

Master of Professional Psychology

2026 Placement Handbook

This placement handbook is for all students completing the Master of Professional Psychology and replaces all previous placement handbooks.

Course Code: PY093

Course Name: Master of Professional Psychology

Degree: MProfPsych or MPP

Table of Contents

1.	COURSE OVERVIEW	4
2.	PLACEMENT ESSENTIALS	4
2.1.	Purpose of Placements	4
2.2.	Getting Started	5
2.3.	Placement Expectations	6
3.	ABOUT THE MPP PLACEMENT PROGRAM	6
3.1.	Placement Unit Learning Outcomes	6
3.2.	Placement Hours, Days and Activities	7
3.3.	Placement Unit Structure	8
3.4.	Arranging Placements	8
4.	PLACEMENT ASSESSMENT REQUIREMENTS	9
4.1.	Overview of Assessment Requirements	9
4.2.	Placement Documents	9
4.3.	Placement Assessments: Overview & Requirements	11
5.	PLACEMENT GOVERNANCE & PROCEDURES	13
5.1.	AHPRA and PsyBA Requirements	13
5.2.	Disclosures and mandatory reporting	13
5.3.	Supervision Expectations and Engagement	13
5.4.	Roles and responsibilities	14
5.5.	Workplace Placements	15
5.6.	Passing a placement unit	16
5.7.	Placement progress concerns and support planning	16
5.8.	Changes to placement arrangements	17
5.9.	Placement clinical governance requirements	17
5.10.	Risk, incidents and escalation (placement context)	18
6.	STUDENT POLICIES & SUPPORT	19
6.1.	Fitness for Practice	19
6.2.	Insurance Cover (course-related activities)	19
6.3.	Immunisations	19
6.4.	Student Support Services	20
6.5.	Grievances and Complaints	20
	APPENDIX A: PLACEMENT ACTIVITY DEFINITIONS	21

Welcome to the Master of Professional Psychology program at the Cairnmillar Institute (CMI), where we have offered professional psychology training for more than 60 years. This degree will provide you with the opportunity to develop high-level skills in psychology by studying in a rich clinical context, at an Institute with a distinguished history of clinical and academic excellence.

Postgraduate psychology at CMI

CMI's postgraduate psychology programs are designed to help students develop a broad foundation of knowledge and skills and apply these in real world practice contexts. Students in the Master of Professional Psychology are required to hold provisional registration with the [Psychology Board of Australia \(PsyBA\)](#) for the duration of their enrolment and are expected to meet relevant registration standards and professional conduct requirements.

Accreditation and graduate outcomes

This course is accredited by the [Australian Psychology Accreditation Council \(APAC\)](#). On successful completion, graduates may be eligible to continue with further post-graduate study or a psychology internship pathway toward general registration as a psychologist (subject to current regulatory requirements). Given the breadth of the placement experiences, it is common for graduates to pursue more targeted training in specific clinical domains or therapeutic approaches following completion of the degree.

About this handbook

The course has three integrated components: coursework, research and the supervised placement program. This handbook explains the placement program requirements and what you need to obtain, undertake, and successfully complete placement. For coursework requirements, refer to the [Course Information Handbook](#).

While this handbook is accurate at the time of publication, updates may occur. Always check Canvas, SONIA and unit outlines (if relevant) for the most current instructions and due dates.

Placement Contacts

- Placement Coordination Team Email: pc-mpp@cairnmillar.edu.au
- Placement Administration Team Email: placements@cairnmillar.edu.au
Phone: (03) 9813 3400

We hope you find the placement program both challenging and rewarding and that your training at CMI support your development as a safe, reflective and capable practitioner.



A/ Prof Terence Bartholomew
Course Coordinator



Professor Linda Byrne
Dean

1. COURSE OVERVIEW

The Master of Professional Psychology course is typically completed full-time over 12 months (Table 1). The placement component is delivered across two [progressive units](#) (MPP560 & MPP562) completed within the same placement setting (or simulation). Across these units, students complete a minimum of 300 total placement hours.

Table 1: Course Requirements – Full-time enrolment

Unit Code	Unit title	Credit Points
Semester 1		
MPP501	Professional Practice Issues**	12.50
MPP502	Foundations in Psychological Assessment & Psychopathology**	12.50
MPP560	Practicum & Supervised Placement 1** *	25.00
Semester 2		
MPP503	Advanced Skills in Psychological Assessment & Psychopathology*	12.50
MPP504	Psychological Treatment Models	12.50
MPP550	Applied Research for the Practicing Psychologist	12.50
MPP562	Practicum & Supervised Placement 2 *	12.50
	COURSE TOTAL	100.00

* Prerequisites: MPP502 is prerequisite to MPP503

**Corequisites: MPP501 and 502 must be completed alongside or prior to MPP560

* Progressive units: MPP560 and MPP562 are [progressive units](#)

2. PLACEMENT ESSENTIALS

2.1.Purpose of Placements

Placements provide supervised opportunities to apply and consolidate learning from coursework in real practice environments. Placement learning is integrated with academic units so that foundational knowledge and skills either precede, or occur alongside, placement activities.

Placements operate within a partnership model involving CMI, placement providers, supervisors, and students. Placement settings are professional workplaces and service environments. Students are expected to engage respectfully and responsibly, including by meeting attendance and administrative requirements, complying with workplace policies, maintaining confidentiality, and responding to feedback and supervision constructively.

Placements are both a learning context and a professional accountability context. Supervisors, placement providers, and CMI staff support student learning while also ensuring that students meet required competencies, inherent requirements, and Fitness for Practice (F2P) standards.

2.2. Getting Started

2.2.1. Placement Systems

You will use three main platforms during placement:

1. **SONIA** - placement management system (forms, timesheets/logbooks, submissions, reviews and key placement tasks).
2. **Canvas** - placement unit information, announcements, resources and assessment guidance.
3. **my.CMI** - policies, student support, and key placement resources linked from Canvas/SONIA.

