



THE UNIVERSITY OF  
**NEWCASTLE**  
AUSTRALIA

SCHOOL OF LAW AND JUSTICE

CRIMINOLOGY PLACEMENT

**GUIDELINES FOR  
STUDENTS**

**2023**

## **CRIMINOLOGY PLACEMENT**

### **GUIDELINES FOR STUDENTS 2023**

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#### **1. INTRODUCTION**

The University of Newcastle's Criminology Department, to operationalize the University of Newcastle's goals of providing a work integrated learning experience for all students, has integrated a compulsory placement course. The following information will help us offer you the most rewarding and skills-focussed experience. Congratulations on making it to this point in your academic career!

#### **2. THE PLACEMENT PROGRAM**

**On successful completion of this course, students will be able to:**

1. Apply advanced criminal justice skills relevant to working with offenders and victims of crime in a vocational setting
2. Evaluate outcomes for offenders and victims in a vocational setting, demonstrating expertise
3. Construct a report relating to working with offenders or victims of crime
4. Show advanced professional knowledge through the undertaking of case-based tasks related to working with offenders and victims of crime in a vocational setting
5. Critique issues facing criminal justice professionals in the workplace
6. Employ professional knowledge gained within your own professional practice

#### **3. PURPOSE OF WORKPLACE EXPERIENCE**

The purpose of workplace experience is to provide a student with an opportunity –

1. to apply, test and reflect on what has been learned during programmed training, while interacting with experts working in the field of criminology, other staff, government officers and clients; and
2. to develop an understanding of criminology and of the student's aptitude for engaging with different aspects of the criminal justice system.

In achieving these aims, students concurrently undertake:

- a) supervised placement dealing with real clients, either internally at the University of Newcastle Bridge of Hope Innocence Initiative and externally with host organizations;
- b) clinical modules involving simulated clinical exercises in CRIM2001; and
- c) academic criminology and/or law courses.

Furthermore, these skills are learnt across specific practice areas and within an ethical context with due regard to the principles of professional responsibility.

#### **4. EXTERNAL PLACEMENT WITH COMMUNITY ORGANIZATIONS**

Placement at external agencies including government departments (Community Corrections, the Police Department) and non-governmental organizations are important complements to the the Criminology degree and ensure students are exposed to a wide range of experiences in different professional settings. Students doing external placement are firstly required to have completed the prerequisite course CRIM2001: Criminal Justice in Practice. After successful completion of this course, students are required to complete a further 140 hours of placement. These 140 hours may be completed at one or more different external agencies.

#### **5. THE EDUCATIONAL AIMS OF A PROFESSIONAL PLACEMENT**

The professional placement aims to ensure students:

##### ***Learn to become a professional***

- By having contact and communication with government and community service organisations and the wider community within a professional context;
- By assuming an appropriate level of responsibility;
- By understanding that the rules of professional conduct: to be courteous, honest, diligent, competent, to act with integrity and maintain client confidentiality;
- By understanding the responsibilities of different people working with and/or within the criminal justice system
- By understanding that appearance, demeanour and behaviour have an important role.

##### ***Learn about professional ethics***

- By confronting ethical issues that often involve uncertainty, professional conflict and dilemma;
- By learning to identify and resolve ethical concerns and dilemmas, and seek appropriate expertise and assistance when required.

##### ***Gain confidence working in a professional office environment***

- By working with professionals and support staff;
- By using initiative, problem-solving, organisational, time management, delegation and research skills;
- By using information technology.

##### ***Further develop practical skills introduced in classroom exercises***

- By effective communication, interviewing clients, taking instructions, writing letters and drafting documents;
- By observing experienced others advise clients, undertake negotiations and conduct advocacy.
- By having the opportunity to apply theoretical learning in a practical context;
- By appreciating the need to always research, read and learn as the need arises.

##### ***Learn to solve problems***

- By working and contributing as part of a team to ensure that all appropriate issues are considered;
- By thoroughly researching the problem to identify the relevant issues;

***Constantly strive for improvement***

- By reflecting upon placement experiences and how they might have been approached differently;
- By exposing students to the importance of pro bono contributions of various organizations, gaining an awareness of the barriers that some people face in accessing justice and the legal system, and responding to demands for reform in an analytical and public spirited fashion.

**6. YOUR RESPONSIBILITIES**

The placement is not merely to be regarded as ‘work experience’ or ‘observation’. Rather, it is an opportunity for the student to obtain high quality training and learn about working within the criminal justice system from an experienced practitioner in a ‘hands on’ way. Some of our placement partners require extensive background checks before commencing the placement. Please check your emails frequently to ensure the documents are submitted in a timely manner. If the organization asks you directly to complete background checks or other on-boarding documents, it is your responsibility to complete them. Your course coordinator is here to support you and answer questions but the ultimate responsibility for successfully completing a placement lies with the student.

