



Hochschule für Angewandte Wissenschaften Hamburg
Hamburg University of Applied Sciences

BA Social Work

Guidelines for Practice Placements Abroad



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Preface

BA Social Work – Practice Placements Abroad

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Central Placement Officer



Thank you for your interest in practice placements for students of the BA Social Work at the Hamburg University of Applied Sciences (HAW Hamburg).

The aim of this booklet is to provide you with the necessary information to arrange a practice placement for students studying on our BA Social Work. The Department of Social Work is strongly committed to supporting students in finding and completing a practice placement abroad in the field of social work as it enables them:

- To experience a different way of life and professional reality
- To develop new personal, intercultural and life skills
- To extend knowledge of chosen specialist area (e.g. refugees) in a different and international context
- To improve existing language skills which are crucial in a cosmopolitan area such as Hamburg
- To improve employment prospects following completion of degree.

Whilst students should seek their own practice placements abroad, we specifically assist students in this process by providing administrative, academic, practical and pastoral support.

In the first part of this booklet you will find a general introduction to our university, the Department of Social Work and Central Placement Office. By providing such information we aim to illustrate our commitment to social work and the effective training of prospective social workers.

In the second part of the booklet, we outline the regulations and procedures for the practice placement, approval of placement providers as well as guidelines for evaluating the student placement.

We hope that you will find all the information you need. Please contact us at any stage of the practice placement should you require further information.

II. Hamburg University of Applied Sciences (HAW Hamburg)

With 12,000 students, Hamburg University of Applied Sciences is the second largest institution of higher education in the Hamburg region and one of the largest of its kind (University of Applied Sciences) in Germany. Founded in 1970, our roots go back to the 18th century. Our orientation towards practice guarantees a continuous adjustment of teaching based on current developments. Small groups, interdisciplinary projects and academic support ensure that our students feel at home.

- **Diversity**

Engineering & Computer Sciences, Life Sciences, Design, Media & Information, Business & Social Sciences - Hamburg University of Applied Sciences offers a wide range of degree programmes within its four faculties. Whilst the majority of students are enrolled in engineering programmes our non-technical departments are also very popular. We offer undergraduate and postgraduate degree programmes leading to the academic qualifications of “Bachelor” and “Master”.

- **Applied Sciences**

Practical orientation is our trademark: theory from lectures is put into practice in the laboratories; study projects are completed in the form of case studies; close cooperation with industry and public institutions ensures a direct link to future fields of work. Furthermore, our professors have years of experience in their specific fields having worked for many years in private companies and public institutions before joining us.

- **International**

1,600 international students study at Hamburg University of Applied Sciences (14 % of all students), representing over 100 nations. We also welcome international guest students from our partner universities abroad. Hamburg University of Applied Sciences has co-operations with 90 European universities as well as universities in North and South America, in Asia and in the Middle East.

Social Work at the HAW Hamburg

The Department of Social Work is part of the Faculty of Business and Social Sciences at the HAW Hamburg. It is committed to the training of future professionals in the fields of social work and education. The main aim of our degrees in Social Work is to provide students with a thorough academic grounding whilst at the same time preparing them for the practical aspects of their future professions within the fields of social work. Throughout the degree there are four key principles. Firstly, in order to gain an initial professional identity we lay the foundations of the academic discipline of social work ensuring that professional, ethical and academic standards are met. A key feature of this academic discipline is the acquisition of knowledge and the ability to apply this knowledge to research methods in the field of social work.

Secondly, students acquire an in-depth understanding of one of the following specialist areas:

- Health, prevention and rehabilitation
- Securing one's livelihood, resocialisation and integration
- Child, youth and family welfare
- Cultural, educational and community work

Thirdly, the specialist subjects studied are complemented with key reference sciences (psychology, social sciences, educational sciences, law). Fourthly, students are systematically introduced to the practical side of social work right from the very beginning with observations as well as project and practice phases. These phases enable students to measure and examine the knowledge and skills gained during their studies against their individual professional reality.