2.2.2. Mandatory Pre-Placement Actions

Students must complete the following requirements at least three months prior to placement commencement.

1. **CMI Email.** All placement correspondence is sent to your CMI email. Check it regularly and respond within 2–3 working days. You may redirect your CMI email to a personal account. See my.CMI: [Email setup and management](#).
2. **Pre-Placement Compliance Checks (must be approved before starting placement)**
Failure to complete these checks may delay or prevent placement commencement. Start early and keep documents current throughout placement. Upload renewals to SONIA by the required dates.
 - a) **Working with children's check** (equivalent): must remain valid throughout placement. Please ensure you hold the correct check based on your placement circumstances (voluntary/employee). [Click here for more information about obtaining and maintaining a valid Working with Children Check](#).
 - b) **National Police Checks:** Required annually. [Click here for more information about obtaining and maintaining a valid police check](#).
 - c) **AHPRA Registration:** MPP students must provide a current copy of their AHPRA registration certificate in SONIA and maintain registration for the duration of the course.
 - d) **Registration or practice restrictions:** you must notify CMI of any conditions, restrictions, cautions, notifications and any changes that affect your ability to practice while enrolled in the course.
3. **Provider Specific Checks**
Some placement sites require additional checks or training (e.g., NDIS screening, immunisations, mandatory training). Check SONIA and site instructions and confirm requirements with your Placement Coordinators if unsure.
4. **Course Specific Requirements**
You must complete mandatory pre-placement workshops and associated assessments before commencing placement. Workshop dates and requirements are published on Canvas.
5. **Pre Placement Recommendations**
 - Keep your CV current (placement-ready)
 - Maintain a list of learning interests (presentations, placement settings, lifespan populations, skills).
 - Prepare a cover letter template you can tailor quickly.

2.3. Placement Expectations

Placement is a core component of your professional development. You are expected to represent CMI professionally and practise safely at all times. These expectations align with the competencies assessed at the mid- and end-of-placement reviews.

Professional and reliable practice.

- Attend placement as scheduled and be punctual for client sessions, supervision, and meetings.
- Complete the placement for the full agreed period and meet placement requirements (including tasks and hours).
- Communicate clearly and professionally by email, phone, and in person, within a reasonable timeframe.
- Work within student scope and seek guidance when you are unsure.

Respectful workplace engagement.

- Follow site policies and procedures (e.g., privacy, record keeping, workplace health and safety).
- Treat staff respectfully, including administrative staff.
- Present professionally (dress appropriate to the setting).
- Raise concerns through the appropriate channels (supervisor and/or Placement Coordinator) and not informally in the workplace.

Ethical practice, boundaries, and safety.

- Maintain professional boundaries with clients, supervisors, and staff.
- Avoid dual relationships and do not accept gifts from clients.
- Follow ethical and legal obligations, including confidentiality and duty of care.
- Escalate safety concerns, and raise any barriers, or circumstances that may impact on your ability to complete placement duties.

Active learning and supervision engagement.

- Track hours and tasks and keep SONIA records current.
- Set learning goals early and review them regularly with your supervisor.
- Use supervision effectively (prepare, reflect and follow through).
- Be open to feedback and show follow-through over time.
- Reflect on your development, notice what you're doing well, and identify areas to keep practising.
- Use quieter periods for suitable learning activities aligned with your learning goals.

3. ABOUT THE MPP PLACEMENT PROGRAM

3.1. Placement Unit Learning Outcomes

Students will have a wide range of placement locations and opportunities, and no two placements will be the same. Placement learning outcomes should be applied through a diversity and inclusion lens. Students are expected to consider culture, identity, and context in formulation, intervention, communication, and ethical decision-making, including attention to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander social and emotional wellbeing frameworks where relevant.

The placement learning outcomes for this course are:

1. Demonstrate skills in psychological practice with adults and/or children who are referred for psychological assessment and intervention.

2. Demonstrate the capacity to relate to clients from various age groups, and other professional staff, including referrers and professionals from other disciplines.
3. Practice ethically and appropriately in accordance with the requirements of the psychology profession, employing and demonstrating self-reflexivity, deliberate practice and self-care practices.
4. Plan and administer risk assessments.
5. Administer and interpret several psychological assessments to evaluate clinical presentations such as mood, functional capacities and/or other symptoms.
6. Demonstrate skills in implementing psychological interventions such as CBT.
7. Research current literature and prescribed readings pertaining to legal, ethical and professional conduct.
8. Critically examine and reflect on evidence-based approaches to psychological interventions as they relate to client needs.

3.2. Placement Hours, Days and Activities

Table 2 outlines the minimum placement activity requirements. Placement is typically completed two days per week. Across the placement, students must record:

- Placement activity excluding supervision: minimum of 300 hours, comprising
 - **Direct Client Activity (DCA):** Minimum 50 hours
 - **Client-Related Activity (CRA):** no minimum (counts towards the 300 hours). Approved activities may include the MPP562 experiential treatment workshops (logged as CRA).
- **Supervision:** minimum of 40 hours across placement, including
 - at least 20 hours of individual supervision
 - a supervision ratio of 1 hour per 7.5 hours of placement activity.

Logging your hours (SONIA)

Students must log activities in SONIA in line with the definitions and examples in **Appendix A** (DCA, CRA, and Supervision).

How supervision is delivered

CMI coordinates supervision for MPP students through individual and group formats with PsyBA approved supervisors:

- **Individual supervision:** typically 1 hour weekly (maximum gap 2 weeks)
- **Group supervision:** Online (timetable on Canvas).
- At least 50% of total supervision must be individual.

