



**POSTGRADUATE  
COUNSELLING & HUMAN SERVICES  
COURSES**

**PROSPECTIVE STUDENT GUIDE  
2010**

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### 2009 LA TROBE UNIVERSITY OPEN DAYS

The 2009 La Trobe University Days will be held on the following dates:

- Sunday 16 August – Bendigo
- Friday 21 August – Shepparton
- Sunday 23 August – Albury-Wodonga
- 27 July to 14 August - Mildura
- Sunday 30 August – Bundoora (10am to 4pm)

Please visit the La Trobe University website for further details:

<http://www.latrobe.edu.au/openday/>

Information in this booklet is current as of May 2009. Every effort has been made to ensure that the material in this publication was correct at the time of printing, but we advise that you check with the Department of Counselling & Psychological Health in the School of Public Health before acting on the information published in this brochure.

## INTRODUCTION

Dear Prospective Student,

Thank you for your enquiry regarding the Graduate Diploma in Counselling and Human Services program offered at La Trobe University, your interest in the course is appreciated. The material below gives a broad general outline of our post graduate options including entry requirements. Postgraduate Counselling and Human Services studies at La Trobe University are part of the Counselling and Psychological Health Department within the School of Public Health.

The Graduate Diploma in Counselling and Human Services is designed both for people who wish to practice as counsellors and for those who wish to exercise a major counselling function within another profession. It offers training of sufficient duration and depth to equip the successful student to practise professionally in the role of counsellor. Continued supervision from qualified counsellor is strongly recommended following completion of the course and is a necessary prerequisite for eventual membership of a Psychotherapy and Counselling Federation of Australia (PACFA) member organisation.

The course articulates into the Master of Counselling and Human Services.

### Course Enquiries:

#### Course Coordinator (Academic Enquiries)

Stephen Andrew  
Telephone: +61 3 9479 3697  
Email: [s.andrew@latrobe.edu.au](mailto:s.andrew@latrobe.edu.au)

#### Student Services Officer (Administrative Enquiries)

Blair Herbert  
Telephone: +61 3 9479 5996  
Email: [blair.herbert@latrobe.edu.au](mailto:blair.herbert@latrobe.edu.au)

### Postal Address:

Division of Health Studies  
School of Public Health  
Department of Counselling and Psychological Health

La Trobe University  
Bundoora, Victoria 3086  
Australia  
Phone: 61 3 9479 5996  
Fax: 61 3 9479 1783  
Website: <http://www.latrobe.edu.au/publichealth>

### Application Closing Date: 31 October 2009

Completed applications can be sent directly to:

Blair Herbert  
Student Services Officer  
School of Public Health  
La Trobe University  
BUNDOORA VIC 3086

Late applications may be considered subject to availability of places.

## GRADUATE DIPLOMA IN COUNSELLING & HUMAN SERVICES

### Admission Requirements

Applicants should be graduates, but those with other professional qualifications or who can demonstrate appropriate academic skills will be considered. In the selection of applicants, preference will be given to those who have prior experience in counselling or a counselling-related facilitative role. Admission is based on demonstrated academic ability and demonstration of suitable personal qualities at interview.

Stage One - The first stage of the application process includes;

- \*\*an Application for Admission to Postgraduate Coursework Program form (Available to download from the La Trobe University school website <http://www.latrobe.edu.au/publichealth> or by contacting the Student Services Officer on 9497 5996)

\*\*NB – An Application for Admission form needs to include; academic transcripts, two letters of reference and a certified copy of either a birth certificate or passport.

### Stage Two

The interview will be held only after the first stage of the application process has been completed. Applicants who successfully pass the first stage will be advised that they have been accepted to the interview stage with department staff.

### Course structure

The course consists of 120 credit points of study (5 units) and includes two semesters of clinical placement with supervision.