The BA Social Work follows a multi-disciplinary approach. Social work is in theory and in practice multi-perspective and interdisciplinary oriented as the problem areas of people are reflected on a social, psychological and somatic level. In addition, the degree aims to enable students to gain an ethically reflective, professional attitude which serves to identify limits of the individual as well as the problems in providing support. Thus through this professional attitude students gain the ability to work through problem situations and identify possible solutions independently, reflecting on each stage of the process as well as the ability to learn new things on a continual basis.

The students complete a Practice Learning component in the fifth semester and this enables students to gain an insight into the practical aspects of social work. The university supports students in this process with Theory/Practice Seminars (TPS) coupled with integrated practice guidance as well as seminars on theory and models of work of the specialist area chosen. In the sixth semester, students reappraise their practical experiences in a workshop and integrate the knowledge and practical skills gained into their Bachelor dissertation.

Professional competence in social work is oriented to best practice and this is only achieved through scientific methods. It is important for us to not only filter state-of-the-art knowledge of professional competence in social work into our teaching but, above all, to gain this knowledge from our own research. We thus provide first-hand knowledge for our students and for practitioners in the field. We benefit society by training excellent social workers, who not only act professionally but who also critically appraise their actions and as a result are in a position to reflect and develop their knowledge further.

Alongside our practice-oriented Bachelor and Master degree programmes in Social Work, we also offer in conjunction with our Centre for the Development of Professional Practice (ZEPRA) a wide range of programmes for continuing professional development. This enables graduates of our courses to take up managerial posts and perform independent research in organisations, universities and institutions focussing on social work.

III. Central Placement Office

Overview

The Central Placement Office (*Zentrales Praktikantenamt, ZP*) is the point of contact for all questions concerning Practice Learning on the BA Social Work offered by the Faculty of Business and Social Sciences, HAW Hamburg.

The Central Placement Office participates in the development of practice and monitors quality during the practice phase. In this respect it steers and accompanies the integrated practice phase in consultation with the lecturers and the placement providers. The Central Placement Office co-operates with and is under contract with over 800 placement providers in the metropolitan area of Hamburg. In addition, it co-operates with numerous other national and international organisations. A further focal point of the Central Placement Office is to provide students, supervisors and lecturers with general information concerning the practice placement. Furthermore, the Central Placement Office advises students on possible fields of practice in social work.

According to the statutes of the “State Certification of Social Pedagogues”, the Central Placement Office confers graduates of the BA or Diplom Social Pedagogy at the HAW Hamburg with state certification.

All the services and functions provided by the Central Placement Office are there to ensure the successful completion of the BA Social Work. Thus all information given is binding.

The guiding principle of work in this area is the personal contact to all those concerned such as students, lecturers and practice providers. By providing such a service needs are established early on, concrete support is given and the transfer of theory to practice is ensured.

The Practice Placement Abroad

The Central Placement Office is responsible for the following areas within the practice placement:

- Advising and supporting students and practice instructors in the choice of a suitable practice placement and in the event of conflict.
- Mediating between the university and the field with regard to controversial issues.
- Approving proposals for practice placements.
- Setting up co-operation contracts.
- Providing students with contracts for the practice placement.
- Providing administrative support for students during the practice placement (Personnel Department)
- Preparing students for the practice placement abroad and supporting them throughout.
- Remunerating students for the duration of the practice placement.

IV. Practice Placement - Aims

The practice placement gives students the opportunity to gain practical experience in a particular field of social work and develop their awareness of the professional skills required in this area.

Specifically, the practice placement should enable students to:

- Analyse and evaluate the relevance and application of the theory and methods studied with regard to professional conduct.
- Apply, critically reflect on and develop the knowledge and skills gained in practice
- Carry out professional tasks observing context specific legal, organisational and economic parameters.
- Identify and record requests and needs for change and improvement in the field and incorporate these aspects in the academic context of the university.

