

Placement Handbook 2024/25

BSc (Hons) Social Work

College of Health, Science and Society

School of Health & Social Wellbeing

Contents

Section Title	Page Number
Introduction	4
Accident/Incident Reporting in Practice	5
Accommodation for Placements	5
Adverse Weather	5
Annual Leave	5
ARC	6
Assessment	6
Bursaries (NHS for Social Work)	6
Concerns about the Placement	6
Disability Services	10
Disclosure Barring Service (DBS)	10
Emotional Wellbeing	11
Failing a Placement	11
Good Health / Good Character Annual Declaration	12
Health & Safety	13
Induction	13
Information Points	14
Jury Service	14
Learner Support Fund	14
Manual Handling	14
Occupational Health Service	14
Paid Employment Outside of the Social Work Programme	15
PebblePad	15
Placement Allocations	15
Practice Absence	15
Practice Days	17
Practice Support Line	17
Professional Communication	17
Professional Practice Office	18
Professional Suitability and Professional Conduct Policy	18
Progression through the Professional Capabilities Framework (PCF)	18
Service User/Carer Feedback	20
Social Networking/Media	20
Student actions prior to starting placement	20
Student Pregnancy, Maternity, Adoption and Partner Leave	21

Study Time During Practice Placements	22
Supernumerary Status in Placement	22
Time Keeping	22
Time Sheets	22
Tips for a successful placement	23
Travel Arrangements	24
University Health Centre	24
Working with the practice learning team	24

Introduction

This A-Z document intends to outline the processes and support relevant to students completing practice placements as part of the BSc (Hons) Social Work programme. Additional guidance is available via [Practice Support Net](#) which all students, practice educators/supervisors and practice tutors should read.

Students must spend at least 200 days in practice over the course of their programme. This is currently structured as;

- The 4-day observational placement (Readiness for Professional Social Work Practice)
- 70 day first placement (Social Work Placement 1)
- 100 day final placement (Critical Reflective Practice for Social Work 1)

It is mandatory for students to attend all placement days, including any recall days to University. A placement day is usually taken to mean no less than 7 hours (plus a lunch break), but exact hours and working patterns may vary depending on the placement provider. Integral to placements, students will apply theoretical learning to practice with service users, carers, and other professionals. This offers the opportunity to develop practical skills and professional competence to evidence the nine domains associated with the appropriate level of the [Professional Capabilities Framework \(PCF\)](#) and, ultimately, reach the [Professional Standards](#), to register as a social worker with [Social Work England](#).

To ensure students gain broad experience, contrasting learning opportunities should be provided within the first and final placement. For example:

- A student could work in child protection for one placement and with children with different needs (such as in a children's disability team) for their other placement.
- A student could work with children in one placement and with adults in their other placement.
- A student could work in a local authority setting in one placement and in the voluntary sector for their other placement.

Accident/Incident Reporting in Practice

If a student has an accident or experiences an incident in practice, this should be reported to the university using the [Raising Concerns Report Form](#). Students should also advise their Practice Learning Team of any accidents/incidents at the earliest opportunity via email.

In the unlikely event that a student sustains a needle-stick injury, they must follow the organisation's local needle-stick injury policy which will include attending Occupational Health as soon as possible. The student must also ensure that the incident is reported to the University by using the Raising Concerns Report Form above. The student should also make sure that their Practice Learning Team are made aware of this.

Accommodation for Placements

Students can arrange accommodation for placements if they are unable to travel to placement on a daily basis; however, this will incur additional costs. Students should contact the Student Advisors via the [Information Points](#) for further advice.

Adverse Weather

Students should check the University website for advice on university closures and the local radio for travel information. University sites may be closed during adverse weather conditions, however placements may be open and students should speak with their Practice Educator/ Supervisor to discuss appropriate arrangements. During periods of adverse weather Practice Educators / Supervisors will work with students to consider any alternative arrangements that can be put in place, for example working from home.

