

# **Practice Education Handbook**

**For**

**Level 5 & 6**

**2017/2018**

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## 1.1 Purpose of Handbook

Welcome to BA (Hons) Social Work programme. The School of Health and Social Care is committed to making a difference to local, national and international health, social care and voluntary services through education, research and knowledge transfer. In accordance with the placement criteria, placements are an essential component of the BA (Hons) Social Work degree. All students must complete a total of 170 practice learning days in two different professional settings, a minimum of 70 days during year two and 100 days during year three. The College of Social Work described the placement experience *as the cornerstone of social work students' learning*.

The purpose of this handbook is to supplement the information provided within the course guide, detailing further practice learning and associated policies and procedures. The handbook should coincide with additional material provided by the university tutors and practice educators, for example student portfolios and guidance for modules.

This handbook is designed to be a reference book for students throughout the course, and for those staff responsible for supporting students through their learning and assessment in practice.

An electronic link is provided to enable access to the most recent versions of all of the [University of Essex Policies, procedures and guidance](#).

If you require further information that is not contained within this handbook, please contact the Placement Co-ordinator. Further contact details for staff associated with practice learning can be found in section [8.2 of this handbook](#).

A website (PEMS) to support practice learning is available and this handbook and all related information, policies and procedures will be available online through the university website.

*Please note:* details and documents included are accurate at the time of printing and may be subject to changes for example, The College of Social Work ceased to exist in September 2015. The PCF is overseen by BASW.

## 2. Professional body requirements

The following information details the relevant professional body requirements that inform and underpin the BA (Hons) Social Work degree.

### 2.1 Health and Care Professions Council (HCPC)

The **HCPC**, as regulatory body for social work programmes, uses Standards for Education and Training (SfET) to assess and monitor all social work programmes and the **HCPC Standards of conduct, performance and ethics**.

## **2.2 Quality of Assurance of Placement Learning (QAPL)**

As stipulated through the QAA (Quality Assurance Agency for Higher Education) benchmark statements are aligned with the Social Work Reform Board's reforms and requirements for the regulation and professional endorsement of social work programs.

## **2.3 Professional Capabilities Framework (PCF)**

Practice is assessed using the PCF. The PCF is an overarching professional standards framework, with nine domains: professionalism; values and ethics; diversity; rights, justice and economic well-being; knowledge; critical reflection and analysis; intervention and skills; contexts and organizations; and professional leadership.

Students must meet all practice requirements as specified within the module guide and portfolio to be successful in achieving the professional standards for placement learning that is applicable to their stage of the programme.

## **2.4 Service user/carer involvement**

Service user/carer involvement is integral to all aspects of the programme and qualifying award. Consequently the University of Essex has established a panel of past and present service users/carers (also known as 'experts by experience'), to advise and inform the development of and subsequent delivery of the academic and practice learning modules.

## **2.5 Glossary**

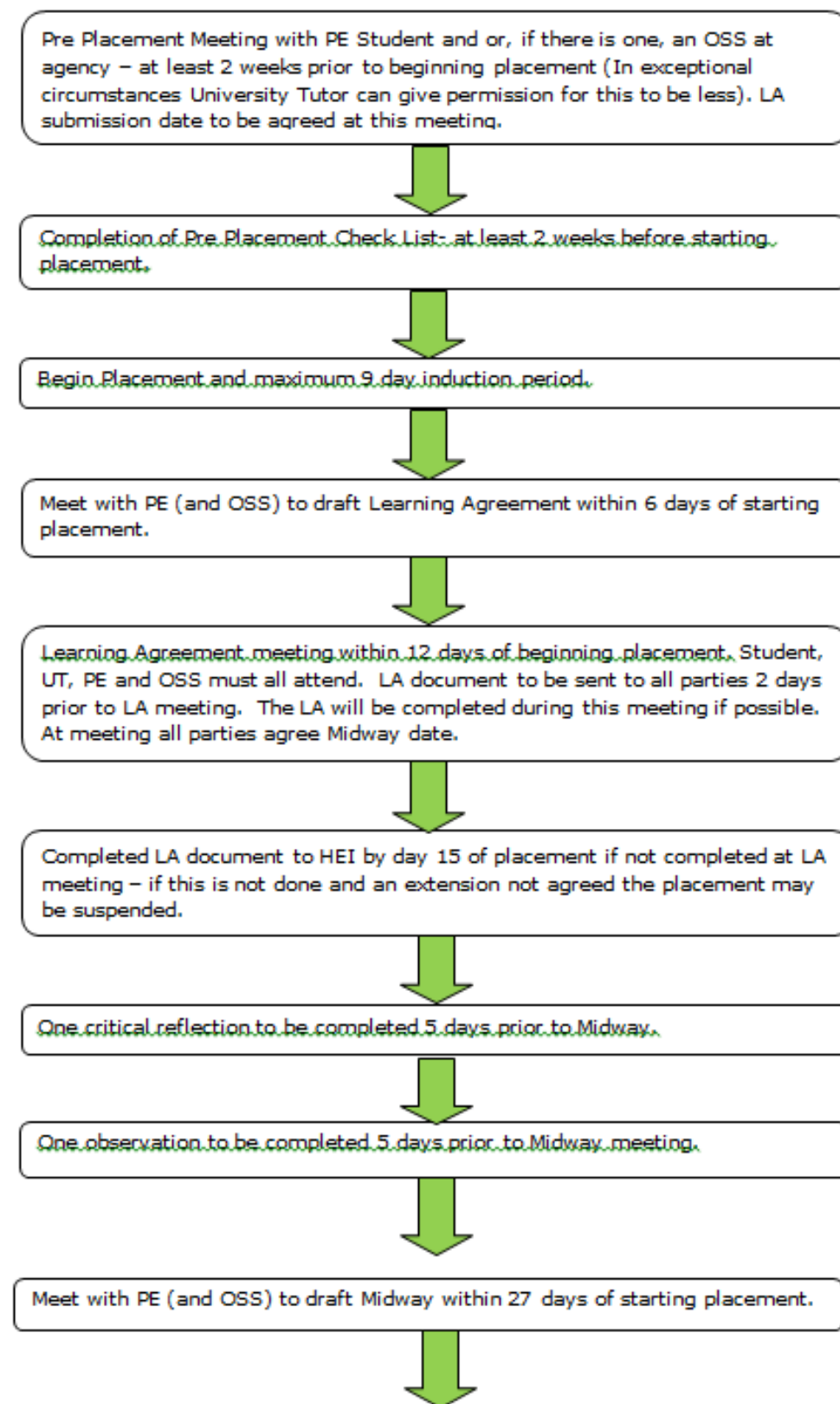
OSS	Onsite Supervisor
PE	Practice Educator
HEI	Higher Education Institute
PCF	Professional Capabilities Framework
UT	University Tutor
DBS	Disclosure and Barring Service
LA	Learning Agreement
HCPC	Health and Care Professions Council
SOPS	Standards of Proficiency
APC	Agency Placement Co-ordinator
PC	Placement Co-ordinator (HEI)

### **3. Prior to Placement**

When students accept a place on the B.A (Hons) Social Work programme they have agreed to conform to the [University of Essex Code of Student Conduct](#).

A structured framework of meetings is pivotal to the assessment of practice, and to enhancing learning. These are described in the following flowcharts.

### 3.1 Practice Placement Level 5 (First Placement/70 days) Flowchart



Midway meeting within 39 days of beginning placement. Student, UT, PE and OSS must all attend. Midway documents to be sent to all parties 2 days prior to Midway meeting. At meeting all parties agree Final Meeting date.



Completed Midway document to HEI by day 42 of placement – if this is not done and an extension not agreed the placement may be suspended.



Second Observation and Second Critical Reflection to be completed by day 50 of placement.



Third Observation and Third Critical Reflection to be completed by day 63 of placement.



Final Placement meeting within 65 days of placement – draft Workbook to be discussed as well as overall holistic assessment of placement.



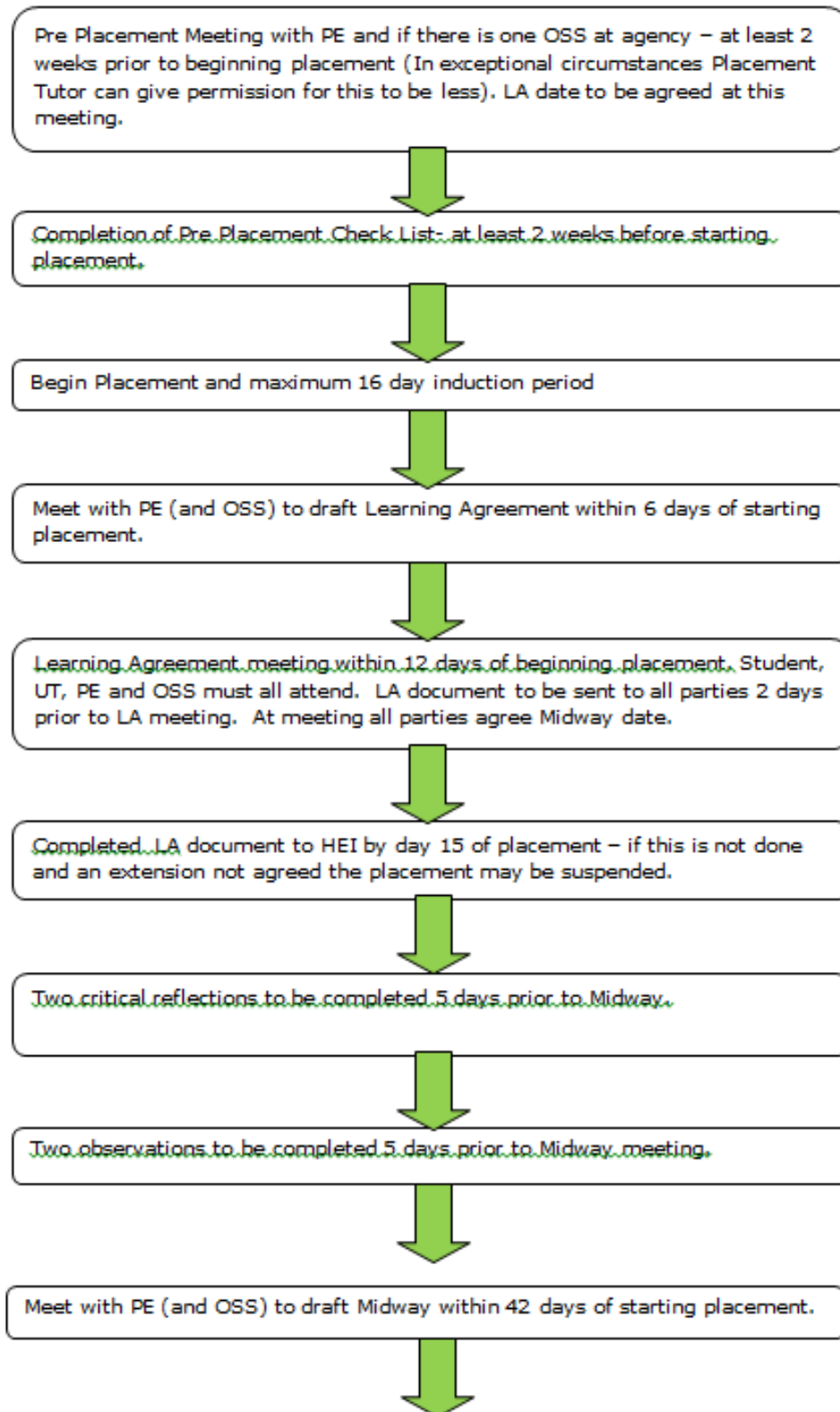
Completed workbook to be handed into PE by 4pm 3 days after the final placement day.



