PLACEMENT INFORMATION FOR COUNSELLING STUDENTS

Questions and Answers

Q: How long am I on placement, and how many hours do I need to complete?

A: You need to be on placement for two consecutive ACAP trimesters, for a minimum of 1-2 days per week. Exceptions apply for students with RPL or Advanced Standing for their second Placement and Supervision unit (only applicable for MCouns&PsychTh and the occasional GradDipCouns students).

Hours on placement:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Course</th>
<th>Minimum Placement Hours</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Bachelor of Counselling (BCouns)</td>
<td>200 hours including 40 hours counselling</td>
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<tr>
<td>Bachelor of Counselling Coaching (BCounsCo)</td>
<td>200 hours including 40 hours counselling</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bachelor of Psychological Science &amp; Counselling</td>
<td>200 hours including 40 hours counselling</td>
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<tr>
<td>(BPsychSciCoun)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Graduate Diploma of Counselling (GradDipCouns)</td>
<td>200 hours including 40 hours counselling</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Master of Counselling &amp; Psychotherapy</td>
<td>240 hours including 80 hours counselling</td>
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<tr>
<td>(MCouns&amp;PsychTh)</td>
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Q: What counts as the initial 40 hours of counselling?

A: You must carry out one to one counselling, co-counselling, and/or facilitate or co-facilitate group work:

One to one counselling or co-counselling*:

- Counselling or psychotherapy sessions with a client 13 years old or over.
- Co-counselling with another counsellor/student where you are in a lead or equal role
- Counselling intake and assessment sessions where subsequent counselling sessions are delivered to the client
- One off counselling and crisis counselling sessions, however, students must see a minimum of 5 clients for at least 3 sessions as this allows a counselling relationship to develop.

*The following conditions apply:

- Placements in agencies working with 13-17 year olds must have a qualified counsellor/supervisor onsite. The agency must be a youth work/school/education facility. Students should have completed the ‘Counselling Children and Young People’ elective before counselling youth. It is advisable for future employment to gain experience in working with adults in addition to adolescents.
- Students working with clients who have severe mental health conditions (i.e. Borderline Personality Disorder, or Bipolar Disorder) or with complex issues, must immediately consult with their ACAP clinical supervisor. Students are only to work on the client’s wellbeing and not treat the condition.
- When co-counselling, students must take a lead or equal role after a period of observation, training, or minimally contributing to counselling sessions.
Groupwork counselling**: 

- Facilitating or co-facilitating a group work program

**The following conditions apply:**

- Students should have completed the ‘Groupwork Theory and Practice’ unit before carrying out group work.
- Students should receive adequate training from the agency before co-facilitating or facilitating groups. Training by the agency should include observation/co-facilitation with experienced therapists/students before the student fully co-facilitates or facilitates groups.
- Students co-facilitating DBT groups, must have received adequate training from the agency, and be working with an experienced co-facilitator who supervises their work and monitors their progression.
- Students must not teach, where they are the expert imparting knowledge to the group. Students facilitate the group for the clients as they come to their own realisations and insights, as in person centred counselling.
- Groups must be structured groups with a topic each session, run for a set time and have the same participants in attendance. The group must not be an open group, such as a support group or a 12-step group where clients listen as others share and debrief, and there is no program to follow. This is not a formal group program but counts towards your general placement hours.
- Facilitation of Mindfulness groups or sessions can be undertaken only by students with prior training and experience, and is to be discussed with your Placement Partnership Adviser.

**Q: When do I need to start counselling clients once I start placement?**

A: After your initial training, orientation and observation period, and by the end of Week 3 of your first trimester on placement (approximately your 5th week on placement). ACAP Census date falls on the Friday of Week 3 in each trimester. If you are not able to commence counselling before Census date, contact your Placement Partnership Adviser.

**Q: Can I counsel children under 12 years?**

A: You cannot counsel children 12 years and under due to the legal an ethical complexity of this work, and not having sufficient theoretical training. You can observe work carried out with children if you are given the opportunity while on placement. MCounsPsychTh students and some students in school placements working with children, would have gained approval from the Placement Advisers to counsel children 12 years and under.
Q: Can I work with clients who have diagnosed severe mental health conditions, or complex issues?

A: You can work with clients diagnosed with severe mental health conditions such as borderline personality disorder, bipolar disorder, post-traumatic stress disorder, or eating disorders by working on the client’s wellbeing only. You must not treat the condition.

If you counsel clients who have committed serious criminal offences, have past trauma, or are long term unemployed, you must work within their capabilities, and be aware of referral procedures within your placement agency. If you are in a situation where you are experiencing undue stress due to working beyond your capacity, inform your Placement Partnership Adviser.

Exceptions may apply when students are working with these clients in a Workplace for Placement context.

Q: Can I carry out Skype or Zoom counselling?

A: Yes, but these hours can only be counted after you have carried out 40 hours of face to face counselling.

Q: Can I carry out telephone counselling?

A: Yes, but these hours can only be counted after you have carried out 40 hours of face to face counselling.

Q: Can I carry out couples, family group or sexual health counselling?

A: No, you are not to carry out any of this work due to the specialised and skilled nature of the counselling.

Q: What doesn’t count as counselling?

A: Case management, any informal interaction/counselling work with clients, observation of counselling, counselling research, pastoral care, or facilitation of support groups (e.g. 12 Step programs), are not counted as part of your counselling hours. These hours are counted as General Placement Hours.

Q: What makes up the remainder of the minimum 200 hours of placement?

A: You can carry out any practical activity that is part of the agencies normal scope of operation, e.g. writing case notes, attending meetings, carrying out research.

Q: Can I attend training with the agency, or external to the agency while on placement?