Annual Leave

Social work students are not entitled to annual leave due to the short-term nature of the placements. The placement schedules for Readiness for Professional Social Work Practice (Level 4), Social Work Placement 1 (Level 5) and Critical Reflective Practice in Social Work 1 (Level 6) will clearly show University holiday periods, to which you are entitled. If you need to take annual leave for specific reasons or key religious dates fall outside of the standard schedule, you should discuss this with the Module Leader. Whilst there can be some flexibility around making up time during a holiday period this must be discussed and agreed by the Practice Learning Team. Social work students are not required to attend placement on designated bank holidays.

Students should not usually be on placement during university closure days. However, there may be some occasions where attendance on these days is agreed with the

Module Leader. This agreement must be sought in advance and should be documented in the Practice Learning Agreement.

ARC

[ARC](#) is a web-based system that holds student information, placement details and a record of placement days completed. Students will be notified of their placements through ARC Placements on the Web (ARC POW). Students will also evaluate their previous placement on ARC (to release placement details of the next) and can check the number of practice days they have completed. Students need to use ARC to complete the self-declaration of good health and good character and advice of any conflicts of interest relevant to practice placements.

Days in practice should be recorded in ARC on a weekly basis and signed off by the Practice/Educator. This ensures there is a clear record of days the student has completed allowing timely payment to the agencies supporting the practice.

Assessment

The assessment process is designed to enable students to demonstrate progress across the nine domains of the [Professional Capabilities Framework \(PCF\)](#). The assessment activities link with those used for the [Assessed and Supported Year of Employment \(ASYE\)](#) and [Continuing Professional Development \(CPD\) for qualified social workers](#).

Please consult the placement module handbook for further assessment details.

Bursaries (NHS for Social Work)

The Social Work Bursary is administered by Student Services, part of the [NHS Business Services Authority \(NHSBSA\)](#). They assess, award and pay bursaries to eligible students on approved undergraduate and postgraduate social work courses on behalf of the Department of Health and Social Care (DHSC). Bursaries include a travel allowance for the purpose of attending practice placements.

Concerns About the Placement

What to do if you become concerned about a student whilst on placement

Practice Tutors should be alerted to any difficulties/concerns that arise within placement at the earliest opportunity. In such cases, a Practice Learning Team meeting

may be convened, which will be chaired by the Practice Tutor. The Practice Tutor takes responsibility for recording this meeting and ensuring agreed actions with suitable deadlines are recorded. This supportive action plan should be reviewed at three weekly intervals by the Practice Learning Team meetings, as well as within the Interim Assessment and Final Assessment reviews.

The advice below sets out how the university will seek to deal with a range of possible difficulties that arise in practice, including those which relate to other matters than student circumstances alone.

What sort of difficulties might arise?

These could relate to one or more of the following areas:

- a) personal circumstances that affect student learning and professional development
- b) aspects of the practice learning opportunity including the quality of supervision and support or the availability of suitable work
- c) lack of student progress in meeting assessment requirements
- d) standards of practice in agencies adversely affecting the well-being of service users or carers
- e) suitability of the student for professional practice.

Who can raise concerns?

Concerns may be identified by the Student, Supervisor, Practice Educator, Practice Tutor, or anyone else involved in the student's practice learning.

Transparent discussion of the issues should be discussed at the earliest opportunity within the Practice Learning Team. The Practice Learning Agreement should be reviewed at this point and amended where required. Placements should not be terminated without this meeting. The meeting should be chaired by the Practice Tutor.

Following the meeting the Practice Tutor is responsible for informing the Module Leader and the Practice Educator/Supervisor responsible for informing the Team Manager and Practice Learning Co-ordinator, unless other arrangements for communication are negotiated.

Written records of communication, discussion and decisions as well as any support being offered will be recorded within the portfolio and depending on the severity, may also be recorded on a student's file held by the University. Records of meetings will be signed by all participants. Information will be shared in accordance with University policy, legal frameworks and Social Work England requirements.

Personal circumstances – withdrawal/ intermitting - students may experience changes in personal circumstance or unexpected events that make it impossible for them to continue the placement. Wherever possible a supportive action plan should be developed to enhance practice learning. However, if this is not feasible or the best course of action, the placement may be discontinued. The student may also need to discuss intermitting or withdrawing from the programme. The decision to intermit or withdraw will be considered with the Module Leader and Programme Leaders, and the faculty administrative process is followed. Anticipated dates and arrangements for the student's return will be clarified.