PE to mark and student to hand in Workbook within 3 weeks of end of placement.



### 3.2 Practice Placement Level 6 (Second Placement) Flowchart



Learning agreement meeting within 55 days of beginning placement. Student, PT, PE and OSS must all attend. Midway document to be sent to all parties 2 days prior to Midway meeting. At meeting all parties agree Final Meeting date.



Completed Midway document to HEI by day 60 of placement – if this is not done and an extension not agreed the placement may be suspended.



Third Observation and Third Critical Reflection to be completed by day 70 of placement.



Fourth Observation and fourth Critical Reflection to be completed by day 90 of placement.



Final Placement meeting within 92 days of placement to include PE, PT (OSS) and student – draft Workbook to be discussed as well as overall holistic assessment of placement.



Completed workbook to be handed into PE by 4pm 3 days after the final placement day.



PE to mark and hand in Workbook within 3 weeks of end of placement.

### **3.3 Disclosure and Barring Service**

All students are required to have an enhanced Disclosure and Barring Service Check (DBS). At the point of application, all students are required to declare any unspent convictions. Students applying for courses for which a satisfactory DBS check is a mandatory entry requirement must declare all convictions, cautions and reprimands, whether spent or unspent. When students enrol upon the course they will be asked to complete a DBS form. The forms will be returned to the university's DBS administrator who will progress the DBS checking process. Students should be aware that this process could take an average of 4 – 6 weeks. Further information can be found [here](#).

A student will not be able to start their placement without this check being completed. If a student is aware of any unspent criminal convictions / cautions registered against them, they must make their university tutor / placement co-ordinator aware at the earliest opportunity.

Students are required to share their DBS Certificate with the placement agency providers at interview. Some placement agencies may complete their own DBS checks. The university is not able to share the contents of a DBS check without the student's consent. The university is required to have written consent, ordinarily through signing the 'Student Support Confidentiality Agreement,' before sharing any student information; however, it is an expectation that a student's acceptance onto the programme includes agreement from the student to share relevant information, where appropriate to placement providers, Local Authority Designated Officers (LADO), where issues of safety or legality apply.

DBS checks are usually undertaken on a three yearly basis; however students will be required to complete an online declaration at the start of every academic year before they can re-enroll.

In the interim of DBS checks and yearly declarations, should students become subject to criminal proceedings / convictions / or cautions they must inform their university tutor or practice coordinator immediately.

The student should keep the original copy of their DBS record for the duration of the course.

### **3.4 Pre-Placement Checklist**

Students will be provided with a pre-placement checklist to be completed with a tutor at least two weeks prior to the beginning of the placement.

The checklist provides detailed information about all issues and areas that must be explored prior to placement, including

- DBS Disclosure
- Conduct
- Pre-Placement Interview
- Prior relationships or conflict of interest
- Car documents

- Attendance
- Health / Disability / Learning Difficulties
- Travel
- Other commitments / personal issues
- Placement Handbook and Workbook
- Inoculations (Hospital placements)

An example of the pre-placement checklist can be found in the student workbook or online.

### **3.5 Mandatory Training**

All Social Work students undertake a range of mandatory training annually. Allocations of placements are subject to the successful completion of the mandatory training. This mandatory training consists of online and practical sessions on the following topics:

Fire Safety  
 Protection & Safeguarding of Vulnerable People  
 Risk Assessment  
 Protection & Safeguarding of children  
 Personal Safety and Security Awareness  
 Information and records governance  
 Disability awareness  
 Equality & Diversity  
 Health & Safety Awareness

### **3.6 Students with Disabilities / Learning Difficulties**

The University of Essex is committed to supporting students with disabilities and / or specific learning difficulties and to conforming to the Equality Act 2010.

Applicants who meet the academic criteria for selection and who indicate on their application form that they have a disability will be contacted by a Disability Adviser with information about the support available.

Disabled students or those with any other learning difficulties, including dyslexia and mental health issues, any medical conditions or placement related needs are encouraged to notify the placement learning coordinator at the earliest opportunity to enable appropriate arrangements to be made.

Further Information can be found on the [University website](#).

With the student's consent any specific requirements will need to be shared with the placement provider to ensure their needs are met appropriately or reasonable adjustments can be made.

Specific requirements of students must be negotiated at the initial interview, agreed at the Learning Agreement Meeting, set out in the Learning Agreement, reviewed at the Midway Meeting and monitored regularly during the placement.

## **4. Suitability for Practice**

Students are required to demonstrate that they are suitable to practise in social work to be eligible to register as a social worker with the HCPC.

The HCPC state

‘Completing an approved programme does not guarantee someone will become registered. It shows us the applicant meets our professional standards and is eligible to apply for registration. We need additional information from them in order to be able to register them.

The information provided by applicants helps us to know that:

- they are who they say they are;
- they meet our standards; and
- we can contact them if we need to’

For further information please go to <http://www.hcpc-uk.org/apply/uk/>

### **4.1 Professional conduct**

Students are therefore required to meet the standards that are set out by the HCPC, which include ‘Standards of conduct, performance and ethics’. It is highly recommended that students familiarize themselves with these standards as they will be used to draw conclusions about professional conduct and behavior. The standards can be found in the publication ‘Guidance on Conduct and Ethics for Students’ which is available from the HCPC.

### **4.2 Fitness to practise**

Upon successful completion of the course, registration with the HCPC requires students to have demonstrated that they are ‘fit to practise’. The publication Guidance on Health and Character (HCPC 2012) defines being fit to practise as having, “...the skills, knowledge, character and health to do the job safely and effectively.”

Doubts about a student’s fitness to practise may arise if there are persistent or serious causes for concern about their health, conduct or competence, this will impact upon their ability to continue on the course and subsequently their suitability to practice.

Concerns about fitness to practise will be managed in accordance with the University of Essex’s [School of Health and Human Science Fitness to practise Policy](#)

### **4.3 Occupational Health**

Students may need access to the University’s screening service for Occupational Health when they enrol.

The objective of health screening is to be supportive and if necessary provide guidance around how to manage specific health issues / disabilities within the

workplace. Having a disability or health condition will not inevitably mean a student is not fit to practice.

Students who will be on placement at a hospital will be subject to Occupational Health screening and inoculations. The Programme Administrator will inform the relevant student/s accordingly.

<https://www1.essex.ac.uk/health-safety/policies/default.aspx>

#### **4.4 Confidentiality**

There are strict codes to follow in relation to confidentiality and these can be found in the guidance of the HCPC, and the [University statement and policy of confidentiality](#).

- You must not discuss service users and carers outside the workplace
- Service users' and carers' names and details must be anonymised in all assessments
- For your protection, you should be cautious about personal information shared about yourself with service users, for example you should not disclose personal phone numbers or your home address. You are advised to refer to your practice educator or supervisor for further guidance
- To enable judgments to be made about your progress, information relating to your academic and practice assessments may be shared with practice supervisors and practice educators responsible for assessing your capability and fitness to practise.

The university is required to have written consent, ordinarily through signing the 'Student Support Confidentiality Agreement,' before sharing any information or taking any action on behalf of a student. The written consent will be held in Student Support files. If a student chooses not to give consent for information to be shared, this decision will be respected, except where issues of safety or legality apply (see Section 5 confidentiality policy). However, the student should understand this might limit their progression on the course and the kinds of support that are available to them.

#### **4.5 Social Media**

It is becoming more frequent that people are using social networking sites as a method of communicating and maintaining contact with others.

This can be extremely problematic in maintaining and protecting the privacy and confidentiality of yourself and others.

If students engage with social networking they are required to adhere to the principles of the codes of conduct performance and ethics, specifically:

- You must act in the best interests of service users
- You must respect the confidentiality of service users, colleagues/staff, carers and others we work with
- You must keep high standards of personal conduct
- You must behave with honesty and integrity and make sure that your behaviour does not damage the public's confidence in you or your profession.

## **5. Co-ordination of Placements**

The placement coordinator organises placements for students, contact details for staff associated with practice learning can be found in section [8.2 of this handbook](#).

### **5.1 Student Placement Profiles**

Before placements can be allocated, students are required to complete a Student Placement Profile (SPP) Upon completion this document will be used by the Placement Co-ordinator and relevant social care agencies to identify an appropriate placement. It is important that all sections are completed accurately and with sufficient information as partner agencies may refer to a student's SPP to assess their experience and suitability for the placement. The SPP will also be forwarded to practice educators and on-site supervisors.

An example of the SPP is available [here](#).

### **5.2 Allocation of Placements**

Students are allocated placements to facilitate their practice learning and to meet the professional body requirements as described in section 2.

Students will need to demonstrate their 'readiness for practice' and ability to meet the PCF to become eligible for placement allocation.

Students are not permitted to contact an agency directly to organise their own placements and the University will not accept requests from students for specific placement allocation. If a student is aware of an organisation that might provide placements for students, they should inform their Placement Co-ordinator.

During the allocation process it is important that students remain in regular contact with the University, especially checking email correspondence. It is the student's responsibility to ensure that the University is informed of any changes to contact details. Failure to maintain regular contact could delay or even result in a loss of placement.

The Placement Co-ordinator will aim to give students 4 weeks' notice upon placement allocation. A meeting prior to the placement commencing will be convened with the agency. Students must ensure they have appropriate knowledge about the agency and be prepared to discuss their own individual learning needs, previous experience and what they might contribute to and learn from the placement.

Students must have a valid reason to refuse a placement and there is no guarantee that another placement will be found for the same academic year if a placement is refused.

### **5.3 Travel Arrangements**

Students are responsible for making their own travel arrangements to and from placements. Having a full driving license might be considered essential criteria for

working in social work; those students who do not drive may want to consider taking lessons.

#### **5.4 Car insurance**

Students are not insured by the University to use their own cars, where students intend to use their own vehicles for work purposes, business insurance will be required - some insurance companies will not apply additional charges for this cover. When on placement, students must not use their own vehicles to transport service users without confirmation of relevant insurance cover. Students will be expected to provide evidence of their insurance cover.

#### **5.5 Finance for travel**

Some agencies will provide finance to cover mileage accrued through work purposes. The rates payable will depend upon the agency or local authority, further advice including how to claim can be obtained from the placement. An element of the social work bursary is attributed to finance travel to and from placement, further information about the bursary and including eligibility can be found at [NHS Business Services Authority](#).

#### **5.6 Allocating Time for Travel.**

The Placement Co-ordinator will try to ensure that all placements are located within 1.5 hours travelling time of the student's home or the University. However, this may not always be possible due to placement availability.

Where students are required to travel for extended time periods it may be possible to make alterations to the normal working hours, any changes will need to be negotiated between the Placement Co-ordinator, on-site supervisor and practice educator.

### **6. Procedures during Placement**

The following information provides details about the procedures to follow whilst on placement.

#### **6.1 Health and Safety**

Whilst on placement, the University of Essex and placement provider have a duty of care towards the student. To satisfy their duty of care the University will:

- Make sure that the student is prepared for placement and aware of the usual health and safety features of the placement.
- Be responsible for giving students an opportunity to give feedback about any health and safety issues.
- Escalate any issues that are raised.

Statutory duties of care and liabilities are the responsibility of the placement provider whilst the student is on placement; the University expects that the student will be



given the same rights as all employees in relation to health, safety and welfare. Therefore the placement provider must:

- Provide evidence to the University of up-to-date liability insurance.
- There is a section within the learning agreement that must be completed to confirm that health and safety procedures have been discussed with the student, usually during the induction period.
- Undertake risk assessments where relevant to the safety of the student whilst in placement, an example being if the student is pregnant.

Students have a responsibility to conform to health and safety procedures; whilst they are in placement they must:

- Ensure they are familiar with health and safety procedures applicable to the placement provider.
- Take care of their own personal safety.
- Report any concerns that have the potential to place themselves, service users or colleagues at risk.