The specific nature of the work to be performed by the student during placement is a matter for the supervisor to determine. Students are expected to produce a report or work on a project that directly benefits the organisation. We recognize that the range of experiences undertaken may depend on the supervisor, time constraints, the appropriateness of student participation and whether the client consents. All days and hours of placement are set directly with the host organization (with the exception of Aboriginal Legal Services).

Experience has shown that both the supervisor and their student will get more out of the placement if:

- a) supervisors provide clear expectations of what is required of the student, a time frame and an opportunity for the student to ask questions; and
- b) a short time is set aside each day to discuss the work the student has been involved in.

A **Placement Arrangement Checklist (Appendix 1)** has been included in these Guidelines to assist supervisors and students in having a discussion about placement arrangements. It is recommended that the supervisor and student set aside time to discuss the relevant points raised in the checklist upon commencement of placement.

**7. STUDENTS’ CODE OF PRACTICE**

Students on placement must abide by the following:

1. Attend the mandatory, pre-placement orientation with your course coordinator.
2. Check university emails frequently and supply requested documentation in a timely manner.
3. Attend placement regularly as arranged and be punctual.
4. Be courteous and polite to all people with whom they come into contact when on placement.
5. Be honest, diligent and act with integrity to earn the trust and respect of those with whom they are working.
6. Upload a copy of their signed **Confidentiality Agreement (Appendix 2)** into Sonia. If your host organization has their own agreement, this step is not necessary.

7. Complete assigned tasks and return them to their supervisor within agreed time frames.
8. Use initiative to seek out work where necessary, and to ensure they are certain of what is expected of them.
9. Take the opportunity to ask questions when appropriate.
10. Maintain an accurate **Record of Hours (Appendix 3)** signed by the supervisor within a reasonable time of task completion.
11. Bring to the immediate attention of the Course Coordinator or the Placement Officer any concerns about their placement.
12. Within one week of the completion of the placement period upload to SONIA:
  - **Record of Hours (Appendix 3)** form duly completed and signed by supervisor and student;
  - *The written assignments for the course must be uploaded in Canvas by Week 13 of the semester.*

## 8. CONFIDENTIALITY

Ethical considerations when working in relation to the criminal justice system are paramount. These will be discussed in our pre-placement orientation and should remain at the forefront of your thoughts throughout the placement.

If the organization does not have their own Confidentiality Agreement, students will provide upload a signed **Confidentiality Agreement (Appendix 2)** into Sonia. Students also cover issues of confidentiality in their induction training at the University of Newcastle. The supervisor may wish to reiterate to students the fundamental importance of keeping a client's affairs confidential.

## 9. SUPERVISOR'S OBLIGATIONS UNDER THE FAIR WORK ACT

Supervisors should ensure they are aware of their responsibilities under the Fair Work Act (Cth) 2009. Students undertaking hours of professional placement each year during their Practice Program Course are classified as 'Vocational Placements'. The placement is a mandatory component of the Criminology Placement Course and unpaid placements are ordinarily not covered by the Fair Work Act. Any hours students undertake in addition to the mandatory hours do not fall into this category and supervisors will need to comply with the minimum wage and other entitlements as provided under the Fair Work Act and National Employment Standards and modern awards. If the placement is paid the supervisor/employer must comply with the minimum wage and other entitlements provided under the Fair Work Act and National Employment Standards. The following links provide additional information on these requirements:

<http://www.fairwork.gov.au/resources/fact-sheets/employer-obligations/pages/internships-vocational-placements-and-unpaid-work.aspx>

[http://www.fwc.gov.au/documents/modern\\_awards/award/ma000116/default.htm](http://www.fwc.gov.au/documents/modern_awards/award/ma000116/default.htm)

The School of Law and Justice is unable to retrospectively approve placement hours already undertaken prior to a signed application to credit placement form being received.

## 10. SUPERVISOR'S OBLIGATIONS UNDER THE WORK HEALTH AND SAFETY ACT

Supervisors must ensure that they comply with their obligations under the Work Health and Safety Act (NSW) 2011. This may include providing an induction and safety briefing for placement students.

## **APPENDICES**

- Appendix 1 – Placement Arrangement Checklist
- Appendix 2 – Student’s Confidentiality Agreement
- Appendix 3 – Record of Hours
- Appendix 4 – Frequently Asked Questions

## **CONTACTS**

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## Placement Arrangement Checklist

The University of Newcastle recommends the student and supervisor spend some time discussing the following practical arrangements at the commencement of a professional placement:

- Which day(s) each week will the student be attending placement?
- What time should the student arrive for the placement each morning?
- Is there a set lunch time each day or will the supervisor indicate the appropriate time to break for lunch each day?
- Will the student be allocated a desk/workstation for the duration of the placement or will that change each placement day depending on office resources?
- Does the student require a password to access the computer system?
- Will the student have partial or full access to the firm's/organisation's computer system?
- If the student is unable to attend placement due to illness who should the student call or email?
- How will the supervisor get in contact with the student out of hours to advise of any change of plans regarding placement?
- As timesheets need to be signed each day, when should the student ask the supervisor to sign off?
- If the student has questions about office procedures, who is the most appropriate person to speak to?
- If the student has questions about a task they have been given should the supervisor be the first contact or is there another staff member the student should approach first?
- Is there a preferred time of day that the student should consult with the supervisor for assistance and direction regarding the task?
- How will feedback be provided to the student during the placement?



