

Policy & Procedures Manual

Policy Title	STUDENT GUIDELINES COMMUNITY SERVICES
Policy Type	Volunteers
Responsibility	Volunteer Coordinator

POLICY

These guidelines have been designed to give prospective students essential information preceding application for a student placement within Community Services.

SCOPE

These guidelines are for any students interested in a placement within Lentara's Community Services program.

DEFINITIONS

Student:

For the purposes of these guidelines, a student is defined as a tertiary level student of either an Australian TAFE or University, studying a qualification classified by the Australia Qualifications Framework.

PROCEDURE

Lentara UnitingCare has a continued commitment to the professional development of students. Students offer an important contribution to Lentara services and alongside employees and volunteers, are a valuable asset.

Overview of LUC

Lentara is an agency of the Uniting Church in Australia, serving the people of the North and West of Melbourne. Lentara is a not-for-profit agency and formed in July 2012 by the union of UnitingCare Sunshine and Broadmeadows, and Orana UnitingCare. The principal objective of Lentara is supporting parents, carers, families and communities to reach their full potential through the provision of programs for people in need, offering opportunities to learn new skills and reduce social isolation, and advocating for disadvantaged people and community groups. In 2013, Hotham Mission Asylum Seeker Project amalgamated with Lentara, further expanding the services LUC offers to Asylum Seekers.

At Lentara we:

- affirm cultural diversity
- show compassion for the vulnerable
- encourage people to value and use their strengths
- advocate on behalf of those who are disadvantaged
- challenge inequity and injustice and work for social change.

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Lentara supports some of the most vulnerable people to access the resources they need for health, wellbeing and participation in the community. The services of LUC are provided to all people irrespective of cultural background, gender, sexual orientation, age, religion or disability.

Lentara has traditionally taken a number of students from both Universities and TAFE. Student placements depend on program needs and supervision capacity. As LUC receives a number of enquiries, we encourage students to fill in applications in as much detail as possible.

The following programs receive students depending on program needs and supervisory capacity:

Asylum Seeker Programs (Brunswick)

The Asylum Seeker Programs consist of the Asylum Seeker Welcome Centre (ASWC), and the Asylum Seeker Project (ASP).

The ASWC is a community centre that offers a safe environment and provides a range of support services to assist asylum seekers, including the facilitation of linkages and referrals with other local support agencies. This includes referrals associated with housing, employment and legal assistance, and the provision of lunch/dinner programs and other social and education based programs as well as assistance in other areas related to client needs. The provision of specific support is undertaken in consultation with caseworkers from other agencies as required.

- Accepts students doing minimum certificate 4 in Community Development or Community Services or 3rd and 4th year Social Work Students that can commit to a minimum of 200 hours in total over at least two days per week

At ASP, service users who receive assistance often have no income, no rights to work, no rights to Medicare, no access to government assistance, no stable housing and significant physical and/or mental health issues. ASP provides: professional casework support; housing; a Basic Living Allowance (BLA) of \$145/month; assistance with utilities; limited material aid; specific support groups; individual and systemic advocacy.

- Accepts 3rd and 4th year Social Work Students that can commit to a minimum of 200 hours in total over at least two days per week

Communities for Children (Broadmeadows)

The Communities for Children (CfC) program promotes culturally inclusive development, prevention and early intervention programs for children between 0-12 and their families. This support is offered across the Hume LGA from funding received from the Australian government. This funding provides services that target the most vulnerable and disadvantaged families.

- Accepts Social Work students that can commit to a minimum of 200 hours in total over at least two days per week

Family Services (Meadow Heights)

The Family Services Program provides case management to vulnerable families using the Best Interest Framework of participatory intervention with families. Inclusion in the program is voluntary issues are addressed through participatory planning with families. The families we work with present complex issues that often include combinations of stressors such as family members with mental health or alcohol and other drug issues, histories of living with domestic violence, serious housing and economic stress and health and behaviour management issues for parents, young people and children. Families are assisted through a variety of Social Work interventions to support and strengthen parenting and parent child relationships, child development, and advocacy to promote and facilitate families capacity to access community and cultural connections, services and social support networks.