## **6.2 Learning Agreement**

A Learning Agreement should be drafted usually during the induction period. The practice educator and on-site supervisor (where appropriate) along with the student are responsible for formulating this agreement. The content of the agreement should detail practical arrangements, special requirements (including learning needs or disabilities) and roles and responsibilities. The agreement will plan how the learning opportunities within the placement can meet the learning requirements. The Learning Agreement will be discussed and finalised at a Learning Agreement Meeting with any amendments being recorded and all relevant parties signing to acknowledge their responsibilities and commitment.

The Learning Agreement must be finalised within 12 practice placement days and shared with all relevant parties, including their allocated university tutor within 15 days. Failure to do so without agreement could lead to the suspension of the placement.

The Learning Agreement Meeting should consider:

- The student's previous experiences, areas of strengths and weaknesses, learning requirements
- The role of service users, carers or groups in providing feedback to the student
- Anti-discriminatory and anti-oppressive practice
- The imbalance of power within the relationships between the students, practice educator, on-site supervisor
- The individual needs of students including approaches to learning
- Specific needs of the student whilst in placement
- The use of theory and evidenced-based practice within the placement
- Methods of practice education.

The Learning Agreement informs and underpins the midway review of progress. A copy of the Learning Agreement must be included in the student's final Workbook.

### 6.3 Midway Review

The date of the midway review should be agreed at the Learning Agreement Meeting.

A midway review, which provides an interim assessment of the student's progress in placement, is a formal meeting taking place at a midway point during the placement. In attendance are the student, practice educator, on-site supervisor and university tutor.

- Students are required to have completed the specified number of observations and Critical Reflections by the midway review meeting.
- If the student has been unable to achieve the requirements, this should not interfere with the meeting going ahead. The meeting then provides a forum for discussion about what has prevented the student from meeting the requirements. If necessary an action plan should be implemented
- If Concern about Placement Progression procedures have been started at the time of the mid-way review, it could be dealt with separately.
- The midway report is completed by the student and practice educator and forwarded in advance of the meeting to the university tutor. The report must include evidence as stipulated in the Workbook
- All parties in attendance at the midway review meeting must sign the relevant sections of the report
- Students must include a copy of the midway review report in their final Workbook.

### 6.4 Submitting reports

Every effort must be made to submit all reports and assessments in a timely manner. Failure to do so could have a serious impact upon progress and completion of the course. Work that is submitted after the deadline will be given a mark of zero.

In line with the University's academic regulations, in exceptional circumstances students can apply for an extension (Late Submission) to the date for submission. Extenuating circumstances are divided into two types: (1) those which affect a student's ability to submit coursework by the deadline (late submission), and (2) those affecting a student's performance in coursework or exams, or circumstances affecting a student's ability to submit their coursework at all and/or circumstances which cause a student to absent themselves from an exam. Further information including the process that must be followed can be found in the [University's policy and guidance on the late submission of coursework](#).

### 6.5. Concerns about placement

Concerns can be raised by students, practice educators, or university tutor and should be forwarded to the Placement Co-ordinator (HE) and/or Programme Manager. Concerns will be discussed in a three way meeting where a decision will be made as to the most appropriate response to the concerns. If these concerns are sufficient to cause concern over performance to the point where there is a possibility of the student failing the placement a [Concern about Placement Progression form](#)

will be completed and will form the action plan. If an action plan is established this can be reviewed twice. If this does not resolve the initial concern then the concern will be put to the Practice Assessment Panel or Professional Suitability Group as appropriate to the nature of the concern. See diagram: [Concerns and Professional Misconduct Process](#).

## **6.6 Requesting a change of placement**

Any concerns about a placement must be discussed with the University Tutor / Placement Co-ordinator and / or practice educator. They are usually resolved within a 3 way meeting and an action plan.

If the concerns cannot be resolved then requests to change placements can only be made in exceptional circumstances and through a formal appeals process.

Legitimate reasons to appeal include:

- Specific health reasons
- The placement does not meet the professional requirements detailed in section 2.
- Conflict of interest, for example previous / current involvement as a service user of the agency.

If no resolution can be agreed then the process to follow is detailed in the [Concerns and Professional Misconduct Process](#).

Students must be aware that requesting a change of placement could prevent the student from completing the practice learning module in a timely manner and will likely require the module to be repeated.

## **6.7 Delayed and disrupted placements**

Should the start of a placement be delayed (for a period of two weeks or more) or the placement be disrupted, this could impede upon the date for the completion of the placement. Subsequently, the date for handing in the Workbook will need to be rearranged in agreement with PE and UT.

## **6.8 Attendance**

The module timetable allows students sufficient days in which they can complete the practice placement and includes supplementary days for independent study. Students are required to complete the specified amount of practice learning days and so time out for any reason must be made up before the placement can be finished.

Students are required to spend the normal hours of a working day in the placement, 7 to 7.5 hours. Where students are required to travel for extended time periods it may be possible to make alterations to the normal working hours, any changes will need to be negotiated between the Placement Co-ordinator, on-site supervisor and practice educator.

There may be times when a student is required to work outside of the usual working day, these hours must be recorded in the record of attendance (which can be found in the student Workbook) and can be taken as time off in lieu (toil), in agreement with the organisation, on-site supervisor and/or PE.

Students are required to keep a record of attendance, which must be verified weekly by the practice educator or OSS. The record of attendance must be submitted at the end of the placement with the portfolio.

Students are encouraged to take 30 minutes reflection time during each day, the time must be negotiated and agreed with the practice educator and / or on-site supervisor, this time must be protected and used for the purpose of reflection only.

### **6.9 Short term absence from the placement**

Short term and temporary absence from placement, usually for reasons of ill health or exceptional circumstances. The absence should be:

- Reported via email to the Placement Co-ordinator and the practice educator on the first and last day of absence, and for every three days of absence.
- Reported to the University admin team via email: [hhsplace@essex.ac.uk](mailto:hhsplace@essex.ac.uk)
- Reported to the placement provider through its usual procedures

These procedures must be explained at the start of the placement as part of the induction process.

Students are required to maintain a record of attendance, which will be shared and discussed during supervision and included in the student Workbook for submission.

### **6.10 Long term absence from the placement**

Students must inform their university tutor and/or the Placement Coordinator if they are aware of any issues that might interfere with their ability to complete their placement, prior to starting the placement. Students may be advised to postpone their placement until the following year, depending upon the circumstances and length of leave.

Once the placement has started, leave of absence from the placement will only be agreed in exceptional circumstances. Evidence to support the request for leave will be required, for example medical certification.

If a request for leave is approved, a report will be compiled by the UT/PC detailing the student's progress to enable continuity upon return. Dependent upon the length of absence from a placement, the timescales of the placement may be extended to incorporate placement days missed, alternatively it might not be possible to return to the same placement, in those circumstances students will be required to repeat the placement. All reports from previous placements are shared with future placements.

## 6.11 Suspend / terminate placements

There are a number of reasons why placements might be suspended usually falling into one of two categories;

- Concerns about the suitability of the placement and / or the provision of supervision
- Concerns about the suitability of the student due to a serious breach of code/s of professional practice / Concerns about Placement Progression / placement policies and procedures.

Suspension of a placement will be conducted in strict accordance with the procedures for [Concerns and Professional Misconduct Process](#).

Placement providers can only suspend a placement without the agreement of the University if a service user is deemed to be at immediate risk and it is not possible to contact the university – under these circumstances the placement can be suspended until an urgent meeting can be convened.

Students must not terminate or suspend their own placement; if a student suspends or terminates their own placement without prior consultation and authority they will automatically fail the placement and will not be entitled to repeat the placement.

Where it is evident in the Concern about Placement Progression meetings that the student is making insufficient changes or progression in meeting the outcomes, within the timescales as set out in the Action Plan, the placement can be terminated before the end of the placement period.

The following outcomes could result from terminating a placement prior to the end date of the placement period:

- A fail will be recorded and student will have to repeat the entire 70/100 days placement
- If any factors outside the control of the placement provider, PE or student were identified which lead to insufficient changes or progression in meeting the required learning outcomes, the Placement Coordinator will liaise with the PE and Practice Assessment Panel to decide if a fail will be recommended to the exam board, or if an alternative placement should be sourced for the remainder of the placement period.

## 7. Roles and Responsibilities

This section details the roles and responsibilities of all people involved in the co-ordination, maintenance and the success of practice placements.

### 7.1. Students

Whilst in placement, students are responsible for:

- Learning in placement and applying knowledge from relevant lectures that underpin the theory to their practice whilst in placement

- Ensuring that they are fully aware of all requirements, expectations and professional standards and policies relevant to their placement, the University and their profession including personal conduct.
- Attendance and punctuality.
- Preparing in advance for supervision, sharing responsibility for ensuring their learning needs are being met and capabilities evidenced.
- Informing relevant people if not coping or meeting deadlines within the workplace or module.
- Attending all formal meetings including midway, tutorials and three / four way meetings.
- Informing on-site supervisor, practice educator and Placement Co-ordinator of any absences, planned or unplanned.
- Informing their practice educator and on-site supervisor if there are any circumstances that may impact negatively upon their progress in placement at an early stage and throughout their placement.
- Completing specified number of days pertinent to stage in programme.
- Ensuring all reports, both for the University and practice placement and assignments are completed and submitted in a timely manner.
- Developing personal and professional skills as a reflective practitioner, through academic learning, personal and group tutorials and considering feedback from others.

## **7.2 University**

Students are entitled to:

- Consultation to prepare for the placement including information about the assessment process and expectations of learning outcomes
- Regular supervision from both the practice educator and on-site supervisor and to be allocated a named university tutor. Supervision will be an informative meeting where students can expect to explore their progress, receive feedback and plan to meet required learning outcomes. Supervision should also be a forum to discuss any issues of concern
- Have access to workshops to facilitate learning requirements
- Be treated fairly and equally and in accordance with equality legislation (Equality Act 2010) and to be assessed in accordance with the University regulations.

## **7.3 University Tutor**

All students will be assigned a university tutor whose primary responsibilities are to:

- Be the First point of contact for the student
- Monitor the student's progress and keep relevant parties informed of any concerns / issues arising
- Attend or coordinate action plan meetings and facilitate resolution, working alongside all parties
- Routinely attend all review meetings.
- Provide academic guidance to students
- Liaise with the Placement Co-ordinator to ensure the quality of the placement learning.

- Maintain an overview and up-to-date records of all areas of the student's progress.
- Facilitate the development of anti-discriminatory, anti-racist and anti-oppressive practice, exploring all issues of diversity.
- Facilitate group tutorials / supervision to enhance the learning experience.

#### **7.4 Placement Co-ordinator**

The Placement Co-ordinator is responsible for the procurement and quality of placements and to ensure that the standards as stipulated by the professional, regulatory and statutory bodies can be met. Therefore the primary responsibilities of the Placement Co-ordinator are to:

- Allocate placements
- Ensure the agency is aware of and meeting their responsibilities to promote learning within the placement
- Liaise with module leaders to synchronize and enrich the student experience.
- Provide training for on-site supervisors
- Organise, coordinate and support independent practice educators
- Provide an annual evaluation and audit report to the Practice Assessment Panel that endorses the quality assurance of placements and learning, to detail and respond to any concerns arising.

