied that placement has prepared them for their future careers.

SATISFACTION WITH FEU

88% or 64 of 73 of students were very satisfied with the quality and level of communication with the FEU during their placement. In total 5 students did not agree and 4 students offered no comment.



**POSITIVE LEARNING
OPPORUNITIES**

84% of students took full advantage of the placement learning experience and 83% agree that placement integration lectures were useful. Academic workload, time frames and level of support were identified by 11 (15%) students as factors that impeded them from taking more advantage of the learning experience.

**RELATIONSHIP WITH
SUPERVISORS**

92% or 70 of 73 students enjoyed a supportive or somewhat supportive relationship with their agency supervisor.



FEU SNAPSHOT REPORT 2017

Context – Data for this report has been gathered using Key Survey. At the end of each placement semester students, supervisors and field educators are invited to provide feedback about the placement experience in a confidential survey. This report is a summary of the students feedback.

STUDENT PLACEMENT ENROLMENT NUMBERS (FROM SAMS) – 2017

Discipline	Sem 1	Sem 2	Summer
SWB201	12	6	0
SWB314	18	31	2
SWB316 & 317	39	15	3
SWB317 (AS)	0	1	0
SWB402 & 403	11	47	3
SWN011 & 012	4	62 *	0
SWN012 (AS)	0	1	0
SWN013	12	55	0
	96	218	8
TOTAL NUMBER PLACED 2017			322
TOTAL NUMBER PLACED 2016			346

* Decreases in number between 2016 and 2017 - majority SWN011/012 with approx. 20 students dropping off.

SURVEY RESPONSE RATE AND DEMOGRAPHIC DATA

- Semester One 2017 31 respondents = 31% of cohort
- Semester Two 2017 39 respondents = 17% of cohort

Student cohort Response Rate	Sem 1	Sem 2
BHS	13%	5%
HS/CI	3%	0
HS/Justice	0	0
HS/Business	3%	0
BSW	45%	31%
SW/Psych	22%	8%
MSW	13%	56%
Domestic	84%	72%
International	16%	27%
First placement	74%	45%
Final Placement	26%	55%

SATISFACTION WITH PRE-PLACEMENT PROCESSES

✓ Overwhelming majority of students in 2017 were satisfied with the combined systems, processes and levels communication in placement matching and preparation process.

As of the 5th December 2017, 85% students have been successfully placed for their upcoming placement in February 2018. This suggests a significant improvement in the efficiency and effectiveness of placement matching process in place.

	Satisfaction rating Agree or strongly agree		Satisfaction Rating Disagree or strongly disagree		Agree or Strongly Agree
	Sem 1 N = 31	Sem 2 N= 42	Sem 1 N = 31	Sem 2 N= 42	Total average 2017 N = 73
Usefulness of pre – placement information session	83% 26	83% 35	3% 1	2% 1	83% 61
Preplacement orientation	70% 22	74% 32	9% 3	7% 3	72% 54
Pre-placement interview	89% 28	88% 39	3% 1	2% 1	89% 67
FEU taking students learning goals into account	70% 22	83% 37	6% 2	2% 1	78% 59
Level of communication with FEU during matching process	84% 26	85% 38	9% 3	7% 3	84% 64

* Remainder of percentages indicates no comment or neutral

FINAL PLACEMENT STUDENTS – 2017 TOTAL

- ✓ 72% satisfaction with pre-placement orientation to facilitate transition between placement 1 and placement 2. Overall 2 (1%) students disagreed and a response of no comment was given by 8% (12) students
- ✓ 53% or 44 students on final placement indicated that they agreed or highly agreed that Placement Integration lectures assisted students to embed skills and knowledge from one placement to the next. 30% did not comment suggesting their attendance at integration lectures was non-existent or minimal. 9% of students disagreed that that lectures assisted them to embed skills and knowledge between placements. The FEU is working on how to further improve the classes.

SUPPORT DURING PLACEMENT

	Satisfaction rating Agree or strongly agree		Satisfaction Rating Disagree or strongly disagree		Agree or Strongly Agree
	Sem 1 N = 31	Sem 2 N= 42	Sem 1 N = 31	Sem 2 N= 42	Total average 2017 N = 73
Usefulness of the content of placement lectures	83% (26)	83% (35)	0	2% (1)	83%
Number of placement lectures	77% (24)	82% (34)	16% (5)	6% (3)	79%
Duration of placement lectures	77% (32)	77% (24)	9% (3)	9% (4)	77%
Support provided by LV	77% (27)	66% (14)	12% (4)	9% (4)	69%
Overall contact with university during placement	82% (24)	85% (35)	3% (1)	4% (2)	80%

* Remainder of percentages indicates no comment or neutral

SUITABILITY OF PLACEMENT MATCHING KNOWLEDGE AND SKILL ABILITY

- ✓ **83% (61 of 73) of students indicated that the placement was suitable to their level of experience**
 - My placement setting was really great. So supportive and motivating.
 - I developed a lot of patience working with people.
 - The placement matched my interest and capability of coping.
 - LOVED my match.
 - My placement had enough variation in the work I was able to do that I found myself continually with new learning opportunities.

