

Counselling and Psychotherapy

Placement Information Handbook 2026

This placement handbook is for all students completing a Counselling and Psychotherapy placement and replaces all previous placement handbooks.

Course Code(s):

- UG071 Bachelor of Psychology and Counselling
- CP082 Graduate Diploma of Counselling and Psychotherapy
- CP091 Master of Counselling and Psychotherapy

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Table of Contents	2
1. PLACEMENT PROGRAM OVERVIEW	4
1.1. Key features of the placement program	4
1.2. Placement Aims	4
1.3. Expectations of Students on Placement	5
2. Placement Overview and Actions	5
2.1. Pre-Placement Actions	5
2.2. Arranging Placements	6
2.3. Placement Hours and Days	7
2.4. Placement Activities: Definitions and Information	7
2.5. Insurance	9
2.6. Workplace Placements	9
2.7. Supervision	9
2.8. Passing a Placement	10
3. PLACEMENT Requirements	11
3.1. Pre-Placement Checks	11
3.2. Placement Documents and Assessments	12
4. PLACEMENT PROGRAM POLICIES	17
4.1. PACFA and ACA Guidelines and Policies	17
4.2. Roles & Responsibilities	17
4.3. Changes to Placement	18
4.4. Confidentiality, Informed Consent and Record Keeping	19
4.5. Risk and Incident Management and Reporting	20
4.6. CMI Support Services	21
4.7. Grievance Policy	22

Welcome to the counselling and psychotherapy programs at the Cairnmillar Institute, where we have offered professional training in counselling, psychotherapy, and psychology for more than 60 years. This placement handbook provides guidance for students undertaking counselling and psychotherapy placements as integral components of their studies. A placement provides students with the opportunity to develop and integrate their learning by applying their skills and knowledge within a rich work-integrated professional context.

Counselling and Psychotherapy at the Cairnmillar Institute

The counselling and psychotherapy programs at the Cairnmillar Institute are designed to assist students in acquiring knowledge, practice, and experience across a diverse range of areas relating to professional practice. Our immersive, cohesive, and philosophically aligned programs equip students with the necessary skills and expertise to ethically offer and deliver effective counselling and psychotherapy.

Accreditation and graduate outcomes

Our courses uphold the highest standards set by the Psychotherapy and Counselling Federation of Australia (PACFA) and the Australian Counselling Association (ACA). Students enrolled in our postgraduate Counselling and Psychotherapy degrees are eligible to join ACA and PACFA as student members at no cost. We encourage our graduates to pursue professional membership and registration, which are governed by the criteria established by PACFA and ACA. Membership levels and the path towards clinical registration involve meeting specific standards and requirements that are maintained by these organisations. For comprehensive information on the various membership categories and the steps towards becoming a registered practitioner, please visit [The Australian Register of Counsellors and Psychotherapists \(ARCAP\)](#) or go directly to [PACFA](#) and [the ACA's](#) websites. Graduates may find employment in a variety of settings including community health and community services organisations, agencies, rehabilitation providers, human resource management, child protection, family support counselling services, allied clinics and services, and private practice.

About this handbook

Our Counselling and Psychotherapy programs combine applied coursework with a supervised placement as part of work-integrated learning. This handbook focuses on the placement program. In it, you will find essential information outlining what is required to successfully secure, undertake, complete, and pass your placement. It is the students' responsibility to read and understand the content of this handbook. For details about coursework and placement unit prerequisites, please refer to the [Course Information Handbook](#) associated with your course.

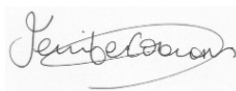
Placement Contacts

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

We hope you enjoy the work-integrated component of your professional training with us. Wishing you a rewarding and enriching experience.



**Dr Bronte McLeod - Program Coordinator,
Counselling and Psychotherapy
Postgraduate Program**



**Jenny Coburn - Course Coordinator,
Bachelor of Psychology and Counselling**

1. PLACEMENT PROGRAM OVERVIEW

1.1. Key features of the placement program

- The placement program helps students **develop essential skills, confidence, and knowledge integration** through real-world experience. It includes reflective practice, working with real clients, and applying theory to practice, aiding professional identity development, networking memberships, and registration.
- Counselling placements allow students to **apply classroom knowledge in a supervised setting, integrating theory and practice**. Students practice skills in a supportive environment with constructive feedback.
- Students are supported during placements. If challenges arise, including personal issues that may impact students' ability to practice, the Placement Coordinator and supervisors provide feedback and collaboratively discuss options to ensure success while maintaining professional standards.
- Students are **expected to act professionally** within their competency, engage in professional development, and proactively develop their expertise and identity.
- Placements offer diverse experiences, including working with various client groups, developing clinical and reflective skills, and cultivating their professional identity. Students may work with couples and groups if competent, ensuring a broad experience to meet professional competency requirements.
- **Placement experiences vary** based on students' skills, experience, and interests, and are arranged considering industry needs. CMI and Placement Coordinators facilitate the program, guided by the handbook's structure and assessment requirements.

1.2. Placement Aims

The aim of placements is to provide students with the opportunity to:

- Learn about policies and procedures associated with working within an organisation in a field context. This includes adhering to the legal and ethical requirements relevant to counselling and psychotherapy practice and working within the PACFA and ACA Scope of Practice.
- Gain experience with a wide range of clients of various presenting concerns and age ranges (including children, adolescents, and adults) in clinical settings.
- Apply and extend learnings attained from their coursework (such as counselling theories, assessment, ethics, and case formulation, conceptualisation, planning and the use of treatment approaches) in a clinical setting with clients.
- Engage in various counselling and psychotherapy tasks with clients, including the timely management and upkeep of case notes and logs. These practices are reflective of essential ethical standards in the field and constitute a legal requirement for health professionals in Australia.
- Develop the professional conduct and collaborative teamwork expected by practitioners within community agencies, schools, and other institutions.
- Develop their awareness of professional issues and available resources in mental health care in Australia (in community organisations, schools, medical and non-medical agencies).
- The opportunity to engage in reflexive practice facilitated by a professional supervisor and develop their capacities as a reflective and reflexive practitioner.
- Students must successfully complete all the requirements for placements set out by CMI and be deemed competent by their supervisors, placement provider representatives, and the placement coordinator to successfully complete each placement.