#### **7.5 Practice Educator (on site)**

The role of the practice educator is underpinned by [the Practice Educator Professional Standards \(PEPS\)](#). This sets out the requirements and responsibilities of Practice Educators when teaching, assessing and supervising social work students. They include:

- Ensuring that the students can meet the relevant professional standards for which they are being assessed by liaison with the placement, service users and carers to identify appropriate work.
- Monitoring, supporting and promoting the student's learning experience.
- Assessing the student's practice in accordance with University requirements.
- Providing regular formal and informal supervision, at least 90 minutes in duration every five placement days.
- Creating and facilitating formal and informal teaching, learning and feedback sessions in liaison with the on-site supervisor, University and other relevant professionals.
- Implementing an induction plan for the student and advice staff about their roles in supporting and assessing the student's practice.
- Contributing to the midway and final meetings; be responsible for the relevant reports in accordance with the assessment framework for the course.
- Recording all meetings, including supervision being aware that these may need to be shared in the event of formal investigations / enquiries being made.
- Undertaking direct observations of the student's practice
- Notifying all relevant parties and the student if any concerns arise.
- Contributing to the quality assurance process.
- Facilitating the development of anti-discriminatory, anti-racist and anti-oppressive practice, exploring all issues of diversity.

- Encouraging students to become reflective practitioners and protect time specified for reflection on a daily basis.

## **7.6 Practice Educator (Off-Site)**

The responsibilities of the off-site practice educator are the same as if they are situated on site, however in addition they must liaise closely with the on-site supervisor.

The on-site supervisor will be providing supervision in the work place and so the offsite practice educator will provide supervision on a 10 work day basis and for a timed duration of a minimum 90 minutes.

## **7.7 On-Site Supervisor**

If the practice educator is on site (based within the practice placement) then it is not necessary for the student to have an on-site supervisor, however where practice educators are off site the student will have an on-site supervisor.

The on-site supervisor is based and works within the same agency as where the student is placed. They are responsible for:

- Managing daily tasks and activities
- Identifying learning opportunities in the organization to support the development of the student's Professional Capabilities  
<https://www.basw.co.uk/pcf/capabilities/>.
- Providing supervision every 10 placement days, to complement supervision provided by the practice educator, for a minimum of 90 minutes
- Daily guidance and support
- Allocation of work and as specified within the learning agreement.
- Verification of the work of the student
- Liaising closely with and providing feedback to the practice educator
- Participating in review meetings
- Recording all meetings, being aware that these may need to be shared in the event of formal investigations / enquiries being made.
- On-site supervisors are not required to provide formal reports, except for within the Workbook (a short report detailing over all progress), however they are required to provide feedback that will inform assessments / judgments about the capacity and development of the student.
- In accordance with the University procedures, contributing to the quality assurance process.
- Facilitating the development of anti-discriminatory, anti-racist and anti-oppressive practice, exploring all issues of diversity.
- Encouraging students to become reflective practitioners and protecting time specified for reflection on a daily basis.

## **7.8 Agency Placement Coordinator**

Students will be placed within the voluntary sector or a Local Authority; the ideal is for students to undertake a placement in both sectors over the two placements.



Within the practice agency there usually will be a nominated person who coordinates social work placements. Their key responsibilities are to:

- Arrange placement opportunities within the placement that will meet the course requirements
- Identify and prepare a practice educator and or on-site supervisor
- Liaise with the University to communicate any issues or problems and to attend relevant meetings
- Assure the quality of placements.

### **7.9 Agency Team Role**

The success of a placement learning opportunity is the responsibility of the whole agency / team, specifically they are responsible for:

- The student's induction including all relevant agency policies, health and safety, confidentiality, maintaining records, dress code, lone working, duty systems and IT systems.
- Identifying who will be accountable for the students work.
- Supporting, guiding, mentoring and reviewing capability and competence.
- Identifying any concerns with the student and relevant parties including the practice educator / on-site supervisor.

### **7.10 Placement Administrator**

- Assists the placement coordinator
- Available for students and placement providers to contact
- Manages placements on the PEMS system
- Manages access to the PEMS system
- Makes placement payments

## 8. Difficulties in the Placement

If students experience difficulties or problems whilst on placement they are usually resolved informally however where this is not possible, please refer to the table below for a guide about who to contact.

<b>Issue/problem</b>	<b>Who to contact</b>
Placement allocation Type of placement offered Quality of placement	Placement Co-ordinator (HEI)
DBS queries	Placement Co-ordinator (HEI)
General queries about the requirements of the practice learning module	University tutor
Supervision and support: Arrangements for supervision and frequency and amount of supervision that can be expected and any concerns about this process	University tutor
Practice Supervisor and Practice Educators' absence from placement e.g. due to sickness	Agency Placement Co-ordinator or Placement Co-ordinator (HEI)
Concerns that the placement is not going well, for example, you are not achieving to the standard expected, lack of opportunity to achieve, feeling unsupported or not getting feedback	In the first instance discuss this with the practice educator/on-site supervisor, and if not resolved contact the module leader/university tutor
Notifying sickness or absence from placement	Follow the placement policies for notifying non-attendance to the placement and notify the Placement Co-ordinator. (HEI)  If sickness/absence is more than 2 weeks notify the module leader/University tutor
General enquiries about attendance requirements and hours of work	University tutor
Changes to the Practice Learning Agreement	3 way meeting
Changes to your health or character status that impedes your fitness to practise	Centre for Social Work - Director/Programme Lead
Witnessing severe bad practice that compromises the safety of service users	Refer to advice given in the escalating concerns policy
Concerns about your health and safety	Agency Placement Co-Ordinator or University Tutor
If your problem is unresolved after exhausting all normal channels of resolution	Centre for Social Work- Director/Programme Lead

## 8.1 Student Support on Placement

If a student is experiencing difficulties or requires support for any other reason, they should speak to their;

- Practice Educator
- On-Site Supervisor
- University Tutor
- Placement Coordinator

The key roles and responsibilities of these people are detailed in section seven.

## 8.2 Contact details for relevant staff Members

Placement Co-ordinator:	Gert Scheepers	01702 328287 <a href="mailto:gschee@essex.ac.uk">gschee@essex.ac.uk</a>
Placement Administrator	Jack Hickson	01206 874312 <a href="mailto:hhsplace@essex.ac.uk">hhsplace@essex.ac.uk</a>
Programme Administrator:	Sarah Wiblin	01702 328229 <a href="mailto:swiblin@essex.ac.uk">swiblin@essex.ac.uk</a>
Director - Centre for Social Work:		Professor Vasilios Ioakimidis 01702 328284 <a href="mailto:ioakimidis@essex.ac.uk">ioakimidis@essex.ac.uk</a>

## 9. Complaints

The University aims to resolve any concerns or complaints quickly and efficiently and if appropriate informally.

In the first instance if a student has an issue or complaint about the placement agency this should be raised with their practice educator and or the on-site supervisor at the earliest and most appropriate opportunity. Supervision may present the ideal situation to explore issues or concerns.

If a student does not feel comfortable to discuss a concern or complaint with their PE or OSS they should speak to their university tutor / Placement Co-ordinator.

If concerns cannot be resolved informally then the [Concerns and Professional Misconduct Process](#) should be followed.

We aim to resolve any issues of complaint as speedily as possible. If you wish to make a formal complaint about any aspect of practice education it should be addressed to:

Vikki-Jo Scott (Head of School)  
School of Health & Human Sciences  
University of Essex  
Wivenhoe Park  
Colchester  
CO4 3SQ  
T 01206 874487 E [vjport@essex.ac.uk](mailto:vjport@essex.ac.uk)

## **9.1 Whistle Blowing**

All social care agencies have a duty to conduct their affairs in a responsible and transparent manner and in accordance with the HCPC standards.

If a student witnesses 'severe bad practice,' that is damaging to service users and / or carers then the [Professional Misconduct Process](#) should be followed.

The Public Disclosure Act 1999 gives legal protection to students / workers against being dismissed or suffering any other detriment as a consequence of raising, with appropriate senior and line managers, any concerns which they believe indicate malpractice within the organisation.

## **10. Quality Assurance of Placements**

Practice learning modules must meet the HCPC Standards for Education and Training, specifically standard 5.

The University of Essex quality assures all practice learning opportunities in accordance with the Quality Assurance in Practice Learning (QAPL).

### **10.1 Evaluation**

Students, on-site supervisors and practice educators are required to complete an online (PEMS) evaluation questionnaire (QAPL) at the end of each placement. This information is used to monitor and maintain and improve the quality of placements. Information provided will be anonymised and used to complete a report for the social work management committee (Scrutiny Panel), and HCPC. The information produced will be used to benefit all of those parties involved in the practice learning module and to enhance the student experience and to continually develop the quality of placements.

Placement monitoring is a standing agenda point for the termly Scrutiny Panel meetings.

The Agency Placement coordinator will be able to view student evaluation on the PEMS.

Guidance on the process for completion of the QAPL will be provided to students, on-site supervisors and practice educators by the Placement Administrator.

### **10.2 Practice Assessment Panel**

The Practice Assessment Panel (PAP) has a key role in developing and contributing the quality of practice learning. This is achieved through providing feedback about the practice learning opportunities and assessment process. The membership of the PAP consists of representation from both academic and agency staff. The PAP meets as and when required, if there are unresolved disputes at standardisation or if a student contests a practice educator's decision or if an independent view of

assessment practices is required. The PAP will make recommendations to the assessment board but does not have the authority to confirm grades or change the progression of students.

Assessment boards are responsible for the ratification of student results and ensuring that University regulations and procedures have been applied properly in verifying the students' qualifications and in confirming their right to continue with their studies. All grades are provisional until the assessment board ratifies them.

If the assessment board's decision does not support the decision made by the PAP, then feedback from the assessment board will be provided.

