

Simcoe Muskoka
Family Connexions



Connexions Familiales
de Simcoe Muskoka

STUDENT PLACEMENT MANUAL

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STUDENT PLACEMENT COMMITMENT

Simcoe Muskoka Family Connexions (SMFC) is committed to developing partnerships with educational institutions to offer learning and development opportunities for students from social work and other related field programs.

In partnership with accredited education institutes, SMFC student placement supervisors, mentors and students will have access to learning and development orientation.

Students will have opportunities to increase their knowledge and skills to prepare them to meet the challenges in their respective field within the context of Child Welfare (CW) or Children and Youth Mental Health (CYMH). This will include a comprehensive overview with an experiential component in order to provide a further understanding of the complex nature of the work.

SMFC will facilitate both local and some distant partnerships to create a pool of trained and skilled candidates in CW or CYMH which reflects the communities of our region. Schools that SMFC partners with will provide their Field Placement Manual and/or expectations to SMFC, be available to the student and the supervisor and ensure field visits are completed for effective partnering and student evaluation.

It will be the expectation that all personnel involved will reflect the values, support the learning culture in the organization, and contribute to job satisfaction and increase skills; supporting student education and possible succession planning.

ORIENTATION PHILOSOPHY

A student will need to be aware of the guiding philosophical beliefs of Simcoe Muskoka Family Connexions, in order to understand and appreciate how decisions are made, within the guidelines set out by SMFC's mission, purpose, and values.

STRATEGIC PLAN 2020-2023



VISION
Safe Kids. Healthy Families. Strong Communities.



PURPOSE
To build safety and well-being with children, youth, families and communities.

OUR VALUES: WE CARE.

We honour **C**ONNEXIONS. We are **A**CCOUNTABLE. **R**ESPECT is essential. **E**QUITY is foundational.

STRATEGIC DIRECTIONS

CHILDREN AND YOUTH SAFE AND WELL WITH FAMILIES IN THEIR COMMUNITIES

We promote wellness, stability and a sense of belonging through effective services, quality care, relationship preservation, and connexions to community and identity.



INNOVATION, ACCOUNTABILITY, & OUTCOMES

We provide evidence-informed services and maximize resources through a commitment to continuous improvement, privacy and accountability for outcomes.



EFFECTIVE COMMUNICATION & PARTNERSHIP

We hear and value the voices of children, youth and families; partner with communities, colleagues and stakeholders to build networks; and advocate.



EQUITABLE PRACTICES

We advance an organizational culture, workplace, policies, programs and services that are equitable, inclusive, and trusted.



TRUTH & RECONCILIATION

We commit to truth and reconciliation with Indigenous families and communities.



SAFE KIDS. HEALTHY FAMILIES. STRONG COMMUNITIES.

In addition, students will be provided resources to develop an understanding of the specialized work that is done in either CW or CYMH fields in the following area:

1. The legal responsibilities of Child Welfare or Children and Youth Mental Health work.
2. The use of authority within the helping relationship and Equitable Practices.
3. How to work on a team to meet the needs of the children, their families, Resource Parents, and professional collaterals.

Students will participate in the agency orientation process and receive information that they will require.

STUDENT PLACEMENT SUPERVISORS

This role is critical to the development of the placement and investment in the student.

Staff who wish to become Student Placement Supervisors will:

1. Be approved and engaged in the Agency's mentorship program.
2. Demonstrate a good understanding of and commitment to working within SMFC vision, purpose, values and mandate.
3. Be familiar with SMFC policies and procedures.
4. Demonstrate through their practice the agency's Service Delivery Framework which imbeds the principles of service that align with our values and a more progressive approach to achieving better outcomes.
5. Meet the educational qualifications as required by the educational institution.
6. Have received positive Performance Evaluation.
7. Demonstrate knowledge and skills essential for competent practice including
 - a. Ability to analyze and articulate the integration of practice skills with knowledge and value base of the field.
 - b. Ability to interpret the work of SMFC and of the specific team/branch setting.
 - c. Ability to manage current workload with the ability to commit time/energy in student education.
 - d. Good organizational skills and time management skills as well as competency in managing administrative tasks.
8. Demonstrate interest and commitment to adult education and continued professional development, including;
 - a. Ability to understand, articulate and appropriately utilize their own teaching and learning style(s) in field education.
 - b. Utilization of training and learning opportunities relevant to the field.
 - c. Understanding of the guidelines, policies and procedures.
 - d. Interest in developing coaching and mentoring skills.
 - e. Ability to articulate methods to help students integrate theory into practice.