Intermitting or withdrawing can be a hard decision given the commitment already made and uncomfortable emotions may be raised by the issues involved. However, agencies and the programme team acknowledge that there are times when this is an appropriate decision and indicates that students understand professional responsibility to services, service users and carers.

Assessment Implications - any modules that the student is taking at this point are treated according to the university regulations in terms of assessment opportunities and fees. Students are advised to consult a student adviser to make an informed decision and consider the implications of the decision.

Standard of practice learning opportunity - if it is clear the practice learning opportunity is not viable for reasons other than student's standard of practice, and it is not possible to resolve the problem at that stage, the Module Leader and Practice Learning Team should decide whether the student continues in the placement.

Assessment Implications: If the placement is halted an alternative should be provided within the same assessment opportunity.

Standard of student practice - if there are any concerns regarding the standard of the student's practice in the provision of services the options outlined in the module handbook will be considered by the placement learning team with the involvement of the placement lead, and where necessary the programme lead.

Assessment Implications: If the student does not meet the required standard or does not complete the placement this is considered as an assessment opportunity completed. The Quality Practice Panel will consider and make recommendations to the programme leader for additional assessment opportunities that will be considered by the Faculty Award Board.

Concerns regarding practice in the agency with Service Users (Whistle Blowing Policy) - if the issue relates to agency practice that causes serious concern regarding service users' well-being, the programme Whistle Blowing Policy applies. This states that the agency policy for such a concern should be followed and the student be

supported by the university during this period.

Assessment Implications:

The Practice Learning Team, in consultation with the module leader, will decide whether the student continues in the placement. If the decision is made that the student should not continue, an alternative should be provided within the same assessment opportunity.

Suitability of Student for Professional Practice - if there is a concern relating to the suitability of the student the University [Professional Suitability and Conduct Policy](#) should be used. This is a formal process that provides support to the student and gathers the fullest information for consideration. Suitability also covers issues of student conduct and concerns relating to Professional Standards (Social Work England 2019).

Assessment Implications: The process may include the continuation of the practice learning period or a temporary period of absence. The outcome may include

- a resumption of the same practice learning period
- an alternative opportunity in the same assessment opportunity
- a requirement to leave the programme.

Support for students regarding concerns - the student may involve a student union representative or independent advocate at any stage of the process. The student may make a complaint at any stage, or an appeal and other policies may apply .

Summary

These policies seek to resolve issues in the earliest and most effective way between the people concerned. Placements should not be ended without a meeting and where appropriate one or more of the policies noted should inform subsequent action.

1. An alternative placement will be sought within the same assessment opportunity if:

- a) the placement is not viable due to agency situation
- b) the student has initiated Whistle Blowing Policy and the module leader, in consultation with relevant others, considers it necessary to arrange an alternative placement.

2. An alternative placement will not be sought within the same assessment opportunity if:

- a) the issue concerns the standard of the student's progress
- b) the student is found to be unsuitable for training under the Suitability Policy
- c) not allowed under UWE assessment regulations.

If a student has a concern that someone who is registered as a social worker is not fit to practice because of a health or a character issue, they must be enabled to report their concerns as per [Social Work Englands Education and Training Standards \(2021\)](#) specifically, **2.7** *Ensure that policies and processes, including for whistleblowing, are in place for students to challenge unsafe behaviours and cultures, and organisational wrongdoing, and report concerns openly and safely without fear of adverse consequences.* Students should discuss any concerns with their Practice Tutor or Module Leader Lead as well as following any agency policy in relation to escalating concerns about practice. Students should also familiarise themselves with their placement's whistleblowing policy during their induction period.

Should the student have an accident or experience an incident whilst on placement, the [Raising Concerns Report Form](#) should be used to report this.