Teaching period	Unit code	Unit title	Credit points
SEM 1	PHE4CFA	Counselling Fieldwork A	20
SEM 2	PHE4CFB	Counselling Fieldwork B	20
ALL YR	PHE4CTP	Counselling Skills: Theory and Practice	40
SEM 1	PHE4APC	Assessment Processes in Counselling	20
SEM 2	PHE4PEC	Professional and Ethical Considerations in Counselling	20

### Course fees

**Domestic students:** a complete list of fees is available from the University website: [http://www.latrobe.edu.au/acadserv/fees/2009/fees\\_pg.php](http://www.latrobe.edu.au/acadserv/fees/2009/fees_pg.php) (Please note: these fees are for 2009 and are subject to change for 2010).

Domestic students are also eligible to apply for the Federal Government's FEE-HELP assistance. FEE-HELP is a loan scheme that assists eligible students to pay their tuition fees. For further information about FEE-HELP, please visit the Going to Uni website: <http://www.goingtouni.gov.au>

The Australian Taxation Office has advised that you may claim tuition fees against your income tax if you are employed in the field of your study and can show that your study relates to your work. It is recommended that you discuss this further with your tax agent.

**International students:** International applicants should contact LaTrobe International to obtain an International prospectus which includes information on admission requirements, English language requirements, course fees, accommodation, student visas, etc.

Email: [International@latrobe.edu.au](mailto:International@latrobe.edu.au) or visit the website for further information [www.latrobe.edu.au/international](http://www.latrobe.edu.au/international)

CRICOS provider number (Bundoora, Albury Wodonga Campuses): 00115M

CRICOS provider number (Bendigo Campus): 00119G

## MASTER OF COUNSELLING & HUMAN SERVICES

The Master of Counselling and Human Services provides an opportunity for students to build on the knowledge and skills gained in the Graduate Diploma in Counselling and Human Services or equivalent courses and to achieve a professional qualification in counselling at an advanced level.

### Admission requirements

Applicants should have a four-year degree in a related discipline or a Bachelor degree, plus an approved fourth year of study plus relevant counselling experience. Admission is based on demonstrated academic ability and demonstration of suitable personal qualities at the interview. Applicants must lodge a written application that meets the admission requirements and take part in an interview.

### Course structure

The course consists of 120 credit points of coursework and is usually taken over two years, with the specialism taken before or after the core units. The core units (80 credit points) must be taken as a sequence in a single year.

Teaching period	Unit code	Unit title	Credit points
ALL YEAR	PHE5SAC	Specialised Approaches to Counselling*	40
SEM 1	PHE5AAP	Advanced Assessment Processes in Counselling	20
SEM 1	PHE5CTP	Advanced Counselling Theory and Practice	20
SEM 2	PHE5APE	Advanced Professional and Ethical Considerations in Counselling	20
SEM 2	PHE5RBA	Research Based Approaches to Counselling Practice.	20

\*It is strongly recommended that students fulfil the requirements of this unit by enrolling in units PHE5PET (Process Experiential: Integrating Practice) and PHE5PEI (Process Experiential: Theory and Practice). Under special circumstances, applicants who fulfil the requirement of this unit by enrolling in one of the approved external specialisms: Relationships Counselling; Gestalt Therapy; Grief Counselling; Psychodrama; Solution Orientated Counselling will be considered.

### Course fees

**Domestic students:** a complete list of fees is available from the University website:

[http://www.latrobe.edu.au/acadserv/fees/2009/fees\\_pg.php](http://www.latrobe.edu.au/acadserv/fees/2009/fees_pg.php) (Please note: these fees are for 2009 and are subject to change for 2010).

Domestic students are also eligible to apply for the Federal Government's FEE-HELP assistance. FEE-HELP is a loan scheme that assists eligible students to pay their tuition fees. For further information about FEE-HELP, please visit the Going to Uni website:

<http://www.goingtouni.gov.au>

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Email: [International@latrobe.edu.au](mailto:International@latrobe.edu.au) or visit the website for further information

[www.latrobe.edu.au/international](http://www.latrobe.edu.au/international)

CRICOS provider number (Bundoora, Albury Wodonga Campuses): 00115M

CRICOS provider number (Bendigo Campus): 00119G

## **FAQs (Frequently Asked Questions) – Graduate Diploma in Counselling & Human Services**

This is a list of some of the most frequently asked questions about the Counselling and Human Services courses offered by La Trobe University:

### **What are the significant features of this course?**

The Graduate Diploma in Counselling and Human Services (GDC&HS) is a postgraduate, interdisciplinary counselling course, based on person-centred values, and taught experientially. Though it has its roots in a counselling psychology course that has been taught at La Trobe University for more than 30 years, the Graduate Diploma draws on a number of other disciplines besides psychology. These include literature, sociology, and philosophy as well as other arts and humanities. The course also gives consideration to the current social and ecological context of counselling as well as its historical legacies.