Table 2: Minimum placement requirements

MPP Placement Activities	Total Minimum Requirements
Total Placement/Practicum Hours	300 hours (excludes supervision)
Direct Client Activity/Contact Hours	50
Client-Related Activity/Hours (excluding supervision)	N/A – no minimum requirement
Total Supervision Hours	40
Individual Supervision Hours	20 (minimum ratio of 50% total supervision)
Ratio of Supervision / Total Placement Hours	1 hour supervision / 7.5 hours of placement

Competency focus and pacing: Placements are designed to support progressive competency development, not only accumulation of hours. Students should build client contact gradually so there is time for preparation, documentation, reflection, and follow-up learning between sessions.

No early completion: Students may reach minimum hours before the agreed end date. However, placements must not end early. Students must continue placement until on or after the end date in the Placement Contract and Learning Plan. Any variation to placement length or requirements must be agreed at commencement and approved by Placement Coordinators.

3.3. Placement Unit Structure

The MPP Placement Program consists of three core foundational training requirements described below.

3.3.1. Mandatory Pre-Placement Training Sessions

Intensive training sessions are designed to prepare students for placement and must be completed before students can commence on placement. Session details are published on [Canvas](#) and may change due to scheduling requirements.

3.3.2. Placement (MPP560 & MPP562)

Students complete one placement across two progressive units in the same placement setting:

- a. **Structured observational phase:** First two weeks (4 days). Students observe and orient to the service/placement and do not see clients independently.
- b. **Supervised placement phase:** Following successful completion of the structured observational phase, students commence supervised placement within the same placement service.

3.3.3. Supervised Simulated Learning (where applicable)

Some students may complete supervised simulation to augment or, in some cases, replace service-based placement. Simulation must be approved by the Placement Coordinator and supervised to be logged as placement hours. Simulations count as a full day and may be completed up to two per week.

3.4. Arranging Placements

CMI coordinates placement opportunities for MPP students. Students participate in a preference and application process communicated via Canvas. While preferences are considered, allocations depend on availability, provider selection processes, and program requirements. Students are expected to engage professionally with any allocated placement.

Students must not approach potential placement organisations independently without consulting Placement Coordinators. Proposed self-sourced placements must be assessed and approved as suitable before the preference process. Any students who are undertaking a placement in a workplace, please refer to **5.5 Workplace Placements** for more details.

Applications

Many providers have competitive selection processes. Students are expected to travel up to one hour each way to attend placement. Please prepare early with a concise CV (generally max 2 pages) and a targeted 1-page cover letter. See Canvas for more guidance.

4. PLACEMENT ASSESSMENT REQUIREMENTS

Placements include assessments that demonstrate both clinical and professional skills. There are pre-placement requirements, placement assessment documents and clinical assessments that students need to ensure they have submitted to SONIA and had approved as completed by the Placement Coordinators.

4.1. Overview of Assessment Requirements

Students also need to submit various assessments and documents across the placement units. These requirements are outlined in Table 3.

Table 3: Placement Assessments

Placement Documents	All Placements		Course Total
Placement Contract & Learning Plan	Required		1
Mid-Placement Review Form	Required		1
End of Placement Review Form	Required		1
Placement Logbook	Required		1
Unit Assessments	Pre-Placement	Placement	Course total
Simulated Clinical Interview and Risk Assessment	1	-	1
Simulated CBT Series	1	-	1
MSE & Formulation Presentations	-	2	2
Supervisors Observations	-	2	2

4.2. Placement Documents

In addition to the pre-placement requirements, students must submit placement documents and assessments for the placement. You can find a complete list of all placement documents required within this handbook.

Please read the instructions and requirements for each assessment and ensure that they:

- submit required documents in SONIA and obtain approvals where applicable
- follow instructions carefully (especially logbook/timesheets)
- retain copies of their completed placement documents

Late or incomplete documentation may affect progress. CMI is required to retain placement documents for 10 years.

4.2.1. Placement Contract and Learning Plan

Purpose: confirms placement arrangements and shared expectations between student, supervisor(s), and placement provider

Due: within 14 days of placement start date

Contract Meeting:

- The student is responsible for arranging the meeting.
- Attendees are the student, Placement Coordinator, placement provider representative & supervisor (where feasible and different to the placement provider representative).

How to complete

- Save as draft while preparing for the contract meeting

- Submit only after the meeting and details are confirmed
- If key contacts are not yet confirmed, keep as draft until details are available

What it covers (summary)

- Contact/role details
 - Placement planning (days/hours, supervision plan, review dates, key governance arrangements)
 - Assessment plan + WHS/induction checks

Responsibilities and expectations

The form includes declarations from the student, placement provider representative, and supervisor that summarise key responsibilities (e.g., professionalism, confidentiality, record keeping, supervision and feedback, safety escalation, and adverse events).

4.2.2. Mid-Placement Review (MPR) Process

Purpose: checkpoint to review progress and agree on any supports or adjustments

Timeframes: meeting within 2 weeks of midpoint; form submitted 7 days after meeting

Process

- Student arranges meeting (Supervisor + Placement Coordinator + Provider representative)
- Student completes their sections; supervisor completes ratings and discusses with student
- Meeting confirms progress and actions; student/supervisor submits in SONIA; Placement Coordinator finalises the form.

4.2.3. End-of-Placement Review (EPR) Process

Purpose: confirms competency development and identifies development goals for next training stage.

Timeframes: meeting within final 2 weeks of placement; form submitted within 7 days after placement end date.

Process

- Student arranges a meeting (Supervisor + Placement Coordinator + provider representative where relevant)
- Student activates EPR form in SONIA; supervisor completes and discusses
- Student/supervisor submit after placement ends; Placement Coordinator finalises the review

Sharing of outcomes (where relevant)

Where a student completes the internship within CMI, outcomes may be shared with relevant CMI staff/supervisor to support continuity of training. We strongly encourage students to share the mid- and end-of-placement review forms with their internship supervisor.

4.2.4. Placement Logbook/Timesheet

Purpose: required record of hours/activities for accreditation and quality assurance. They support clinical oversight.