Disability Services

The [Disability Service](#) offer a wide range of support for students who have a disability or long-term health condition. Support services include assisted technologies, assessment, and support for specific learning difficulties such as dyslexia, and support with reasonable adjustments for placements via an access plan. Access plans are designed to give the student an opportunity to set out their needs around placements. This includes any support or reasonable adjustments that could be put in place such as access to the placement, parking, travel and managing the working day, including shifts and weekend work.

If a student thinks they may have a specific learning difficulty, they should contact [Disability Services](#) for a diagnostic assessment. Some students do not realise that they have a specific learning difficulty until they reach university and may have developed strategies for dealing with the difficulties, however an assessment can be helpful as the impact on placements can be different.

Students will have been asked to declare any disability on their occupational health form on admission. If a student has a disability which may affect their placement, they should discuss this with the Module Leader/Disability Champion who will complete the Access to Placement Plan in collaboration with the Disability Service.

Disclosure Barring Service (DBS)

All social work students require an enhanced [Disclosure and Barring Service](#) (DBS) check prior to starting the programme and students will not be allowed to start placement until they have DBS clearance. Students must send their certificate to Admissions as per the joining instructions. Students should follow the UWE Student

Conduct Policy Disclosure of Criminal or Pending Criminal Convictions. All students with a police conviction or caution on their DBS certificate will be seen by the Programme Leader.

It is essential for social work students to disclose any criminal or pending criminal convictions they may have. The Rehabilitation of Offenders Act (1974) does not apply and all convictions, including those which are spent, must be disclosed. All information will be treated in confidence. If a student receives a criminal conviction during their studies, it is a requirement of the university that they disclose this. In the first instance, this should be reported to their Academic Personal Tutor and Programme Leader.

Students must keep their DBS certificate safe as they may be asked to produce it for future practice placements as part of the placement's safer recruitment process.

Emotional wellbeing

Some students experience challenges with balancing the demands of practice and academic work whilst maintaining a healthy work – life balance. If a student is struggling with their emotional wellbeing they can consider the following:

- Talking to their Practice Learning Team
- Contacting their Academic Personal Tutor for advice
- Contacting the Practice Support Line hscpsl@uwe.ac.uk or 0117 32 81152
- Accessing support from the university [Health and Wellbeing for students](#)
- Speaking to their GP

Whilst there is flexibility in the pattern of attendance at placement, there must be sufficient breaks between shifts, students must have an 11-hour rest period within a 24-hour period, e.g., a student cannot do a night shift followed by a late shift if both fall within the same 24-hour period. This would also mean; it is not acceptable to do a night shift and then attend lectures the next day in university.

Failing a Placement

If a student does not pass a placement, a further opportunity will be considered by the Award Board as per Academic Regulations. A further placement will be sought through the Professional Practice Office, but dependent on the circumstances, this may not be until the following academic year. Students will be required to complete a new Student Information form. This will need to be reviewed by both the Module Leader and Practice Tutor.

All students need to have successfully completed their placement to meet requirements for progression from the first to final placement and from the final placement on to qualification.

Good Health/Good Character Annual Declaration

Good health and good character are fundamental to fitness to practice as a Social Worker. Students are expected to work to [Social Work England Professional Standards](#) in readiness to apply to the register upon qualification.

Good character is important and central to Social Work England's professional standards. Students must work within legal and ethical frameworks, use professional authority appropriately and make evidence-based decisions. They must be open, honest, and fair. A student's good character is based on their conduct, behaviour and attitude. It also takes account of any convictions, cautions and pending charges that are likely to be incompatible with professional registration.

Good health is necessary to undertake practice as a social worker. Good health means that students must be capable of safe and effective practice and decision making, supported by their Practice Educator or Supervisor. It does not mean the absence of any disability or health condition. Many people with disabilities and those with health conditions are able to practice with or without adjustments to support their practice. Being a social worker in poor health, means that the person is affected by a physical or mental health condition that impairs their ability to practice safely.

