

Professional Practice Policy and Procedure HEPP48

PURPOSE

This policy provides the framework to support the inclusion of Professional Practice into courses offered at Southern Cross Education Institute (Higher Education).

SCOPE

This policy applies to all staff and students of Southern Cross Education Institute (Higher Education).

DEFINITIONS

Professional Practice	The purposeful, organised, supervised and assessed educational activity that integrates theoretical learning with its applications in the workplace.
Professional Practice Placement	Unpaid, structured learning in a workplace, which is subject to a written agreement between the placement provider, the student and Southern Cross Education Institute (Higher Education).
Professional Practice Placement Agreement	A written agreement between Southern Cross Education Institute (Higher Education), placement organisation and a student undertaking a placement, which sets out the rights, responsibilities and expectations of all parties for the placement.
Professional Practice Placement Provider	A suitable place for students to attend to complete course placement requirements.
SCEI-HE	Southern Cross Education Institute (Higher Education)

POLICY

1. SCEI-HE will:

- 1.1 ensure the equitable allocation of available professional practice placements, taking into account the preferences of students wherever possible;
- 1.2 take all reasonable precautions to ensure the health and welfare of students on professional practice placement;
- 1.3 risk assess and quality assure professional practice placements to ensure learning outcomes are met;
- 1.4 monitor the progress and attendance requirements of students while on professional practice placement;
- 1.5 ensure that all those involved in a professional practice placement are appropriately oriented and aware of their rights and responsibilities;
- 1.6 provide ongoing support to students during placements, including regular check-ins with academic supervisors or placement coordinators to monitor progression and address any concerns; and
- 1.7 ensure tailored support for diverse student cohorts, including international students and students with disabilities, to facilitate equitable participation in professional practice.

2. Selection and approval of professional practice placement providers

- 2.1 SCEI-HE is responsible for identifying and engaging professional practice placement providers who can provide:
 - 2.1.1 a safe, positive and ethical learning environment for students;
 - 2.1.2 suitable induction, training, and mentoring in professional and safe behaviour;
 - 2.1.3 varied experiences for students that support the attainment of course learning; and
 - 2.1.4 appropriate supervision and performance evaluation of students.
 - 2.1.5 training for placement supervisors on assessment criteria and processes to ensure consistent and reliable evaluation of student performance.

3. Allocation of professional practice placements

- 3.1 The course coordinator will be responsible for supporting, assisting and allocating available professional practice placements. Students will be required to nominate at least 2 (Graduate Diploma) or 4 (Bachelor) preferred professional practice placement providers and will also have the opportunity to include a justified request not to participate in a particular professional practice placement. Reasons may include a conflict of interest or a disability that would be difficult to accommodate by the professional practice placement provider. While every effort will be made to accommodate student preferences, there will be no guarantee that a student will be placed in an organisation on their list of preferences.

3.2 Where student preferences cannot be met, SCEI-HE will ensure equitable allocation by considering factors such as accessibility needs, geographic constraints, and course requirements, and communicate the rationale to the student.

4. Appeals

4.1 Students may access the Student Complaints and Grievance Policy and Procedure HEPP03 if they have a complaint about the allocation of a professional practice placement or any other aspect of their professional practice placement.

5. Risk Assessment

- 5.1 A risk assessment will be carried out on all professional practice placement providers before a Professional Practice Placement Agreement is signed. The Professional Practice Placement Agreement will outline the responsibilities of SCEI-HE and the placement provider, and will include insurance, supervision arrangements, dispute resolution and termination clauses.
- 5.2 The risk assessment will include a visit to the placement provider's premises, an interview with potential supervisors of students, and agreement about on-site visits by SCEI-HE staff during the professional practice placement. A review of workplace safety requirements and the identification of potential hazards is an important element of the risk assessment.
- 5.3 The risk assessment will also evaluate psychological safety, including mechanisms to prevent and address harassment or discrimination, to ensure student well-being.

6. Review and Evaluation

- 6.1 Professional practice placements will be evaluated by students, SCEI-HE staff and placement providers at the end of each professional practice placement to ensure the ongoing value to both the industry partner and to future students.
- 6.2 Evaluation data will be systematically analysed to identify areas for improvement, and findings will be used to enhance future placements, with outcomes reported to the Academic Board.

PROCEDURE

1. Establishment of Professional Practice Placement

- 1.1 In selecting professional practice placement providers, due diligence is required to ensure the provider:
 - 1.1.1 is suitable for the purpose of the professional practice;
 - 1.1.2 has adequate capacity for an appropriate level of supervision on a daily basis;
 - 1.1.3 has policy and procedure in place to ensure the health and safety of students and SCEI-HE staff; and
 - 1.1.4 has sufficient resources to support the learning of the student as aligned to the course and unit outcomes.
- 1.2 A risk assessment is conducted by SCEI-HE.
- 1.3 Ensure that appropriate insurance policies are in place to cover significant risks.
- 1.4 Professional Practice Placement Agreement is executed between the placement provider and SCEI-HE.
- 1.5 Ensure that an appropriate Professional Practice Placement Agreement is signed by each student prior to their commencing their professional practice.
- 1.6 Monitor compliance with Professional Practice Placement Agreements through regular site visits or audits during placements to ensure quality standards are maintained.