In order to ensure consistency and efficiency, the following procedures are applicable to and must be followed by student placement supervisors who are interested in taking a student in the upcoming academic year.

1. Complete process and be accepted into the mentorship program.
2. The field instructor will follow all expectations as set out by the respective educational institution.

PROCESS FOR STUDENTS TO BE PLACED AT SIMCOE MUSKOKA FAMILY CONNEXIONS

The Staff Learning and Development Coordinator will liaise with the Field Placement Coordinators/Instructors as required.

Resumes will be submitted via the Agency's website and held in the HRIS system for review. Applicants whose resumes fit the qualifications for a potential placement will be invited to an interview. The Staff Learning and Development Coordinator will communicate with mentors/Team Leads and their supervisors regarding a potential student, taking into consideration the role and geographic location requests from students. Selection will be made in partnership with HR, service manager and mentors/Team Leads. Interviews will be arranged by HR. References will be completed by HR.

GUIDELINES FOR PLACEMENT INTERVIEWS

The student/placement supervisor interview is a crucial step in the placement matching process as it provides a unique opportunity to clarify expectations, needs and opportunities for both students and student supervisors in the placement experience. This process emphasizes the importance of identifying the right match for the student and field instructor in a particular placement setting. The placement interview focuses on the candidate's level of motivation and commitment to learning as well as exploring their competency and ability to manage the student placement tasks/goals. The agency will prioritize student resumes that have had some experience working within a social services environment either via employment or volunteer work.

The placement interview needs to be well planned and interviews must demonstrate objectivity and consistency. Prior to interviewing, field instructors should have a clear outline of the interview and estimated length along with a list of questions they plan to ask and their rationale for asking those questions. During the interview, students will be provided with information about the organization, the placement setting, expectations of a student at the entry point and expected progress and development over time.

DESCRIPTION OF SOCIAL WORK STUDENT PLACEMENT

It is important that students, before they commit to a placement at SMFC, have an understanding of the roles and responsibilities of the child welfare or children's mental health sector and of the specific setting in which they will be placed.

A good decision regarding a student and placement supervisor match contributes to successful placement outcomes which will benefit students, supervisors and the organization. Please note that the availability of student placements dependent on the availability of an approved mentor, taking into consideration current demands on the team/unit.

In order to be aware of any possible conflict of interest, students are required to advise of any previous or current child welfare involvement. Arrangements will be made to place the relevant file(s) under restricted access if necessary.

DOCUMENTS

The HR Staff Learning and Development Coordinator will review the student documentation process with the successful candidate which includes:

1. The work/education placement agreement (University to provide to student)
2. Police Record Check and SMFC records check.
 - All placement students will be required to provide a Police Record check (inclusive of the Vulnerable Sector check) prior to the commencement of their placement. As well, they need to sign consent for internal record check along with Consent for the purpose of checking references.
 - Students are responsible for any costs associated with obtaining a police and/or criminal record check for placement purposes.
 - If a student's police record check or SMFC check comes back with anything other than a "clear" status, the student will be invited to meet with an HR representative to discuss the incident(s) contained within the police record.

Prior to making a recommendation as to supporting a placement, a consult with the Senior Lead of HR and possibly Senior Service Manager of the department in which the student is requesting to be placed is required to determine what, if any, risk(s), a placement for the student poses in a particular placement setting (based on the extent and nature of the police record check) and what restrictions, if any, will be placed on the student.

3. Oath of Confidentiality.
4. PKI authorization for CPIN access as determined by HR and the Service Manager.
5. Sign off on agency policies as required.

PRACTICALITIES

Once students have been assigned to a student placement supervisor, and they are notified (both student and supervisor) the staff changes log will be updated by the HR department with start date, and to ensure agency equipment will be available for students completing placements.

The student will be informed of the date of the agency orientation session where they will receive a key access card, an ID, all applicable training, and their agency equipment. They will also sign off on any outstanding documentation that is required.

VEHICLE USE

Students are responsible to fully inform their insurance provider regarding their use of vehicle. Students who may transport clients must inform their insurance company of such and ensure that they have adequate liability insurance and other coverage to do so.

PHOTO IDENTIFICATION

All Student Placements will receive for photo identification card and keys/access cards to the office they are working from at Orientation.