1.3. Expectations of Students on Placement

Students on placement are expected to conduct themselves in a professional manner as they would in a professional, paid work setting and as representatives of the Cairnmillar Institute. In this way students are expected to:

- Fulfill their contractual obligations with the placement agency regarding contract period for the placement and expected activities and behaviours.
- Be punctual to work, client sessions, meetings, and all professional appointments.
- Be mindful of their role as a student practitioner in a development role (e.g., not a consultant).
- Be prompt and professional in all communications (e.g., in person, email, calls) including responding to people in a timely manner.
- Read and abide by all relevant agency's policies, procedures, and other documents, including workplace health and safety related material, and abide by the requirements set out in these documents.
- Be respectful and not engage in conversations that are openly critical of the agency, its practices, or people (staff, clients, and associated parties).
- Be available to liaise with all staff they work with, including reception and support staff.
- Tend to personal hygiene, dress in a professional manner, and abide by any reasonable clothing requirements.
- Maintain professional boundaries with their clients, supervisors and agency representatives and refrain from accepting gifts.
- Actively seek out and/or offer to complete additional tasks during quiet times.
- Refrain from making changes to your placement days, start/finish times, or other agreed placement arrangements without prior consultation.
- Behave in a manner that is aligned with the ethical code in place for the profession of counselling and psychotherapy and legal requirements.
- Immediately report to their placement coordinator any safety concerns, barriers or impairments that impact on the student's ability to perform their duties on placement.

Please note that this list is not exhaustive, please refer to the section below titled passing a placement for more information.

2. Placement Overview and Actions

2.1. Pre-Placement Actions

Students are required to action these items within the first two weeks of admission and enrolment in the course:

- **Email.** Ensure your CMI email address is directed to the email address you use. Email, including essential Canvas/SONIA notifications, are the primary method used by CMI to communicate with students. [Click here for more information on my.CMI about accessing and configuring your email.](#) Students are expected to check their student emails regularly and to respond to CMI emails within 2-3 working days.
- **Pre-Placement Checks.** Students must upload a copy of the following documents to SONIA. Once uploaded, these need to be approved by the Placement Coordinators before students can commence placement. Students will need to ensure these actions are commenced at least three months prior to commencing the first placement to allow for any delays in processing. Students are responsible for ensuring their compliance checks are current while undertaking placements.

- **Working with children's check (WWCC).** Students are required to obtain and maintain a current WWCC while completing placement. [Click here for more information about obtaining and maintaining a valid WWCC.](#)
- **National Police Checks.** Students must obtain and maintain a current National Police Check annually while completing placement. [Click here for more information about obtaining and maintaining a valid police check.](#)
- **Other requirements.** Specific placement providers may require students to obtain necessary immunisations and/or a NDIS worker screening check. Students will be advised by the placement provider and/or the Placement Coordinators if these are required.
- **Pre-placement training workshops: Student must complete the following workshops and associated assessment before starting their first placement.** These mandatory workshops cover topics such as:
 - Placement administration and process overview
 - Family violence training
 - Suicide risk assessment and intervention.

Workshop dates will be communicated to students. As these typically fall on the Semester breaks and students are advised to check for scheduled workshop dates prior to booking any planned holidays.

2.2. Arranging Placements

2.2.1. Placement Preferences

CMI will arrange placement opportunities for students in the program, and the placement coordinator will advise students about the timing and specific process. Below is a brief overview about arranging placements:

- **Pre-Placement Meeting:** Once advised, students are required to schedule a pre-placement meeting with the placement coordinator to discuss their placement preferences. For semester one placement, these meetings typically occur in October the year before, and semester 2 in April. The Placement coordinator will provide further details, including how to book a meeting at the right time.
- **Prepare CV:** When requested by the placement coordinator, students will need to upload a copy of their CV. Please ensure that it is up to date and has a counselling focus. Prepare your CV with the following aspects in mind:
 - Remember that the reader will be a busy person and does not need an extensive description of the work you have done. Keep it brief and concise (e.g., no more than 2 pages).
 - Key headings can include contact details, current employment, voluntary work, employment history, qualifications, scholarships and awards, memberships of professional organisations, and training workshops attended.

2.2.2. Placement Allocations

The Placement Coordinator will arrange placement opportunities based on the information and preferences you provide during the pre-placement meeting. While every effort is made to consider student preferences, it may not always be possible to find a perfect match due to the nature of placement allocations and availability. You will be notified of the selected placement agency, and the next steps will depend on the specific agency. Placement providers may require an interview, while others may begin with a meet-and-greet followed by the onboarding process. The Placement Coordinator will guide you through each step to ensure a smooth transition into your placement.

2.3.Placement Hours and Days

Table 3 outlines the minimum placement hours required for each placement. The total time spent on placements is expected to be approximately 150 hours. It is expected that students will complete at least 40 hours of direct client contact and 25 hours of supervision (10 individual and 15 group). All placements should be undertaken at the rate of 2-3 days per week and take 20-24 placement weeks to complete.

Table 3: Minimum placement requirements

Counselling & Psychotherapy Placement Activities	Total Minimum Requirements for each placement unit (CAP361, CAP461 and CAP561)
Total Placement/Practicum Hours	150
Direct Client Contact (DCC) Hours (Counselling)	40
Client-related activities/hrs (excl. supervision & DCC)	80
Total Supervision hours	25
Individual Supervision hours	10
Group Supervision hours	15

In line with placements being an opportunity to develop and apply counselling and psychotherapy skills, it is important that the structure of a placement centres on learning and developing competencies. For this reason, students in their first placement should attempt to slowly increase their client hours; this will allow students the opportunity to undertake work required outside of sessions to develop counselling and psychotherapy competencies.