2. Information to Professional Practice Placement Providers

- 2.1 Ensure that placement provider contact personnel and supervisors receive an appropriate orientation before taking a student for the first time on SCEI-HE's expectations in relation to their supervision of students, prior to the commencement of any subsequent professional practice placement.
- 2.2 Information to be provided to placement providers include:
 - 2.2.1 Purpose of professional practice and alignment to graduate and learning outcomes
 - 2.2.2 Outline the roles and responsibilities of placement provider, student and SCEI-HE
 - 2.2.3 Expected student learning outcomes
 - 2.2.4 Insurance and Work Cover arrangements including reporting of incidents
 - 2.2.5 Student induction to the workplace requirements, e.g. WHS, emergency procedure, professional behaviour and conduct, dress, daily start and finish times, break times, workplace orientation
 - 2.2.6 Model of supervision
 - 2.2.7 Communication process between all parties during placement

- 2.2.8 Attendance requirements
- 2.2.9 Complaint's process
- 2.2.10 Confidentiality of student and SCEI-HE information
- 2.2.11 Assessment requirements
- 2.2.12 SCEI-HE contact personnel and details
- 2.2.13 Standardised assessment guidelines and rubrics to ensure consistency and fairness in student evaluations
- 2.2.14 Procedure for supporting students with disabilities, including any required reasonable adjustments.

3. Information to Student

- 3.1 Provide each student with an appropriate placement workshop before they commence their professional practice placement to ensure they understand the procedural arrangements in place and what is expected of them, of the placement provider and what they can expect of SCEI-HE.
- 3.2 Information to be provided to students includes:
 - 3.2.1 Dates of professional practice
 - 3.2.2 Hours of work
 - 3.2.3 Placement provider: address, contact person, contact number
 - 3.2.4 Attendance requirements
 - 3.2.5 Procedure if absent and unable to attend professional practice
 - 3.2.6 Expected behaviour and conduct
 - 3.2.7 Safety considerations and responsibilities
 - 3.2.8 Assessment requirements
 - 3.2.9 Procedure if an incident or emergency happens during professional practice.
 - 3.2.10 Emergency protocols, including immediate steps to ensure personal safety and contact details for reporting serious incidents
 - 3.2.11 Mechanisms to report harassment, discrimination, or other well-being concerns, with access to SCEI-HE support services.

4. Responsibilities of Professional Practice Placement Provider

- 4.1 During professional practice, the placement provider should:
 - 4.1.1 Treat student and SCEI-HE information in confidence;
 - 4.1.2 Provide the student with a workplace induction including Occupational Health and Safety requirements;
 - 4.1.3 Explain the expectations regarding students' performance of tasks, behaviour, conduct, and hours of work;
 - 4.1.4 Provide the student with a briefing of the policy and procedure;
 - 4.1.5 Treat the student as a student (supernumerary) and not as a paid member of staff;
 - 4.1.6 Inform clients and staff as to the role of the student;
 - 4.1.7 Guide and support the student's work on a day-to-day basis;
 - 4.1.8 Take responsibility for the day-to-day supervision and contribution to the professional development and learning of the student during professional practice;
 - 4.1.9 Notify SCEI-HE if the student is not complying with requirements, progressing unsatisfactorily, or is absent or frequently late;
 - 4.1.10 Verify the attendance of the student whilst on placement; and
 - 4.1.11 Assist in the assessment process of the student whilst on placement.
 - 4.1.12 Implement reasonable adjustments for students with disabilities as agreed with SCEI-HE.

5. Responsibilities of the Student

- 5.1 During professional practice, the student should:
 - 5.1.1 Work supportively and sensitively during placement, particularly in relation to staff and clients;
 - 5.1.2 Follow reasonable instructions and operate in accordance with the placement provider's standards, policy and procedure;
 - 5.1.3 Work the agreed hours of work and ensure punctual attendance;
 - 5.1.4 Abide by the expected behaviours and code of conduct of both the placement provider and SCEI-HE;
 - 5.1.5 Be aware that they are a student and not an extra staff member;
 - 5.1.6 Maintain appropriate confidentiality of placement provider and their clients' information;
 - 5.1.7 Actively participate in the learning process and complete assessment tasks;

- 5.1.8 Inform the placement provider and SCEI-HE if they are absent; and
- 5.1.9 Notify SCEI-HE if there are any concerns or issues during placement or if an emergency or incident occurs during placement.

6. Responsibilities of SCEI-HE

6.1 It is the responsibility of SCEI-HE to:

- 6.1.1 Exercise due diligence in the selection of professional practice placement providers;
- 6.1.2 Ensure professional practice agreements are signed, dated and executed by all parties prior to placement commencing;
- 6.1.3 Ensure the placement provider and students are provided with an appropriate placement workshop prior to commencement;
- 6.1.4 Ensure that the student and the placement provider are informed of Insurance and Work Cover responsibilities;
- 6.1.5 Inform placement provider of SCEI-HE requirements and expectations;
- 6.1.6 Inform student and placement provider supervisor of the learning outcomes expected and assessment to be undertaken;
- 6.1.7 Provide support to the student and placement provider during the professional practice and respond to any student and/or placement provider concerns, promptly and professionally;
- 6.1.8 Monitor student progress and assess learning outcomes;
- 6.1.9 Respond to any complaints or grievances in accordance with SCEI-HE policy and procedure;
- 6.1.10 Ensure students hold current and valid security checks e.g., working with children check and national police record check prior to commencement of professional practice; and
- 6.1.11 Inform the placement provider if any issues with a student's security checks and discuss an appropriate outcome prior to professional practice commencing.
- 6.1.12 Coordinate with placement providers to identify and implement reasonable adjustments for students with disabilities.

RELATED DOCUMENTS

Student Complaints and Grievance Policy and Procedure HEPP03

LEGISLATIVE CONTEXT

Education Services for Overseas Students Act 2000

National Code of Practice for Providers of Education and Training to Overseas Students 2018, Standard 4.2

RESPONSIBILITIES

Nil

DOCUMENT AND RECORD CONTROL

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