Implementing Accommodations in Practicum, Clinical, and Fieldwork Settings: Planning for Success

Off-campus settings are unfamiliar to both students and staff, making it more challenging to anticipate and plan for accommodations compared to on-campus settings.

Challenges

Multiple stakeholders involved in the accommodation planning and implementation process.

- Academic staff (School Experiences Office Director, Faculty Advisor)
- Accommodation Team
- On-site supervisors (Principal, Vice Principal, etc.)
- Other on-site staff (teachers, educational assistants, etc.)

An off-campus setting involves unique logistics to consider.

- Different schedules/hours than regular courses
- Program accreditation requirements to uphold

An unfamiliar work setting creates unique challenges for support staff (transcriptionists) and their supervisor.

- Willingness of existing staff to work off campus
- Time needed to recruit and train new staff
- Training staff to work in an alternate setting
- Extra requirements for staff selection due to the work setting (background checks)
- Working with little to no supervision
- Decreased availability of subs
- Changing work locations throughout the day
- Require access to appropriate seating, electrical plugs, and Wi-Fi on site
- Need to communicate role to on-site staff while maintaining student confidentiality

Solutions

As early as possible, consult with the student, faculty, and staff who are familiar with the off-campus setting to familiarize yourself with the logistics of the location, the standards that the student is required to meet, and any other requirements.

Foster open communication between all stakeholders throughout the entire accommodation planning and implementation process.

- Share relevant information as necessary while maintaining student confidentiality.
- Create an off-campus accommodation plan together with the student and the Accommodation Team.

Visit the off-campus site in advance if possible.

- Work with on-site staff to set up logistical requirements in advance.
- Reserve seats, set up Wi-Fi access, parking, and ID cards if needed.

Recruit and assign staff as early as possible, and set up a pool of subs who can fill in if needed.

- Ensure that staff are background checked if required for the setting (criminal record & child abuse checks, etc.), including subs.
- Set up a clear process for using a sub if staff are unable to attend a shift – who to contact, informing the student, location staff, etc.
- Ensure staff are trustworthy and comfortable working in a location with minimal/no supervision – ask relevant interview questions, do thorough reference checks.
- Assign newer staff to team with more experienced staff if possible.
- Use role play to train staff to prepare for difficult/awkward situations that may arise.
- When the placement starts, check in early and often with student and staff to manage issues as they arise. Visit in-person if possible.

Maintain open communication and follow up regularly with student, staff, and faculty to anticipate and respond to any issues, and make adjustments as needed.

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