Please be advised that the landscape of placement providers is subject to continual change, influenced by varying demand for consultations and the diverse professional skills required of students. Consequently, the duration of placements may occasionally extend beyond standard semester dates.

Please note that these hours and activities constitute the *minimum* requirements. Progress is based on achieving competency across various counselling and psychotherapy domains.

At times students may accrue more than the minimum placement hours before the placement end date stipulated and agreed to on the Placement Contract and Learning Plan. Students are not permitted to end their placement early and are required to complete their placement on or after the end date stated on the Placement Contract and Learning Plan. A variation in the length of placement or minimum requirements needs to be agreed upon at the commencement of placement and approved by the Placement Coordinators.

2.4.Placement Activities: Definitions and Information

Placement activities are categorised as either direct client contact hours, client-related hours, and professional/clinical supervision for their practice. A client may be an individual or a group. There are minimum hours for some of these activities required for a placement to meet accreditation and training standards. It is important to understand what can and cannot be included to meet the course and accrediting body(s) requirements.

Students are expected to closely monitor their placement requirements on a weekly basis in consultation with their supervisor, including the rate at which hours are being accrued across the various categories (e.g., direct client contact, client related contact, supervision etc.).

Placement Coordinators will monitor students' logbooks (timesheets) across the course of placements and will discuss progress during the mid placement review. Where the rate of accrual for hours is lower than expected, students are required to discuss potential solutions with their supervisor and/or placement provider representative when a problem arises and ideally prior to the mid-placement review meeting.

Please ensure you read and understand each of the definitions provided below as you will need to maintain an accurate logbook of approved placement activities.

- **Total Placement Hours:** Total placement hours = direct client hours + client related hours + supervision.
- **Direct Client Activities/Contact (DCC):** Direct client contact is time spent working directly with clients face to face or via teleconferencing. A client is an individual across the lifespan (a child, an adolescent, an adult, an elderly) in the context of counselling, Indigenous Healing Practices, and/or psychotherapy provision. Students completing CAP561 who demonstrate readiness, and the necessary competencies may also be given the opportunity to work with couples and groups, as assigned by the placement providers. Direct client contact hours must be obtained through one-on-one counselling sessions, where the student engages with the client individually in a direct therapeutic relationship. The initial intake session will count towards Direct Client Contact (DCC) hours only if it is part of an ongoing therapeutic relationship, requiring a minimum of two sessions. If the intake of session is not followed by further sessions, it will be categorised as Client-Related Activity (see below).
- **Co-therapy:** Up to 50% of the first 40 direct client contact hours can be accrued via co-therapy where a student is providing group therapy. After the initial 40 face-to-face client hours, other methods of client contact such as telephone counselling, online counselling using videoconferencing technology (audio and visual) or additional co-therapy are allowable. Co-therapy is where a student works with a trainer or qualified practitioner or another student in a dual capacity to provide psychotherapy or counselling at the same time with the same client or client group.
Please note that Co-therapy can only be logged in by the student as direct client contact when therapy is provided by trainees and not when it is also provided by a trainer or qualified practitioner.
- **Client-Related Activity:** Client-related activities support students to acquire graduate competencies relevant to the counselling and psychotherapy courses and are distinct from direct client contact activities (though supportive of it) and may include those items listed below as examples.

Examples of Client Related Activities include but are not limited to:

- Administrative phone calls or meetings
- Reading/writing case/file notes/reports
- Scoring assessments
- Preparing for supervision related to client work
- Organisational projects
- Preparation of logbooks and placement forms
- External professional development that has been approved by the individual supervisor as meeting the student's learning goals
- Case presentations, role plays, practice sessions, etc.
- **Supervision:** Supervision is a collaborative process aimed at supporting students to develop ethical, reflective practice and other counselling and psychotherapy competencies. It gives students an opportunity to learn while focusing on a duty of care towards the client and the supervisee's professional development and self-care. Students can only log in supervision provided by their allocated individual and group supervisors.

2.5. Insurance

All services provided by students are required to be covered by appropriate professional indemnity insurance (PII). Students enrolled into CMI courses with a placement component are covered under the Cairnmillar Institute's public liability and professional indemnity insurance policies when on external placement, fieldwork or other work undertaken in Australia in connection with a course or approved research work, with the knowledge and consent of the Cairnmillar Institute. It is important that students work on the specified placement days outlined in the placement agreement. Students who are undertaking placements in their workplace and who source their own placements need to be clear about which days are designated placement days, so they are covered by the appropriate insurance policy on those days. Students who mix their placements days, for instance while on a placement in their workplace, place themselves at risk of not being covered by the appropriate insurance.

Although Workcover cannot cover students, they are covered to the extent permitted by legislation, under the Cairnmillar Institute's Personal Accident and Travel Policy.

2.6. Workplace Placements

Students may be approved to undertake a placement in their existing workplace (their place of employment) if the scope of the proposed role is consistent with developing counselling and psychotherapy competencies required for the course, and if the activities comprising the proposed role are sufficiently distinct from the student's usual workplace role (e.g., in a separate department, working with a different age cohort). If the placement is to be a paid placement, the financial arrangements are between the student and the organisation; the Cairnmillar Institute cannot advise on any financial arrangements included in this agreement.

All placements must meet the criteria for a suitable placement opportunity in counselling and psychotherapy in terms of the scope of work to be undertaken, diversity in counselling and psychotherapy placement experiences across the course and its ability to support the unit aims. They must be organised at least 8-10 weeks in advance of the first date of the semester to accommodate the extra time required to establish appropriate contractual agreements and approvals. As the expectation is that students will be undertaking a structured learning opportunity, placements days, and expected caseloads should be clearly specified. It is expected that, while on placement, students will carry a smaller case load than they might ordinarily do when undertaking paid work (e.g., 2-4 clients daily) to allow for development opportunities, reflection, planning and completion of placement requirements (e.g., logbook entries, case reports, supervision etc.).

Students undertaking paid or unpaid placements within their place of work must establish clear mutual understandings about what needs to be learned and how collegial/ managerial/ supervisory boundary issues will be negotiated. A [conflict of interest form](#) is required where students are known to the placement agency contact, the supervisors or where there are employment arrangements.