Keeping your timesheets up to date

- Log activity regularly (ideally daily)
- Ensure entries are accurate and signed off fortnightly by your supervisor
- Finalise the SONIA timesheet within 7 days of placement end date
- Do not include identifying details in reflections/comments

What to include

For each placement day (typically a 7.5-hour day), record hours by activity type — do not bundle hours into one entry.

1) Activity

Log hours under the correct category: **Direct Client Activity (DCA), Client-Related Activity (CRA), Supervision**. See the appendix for detailed information about correct logging and activity descriptions and examples.

2) Sub-activity

Select the sub-activity that best describes what you did (e.g., assessment, intervention, professional development, individual supervision).

3) Comment: Brief description and reflection

- Add a very short description that reflects the work completed and links to your learning goals and competency development. For example, Session 2 - 21 yr female (*client initials*) OCD treatment, and then also a reflection.
- Reflections should be individualised and demonstrate insight and genuine vulnerability as a learner. Examples include:
 - “Client appeared to be deteriorating, and I felt uncertain about next steps. Plan to discuss risk management in supervision.”
 - “I attempted CBT to address cognitive distortions and found it challenging. Plan to practice further and review in supervision.”

Important: Do not log reflections as a separate activity. Reflections should be written within the relevant DCA/CRA/supervision entry. Most of your timesheet entries should include a reflective component.

4.3. Placement Assessments: Overview & Requirements

Assessments are completed during placement and assessed by the CMI-approved individual supervisor. Before completing assessments, ensure you follow requirements for confidentiality, informed consent, and de-identification (see Sections 4.3.4–4.3.5 and 5.9).

4.3.1. MSE & Formulation Presentations

Purpose: assesses ability to describe mental state and develop an evidence-based formulation.

Requirements and Timing

- Complete two presentations within supervision and submit via SONIA
- One before the MPR; one before the EPR
- One is based on the provided case (Uncle Fred); the other is based on a placement client (or simulated case if needed)

How to complete

- Follow the [MSE/Formulation guidelines](#) on my.CMI.
- Present in supervision using shared slides (minimum: history, MSE, formulation)
- Plan dates in the Placement Contract and Learning Plan

Planning and alternatives

Students are expected to plan ahead (e.g., when completing the Placement Contract) and make every effort to complete these requirements during placement. If an alternative arrangement is needed (e.g., simulated activity), contact the Placement Coordinators early so this can be organised.

4.3.2. Supervisor Observations

Purpose: supports competency assessment and targeted feedback through direct observation.

Requirements and timing

- Complete two supervisor observations and submit via SONIA
- One observation before the mid-placement review, and one before the end-of-placement

How to complete the task

- Supervisor directly observes on two occasions (live/co-therapy/sitting in, or secure recording where applicable)
- Student completes the SONIA form; paste the OneDrive recording link if used (shared with supervisor only)
- Supervisor reviews form and recording link (if applicable) and provides feedback

Planning and alternatives

If your supervisor cannot observe you in person, observation may occur via a secure recording, with client consent. Where observation/recording is not permitted (e.g., some forensic settings), contact the Placement Coordinators early to seek approval for an appropriately qualified onsite supervisor to complete the observation. Any alternate observer must liaise with your CMI-approved supervisor before providing feedback.

Consent and recording requirements

- Consent is required for observation. See 4.5.3 Informed Consent
- Store recordings securely in student OneDrive and share via link in line with [CMI guidance about submitting supervisor observations](#).
- Carefully follow the [specific guidance about sharing this confidential OneDrive link](#) with your supervisor only.

4.3.3. Supervisor sighting of case notes

Purpose: supports oversight of client work and strengthens record-keeping quality.

Requirements and timing

- A minimum of six client case notes must be sighted across placement (3 before mid-placement review; 3 before end of placement review)
- Supervisors may request more than six as needed for oversight

Process

- Student provides access to case notes (de-identify if supervisor is external to the service)
- Supervisor provides feedback and records number sighted on mid and end review forms.

4.3.4. De-Identification of Placement Assessments

All education/assessment materials must be de-identified (timesheets, reflections, slides, reports, reviews, and written tasks). Do not include names, DOB, addresses, contact details, Medicare numbers, or details that could reasonably identify a client or associated parties. Use a non-identifying label (e.g., "Client A") and include only what is necessary.

See my.CMI: [Guide to De-identifying Placement Assessments](#).

4.3.5. Informed Consent

Students must obtain appropriate informed consent before providing services and before using any client information for education and training purposes.

There are two distinct consent requirements:

1. **Consent for services** (assessment/intervention).

2. **Consent for education and training** (use of information for placement learning tasks, supervision, or recordings)

Client information cannot be fully de-identified for supervision and clinical oversight within the service; however, all student education records must be de-identified.

What students must do

- Use the placement organisation's consent processes first
- Confirm whether education/training consent is already included
- If not included, obtain education/training consent before using client information in learning tasks

Where the placement host does not have suitable templates, students may use [CMI templates](#) with supervisor and placement organisation approval.

4.3.6. Student Evaluation of Placement

Your placement and supervision experiences help CMI improve how we support students. Students are asked to complete two short surveys:

1. [Placement Experiences Survey](#)
2. [Group Supervision Survey](#)

Each takes only a few minutes. Your feedback directly informs improvements across placement sites, supervision, and student support.

5. PLACEMENT GOVERNANCE & PROCEDURES

This section applies to placement settings and placement units. It outlines the professional standards, supervision arrangements, roles, and procedures that support safe practice and successful completion of placement requirements.

5.1. AHPRA and PsyBA Requirements

Students in this course hold provisional registration with the Psychology Board of Australia (PsyBA). Under [National and State specific Health Practitioner Regulation Laws](#), students must comply with PsyBA registration requirements to maintain their registration.

