

PSYC533 Simulated Placement Unit Outline

What is the Simulated Placement unit?

This unit develops professional psychological skills and ethical practice required in the professional context by providing students a simulated practicum. Students will access a suite of simulated training resources, underpinned by leading evidence-based pedagogy in psychological skills development. The practicum will develop competency in a range of areas: interview skills, psychological assessment, diagnosis, case formulation, psychotherapeutic interventions with individuals/groups, professional identity, conduct and ethical practice, and professional communication with clients, supports, and other professionals. Students work with simulated clients in order to develop competence in a supported and scaffolded way before undertaking the +1 internship.

What are the advantages of completing the Simulated Placement unit (as versus an ordinary face-to-face placement unit)?

This simulated placement has numerous advantages. The simulated practicum allows an opportunity for students to develop and demonstrate competency across the breadth and scope of practice and across the lifespan. It will provide a consistent training experience with exposure to a representative range of clients and presenting difficulties. Students will also be able to develop skills and competence in a safe and low risk setting.

How does the unit operate?

The simulated placement is a 15-week unit that consists of a minimum of 300 hours of simulated practice, including a maximum 100 hours of simulated client contact and 40 hours of supervision. By undertaking the placement students are committing to the equivalent of at least 3 full-time working days per week (i.e., 24 hours). It is recommended that supervisors commit to approximately 8 hours per week over the course of the placement. The simulated placement allows an opportunity for students to develop and demonstrate competency in

- interview skills,
- psychological assessment,
- diagnosis,
- case formulation,
- psychotherapeutic interventions and evaluation of treatment outcome
- professional identity,
- conduct and ethical practice,
- professional communication with clients, supports, and other professionals.

It is expected that students approach the placement in the same manner they would if they were undertaking an Internship/employed as a provisional psychologist. How students conduct themselves in supervision, during client sessions, written work, and Moodle activities will be evidence of their professional, ethical, and clinical competencies. Therefore, it is integral for supervisors to use these platforms to gather information to accurately assess a student's competencies.

The placement is designed for students to work through a series of case studies which provide exposure to a number of typical client presentations. Each case study has a Moodle tile that contains a Moodle book of activities to be worked through. Case studies vary in length and time required to complete each activity. Each case recording will be presented via the Deakin Virtual Clinic with all required activities to be completed within the PSYC533 Moodle book for that case.

In addition to completing simulated psychological practice, students are required to complete:

- two written case studies,
- two Objective Structured Clinical Examinations (OSCEs),
- two student experiences forms that comprise the mid- and end-placement review,
- a logbook, and
- a case presentation during group supervision (non-assessable, but must be completed to pass the unit)

These assessment tasks require supervisory oversight and feedback. The assessments were devised to provide essential information regarding a student's progression towards the clinical competencies and enables supervisors to provide individualised feedback to students to enhance and target their clinical skills. Whether a student demonstrates the clinical competencies, and therefore is able to commence a further placement or graduate the program, is at the discretion of the supervisor.

What are the Supervisor Roles and Responsibilities?

The role of a supervisor can be both extremely rewarding and, at times, challenging. Supervisors have the opportunity to give back to the profession through shaping, guiding and educating the next generation of psychologists. As gatekeepers to the profession, supervisors have the responsibility of ensuring that students have the skills and knowledge to practice ethically, professionally, and responsibly.

This placement has been strategically designed to enable supervisors to monitor and evaluate students' progression towards the clinical competencies and their adherence to ethical, legal and professional standards in a contained and supportive environment. The placement mirrors the Psychology Board of Australia's requirements for provisional psychologists undertaking the 1 year internship, thus aiming to prepare both students and supervisors for this role in future.