2.7. Supervision

Supervision is an important aspect of a student's placement experience, forming part of the minimum requirements for students on placement. The aim of each supervision session is to help the student develop their real-world case conceptualisation and counselling skills and the reflective practice required to offer an informed and competent service to their clients. Supervisors assist counsellors and psychotherapists to engage in reflective practice about the student's client caseload, explore and gain added awareness of their own "blind spots" and provide practical support and guidance in examining how to best approach and respond to tricky situations, ethical dilemmas, and client concerns. Group supervision provides an added benefit of learning from the experience and reflections of peers.

In placement supervision, supervisors also have a duty of care to ensure the safety and wellbeing of their students' clients and to facilitate, monitor and evaluate the student's competency development. Supervisors are responsible for helping students further develop their case formulation and conceptualisation abilities, reviewing students' case notes, signing logbooks etc. and more broadly, tracking their professional development and progress over the course of the placement. Students should expect to feel supported, guided and challenged in their supervisory relationship.

Students are expected to play a proactive role in supervision by:

- Preparing an agenda in consultation with the supervisor for each session.
- Allowing sufficient time before each supervision session to review their work with clients as well as any unrelated challenges they face in placement, and to consider what they have achieved and what they may be concerned about.
- Preparing succinct initial case formulations to facilitate clarity and ask for guidance in the areas of greatest need.
- Being open to the feedback and guidance provided by their supervisors is important.
- Come prepared having undertaken any activities or readings previously recommended by their supervisors.
- Engage in activities that support learning within the supervision session, such as participating in role plays.

2.8. Passing a Placement

To successfully pass a placement unit, students are required to meet the following requirements:

- Placement activity requirements outlined for the placement in Table 3,
- Successfully pass the competency-based placement assessments for the placement outlined in Table 4, and
- Be assessed by Supervisors, Placement Provider Representative, and Placement Coordinators as meeting the clinical and professional competencies required for the placement units.

In line with the aims of placement, the individual supervisor is responsible for assessing competencies and making a recommendation to the placement coordinator about whether a student has passed a placement. The individual supervisor will consider feedback from the placement provider representative and the group supervisor in making their recommendation. The placement coordinator retains the final decision-making responsibility about whether a student has passed the placement unit. The following provides an overview of competency development that will be considered when deciding whether a student has successfully completed a placement:

1. **Professional and ethical behaviour:** Demonstrated integrity, ability to abide by codes of conduct, ethical and legal obligations, accountability, timeliness, communication, problem-solving and the ability to show initiative and self-direction. Is respectful and demonstrates professional conduct with all interactions.
2. **Counselling and psychotherapy skills:** Demonstrated ability to develop effective therapeutic relationships with clients, shows empathy, demonstrated person-centered counselling skills, and ability to tolerate ambiguity and complexity.
3. **Knowledge of theoretical models and approaches:** Ability to link theory to practice, demonstrated familiarity with interventions and their use, and able to recognise therapeutic themes
4. **Clinical knowledge and case management:** Ability to assess and respond to risk, Case conceptualisation skills, and skillful and timely recording keeping (e.g., case notes).
5. **Personal development and self-awareness:** Demonstrated self-awareness, reflexivity, accountability, genuineness, congruence, transparency, and cultural humility. Competence in

responding to diversity, recognising transference/countertransference, and ability to sit with difficult emotions in self and others.

6. **Communication and interpersonal skills:** Demonstrated understanding and management of boundaries, empathy, and flexibility.
7. **Working with other professionals:** Demonstrated ability to integrate constructive criticism, is prepared for and uses supervision effectively, raises and communicates concerns and appropriately seeks guidance as needed. Is open and respectful of others and their ideas.

Additionally, the placement coordinator will also include in their assessment the ability of students to submit assessments and documents in a timely manner and their ability to be accountable and their professional behaviour when interacting key staff including the placement coordinator.

Supervisors, placement provider representatives, and the placement coordinator take a collaborative approach in assessing the skills, conduct, and overall performance of students while on placement. It is the individual supervisor's role to provide regular, constructive feedback to students regarding their counselling and psychotherapy competencies. This feedback is formally documented during the Mid-Placement and End-Placement Reviews, and input from placement provider representatives is also incorporated to provide a well-rounded evaluation of the student's progress.

If a student is not making the expected progress on placement, a learning support plan will be developed to address these concerns and assist the student in meeting placement requirements. Where a learning support plan has been implemented during the placement, the placement coordinator will attend the End-Placement Review.

At the conclusion of the placement, the individual supervisor, together with feedback from the placement provider representative, will provide a recommendation to the placement coordinator about whether the student has passed the placement. Supervisors will evaluate student progress as either "Satisfactory" or "Not Satisfactory." Once the final supervisor's report is submitted, the placement coordinator will review this report alongside the student's other required documents and assessments (e.g., logbooks, journals, placement forms, case reports, etc.) to determine the final placement outcome. All placement assessment material must have been completed in a timely manner and to professional standards. The recorded result will be either Pass or Fail. Students must successfully complete the minimum contact hours, supervision, and all other placement requirements, including demonstrated professional and ethical behaviour to the required standards to pass the unit.

In some cases, the Placement Coordinator, in consultation with the Course Coordinator, may determine that referral to the CMI [Academic Integrity and Progress Committee \(AIPC\)](#) is necessary. This step is taken when standard interventions, such as a learning support plan, do not resolve ongoing concerns about a student's progress, including issues related to professional conduct.

3. PLACEMENT 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.

3.1. Pre-Placement Checks

As outlined in section 2.1 above, students are required to submit the pre-placement documents before each placement and cannot commence a placement before the Placement Coordinators have

approved these assessments. You can find detailed information about how to apply for each of the pre-placement requirements on my.CMI here: [Pre-Placement Documentation](#).

All students are required to submit the following to SONIA prior to commencing each placement:

- Police Check
- Working with Children Check (where required)
- Other checks (e.g., NDIS) were required.