The course adopts a “cohort model” of teaching whereby students spend a day a week together in work designed to further personal development and counselling skills and introduce a range of counselling theories. The cohort design means that students become a resource to each other and often form peer supervision and support groups that continue into their professional life. Students speak of finding the course stimulating, demanding, enjoyable, and personally and academically challenging.

So far as we are aware, no other course in Australia offers this highly successful combination of an experiential, person-centred cohort model of teaching and learning.

### **What outcomes can I expect from this course?**

The GDC&HS will help to test your vocational interest in counselling as well as give you practice in and feedback on your counselling skills. It will introduce you to the diversity of the counselling field, to ethical concepts essential for professional practice, to practical and conceptual issues of assessment, and to areas of possible specialisation. Group-work and working in threes (trios) and sixes (cell work) will offer challenges and support. Finding and completing the clinical placement component of the course gives you a broader view of how and where counselling is situated in the community, further expands your skills, and allows you to make useful contacts.

Students can also access the counselling service at the La Trobe Counselling Service free of charge for further personal work. Students who successfully pass the course will have completed many hours of face-to-face counselling practice, hold a strong, critical understanding of psychotherapeutic theory, possess an ability to provide competent initial assessment client states and behaviours, and embody a sound notion of the principles of ethical practice.

### **What are the entry requirements for this course?**

Applicants should be able to demonstrate a high level of academic achievement (usually a completed undergraduate degree), some experience working in the field of counselling (either paid or volunteer), and present authentically at a selection interview.

### **What sort of degree do I need to apply for this course?**

Since this is an interdisciplinary counselling course, various first degrees are acceptable and it is not necessary to have psychology in your degree. (If you do not have a first degree, see the relevant section below). We will be looking for evidence that you understand the requirements of an academic environment and that you can write coherently and thoughtfully.

### **What prior experience should I have?**

We look for people with some initial counselling training and experience. Often this experience is gained by working as a volunteer, perhaps in telephone counselling. For example, we recommend the Lifeline training because it pays close attention to a person-centred philosophy and skills and emphasises the critical role of supervision. Many of our applicants come from professions such as nursing and other “para-medical” professions, teaching, religious ministry etc in which counselling skills – sometimes formally learned and sometimes intuitively practised - form part of the everyday work.

**What happens in the selection interview?**

The interview takes place with a staff member from the department and usually one or two students who have completed the course. Our aim is to ascertain the candidate's personal suitability for the course. Research tells us that quality of engagement, tolerance of ambiguity and flexibility are important variables in the counselling process. The interview is not a one way street. We will reflect on the nature of the relationship you establish with us at this time and can give you feedback about our own observations at the conclusion of the interview, if you wish. There is a sense in which you cannot "prepare" for this interview. It is best to simply "be yourself". Besides the qualities noted above, we are looking for evidence of authenticity. We are not looking for perfection!

**What other selection criteria apply?**

We value your capacity to reflect on your life experience and what you have learned from that, and your reflections on your counselling experience or counselling related work. We value experience you may have had as a client of counselling and your capacity to make sense of that experience.

**How competitive is entry to this course?**

We interview about 100 applicants each year for 24-27 places.

**Can I claim credit(s) for prior learning?**

For many people who enter our program, becoming a counsellor involves a significant career-change, even if they have made use of counselling skills in their previous work. People in the Graduate Diploma come from a wide variety of work settings with a wide variety of qualifications – from PhD's to professional degrees or less formal learning experiences. Because of this and because of the cohort nature of the course, described above, Credit/Advanced Standing for units are not usually granted.