A: Yes, some agencies have mandatory training either pre or during placement. You can count all hours you attend training as ‘General Placement Hours’. Occasionally an agency might suggest non-mandatory training to students. You can attend, and count the hours as ‘General Placement Hours’, however, you will need to make up any time if the training falls on your regular placement day.

Q: Am I insured while on placement?

A: If you are on a registered, supervised, unpaid placement, you are covered by ACAP for professional indemnity, public liability, and personal accident Insurance (conditions apply for all ACAP insurance policies). The placement agency has a legal responsibility to provide a safe and secure working environment and to not place you in a situation where you may be at risk. You may go onto volunteer with the agency, and in this case, you are not covered by ACAP insurance.
Q: Can I carry out my placement overseas, and be insured by ACAP?
A: It is possible to carry out your placement overseas and be insured by ACAP. Please contact your Placement Partnership Adviser before making enquires to overseas agencies.

Q: Can I carry out home visits?
A: Only if you are accompanied by an agency staff member, and not another ACAP student.

Q: Am I insured to use my car while driving to placement, and carrying out duties or tasks for the agency while on placement?
A: Yes, you are insured for travel to and from the placement agency. You are also insured if you need to use your car for activities during placement hours.

Q: Can I be paid for my work while on placement?
A: No, placement is a period of unpaid work experience. The only exception is for students who have been approved to use their workplace for placement. These work places may choose to pay students for the time they allocate to placement.

Q: Is everything I share in ACAP clinical supervision confidential?
A: No, should a concern be identified or an issue arise with your performance on placement, the Clinical Supervisor will notify the Placement Senior Lecturer in the first instance, and he/she will notify the National Placement Operations Manager or the Placement Partnership Advisers of their concerns. Various stakeholders may need to become involved if concerns or performance issues are identified; Placement Agency Supervisor; National Placement Operations Manager; Placement Partnership Advisers; Head of Discipline of Counselling; Senior Counselling Lecturer or Academic Head; ACAP Placement Lecturer.

Q: Can I take breaks, or have a holiday while on placement?
A: No, you must attend placement for the entire duration of two ACAP trimesters. You can apply to your Placement Partnership Adviser for leave from your placement for funerals, graduations, weddings etc. If you experience exceptional situations, illness or unforeseen circumstances, you must contact your Placement Partnership Adviser immediately. Most agencies break for the Christmas holiday period, and your leave from the placement at this time is negotiated with the agency.

Q: Can I complete my placement early if I carry out all of my hours?
A: No, you must be on placement for the full duration of two ACAP trimesters. You attend clinical supervision groups in conjunction with your placement. Completing placement before the end of the trimester can result in failing your ACAP supervision class.

Q: How am I supervised during ACAP trimester breaks?
A: If you require urgent clinical supervision during the Trimester 1 and 2 breaks, and there is no suitably qualified or experienced supervisor at your placement agency, contact your Placement Partnership Adviser who will arrange for you to receive additional clinical supervision. During the Trimester 3 extended break, students who do not have a suitably qualified or experienced supervisor at their placement, will be required to attend online Bridging Clinical Supervision, on a fortnightly basis until Trimester 1 supervision classes resume.
**Q: What do I do if I need extra time to complete my placement?**

A: Contact your Placement Partnership Adviser immediately, who will ask you to complete a ‘Placement Extension Application’ form in Sonia.

**Q: What forms and paperwork do I need to complete for placement?**

A: All of your forms can be found in Sonia; all forms except the Timesheets or Experience Log, can be found under the ‘Forms’ tab.

**Timesheets (for students commencing placement from Trimester 1 2019):** Can be found under the ‘Placement Instructions’ tab. Timesheets are created for each activity carried out on a placement day. They are approved by your Agency Supervisor mid-way, and at the end of your placement.

**Experience Log (for students commencing placement on or before Trimester 3 2018):** An Excel spreadsheet found under the ‘Placements’ tab. You need to make entries into your Experience Log each day you are on placement. This log is to be submitted to your Placement Advisor at the end of your second trimester of placement.

**Learning and Supervision Contract:** You must complete this form by the end of Week 2. You are given a Sample Template, and are encouraged to copy and paste the Learning Tasks and Methods of assessment into your form, and then modify them to meet the agency supervisor’s needs and expectations. The Learning Goals are the Placement and Supervision unit learning outcomes. This form is approved by both the Agency Supervisor and your ACAP Clinical Supervisors by the end of Week 2.

**Mid Placement Review:** Carried out between Weeks 9-13 of your first trimester of placement. It is a three way meeting between the student, the Agency Supervisor, and an ACAP reviewer, who will complete the form. This form is signed off by the ACAP Clinical Supervisors in Week 13 of the first supervision unit, and Week 2 of the second supervision unit.

**Clinical Supervision logs:** You need to log your attendance in Placement and Supervision classes. The log must be completed by the end of Week 13 of each trimester. This form is signed off by your ACAP Clinical Supervisors in Week 13.

**Final Placement Report:** This form is completed by your Agency Supervisor at the end of your final trimester of placement. This is due within 7 days of completing your placement. You must complete the Student Declaration section after the Agency Supervisor has completed their portion.

Contact your Placement Partnership Adviser if you have questions.

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<tr>
<th>ACAP staff member role</th>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Contact details</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Placement Senior Lecturer</td>
<td>Pol McCann</td>
<td><a href="mailto:PolDominic.McCann@acap.edu.au">PolDominic.McCann@acap.edu.au</a> (02) 9964 6359</td>
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<tr>
<td>Placement Advisers for each campus</td>
<td></td>
<td><a href="#">Contact details</a></td>
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