These must be kept valid throughout your placement so any renewals must also be uploaded as required. Failure to submit these documents may jeopardise your placement and your opportunity to see clients. Placement providers may also require pre-placement activities, such as mandatory training, to be completed before students can commence placement. Student are required to complete these and provide evidence of completion to the placement provider and/or CMI (as per relevant instructions).

3.1.1. Immunisations

There are placement settings that require students to have specific immunisation or coverage for certain diseases. Students will liaise with and provide evidence of vaccinations directly with the placement agency.

3.2.Placement Documents and Assessments

Students also need to submit various assessments and documents across the placement units. These requirements are outlined in Table 4.

Table 4: Placement Assessments

Placement Documents	All Placements
Placement Contract & Learning Plan	Required
Mid-Placement Review	Required
End of Placement Review	Required
Placement Logbook (Timesheet) & Reflections	Required
Unit Assessments	All Placements
Case Report	1
Supervisors Observation	1
Case Notes (Supervisor Review) Minimum	6

Students can access and action/submit all placement documents and assessments within Sonia. Placement documents completed incorrectly and/or outside of the required period may jeopardise a student's timely graduation or progression to subsequent units.

The following sections outline the required placement documents for each placement in this course. Please read the instructions and requirements for each assessment and ensure that:

- Where applicable, the student submits all documents and ensures they are approved by the supervisor and the placement provider in contact.
- All instructions for each assessment are followed correctly, especially in the logbook.
- Students retain their own copies of all placement documents.

These assessments and documents are activities undertaken on placement and assessed by each student's CMI-approved individual supervisor. The following explains the requirements for each of these assessments and when they are required to be submitted.

3.2.1. Placement Contract and Learning Plan

Purpose: The placement contract sets out the parameters for ensuring all parties are aware of their obligations and responsibilities throughout the placement and is signed by the student, the individual/clinical supervisor, and the placement provider representative (where this is different from the supervisor). The Placement Contract contains the following details:

- Agreement between Cairnmillar, student and placement provider
- Confirmation of student placement information
- Placement requirements
- Induction and workplace health and safety requirements
- Supervision agreement
- The student's learning goals.

The Placement Contract & Learning Plan includes a schedule of workplace health and safety obligations and responsibilities for delivering services off-site (where applicable). Please ensure these aspects are covered in the orientation and induction once onsite at the placement provider.

Due date: Within 14 days (about 2 weeks) from the placement commencement date. The students are responsible for arranging a placement contract meeting prior to the placement start date or within the first two weeks of commencing placement. The student, placement provider representative, Placement Coordinator, and primary individual supervisor (where feasible) must attend the placement contract meeting. The Placement Contract and Learning Plan must be submitted by the student in Sonia within 7 days from completing the placement contract meeting.

Task: The contract focuses on ensuring all parties are aware of the placement requirements and their obligations. It is also important for setting individual learning goals for each student, ensuring that these goals are tailored to their specific clinical setting and placement requirements. The goals should align with the student's development needs, while also considering the unique aspects of the placement environment. This process will help ensure that the student's learning experience is both relevant and supportive of their professional growth throughout the placement.

Please note: For safety reasons, students cannot see clients outside standard business hours (e.g., after hours, weekends) without appropriate staff on-site. Additionally, students are not permitted to book client sessions outside the days and times agreed upon in the placement contract. Please ensure you have a clear understanding of the expectations regarding after-hours work and the requirement for appropriate staff presence during placement days to ensure both safety and compliance with placement guidelines.

3.2.2. Mid-Placement Review (previously called Form B) Process

Purpose: The mid-placement review is required for all placements. It serves to evaluate the student's progress towards achieving graduate competencies and to identify and implement any necessary adjustments to enhance the student's learning and development.

Due Dates: The mid-placement review meeting must occur within 6–8 weeks after the placement start date.

Task: The mid-placement review consists of two components: mid-placement review document, and mid-placement review meeting:

- **Mid-Placement Review Assessment and Form:** The mid-placement review form will be allocated to students within Sonia and must be completed by all parties before the mid-placement review meeting. Students will complete the first section and submit the form, and it will be automatically sent to the student placement provider representative for

completion. Upon completion and submission by the placement provider representative, the form will be automatically sent to the individual supervisor to complete. Any areas needing further development. It is recommended that placement provider representatives and supervisors complete the assessment of competencies and progress with the student in a collaborative manner. Following the mid-placement review meeting and the supervisor submitting the form, students will have a chance to review the form and make any comments. Then submit the form for the Placement Coordinator to review. Students must submit the final form within 7 days of the mid-placement review meeting.

- **Mid-Placement Review Meeting:** The student must arrange and attend a review meeting with their individual supervisor, the placement provider representative, and the placement coordinator (or a suitably qualified delegate). Placement coordinators will provide guidance via Canvas for announcements on how to book the meeting. The mid-placement review meeting provides an opportunity for the student, their individual supervisor, the placement coordinator, and the placement provider representative to collaboratively review the completed mid-placement review document and assess the student's progress.

During the meeting the student, placement provider representative, individual supervisor, and placement coordinator (or delegate) will discuss:

- The student's progress towards placement goals and graduate competencies.
- Any challenges encountered and strategies to address them.
- Adjustments or actions needed to support the student's continued development and successful completion of the placement.

This collaborative process ensures that students receive clear feedback and appropriate support to meet their learning objectives.

3.2.3. End-of-Placement Review Process

Purpose: An end-of-placement review is required for all placements in this course and is designed to assess the student's progress towards graduate competencies and provide feedback about areas for further development in the next placement. Please be aware that this information may be shared with your supervisor in a subsequent placement.

Due dates: End-of-placement review meeting is due within 1 week prior to the end date of placement and the end of placement form must be submitted by the student within one week of the last day of placement.