Students must be in good health and are advised to be up-to-date with all routine immunisations that are required for working in health and social care settings. Students offered a place on one of the University's health and social care programmes will be required to complete a health questionnaire. Students may be asked to confirm their status in respect of a number of infectious diseases (tuberculosis, measles, mumps, rubella, chicken pox, varicella, hepatitis B, hepatitis C, HIV [antibodies], Covid-19) and encouraged to have all required vaccinations. Please note that the list of recommended vaccinations may change, in response to advice from the Department of Health. If a student's vaccinations are not up to date, this could affect their ability to attend some placement settings. Concerns with regards to vaccinations should be raised at the point of application.

Social Work students must be fit to practice as per [UWE Fitness to Study Policy principles](#) and in line with [Social Work England's Qualifying Education and Training Standards 2021](#) specifically, **5.3** *Ensure that there is a thorough and effective process for ensuring the ongoing suitability of students' conduct, character, and health.* During

your course you will be required to provide an annual self-declaration confirming you meet the regulatory body requirements of good health.

Health & Safety

Students must read and understand the agency policies and procedures for Incident Reporting, Health and Safety, Risk Assessment and Lone Working. The student's understanding of such policies should be articulated in the Practice Learning Agreement and discussed with the Practice Learning Team.

Lone working may form part of the normal pattern of work in a placement. If lone working is considered appropriate for the student's stage of learning, this should be discussed and agreed at the Placement Learning Agreement meeting.

In order to develop the skills that are required to become a qualified practitioner, students must be an active participant in practice. However, unaccompanied visits to service users/ carers should only be undertaken after careful consideration of the following factors:

- The student's stage of learning
- The student's capability/previous experience
- The type and nature of the skills being developed
- Staff knowledge of the service user/carers and potential risks involved in lone working
- The student must not use their own vehicle if they cannot provide evidence of business insurance cover

Induction

All students should attend a University induction to the relevant placement module before commencing both the first and last placement. If for any reason students cannot attend this induction they must contact the Module Leader to discuss the absence and identify how the missed learning will be covered.

All students should have visited the placement provision, to attend a pre-placement meeting with the Practice Educator/Supervisor, prior to commencing the first and last placement. A thorough induction should be offered in the first four weeks of placement highlighting essential information relating to health and safety, personal safety, IT access, organisational policies, and dress code. Placement specific training should be identified in advance to ensure the student is able to attend. An induction plan is beneficial in ensuring all important information has been covered.

Information Points

Glenside [Information Point](#) located near reception, can support students with many issues. These include: academic university regulations and procedures; advice about fees, and providing replacement student ID cards.

Student Advisors can support students with a wide range of university matters and can be contacted through the Information Point at Glenside reception. They can also support students through professional suitability processes and can be contacted by emailing infopoint@uwe.ac.uk

Jury Service

Should students be called for jury service, they need to contact the Module Leader to explore the impact on their studies and develop a plan of action. People called up for [Jury Service](#) can ask to change the date or be excused.

Learner Support Fund

The [Student Support Fund](#) is a fund provided by UWE Bristol to support UK undergraduate and postgraduate students who may need extra financial support to remain in higher education. Priority is given to care leavers, estranged students, students with caring responsibilities and students with a disability. All applications are means tested. If a student experiences exceptional financial hardship which will prevent them from attending or continuing the social work course, they should [contact a Money Adviser](#).

Manual Handling

Social Work students are not expected to undertake any manual handling and therefore no manual handling training is provided.

Occupational Health Service

The University has a contract with the [Avon Partnership/UHB NHS Occupational Health Service](#) for assessment, advice and guidance in relation to fitness to engage on a Social Work programme, fitness to return to the programme and practice placements following a time out, and other health related matters.

A student may be asked to contact the service directly for telephone advice before a referral is made for them. All students should declare all health conditions before starting on the programme so that a judgement can be made whether they are fit to

undertake the programme. If a student does not declare a known health condition, which compromises their ability to be on the programme, this may be considered under the [UWE Bristol Professional Suitability and Professional Conduct Policy](#).

Paid Employment Outside of the Social Work Programme

The BSc (Hons) Social Work programme is regarded a full-time course. Students have a responsibility to ensure that they are fit to attend their practice placement and other commitments associated with their studies. Undertaking paid employment whilst on placement is not advised as it will be difficult for students to maintain their own wellbeing and achieve well in their studies. Students sometimes gain employment with the placement provider; this paid employment cannot happen whilst the student is still on placement with the agency.