**Is it possible to gain special entry without a degree?**

Special entry, without the completion of a first degree, is sometimes possible. It must be emphasised, however, that the course assumes a good working knowledge of academic requirements. By this we mean the ability to research, reflect, think critically and write at a level expected at the conclusion of an undergraduate degree. If there are any doubts about a student's capacity to meet these requirements, we would recommend enrolment in one or two single units at undergraduate level as a way of testing out abilities. We recognise that from time to time, individuals accumulate significant experience in a counselling-related field, without having enrolled in a first degree. We are always willing to consider applications from such individuals and willing to assist them to consider their options.

**How is the course structured?**

The Graduate Diploma is a full time course that can be completed in either one year or two. The course can be completed in one year but our normal recommendation is that the three "core units" taught on a Tuesday be completed as a cohort, whilst the clinical placement component be completed in second year. The core units are taught over two semesters. They occupy 26 days (9am-5pm Tuesdays) at La Trobe's Bundoora campus. These are taken as two 13 week semesters.

Over these 26 days, students do the year-long unit PHE4CTP (Counselling Skills: Theory and Practice [40pts]) as well as PHE4APC (Assessment processes in Counselling [20pts] in semester 1) and PHE4PEC (Professional and Ethical Considerations in Counselling [20pts] in semester 2).

The course also includes a minimum of 26 days of clinical placement, normally taken at the rate of one day a week. Placements are found by students but we provide some support in this process as we have developed placement arrangements with various counselling providers. On-site supervision from agency supervisors is required on at least a fortnightly basis and La Trobe staff liaise with your supervisors on placement. Students are required in this year to also attend reflective practice seminars. These consist of 13 two hour seminars offered at a number of different times throughout the week. Further details on clinical placement requirements and expectations can be found in our Placement Package document.

**If this is a full-time course, how come I am only required on campus on a Tuesday?**

Although Tuesday is the only day where students are required to attend on campus, the course places significant other time demands on you. This includes placement (at least one day per week if you do placement in the same year as the core units), and Reflective Practice (two hours per fortnight) In addition, we encourage students to engage in peer-to-peer counselling practice outside of class time. Then there is the prescribed and recommended reading, reflecting, writing for your journal, researching and writing for assignments, and so on. In an effort to keep the cost to you as low as possible, we compress elements of the course and attempt to make best use of our time together. Invariably much of the work needed to complete the course occurs away from the university grounds.

**Are police checks required?**

An increasing number of health care agencies are requiring students to obtain a police check prior to commencing placements. When a police check is required, staff of the placement agency will decide whether the placement can proceed once they receive the police report. Students who are refused placement at an agency because of their police record may find that their course progression is delayed, or in extreme circumstances, that the completion of the course is not possible. Students are required to meet the cost of the police check.

**Do I need to have immunizations for placement?**

The Faculty of Health Sciences recommends that students are immunised for a selection of infectious diseases and as a minimum seek medical advice as to whether this is required based on the potential agency in which you are placed.

**Are the fortnightly Reflective Practice Group sessions held during working hours or is there an option of meeting after-hours or on a Tuesday?**

Some after-hour's sessions are offered. Late Tuesday may be considered from time to time for students who are completing placement in their first year - although this is not ideal as Tuesdays are very intense days!

**Could I undertake placement either within my current workplace or locally?**

While it may be sometimes technically possible to complete your student placement at your workplace, we seriously encourage you to seek your placement at another organisation. An independent placement reduces the problems associated with dual roles (student/employee) and increases the variety of counselling experience you receive.

**Can the 26 days of placement be done as a block?**

No. Occasionally two days a week is accepted, but we want students to experience at least some longer counselling relationships. Learning over a longer period also conforms to the goals and requirements of the Psychotherapy and Counselling Federation of Australia (PACFA). See below for further details of this organisation.

**Is there a midyear intake into the Grad Dip CHS?**

There is no midyear intake to the Graduate Diploma.

**Is the Grad Dip offered in external mode?**

Because of the experiential nature of the Course, this is not possible.

