§1 Term and Objectives of the Work Placement Semester

(1) The work placement semester is an educational component of the study programme, normally conducted in the fourth semester. The University regulates the content, the choice of supervisor and any accompanying training. It is usually conducted as one placement, but in certain situations it may be composed of a number of placements at acceptable institutions.

(2) An aim is for the student to become familiar with, gain experience in and critically reflect on their future daily working life and role. The student should be able to work independently.

(3) The learning objectives of the work placement semester are for the student to:

1. Gain experience in systematic analysis to determine the problems and needs of the social work clients with awareness of the conditions and effective dependence involved.

2. Determine and reflect on the relevance of different situations, of the resulting action objectives, means of action and form of action, and to professionally assess these to help in planning conception.

3. Develop targets considering social, institutional and legal conditions with awareness of the possibilities for participation with cooperative partners and clients involved.

4. Develop concepts regarding the client’s help requirements and the needs of services, material and financial aid in solving these problems, and to gain experience in the practical implementation within the given legal and institutional frameworks.

5. Familiarize themselves with the organizational structures, legal base and fields of responsibility and procedures of the social work agencies, their administrative systems and applications and the significance of these in professional life.

6. Apply and practise acquired theoretical knowledge when providing help in specific tasks in social work and training.

7. Familiarize themselves in the application and practice of job-specific tasks and to consider their relevance in implementing concepts as in objective four.

8. Coordinate, cooperate and work as a team member in the workplace, to reflect on their own actions and evaluate results for further planning of procedure and work stages.
(4) The ability to perform in the professional field should be acquired through carefully chosen work tasks appropriate to their level of training. During the work placement the students should familiarize themselves and practise professional activities through work-shadowing, through an introduction into the work processes and the problems they involve and in increased practical participation in professional activities. The aim is to encourage the student to act independently and with sole responsibility and to thus enable them to apply the theoretical knowledge acquired to target-oriented professional activities.

§2 Admission to the work placement, duration and accompanying courses

(1) According to §4, section 2 of the Hochschule Mannheim study and examinations regulations for the Bachelor course from June 1st, 2007, a practical semester comprises at least 100 workdays at the work placement organisation. As a general rule, this work time ought to be based on the normal working hours of full-time employees at the work placement organisation. In addition, students attend two days of block courses and a ten-days reflection seminar organized by the Department of Social Work. According to § 4, section 2, sentence 2 of the study and examinations regulations, participation in these courses is obligatory for all students and a prerequisite for obtaining the credits.

(2) The aim of the reflection seminar is to support learning processes and thus to increase specific knowledge as well as to improve the students’ insight into the correlation between theoretical knowledge and professional action by reflecting on the experience gained during the work placement and the evaluation of the practical report as stipulated in 13 on the basis of the training objectives according to §1, section 3 and the training plan outlined in §12. Where participation in the block courses or the reflection seminar is not possible due to travel problems, the student has to participate in similar courses at another university and or aim at achieving the objectives of the reflection seminar by other means. Proof of participation in the courses or alternative measures has to be provided by the students.

(3) The prerequisites for admission to the work placement are outlined in the module description.

(4) Regulations differing from sections 1 and 3 for individual cases are decided upon by the head of the office for work placements in agreement with the Chair of the Examination Committee.

(5) Practical work times and course presence times cannot overlap. The office for work placements can allow participation in examinations during the work placement.
§3 Variations in duration

(1) The weekly work time can be reduced by half on petition and for well-founded reasons. The decision is made by the Office for Work Placements in agreement with the work placement organisation.

(2) If a student’s child falls ill during the work placement, the parent studying at Hochschule Mannheim is entitled to up to five days off work, but only up to the time when the child has recovered. The illness has to be certified by a doctor. The same applies when caring for other relatives.

(3) Expectant mothers and mothers should be off work six weeks before and the eight weeks after childbearing.

(4) In the case of illness of a student during the practical work placement the regulations of section 2 are applied.

(5) If the period of employment has been reduced for one of the reasons outlined in sections 1 to 4, the work placement is extended accordingly.

§4 Office for Work Placements

(1) In accordance with §3, section 7 of the Hochschule Mannheim study and examinations regulations, the Department of Social Work sets up a office for work placements. The office is directed by a work placement advisor.

(2) The office for work placements is responsible for the organization of the work placement, the further development and coordination of training and liaison with the practical work placements.

§5 Responsibilities of the office for work placements

(1) The office for work placements is specifically responsible for:
   1. accepting assessment results during the work placement as stipulated in §2, section 5,
   2. deciding if the work placement can be conducted part-time as outlined in § 3, section 1,
   3. deciding on admission to the work placement,
   3. admitting I work placements as outlined in §6, section 2,
   5. evaluating work-shadowing in a work placement as stipulated in the Foundation Studies handbook,
   6. confirming successful completion of a work placement as stipulated in §15.
(2) The Examination Committee can transfer some of its responsibilities to the office for work placements.