## **11. Appendices**

Appendix 1. Concerns and Professional Misconduct Diagram

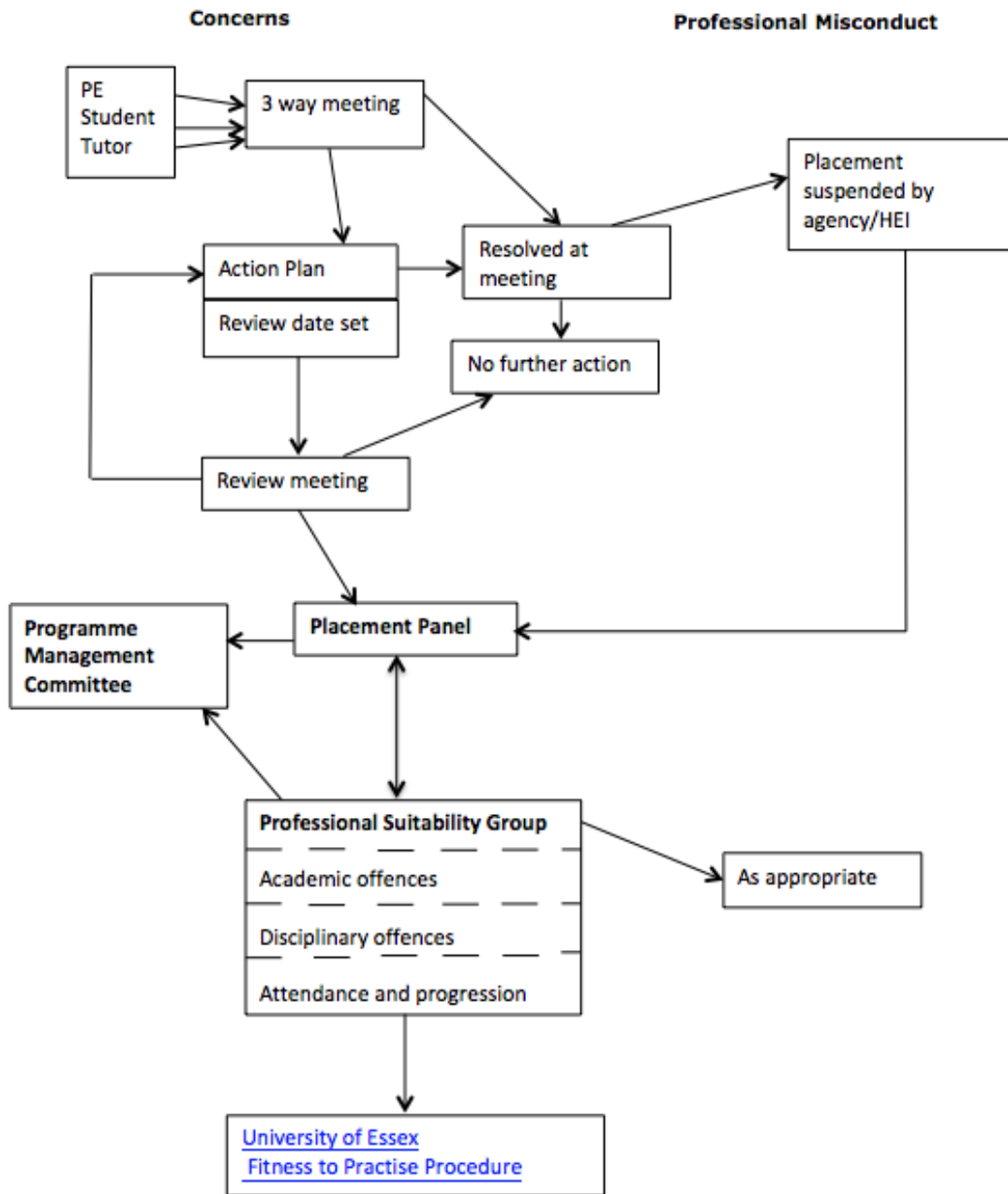
Appendix 2. Danger of Failure Forms

Appendix 3. University Fitness to Practise Process

Appendix 4. HCPC Standards of conduct, performance and ethics

Appendix 5. Standards of Proficiency

## 11.1 Concerns and Professional Misconduct Process



\* Placement Panel to be replaced with Practice Assessment Panel

## 11.2 BA Social Work: Concerns about Placement Progression Form

This form is an official record of the under-performance of a pre-registration Social Work student. It is completed by the university tutor, practice educator and the student concerned.

The use of the form signifies concerns and/issues on placement that may lead to the student underperforming or failing to perform at a satisfactory level. If improvement is not demonstrated within an agreed timescale it is likely to result in the student failing the placement.

The form outlines the areas of poor performance and is used to create an action plan to assist the student in improving their performance to the required level. A copy of this form is given to the student, the practice educator and the university tutor. The original must be given by the lecturer to the Administrator – Centre for Social Work for confidential storage in the student's placement file. The practice educator's and university tutor's copies must be treated as confidential documents and must be destroyed when the student completes the placement.

<b>Student</b>		<b>Date</b>	
<b>Year of Study</b>		<b>Level/Type of Placement</b>	
<b>Practice Educator</b>		<b>Name of Placement</b>	
<b>Placement Locality</b>		<b>University Tutor</b>	
<b>Indicators of poor performance:</b> (these must be aligned with the relevant placement assessment criteria i.e. HCPC Standard of Proficiency and or PCF Domain)			
Indicator 1			
Indicator 2			
Indicator 3			
Indicator 4			

Indicator 5	
<b>Student and date</b> (to be achieved)	<b>Objectives to be achieved by first review:</b> (these should include what action will be taken and how success will be demonstrated)
Objective 1	
Objective 2	
Objective 3	
Objective 4	
Objective 5	
<b>Date of Review:</b> (Usually 2 weeks or within an agreed timeframe after this form is completed and then reviewed within agreed timeframe until student is performing at the required level or has failed the placement).	

Signature of Student \_\_\_\_\_

Signature of Practice Educator \_\_\_\_\_

Signature of University Lecturer \_\_\_\_\_



## BA Social Work: Concern about Placement Progression Form

This form is completed by the university tutor and the practice educator in discussion with the student. The form is an official record of the review of the performance of a student who is underperforming or failing to reach a satisfactory standard.

The student, the practice educator and the university tutor must be provided with copies of this form. The original must be given by the UT to the Administrator – Centre for Social Work for confidential storage in the student's placement file. Practice educator and university tutor's copies must be treated as confidential documents and must be destroyed when the student completes the placement.

<b>Student</b>		<b>Date</b>	
<b>Year of Study</b>		<b>Level/Name of Placement</b>	
<b>Practice Educator</b>		<b>University Tutor</b>	
<b>Current student performance in relation to the indicators of poor performance identified on the original danger of failure form dated _____:</b>			
Progress on Indicator 1			
Progress on Indicator 2			
Progress on Indicator 3			
Progression on Indicator 4			
Progress on Indicator 5			

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**Current student performance in relation to the objectives to be achieved identified on the original danger of failure form/last review form dated\_\_\_\_\_:**

Progress on Objective 1	
-------------------------	--

Progress on Objective 2	
-------------------------	--

Progress on Objective 3	
-------------------------	--

Progress on Objective 4	
-------------------------	--

Progress on Objective 5	
-------------------------	--

**Summary of student's current level of performance:**

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**Recommended Further Action:**

**Is the student now making satisfactory progress? YES NO**  
(If yes the student can be signed off from the danger of failure process below)

**Has the student now failed the placement? YES NO**  
(If yes sign off this form below and complete placement assessment documentation indicating failure of the placement). If you need any assistance/advice please ring (+)1702 328287

**Is the student still at risk of failure/ concerns about placement progression? YES NO**  
(If yes indicate objectives to be met by next review, set review date and sign off below)

**Objectives to be achieved by next review:**

Objective 1	
Objective 2	
Objective 3	
Objective 4	
Objective 5	

Reviews should usually be undertaken weekly/agreed timeframe until student is performing at the required level or has failed the placement **Date of Review:**

Signature of Student \_\_\_\_\_

Signature of Practice Educator \_\_\_\_\_

Signature of University Lecturer \_\_\_\_\_



## 11.3 University of Essex Fitness to Practise Procedure

### Introduction

1. All University students are required to comply with the regulations of the University regarding conduct. Students enrolled on courses where a practical professional placement is required (including health, social work and education) have additional responsibilities placed upon them regarding not only their conduct but also their professional suitability, as outlined in relevant regulatory and/or professional body codes of practice. Failure to meet these responsibilities can lead to the *Fitness to Practise Procedure* being invoked. Students will be notified on registration if their course of study is subject to the terms of this procedure.

2. The *Fitness to Practise Procedure* applies to all relevant courses leading to awards of the University of Essex, although the office holders identified in Sections A and B below may be adapted where the course is offered through a partner institution of the University.

3. The *Fitness to Practise Procedure* is not intended to replace the Student Membership and Disclosure and Barring Service Check Policy and Procedure, Code of Student Conduct or academic offences procedures, though the outcome of a case raised under these procedures for a particular student might also raise issues of fitness to practise. Where a conviction, caution or reprimand comes to light as part of the DBS checking process, the matter is considered in accordance with the Student Membership and Disclosure and Barring Service Check Policy and Procedure. Where a student allegedly commits an act that is actionable under the University's Code of Student Conduct or academic offences regulations then these procedures must be completed prior to instigating action under the *Fitness to Practise Procedure*.

4. In the event of concerns that a student may not be suitable for engagement in the relevant profession, the University's *Fitness to Practise Procedure* shall be invoked. A student may at any time be suspended or precluded from further study by the University if a concern is raised under the *Fitness to Practise Procedure*. The procedure for temporary exclusion or suspension of a student is outlined in appendix 1.

5. In the situation where the support of a designated signatory is required for a student to register with a professional or regulatory body, and a case arises following a student's graduation and where the alleged incident took place during the student's period of study, the *Fitness to Practise Procedure* will be followed and a Fitness to Practise Committee will make a recommendation as to whether the required support can be given.

6. Schools/ Departments/ Centres (hereafter referred to as Schools) that are running courses where students are subject to the *Fitness to Practise Procedure* will establish a School Professional Suitability Group as outlined in appendix 2 of this procedure.

7. Concerns about a student's fitness to practise may be raised from any source, including any member of staff, student, placement partner, member of the public, the Occupational Health Service or other agencies such as the Police or Social Services. Concerns about fitness to practise may involve a range of actions or omissions relating to professional conduct or professional suitability but may include any of the following:

- actions that are harmful to service users, other members of the public or service providers
- actions that are likely to constitute an unacceptable risk to the student or others
- failure to disclose information about previous matters relating to their professional suitability prior to registration on the course, including health, previous convictions and cautions
- contravention of the relevant professional code of conduct
- concerns about health

disability or wellbeing, including a failure to seek appropriate medical treatment or other support; unreasonable failure to follow medical advice or care plans and treatment resistant conditions which might impair fitness to practise

f. actions that are prejudicial to the development or standing of professional practice.

g. At 7e by health we are not referring to pre-existing medical conditions or disabilities that the student has already disclosed and where reasonable adjustments have been made to enable the student to access their study. Cases will be considered where disability prevents the student meeting the core competencies after adjustments have been considered or made or where this has implications for the safety of the student, patients, service users or colleagues.

8. This Procedure includes normal timescales. Every effort will be made to expedite the overall process and meet the normal timescales. However sometimes circumstances arise which mean that exceptionally the normal timescales will not be met. In these cases the student will be contacted and informed of the adjusted timescale.

9. The term 'working days' used within this procedure, refers to days Monday to Friday when the University is open.

10. Where within the Fitness to Practise procedure it states that a nominee may act on behalf of the Head of School, the nominee(s) must be members of academic staff approved by the Pro-Vice Chancellor (Education)

### **A. Procedure for dealing with concerns about a student's fitness to practise**

A1

Where an allegation is raised about a student's fitness to practise and immediate action is required to safeguard all relevant parties, the Course Director or Professional Lead or equivalent, in consultation with the Head of School or their nominee shall have the power to remove a student from placement with immediate effect for up to 5 working days, or to prevent the commencement of a placement for up to 5 working days from the receipt of the allegation. This action shall be taken without prejudice to the outcome of any enquiry. Any decision on further action shall be taken by the Professional Suitability Group under Section A4 of the *Fitness to Practise Procedure*.

A2

Concerns about the fitness to practise of a student shall be made in writing to the Professional Suitability Group of the School offering the professional course.

A3

It must be borne in mind that an allegation raising concerns about fitness to practise is a serious and potentially defamatory one. Consequently it is essential that the proceedings should be conducted on a basis of strict confidentiality.

A4

On receipt of a written allegation, the Professional Suitability Group, in consultation with the relevant Course Director or equivalent, shall:

a. take such immediate action as is deemed appropriate in the circumstances to safeguard all relevant parties, but without prejudice to the outcome of the enquiry. This may include a decision to request a temporary exclusion or suspension as outlined in Appendix 1 of this procedure.

b. normally within five working days of receipt of the allegation shall confirm in writing the nature of allegation made, the action taken under A4(a) above and the procedures for dealing with the allegation

c. normally within ten working days of the receipt of the allegation either:

i. decide no further action is required, or

ii. appoint an Investigating Officer from the list approved by the Academic Registrar for this role.

A5

The Investigating Officer shall impartially assemble the evidence relevant to the case in a timely manner. Appropriate methods for gathering evidence will normally include

- interviewing the student concerned, who may be accompanied by a student or other member of the University, the relevant partner institution or the Students' Union if he or she wishes. The interview can be conducted by telephone if appropriate.

and may include:

- Interviews with relevant University staff, students, professional or practice partner colleagues
- Obtaining a written professional opinion on the effect of the student's behaviour or state of health/well-being on their fitness to practise

A6

The Investigating Officer shall prepare a written report for the Professional Suitability Group, normally within fifteen working days of the case being referred to him/her. The report shall not pass judgement nor recommend a particular course of action.

A7

If the Professional Suitability Group deems that *prima facie* case has been made they shall inform the student in writing.