CMI expects students to be familiar with, and act in accordance with:

1. AHPRA and the PsyBA [Registration Standards](#)
2. PsyBA [Professional Practice Standards](#), including the [Code of Conduct](#) and [Professional Competencies](#) (effective from 1 December 2025).
3. PsyBA [Guidelines and Policies](#)

5.2. Disclosures and mandatory reporting

If you are unsure whether a disclosure/mandatory report is required, discuss this with your individual supervisor as soon as possible (where appropriate). If this is not possible (e.g., the concern relates to the supervisor), contact Placement Coordinators, the Course Coordinator, or the Dean.

5.3. Supervision Expectations and Engagement

Supervision supports client safety, competency development, ethical decision-making, and reflective practice.

Student Expectations

- attend supervision as scheduled and arrive prepared (e.g., cases, reflections, questions, learning goals)
- engage openly and professionally, including discussing uncertainty and ethical dilemmas
- respond to feedback constructively and demonstrate follow-through over time
- communicate respectfully and in a timely way regarding supervision arrangements
- participate in supervision in a way that supports clinical governance and safe practice

Cancelling or rescheduling supervision / supervision continuity

Students and supervisors are expected to observe professional courtesy when changing supervision arrangements. CMI expects:

- a minimum of 24 hours' notice to cancel or reschedule supervision where possible (except emergencies).
- Students with external supervisors should clarify cancellation terms early, as late cancellations may result in fees payable directly to the supervisor.
- Students must not continue placement without individual supervision for more than two weeks. If continuity cannot be maintained through the placement site, notify Placement Coordinators promptly to request interim support.

5.4.Roles and responsibilities

Individual supervisor (CMI-approved)

Purpose

To provide clinical oversight, assess competency development, and support safe, ethical, and effective practice through structured supervision and timely feedback.

Core responsibilities

- **Clarify role and scope:** Confirm the student's role within the placement setting, including expected work, boundaries of practice, and documentation expectations.
- **Establish a safe supervision relationship:** Build rapport that supports open discussion of challenges, ethical issues, and potential problems.
- **Structure supervision:** Set regular supervision arrangements, establish a supervision agreement/contract, and support the student to set and review learning goals (aligned with the Placement Contract and Learning Plan).
- **Provide feedback and competency oversight:** Give specific, constructive feedback across clinical and professional domains, including review of required placement documents and assessments.
- **Liaise where feasible:** Communicate periodically with the placement provider representative about student progress and any practical issues (noting Placement Coordinators also liaise with providers).
- **Support observational learning:** Where feasible, provide opportunities for the student to observe the supervisor and/or other suitably qualified clinicians.

When to escalate / seek support

Notify Placement Coordinators early and promptly about concerns regarding the student's performance, professionalism, wellbeing, or client safety, especially where additional support, risk management, or changes to placement activities may be required.

Records and sign-offs

Confirm completion/satisfactory progress of required activities in SONIA (e.g., supervisor observation review, case note sighting counts, and other sign-offs as relevant).

Placement provider representative

Purpose

To support placement onboarding and day-to-day placement functioning, ensuring the student's role is clear and consistent with the placement agreement and that concerns are communicated early.

Core responsibilities

- **Orientation and local induction:** Orient the student to the organisation (key staff, systems, environment, equipment, local policies/procedures, safety requirements, and privacy/record-keeping expectations).
- **Clarify the student role:** Establish the student's duties, boundaries, and practical expectations in line with the CMI placement agreement.
- **Provide a local point of contact:** Maintain a relationship that encourages early discussion of workplace or operational issues that may affect the placement.

When to escalate / raise concerns

Inform the individual supervisor and/or Placement Coordinators in a timely manner about concerns regarding the student's performance, conduct, suitability, or risks to client safety.

Records and sign-offs

Complete any local organisational requirements relevant to onboarding or access (as applicable), and support communication with CMI where needed.

5.5. Workplace Placements

A **workplace placement** is any placement where the student is placed in an organisation they currently work for, have previously worked for, or has an existing relationship with (e.g., they are known to key staff). A **paid placement** is any placement where the student is paid for the placement work. These often overlap, but not always.

Because both situations can create conflicts of interest or role confusion, Cairnmillar applies the same requirement that all students completing a workplace placement and/or a paid placement must complete a [Workplace Placement Conflict of Interest Form](#).

When workplace placements may be approved

Workplace placements may be approved only where the placement is clearly educational (not simply employment) and all the following are met:

1. **Scope aligns with training requirements:** Activities align with the placement unit learning outcomes and competency requirements.
2. **Placement activities are distinct from usual work:** Placement work is substantially different from their normal duties (for example: a different service/team, different client group or age cohort, or different presentations/interventions).
3. **Clear new learning:** The placement must provide meaningful new learning and skill development, not just a continuation of existing practice.

Expectations and boundaries

Placements are intended to be novel learning experiences. Students must confirm their placement days and anticipated caseload in advance. Students are also expected to carry a reduced caseload compared

with paid employment (e.g., generally not more than four clients per day) to allow time for supervision, reflections, learning tasks, and professional growth.

Students must have clear agreements in place with the workplace about:

- Learning objectives and expectations
- Supervision arrangements
- Management, collegial, and supervisory boundaries (including escalation pathways)

Payment arrangements

Some placement providers may offer payment at their discretion. CMI does not negotiate payment arrangements. Any payment discussions and agreements are between the students and the placement provider. Regardless of payment status, all learning and supervision requirements apply.

5.6. Passing a placement unit

To pass a placement unit, students must:

- meet minimum placement requirements (e.g., hours, documents, assessments),
- demonstrate satisfactory competency development (as evidenced through supervision, observation, and review processes), and
- be recorded as Satisfactory/Pass by the Placement Coordinator.

How placement outcomes are determined

At the end of placement, the CMI-approved individual supervisor provides an overall recommendation to Placement Coordinators (e.g., Satisfactory / Not Satisfactory). Placement Coordinators determine the final unit outcome based on placement and other professional behaviours.

Placement Coordinators may refer matters to the relevant CMI academic progress processes in consultation with the Course Coordinator. Further information is available on my.CMI: [Academic Progress](#).