Task: Within the last two weeks of last day on placement, students will arrange and attend a meeting with the individual supervisor, and where indicated, the placement coordinator, to review the progress of the placement. Following this meeting the student and supervisor will verify and submit the end-of-placement review form within SONIA. There are two aspects of the end-of-placement review:

- **End-of-placement review form:** The form will be allocated to students within Sonia and must be completed by all parties before the mid-placement review meeting. Students will complete the first section and submit the form, and it will be automatically sent to the student placement provider representative for completion. Upon completion and submission by the placement provider representative, the form will be automatically sent to the individual supervisor to complete. Supervisors must complete the end-of-placement review form and discuss this assessment and the student's progress with the student prior to, or in collaboration with them during the end-of- placement meeting. The completed form should be verified and submitted by the student and supervisor in SONIA within 7 days after the end of placement for the Placement Coordinators to finalise.

- **End-of-placement review meeting:** An end-of-placement review meeting is required to take place between the student and their individual supervisor, and where relevant the placement provider representative may also be invited to attend to contribute to reviewing the student's professional performance during placement. Placement Coordinators may also attend, and students will be advised if this is needed.

This meeting must occur within two weeks before the end date of placement. Students are responsible for arranging this meeting. During the meeting, the student and primary individual supervisor (and the placement provider representative and Placement Coordinator where relevant) will discuss the contents of the end-of-placement review form and progress with competencies. Students and supervisors should discuss any areas for improvement, and the student should seek the supervisor's feedback on how to further develop their clinical competencies. To support progression of competencies to the next stage, the outcome of this review may be shared with the supervisor of the next placement, where relevant.

3.2.4. Placement Activities Logbook/Timesheet and Reflective Journal

Purpose: The placement logbook (timesheet) and reflective journal is an essential record of all placement activities and reflections and is an accreditation requirement. Maintaining accurate records and logs is a legal and ethical requirement for helping professionals in Australia. The reflective journal assists in students' development of self-awareness, self-reflection, and reflexivity.

Due date: Students are required to keep their logbook (timesheet) and reflective journal up to date (fortnightly) so supervisors can approve entries within SONIA. The logbook (timesheet) and reflective journal are required to be completed with all entries approved within 7 days from the end date of placement.

Task: Students are required to maintain a logbook of hours representing the activities undertaken in a typical 7.5-hour day, noting direct client activity and client related activity hours, supervision, and reflections etc. Students should log each activity and are required to include the following details:

- **Date:** When the session/activity/supervision/reflection took place
- **Duration:** Enter the number of hours for the specific activity being logged
- **Activity:** Direct Client Hours/Client-related Hours/ Supervision
- **Sub Activity:** Select the most relevant category (e.g., Intake, Therapy, Intervention)
- **Comment:** Briefly describe the session and add your reflection.

A note on reflections: Students are required to log a reflection when logging Direct Client Activity and Supervision. Students may log a separate reflection entry by selecting reflection in the Activity section of the logbook (timesheet).

Students are required to ensure they keep their logbooks up to date on a weekly basis. All supervisors allocated to the student for that specific period are required to approve each logbook entry. All logbook entries must be completed and approved by the supervisor within 7 days from the last day of placement. CMI will retain copies of logbooks to demonstrate appropriate process if the Institute is audited and to provide examples of student work during regular course renewal of accreditation

Important: if you have a change of supervisor during a placement, you must make sure that the exiting supervisor has signed off on any logbook weeks before they leave. Any incoming supervisor is unable to verify activity they did not supervise, putting your logbook at risk of not being accepted as a true record of your placement hours and activity.

3.2.5. Case Report

Purpose: Case reports are required to assess students' competence in taking a complete history, conducting a full assessment, formulating the case, and implementing and intervention plan and monitoring its effectiveness.

Due date: Students are required to submit one case report via SONIA. The specific due date can be found on both SONIA.

Task: Students must complete a comprehensive assessment case report using the guidelines for writing a [Case Report](#) available on my.CMI. Student will submit the case report to Sonia and their supervisor will review and submit the final draft in Sonia. The placement coordinator (or delegate) will assess the case report and provide feedback via Sonia.

Students must use a client in the current placement for the case report and cannot use clients from previous placements or clients in work outside of placements. Students will require placement coordinator approval if case reports are based on clients not at the current placement.

Please ensure that your case reports are [deidentified](#) before submitting.

Please note: more information about the process of submitting these for your supervisor's review within SONIA will be provided at the right time.

3.2.6. Supervisor Observations

Purpose: Supervisor observations are required to assess multiple competencies related to delivering safe, appropriate, and professional counselling and psychotherapy services to clients, and are important for students to strengthen their practice.

Due date: It is recommended that this is completed and reviewed by your supervisor prior to the mid-placement review so that relevant feedback may be incorporated into your work for the remainder of the placement.

Task: Students are required to have their clinical work directly observed by a supervisor on at least one separate occasion, for each placement (e.g., via co-therapy, video, or audio recording, sitting in).

If the student's supervisor is not located onsite and cannot observe 'in vivo', direct observation may occur by way of secure video or audio-recording, with the client's consent. This confidential information is not required to be submitted to Cairnmillar.

Where the setting does not allow for the CMI-approved primary individual supervisor to observe the student in vivo or using video or audio recordings (such as in some forensic settings) this should be addressed in the appropriate section on the Placement Contract & Learning Plan form and during the Placement Contract meeting at the commencement of placement. Where this was not anticipated, students need to seek approval from the placement coordinator for an alternate supervisor to undertake the supervisor observation. Alternate supervisors will need to liaise with the primary individual supervisor prior to giving the student feedback about the observation.

Please note: more information about the process of submitting these for your supervisor's review within SONIA will be provided at the right time.

3.2.7. Case Notes (Supervisor review)

Purpose: Supervisors are required to review and sign off on a minimum of six client case notes for each placement. The purpose of this requirement is to provide the supervisor with evidence of record keeping and an opportunity to provide the student with feedback to strengthen case note content and format.

Due date: At least three case notes should be reviewed by the individual supervisor before the mid-placement review and a minimum of three (as required by the supervisor) before the end-of-placement review meeting.

Task: Students are required to provide their CMI approved primary individual supervisor opportunities to review a minimum of six case notes as requested by the supervisor for each placement. Where the supervisor is external to the placement agency, permission for the supervisor to review deidentified case notes should be discussed during the Placement Contract meeting at the commencement of the placement.