Newcastle School of Law and Justice  
The University of Newcastle

**Confidentiality Agreement - Student Agreement to Keep Information Confidential**

I, .....  
(name)

.....  
(address)

acknowledge that in spending time on Professional Placement in organisations associated with the criminal justice system and/or at the University of Newcastle I must adhere to the following principles:

1. *I acknowledge that:*
  - a. Criminologists have a duty to keep casework material confidential. They must also ensure that any other person under their supervision also keeps the information confidential.
  - b. Confidential information belongs to the client/case and not any other person. It is not the property of any person other than the client/case and no one has the right to deal with it as they wish.
  
2. *I understand that:*
  - a. If information was revealed a person, who is a client of the organisation, might have their feelings, or their family’s feelings, hurt. I also understand that legal action might be taken against the organisation or the person who revealed the information.
  - b. Any information that I learn during my professional placement that might identify particular clients/cases may not be told to anyone, no matter how tempting it may be to do so.
  
3. *I undertake to:*
  - a. Immediately tell the Director or my supervisor if I personally know any of the clients or any person mentioned in a case, (because it may not be appropriate for me to have access to that client’s information in those circumstances).
  - b. Only look at papers relating to clients matters/cases when it is necessary and not to look through files or papers without permission. Not to make photocopies of any documents without permission.
  - c. Not discuss any legal matter with any person outside the organization.
  - d. Keep all client/clients’/case information confidential.
  
4. Generally, I may discuss a client’s matter/case in broad terms without identifying the client/case or giving any information that might allow the client/case to be identified but I must exercise great care in doing so. There is nothing wrong with discussing an abstract point as long as doing so will not enable identification of the client/case.

I acknowledge that I have read and understand this Agreement to Keep Information Confidential and that I had the opportunity to ask questions and have them satisfactorily answered before signing this agreement.

Signature:..... Date:...../...../.....





**RECORD OF HOURS FOR PROFESSIONAL PLACEMENT**

<b>STUDENT NAME:</b>								
<b>SUPERVISOR'S NAME:</b>				<b>FIRM NAME:</b>				
Date	Brief Description of Activity	Time Commenced	Lunch		Time Finished	Hours Completed		Supervisor Signature
			From	To		Hours	Minutes	
<b>TOTAL HOURS</b>								

**NOTE:** Record of hours to be uploaded to SONIA within one week of the completion of the placement period .  
Please aim to keep records in date order.

<b>Supervisor's Signature:</b>	<b>Date:</b> /    /	<b>Student's Signature:</b>
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## **Frequently Asked Questions**

Undertaking a placement is an exciting opportunity and we understand you may have lots of questions. Many of these are answered in the student guidebook and on the Canvas page associated with the course. Below are questions students in the past have asked:

### **Are there prerequisites for this class?**

Yes. Students must successfully complete CRIM2001 Criminal Justice in Practice to enrol in the placement course.

### **How many hours is my placement?**

This will depend on whether you are required to enrol in CRIM 3001 (80 hours) or CRIM 3002 (140 hours). Please reach out to your program advisor to confirm in which course you should enrol.

### **What is an expression of interest?**

After you have completed CRIM 2001, you will receive an email inviting you to log onto Sonia (our software for recording placement hours) and select which placement partners you are interested in being placed with. Generally, this email will be sent out one month before the semester starts. It is very important you are checking your university email and respond promptly so we can make every effort to place you with your preferred host.

### **Can I organize my own placement?**

Maybe. These are dealt with on a case-by-case basis. Please contact the program coordinator directly.

### **Can I do a placement at my current job?**

Maybe. These are dealt with on a case-by-case basis. Please contact the program coordinator directly.

### **Who sets the days and hours for my placement?**

Placement days and hours are all set directly with the host organization. The only exception to this is placements with Aboriginal Legal Services. If you are placed with them, your course coordinator will work with you, the Law School, and Aboriginal Legal Services to arrange placement hours.

### **Where do I log my placement hours?**

The hours sheet is found in the student guidebook and on the Canvas site. Once you and your supervisor has signed these, they need to be uploaded into Sonia.

### **My supervisor did not sign my hours sheet, does that matter?**

Hour sheets must be signed by the supervisor. Please contact them for a signature so you can receive credit for your hours.

### **I missed placement hours, do I need to make these up?**

Yes, there is a set minimum number of hours that must be completed to earn credit for the class.

### **I did my hours, does that mean I completed the course?**

No, there is a mandatory orientation meeting the first week of placement where the course coordinator will go over the other course requirements. There are several pieces of written assessment associated with the placement course. It is your responsibility to complete all course requirements and upload the written assignments into Canvas. The course outline on Canvas will provide more information.