

Quality Practice Panel Terms of Reference (TOR)

Purpose of panel

The purpose of the Quality Practice Panel is to:

- Quality assure and moderate placement reports and portfolios highlighting identified strengths and areas for development moving forward.
- Make recommendations around student practice, including action plans and failing placements.
- Address other placement related issues, including reviewing Placement Opportunity Forms and Placement Audits and making recommendations in relation to Practice Educators.
- Review the online portfolio and practice learning documents for any views on developments and improvements that could be made.

The panels will meet at the end of each placement round, and at the midpoint. Additional panels may meet on an ad-hoc basis, where specific issues are to be discussed.

Using this panel ensures transparency and fairness for everyone involved in placements, including students, placement providers and, ultimately, people who use social work services. It provides support for UWE staff who may otherwise be expected to make unilateral decisions.

Composition of panel

As outlined in the QAPL best practice recommendations this panel will include representatives from all those with a stake in placements, particularly the following groups:

- People with lived experience to ensure that people who use social work services are central to our decision making, which fits with both social work ethics and the expectations of the regulator.
- UWE staff.
- Practice educators / Local Authority representatives (Practice Coordinators/ASYE Coordinators/ Principal Social Workers).

While it wouldn't be appropriate to have students present for the entire panel, we will work towards having a student representative attend for a summarised report / portfolio feedback and to give a student perspective.

Where a panel is called for a student who is struggling on placement, it would be helpful to have people on the panel who have lived experience of the individuals' particular needs or characteristics, or a separate advisory panel for this purpose. Such a representative / advisory panel would potentially be in a better position e.g. look in depth at any barriers to learning or consider possible adaptations that can be made.

All those on the panel have equal status; where needed, some participants may need support to ensure that they can fully participate. Panels may be chaired by UWE staff, local authority representatives, or an independent person.

Quality Assurance of Portfolios & Reports

All final reports and portfolios will already have been seen by a member of the university, meaning only a percentage come to the panel for quality assurance. Given the volume of the portfolios, panel members will be provided with a checklist and asked to comment on selected parts of the portfolio (appendix a).

As highlighted in the QAPL best practice recommendations, it should be noted that practice educators are trained to the Practice Education Professional Standards (or equivalent) and adhere to regulator standards as registered social workers. The default expectation is that they have the capability and integrity to be able to check student evidence and to complete their own work to the required standard, so UWE staff and the panel do not ordinarily need to review the primary evidence of the students practice on placement.

All reports will be reviewed anonymously to maintain confidentiality and PE's should be aware that their own reports may be amongst those reviewed by the panel.

Disseminating the Panel Findings

Panel findings will be used in the following ways:

- Shared in UWE field/award boards and provided to the External Examiner for external scrutiny prior to field/award boards
- A report of panel findings will be produced by the placement lead and made available to UWE tutors, placement providers, practice educators and students, to allow them to see the summarised (anonymised) feedback relating to portfolios and reports.
- To inform practice tutor, practice educator and student training.
- Used for research, with a view to further improving practice.
- Outcomes held within UWE internal QA processes – e.g. programme review.

Good Practice in Quality Assurance Panel

In line with the findings of the BASW ‘Quality Assurance in Practice Panels’ survey, regarding good practice in panels, the panel will operate under the following conditions:

- There will be a clear terms of reference, to include transparency of process and participation, and ensuring that there are no conflicts of interest.
- The panel will maintain confidentiality of student names through the use of student numbers other than where a panel is called to address a specific issue rather than for routine quality assurance.
- The panel should be a confidential space in which to discuss any issues students may be experiencing. Information discussed in the meeting should not be shared outside the meeting without the prior agreement of the panel members.
- The panel will be utilised as a place to develop and share good practice and good practice guidance e.g.around failing placements.
- Guidance and decisions made by the panel should be shared at a senior level (both in UWE and placement providers), and it may be useful for senior staff to attend the panel.

In line with the ‘People with Lived Experience’ panel review of the documentation recommendation, the following good practice around ensuring accessibility of panel meetings will be followed:

- Documents will be circulated in advance, to accommodate any attendees with disabilities or who are less familiar with the paperwork.
- Paperwork will be condensed where possible and, rather than screening out people with lived experience who have a degree of learning disability, support will be offered to understand the nature and content of the paperwork – for example with a pre-meeting.
- Where individuals use technology, the panel chair will check what would help them to access the documents more easily.

Disclaimer

These Terms of Reference have been adapted from the BASW QAPL Refresh Guidance 2023 and were produced in 2024. This should be reviewed bi-annually within the panel or at any point a panel member raise the need to amend the TOR.

Practice panel policies may need to be adapted in response to local needs and feedback from those who attend the meetings. The panel will be consulted on any proposed changes.

Anonymised minutes will be recorded from each panel. Practice themes will be disseminated in a report to panel members, but specific information related to students experiencing difficulties in placement will be held confidentially within UWE. This information may be shared with senior members of UWE where appropriate in line with professional suitability procedures.