PebblePad

Social work students complete a portfolio of work while on placement using the [PebblePad](#) system. The portfolio has several elements including the Practice Assessment Report (PAR). This is a working online document that the Practice Learning Team use to record formative and summative assessments of the student's practice and any learning needs.

Placement Allocations

Placements are allocated through the Professional Practice Office and each placement must meet the requirements of the programme. Students sometimes identify a reason why the placement may not be suitable, for example a family member is a service user or works in the organisation. If this information has not been previously shared through completion of the Conflict-of-Interest declaration on ARC, the student should contact the Module Leader at the earliest opportunity. Students must be prepared to travel to the placement within the university's geographical locations/placement circuits (see travel arrangements section). This is as per the terms of their offer at admission. In order to maintain transparency and ~~and~~ students are not allowed to contact and/or organise their own placements.

Practice Absence

If a student is absent from placement, they must report it to the Practice Absence Support Line and Practice Learning Team as soon as possible on the first day of absence. On contacting the placement, the student should make sure they:

- Speak to their Supervisor/Practice Educator or other nominated staff member
- Take the name of the person they are speaking to
- Inform them of the reason for the absence
- Inform them of when they intend to return

The student should email practiceabsence@uwe.ac.uk or call 0117 32 83283 and leave a message with their name, contact number, current placement details and reason for their absence. Calls are not routinely returned from this number. If a student wishes to speak to someone, they should call the Practice Support Line on 0117 32 81152. Students must ensure their online time sheets reflect the sickness absences and is recorded correctly.

If a student does not arrive at placement as expected and nothing is heard from them, the placement should contact the Practice Support Line on 0117 32 81152 to report this.

If a student has fewer than 5 days sickness or absence in a block during a placement, they should negotiate with the placement to make up the hours/days missed and ensure the Practice Learning Team are aware and in agreement with the plan. If the student has more than 5 days absent, liaison with the Module Leader is crucial to plan the completion of the placement.

If a student is sick for up to six consecutive days, they must submit a self-certification form. These are available from the [Information Point](#) and should be submitted directly to the Professional Practice Office. If a student is sick for seven days or more, a medical certificate is required. This should also be submitted directly to the Professional Practice Office

Students who have long periods of sickness, or frequent short-term sickness/absence, will meet with the Module Leader or Practice Tutor and may be required to attend Occupational Health for a health assessment, which the Programme Leader will request. Students may be required to intermit from the programme if the absence is lengthy as they may not be able to achieve the required competences in the available time.

Students should contact their Practice Learning Team if they require compassionate leave. Up to 5 days can be authorised by the Academic Practice Tutor, dependent on circumstances.

All other authorised absence needs to be negotiated by the student with their Practice Tutor/ Module Leader or Programme Lead. The Practice Tutor may agree absence for hospital appointments and carer emergencies, the Practice Learning Team need to be informed of any absence.

Students need to contact the Programme Leaders to discuss any issues around military reserve personnel to explore the impact on their programme and to develop a plan of action.

All missed placement days will need to be rescheduled. Placements cannot be completed without completion of the full 70 days in the first placement and 100 days for the final placement.

Practice Days

A placement day is usually taken to mean no less than 7 hours (plus a lunch break), but exact hours and working patterns may vary depending on the placement provider. Students cannot work additional hours to reduce the total number of placement days they need to complete. To meet Social Work England requirements for qualification every student is required to complete 200 practice days (4-day observational practice at level 1, 70 days at level 2 and 100 days at level 3, the remaining 26 are made of skills days throughout the duration of the course and attached to specific modules). Students will need to upload their attendance declaration for Skills Days to their PebblePad portfolio. Students are entitled to a 20-minute break for every 6 hours worked. They are also entitled to a lunch break which is usually 30 minutes; lunch breaks are not counted as hours worked. Lunch breaks must be taken.

Practice days are recorded in [ARC](#) using the information provided from timesheets. Any queries about the information held on ARC should be directed in the first instance to the Practice Support Line hscpsl@uwe.ac.uk and/or 0117 32 81152.

