



# **ACWA COVID-19 flexible course arrangements**

## ACWA's response to COVID-19 pandemic

---

ACWA is closely monitoring the evolving Covid-19 pandemic and we understand that course providers may be unable to comply with all the accreditation criteria at this time. We have taken a number of enquiries from students who are concerned about the impact of COVID-19 on their ability to meet the fieldwork requirements. We can assure you that a team of industry representatives, including ACWA, have already met with the Department of Education, Skills and Employment to discuss this issue and work is underway to ensure a reasonable solution.

Our priority is ensuring the health and safety of all students and educators and we will continue to monitor the situation and be guided by information from the commonwealth Department of Health and the Department of Education, Skills and Employment. In the meantime, ACWA has cancelled physical campus visits, however, education providers can request phone or video conference meetings with ACWA staff.

## Flexible course arrangements

---

### 1. Mode of delivery

Over the past weeks many providers have contacted us for advice on alternative course delivery arrangements. ACWA course accreditation requirements outline that courses must be delivered in a manner that will provide the learning outcomes of the specific units being delivered. In order to meet this requirement, mandatory face to face residential delivery components have been included in accredited courses. We understand that the current situation prevents providers from meeting this requirement and we will approve alternative online delivery arrangements.

### 2. Fieldwork placements

While many providers indicated difficulty in placement arrangements some pointed out that certain areas are not affected. As fieldwork placements are a vital part of accreditation and course outcomes, there is no reduction permitted in the minimum 400 hours of direct practice placement.

We have decided to approve the following variation arrangements during this period:

- i. Higher education courses offering more than 400 hours of placement may consider replacing the additional hours with supplementary projects.
- ii. Education providers can choose the option of one single placement of 400 hours at the end of the course. This will allow many students to move their placements towards the end of their program.
- iii. Removal of the requirement 'placements must occur at least one term apart'.
- iv. If students are unable to attend their placement due to agency closure, it is envisaged that these students can continue their placement later with the same agency or at a different organisation. Hours that have already been completed can be credited towards completing the total placement hours.

- v. For students who have not commenced placements, these may be postponed for up to three months.

\*We understand this may cause delay in students graduating from the course. We also understand that relevant regulatory authorities are aware of this and will approve such arrangements. International students who are unable to complete their course and placements within their student visa period will be affected, however, they can contact the Department of Home Affairs and apply for visa extension.

- vi. Course fieldwork liaison officers can use flexible supervision arrangements (zoom, skype, phone etc.) to liaise with students on placement and agency supervisors.
- vii. Working students can undertake the full 400 hours placement at their workplace. Please note skill level requirement must be met and strictly no aged/disability care placements are permitted.

**Please note:** Work from home, and supplementary project work **cannot** replace the minimum 400 hours. This is to ensure client safety and appropriate levels of student supervision.

All other accreditation requirements must be followed.

### 3. Duration of flexible course delivery arrangements

The above flexible arrangements will be reviewed at the end of three months. We will keep you informed of any changes during this period.

### 4. Fieldwork placement completion letter

From 6 April 2020, all ACWA accredited course providers must issue a placement completion letter/certificate on completion of the required 400 hours. This letter should include following details.

Full name of student

Agency name

Agency address

Agency contact number

Type of setting (for example, child protection/mental health/youth work/homelessness/AOD)

Placement start date

Placement completion date

(Repeat this information for second placement)

Signature and name of Course Coordinator/Fieldwork Placement Coordinator

## Further information and support

---

If you are unable to meet the above flexible delivery guidelines you must notify ACWA within 14 days.

If you have any questions, please contact Jesu Jacob via [jesu@acwa.org.au](mailto:jesu@acwa.org.au).