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**ORGANISATIONAL PSYCHOLOGY PRACTICAL PLACEMENT UNITS
(PSY503/701/702)
INFORMATION FOR PROSPECTIVE FIELD SUPERVISORS AND
PARTICIPATING ORGANISATIONS.**

Thank you for considering taking on a Masters or Doctoral student on placement. The purpose of this document is to provide a brief overview of the placement process and the expectations placed on the various participating parties. More detailed information can be obtained from the unit outline, a copy of which can be supplied to you. You are also very welcome to contact the unit coordinator, Dr Max Sully (08 93602253, M.Sully@murdoch.edu.au) for further information.

Background

Occupational/Organisational Psychology is a specialization within the profession of psychology, which seeks to apply psychological knowledge and understanding to work, organisational systems and the people working in organizations.

As part of their professional training requirements, Occupational/Organisational Psychology Masters and Doctoral students are expected to undertake a series of practical placements over the course of their studies. The aim of these placements is to provide students with opportunities to apply their academic learning and to develop and enhance their professional skills.

The Occupational psychology programme at Murdoch is structured in such a way that students undertake an extensive range of academic coursework and “in-house” placements in their first year of study. The coursework units cover such topics as human resource systems, training and development, occupational health, safety and well-being, organization development, conflict management, leadership development, professional issues and psychological assessment.

The completion of coursework and placements in the first year means that by the time students embark on “external” placements in their second or third year of study, they have already acquired a measure of professional competence. Despite this, students on placement remain “trainees” rather than functioning professionals and they do require supervision and support. The primary purpose of the placements is to contribute to their learning and development. Having said this, however, it is almost invariably the case that the most successful placements are those where students are given organisationally significant tasks to complete, and, with

appropriate planning and management, participating organizations can anticipate some reciprocal benefit from having students on placement.

Structure

Each external placement comprises 36 working days. This can be completed on a part-time or full-time basis depending on circumstance and availability. While some placements may require that the student work off-site for some of the time (e.g. when conducting library research) wherever possible students should work within the organization and participate in the normal organisational routine.

Provision of supervision

Participating organisations are expected to nominate an individual who will act as field supervisor to the student throughout their placement. Professional training requirements stipulate that a student on placement should be supervised by a psychologist who is eligible for membership of the APS College of Organisational Psychologists and who has a minimum of two years of relevant post-qualification working experience. Under ideal circumstances, the placement organization should be in a position to provide the services of a field supervisor holding these qualifications. Where this is not possible, a joint supervisory arrangement can be set up. In this case, an appropriate field supervisor (such as a HR professional) and an external psychologist (usually a member of the University Psychology Staff) jointly provide supervision to the student. It is anticipated that field supervisors will provide students with a minimum of one hour of supervision per placement week. Supervision provided to students should principally be focused on developing their professional capacity. In other words supervision should not simply cover task attainment issues but also deal with personal professional issues that may have been encountered. Field supervision is supplemented by university-based seminars and meetings, which the student is expected to attend.

A brief **supervisor questionnaire** (see attached) needs to be completed and returned by the field supervisor at the commencement of the placement

Placement Evaluation

At the end of the placement, field supervisors are expected to evaluate the quality of the student's work and this evaluation contributes to the overall assessment of the student's unit performance. A **supervisor rating form** (see attached) will be provided to supervisors and should be returned directly to the placement coordinator. In addition at the end of the placement students are expected to draw up an evaluation document which should record supervisor and self-evaluation comments against the agreed placement objectives.

Contracting

Placement students have the responsibility of negotiating and drawing up a placement agreement at the start of a placement. This stipulates any necessary conditions and, importantly, stipulates a series of objectives to be achieved during the placement. The contract is signed by the field supervisor, student and placement coordinator.

There is no expectation of students being remunerated while on placement, and should an organization wish to provide any form of financial support, this should be by way of a private arrangement with the student.

Insurance

While registered students are on placement, they are covered by University insurance for Public Liability, Personal Accident and Medical Malpractice claims. A letter providing further information on this can be supplied.

Placement Objectives

Placement objectives can span a range of general and specific activities. While some objectives may be as simple as participating in activities that familiarise the student with the organization, it is important that the contract includes one or more measurable and distinct objectives. Some typical examples of projects undertaken by students on placement include: conducting evaluations of programmes and policies, designing, updating and making recommendations on HR systems such as performance development reviews and training, conducting literature and best practice reviews and developing and designing training programmes. Objectives should provide challenge to the student, but should also be achievable within the time and resource restraints of the placement.