V. Practice Placement – Structure

The practice placement is an integral part of the BA Social Work. Students may only start their practice placement following successful completion of the modules outlined below:

- Introduction to social work
- Social work parameters: economics, politics & society
- Law for social work: social welfare
- Sociological, educational and psychological aspects of social work
- Theory and principles of social work
- Theory and practice of communication and counselling
- Introduction to practice placement
- Law for social work: child, adolescent and family welfare
- Professional skills: concepts and methods
- Culture, aesthetics, media: general principles of creative media in social work
- Preparing for practice placement

The Central Placement Office provides procedures relating to specific tasks and contractual obligations for the practice placement abroad. The practice placement is organised as follows:

Semester:	5 th semester
Activity:	Supervised work in the field in a chosen area with increasing independence. This includes adapting to and embodying the specific circumstances of the place of practice and the position take up.
Time frame:	from 01 September to 28 / 29 February.
Duration:	115 days.
Hours per day:	7
Absences:	Absences of more than 8 days must be made up by the end of the fifth semester.

VI. Practice Placement - Placement Approval

The following provisions are laid out for the approval of practice placements:

- The placement must take place in a social, healthcare or educational facility or a similar external place of learning approved by the university.
- This facility must employ social workers or, on account of the type of facility, be in a position to employ social workers.
- The facility must be able to ensure that the training goals can be achieved and that the student is supported and trained by a qualified supervisor.
- The placement provider must enter into contract with the student from the HAW Hamburg on practice placement.

The student is responsible for finding an appropriate practice placement. However, the Central Placement Office and the professors at the HAW Hamburg support students in this process.

VII. Practice Placement - Supervision

The aims of supervision during the practice placement are primarily:

- To support the student's learning process in the field.
- To enable students to gain an understanding of professional conduct in the area of social work.
- To enable students to critically reflect on their professional role and thus develop their own professional identity.

Supervision should take place for at least one hour per week during the practice placement.

The supervision thus fulfils four different functions:

1. **A teaching function:** it enables students to develop their knowledge of theory and practice and learn how to apply it to their own practical context.
2. **An advisory function:** it encourages students to critically reflect on their self-concept as a(n) (under)graduate in Social Work or Social Pedagogy.
3. **An administrative function:** it enables students to structure social-pedagogical goals and actions with organisational and legal parameters.
4. **An evaluative function:** it describes the learning process and enables the evaluation of the different stages within the placement with respect to the overall aims of the practice placement.

Based on the above functions, the supervisor is required to independently assess the success or failure of the practice placement and submit a written evaluation of the student. The supervisor should contact the Central Placement Office immediately should doubt occur at any stage that the student is able to complete the practice placement successfully.

The following formal requirements must be fulfilled in order to be approved as a supervisor by the HAW Hamburg:

- The supervisor must be a graduate of Social Work or Social Pedagogy and have at least 3 years relevant experience in social work post state certification.
- The supervisor must be employed on a full-time basis.
- The supervisor must have a work contract for the whole duration of the practice placement so that continuous supervision is guaranteed.

The Central Placement Office will consider exceptions in lieu of the above-mentioned formal requirements in the following instances:

- The supervisor will be a member of staff who is a graduate of a different discipline to Social Work or Social Pedagogy. In this case, the supervisor must provide evidence of at least 5 years experience in the field of social work.
- The supervisor will be a qualified social worker or social pedagogue working on a part-time basis.

VIII. Practice Placement - Contracts

Contract between Hamburg University of Applied Sciences and student

The Practice Placement Contract (PPC) forms the legal basis for the practice placement and must be signed in Hamburg before placement. The contractual parties are:

- The Hamburg University of Applied Sciences, Faculty of Business and Social Sciences represented by the Practice Placement Officer of the Department of Social Work.
- The student on a degree course leading to the BA Social Work at the Hamburg University of Applied Sciences, Department of Social Work.

