

# JCU Social Work: Trimesters & Field Education

## BACKGROUND

In 2024 a refreshed calendar model was gradually introduced to JCU. At the heart of the refreshed calendar is a trimester model, where teaching is split over three study periods during a calendar year. At JCU, this is known as the 3+3+3 model. Trimesters give students increased opportunities for mobility in Australia and overseas, and more options to accelerate their degree and balance work/life/study.

A trimester model offers teaching in three equal-length study periods, and shorter, 10-week blocks of study. The move to trimesters brings JCU in line with many universities in Australia and aligns with the broader international student calendar.

### The trimester model in practice:

- Three equal study periods of 10 weeks in a calendar year
- Study plans are organised on a 3+3+3 model (which replicates current enrolment trends at JCU of three subjects per study period but enables slight acceleration)
- Mid-session non-teaching week(s)
- One week study vac period, followed by a one-week formal assessment period
- A three-week break between trimesters.

## KEY MESSAGE

Most social work students will be transitioned into the trimester model from 28<sup>th</sup> January 2025.

- Field Education subjects for most students will now be 'chained' subjects in 2025 (meaning the placements will run across two trimesters)
- BSW Field Education 1 will commence in Trimester 1 (around 17<sup>th</sup> February) and continue into Trimester 2 with completion ideally by 20<sup>th</sup> June.
- MSW [PQ] Field Education 1 will commence in Trimester 2 and continue into Trimester 3 with completion ideally by 14<sup>th</sup> November.
- MSW [PQ] Advanced Practicum will commence in Trimester 1 (around 17<sup>th</sup> February) continue into Trimester 2 with completion ideally by 20<sup>th</sup> June.
- BSW Field Education 2 and MSW [PQ] Advanced Practicum will commence in Trimester 2 (around 21<sup>st</sup> July) and continue into Trimester 3, with completion ideally by 14<sup>th</sup> November.

## CHALLENGE

- Field Education 1 and Field Education 2, Advanced Practicum overlapping in June/July if placements are not completed within the ideal timeframe.
- Full time placements are 4 days per week to enable students to complete another subject during placement. This could be challenging for students although many students are already doing this.

## DELIVERABLES

The trimester model responds to the demand for flexible, year-round learning and increases JCU's competitiveness in a crowded higher education market. The approach simplifies and aligns the number, length, and timing of study periods across all JCU locations and jurisdictions.

***We do need to emphasise that although moving to trimesters, not much will change for Field Education in the sector, there are still only two intakes per year: February and July.***

## STAKEHOLDERS

- Host Agencies
- Field Educators
- Task Supervisors
- Field Education Liaison Officers

## TIMELINES for 2025

- Trimester 1, 28<sup>th</sup> January – 29<sup>th</sup> April
- Trimester 2, 19<sup>th</sup> May – 23<sup>rd</sup> August
- Trimester 3, 15<sup>th</sup> September – 13<sup>th</sup> December
- BSW, MSW [PQ] Field Education 1 & MSW [PQ] Advanced Practicum commence 17<sup>th</sup> February 2025
- BSW Field Education 2 & MSW [PQ] Advanced Practicum commence 21<sup>st</sup> July 2025

## DISTRIBUTION

- Internal and external stakeholders by October 2024

### Glossary:

- Bachelor of Social Work (BSW): The JCU entry-level qualification to the social work profession that is taken at the undergraduate level.
- Master of Social Work (Professional Qualifying); MSW [PQ]: The JCU entry-level qualification to the social work profession that is taken at postgraduate level.
- BSW and MSW [PQ] Field Education 1: The first placement subject for students completing their bachelor of master course.
- BSW Field Education 2: The second placement subject for students completing their bachelor course.
- MSW [PQ]: Advanced Social Work Practicum: The second placement subject for students completing their master course.