A8

If the Professional Suitability Group deems that a *prima facie* case has been made against the student, they shall refer the case as expeditiously as possible to a Fitness to Practise Committee which shall be appointed, normally within five working days, by the Pro-Vice-Chancellor (Education). The Committee shall normally comprise the following, but will also conform to the requirements of the relevant professional and/or regulatory body:

- a. an Executive Dean, his/her Deputy, Dean or Associate Dean of Academic Partnerships, or the Dean of Health who has no previous involvement with the case as Chair
- b. two members of academic staff from a relevant subject discipline who have had no previous involvement in the case
- c. one practising member of the relevant profession who is from outside the University and who has not been associated with teaching the student.

A9

The Secretary of the Fitness to Practise Committee shall be the Academic Registrar or his/her representative.

A10

The Professional Suitability Group shall submit to the Secretary of the Fitness to Practise Committee all relevant evidence, including the report of the Investigating Officer, and a case summary. The Secretary shall convene a meeting of the Committee as soon as possible and send copies of the evidence to the members of the Committee and at the same time to the student concerned a minimum of ten working days before the meeting.

A11

The student should submit to the Secretary of the Fitness to Practise Committee any papers for the consideration of the Committee at least five working days before the meeting.

A12

All representations to the Fitness to Practise Committee should be submitted in writing. Exceptionally the Committee may ask for witnesses to attend in person.

A13

The student will normally be required to attend the meeting of the Fitness to Practise Committee in person. In the event of their non-attendance, without very good reason, the Committee meeting will continue in their absence.

A14

If the student wishes, they may bring to the Committee meeting a student or employee of the University, the relevant partner institution or the Students' Union, or equivalent in Partner institutions, to help him/her in presenting his/her case to the Committee.

A15

The Head of School or another member will attend the meeting of the Fitness to Practise Committee to set out evidence relating to the concern. The Head/member of Professional Suitability Group should not propose or comment on any outcome or action which might be imposed.

A16

The Head/Professional Suitability Group member is not a member of the Committee and can only attend when the student is present (not before and after). The Head/Professional Suitability Group member is not permitted to ask questions of the student during the meeting except through the Chair.

A17

All members of the Fitness to Practise Committee must attend the meeting.

A18

The Fitness to Practise Committee will operate on the principle of 'the balance of probability' rather than that of 'beyond reasonable doubt'.

A19

Where a vote is required the majority decision of the committee members will be taken. In the case of an equally split decision the outcome should fall in the student's favour.

A20

The conduct of the Fitness to Practise Committee is at the discretion of the Chair but shall normally proceed as follows:

- a. The members of the Committee have a preliminary discussion without the student, the student's representative or the Head/Professional Suitability Group member being present.
- b. The student, the student's representative and the Head/Professional Suitability Group member enter the room and the Chair introduces all those present.
- c. The Chair checks that the student has received details of the concern and any supporting documentation.
- d. The Chair explains the order of proceedings to the student.
- e. The evidence relating to the concern about fitness to practise is then presented by the relevant Head or member of the Professional Suitability Group, and members of the Committee, the student and the student's representative are invited to put questions to them.
- f. The Chair then invites the student to put forward a case orally if he or she wishes to do so including any mitigation, and members of the committee (but not the Head) are invited to put questions to the student.



- g. The Chair invites the student's representative to put forward any additional statement.
- h. Exceptionally the Committee has the power to call witnesses who shall only attend to present their evidence and to answer questions that the Committee or other party may put to them through the Chair. Once their evidence has been heard and there are no more questions, witnesses shall be required to withdraw.
- i. The Chair invites the student to make any final response.
- j. The student, the student's representative and the Head/Professional Suitability Group member are then asked to leave the room. The Committee then deliberates and comes to a decision. If the Committee is unable to reach a decision then the Committee may be adjourned.
- k. If the Committee finds on the balance of probability that the case is proven, they determine any further action or sanction, clarifying the reasons for the choice of action.
- l. The student is then recalled to the room and is told the decision, the reason for the decision and details of any further action or sanction if appropriate. The Head /Professional Suitability Group member may be present during this final stage.

A21

Only members of the Committee and the Secretary shall be present while a Committee is reaching a decision on the outcome, or on other action.

A22

The Committee shall have the power to seek such other evidence as it deems necessary. The Committee may be adjourned to allow for such evidence to be gathered.

A23

If the Committee decides that the fitness to practise concern is unproved, it will dismiss the case.

A24

If the Committee decides the fitness to practise concern is proven then it shall have the power to do any one or combination of the following:

- a. Permit the student to continue on the course with no further action required
- b. Permit the student to continue on the course with adjustments
- c. Issue a formal warning
- d. Discontinue the placement and institute arrangements for locating an alternative placement if this is permitted under the Rules of Assessment
- e. Require the student to intermit from the course for a defined period of time with return subject to conditions
- f. Require the student to withdraw from the course because they are unfit to practise
- g. Impose such other action as it considers appropriate, provided that no such action requires or implies a concession or exemption under the Rules of Assessment

A25

The Secretary shall confirm to the student and the Head of School concerned in writing within five working days the decision, the reason for the decision and details of any sanction or further action. The student shall be informed of the right to appeal against the decision in accordance with Section B (below).

A26

If the fitness to practise case against the student is found proven, the Head of School and the Academic Registrar shall decide whether a report should be made to the relevant professional or regulatory body and/or the student's employer, if applicable. The student will be informed in writing whether such a report will be made.

## **B. Procedure for Appeals against Decisions of the Fitness to Practise Committee.**

B1

Written notice of appeal by the student must be lodged with the Academic Registrar within five working days of the student being informed of the decision by the Fitness to Practise Committee.

B2

In the event of an appeal, the Academic Registrar and the Pro-Vice-Chancellor (Education) shall decide whether the grounds for the appeal are covered by the provisions of paragraph B5 below and warrant further consideration by a Fitness to Practise Appeals Committee. If they agree that there are no grounds for further consideration of the appeal, the Academic Registrar shall inform the student in writing giving the reasons for that decision.

B3

If the Academic Registrar and the Pro-Vice-Chancellor (Education) decide that the appeal does warrant further consideration, the Academic Registrar shall refer the case to a Fitness to Practise Appeals Committee which shall be appointed by the Pro-Vice-Chancellor (Education) and shall normally comprise:

- a. an Executive Dean, his/her Deputy, Dean or Associate Dean of Academic Partnerships, or the Dean of Health who has no previous involvement with the case as Chair
- b. one member of staff from a relevant subject and professional discipline who shall not be the Head of School or the Investigating Officer or a member previously involved with the case;
- c. one senior practising member of the relevant profession who is from outside the University and who has not been associated with the teaching of the appellant.

B4

The Secretary of the Committee shall be the Academic Registrar or his/her representative.

B5

The grounds for the appeal shall be one or more of the following:

- a. that new evidence had become available that could materially affect the Fitness to Practise Committee's decision
- b. that there was evidence of procedural irregularity or prejudice or bias in the conduct of the hearing by the Fitness to Practise Committee.

B6

The Committee shall have before it all documents relating to the original hearing, together with a written statement submitted by the student setting out the grounds for the appeal. The Committee shall not proceed by way of a re-hearing, but shall have power to require the presentation of such further evidence as it deems necessary.

B7

The Committee shall have the same powers as the Fitness to Practise Committee and may confirm the decision of the Fitness to Practise Committee or substitute such other decision as it considers appropriate.

B8

When the committee has reached its decision the Secretary shall inform the student and the Head of School concerned in writing.

B9

If any action had been taken under paragraphs A26 above to inform the relevant professional or statutory bodies

and/or the Student's employer, the Head of School and the Academic Registrar shall decide whether any further report should be made to the professional or regulatory bodies and/or the student's employer concerned in the light of the decision of the committee.

B10

The decision of the Fitness to Practise Appeals Committee shall be final.

B11

The Office of the Independent Adjudicator for Higher Education (OIA) provides an independent course for the review of student complaints and appeals. When the University's internal procedures for dealing with complaints and appeals have been exhausted, the University will issue a Completion of Procedures letter. Students wishing to avail themselves of the opportunity of an independent review by the OIA must submit their application to the OIA within twelve months of the Completion of Procedures letter. Full details of the course are available on request and will be enclosed with the Completion of Procedures.

Kirstie Sceats

Education Manager (Science and Health)

Registry

Updated June 2015

## **Guidelines on the Operation of a Departmental Professional Suitability Group**

- These guidelines are only relevant for Departments/Schools that are running courses where a professional or regulatory body has concerns for a student's fitness to practise. These students will be subject to the *Fitness to Practise Procedure*.
- Any concerns raised under the *Fitness to Practise Procedure*, will initially be made to a Departmental/School Professional Suitability Group so all relevant Departments/Schools will need to establish such a group.
- There are a number of different policies and procedures where the outcome for a particular student might raise issues of fitness to practise. These procedures operate separately from each other but there is a need for them to be considered as a whole in assessing a student's suitability for practice.
- Information on Academic Offences cases, Disciplinary cases and Progress cases will be reported to the Professional Suitability Group within the Department/School.
- The Professional Suitability Group will receive and consider reports from all the relevant sources and then make appropriate referrals
- Professional Suitability Groups will vary in operation dependent on the needs of the Department/School and the relevant professional/regulatory bodies.
- In Departments/Schools which run courses for which it is a requirement, the Professional Suitability Group will consider all students who need to be 'signed

off' as being of good character as part of their programme of study and will make the appropriate report to the Board of Examiners.

- Departments/Schools must ensure that students are informed of the operation of the departmental Professional Suitability Group and other processes relating to fitness to practise. This information should appear in student handbooks.

### **Constitution of a Professional Suitability Group**

- The constitution of the Professional Suitability Group will vary in operation dependent on the needs of the department and may need to take account of the requirements of relevant professional/regulatory bodies. The membership of the group may vary dependent upon the reason it has been convened.
- The minimum requirements for membership of the group are:
  - The Head of School/Department will chair the group
  - There shall be at least two other members
  - A majority of the members of group should be members of staff working on courses where the students are subject to the *Fitness to Practise Procedure*
  - Other individuals may be co-opted into the group as appropriate. This may include, for example, the Programme Lead for a particular student under consideration or a member of staff with a particular clinical or professional background relevant to the case under consideration

### **Remit of the Professional Suitability Group**

The Professional Suitability Group will:

- only consider students who are on programmes which are subject to *Fitness to Practise Procedure*
- have a remit to consider any report submitted to it as part of the *Fitness to Practise Procedure*
- will, where relevant, consider any student on courses where students are required to be signed off as being of good character as part of their course, and either confirm to the Exam Board that there are no issues to raise, or deal with any issue arising under the *Fitness to Practise Procedure*
- be a central point, established at Departmental/School level, to which the outcomes of a number of different processes can report. These are: Disciplinary procedures, Academic Offences Procedures, outcome of Progress Committee, Exam Board. It might also consider reports from Occupational Health, Student Support, or reports made directly from a placement.
- have referral powers as outlined under the *Fitness to Practise Procedure*

## Operation of group

- The Professional Suitability Group will meet on an ad hoc basis, and may meet 'virtually' to consider any referral made as outlined in the *Fitness to Practise Procedure*, keeping to the appropriate timescale where required.
- For programmes where it is a requirement, the Professional Suitability Group will also need to meet before relevant exam boards, to review all students on the programmes to verify professional suitability and make referrals if necessary
- A record should be kept of all cases considered by the Professional Suitability Group, noting decisions made.

## **11.4 HCPC Standards of conduct, performance and ethics**

Your duties as a registrant

Standards of conduct, performance and ethics

### **Registrants must:**

- promote and protect the interests of service users and carers;
- communicate appropriately and effectively;
- work within the limits of their knowledge and skills;
- delegate appropriately;
- respect confidentiality;
- manage risk;
- report concerns about safety;
- be open when things go wrong;
- be honest and trustworthy; and
- keep records of their work.