The formal conclusion of a binding contract as well as adherence to the agreed contractual obligations are a requirement for the recognition of the practice placement on the BA in Social Work as well as for state recognition as a social pedagogue and social worker. The formal contract is valid once signed by both contractual parties. The Practice Placement Contract is binding and stipulates the practice placement provider approved for the practice placement (Article 2, PPC). In addition to stipulating the length of the practice placement, the Practice Placement Contract lays down the duties of each contractual party (Article 3, PPC). These include primarily:

The obligations of the students

- To carry out the specified tasks in a professional and conscientious manner.
- To maintain confidentiality of information during and following the placement with regard to clients, staff and workplace procedures as governed by law or laid down by the practice placement provider.

The obligations of the HAW Hamburg

- To provide a course of study, including the practice placement, in accordance with the Examination and Study Regulations of the HAW Hamburg.
- To remunerate students on a monthly basis during their practice placement in the fifth semester in accordance with the current rates stipulated in the relevant regulations as well as in accordance with tax and social security laws. (Article 3, Clause 2 PPC).

The Practice Placement Contract stipulates the amount of daily working hours and procedures for absences (Article 5 Practice Placement Contract). All absences must be made up by the end of the fifth semester. However, in the event of illness of family bereavement students may be absent for a total of 8 working days as long as sufficient medical or other evidence is provided. Students are not entitled to holiday during the practice placement. The Practice Placement Contract further includes provisions for contract termination (Article 6, PPC) and the repayment of the practice placement remuneration (Article 7, PPC) as well as providing a legal basis for the waiving of tuition fees during the practice placement semester.

Contract between the placement provider and the student

The placement provider and student must sign a formal contract and submit a copy of the contract to the Central Placement Office prior to the commencement of the practice placement (see Appendix for details).

IX. Practice Placement - Student Evaluation

The placement provider is required to submit a written evaluation of the student. This is normally carried out by the supervisor. The evaluation should describe the student's learning processes at each stage of the practice placement and with respect to the overall aims of the practice placement.

The written evaluation must be completed by the end of the practice placement and given to the student before return to Germany. The student must submit the original evaluation to the Central Placement Office together with a German translation (translated by student) if the evaluation is written in a language other than German.

The evaluation should specifically include the following:

1. The student's personal details (name, address, date of birth)
2. Name and address of practice placement provider and placement location if different to the provider.
3. Name of supervisor
4. Length of practice placement
5. Tasks carried out by student
6. Student's approach to work and learning:
 - Acquisition of subject knowledge and methods
 - Awareness and execution of administrative tasks
 - Commitment and willingness
 - Ability to plan and coordinate tasks
 - Ability to co-operate and work in a team
 - Conflict management
 - Ability to reflect on one's own actions
7. Summarising evaluation: "successful" or "unsuccessful" completion of practice placement
8. Signed and dated by supervisor and student

The evaluation should also be structured according to the afore-mention points 1 – 8. It must also clearly state whether the practice placement was completed successfully or not.

Guidelines for writing an appraisal¹

The appraisal should be in written form and must be discussed with the placement student. The appraisal is not a formal reference to be used at a later stage for job applications. Rather it is a report for the university that documents the student's progress during the placement and their degree of success. The appraisal should support placement students in their professional development and in enabling them to prepare for their future careers. Thus the appraisal should focus on existing strengths as well as on areas for development in a constructive manner so that students can focus clearly on developing their skills in these areas. The appraisal by the supervisor should include the following aspects:

Design and progression of the practical training stage:

- The parameters of the practice placement
- The pre-set organisational structures including possible changes or supplements
- Specific tasks and situations encountered during the practical training stage
- The type of supervision

Placement student:

- Knowledge and skills and their practical application
- Ability and willingness to acquire and process information
- Social skills and interacting with individuals and groups
- Ability to identify and evaluate problems and conflicts accurately, appropriately and in a professional manner
- Application of professional concepts and methodological structures
- Administrative skills
- Progress made during the placement
- Areas for future development

Overall evaluation:

- Overall impression of the placement student in the placement context
- Occupational aptitude in particular with respect to skills and areas for development.