5.7. Placement progress concerns and support planning

Supervisors provide ongoing feedback throughout placement, with formal competency review at the Mid-Placement Review and End-of-Placement Review. Concerns may be raised at any time by the student, supervisor, placement provider representative, or Placement Coordinator.

Where a student is not making expected progress, **a support plan or progress plan** may be implemented as early as possible (often at, or before, the Mid-Placement Review). Students are expected to engage actively with agreed actions and timelines.

Student responsibilities for progression

Students are responsible for:

- managing time and workload to complete placement requirements,
- maintaining accurate, up-to-date placement records in SONIA (especially timesheets),
- meeting due dates set by supervisors and Placement Coordinators, and
- raising emerging issues early so they can be managed proactively.

Common progress risks (raise early)

Timesheets not up to date

Keeping SONIA timesheets current is part of safe clinical oversight. Delays or inaccuracies may be managed as a progress concern. Build a routine to update entries regularly and discuss barriers early with your supervisor.

Low Direct Client Activity (DCA) hours

DCA accrues variably due to referrals, cancellations, and service context. If you are not on track to meet required hours, or if client allocations are limited, raise this early with your supervisor and Placement Coordinator so options can be implemented (e.g., rebalancing activities, targeted allocations, approved alternatives where appropriate).

5.8. Changes to placement arrangements

5.8.1. Student absences and leave

Any absence of one day or more must be reported:

1. to the placement provider contact (per site process), and
2. via email to your individual supervisor and Placement Coordinators.

Unplanned absences of more than two weeks must be reported to Placement Coordinators as soon as possible.

On return to placement, students must confirm with the supervisor and placement provider representative how missed days will be made up and advise Placement Coordinators of the plan.

Planned leave during placement is not recommended unless already agreed in the Placement Contract and Learning Plan. If leave is required, discuss with the placement provider at least four weeks in advance and seek approval from Placement Coordinators.

5.8.2. Placement extensions

Placements are extended only in specific circumstances and require approval from Placement Coordinators. Students must discuss the need for an extension early and follow the placement extension process on my.CMI: [Placement extensions](#).

5.8.3. Placement termination or withdrawal

Students and placement providers are encouraged to raise concerns early, with the goal of addressing issues and supporting continuation of the placement where possible.

A placement provider may terminate a placement for organisational related reasons and also where there are reasonable concerns about competence, professionalism, or safety, or where concerns cannot be resolved despite reasonable attempts.

If a student has serious concerns about a placement, these should be raised with the supervisor, placement provider representative, and Placement Coordinator as early as possible. Students **must not** terminate a placement unilaterally without approval from the Placement Coordinator as this can result in a failure of placement. If concerns cannot be resolved and withdrawal is required, the period of notice will be negotiated with the placement provider, the student and placement coordinator and considering the ethical needs to prioritise client care and appropriate closure.

5.9. Placement clinical governance requirements

You can access some general placement forms [here \(such as consent forms, etc.\)](#).

5.9.1. Confidentiality in placement settings

Client information is confidential and must be discussed only with appropriate people, in appropriate settings. Discussing client information in public/open areas or with unauthorised persons may breach the PsyBA's Code of Conduct and place you at risk of a notification to AHPRA.

5.9.2. Informed consent in placement settings

Students must obtain appropriate informed consent before providing services and before using client information for education and training purposes. See [my.CMI here](#) for requirements and templates, including service consent and education/training consent, and use of CMI templates where the placement host does not have suitable forms.

5.9.3. Record keeping and secure storage (including PracSuite)

Client records must be stored in line with applicable legislation, PsyBa Code of Conduct and placement provider requirements. Before commencing placement, students must confirm with the placement provider representative and supervisor where and how case notes will be stored.

Where case notes cannot be stored within the placement provider's system in a compliant manner, students may be required to use CMI's practice management system PracSuite. See my.CMI: [PracSuite access and use](#).

School settings: School placements can involve additional constraints regarding confidentiality, information sharing, and continuity of care. Students must confirm local requirements with their supervisor and school leadership and seek guidance from Placement Coordinators where needed.

5.9.4. De-identification of education and assessment materials

All placement assessment and education materials must be de-identified (e.g., timesheets/reflections, MSE/formulation slides, case reports, placement reviews). See [Guide for De-Identifying Placement Assessment](#) on my.CMI for guidance and examples.

5.10. Risk, incidents and escalation (placement context)

5.10.1. Managing client risk (placement site first)

Students must follow the placement provider's processes for responding to risk of harm to self or others and act within legal, ethical, and professional obligations.

Step 1: Assess and respond

Conduct a risk assessment, take appropriate action, and document your assessment and plan in accordance with site policy.

Step 2: Escalate within the placement site

Seek support from appropriate placement staff (e.g., clinic director, placement provider representative, senior clinician). If site support is not available, contact your individual supervisor as soon as possible.

5.10.2. Urgent escalation to CMI (if timely site/supervisor support is not available)

If you cannot access timely support within the placement site or supervision, contact CMI in the following sequence:

1. CMI Reception: (03) 9813 3400 (state this is an urgent placement risk matter)
2. Placement Coordinator (MPP): Courtney Wurth - 0425 739 655
3. Course Coordinator: Terence Bartholomew - 0437 837 792
4. Dean: Linda Byrne - 0416 166 277

Where a risk matter is escalated to CMI, students must complete a critical incident report within **24 hours** and notify the placement provider representative and supervisor as soon as reasonably possible.

5.10.3. Critical incidents and reporting

CMI has a [critical incident policy](#) together with procedures that cover the action to be taken in the event of a critical incident, required follow-up to the incident, and records of the incident and action

taken. CMI's critical incident procedures support student wellbeing and ensure appropriate follow-up and documentation.

A critical incident is a traumatic event, which may cause significant physical and/or emotional distress involving CMI staff and or its students.