Introduction

### **About us**

We are the Health and Care Professions Council (HCPC), a regulator set up to protect the public. To do this, we keep a register of professionals who meet our standards for their professional skills, knowledge and behaviour. The people on our register are referred to as ‘registrants’.

### **About this document**

This document sets out the standards of conduct, performance and ethics. The standards set out, in general terms, how we expect registrants to behave.

We currently regulate the following 16 professions.

- Arts therapists
- Biomedical scientists
- Chiropodists / podiatrists

- Clinical scientists
- Dietitians
- Hearing aid dispensers
- Occupational therapists
- Operating department practitioners
- Orthoptists
- Paramedics
- Physiotherapists
- Practitioner psychologists
- Prosthetists / orthotists
- Radiographers
- Social workers in England
- Speech and language therapists

Our registrants work in a range of different settings, which include direct practice, management, education, research and roles in industry. They also work with a variety of different people, including patients, clients, carers and other professionals.

In this document we have tried to use terms which everyone can understand. Some terms which have a specific meaning in this guide are explained in the glossary at the end of this booklet.

## **What the standards mean for different groups**

### **Service users, carers and the public**

If you are receiving care, treatment or other services from one of our registrants, or you might do so in the future, the standards will help you to understand how our registrants should behave towards you. The standards will also be helpful if you are a carer.

On the rare occasions that something goes wrong, anyone can raise a concern through our fitness to practise process (see page 15). We can take action when there are serious concerns about a health and care professional's knowledge, skills or behaviour.

We use the standards of conduct, performance and ethics to help us decide whether we need to take action to protect the public.

## **Registrants and applicants**

If you are registered with us, you must make sure that you are familiar with the standards and that you continue to meet them. If you are applying to be registered, you will need to sign a declaration to confirm that you will keep to the standards once you are registered.

As a registrant, you are personally responsible for the way you behave. You will need to use your judgement so that you make informed and reasonable decisions and meet the standards. You must always be prepared to justify your decisions and actions.

Making informed and reasonable decisions might include getting advice and support from colleagues, education providers, employers, professional bodies, trade unions or other people. In particular, we recognise the valuable role professional bodies play in representing and promoting the interests of their members. This often includes providing guidance and advice about good practice, which can help you meet the standards.

## **Students**

The standards also apply to you if you are a student on an HCPC-approved programme. We have published another document, 'Guidance on conduct and ethics for students', which sets out what the standards mean for you. <http://www.hpc-uk.org/registrants/standards/students/>

The standards

### **1. Promote and protect the interests of service users and carers**

#### **Treat service users and carers with respect**

1.1 You must treat service users and carers as individuals, respecting their privacy and dignity.

1.2 You must work in partnership with service users and carers, involving them, where appropriate, in decisions about the care, treatment or other services to be provided.

1.3 You must encourage and help service users, where appropriate, to maintain their own health and well-being, and support them so they can make informed decisions.

#### **Make sure you have consent**

1.4 You must make sure that you have consent from service users or other appropriate authority before you provide care, treatment or other services.

#### **Challenge discrimination**



1.5 You must not discriminate against service users, carers or colleagues by allowing your personal views to affect your professional relationships or the care, treatment or other services that you provide.

1.6 You must challenge colleagues if you think that they have discriminated against, or are discriminating against, service users, carers and colleagues.

### **Maintain appropriate boundaries**

1.7 You must keep your relationships with service users and carers professional.

## **2 Communicate appropriately and effectively**

### **Communicate with service users and carers**

2.1 You must be polite and considerate.

2.2 You must listen to service users and carers and take account of their needs and wishes.

2.3 You must give service users and carers the information they want or need, in a way they can understand.

2.4 You must make sure that, where possible, arrangements are made to meet service users' and carers' language and communication needs.

### **Work with colleagues**

2.5 You must work in partnership with colleagues, sharing your skills, knowledge and experience where appropriate, for the benefit of service users and carers.

2.6 You must share relevant information, where appropriate, with colleagues involved in the care, treatment or other services provided to a service user.

### **Social media and networking websites**

2.7 You must use all forms of communication appropriately and responsibly, including social media and networking websites.

## **3 Work within the limits of your knowledge and skills**

### **Keep within your scope of practice**

3.1 You must keep within your scope of practice by only practising in the areas you have appropriate knowledge, skills and experience for.

3.2 You must refer a service user to another practitioner if the care, treatment or other services they need are beyond your scope of practice.

## **Maintain and develop your knowledge and skills**

3.3 You must keep your knowledge and skills up to date and relevant to your scope of practice through continuing professional development.

3.4 You must keep up to date with and follow the law, our guidance and other requirements relevant to your practice.

3.5 You must ask for feedback and use it to improve your practice.

## **4 Delegate appropriately**

### **Delegation, oversight and support**

4.1 You must only delegate work to someone who has the knowledge, skills and experience needed to carry it out safely and effectively.

4.2 You must continue to provide appropriate supervision and support to those you delegate work to.

## **5 Respect confidentiality**

### **Using information**

5.1 You must treat information about service users as confidential.

### **Disclosing information**

5.2 You must only disclose confidential information if:

- you have permission;
- the law allows this;
- it is in the service user's best interests; or
- it is in the public interest, such as if it is necessary to protect public safety or prevent harm to other people.

## **6 Manage risk**

### **Identify and minimise risk**

6.1 You must take all reasonable steps to reduce the risk of harm to service users, carers and colleagues as far as possible.

6.2 You must not do anything, or allow someone else to do anything, which could put the health or safety of a service user, carer or colleague at unacceptable risk.

## **Manage your health**

6.3 You must make changes to how you practise, or stop practising, if your physical or mental health may affect your performance or judgement, or put others at risk for any other reason.

## **7 Report concerns about safety**

### **Report concerns**

7.1 You must report any concerns about the safety or well-being of service users promptly and appropriately.

7.2 You must support and encourage others to report concerns and not prevent anyone from raising concerns.

7.3 You must take appropriate action if you have concerns about the safety or well-being of children or vulnerable adults.

7.4 You must make sure that the safety and well-being of service users always comes before any professional or other loyalties.

### **Follow up concerns**

7.5 You must follow up concerns you have reported and, if necessary, escalate them.

7.6 You must acknowledge and act on concerns raised to you, investigating, escalating or dealing with those concerns where it is appropriate for you to do so.

## **8 Be open when things go wrong**

### **Openness with service users and carers**

8.1 You must be open and honest when something has gone wrong with the care, treatment or other services that you provide by:

- informing service users or, where appropriate, their carers, that something has gone wrong;
- apologising;
- taking action to put matters right if possible; and
- making sure that service users or, where appropriate, their carers, receive a full and prompt explanation of what has happened and any likely effects.

## **Deal with concerns and complaints**

8.2 You must support service users and carers who want to raise concerns about the care, treatment or other services they have received.

8.3 You must give a helpful and honest response to anyone who complains about the care, treatment or other services they have received.

## **9 Be honest and trustworthy**

### **Personal and professional behaviour**

9.1 You must make sure that your conduct justifies the public's trust and confidence in you and your profession.

9.2 You must be honest about your experience, qualifications and skills.

9.3 You must make sure that any promotional activities you are involved in are accurate and are not likely to mislead.

9.4 You must declare issues that might create conflicts of interest and make sure that they do not influence your judgement.

### **Important information about your conduct and competence**

9.5 You must tell us as soon as possible if:

- you accept a caution from the police or you have been charged with, or found guilty of, a criminal offence;
- another organisation responsible for regulating a health or social-care profession has taken action or made a finding against you; or
- you have had any restriction placed on your practice, or been suspended or dismissed by an employer, because of concerns about your conduct or competence.

9.6 You must co-operate with any investigation into your conduct or competence, the conduct or competence of others, or the care, treatment or other services provided to service users.

## **10 Keep records of your work**

### **Keep accurate records**

10.1 You must keep full, clear, and accurate records for everyone you care for, treat, or provide other services to.

10.2 You must complete all records promptly and as soon as possible after providing care, treatment or other services.

## **Keep records secure**

10.3 You must keep records secure by protecting them from loss, damage or inappropriate access.

## **Fitness to practise**

When we say someone is 'fit to practise', we mean that they have the skills, knowledge, character and health they need to practise their profession safely and effectively.

We can consider concerns which members of the public, employers, professionals, the police and other people raise about a registrant's fitness to practise. When we are deciding whether we need to take any action against a registrant to protect the public, we look at whether the registrant has met these standards.

You can find out more information about our fitness to practise process in our brochures 'How to raise a concern' and 'What happens if a concern is raised about me'. You can download these from our website at [www.hcpc-uk.org](http://www.hcpc-uk.org), or you can phone us on 020 7840 9806 to ask for a copy.

## **Glossary**

### **Apologising**

Making it clear that you are sorry about what has happened. The HCPC does not regard an apology, of itself, as an admission of liability or wrongdoing.

### **Carer**

Anyone who looks after, or provides support to, a family member, partner or friend.

### **Care, treatment or other services**

A general term to describe the different work that our registrants carry out.

### **Colleague**

Other health and care professionals, students and trainees, support workers, professional carers and others involved in providing care, treatment or other services to service users.

### **Conduct**

A health and care professional's behaviour.

**Consent**

Permission for a registrant to provide care, treatment or other services, given by a service user, or someone acting on their behalf, after receiving all the information they reasonably need to make that decision.

**Delegate**

To ask someone else to carry out a task on your behalf.

**Disclose**

In these standards, this refers to making a formal decision to share information about a service user with others, such as the police.

**Discriminate**

To unfairly treat a person or group of people differently from other people or groups of people. This includes treating others differently because of your views about their lifestyle, culture or their social or economic status, as well as the characteristics protected by law – age, disability, gender reassignment, race, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, religion or belief, sex and sexual orientation.

**Escalate**

To pass on a concern about a service user's safety or well-being to someone who is better able to act on it, for example, a more senior colleague, a manager or a regulator.

**Ethics**

The values that guide a person's behaviour or judgement.

**Practitioner**

A health and care professional who is currently practising in their profession.

**Refer**

To ask someone else to provide care, treatment or other services which are beyond your scope of practice or, where relevant, because the service user has asked for a second opinion.

**Scope of practice**

The areas in which a registrant has the knowledge, skills and experience necessary to practise safely and effectively.

**Service user**

Anyone who uses or is affected by the services of registrants, for example, patients or clients.

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## **11.5 Standards of Proficiency**

### **Social workers in England**

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**Foreword**

We are pleased to present the Health and Care Professions Council's standards of proficiency for social workers in England.

We first published standards of proficiency for social workers in England in August 2012. We review the standards regularly to look at how they are working and to check whether they continue to reflect current practice in the professions we regulate.

The profession-specific standards for social workers in England included in this document were developed through the input of our stakeholders, including a public consultation. The review process and consultation produced valuable feedback and we are grateful to all those who gave their time to help us in shaping the new standards.

We have made a small number of changes to the standards overall, mainly to reflect developments in education and practice, to clarify our intentions and to correct any errors or omissions.

We are confident that the standards are fit for purpose and reflect safe and effective professional practice for social workers in England.

These standards are effective from 9 January 2017.

**Introduction**

This document sets out the standards of proficiency. These standards set out safe and effective practice in the professions we regulate. They are the threshold standards we consider necessary to protect members of the public. They set out what a student must know, understand and be able to do by the time they have completed their training, so that they are able to register with us. Once on our Register you must meet those standards of proficiency which relate to the areas in which you work.

We also expect you to keep to our standards of conduct, performance and ethics and standards for continuing professional development. We publish these in separate documents, which you can find on our website.