**Is it possible to undertake the course and do any of the components at La Trobe's country campuses or the city campus?**

Units are not offered outside of the Bundoora campus. Occasionally, students from country centres (such as Ballarat, Bendigo or Albury Wodonga) opt to travel to Melbourne to do the "hands-on" part of the course, and are able to do the placement component more locally. We are happy to assist you to make a realistic assessment of the workability of such an arrangement.

### **What professional accreditation is needed to practise counselling in Australia?**

Counselling in Australia is not currently regulated by legislation. However, the counselling profession in Australia is moving towards effective self-regulating through the Psychotherapy and Counselling Federation of Australia (PACFA), which accredits member organisations, and also keeps a register to which individual counsellors may apply.

Many of our graduates have joined The Counselling and Psychotherapy Association of Victoria (CAPAV), which holds constituent membership with PACFA. CAPAV is currently reviewing courses for approval. Graduates of the course normally require further supervised practice to meet the minimum of 50 hours of one-to-one supervision, specified by CAPAV and PACFA. Students may therefore find it advantageous to negotiate more than the minimum supervision requirements during the course.

### **What Code of Ethics informs the Graduate Diploma?**

We use the PACFA code of ethics as our reference point. The Grad Dip includes a Professional Practice and Ethics unit that draws explicitly from this document. See: [www.pacfa.org.au](http://www.pacfa.org.au)

### **What employment opportunities are available to graduates of this course?**

Our graduates work in a wide range of settings. Some continue in existing careers but make use of their counselling skills (in health and community services, education, youth work, organisational coaching etc). Many, however, find work as counsellors - in TAFES, schools, community centres, drug and alcohol agencies, church agencies, relationship counselling organisations, private practice etc).

Counselling is a relatively 'new' profession which continues to establish itself. Psychologists and social workers have a history of being better recognised and preferred in many agencies. This situation appears to be changing due to the profession being increasingly recognised and valued by employers, the efforts of professional organisations such as PACFA in raising the profile of counselling in the health industry, and by the fact that graduates from programs like the Graduate Diploma have been working successfully as counsellors for many years. (Each year we invite former students to return to La Trobe to address current students and talk about life in the world of work).

Job advertisements in newspapers have started to ask for eligibility for PACFA membership alongside the more traditional requests for APS (psychology) or AASW (social work) affiliation. While you will find some jobs specifically for counsellors in the newspapers, finding work seems to depend more on establishing contacts and credibility through your placement, honorary work, previous employment and contacts etc.

### **Will the completion of the Grad Dip enable me to be fully qualified to practise as a private counsellor?**

Counselling is not regulated by law - anyone can offer it. However, we consider it unwise to do so without proper training and the accountability of belonging to a professional counselling organisation. Reputable counsellors will probably belong to PACFA member organisations.

The Graduate Diploma should be seen as a stepping-stone towards a career in professional counselling, rather than a final qualification. Besides equipping you to work effectively under supervision in the counselling field, the course will assist you to identify gaps in your knowledge base that can be attended to in a variety of ways. We strongly recommend further training such as the Master of Counselling and Human services at La Trobe or other similar course.

Some of our graduates do work privately but it usually takes a couple of years to build up a practice. Your success will depend on your networks, credibility, and peer support and (in the longer term) referrals from colleagues and your ex-clients. Ideally, we think private practice should follow at least two years of full time study (or equivalent) and/or some supervised agency experience.

### **What if I want to become a psychologist?**

An interdisciplinary counselling course such as the Graduate Diploma will not help you become a psychologist. Instead you need an undergraduate degree with a major in psychology and entry into a fourth year in psychology, before completing a Masters in psychology. These courses need to be recognised by the Australian Psychological Society (APS). If you have an undergraduate degree without psychology you may be able to pick up a psychology major (often offered as a diploma).

### **How do I decide whether to apply for the Graduate Diploma in Counselling & Human Services or the Master in Counselling & Human Services?**

The Masters degree assumes the core skills and experiences that are learned in the Graduate Diploma. As noted, we would recommend that students who complete the Graduate Diploma seriously consider enrolling in the Masters degree to shore up and strengthen their understanding and their competencies.