¹ (Source: excerpt from the "Recommendations for Placement Supervision", Federal Association for Practice Placements in Social Work)

X. Practice Placement - Procedures for Exceptional Circumstances

The Central Placement Office is to be informed immediately in the event of exceptional circumstances or events.

The Central Placement Office must be informed immediately in the following cases:

- **Accidents:** should the placement student be involved in an accident either on the way from their residence to the placement facility, or vice-versa, or on the job. The accident report for the state accident insurance should be completed by the placement provider.
- **Prolonged absence:** should the placement student be absent for a period of more than 8 days due to illness, accident or pregnancy. The placement student must inform the placement provider immediately and provide the placement provider with a Doctor's Certificate in this case.
- **Breach of contract:** should the contract be breached by the placement student, the supervisor or the placement provider.
- **Negligent or culpable behaviour on behalf of the student.**

The HAW Hamburg is under no circumstances liable in the event of negligent or culpable behaviour on behalf of the student. Students are thus recommended to arrange their own private and/or professional liability insurance.

XI. Contact Details

For all matters regarding the practice placement, please contact:

Central Placement Office
Department of Social Work
Faculty of Business and Social Sciences
Hamburg University of Applied Sciences
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20099 Hamburg
Germany

Practice Placement Officer

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For further information regarding our university and our courses, please see:

General: <http://www.haw-hamburg.de/international.html> (English language version)

Central Placement Office: <http://www.zepira-hamburg.de> (German language site)

XIII. Appendix - Sample Social Practice Placement Contract

This contract is for students of the **Faculty of Business and Social Sciences, Hamburg University of Applied Sciences, Germany** who are in their fifth semester and are on a social work placement.

This contract is between the following work **placement provider**:

Institution / organisation / provider _____

Address: _____

Telephone: _____

Fax: _____

E-mail: _____

- hereinafter placement provider

and

the following student of the **Faculty of Business and Social Sciences, Hamburg University of Applied Sciences, Germany**

- hereinafter student

Ms / Mr. (Please circle)

First name(s): _____

Surname(s): _____

Date of birth: _____

Address: _____

Telephone: _____

Fax: _____

E-mail: _____

SECTION I - Subject of the Contract

This contract regulates the practical training for students on a degree course in Social Work in the Faculty of Business and Social Sciences, Hamburg University of Applied Sciences, Germany. It is based on the regulations in German language set out by the University of Applied Sciences Hamburg for practice placements abroad. It regulates further the rights and duties of both contractual parties during the social work placement with regard to the conditions of the placement and the training plan.

SECTION II - Legal basis of the work placement

- (1) The work placement is full-time and takes place in the fifth semester. The placement is one hundred and fifteen days in total.

The length, range and training content of the social work placement are governed by the current edition of the Study, Examination and Practice Placement Regulations of the Faculty of Business and Social Sciences, Hamburg University of Applied Sciences, Germany and the clauses of this contract.

Section III - Length of Social Work Placement, Working Hours and Absences

- (1) During the social work placement, the student should work 7 hours per day.

Only the actual hours worked during the social work placement will be recognised. The time missed through absence must be made up in order to be recognised. However, should absences occur for compelling reasons such as illness or family bereavement, a total of 8 days may be missed and does not need to be made up. Students on social work placement are not entitled to holiday leave.

At the end of the social work placement, the placement provider is required to submit full details of attendance and absences in the final student evaluation. The Central Placement Office in the Faculty of Business and Social Sciences, Hamburg University of Applied Sciences must be notified immediately of all absences over those stipulated in Section III, Clause 2.