The standards of proficiency in this document include both generic elements, which apply to all our registrants, and profession-specific elements which are relevant to registrants belonging to one of the professions we currently regulate. The generic standards are written in **bold** and the profession-specific standards are written in plain text.

We have numbered the standards so that you can refer to them more easily. The standards are not hierarchical and are all equally important for practice.

### **A note about our expectations of you**

You must meet all the standards of proficiency to register with us and meet the standards relevant to your scope of practice to stay registered with us.

It is important that you read and understand this document. If your practice is called into question we will consider these standards (and our standards of conduct, performance and ethics) in deciding what action, if any, we need to take.

The standards set out in this document complement information and guidance issued by other organisations, such as your professional body or your employer. We recognise the valuable role played by professional bodies in providing guidance and advice about good practice which can help you to meet the standards in this document.

### **Your scope of practice**

Your scope of practice is the area or areas of your profession in which you have the knowledge, skills and experience to practise lawfully, safely and effectively, in a way that meets our standards and does not pose any danger to the public or to yourself.

We recognise that a registrant's scope of practice will change over time and that the practice of experienced registrants often becomes more focused and specialised than that of newly registered colleagues. This might be because of specialisation in a certain area or with a particular client group, or a movement into roles in management, education or research. Every time you renew your registration, you will be asked to sign a declaration that you continue to meet the standards of proficiency that apply to your scope of practice.

### **Your particular scope of practice may mean that you are unable to continue to demonstrate that you meet all of the standards that apply for the whole of your profession.**

As long as you make sure that you are practising safely and effectively within your given scope of practice and do not practise in the areas where you are not proficient to do so, this will not be a problem. If you want to move outside of your scope of practice, you should be certain that you are capable of working lawfully, safely and effectively. This means that you need to exercise personal judgement by undertaking any necessary training and experience, before moving into a new area of practice.

## **Meeting the standards**

It is important that you meet our standards and are able to practise lawfully, safely and effectively. However, we do not dictate how you should meet our standards. There is normally more than one way in which each standard can be met and the way in which you meet our standards might change over time because of improvements in technology or changes in your practice. We often receive questions from registrants who are concerned that something they have been asked to do, a policy, or the way in which they work might mean they cannot meet our standards. They are often worried that this might have an effect on their registration.

As an autonomous professional, you need to make informed, reasoned decisions about your practice to ensure that you meet the standards that apply to you. This includes seeking advice and support from education providers, employers, colleagues, professional bodies, unions and others to ensure that the wellbeing of service users is safeguarded at all times. So long as you do this and can justify your decisions if asked to, it is very unlikely that you will not meet our standards.

## **Language**

We recognise that our registrants work in a range of different settings, which include clinical practice, education, research and roles in industry. We also recognise that the use of terminology can be an emotive issue.

Our registrants work with very different people and use different terms to describe the groups that use, or are affected by, their services. Some of our registrants work with patients, others with clients which can include organisations and others with service users. The terms that you will use depend on how and where you work. We have used terms in these standards which we believe best reflect the groups that you work with.

In the standards of proficiency, we use phrases such as ‘understand’, ‘know’, and ‘be able to’. This is so the standards remain applicable to current registrants in maintaining their fitness to practise, as well as prospective registrants who have not yet started practising and are applying for registration for the first time.

## **These standards may change in the future**

We have produced these standards after speaking to our stakeholders and holding a formal public consultation.

We will continue to listen to our stakeholders and will keep our standards under continual review. Therefore, we may make further changes in the future to take into account changes in practice.

We will always publicise any changes to the standards that we make by, for instance, publishing notices on our website and informing professional bodies.

## **Standards of proficiency**

### **1 be able to practise safely and effectively within their scope of practice**

1.1 know the limits of their practice and when to seek advice or refer to another professional

1.2 recognise the need to manage their own workload and resources effectively and be able to practise accordingly

1.3 be able to undertake assessments of risk, need and capacity and respond appropriately

1.4 be able to recognise and respond appropriately to unexpected situations and manage uncertainty

1.5 be able to recognise signs of harm, abuse and neglect and know how to respond appropriately, including recognising situations which require immediate action

### **2 be able to practise within the legal and ethical boundaries of their profession**

2.1 understand current legislation applicable to social work with adults, children, young people and families

2.2 understand the need to promote the best interests of service users and carers at all times

2.3 understand the need to protect, safeguard, promote and prioritise the wellbeing of children, young people and vulnerable adults

2.4 understand, and be able to address, practices which present a risk to or from service users and carers, or others

2.5 be able to manage and weigh up competing or conflicting values or interests to make reasoned professional judgements

2.6 be able to exercise authority as a social worker within the appropriate legal and ethical frameworks and boundaries

2.7 understand the need to respect and so far as possible uphold, the rights, dignity, values and autonomy of every service user and carer

2.8 recognise that relationships with service users and carers should be based on respect and honesty

2.9 recognise the power dynamics in relationships with service users and carers, and be able to manage those dynamics appropriately

2.10 understand what is required of them by the Health and Care

**3 be able to maintain fitness to practise**

3.1 understand the need to maintain high standards of personal and professional conduct

3.2 understand the importance of maintaining their own health and wellbeing

3.3 understand both the need to keep skills and knowledge up to date and the importance of career-long learning

3.4 be able to establish and maintain personal and professional boundaries

3.5 be able to manage the physical and emotional impact of their practice

3.6 be able to identify and apply strategies to build professional resilience

**4 be able to practise as an autonomous professional, exercising their own professional judgement**

4.1 be able to assess a situation, determine the nature and severity of the problem and call upon the required knowledge and experience to deal with it

4.2 be able to initiate resolution of issues and be able to exercise personal initiative

4.3 recognise that they are personally responsible for, and must be able to justify, their decisions and recommendations

4.4 be able to make informed judgements on complex issues using the information available

4.5 be able to work effectively whilst holding alternative competing explanations in mind

4.6 be able to make and receive referrals appropriately

4.7 understand the importance of participation in training and mentoring

**5 be aware of the impact of culture, equality and diversity on practice**

5.1 be able to reflect on and take account of the impact of inequality, disadvantage and discrimination on those who use social work services and their communities

5.2 understand the need to adapt practice to respond appropriately to different groups and individuals

5.3 be aware of the impact of their own values on practice with different groups of service users and carers

5.4 understand the impact of different cultures and communities and how this affects the role of the social worker in supporting service users and carers

## **6 be able to practise in a non-discriminatory manner**

6.1 be able to work with others to promote social justice, equality and inclusion

6.2 be able to use practice to challenge and address the impact of discrimination, disadvantage and oppression

## **7 understand the importance of and be able to maintain confidentiality**

7.1 be able to understand and explain the limits of confidentiality

7.2 be able to recognise and respond appropriately to situations where it is necessary to share information to safeguard service users and carers or others

7.3 understand the principles of information governance and be aware of the safe and effective use of health and social care information

## **8 be able to communicate effectively**

8.1 be able to use interpersonal skills and appropriate forms of verbal and non-verbal communication with service users, carers and others

8.2 be able to demonstrate effective and appropriate skills in communicating advice, instruction, information and professional opinion to colleagues, service users and carers

8.3 understand the need to provide service users and carers with the information necessary to enable them to make informed decisions or to understand the decisions made

8.4 understand how communication skills affect the assessment of and engagement with service users and carers

8.5 understand how the means of communication should be modified to address and take account of a range of factors including age, capacity, learning ability and physical ability

8.6 be aware of the characteristics and consequences of verbal and non-verbal communication and how this can be affected by a range of factors including age, culture, disability, ethnicity, gender, religious beliefs and socio-economic status

8.7 understand the need to draw upon available resources and services to support service users' and carers' communication wherever possible

8.8 be able to communicate in English to the standard equivalent to level 7 of the International English Language Testing System, with no element below 6.51

8.9 be able to engage in inter-professional and inter-agency communication

8.10 be able to listen actively to service users and carers and others

8.11 be able to prepare formal reports in line with applicable protocols and guidelines

8.12 be able to present reports in formal settings

## **9 be able to work appropriately with others**

9.1 understand the need to build and sustain professional relationships with service users, carers and colleagues as both an autonomous practitioner and collaboratively with others

9.2 be able to work with service users and carers to enable them to assess and make informed decisions about their needs, circumstances, risks, preferred options and resources

9.3 be able to work with service users to promote individual growth, development and independence and to assist them to understand and exercise their rights

9.4 be able to support service users' and carers' rights to control their lives and make informed choices about the services they receive

9.5 be able to support the development of networks, groups and communities to meet needs and outcomes

9.6 be able to work in partnership with others, including service users and carers, and those working in other agencies and roles

9.7 be able to contribute effectively to work undertaken as part of a multi-disciplinary team

9.8 recognise the contribution that service users' and carers' own resources and strengths can bring to social work

9.9 be able to identify and work with resistance to change and conflict

9.10 be able to understand the emotional dynamics of interactions with service users and carers

## **10 be able to maintain records appropriately**

10.1 be able to keep accurate, comprehensive and comprehensible records in accordance with applicable legislation, protocol and guidelines

10.2 recognise the need to manage records and all other information in accordance with applicable legislation, protocols and guidelines

### **11 be able to reflect on and review practice**

11.1 understand the value of critical reflection on practice and the need to record the outcome of such reflection appropriately

11.2 recognise the value of supervision, case reviews and other methods of reflection and review

### **12 be able to assure the quality of their practice**

12.1 be able to use supervision to support and enhance the quality of their social work practice

12.2 be able to contribute to processes designed to evaluate service and individual outcomes

12.3 be able to engage in evidence-informed practice, evaluate practice systematically and participate in audit procedures

### **13 understand the key concepts of the knowledge base relevant to their profession**

13.1 understand the roles of other professions, practitioners and organisations in health, social care, justice and in other settings where social work is practised

13.2 be aware of the different social and organisational contexts and settings within which social work operates

13.3 be aware of changes in demography and culture and their impact on social work

13.4 understand in relation to social work practice:

- social work theory;
- social work models and interventions;
- the development and application of relevant law and social policy;
- the development of and application of social work and social work values;
- human growth and development across the lifespan and the impact of key developmental stages and transitions;
- the impact of injustice, social inequalities, policies and other issues which affect the demand for social work services;
- the relevance of psychological, environmental, sociological and physiological perspectives to understanding personal and social development and functioning;
- concepts of participation, advocacy, co-production, involvement and empowerment; and

– the relevance of sociological perspectives to understanding societal and structural influences on human behaviour

13.5 understand the concept of leadership and its application to practice

**14 be able to draw on appropriate knowledge and skills to inform practice**

14.1 be able to gather, analyse, critically evaluate and use information and knowledge to make recommendations or modify their practice

14.2 be able to select and use appropriate assessment tools

14.3 be able to prepare, implement, review, evaluate, revise and conclude plans to meet needs and circumstances in conjunction with service users and carers

14.4 be able to use social work methods, theories and models to identify actions to achieve change and development and improve life opportunities

14.5 be aware of a range of research methodologies

14.6 recognise the value of research and analysis and be able to evaluate such evidence to inform their own practice

14.7 be able to use research, reasoning and problem solving skills to determine appropriate actions

14.8 be able to demonstrate a level of skill in the use of information technology appropriate to their practice

14.9 be able to change their practice as needed to take account of new developments or changing contexts

**15 understand the need to establish and maintain a safe practice environment**

15.1 understand the need to maintain the safety of service users, carers and colleagues

15.2 be aware of applicable health and safety legislation and any relevant safety policies and procedures in force at the workplace, such as incident reporting, and be able to act in accordance with these

15.3 be able to work safely in challenging environments, including being able to take appropriate actions to manage environmental risk

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