If a critical incident occurs at a placement site:

- report immediately to the placement provider (per local process) and to CMI placement staff, and
- submit the [critical incident report within 24 hours](#) to:
 - hr@cairnmillar.org.au and
 - terence.bartholomew@cairnmillar.edu.au

5.10.4. Debriefing and follow-up

Following a critical incident or stressful/adverse clinical event, students should debrief with their supervisor or appropriate placement staff. If this is not possible due to staff unavailability, students may contact CMI using the escalation sequence above.

6. STUDENT POLICIES & SUPPORT

This section contains broader student policies and support information that may apply across your course, including coursework and placement. Full policies and procedures are available on my.CMI and/or Canvas.

6.1. Fitness for Practice

CMI's Fitness for Practise framework supports early identification and timely management of concerns that may affect public safety, client wellbeing, or professional conduct across any learning context (coursework, placement, and professional engagement).

Students are required to familiarise themselves with, and follow, the [FfP framework on Canvas](#).

6.2. Insurance Cover (course-related activities)

Students enrolled in this course are covered under CMI's public liability and professional indemnity insurance for approved course-related activities in Australia (including external placement) undertaken with the knowledge and consent of CMI.

Students must complete placement on the agreed placement days recorded in the Placement Contract and Learning Plan. Any variation to placement days must be approved by the Placement Coordinator. This is particularly important for workplace placements—students must clearly distinguish placement days from employment days to ensure appropriate coverage.

While WorkCover does not apply to students, students are covered to the extent permitted by legislation and under CMI's Personal Accident and Travel Policy.

6.3. Immunisations

Some placement settings and learning environments require evidence of specific immunisations or health checks. Students are responsible for confirming and providing evidence directly to the relevant organisation where required, and for ensuring compliance requirements are met before participating.

6.4. Student Support Services

CMI provides a range of student support services. Details are available on my.CMI:

- **Counselling & Support:** Please refer to '[Counselling for Students](#)' on my.CMI. Note this service is confidential and impartial, and external to CMI's own clinic.
- **Academic & Writing Support:** Please see [Your Academic Skills Toolkit 2026](#) on canvas and the [Academic Skills and Support](#) my.CMI page.
- **Learning Equity and Accessibility Support for Students:** Please see [Learning Equity Support](#) on my.CMI
- **International Student Support:** Please see the [International Students Page](#) on my.CMI.
- **Other supports and wellbeing Services:** A searchable list of other support services can be found on my.CMI. See: [Support for Students](#)

6.5. Grievances and Complaints

Students should refer to my.CMI for more information about the [Student Grievance Policy and Procedure](#). For on-placement related issues please follow the pathway below.

Step 1: Raise the concern early.

Where possible, discuss concerns with the relevant supervisor and/or Placement Coordinators first. CMI will work with you to determine appropriate options: Placement Coordination Team (MPP): (03) 9813 3400 | pc-mpp@cairnmillar.edu.au

Step 2: Escalate if not resolved

If the concern is not resolved (or you are unable to raise it with placement staff), contact the Course Coordinator and submit a formal grievance: Course Coordinator: Terence Bartholomew | (03) 9813 3400 | terence.bartholomew@cairnmillar.edu.au

Step 3: Escalate to the Dean

If the matter remains unresolved, contact: Dean: Linda Byrne | (03) 9813 3400 | dean@cairnmillar.edu.au

APPENDIX A: PLACEMENT ACTIVITY DEFINITIONS

This section explains how to classify and log your placement activities in SONIA using the three activity categories used across CMI APAC-accredited postgraduate psychology courses:

- **Direct Client Activities (DCA)**
- **Client-Related Activities (CRA)**
- **Supervision**

Accurate logging matters. Your placement hours must be recorded in SONIA, reviewed regularly with your supervisor, and approved as part of placement requirements. If you are unsure how to classify an activity, review the definitions and examples on this page and discuss with your Primary Individual Supervisor.

Before you start logging

- **Read the definitions and examples carefully.** There are many ways placement activities can be accrued, and some activities can look similar but belong in different categories.
- **Check your progress regularly in supervision.** You are expected to monitor your placement requirements with your Primary Individual Supervisor each supervision session, including the rate at which hours are accruing across categories (e.g., DCA, CRA and supervision).
- **Be ready for mid-placement review.** You will be asked to report your timesheet hours to date to your Placement Coordinator during the mid-placement review. If your hours are accruing more slowly than expected, you must discuss solutions with your supervisor and/or placement contact before the mid-placement review meeting.
- **Be ready for end-of-placement review.** You will be required to report your total timesheet hours for the placement on the end-of-placement review form. If you have hours that are yet to be approved by your supervisor at the end of placement, you are required to discuss this with your supervisor and actively seek their approval.

Need help with SONIA timesheets? See: [What is Sonia Online? What are Timesheets? – my.CMI](#)

How MPP placement hours are counted and logged (SONIA)

1. How your total placement hours are calculated

In the MPP, your total placement hours are the sum of:

Total placement hours = Direct Client Activity (DCA) + Client-Related Activity (CRA) + Supervision

2. How to log supervision (MPP-specific)

In the MPP, supervision is logged as a separate category (not under CRA). This aligns with the PsyBA 5+1 internship activity categories and supports a smoother transition to internship.

3. How to log simulated activities (MPP-specific)

In some other courses, simulated activities are logged as CRA. In the MPP, simulated activities may be logged as DCA when they meet the DCA definitions/examples.

Direct Client Activities (DCA): Definitions and Examples

Definition: DCAs are activities typically undertaken with a client present, or activities involving direct clinical communication or clinically integral liaison/consultation about a specific client.

DCA rule of thumb

If the activity involves active clinical work with a client present, or clinical (non-admin) communication/liaison integral to a specific client's assessment/intervention, it is likely **DCA**. If it is preparation, administration, training, paperwork, or supervision, it is **not DCA**.

What counts as DCA (examples)

Assessment and intervention delivery (core DCA)

- Conducting assessment, testing (including psychometric testing), or therapy/intervention sessions with clients (e.g., individuals, couples, or families).
- Providing psychometric assessment feedback to clients.