- ✓ **4% (3) of students indicated that the placement was too complex for their level of experience**
 - There were different expectations from various staff confusing my role.
 - I struggled at first but I stepped it up and challenged myself and as a result have improved and learnt so much.

- ✓ **12% (9) of students indicated that the placement was too simple for their level of experience**
 - There could have been more scope for responsibility for individual work.
 - There were some elements of my placement that I found too simple but this provided opportunity for me to seek out and explore other learning opportunities.
 - In some ways, it was too simple for my experience and what I was seeking to gain from it. However, I did have a couple of experiences which challenged me.

MAXIMIZING LEARNING OPPORTUNITY DURING PLACEMENT

- ✓ 84% (62 of 73) students indicated they felt that they took full advantage of the learning offered to them on placement.
- ✓ 15% (11) students indicated they felt that they **could have taken more advantage** of the learning offered to them on placement. Of the students that responded to this, some of the reasons they offered for what got in the way of maximizing the learning experience included:
 - **Academic load** - If research project could be taken any other time, it could positively drive more contributions to my placement.
 - **More support** - I felt I could be more guided in the beginning to have a better focus to improve my communication skills.
 - **Supervision** - lack of supervision affected my learning.
 - **Timeframes** - I had difficulty managing the time period effectively; the beginning was spent ingesting information, while the later part was spent accepting the limitations of time available to do anything that I felt would have been challenging or different to other student's projects and the agencies expectations.

INTERNAL ONSITE SUPERVISION

- ✓ 76% (56 of 73) of students indicated that they had a supportive and well-established relationship with their supervisor
 - My supervisor was fantastic. She was very supportive and generous with her time. She had only recently started in a new role and we could see how busy she was but she was never too busy to talk with us.
 - I am lucky because both of my supervisor work in the same agency. The external one is a social worker, the internal one is from a nursing background.
- ✓ 16% (12) students indicated that their relationship with their supervisor was somewhat supportive
 - I had many supervisors, some with poor professional skills although my primary supervisor was very supportive.
 - It was a good relationship; however, she was very time poor and scheduling supervision sessions was a challenge.
 - They did help to support me. Although I felt that as they have a constant stream of students on placement, that my experiences were just assumed or generalised by my supervisor and the agency. Meaning that I was just the 'student on placement', not so much an individual.
- ✓ 6% (5) students indicated their relationship with their supervisor was not supportive or well established
 - Supervision was irregular.
 - During my placement (before it broke down) I did not have a good relationship with my supervisor and I found her to be demeaning and held unrealistic expectations, once my new placement was sorted, I could not have asked for a better more supportive supervisor!!
 - Once supervisors changed it was good, before that it was frustrating. The initial supervisor was too time poor to really take on the commitment of having a placement student.

- My supervisor was always incredibly busy and this sense of intensity that she gave off in being under this stress did not make her seem open for supervision and discussion as I needed to have.

EXTERNAL PROFESSIONAL SUPERVISION

During 2017 49% (46) of students have an external supervisor during placement. Of these:

- ✓ 44% (36) students indicated that they had a supportive and well-established relationship with their supervisor
 - My external supervisor supported me a lot in my repeated first placement.
 - External supervisor was brilliant. However, I think there could have been more flexibility with the group supervision sessions instead of them having to stay with a set topic for each session. Yes, it covered a group session for each practice standard but maybe a bit more flexibility could have been there.
 - My supervisor was a fantastic support over my time at placement and I cannot speak highly enough of her.
 - They helped me to understand the expectations of the placement and keep on track with the assessment.
- ✓ 33% (8) students indicated that their relationship with their supervisor was somewhat supportive
 - My external supervisor was associated and involved with my placement, so I didn't feel comfortable enough to talk to her about any issues I was having, as I felt as though she would have bias and would tell my supervisor things.
 - My external supervisor was hardly ever there and would not know how I function but still judged my learning.
- ✓ 2% (2) students indicated their relationship with their supervisor was not supportive or well established
 - I was also not able to meet with her privately during the placement visits but also didn't speak up and ask to.

The Field Education Unit recognizes the importance of the feedback provided and will continue to work towards addressing issues and gaps.

CHALLENGES DURING PLACEMENT

Students are invited to express what has been most challenging aspect of being on placement. 94% (69) students responded to this question with some of the following concerns.