SECTION IV - Obligations of the Placement Provider

- (1) The placement provider is to train the student in accordance with the current Study, Examination and Practice Placement Regulations of the Faculty of Business and Social Sciences, Hamburg University of Applied Sciences, Germany. The provider is further to support the student in keeping a reflective diary.
- (2) The placement provider is responsible for supplying the student with regulations relevant to the placement such as those for data protection as well as in-house regulations.
- (3) The placement provider is to assign a person responsible for the execution of the social work placement. This person is responsible for training the student and is named as follows:

Name: _____
Work address, Telephone, fax, e-mail _____

- (4) The placement provider is to clarify any queries or problems that arise with the Central Placement Office in the Faculty of Business and Social Sciences, Hamburg University of Applied Sciences, Alexanderstrasse 1, 20099, Hamburg, Germany. Telephone: (+49 40) 42875-7033, Fax: (+49 40) 42875-7009.
- (5) On completion of the social work placement, the student is to receive an evaluation in which it is clearly stated whether the social work placement was completed successfully or not and that it was in accordance with the above-mentioned Study, Examination and Practice Placement Regulations. It must be further certified in the evaluation that either no absences occurred or in the event of absence, that the said absences were made up. An evaluation is also to be completed if the student ends his or her placement early.

Section V - Obligations of the Student

- (1) The student is required:

To carry out the tasks allocated to him or her during the work placement in a careful and conscientious manner.

- To observe the Study, Examination and Practice Placement Regulations in their current form.
- To follow the instructions given by the supervisor during the work placement.
- To observe the relevant workplace regulations during the placement.
- To inform the placement provider immediately in the event of absence or not being able to complete a part of the placement.

Section VI - Remuneration

Remuneration agreements are not subject of this contract. In the event of the placement being remunerated, a separate written agreement is required. In this case, each party is responsible for their own social security and tax contributions as well as their legal obligations with regard to employment regulations. Such agreements must not alter or limit the rights and duties outlined in this contract with regard to the length, range and content of the social work placement.

Section VII - Rights and Duties of the Central Placement Office

- (1) The Central Placement Office is the contact point for all matters relating to the social work placement for all contractual parties. It has the right to request an interim report for the social work placement from the placement provider and may further visit the placement provider for further discussions with prior notice.
- (2) Each of the contractual parties is obliged to contact the Central Placement Office in the following cases:
 - On non-starting or completion of a part of the placement.
 - In the event of absence over 8 working days during the full-time placement in the fifth semester.
 - On annulment of this contract.
 - On alterations or additions to this contract.
- (3) The Central Placement Office will not recognise the completed placement if it was not conducted according to the Study, Examination and Practice Placement Regulations or if the training provided was not in accordance with these guidelines. The placement will further not be recognised if the absences during the placement amount to more days than those stipulated in Section III.

Section VIII - Contractual Validity, Alterations and Additions

- (1) The conclusion of this contract is dependent on the social work placement work place being recognised for this purpose, the authorisation of this contract and the approval of the training plan. The student will receive a written confirmation of the recognition and authorisation of the social work placement from the Central Placement Officer.
- (2) In order for changes and alterations to this contract as well as the training plan to become effective, they must be submitted in writing to the Central Placement Office. These must be authorised by the Central Placement Office according to Section VIII Clause I.

Section IX - Annulment of Contract

- (1) This contract may be annulled by each contractual party with a period of notice of four weeks to the end of the month. Notice must be in written form and be sent by registered post.
- (2) The right to immediate contract annulment without notice in the event of a fundamental breach of contract remains.

Section X - Final Clauses

- (1) In the event of clauses in this contract becoming ineffective, the remaining agreements between the contractual parties are still legally binding. The contractual parties are then required to provide effective clauses as a substitute for the ineffective ones.
- (2) Neither the Central Placement Office nor the Hamburg University of Applied Sciences is a contractual party in this contract. The rights and duties of the Central Placement Office are determined by the regulations in Sections IV, VII, VIII und X of this contract.
- (3) In addition, the provisions of the German Civil Code ("Bürgerliches Gesetzbuch") shall be applicable.

Date:

Placement provider:

Student:
