1.1 Scope

This policy applies to the complete range of educational provision without exception.

The term ‘service user’ should be understood to refer to any person catered for within an organisation whether this is within healthcare, social care or education sector, both in child or adult services, voluntary or private.

1.2 Introduction

The maintenance, and management, of confidentiality is the responsibility of the individual student. The student must seek guidance from their workplace supervisor, mentor or manager on the effective discharge of this responsibility.

As a student of the Centre for Psychoanalytic Studies you will note that modules use different forms of assessment. For practice based programmes a common component of the assessment strategy is the requirement for you to present work that accurately portrays the environments in which you practice / seek to practice. Consequently, information contained in submitted work is often detailed and specific. In presenting work of a suitably high standard, you must be constantly aware of the necessity to maintain confidentiality for all concerned.

The Centre for Psychoanalytic Studies sees the observance of confidentiality as crucial to the development of professional practice and ethical conduct of its students.

1.3 What can I include?

1.3.1 Pseudonyms.

Using ‘Client X’, ‘Child B’ or ‘Organisation Y’ does not aid the readability of your work. We suggest that you use pseudonyms throughout, in other words, use a false name for any client, staff member or organisation to whom you wish to refer.

1.3.2 Public information

As a general rule you may include any data that is already within the “public domain”. This means any document that a Trust, Social Service Department or Organisation has made available to the general public. Your line manager / mentor will be able to confirm whether this is the case for a specific document.

1.4 What must I not include?

Any information that would breach confidentiality for service users, carers, staff, students or anyone else involved in the scenario that you are describing including the organisation.

1.4.1 For the service user, you must not include:
• Any personal details from which the identity of a service user could be deduced
• Any dates significant to a service user’s episode of care or education
• Any specific location details of hospitals, clinics, care homes, schools, placements, services etc relating to the service users episode of care or education

1.4.2 For colleagues, you must not include:

• Any personal details from which the identity of staff mentioned in the work could be deduced
• Any specific location details of hospitals, clinics, schools, placements, services etc. in which the staff are work

1.4.3 For provider organisations, you must not include:

• The name of the school, home, placement or organisation referred to in the work

1.5 Specific Assessments

1.5.1 Reflective Journals / Reflective Reports / Portfolio

Where Reflective Journals, Reports or Portfolios form part of the assessment it is the recommendation of the Centre for Psychoanalytic Studies that you do not submit reflective journals maintained throughout your studies verbatim. However, you may quote from such journals provided that you maintain confidentiality in line with this policy.

1.5.2 Extended Projects, Observations or Case Studies

Some modules require students to undertake projects or observations connected with their work organisation or placement over a period of time which makes the organisation or placement more likely to be identifiable. Regardless of this, the student remains responsible for presenting work that protects the confidentiality of those concerned.

Some programme use a Placement Agreement to clarify arrangements between the student, the organisation and the university. These should always be used as a guide. The student should consult and seek guidance from his / her supervisor or mentor if he / she is unclear about how to maintain confidentiality.

1.5.3 Dissertations

Dissertations / Long Essays require students to undertake specific work or study from which the relevant organisations may be perceived as identifiable. Regardless of this, the student remains responsible for presenting work that protects the confidentiality of individuals concerned. The student should consult and seek guidance from his / her supervisor or mentor if he/she is unclear about how to maintain confidentiality.

1.6 Using multimedia recording

There are rare instances you may feel that it is essential to include an audio-visual record in your work. The following procedures can support such an audio-visual record, but must first be explored with your supervisor.
Where you wish to include audio-visual records, photographs, images etc. of an episode of care, treatment or a client’s products this will inevitably compromise confidentiality, the following points must be addressed:

- The student must obtain written consent from the module leader if this form of evidence is to be included.
- The student must confirm with his/her line manager whether an organisational policy on the use of educational videotape, or similar, currently exists.
- The student must seek written consent from each service user/participant involved.
- The completed consent forms must be provided to the student’s line manager. The line manager will write a statement to the effect that they have seen the consent form and approve of the evidence being included. The completed consent forms must not be included in the submission.

1.7 Consent of colleagues

Colleagues have the same rights to confidentiality as service users. Where details by which colleagues may be identified are included in the work the student is obliged to seek consent and provide written evidence of such.

- The student must obtain written consent from the module leader if this form of evidence is to be included.
- The student must seek written consent from each colleague involved.
- The completed consent forms must be provided to the student’s line manager. The line manager will write a statement to the effect that they have seen the consent form and approve of the evidence being included. The completed consent forms must not be included in the submission.

1.8 Commercially sensitive material

Students are reminded that confidentiality may extend beyond people involved in a caring or educational environment. Issues of confidentiality may extend to products of, and information concerning, employing organisations.

Products and information may be commercially sensitive and each student must consider his/her responsibilities in relation to such items. Student’s judgement should be based upon systematic reflection on his/her role as:

- A student member of the University
- Professional practitioner
- The Organisation’s employee

If a student is concerned about inclusion of material that may be commercially sensitive (e.g. information concerning the organisation that is not already in the public domain) he/she should seek guidance from his/her academic supervisor and/or line manager.

1.9 Assessment at the Centre for Psychoanalytic Studies

The University of Essex regards all work produced by students as confidential. Staff do not engage in discussion concerning students’ work except with fellow assessors.

The Centre for Psychoanalytic Studies retains:
• All coursework for one calendar year after the student has completed the programme
• Undergraduate and Graduate dissertations are retained for five calendar years after the student has completed the programme
• Doctoral dissertations are retained within the Albert Sloman Library

Information about student progress may be shared, within clearly defined parameters, with the student’s employer / sponsor. However, student work is not disseminated outside the Centre for Psychoanalytic Studies without prior consent from the relevant student.

1.10 Other Considerations

Students should also consider the following guidance and legislation in relation to their work:

• Human Rights Act 1998
• Data Protection Act 1998
• Professional guidance on confidentiality, record keeping and conduct (as issued by regulatory bodies relevant to your professional programme)
• Freedom of Information Act 2004
• Mental Capacity Act 2008

2.1 Penalty

Student submissions that breach our School’s Confidentiality Policy, explicitly or implicitly, in the view of the internal assessor / moderator or External Examiner will be penalised. A breach of confidentiality as outlined above is an offence that will be referred to the Director of Education for investigation and may lead to a fail. A fail through breach of confidentiality will be regarded by the Centre in the same manner as any other fail.

2.2 Written work and seminars discussion

The Centre for Psychoanalytic Studies confidentially policy refers to maintaining confidential in regard to written work submitted for assessment. However, it is likely that sensitive materials may be referred to in seminars discussions, especially in work-based and practice-based programmes. In this case it is the responsibility of students and tutors to agree to maintain confidentially and an agreement must be established that no discussion of confidential material takes place outside of seminars.

Failure to maintain confidentially in this way will be seen as a serious breach and treated as a disciplinary offence.