The quality of the training that the University can provide to Occupational Psychology students is significantly linked to the partnerships we can build with commercial, government and community organizations. We appreciate your interest and would be happy to answer any questions you might have.

Max Sully
2/2/06

MURDOCH UNIVERSITY
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PRACTICAL PLACEMENT UNITS

FIELD SUPERVISOR QUESTIONNAIRE.

It is a professional training requirement that we keep the details of placement supervisors on record. It would be greatly appreciated if you would complete the few questions below. If you prefer, you are welcome to submit a brief CV as an alternative.

- 1. Name and title:
- 2. Organisation:
- 3. Functional job title:
- 4. Are you a registered psychologist or eligible for registration? :
.....
- 5. Are you a member or eligible for membership of the college of Organisational psychologists?
.....
- 6. Academic and professional qualifications:
.....
- 7. Previous placement supervision experience:
.....
- 8. Telephone #:e-mail:..

Signature:Date:

MURDOCH UNIVERSITY
DOCTOR OF PSYCHOLOGY & MASTER OF APPLIED PSYCHOLOGY
ORGANISATIONAL PLACEMENT PERFORMANCE RATINGS

Name of candidate: _____ Dates of Placement : _____

Organisation: _____ Supervisor: _____

Supervisor's signature: _____ Date: _____

This assessment requires you to rate the trainee on behavioural dimensions related to placement performance. The behavioural dimensions have been selected as being potentially appropriate for such placements. On the following page you will find definitions of each dimension. Please read each dimension description before rating the trainee on the dimension.

Please rate the trainee's performance on those dimensions for which *you have observed relevant behaviour*. When the trainee has had no opportunity to exhibit the behaviours described within a dimension, or you have not had an opportunity to observe those behaviours, please select zero (0).

On the following scales, a score of one or two indicates failure to perform in any acceptable way in the dimension. Scores of three to five indicate that the trainee needs further development in that dimension; with some indication of how close the trainee has come to attaining satisfactory performance. A score of six indicates satisfactory performance on the dimension. A score of seven should only be used when the trainee has performed at a level exceeding that which could be expected of a trainee; that is, performance at a level which might be typical of an established practitioner. It is expected that few trainees will achieve this level of performance.

1	2	3	4	5	6	7
very poor	ineffective	adequate but needs development			satisfactory	excellent

Behavioural Dimension	Rating							Unable to Assess
Job Knowledge	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	0
Research Skills	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	0
Attention to Detail	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	0
Oral Communication	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	0
Written Communication	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	0
Initiative	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	0
Work Standards	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	0
Tolerance of Stress	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	0
Interpersonal Sensitivity	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	0
Impact	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	0
Behavioural Flexibility	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	0
Judgement	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	0
Planning and Organising	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	0
OVERALL ASSESS,	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	0

DEFINITIONS OF BEHAVIOURAL DIMENSIONS

JOB KNOWLEDGE: Acquaintance with, and effective use of, the theories, techniques, procedures and methods associated with the project or tasks.

RESEARCH SKILLS: Gathers relevant information or data; relates and compares information or data from several sources for the purpose of identifying issues, relationships, problems or possible causes of problems.

ATTENTION TO DETAIL: Thorough and careful in the performance of a task or part of a task.

ORAL COMMUNICATION: Effective expression in individual or group situations during questions and answers, conversation, or discussion (includes non-verbal communication and listening).

WRITTEN COMMUNICATION: Clearly expresses information, facts, data, conclusions and recommendations in writing; includes good grammatical form.

INITIATIVE: Originates actions; active efforts to influence events rather than passive acceptance; takes action beyond basic requirements for completion of task; self starting; tackles problems or issues without awaiting instructions.

WORK STANDARDS: Remains on task with minimal direction or supervision; sets and maintains high standards of performance; sets and maintains deadline for the task at hand; accepting rather than avoiding job responsibilities.

TOLERANCE OF STRESS: Maintains composure and effective performance while under pressure and/or opposition.

INTERPERSONAL SENSITIVITY: Reacts sensitively, with empathy and sincerity, and communicates tactfully; acts in a way that indicates consideration of the needs of others.

IMPACT: Commands attention and respect; displays confidence; asserts him or herself when appropriate.

BEHAVIOURAL FLEXIBILITY: Modifies approach to task, individual or group to effectively deal with different personalities and situations so as to achieve goals.

JUDGEMENT: Considers alternative courses of action and makes realistic and rational decisions based on logical assumptions supported by factual evidence.

PLANNING AND ORGANISING: Establishes a course of action for self and/or others to accomplish a specific goal; assigns and structures the use of personnel and resources to achieve objectives.