

## **Supporting social work field education with off-site supervision: views from liaison people**

Ines Zuchowski<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup>*James Cook University, Townsville, Australia*

Social work as a profession, social work practitioners and organisations, as well as social work education are all under strain from global, economic, social and political changes and workplace pressures. Field education is recognized as pivotal in preparing social work students for professional practice. Field education facilitates the development of practice skills, professional identity and a professional practice framework. As social work practitioners, organisations and social work education are exposed to external and internal pressure, social work practice learning with off-site supervision is becoming more prevalent. In some countries field education with off-site supervision is considered less desirable than practice learning with 'in house' supervision.

This paper report on research that explored the experiences of key stakeholders in social work practice learning with external supervision and develop practice in this area. A qualitative approach guided in-depth interviews with Australian students, field educators/ practice assessors, task supervisors and university liaison persons about their experiences in field education with external supervision. This presentation reports on the experiences of university liaison people who provided support and guidance to students and supervisors in field education arrangements with off-site supervision. A range of themes has emerged, including reflections on their support role, the extra support and resources needed to support placements with off-site supervision and the complexity of connecting the various players. Preliminary findings suggest matching of students and supervisors to placement, good placement preparation and working relationships are central to successful placements with off-site supervision.