Sometimes students who have completed some other form of training are not sure if what they have already done would be equivalent to the Graduate Diploma. In cases such as this, you are welcome to contact a staff member to discuss the matter. Alternatively, you should feel free to apply for the course for which you believe you are better suited. At the time of the interview (or afterwards) we will give you feedback on the level we think is appropriate. Sometimes we suggest that a Masters applicant would be better suited to the Graduate Diploma – sometimes vice versa. There is no shame in getting the application level “wrong”. The main objective is to offer you a course that best suits your needs.

### **How much are the course fees and are they upfront or can you apply for a postgraduate loan scheme?**

Fees for 2009 are \$13,370 for the Graduate Diploma in Counselling and Human Services, for domestic students. Please note: this is subject to change for 2010. We would also like to remind you of the availability of the Federal Government’s FEE-HELP assistance.

FEE-HELP is a loan scheme that assists eligible students to pay their tuition fees. FEE-HELP can cover all or part of a student’s tuition fees. The Government pays the amount of the loan directly to the student’s higher education provider or to Open Universities Australia in the case of its students. Students repay their loan through the tax system once their income is above the minimum threshold for compulsory repayment.

For further information please visit the Going to Uni website at: <http://www.goingtouni.gov.au/> or call the enquiry line on 1800 020 108

The Australian Taxation Office has advised that you may claim fees against your income tax if you are employed in the field of your study and can show that your study relates to your work

### **When does the course commence and how do I go about applying for the course?**

The next intake for the course will be February 2010, closing date for applications is **31 October 2009** for interviews in early November.

### **Information Night**

An information night for prospective students will be held on Thursday 10 September from 6 to 8pm. Further information about this event and a link to the online registration page is available at: [www.latrobe.edu.au/pgexpo](http://www.latrobe.edu.au/pgexpo)

**It is strongly recommended that prospective applicants attend this information evening.**

Prospective students are also invited to attend the University Open Day held on August 30 2009 at the Bundoora Campus.

Further information is available from the School of Public Health website:

<http://www.latrobe.edu.au/publichealth/>

### **How does a prospective international student apply?**

International applicants should contact La Trobe International to obtain an International Prospectus which includes information on admissions requirements, English language requirements, course fees, accommodation, student visas, etc. Email:

[International@latrobe.edu.au](mailto:International@latrobe.edu.au)

Web: <http://www.latrobe.edu.au/international/>

## **GRADUATE DIPLOMA IN COUNELLING & HUMAN SERVICES – FAQS ABOUT PLACEMENT / FIELDWORK**

### **What can I expect to gain from placement?**

Placements will provide you with the opportunity to develop your skills as a therapist as well as your overall sense of yourself as a therapist. You will have the opportunity to observe and participate in the range of activities that occur in an agency and experience how those activities and demands impact on you, your colleagues and the clients who attend the agency.

You will be expected to set goals with your agency supervisor that meet your needs and allow you to maximise your experience.

### **How many hours do I have to do?**

You are required to complete 78 hours of FACE-TO-FACE counselling spread over at least 26 weeks. Precise hours of attendance will be something you negotiate with the agency where you complete your placement, but attendance at least one day a week is expected. Some agencies may require you to attend for two days or for a twelve month period.

### **How many clients do I have to see at any one time?**

On average, you should see 3 clients per week. It is recommended that you have no more than 4 in total at any one time.

### **Can I do placement over less than or more than the 26 week period of classes?**

Students are expected to complete a MINIMUM of 26 weeks in placement during the academic year. The reasoning behind this is to give you ample opportunity to experience the full range of activities and processes at the agency and to be able to get to know the agency and how it works in a thorough way. It also provides you with the opportunity to engage in long term work with a client and to follow clients through the therapeutic journey.

