



Good Practice Youth Work Education and Training

Good Practice Youth Work Education and Training

Youth Work education should work in partnership with professional and community-based agencies to provide a variety of approaches to learning and teaching so that students have an opportunity to experience a wide range of strategies and approaches to learning. Students should have significant involvement in community and youth projects learning through working with experienced practitioners of youth work (Quality Assurance in Higher Education, 2009).

Diploma, Undergraduate (Degree) and Post Graduate Youth Work Courses

The Board of the YWA continues to have productive conversations with education providers regarding the professionalisation of youth work. To provide further direction to these discussions the Board have moved to offer YWA Endorsement to recognised youth work providers with the aim of providing greater quality assurance to the content and pedagogy of vocational and higher education youth work courses.

Principles and Benchmarks of Good Youth Work Education & Training.

1. Pedagogy that is based on a values clarification and reflective practice model that challenges personal values and separates those from the professional values of a Youth Work practitioner.

Benchmark; evidence of values clarification that understands the importance of separating personal and professional value frameworks

2. An understanding that young people are the primary client/consideration of the Youth Work practitioner.

Explicit youth practice content where this is one of the primary outcomes.

3. Bibliographies that direct students to required reading that has a focus on important practice values such as: social justice and social action, consciousness raising, empowerment, participation, human rights and advocacy; and is reflective of Australian content.

Evidence of literature and reading that is required to be utilised in assessment

4. Ethics education based on the Victorian Youth Sectors Code of Ethical Practice and taught by qualified practitioners.

Ethics content that uses the Code of Ethical Practice

5. Content reflective of the social, economic and political structures, influences and barriers young people face.
6. Focus on the development of a framework of practice through exposure to a theoretical core of community development, sociology of youth, social structure of adolescent health and youth policy; as well as a minimum of 12 specific youth work practice or field education placement subjects.

Evidence that students have an understanding of a practice framework that is informed by theory and practice

7. An inclusion of a human rights based social justice pedagogy that includes exposure to issues such as: age, culture, gender, indigenous and sexuality within its framework of practice.

Evidence of content that identifies marginalized groups in communities

8. Pedagogy that reflects on the broader social structural systemic influences that impact on young people and youth work practice.

Evidence of content that identifies specific barriers that young people face such as access to income, education, isolation, social capital and family make-up.

9. Qualifications and experience of staff in the Youth Work courses will also be considered and it is expected that every course will have 80% of their staff that are eligible to join the Youth Workers Association.

Minimum of 80% staff members eligible for YWA and 20% of staff with significant youth work practice experience. Significant would be 10 years and above

10. Encourages reflective practitioners that can work collaboratively in professional settings.

Evidence of professional placement with reflective assessment

11. No more than 20% of the course is undertaken “on the job”.
12. Student’s undertaken youth work placements within youth agencies or agencies that have a substantial youth service component.

Each student has professional placement in a Youth Work agency with a minimum of 600 hours and the primary focus of their experience is Youth practice. Up to 200 hours may be preparation, assessment, project work and supervision.

There is evidence of adequate time to complete structured content and that content is delivered within a structure that focuses on young people and Youth Work and is not compromised by excessive amounts of units shared with other disciplines.

Excessive will be deemed as over 15%

13. The course must be overseen by a qualified Youth Work practitioner.

The Manager of the academic program must be a qualified Youth Work practitioner

In the form of building blocks, the following are what we consider core to professional Youth Work education and training.

First Year

Global communities and understanding the structural barriers

Co-design and Youth participation in every level of governance

Youth Work Practice what it is and working in diverse communities

Developing Youth and community programs for groups of Young People

Understanding Adolescent Health and Development and Adolescence as a distinct period

Second Year

Fieldwork on the job professional placement

Substance Use and Mental Health

Youth Work Theory and Ethics

Case Management and Holistic practice.

Political Economy in Youth Work

Third Year

Youth Policy

Trauma informed care and critical incidents

Youth Research and Program Evaluation

Fieldwork on the job professional placement



Youth Work Graduates

Graduate Capabilities

The YWA aims to increase the skill set of the Youth Work sector to a Bachelor degree. Youth Work graduates should be able to demonstrate skills and knowledge in the following areas. These have been sourced and then adapted from the Quality Assurance in Higher Education (2009).

1. Understanding, developing and managing their professional role:

- An understanding of and the capacity to apply and integrate theoretical frameworks and key concepts relevant to practice in youth work.
- An informed and critical understanding of their role as facilitators in relation to other professional interventions in the lives of young people and communities.
- The ability to maintain good professional boundaries in voluntary relationships and in informal contexts.
- The ability to make informed judgments on ethical and professional issues in a disputed field and to act appropriately in line with the Code of Ethical Practice.
- The ability to operate as a reflective practitioner, consistently reviewing practice against quality benchmarks and in consultation with all stakeholders.
- Critical reflection upon, and commitment to, their continuing personal and professional development.
- The capacity to manage others in the workplace (volunteers, staff, accountability, equality and diversity in the workplace).

2. Fostering democratic and inclusive practice:

- The ability to build trusting relationships.
- The ability to foster participation and support for young people to play an active role in their community recognising the importance of community connection to each individuals social capital and the' contribution to building the capacity of individual communities.
- The ability to create inclusive environments that reflect an understanding the power dynamics that exist in and around relationships with young people whether that be with individual youth workers or institutions.

3. Facilitating personal and collective learning development and capacity building:

- The capacity to engage with young people and community groups, build relationships, form partnerships and facilitate young peoples' individual and collective learning and development.
- Ensuring that underpinning every youth work role is acknowledging our accountability to stakeholders.
- Skills in developing inclusive networks which recognise that marginalization of small projects or minority groups must be challenged in all of our practice and the practice of others and of the institutions that work with young people.
- The ability to write and analyse organisational and Government policies.

- Effective communication using written, visual, electronic and oral means with individuals and groups.
- Understand the importance of emotional literacy to the overall well-being of young people and be able to devise practice responses that build these skills in young people.
- The ability to design and implement initiatives projects and programs using appropriate professional frameworks and methods that reflect the importance of a participatory approach to all of our practice.
- Skill in the collection and application of basic program evaluation data to ensure the appropriate evaluation of the impact and effectiveness of the work being undertaken and community-based projects.
- A commitment to building youth work communities of practice to promote and share good practice as individual youth workers building professional networks and as a member of organisations.

4. Generic Skills

Graduates should be able to demonstrate:

- Self-management, including the organisation of an efficient and effective work pattern and working to deadlines.
- Ability to present data in different formats, including graphical and tabular.
- Commitment to the improvement of their own learning and performance.
- The capacity to build practice on an understanding of issues of power, empowerment and the complexity of voluntary relationships.
- The capacity to provide support, safety and well-being of staff.
- Context-appropriate leadership of individuals and groups.
- Project management skills (monitoring, evaluation, financial management, management of resources, policy development, understanding quality framework models).

Reference:

The Quality Assurance Agency for Higher Education, (2009), Subject benchmark statement Youth and Community Work, The Quality Assurance Agency for Higher Education, UK.