

UWE BSc (Hons) Social Work – Partner Update August 2024
College of Health, Science and Society
School of Health & Social Wellbeing
University of the West of England
Glenside Campus
Blackberry Hill
Stapleton
Bristol
BS16 1DD



UWE Social Work Update August 2024

Dear all,

I hope that everyone is keeping well and had the chance to rest and recuperate over the Summer.

I want to take the chance to welcome any new partner organisations, practice educators and practice supervisors that will be supporting UWE students this year – we really appreciate your support! I have now been in this post for two placement rounds, and it has been a rather steep learning curve to say the least! I am very grateful for the help and support that I have received from you all over this period and to Margaret Brookes who previously job shared this role with me. Margaret has since moved on to focus on other academic aspects of her role at UWE, with me now being the placement lead and module leader for both social work placements. You may of course still encounter Margaret as a Practice Tutor.

I hope that this update will be useful to you and those you work alongside, and if you have any questions or queries then please come back to me.

Shelley

Placement Allocations

I am pleased to say that this year's placement matching has gone relatively smoothly with many of our students having their placements confirmed and others in the process of having pre-placement meetings. Thank you to all Practice Learning Coordinators, as well as voluntary sector placement providers, who have been very flexible in providing placements for our students. I look forward to hearing how they are all progressing!

It has been exciting to welcome a number of new partner organisations for our first placements this year, broadening the range of placement experiences available to our students during their 70-day practice placements.

Our statutory placements continue to deliver high quality placement opportunities for our final placement students, despite at times facing their own agency challenges, so we thank you for your ongoing support.

Placement Dates (Reminder)

Final (100 day) placements are planned to commence on **Monday 23rd September 2024** with a completion date in March 2025. Please consult the placement schedule for details of when students are required to be on placement and when they are in University [100 Day Placement Schedule.docx](#). University teaching days will be on Thursday once students begin placement, with five recall days taking place throughout the placement period that count as placement days.

First (70 day) placements are planned to commence on **Monday 30th September 2024** with a completion date in February 2025. Again, please consult the placement schedule for details of when students are required to be on placement and when they are in University [70 Day Placement Schedule.docx](#). University teaching days will be on Friday once students begin placement, with five recall days taking place throughout the placement period that count as placement days. **Please note the change in attendance pattern this year** to allow for two full recall weeks to university, in response to students wishing to have more contact with peers during their placements. These will take place in November and January.

Placement Meetings

We have continued with a blended approach to placement meetings this year, whether this is the Practice Learning Agreement meeting, Interim Reviews or Final Reviews. We are finalising our Practice Tutor allocations and we are asking that Practice Tutors attend at least one meeting in person. As usual, Practice Tutors should chair the Practice Learning Agreement and Interim

Review. Practice Tutors will only attend the final review if there have been difficulties along the way.

Improvement themes from the recent Quality Practice Panel (QPP)

As well as identifying some excellent practice and portfolio work, the QPP raised some areas for improvement in the next placement round that we would appreciate your support in addressing;

- Having a focus on gathering service user/carer feedback and reflecting on professional development considerations accordingly.
- The need to ensure that practice issues are identified in a timely manner and are supported through a supportive action plan agreed by the practice learning team and reviewed on a three-weekly basis.
- Evidence of the application of social work theory, legislation and research to support decision making and interventions in practice.
- The need to evidence thinking around equality and diversity issues when reflecting on each piece of work within the portfolio.
- Incorporate the use of reflective tools to guide reflection on practice.
- Improvement in the quality of the context analysis, including critical thinking and writing in a concise manner.

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What we have done to address these issues

You will notice that we have made some small changes to the portfolio this year to be more explicit about how students are expected to evidence competency in the themes above within the portfolio. For example, there is now a dedicated page in the portfolio for service user/carer feedback, guidance has been added to the context analysis and direct observation templates, and a reference list added to each document, to encourage the application of social work literature. You will see details below of changes to the assessment of practice learning in the first placement that will also support this feedback.

If you have any other ideas or feedback on the above, we'd love to hear from you!!

New Degree Programme

As some of you will be aware, our new Social Work curriculum that we worked hard to achieve has been approved by Social Work England with the first run of the Level 4 modules taking place in the last academic year.

This year these students will embark on the first run of the Level 5 modules, including Social Work Placement 1(70-day placement). The main change is that there is now an additional assessment for the placement for which they receive a mark, meaning their placement efforts can count towards their final degree classification. Previously they only received a pass or fail for the portfolio, having no bearing on the final degree classification awarded. This will

see students presenting their use of a reflective tool to consider a piece of their practice in relation to social work ethics and values, anti-oppressive practice and service user involvement.

Absence Line and Timesheets

We are continuing to use the absence line and on-line timesheets for the 2024/25 academic year. The online timesheet must be completed weekly via ARC and will require the supervisor/practice educator to sign this off each week. Having a concrete record of student attendance should hopefully cut down queries about the total number of days completed and has proved this year to speed up payment being authorised to agencies.

From September 2025, we will be rolling out extended use of the ARC system, through which we will be able to complete placement matching, reducing the need for high volumes of emails in arranging placements. We undertook a trial of students completing their conflict of interest declarations using ARC this year, which was a success. Please don't worry about this change as we will fully support you in moving over to the new system, which should cut down on the workload currently involved in placement matching.

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Managing Practice Learning (MPL)

Our MPL course has seen some changes this year with the introduction of a one-day MPL course aimed at prospective practice supervisors, who are not social work qualified or those who do not wish to go on to achieve their Practice Educator qualification in the future.

Additionally, we will continue to run our three-day MPL course for social workers wishing to use this to progress to Practice Educator training. The Next planned three-day MPL course is scheduled for 13th-15th May 2025.

Practice Educator/Supervisor Induction

This is an induction and preparation event for practice educators and supervisors who are hosting a UWE undergraduate student in September 2024. This will take place online on Thursday 19th September at 11am. There will be input on online timesheets, absence line, Practice Support Net and Pebblepad Changes.

[Practice Support Net](#)

Practice Support has been reviewed for this year and necessary changes made. We would like to encourage all staff to utilise this resource as it does contain key information such as ARC access and information for students, links to PebblePad guidance, placement handbooks and schedules, timesheets and absence line guidance, links to key UWE policies related to placements and other practice documentation.

Practice Educator Training (PEPS)

UWE do not currently have a PEPS 1 & 2 training offer, but this is something that we are actively exploring. This is in response to a regional shortage in appropriately trained practice educators to support our students on placement. Any updates regarding the potential of this offering will be shared as and when they are available.