(3) The office for work placements conducts visits of the students’ work placements.

(4) In the case of work placements abroad, the work placement is approved by the office for work placements, as outlined in §1, section 4, and in agreement with the department’s representative for international relations.

§6 Arrangement and approval of work placements

(1) Students are responsible for locating and applying for an appropriate work placement. The office for work placements can assist students in their search.

(2) A work placement can only be conducted in practical work placements approved by the office for work placements before the start of the work placement.

(3) The prerequisites for such approval are the suitability of the work placement and the specialist training provided. In certain cases the office for work placements can agree to exceptions. In the case of doubt the decision is taken by the Examinations Committee.

§7 Suitability of work placements and specialist training

(1) Work placements are suitable if:
   1. they deal mainly with tasks in social work and/or social work training
   2. the tasks performed at the work placement also involve some organizational activities,
   3. they involve, as the main employer, state-recognized social workers or workers in social training or people who have qualified in at least a Bachelor of Arts in Social Work,
   4. they ensure appropriate daily instruction and the achievement of the training objectives outlined in §1, section 3.

(2) Staff suitable for training are specialists with at least two years’ continuous work experience in social work or staff with at least a Bachelor degree or a similar qualification. The head of the office for work placements can, as an exception also accept qualified specialists with a minimum of three years’ of relevant work experience as suitable training staff.

(3) The work placement has to consider the training objectives outlined in §1, section 3 and should include both organizational aspects and direct orientation towards the client. Depending on the possibilities of the practical work placement, the work
placement should involve various work areas and thus ensure that the students gain a balanced insight into both these work aspects.

§8 Change of work placement and early termination of the work placement

(1) The work placement is normally only conducted in one practical work placement. The office for work placements has to be informed immediately when a change of placement is planned.

(2) The student has to immediately report early termination of the study placement to the office for work placements.

(3) On application and for well-founded reasons, concluded practical work times can be taken into account when terminating the work placement before time.

§9 Legal status of students during placement semester

Students remain registered at the University for the duration of their work placement. During this period they are eligible to vote and be elected in union elections.

§10 Co-operation between faculty and placement organisations

(1) The faculty works in co-operation with the placement organisations in which training is provided.

(2) In order to enable necessary arrangements to be made to ensure training goals are met, the faculty organises a meeting for all training supervisors during each work placement semester.

§11 Training agreement

Before commencement of the work placement semester the placement organisation, students and the faculty of Social Work negotiate a written training agreement in which the rights and obligations of all parties are set out.

§12 Training programme

(1) After a period of familiarisation of no longer than one month the placement organisation draws up a training programme in collaboration with the student. This programme defines the learning goals with corresponding tasks and responsibilities for the placement semester. The training programme is drawn up according to the requirements of these placement regulations and submitted to the Office for Work Placements no later than six weeks after commencement of the placement semester.
(2) The training programme (see section 1) requires authorisation from the Office for Work Placements and forms part of the training agreement.

§13 Placement report and evaluation

(1) Students are required to write a report (placement report) on their training during the work placement semester and have this confirmed by the placement organisation. The placement report is to be submitted to the appropriate supervising lecturer.

(2) The placement report should document the various stages of the work placement and specifically:
1. outline the set-up of the placement organisation and its function within the sphere of social work,
2. describe the period of familiarisation, the working conditions within the organisation, work-related tasks and personal responsibilities agreed upon with the training supervisors,
3. give one or more examples of tasks which were carried out by the students in order to reach training goals. These examples should include details of the preparation, working materials and methods required in planned problem-solving,
4. explain how tasks were carried out,
5. evaluate the placement phase as a whole.
The placement report should provide a clear account of whether and to what extent the goals set for the work placement semester were reached.

(3) The work placement semester concludes with a reflection seminar for the purpose of evaluating the placement. The placement report forms the basis for this evaluation.

§14 Activity report

(1) At the end of the work placement semester the placement organisation issues the student with a completed activity report form provided by the Department of Social Work.

(2) Students submit the activity report promptly to the Office for Work Placements.

§15 Determination of successful completion of a work placement semester.

(1) The successful completion of a work placement semester is determined according to the following criteria:
1. Activity report, according to §14
2. Placement report, according to §13
3. Record of attendance at accompanying tutorials both before and during the work placement semester, according to §2, section 1
4. Proof of attendance at work placement semester reflection seminar as in §13, section 3
(2) Should a work placement semester fail to be successfully completed, a second attempt is permitted.

Mannheim, 30 April 2008