Supervisors will review the case notes and provide feedback to students about areas for improvement in case note form and content. Supervisors will indicate on the mid and end-of placement reviews within Sonia that six case notes have been provided by the student and are satisfactory.

3.2.8. Student Evaluation of Placement

You will be invited to provide anonymous feedback on the Placement Units at the end of the year via survey link. The feedback you provide is extremely valuable and enables CMI to engage in continuous improvement of its services. We appreciate you taking the time to evaluate your placement experiences and provide feedback.

4. PLACEMENT PROGRAM POLICIES

4.1. PACFA and ACA Guidelines and Policies

Students in this course are expected to be familiar with and act in accordance with:

- [PACFA policies and guidelines](#), including the ethical standards
- [Code of Conduct for General Health Services](#) (VIC)
- Placement agency specific policies and procedures
- Privacy Laws.

Please note that there are times where the student may be required to make disclosures, such as to meet mandatory reporting obligations. If you have a concern about needing to make a mandatory report, please discuss this with your supervisor, if this is appropriate. Alternatively, if this is not possible (e.g., the concern relates to the supervisor) please consult directly with the Placement Coordinator, Course Coordinator or Dean.

4.2. Roles & Responsibilities

Individual Supervisor

The individual supervisor is responsible for:

- Gaining understanding of the student's role within the organisation, including details of the work expected.
- Developing a relationship with the student that facilitates open discussion of difficulties and potential problems.

- Demonstrating a commitment to the supervision relationship (e.g., setting up a regular supervision time, supervision contract, and discussing with the student about their learning goals).
- Providing specific and detailed feedback on all aspects of the student's performance, including direct observation of the student on at least 2 occasions (e.g., video recording, co-therapy, sitting in).
- Where possible, liaising with the placement provider representative periodically regarding the student's performance. The Placement Coordinators will also liaise with the provider representative periodically.
- Where possible, providing an opportunity for the student to observe the supervisor, and others.
- Sighting and signing student's case notes and written works.
- Sighting and signing student's placement activity logbook (timesheet).
- Alerting the Placement Coordinators of any concerns regarding the student's performance at the placement provider.

Placement Provider Representative

The placement provider representative is responsible for:

- Orienting students to the organisation (e.g., relevant staff members, equipment, physical environment, organisational policy, and procedure, etc.)
- Clearly establishing the student's role within the organisation consistent with the placement agreement with CMI, including details of the work expected.
- Developing a relationship with the student that facilitates open discussion of difficulties and potential problems, including enabling the student to provide feedback.
- Alerting the primary individual supervisor and Placement Coordinators of any concerns regarding the student's performance at the placement provider.
- Facilitating the allocation of suitable clients for the student at the rate required for them to accrue hours required for the placement.

4.3.Changes to Placement

4.3.1. Student Absences

Any absence of a day or more from placement must be reported to the appropriate placement provider contact in the first instance, and via email to your individual supervisor and Placement Coordinators. Student are required to determine early in the placement who they are required to notify if they are absent from placement.

Unplanned absences for more than two weeks must be reported to the Placement Coordinators. An unplanned absence is an absence that was not planned when determining placement start and end dates.

Upon return to the placement, the student should discuss with the agency representative and their individual supervisor how any missed placement days will be made up. The outcome should be advised via email to the Placement Coordinators. Students who need to change their placement end date due to absences need to follow the placement extension instructions below.

It is not recommended that students take annual leave while on placement unless this was planned and agreed to as part of the Placement Contract and Learning Plan. However, if a student needs to take annual leave, they are advised to discuss this with the placement provider at least four weeks in advance of the leave start date, and apply via email to the Placement Coordinators.

4.3.2. Placement Extensions

Placements can only be extended under exceptional circumstances. All placements should have a clear start and end date as recorded on the original placement agreement. Students who need to extend placement need to discuss the potential extension and seek approval from the placement coordinators. Please refer to my.CMI for the full [placement extension application process](#). However, please note that this process may change as SONIA is more fully implemented.

4.3.3. Cancelling or rescheduling a supervision session

Both students and individual supervisors (CMI or external) should observe common professional courtesies when changing or cancelling a supervision session. CMI requires that at least 24 hours' notice is provided by the student or supervisor to reschedule or cancel a supervision session. Exceptions apply where there are extenuating circumstances, such as emergencies.

Students with an external supervisor are required to discuss potential session cancellations when entering the supervision arrangement, as the student may become liable for a supervision fee directly billed to them by the external supervisor if they miss or cancel a session late.

Supervisors should discuss any planned absences and make suitable arrangements to ensure continuity of supervision. Please note that students must not continue placement without individual supervision for more than 2 weeks. It is important that students and supervisors have a clear understanding of who they can seek urgent advice while on placement if their own supervisor is not available. If an agency cannot provide an alternative appropriately qualified supervisor, the student should alert the Placement Coordinators and request interim supervision.

4.4. Confidentiality, Informed Consent and Record Keeping

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

4.4.1. Confidentiality

Students are reminded that client information is confidential and should always be discussed in a sensitive and respectful manner with appropriate people. Students are reminded that discussion of client information in open and/or public areas with staff or other students at their placement is inappropriate.

Students are required to deidentify clients group supervision and in all assessment, including in logbooks, reflections, case reports, and correspondence. Please refer to the [deidentification guidance on my.CMI](#).

4.4.2. Informed Consent

The informed consent of a person must be sought before undertaking assessment or interventions with that person, in accordance with the Mental Health Act. A person gives informed consent if they:

- have capacity to give informed consent to the treatment or medical treatment proposed
- have been given adequate information to enable the person to make an informed decision
- have been given a reasonable opportunity to make the decision
- have given consent freely without undue pressure or coercion by any other person
- have not withdrawn consent or indicated any intention to withdraw consent.

The process of obtaining consent and any queries relating to the individual's capacity to consent should be discussed within supervision and clearly documented within client case notes.

