

Te Pou Tūhono Education Standards

Guidance on Field Education Placement Exceptions – different settings

Purpose

This document provides guidance relating to standard 3.3.3 of Te Pou Tūhono Education Standards (the Standards), which came into effect on 1 January 2026.

Context: Field Education requirements

The Standards recognise Field Education as central and critical to social work education. The Standards require ākonga to complete at least two field education placements in the final two years of their programme, totalling at least 900 hours across 120 to 150 days. These requirements exist to ensure that graduates have experienced meaningfully different practice contexts and can demonstrate the range of competencies required for registration.

Standard 3.3.3 – placements at place of work

Standard 3.3.3 (below) outlines when an ākonga may undertake two placements at their place of work.

Standard 3.3.3 – Expectations for placements at place of work – different settings

Ākonga may undertake two placements at their place of work in exceptional circumstances, as long as they:

- *are exposed to two differently structured settings with significantly different experiences e.g where the organisation holds multiple contracts*
- *have a different supervisor for each setting.*

This will be notified by the Tertiary Education Organisation (TEO) to the Social Workers Registration Board (SWRB) Registrar.

TEO responsibilities for exceptions

It is up to the TEO to:

- ensure ākonga are informed of the standards and the process for applying for an exception
- have a documented process to consider and manage exceptions
- make an assessment if the individual situation or circumstance meets the standard and is legitimately exceptional
- notify the SWRB Registrar of exceptions it has accepted as part of its annual submission to SWRB.

The TEO must maintain records of exceptions, including its reasoning and rationale for why a deviation from the Standards was requested and why the exception was granted. A template for recording these decisions is available for TEOs to use.

The TEO should exercise professional judgement, ensuring decisions align with the intent of the standard and maintain the integrity of ensuring that ākonga receive distinct placement and practice contexts and experiences.

Reporting and monitoring

The TEO will include an anonymised version of the template in its annual submission to the SWRB. Any anomalies may be examined during SWRB prescription or monitoring events.

Following the annual TEO submission, where the Registrar has concerns that Field Education arrangements may not comply, or may not have complied, with the Standards, the Registrar will raise those concerns with the TEO and may request additional information, which may result in custom monitoring.