CLINICAL PSYCHOLOGY PLACEMENT POLICIES

These placement policies provide general information to potential applicants for a clinical postgraduate degree in the School of Psychology at Flinders University. Extra, specific information about placements is only provided to students who are accepted into one of these degrees.

BACKGROUND
Students enrolled in the Master of Psychology (Clinical) or the Doctor of Philosophy (Clinical Psychology) programme are placed in 3 practical settings under the supervision of a registered psychologist (or Field Supervisor). Each placement has a duration of about 2.5 days per week for ~19 weeks. Therefore, a primary requirement for any student in the course is that each student is available for 2.5 days per week during the placement periods. The distribution of the 2.5 days per week should be negotiated between the supervisor and the student.

Practical experience can be expected to differ between placements. It is essential that all students gain experience with both adults and children in a variety of settings. Prior to commencement of a Placement, each student will be required to prepare a CV for the Field Supervisor which describes their academic background, work experience, and completed postgraduate topics and placements. An individualised contract is drawn up for each placement, defining the learning objectives, the expectations on all parties, and the form of assessment. The terms of the contract are negotiated with the student, Field Supervisor and a member of the academic staff (University Supervisor) appointed to liaise with the supervisor and the student.

PLACEMENT LOCATIONS
Placement sites vary slightly from year to year. Below are some examples:

- Adult Mental Health Services
  - Various Sites
- Bower Place (Private Practice)
  - City
- Child and Adolescent Mental Health Service
  - Various Sites
- Novita Children’s Services
  - Regency Park
- Drug and Alcohol Services Council
  - Norwood
- Families SA
  - Various Sites
- Flinders Medical Centre
  - Bedford Park
- Flinders University Psychology Clinic
  - Bedford Park
- Minda Incorporated
  - Brighton
- Noarlunga Health Service
  - Noarlunga
- Noarlunga Hospital
  - Noarlunga
- Royal Adelaide Hospital
  - North Terrace, City
- Southern Child & Family Clinic
  - Bedford Park
- Southern Mental Health Services
  - Marion
- Women's and Children's Hospital
  - North Adelaide
Students will be given specific details about each placement when the list of placements available for the next semester is posted to students.

**Allocation of Students to Placements**
The University Placement Allocation Committee (UPAC) oversees the allocation of students to clinical placements in South Australia. Members of the UPAC include Placements Co-ordinators from the 3 Universities, as well as a representative from the field. UPAC is a cooperative arrangement between the Universities and is designed to ensure an equitable allocation of placements in the community, and prevent field psychologists from fielding requests from students. The only placements that fall outside the domain of UPAC are the placements offered in the Psychology Clinics run by the universities.

The steps involved in allocating students to placements involves:

1. UPAC asking Field Supervisors their willingness to provide a placement in the forthcoming semester. Placement details are tabulated and provided to the 3 Universities.

2. Placement details are emailed to Flinders University students with a Placement Preference Form. Students need to provide their preferences as soon as possible to the Clinical Administrative Officer. A student preference list is tabulated on a ‘first-come-first served’ basis.

3. The Placement Co-ordinator takes students’ preferences to the UPAC Placement Allocation Meeting. The very first allocation is rotated each allocation meeting to ensure equity between the 3 Universities. The second allocation goes to the next University, and so on.

4. Once all placements have been allocated to all students, UPAC informs field supervisors of their student allocation. The School’s Clinical Administrative Officer also informs Flinders University students of their placement allocation.

5. Shortly after the Field Supervisors have been notified, students may contact Field Supervisors in order to make arrangements for the commencement of placements.

Generally, placement allocation meetings take place in November and June for first and second semester, respectively. Placements may commence on a date arranged with the Field Supervisor, generally in mid-late July and late January. If a student is unable to accept the placement to which they have been allocated, the high demand for placements in Adelaide will most likely mean that the student **will not** be able to attend a placement until the following semester. Another important point to note is that students are **not** to contact Field Supervisors in the hope of securing a placement independent of the allocation process conducted by UPAC.

If there is any doubt about the commencement date, it is important for students to calculate 19 weeks back from any known commitment (e.g., holiday arrangement, travel, Christmas). The clinical programme does not designate specific dates to begin or end placements because of the wide variability in needs, hence students must ensure that their arrangements will fit with their own commitments and those of their Field Supervisors. Students should be very careful about making any plans for travel. Such plans should be checked with the Placement Co-ordinator and the Director of the Clinical Programmes prior to making any bookings.
In special circumstances, student placement allocation will consider:

- the placement category remaining to be completed (Child, Adult);
- geographical region of student residence (Far North, Middle, Far South);
- special requirements (e.g., thesis topic matching to placement, special need of student);
- preference for student based on student's experience;
- students qualifying for a placement after an interview (in order to assess suitability).

**On-campus Clinical Placements**
The Flinders University Psychology Clinic is run by the School of Psychology has been established to offer child placements because of potential shortages of child placements in the community, and the need for students to complete at least 1 child placement. Similarly, the on-campus Southern Child & Family Clinic is co-ordinated by Families SA and the School of Psychology. Allocation of students to these Clinics will occur around the same time as community placement allocations. Students will be asked to nominate their preferences for these clinics, and the Placement Co-ordinator will allocate students to these Clinics. In accordance with accreditation guidelines, students will be ideally allocated to one of these two placements for their first placement. If a student has been allocated to the community for their first placement, it is likely they will be allocated to one of these on-campus clinics for their second or third placement.

**Absences**
Sick days may be granted without an extension of the placement period up to the equivalent period to which an employee would be entitled (i.e., 2 days per placement). Periods of absence due to illness in excess of this figure will result in an extension of the placement until the full period (minus 2 days) is met.

**Evaluation of Placement Performance**
A Placement Supervisor Report is completed by the Field Supervisor at the end of each placement. Student’s Assessment of Placement/Supervisor form is also completed by the student. The Recommendations for Future Development form can be completed jointly by the student and Field Supervisor prior to (or during) the end-of-placement review. Students should keep a record of their work in the Clinical Activities Diary. The University Supervisor will ask to see such records at both visits.