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- Accepts Social Work students that can commit to a minimum of 200 hours in total over at least two days per week

Financial Inclusion (Broadmeadows)

Financial Inclusion in Broadmeadows takes students in Financial Counselling and Emergency Relief.

Lentara's Financial Counsellors work predominantly from the Broadmeadows and Sunshine sites with some outreach points as well. The Broadmeadows site is the largest with a staff of five financial counsellors. The service is a busy one and provides the full variety of cases and issues, from utility bills, and fines to unsecured debts and mortgages. Some client issues are simple and short term, but we also have longer term more complex cases which require extended case work.

We find students participating in Intake and Assessment to be both helpful to the service and a great way for students to learn about client issues and the possible options they have.

- Accepts Financial Counselling students (currently Broadmeadows only) that can commit to minimum of 200 hours in total over one day per week

Emergency Relief is one of the community service responses of the agency to people experiencing financial hardship, poverty and crisis. Emergency Relief is provided through an appointments process which includes an eligibility interview conducted by both paid and volunteer staff.

- Accepts students in Community Development, Community Services, and Social Work students that can commit to a minimum of 200 hours in total over at least two days per week

Sunshine Mission (Sunshine)

Sunshine Mission provides a diverse range of services to those in need. These services encompass Emergency Relief (Foodbank, Material Aid and bill paying), Financial Counselling, a Communal Justice Program, the Brimbank Men's Shed, a growing number of other community development initiatives and a Drop-in Centre.

- Accepts students in Community Development, Community Services, and Social Work student that can commit to a minimum of 200 hours in total over at least two days per week

What we look for:

Overall, we expect all students to uphold our Guiding Values and Behaviours of: Respect, Integrity, Collaboration and Compassion. Furthermore, we look for students with the following;

- Ability to work in a team
- Show initiative and a positive attitude
- High level communication and listening skills
- Basic computer skills
- Some understanding of the Community Welfare system

As there is a diversity of programs within Lentara's community services, some programs have capacity to take students all year round on a rolling basis, while others have deadlines and only able to take a certain number each year. Currently all programs will consider students on a first come, first serve basis.

Supervision

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Lentara will ensure all students are well supported by only taking students if there is supervisory capacity. Sometimes students will work without direction and supervision, however this will be on the basis that the student is comfortable and has access to assistance should they need it. Students will agree on supervision requirements with their LUC supervisor based on tertiary institution requirements before commencement of placement. Any issues or problems that arise during placement will be resolved at the lowest possible level first, before formally going through Lentara's grievance procedure.

All students will undergo the following:

- Induction
- Program and Site Orientation
- Supervision

How to apply:

1. Read the Student Placement Guidelines (Community Services).
2. Complete an online student application form in as much detail as possible. Applications will not be processed until completed fully. Please complete by clicking on this link: <http://app.volunteer2.com/Public/SignUp?organizationGUID=f55e18e9-e57b-4de7-9ae5-6cc2530c995d&signupFormId=3>
3. If you are shortlisted you will be contacted by the relevant Program who will arrange an interview time.
4. Within two weeks of your interview, you will be notified if you have been accepted for a student placement or not.
5. If you have been accepted, you will be contacted by the Program to arrange further placement details
6. All students must attend induction, complete all paperwork including a Police Check and a Volunteer Working with Children's Check (at own expense), and program orientation before commencement of placement.

RELATED DOCUMENTS

- Grievance policy
- Harassment, Discrimination and Workplace Bullying policy
- Volunteer policy
- Code of Conduct
- Working with Children's Check policy
- Occupational Health and Safety policy

FORM/S

- Student application form (online)
- Volunteer organisational and site induction