

Summary:

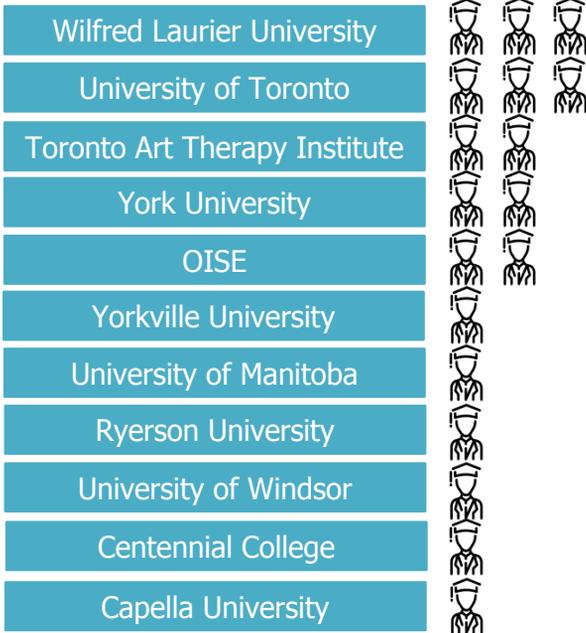
- Students continue to report very positive experiences in FST’s student placement program.
- Students had strong relationships with instructors and achieved their learning goals.
- 100% of survey respondents would recommend FST to another placement student.

Family Service Toronto’s Student Placement Program

In 2016 – 2017, 18 students from 11 institutions completed their placements at FST. Students worked in a range of programs across the organization:

- Counselling
- David Kelley Services (DKS)
- Healthy Families, Healthy Communities
- Campaign 2000
- Seniors and Caregivers Support Services
- Passport
- Knowledge Building (KB)
- Senior Community Connections

Where do our students come from?



Evaluation Process

Surveys

The survey investigated student experiences in 5 categories:

- Orientation to FST
- Student Supervision
- Student-Field Instructor Relationship
- Experience at FST
- Overall Satisfaction

A majority of questions were closed-ended, asking students to rate their agreement with a series of statements, from 1 (*very low*) to 5 (*very high*).

The survey also included open-ended questions for students to elaborate on what they learned, what they found challenging, and suggestions for the future.

While 18 students started the survey, three did not complete all questions. Therefore, sample sizes vary from question to question.

Specific units at FST have demonstrated amazing consistency in including students in their operations. **Counselling, DKS, Violence Against Women, and KB** had seven or more students over the past three years, and in 2016-2017 **Counselling, DKS, KB and Social Action** had three or more students each. There is also a consistency in the individuals who offer student placements.

There is room for growth and diversification in the staff, programs and departments who offer student placements, especially in indirect service units, such as HR, Technology and Communications, and Finance. Cultivating student learning continues to be an important FST commitment.

Orientation to FST

Students participate in a general orientation to the organization. Field instructors provide orientation to specific program areas.

Over 90% of students (n=16) reported being well-informed about...

FST's **mission, values, and strategy**

The **community** that FST supports

FST's range of **programs and services**

FST's **policies** guiding student practice

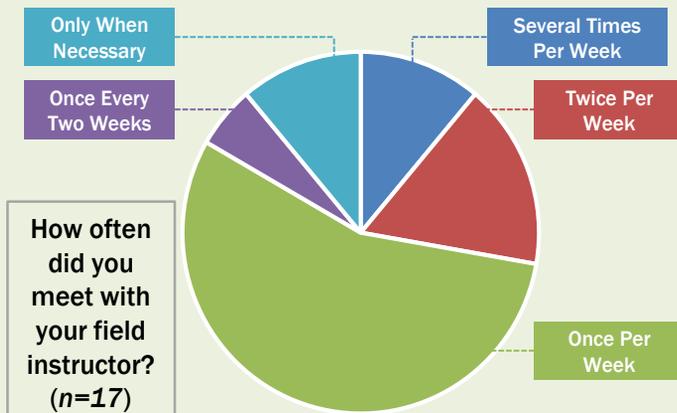
100% of students felt **well oriented to their specific program area**

94% of students felt **prepared to begin their placement** after orientation

Student Supervision

Field instructors provide students with hands-on experience, informed by in-depth meetings and the student's learning objectives.

While a majority of students had in-depth meetings with their field instructors on a weekly basis, some students reported having meetings only once every two weeks or less. This is an area for improvement, as regular in-depth supervision is critical to student learning.



Learning Objectives

All students reported that field instructors helped them establish, monitor and adapt their learning objectives.

All students reported that their learning objectives were *mostly* or *completely* met.

Student-Field Instructor Relationship

At the core of the student experience is the mentoring relationship with field instructors.

Over 90% of students (n=17) said...

I had **open lines of communication** with my field instructor

My field instructor ensured my **learning needs were met**.

My field instructor provided me with **helpful feedback**.

ADVICE FOR NEW STUDENTS



Ask your supervisor if you need information or support and take advantage of opportunities to learn from others, while respecting the boundaries of each person's work responsibilities.



Take time to get to know the organizational structure, policies, and programs. Although it is a lot of information to take in all at once, it will be helpful down the road to situate your work by knowing how it relates to and support the overarching organizational goals.



Try a little bit of everything. If an opportunity to sit in on a meeting or an information session comes up, take it. You're here to learn from [FST] not to work for [FST].



Work hard and get involved with those around you. You'll be spending a lot of time here, and your fellow staff will become some great friends.

Experience at FST

Students are encouraged to learn about FST beyond their program area and could participate in learning opportunities to do so.

94% of students ($n=16$) found the staff at FST to be **inclusive and welcoming**.

Students engaged in a variety of **learning experiences** to enhance their understanding of the organization (see sidebar, 'Learning Experiences').

Students indicated often missing out on learning experiences because of an **intense workload** or **anxiety about approaching staff members**. This suggests that future field instructors could facilitate these experiences through warm introductions and setting aside time in student schedules for these opportunities.



Learning Experiences

Learning Seminars 94%

Interviewing 44%

Case Consultations 25%

Shadowing 19%

Percentages represent # of total students that took part in each learning experience ($n=16$).

TOP 4 SKILLS THAT STUDENTS ACQUIRED DURING THEIR PLACEMENT

Counselling



Research/Evaluation



Communication



Teamwork



Overall Satisfaction

Students are asked about their overall satisfaction with their placement, and their likelihood of recommending FST to a peer.



100% of respondents ($n=15$) either *agreed* or *strongly agreed* that they would recommend FST to a future placement student.

“This was a great learning experience. I’m glad I completed my placement at Family Service Toronto.”



93% respondents ($n=15$) were either *satisfied* or *very satisfied* with their placement at FST.

“I am thankful for the learning opportunities given to me and the ongoing support from my Supervisor and Placement Coordinator.”

WHAT STUDENTS APPRECIATED

I appreciated the opportunity to learn about different parts of the agency through the learning seminars and informational interviews.



I got in-depth practice at working as a counsellor with a variety of clients, exposure to many people and perspectives on doing this work, and felt a sense of belonging and purpose in my day-to-day work life here.



I appreciated that learning took place not only in the office, but by attending meetings, phone conferences, and other community events.



The staff are all incredibly amazing. The environment is so supportive and welcoming!



For more information about student placements at Family Service Toronto, visit:

familyservicetoronto.org/get-involved/student-placements/

Or contact:

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