Themes	Issues	FEU response
Academic Load and Balancing Competing Demands	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Number of units for MSW students alongside full time placement detracts from focus required for placement learning • Options to undertake units over the summer semester to free up load during placement times • Managing assessment – particularly group assessment while on placement • Managing 30 hours per week of placement with paid work and assessment SWN020 and placement are arranged in the same semester. If SWN020 could be taken in summer, it will get students focus more on their final placement practice • Placement paperwork onerous • Academic expectations and placement hours and pressure detracting from the need for self-care • Balancing demands of university, work , assessment and family • Inability to earn income and associated financial hardship • No flexibility for sick leave, bereavement leave, family leave 	Advocacy across the Discipline to review workload commitments for MSW and BSW.
Supervision	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Limited opportunities to develop skills due to supervisor absences • Limited supervision jeopardising opportunity for competing placement successfully • Very high expectations from supervisors in comparison to experiences of other students – inconsistent messages and approaches. 	Support for supervisors offered by way of Supervisors Workshops at 3 key points during the placement to clarify expectations, issues and responsibilities.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Supervisors having limited time for the support that is required 	Induction and support for role of Liaison Visitors to ensure that if problems are identified or raised by student than an immediate response follows.
Agency setting	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Creating learning experiences in an agency that offered no supervision and very little tasks. Placement in 'non- social work' settings with limited direct client contact 	Pre placement induction and Placement Orientation workshops clearly specify the broad and diverse nature of social work practice and the variety of placement settings – many of which include roles not traditionally denied by the social work title.
Self-care	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Managing personal life and self-care Limited to no opportunity to practice self-care due to expectations of university and placement agency Working 7 days a week for 17 weeks limits self-care focus Impact on mental health Complexities and implications of managing and dealing with clients grief and trauma when you are overworked and stressed on placement 	<p>Focus on self-care is a key priority in all Placement Integration lectures.</p> <p>Significant advocacy undertaken across the Discipline to alert lecturers to the stress burden of placement.</p>
Workplace politics	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Challenges adjusting to other colleagues at placement representing multi-disciplinary teams 	
Nature of placement agency	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Not getting the choice of placement that students would like and therefore feeling forced to engage with learning experience 	Students explicitly warned that due to competition between universities for placements and lack of placement opportunities that often they will not get their first choice of placement.

		Significant work underway between universities to minimize competition for placements and create collaborative placement allocation processes to ensure best fit for students and agencies.
Placement documentation and assessment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Managing the PLT and evidence required • STARLs difficult to evidence when in non-client practice settings • No time allocated during placement to attend to assessment requirements for the PLT leaving no option other than doing this at home 	Placement documentation has been reviewed and modified to ease the burden on students and supervisors and will be trialed Sem 1 2018. New documentation has been circulated to a selection of the student cohort and supervisors for feedback. Results suggest it will address issues as raised by students.
Finances	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Not having enough money. Very hard expectation of having to work unpaid for 4 days per week. Plus do two units. • Additional costs associated with placement – child care, petrol, parking and transport creating an additional burden and added stress • Inability to earn an income creating financial stress for 4 months 	<p>Review of the assessment that sits beside placement units will facilitate some measure of relief in terms of additional academic load on placement.</p> <p>Ongoing advocacy with school by FEU.</p> <p>Ongoing monitoring and liaison with Student Counselling re issues for SW/BHS students.</p>
Cultural Challenges	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cultural differences and value clashes – lack of understanding of role within family as compared to that of Australia Culture. 	This issue has not been raised before with the FEU. Response to be discussed.

Feeling like a burden	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Awareness of the additional load for agency taking on students and feeling a burden on agency resources 	FEU endeavor to build the capacity of smaller agencies whenever possible. Usual repose would be to supplement supervision for smaller agencies to not over burden resources of such NGO's.
Performance Pressure	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pressure to perform and expectations of others • Being placed in an organisation and doing work that you haven't been particularly drawn too but are expected to excel in • Consideration of future work prospects pressure to do well on final placement 	Supportive context established for placement integration lectures. Liaison visitors and supervisors are offered information about the pressures on students. FEU offer additional support if students advise that the pressure is too great.
Length of placement	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Length of placement too long • Burden on agencies having students for 500 hours 	AASW prescribed. Not an issue that FEU has control over. However regular discussions take place within the Field Educators network group.
Placement Lectures	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The duration of placement lectures is too long and not all the hours for lectures can be counted towards placement hours • Length of lectures discourages some students to attend for 3 hours • Inconsistent messages to students re extensions for assignments 	AASW prescribed requirement.
Limited Support	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Lack of external neutral support re placement challenges 	Role of the Liaison Visitor to monitor.

EXPERIENCES OF SUPPORT PROVIDED TO MANAGE CHALLENGES

56 % of students that had expressed challenges suggested that they shared their experience with university staff member or the FEU. 35% of students did not share their experience with anyone. Of the students that did seek support, the following responses were offered.

ALLS Support

- Academic language support is too popular to book an appointment close to the submission.

Liaison Visitor

- Liaison visitor helped support extension of placement to provide me with some additional experience - this allowed me more opportunities to develop my skills.
- Liaison Visitor support and guidance helpful.
- Inconsistent messages provided by Liaison Visitor to that of lecturer re undertaking university work while on placement.
- Yes sought advice from the university liaison on how best to manage the placement.

Assignment Extension

- Extension granted due to illness for a non-placement subject, liaison visitor supported this action.
- Assignment extension due to illness and managing different competing timeline.
- Placement supervisor gave me time to work on university assignments whilst on placement, while helpful I would have preferred focusing on my placement learnings.
- Special consideration.
- Extension helped me to balance both placement and study.
- Assignment extensions, counseling support and support from the placement agency.

Supervisor

- I felt understood and supported, however, practically it changed very little. I feel quite frustrated with my placement experience especially when I hear others say they enjoyed theirs.
- I did ask to meet with my QUT external social worker who was super unprofessional and made feel humiliated as a social worker and disregarded my concerns.
- University was supportive in helping manage the many changes that took place during placement –agency supervisor changed and LV changed. To have rapport with every new supervisor is bit difficult to balance.
- Supervision and debriefing useful.
- Support from external and internal supervisors.
- Engaged in supervision and adjusted hours and workload.
- I sought support in my other units (in creative industries) from my lecturers in trying to set up a meeting to talk about my progression in the unit, however I could not find a time where we were both free and the lecturers were not understanding of my situation.
- Faced with overload of assignment, I seek support from my supervisor and QUT library support, which helps me achieved a high mark in my uni assignment.

Peer Support

- Another student on placement offered support and my Placement Supervisor is an ex-QUT student who had worked with PLTs previously.
- I sought my own support through professional supervision and my own support network of family and friends.
- I found peer student support to be most beneficial.

Bursary/Financial Support

- I would like to apply for bursary but I am not quite sure if international students are eligible.
- Bursary meant I didn't have to work during placement too much.
- WIL bursary. The process was efficient enough to help me pull through. I was not aware of hardship bursary.
- Bursary which helped to a certain extent. I got extension for one of my assignment.
- In relation to the finance I asked for installment for paying the fees and it got rejected.
- I was able to manage the workload without assistance from the university. I sort help for my financially struggles in the form of the WILS bursary. The bursary significantly helped manage the associated cost of placement.
- I asked for support regarding the bursary but it was not useful. As I still have a few thousand dollar saving, I was told there would be slim chance for approval of any bursary.
- I faced financial hardship and requested for welfare loan from the university.
- I received WIL bursary and it helped me a lot to get through the last month of my placement. I previously lost my job as a result of committing to the placement hours.

Counselling

- I contemplated getting counselling support, however felt that travelling to the campuses would have just added to an already overburdened week!
- Counselling support and support from placement agency were helpful too.

Placement Agency

- My placement agency is flexible. I can take day off if I need for my assignment. However, the uni is not as flexible compare to my agency. I feel bad that my academic commitment sometimes affect my daily performance in placement.
- My placement agency was fantastic and very supportive. Uni was considerate of my family tragedy, however not the financial strain.

FEU & University

- FEU was great in providing support, the lack of support came from the other subject unfortunately.
- The university was incredibly supportive by extending the dates on many of the assessment pieces. This extra time to complete the work took a lot of stress off our shoulders while on placement.
- I sought counselling elsewhere and also found all placement staff to be really understanding in terms of assessment and of the requirements of placement
- My supervisor and university staff were very supportive and were flexible when necessary.

REASONS FOR NOT ACCESSING SUPPORT or SUPPORT NOT HELPFUL

- I tried to deal with it autonomously whilst maintaining my professionalism
- The guidelines provided by QUT on 'professionalism' specifically states that no time is to be taken off from placement to work on assignments, making it practically impossible to work on them at all. How can you go to the doctors to get a medical certificate or apply for any extensions or other support when there is literally no time.
- The placement agency had minimal patience, and minimal to no compassion, regarding the unrealistic workload from Uni and the implications on placement. The placement agency raised the matter of concern with the Uni liaison officer during visits, their response was 'Everyone else is coping!' Which obviously sets the student up for failure and an even greater power imbalance, and paints a picture that the issue is the students directly, rather than a systemic one and an imbalanced Uni system.
- No because no changes to the program structure could be made.
- I didn't seek any bursary support as my financial stress really increased towards the end of placement, but I knew I would have income soon.
- I tried to apply for a bursary/financial support, but the application process was confusing and time consuming.