ORIENTATION TO SOCIAL WORK STUDENT PLACEMENT:

1. Welcoming students to the location (Joint responsibility):
 - a. Students will attend orientation at the Bell Farm office on their first day(s) and will receive much of the same information and training as new staff to the agency;
 - b. Mentors/manager of team to introduce the student to members of their team and colleagues in their location;
 - c. Mentors/managers to provide the student with an overview of the different roles and responsibilities of your colleagues;
 - d. HR will inform the agency in the Staff Changes updates of new students to the agency;
 - e. During orientation, the student will have a tour of the Bell Farm office and units. Student who are working from other branch offices will require mentor/manager to orient the student to the features of the physical setting (for example, location of washroom, office supplies, photocopy/fax machine, sign in/out sheet, and amenities in the neighbourhood).

2. Introducing SMFC to students through touring and Intranet, and links to important documents such as the Eligibility Spectrum, Protection Tools, Protection Standards, Child and Family Services Act, CYMH information, etc. Some materials will be provided in advance and some elements will be covered at orientation and/or at their team setting. Students will be made aware of the following during the orientation session:
 - a. Relevant materials about the setting, policies and procedures and practice guidelines.
 - b. Agency's policy and practice relating to health and safety; respectful workplace, and our Anti-violence, Anti-Oppression, Anti-Harassment, policies will also be provided, and students will be made aware of where to access on the agency Intranet for future reference.
 - c. Structure of SMFC, organizational chart and its procedural systems, such as maintaining records, reporting structure, etc.
 - d. Support and Resources to students.
 - e. Training opportunities available to them and how to register.

- f. Expectations and roles and responsibilities of the student and field instructor (mentor).
3. Students will be provided access to a computer, phone and given expectations on safe storage of their work and privacy/confidentiality expectations. The mentor/supervisor will advocate if there are any items not in place at the start of placement.
4. Student working in Child Protection will have access to CPIN and provided training. This will be planned for at orientation day by HR. If there are issues, mentor to advocate for support.
5. Mentors/managers are to inquire about student's learning objectives and complete any learning objectives forms necessary for the university.
6. Mentors and managers are to ensure the student is clear on expectations around the placement setting, including:
 - a. Physical work environment, including access to equipment and vehicles
 - b. Flexible work environment, e.g. virtual work
 - c. Work hours, including any potential shift work that is required
 - d. Roles and responsibilities
 - e. The importance of completion of documentation and the amount of administrative tasks required
 - f. Reporting structure
 - g. Available learning opportunities
 - h. Available resources
 - i. Skills to be developed
 - j. Training expectations
7. Mentors/Managers are to explain the commitment and dependability that is expected in the placement. Explore the student's readiness and potential to learn in this aspect.

EXPECTATION OF STUDENT PLACEMENT SUPERVISORS (Mentors/Team Leads)

Student Placement Supervisors are the “teachers” of the practicum component of the curriculum of the educational institution. They also represent the Agency, and are expected to role model the Agency’s Vision, Purpose and Values during the course of the student placement. As such, their work is pivotal to the Agency and to the student’s learning. Field instructors will provide:

1. **Orientation:**

- a. Orient the student to the setting, clientele and community.
- b. Develop a learning contract within the time frame and guidelines required by the educational institution.

2. **Supervision/Training/Evaluation**

- a. Be available to the student in an ongoing way to problem solve and answer questions.
- b. Make time on a regular and scheduled basis for supervision with the student and familiarize the student with the SMFC supervision model.
- c. Understand that the student is in a learning role and understand their own role as a teacher/mentor/facilitator of student learning.
- d. Provide the student with ongoing evaluation regarding their performance with an equity and strength based approach, including both positive and constructive feedback.
- e. Take notes at each consultation session as appropriate.
- f. Advise the student of whom they should approach for advice and direction in the absence of the field instructor.
- g. Assist student (in consultation with their supervisor, and the HR department) in planning for registering for in house and/or OACAS training opportunities as deemed necessary and relevant to the student’s placement.
- h. Ensure that students make the best use of training by preparing them prior to attending training and having a discussion with them afterwards about how to integrate their learning to practice.

- i. Complete evaluation(s) as required by universities. All evaluations are to be completed in collaboration with the student, the placement supervisor (mentor or team lead) and the Supervisor of the team.