Co-therapy / Joint Sessions / Group Interventions (active participation required):

- Co-facilitating assessment or treatment sessions with another therapist (co-therapy), and joint sessions with another professional or supervisor where the student has an **active role** in the clinical process. Passive participation/observation does not count as DCA.
- Facilitating /co-facilitating group treatment sessions (solo or co-facilitating). Not observation only.

Clinical communication with clients (not administrative):

- Communicating with clients via telephone, teleconference, video/online (e-health), or digital means (e.g., email, text message, secure messaging platforms, chat-based therapy), where the purpose is clinical and not administrative (e.g., triage, intake interview, phone review, phone counselling).
- Administrative only communications (e.g., booking/rescheduling) do not count as DCA and should be recorded as CRA.

Liaison and consultation about a specific client (clinically integral)

- Liaising with a client's family members or other relevant stakeholders (e.g., to collect information or provide feedback about an assessment; to support intervention planning).
- Consulting with other professionals (e.g., acute/multidisciplinary care team, psychiatrist, case worker, teacher) about the management of a client or gathering clinically relevant information (e.g., ward rounds, clinical meetings, phone or in-person discussion of impressions/diagnosis/treatment/follow-up). **Note:** this does NOT include supervision.
- Communicating outcomes of assessment or treatment with a referrer by verbal means.
- Provision of psychoeducation regarding a client to other stakeholders involved in client care.

Observational client assessments (client-specific):

Observational assessments that form part of a clinical task you undertake alongside other psychological services you are providing to one of your own clients (e.g., school observation; observation of parent-child interaction; observation in performance/competition settings where clinically relevant).

Case conferences and clinically-focused meetings:

- Meetings, such as clinical case review meetings, where the student reports to the team/organisation, if the team/organisation will enact interventions to the client or is in fact the focus of interventions.
- Active participation in a case conference even when the client is not present, where your role is clinically integral to assessment/intervention/advocacy for that client.
- Please note: For ward rounds, clinical meetings, handovers, or case allocation meetings, only the client-relevant portion (time spent where your clients are discussed) may be counted as DCA.

Client Related Activities (CRA)

Client-related activities are distinct from DCA (though supportive of them). CRA includes activities that support client-focused assessment and/or intervention, and broader placement-linked learning and governance activities, where these do not meet DCA criteria.

CRA “rule of thumb”

If the activity is preparation, administration, documentation, travel, training, simulation (see MPP differences), supervision (see MPP differences), governance/onboarding, or passive observation (and does not meet DCA criteria), it should be recorded as **CRA**.

What counts as CRA (Examples)

Administration and coordination (client support)

- Communicating with clients for administrative purposes only (e.g., booking/rescheduling).
- Organising future appointments and other client-linked coordination tasks.
- Administrative phone calls or meetings supporting service provision (where not DCA).
- Completing timesheets and assessment tasks for the placement.
- Completing placement paperwork and documentation required for placement governance (e.g., placement forms/contracts where applicable).

Documentation, file work, and indirect clinical tasks

- File review and reviewing background records relevant to a client.
- Reading/writing case/file notes (progress notes, case summaries).
- Scoring test material and collating assessment materials (outside DCA).
- Writing reports and related drafting/editing tasks.
- Completing timesheets, placement assessment tasks and documents.

Supervision and reflective practice

- Supervision undertaken with your CMI-approved/allocated supervisors (individual or group—client-focused or general) should be logged under Supervision in SONIA (not CRA). Any additional supervision undertaken with other supervisors (e.g., onsite group supervision provided by the placement service) should be logged under CRA.
- Preparing for supervision related to client work.
- Presenting a client’s case in a clinical review meeting where the student receives feedback from the team. If an appropriately qualified supervisor is present and agrees, the student may record this time as supervision.

Meetings and team-based activities (where not DCA)

- Phone calls, focus groups, and meetings for data-gathering/case management in support of service provision to clients (where not DCA).
- Team reporting meetings advising client progress (where not DCA).
- General team meetings or work planning meetings where content does not relate to service provision for a specific client.

Learning, training, and professional development

- Professional development activities relevant to placement learning goals (e.g., workshops, webinars, skills training, MPP experiential treatment workshops).
- Simulation activities (role plays, skills rehearsal, simulated practice of therapeutic techniques, cognitive testing practice, practising difficult feedback) (*Note: MPP students may log specific activities as DCA, refer to your unit information for details*).
- Passive observation of recorded previous sessions or training materials (particularly where there is no structured debrief/reflection afterwards).

- General reading about disorders/treatments/approaches where this is part of placement learning and does not meet DCA criteria.

Observation (passive participation):

- Observing clinical interviews by other professionals where the client is not necessarily a client of the student, the student does not participate and remains passive.

Stakeholder/role familiarisation (not client-linked)

- Learning about professional roles within multidisciplinary teams where it does not relate to service provision for a specific client.
- Networking catch-ups and work functions with no client linkages.

Placement governance and onboarding

- Standard induction/on-boarding activities.
- Meetings with the Placement Coordinator.
- Accreditation/advisory/focus group meetings for host agency accreditation purposes.

Organisational/service improvement projects

- Organisational or service improvement projects completed on placement days.

Supervision

- Supervision can only be counted as Supervision when it is undertaken with your CMI-approved/allocated supervisor(s) (individual or group). Any additional supervision with other supervisors (e.g., onsite group supervision provided by the placement service) should be logged as Client-Related Activity (CRA).
- Placement Contract Meetings and Placement Mid and End review meetings can be logged as supervision

Please note: Travel cannot be logged as a placement activity, except in exceptional circumstances AND with explicit approval for each entry from the Placement Coordinator.

Need help?

If you are unsure how to classify an activity, discuss it in supervision with your Primary Individual Supervisor. If you need further guidance, contact your Placement Coordinator.