Psychologists are required to obtain written informed consent from a guardian or parent prior to providing psychological services to a child. Children aged 16 years or older can provide informed consent if the psychologist has assessed them as a mature minor.

Students should use the placement providers informed consent process, however where there is no informed consent form, students can use the [CMI informed consent form](#).

4.4.3. Secure storage of client case notes and record keeping

Client case notes secure storage

Client case notes created by students on placement must be stored in accordance with the Health Records Act 2001. Prior to commencing placement students, in liaison with the placement provider contact and their supervisor, must determine whether case notes can be stored with the placement agency in line with the Health Records Act 2001. Where this is not possible it is mandatory that students store their case notes with CMI using the practice management software PracSuite. You can find more information about how to arrange access to PracSuite on my.CMI [here](#).

School Placements

School placement can pose some challenges in relation to sharing confidential information and this, can pose problems with continuity of care and access to client notes for the child. Students will need to liaise with their supervisor, the school principal, and placement coordinators about specific confidentiality requirements within a school setting and make appropriate and approved arrangements regarding continuity of care and information sharing.

4.5. Risk and Incident Management and Reporting

4.5.1. Risk Management

Students on placement are required to ensure they are aware of and follow the placement provider processes and procedures for managing clients who pose a risk of harm to self or others, and in accordance with their professional, ethical, and legal obligations as a registered health professional. The following provides guidance about risk management processes, and further support for students who encounter situations where risk management is required.

Step 1: Conduct a risk assessment of risk of harm to self-and/or to others. Take appropriate further action and document your risk management approach/plan.

Step 2: Contact your appropriate placement provider staff (i.e., clinic director, placement provider contact, if a psychologist) for assistance and support to manage the risk. If the placement provider is unable to provide support, please contact your supervisor. If the appropriate agency staff or supervisor are unavailable to support students on placement with crises, then contact CMI in the sequence in Step 3.

Step 3 (where applicable):

Call CMI reception on (03) 9813 3400 and make it clear to the receptionist that you are calling about an urgent risk matter. The receptionist will triage your call to an appropriately qualified CMI staff member.

Out of hours or if reception is unavailable, contact individual staff members in sequence as follows:

- Placement Coordinator: Paulina Stanek 0475 703 777
- Course Coordinator (Postgraduate Programs): Bronte McLeod 0408 711 896
- Course Coordinator (Bachelor Program): Jennifer Coburn 0414 013 922

- Dean: Linda Byrne 0416 166 277

To ensure student safety on placement, students who escalate a risk management situation to CMI for support (Step 3) are required to make a critical incident report within 24 hours of the incident. You can find more information about critical incidents below, including a link to the report form. Students are required to advise both their supervisor and placement provider contact as soon as reasonably possible about the situation.

4.5.2. Critical Incidents

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. The critical incident policies ensure the interests of students are managed appropriately. Such policies also ensure CMI are prepared for such incidents and have a clear protocol to follow in what can be distressing and upsetting circumstances.

To ensure that ongoing support is provided to a student in need, and that records of the incident are maintained, the following procedures apply.

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

- missing students
- any fatality or significant injury
- a serious traffic collision
- homicide or suicide
- verbal or psychological aggression
- serious clinical incident
- fire
- explosion or bomb threat
- a hold up or attempted robbery
- serious threats of violence.

If a critical incident occurs at a CMI site or at a placement site, students must report the critical incident to the appropriate placement provider and CMI placement staff immediately, and if located outside the placement provider (e.g., clinic, school) then you must advise the placement provider as soon as reasonably practicable that an incident has occurred. Following a critical incident students must complete and submit the critical incident report form to hr@cairnmillar.org.au and the relevant Course Coordinator (Graduate Diploma or Masters: bronte.mcleod@cairnmillar.edu.au; or Bachelor: jennifer.coburn@cairnmillar.edu.au) within 24 hours of the incident.

4.5.3. Debriefing

Following a critical incident or a stressful or adverse clinical event, students should take measures to debrief with their supervisor or other appropriate placement agency staff. Students who do not have the opportunity to debrief due to unavailability of placement provider staff can contact CMI staff as per the sequence of contacts listed in the risk management section above.

4.6.CMI Support Services

The following services are available to students:

- **Counselling & Support for Students:** 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 for Students:** Please refer to '[English and Academic Writing Support](#)' and '[APA Support and Study Skills](#)' on my.CMI
- **Other Support Services:** A searchable list of other support services can be found on my.CMI. See: [Support for Students](#)

4.7. Grievance Policy

Please refer to the [Student Grievance Policy and Procedure](#) in addition to the following information. Should students have a concern or grievance regarding any aspect of their placement, they should communicate this to their CMI placement supervisor or Placement Coordinators where the supervisor is external to CMI in the first instance. The supervisor or coordinator will discuss the student's concerns and will collaborate with the student to determine the most appropriate course of action.

If the student's concern or grievance is not resolved to the student's satisfaction, or if the student is unable to discuss the matter with their supervisor or Placement Coordinators the student should contact the Course Coordinator. At this point, the student will be asked to complete and submit a formal grievance which will be responded to in writing to:

- **Course Coordinator (Postgraduate Programs):** Bronte McLeod | Phone 0408 711 896 or email bronte.mcleod@cairnmillar.edu.au
- **Course Coordinator (Bachelor Program):** Jennifer Coburn | Phone 0414 013 922 or email jennifer.coburn@cairnmillar.edu.au
- **Placement Coordinator (CAP):** Phone (03) 9813-3400 or email pc-cap@cairnmillar.edu.au

If the student's concern or grievance is still not resolved to the student's satisfaction, or if the student is unable to discuss the matter with a Course Coordinator, the student should then contact the Dean:

- **Dean:** Linda Bryne | Phone (03) 9813-3400 or email dean@cairnmillar.edu.au

If the student's concern or grievance is not resolved to the student's satisfaction, the student may then take their concerns to an external body. The appropriate body will be determined by the nature of the complaint. Students can access further information by first visiting:

<https://www.studyassist.gov.au/support-while-you-study/higher-education-student-complaints>