3. Work Assignments

- a. Provide opportunities for the students to observe and shadow the work of the field instructor and his/her colleagues, and if applicable, staff in other service areas that will enrich the student's learning opportunity.
- b. With an equity and strength based approach, provide ongoing feedback and discussions about placement activities as well as Case/task assignments.
- c. Introduce students to youth and families and explain their role. Ensure that students clearly identify themselves as a student/intern in all of their interactions with clients, collaterals and colleagues.
- d. Assign tasks on case files to students with approval from team supervisor, balancing the complexity and the level of risk of the task/case work as well as the student's knowledge, skills and experience. STUDENTS cannot carry cases or facilitate investigations independently. They can participate in both under the guidance of the mentor/team lead or another experienced authorized worker. CYMH will ensure they abide by any regulations within their field of work when assigning tasks etc. to students.
- e. Continue to oversee the tasks/work assigned to the student and understand that field instructors are ultimately responsible for the coordination of such.
- f. Provide a range of learning opportunities ensuring that these are well balanced and representative of the job/setting.

4. Student Health and Safety

- a. Reinforce with the students about how to keep themselves safe and healthy during the placement.
- b. Ensure that a contact person is available by phone to the student at all times for any activities the student performs independently, e.g. visiting in the community, accompanying a youth to a medical appointment, etc.

- c. Students are required to 'clear the field' according to the agency policy and procedures.
- d. Ensure that information such as student's address, phone number (home and cellular if available) and emergency contact person is up to date.

5. Student Performance

- a. Attend training/orientation offered via the university as per university requirements.
- b. Identify and report to the respective educational institution, the Staff Learning and Development Coordinator (who may consult with the HR Senior Lead), program/team supervisor any concerning behaviour, difficulty that may arise in the student/instructor relationship or in the placement that impede learning at the earliest possible date so that mutually agreeable resolutions can be developed and implemented.
- c. Document any attempts in the teaching experience to address these difficulties.
- d. Be familiar with and comply with guidelines established by the respective educational institution to resolve concerns and problems in the practicum.
- e. Consult with HR if asked to provide a reference for a student.
- f. Fill out an evaluation form about their experience of supervising a student as may be requested by the HR Department.

EXPECTATIONS OF STUDENTS

Organizational Policies

- Follow the rules and regulations placed on employees within the organization.
- Adhere to the Agency's Code of Conduct and respective policies.
- Be responsible for learning and adhering to agency policies.
- Engage in the mentorship process.

Learning/Supervision/Evaluation

- Develop, with the Field Instructor, a learning contract within the time frame and guidelines required by the educational institution.
- Participate in regular supervision and in the evaluation process.

Communication

- Seek out assistance and advice from the field instructor and/or the Faculty for any difficulties, concerns or issues pertaining to the placement.
- Seek prior approval for any absence from placement. In the case of illness or unexpected circumstances notify the field instructor as soon as possible.
- Communicate to the field instructor and/or members of the program/team their whereabouts at all times verbally, via text or other systems in place. Ensure their agency outlook calendars are up to date.

Training

- Complete all orientation requirements.
- Students in specific roles may be offered the opportunity to participate in the Ontario Association of Children's Aid Societies' (OACAS) Child Welfare Professional Authorization series. This is an ongoing, 5-month training commitment that is required of all Child Protection Workers in the province. The Agency will support this for Child Protection roles when available and based on individual circumstances.
- Students should attend additional training workshops only when the workshops are critical to their learning goals and objectives. There will be mandatory Health and Safety training

sessions that are to be completed within the first few weeks of placement. Students may be permitted to attend relevant agency based training.

- Students must obtain approval from their field instructor prior to attending any training session.
- Students are expected to adhere to the training policies and guidelines.

Expenses

- Students must be prepared to pay for the expenses of traveling to and from the setting (including training location), parking, and documentation requirements such as immunizations and police reference checks.
- Students are responsible for any costs related to training, such as parking, bus tickets, meals, etc.
- Students are reimbursed for expenses that pertains to case work, e.g. mileage from place of work to family home and back. Students must seek prior approval from their field instructor regarding any requests for reimbursement of expenses related to servicing clients, for example mileage or parking fee as a result of conducting a home visit or attending a committee meeting.

COMPLETION OF PLACEMENTS

- Managers and/or Students are responsible to inform HR of their expected last day of placement.
- Managers/mentors will ensure that the student evaluation is completed in accordance with the University/College expectations.
- Students will participate in the exit evaluation process regarding their placement experience which will be conducted with the Staff Learning and Development Coordinator or designate
- Managers/Mentors will be responsible to complete the Exit Checklist and oversee that all Agency Equipment is returned at the end of placement