Counselling placements

Thank you for considering supervising an ACAP student for placement within your organisation. Your contribution to the training and development of the next generation of professionals in the industry is invaluable.

What is Student Placement?
Student placement provides an opportunity for ACAP students to apply the skills and knowledge they are learning in a supervised workplace. Depending on their program, students complete 200 to 240 hours of placement. Placement also provides an excellent opportunity for students to develop professional networks and to explore career options and professional pathways.

What are the expected outcomes of a Student Placement?
At ACAP, placement is considered a vital and rewarding aspect of the student’s learning experience. While on placement, students are expected to:

- Critically evaluate the use of counselling skills and interventions
- Demonstrate assessment and intervention planning
- Apply counselling models to meet client needs
- Integrate ethical thinking and decision-making in counselling to uphold the rights and autonomy of clients
- Facilitate effective use of theoretical knowledge and counselling skills to practice
- Evaluate counselling competence in preparation for future clinical practice
- Integrate feedback from supervisor

Applied Social Science Placement Outcomes:
- Apply social science concepts to analyse key practices in the placement organisations
- Analyse the influence of policy, funding, and social and cultural contexts on the organisation
- Demonstrate cultural sensitivity and provide culturally safe services to diverse groups
- Demonstrate ethical decision-making skills

ACAP student profile
Approximately 500 higher education students are registered for placement each year over a network of more than 600 agencies, both nationally and internationally. ACAP students are predominately female (84%) with the majority being mature aged, the average student being in their late 30’s.

As Agency Supervisor, what do I need to do?
- Participate in a pre-placement meeting with the student to discuss available learning opportunities and to determine the suitability of the placement for that student;
- Log in to the placement system Sonia Online and approve the placement confirmation form (log in details will be emailed when the student registers the placement);
- Fully induct the student into the agency including policies and procedures;
- Set clear boundaries with students regarding access to clients files;
- Review and approve the Student Placement Learning Contract in Sonia Online;
- Establish the framework and process for assessment and supervision (e.g. schedule daily preparation and debrief meetings with the student etc);
- Provide adequate training regarding the agency’s service delivery models, e.g. CBT, motivational interviewing, grief and loss etc, and explain requirements for case notes;
- Ensure students (except experienced masters level students) are not facilitating DBT, couples counselling, working with children 12 years and under, or treating clients with Borderline Personality Disorder however they can work on the client’s wellbeing;
• Ensure all clients are informed that the student is not yet qualified and is on a supervised placement;
• Set tasks, and guide the student in their daily activities;
• Give regular and constructive feedback, preparation and debriefing on the student’s performance;
• Participate in a three-way Mid Placement Review with the student and a Mid Placement Reviewer and assess the student’s progress as satisfactory/not satisfactory/result withheld (if there are concerns that need to be addressed urgently);
• Complete the online Final Placement Report in Sonia Online during the final two weeks of placement, and assess the student’s performance against their Learning Contract, placement outcomes and expectations of a student approaching graduation as satisfactory/not satisfactory;
• Meet with the student in the final two weeks of placement to review their performance and approve their timesheets in SONIA online. The student must submit their forms to ACAP within seven days of completing the placement;
• Maintain the confidentiality of clients at all times and limit student access to files, notes, etc. unless the client has given their informed consent.

Please note: The agency is responsible for managing client confidentiality.

Counselling placements:
Allocate appropriate clients for the student to counsel; the student is equipped to offer general counselling for a wide range of issues. However, they do not counsel couples, children children 12 years and under, or work with clients in acute phases of severe mental illness.

ACAP provides all clinical supervision for counselling students on placement.

What insurance cover is provided for ACAP students on placement?
Students are covered by ACAP for professional indemnity, public liability and personal accident insurance (conditions apply for all ACAP insurance policies). These insurance policies will only cover students on approved, registered, unpaid student placements that form part of the academic requirements of their course.

There is an implied legal obligation on the part of the placement organisation and the placement supervisor to ensure that the student is not placed in a position where their actions can result in damage to property or injury to other persons. The placement organisation also has a legal requirement to provide a safe and secure working environment and not place the student in a situation where they may be at risk. The supervisor is responsible for the student’s well being and participation in suitable activities at all times.

How does my organisation benefit from having a student on placement?
Organisations benefit in many ways. Some of our smaller placement organisations could not function adequately without our students, as they participate in every aspect of the business. Depending on the services offered by the organisation and the specialisation and experience of the student, benefits could include:
• implementation of services, projects or tasks that could not otherwise be carried out due to lack of human resources
• Organisations that accept and supervise 800 hours of placement are eligible to receive complimentary scholarship enrollment into any one of our units. This provides an invaluable staff training opportunity in the areas of Counselling, Psychology, Social Work, Case Management or Coaching valued at approximately $2,300. This scholarship unit can be undertaken by the placement supervisor or a nominated staff member of the organisation within 18 months of achieving the required number of hours of supervision
• a source of potential employees or volunteers. Some of our students are employed by their placement organisation as they have had time to assess the student’s skills, attitudes and cultural fit
• reflection on and revision of current practices
• exposure to new theories and practices
• participation in the skilling of the industry workforce

Please note: Some single units are excluded from this offer. Applicants must meet all pre-requisites for the unit.

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