**As noted above, some agencies may require you to be at the agency for more than the 26 weeks. This needs to be negotiated right at the beginning and discussed with the Placement Co-ordinator at the university. It's OK to do more or spread it out; we just want to make sure you are adequately supported, especially during non-teaching periods.**

### **Can I do a placement where group work or telephone counselling is the main focus?**

The opportunity to do group work is a bonus associated with some placements. However, the MAJORITY of your placement hours must be INDIVIDUAL counselling. Group work, telephone counselling, running training or psycho-educational programs must not exceed more than 1/3 of your placement hours. Your involvement in these activities MUST BE DISCUSSED with the Placement Co-ordinator at the university prior to the commencement of the placement.

### **How do other activities count towards placement?**

Other activities, such as taking referrals, participation in agency meetings, professional development, etc, are considered part of the overall placement experience and are not credited towards the 78 client hours.

### **Can I do more than one placement?**

If for some reason your placement is terminated before you have accumulated your 78 hours or it becomes apparent early on in the placement that you will not be able to accumulate these hours, you may need to arrange a second placement. **Students should not participate in more than one placement at a time.**

### **What is a Reflective Practice Group?**

Reflective Practice Groups are small groups of up to eight students facilitated by an experienced therapist. They act as a supportive mechanism to students in placement and allow for you to share your placement experiences with your peers in a context where you are encouraged to reflect on your experiences and learn from each other.

The groups run for two hours per fortnight. Times vary. Typically, two groups are scheduled to run on Tuesday evenings after lectures and others are arranged according to demand on at least one other day of the week during the day. It is not always possible to meet each student's request for a particular Reflective Practice Group. These groups are also considered an integral part of your class participation and MUST attendance is compulsory. As with other aspects of the course, less than 75% attendance will normally be deemed as not having met the requirements of the unit. Unless otherwise negotiated between the group leader and the students, Reflective Practice Groups do not run during semester breaks

### **When do I join a Reflective Practice Group?**

You will be placed in a Reflective Practice Group by the Placement Co-ordinator once you have arranged your placement. **If you are planning a placement in a given year, you will join a Reflective Practice Group for that year.** All efforts will be made to place you in a group that meets your needs.

### **Do Reflective Practice Group hours count towards supervision hours?**

The groups are considered part of your "tuition/skill development" hours for the purpose of membership to CAPAV/PACFA. Whilst they have supervision component, attendance at these groups cannot be claimed as supervision hours for the purpose of CAPAV/PACFA membership.

### **Can I do placement at my normal place of work or be paid for placement?**

Students should not be employed by or receive remuneration from the agency where they complete their placement. In situations where there is no other option but to use your workplace for your placement experience, you are required to first discuss this with the Placement Co-ordinator at the university. In such circumstances, you will be expected to arrange that you undertake your placement in a different role from your usual work role, have a different supervisor and are not paid for this work. This needs to be confirmed in writing.

### **Do I attend placement over semester breaks?**

Students are not required by the University to attend placement during semester breaks. In many cases, however, and for obvious reasons, continuity may be expected or required by the agency. You should make sure that this aspect of the placement is made clear at the beginning. The default position, in the event of a misunderstanding, is that the agency's (and clients') needs must be given priority.

### **What hours will I work?**

Usually you attend placement for the normal working day hours of the agency where you are placed.

### **Am I supervised whilst on placement?**

You should receive at least one hour's supervision per fortnight by the same person. Some agencies will also provide/expect students to attend group supervision.

### **Where are the placements?**

There are a range of placement settings that may be suitable to your interests and needs. These include community based counselling services, community health centres, local council services, educational settings, specialist agencies (e.g. Bereavement services, Drug & Alcohol Services) and church based agencies.

### **How do I find a placement?**

You must find your own placement. Where necessary, support is also provided by the Placement Coordinator. In particular, when any agency requires further information about the Graduate Diploma, you should invite the agency to contact the coordinator or request the coordinator to contact the agency.

A list of possible placement options is provided with the Placement/Fieldwork package. Some students also use directories online such as Info Xchange or simply conduct online searches for services in particular areas (e.g. Refugee services, bereavement services, etc.). You **are welcome** to seek assistance from the Placement Co-ordinator to clarify what type of placement agency would best suit your needs.

### **How will I know what to do?**

The Placement/Fieldwork package provides you with the information you and the agency require. You should arrange an appointment with the Placement Co-ordinator within the first month of the semester to discuss your placement plans. The Placement Co-ordinator is available to answer your questions and assist you with any concerns.

### **What do I do after I find a placement?**

You need to arrange for your agency supervisor to complete the "Confirmation of Student Placement Information" and the "Acceptance of Student for fieldwork/placement experience" forms which are in the Placement/Fieldwork package and forward this to the Placement Co-ordinator. Keep copies of ALL paperwork that is completed.

You then need to arrange an initial agency visit between yourself, your supervisor and the Placement Co-ordinator.

### **Are police checks and working with children checks required?**

Many agencies require that a police check be obtained prior to commencing your placement. This is particularly the case where you may be working with children. The forms for applying for a police check can be obtained from the web site: <http://www.police.vic.gov.au> and follow the links to "Forms & Permits". You are required to complete this process and meet the costs. Students are eligible for a reduced fee as long as the form is validated by the department's administrative staff.

Some agencies may also require a Working with Children Check. You should clarify this with the agency before you begin placement.

### **Do I need to have vaccinations for placement?**

The Faculty of Health Sciences recommends that students are immunised for a selection of infectious diseases. Arrangements will be made at the commencement of first semester for immunisations at the Bundoora campus. Students who decide to update their immunisations are responsible for meeting the cost of this service.

### **Do I need to do placement this year?**

The Graduate Diploma is aimed at students who have a good academic background (usually a first degree), some life experience within the broad human services field, and some structured exposure to face to face or telephone counselling. Sometimes this is sufficient for a student to begin a placement in the year of enrolment and to continue to develop skills as the academic year progresses. However, some agencies prefer students to have completed their course work first.

Some students, however, may not have the background and/or the confidence to make good use of a placement in their first year of enrolment. In this case, it is recommended that the student enrol in a placement and attend the Reflective Practice Groups in their second year.

Sometimes, other life demands may influence your decision. Remember, this is a FULL TIME course – with classes, reflective practice and up to two days of placement, you could have 4 days that you are required to be at uni and placement per week.

On occasions, enrolment in second semester of the year of enrolment and first semester of the following year is possible. Generally speaking, organisations are less likely to be available for student intake mid year. There may also be logistical issues with respect to joining a Reflective Practice Group mid year. Students contemplating a mid year option should consult the

Placement Coordinator. Students who are hoping to begin placement in first semester MUST speak with the Placement Coordinator in early February (by phone is suitable) and should have a possible option arranged.

**What do I have to do to complete this unit and graduate at the beginning of the next year?**

For the placement to be completed, you need to have accumulated at least 78 face to face counselling hours and you need to have forwarded the "Placement Assessment Form," completed by your Supervisor (the form is in your Placement/Fieldwork package) to the Placement Co-ordinator **no later than the end of February of the year following your enrolment in the course.**

**What if my supervisor and I disagree on my progress?**

Any difficulties or disagreements between yourself and your Supervisor should be flagged with the Placement Coordinator as soon as possible. Usually, issues can be resolved at a Placement Liaison Visit. In the rare event of an unresolvable issue, it may be necessary to seek a placement elsewhere. Your Supervisor's report should not be a surprise, but would normally be expected to be a confirmation of the progress you and your supervisor believe you have been making. In the final analysis, your Supervisor's report is a recommendation to the University. Whilst the report carries considerable weight, the University always reserves the right to make its own judgement, based on a holistic knowledge of your performance in the Course.

**What happens if I don't get my hours up by the end of the second semester?**

If it appears that more time will be required beyond the end of second semester for you to accumulate your 78 face-to-face hours, this needs to be discussed with the Placement Co-ordinator. If necessary a "Withheld" result will be recorded against your name until you complete the placement requirements. A date by which you should have completed your placement should be negotiated. In some cases there may be a necessity to re-enrol in the unit for a second year.

If you have any queries about placements, please contact Katrina Murphy, Graduate Diploma in Counselling & Human Services Placement Co-ordinator by email: [k.murphy@latrobe.edu.au](mailto:k.murphy@latrobe.edu.au)