Practice Support Line

The Practice Support Line is a confidential helpline for Practice Educators, Supervisors, and Students. Students are encouraged to use this line to report concerns whilst on placement. Contact details are: hscpsl@uwe.ac.uk and 0117 32 81152.

Professional Communication

During a student's professional course, they will engage in a range of communication across a range of sectors, with colleagues, services users, carers, and academic staff. This will include written and verbal communication conducted variously across a range of mediums.

Advancements with digital technology, the increased use of ICT and home working, increases the risk of breaches in confidentiality of service user information due to it

being made available to many people and conversations potentially being overheard. Care should be taken to ensure service user safety and confidentiality is not compromised and all digital information should be securely stored, as per the agency policies and procedures. Emails should be used appropriately and only for professional correspondence purposes and details of service users and their families/carers should never be discussed via social networking sites. Students should read and follow their placement agency's policies around the acceptable use of ICT/digital technology.

Professional Practice Office (PPO)

The Professional Practice Office manages all student placement allocations, the PracticeSupport Line, Practice Absence Line and ARC. Please use PPOallocations@uwe.ac.uk for contact.

Professional Suitability and Professional Conduct Policy

UWE has a responsibility to assess and monitor student suitability. This applies to programmes of study which lead to professional registration and/or a license to practice in a professional context. Such courses are characterised as being practice-centred and directed towards the achievement of professional competence and/ or professional registration. In addition, all these programmes are accredited and/or regulated by professional, statutory, and regulatory bodies which are involved in the design, delivery, and regulation of programmes. The BSc (hons) Social Work programme is monitored and approved by Social Work England.

Students registering for and undertaking a social work degree are bound by the [UWE Bristol Professional Suitability and Professional Conduct Procedure](#).

Progression through the Professional Capabilities Framework (PCF)

End of Level 4- Readiness for Direct Practice

Students must demonstrate [Readiness for Direct Practice \(RDP\)](#) through successful completion of Readiness for Professional Social Work Practice and having no more than 30 academic credits to carry into Level 5, prior to starting the first placement. Students are encouraged to use feedback from assignments, simulation activity and skills days in Level 4 modules, as well as their four day shadowing opportunity, when setting their learning objectives for their first placement. The learning objectives should be in fitting with the 9 PCF domain outcomes associated with the first placement [End of first placement | BASW](#).

End of Level 5 - End of First Placement

The first placement is 70 days in a practice setting (including university recall days), where students will have the opportunity to work with services users and carers in a student social work role. Most placements are within voluntary and independent private (VIP) agency settings, although some may be in the statutory sector. Students must demonstrate the end of first placement competencies (link above) to successfully pass the placement. Students should set learning objectives for the last placement based on the feedback received during the first placement and in particular carrying over any identified areas for development.

End of year 6 -End of last placement

The final placement at Level 6 is 100 days in a practice setting (including university recall days), where there are opportunities for students to prepare to undertake more complex practice, usually within a statutory setting, including:

- the use of authority
- statutory tasks
- critically reflective practice
- inter professional working.

A statutory placement is one which takes place within a statutory setting that meets the following definitions, and which requires students to carry out tasks that involve high-risk decision-making and legal interventions. A statutory placement is one which:

- Takes place in a local authority setting or settings delivering delegated statutory functions on behalf of the local authority.
- Involves a sufficient amount of work on either s17 and s47 cases (under the Children Act 1989) or on delivering services under the Care Act 2014 and Mental Capacity Act 2005.

At the beginning of the placement students are required to signpost their Practice Educator to their practice assessment report from their previous placement. Students must demonstrate the [End of last placement](#) competencies to successfully pass this placement. Students should set learning objectives for the first qualified year in practice based on the feedback received during the last placement and in particular carrying over any identified areas for development.

It is important that dates for completion of the portfolio is planned well in advance. It is the student's responsibility to ensure the PebblePad portfolio is up to date and

completed as required, any challenges with this should be raised with the Practice Tutor at the earliest opportunity. The Practice Tutor may discuss any difficulties with the Module Leader.

Students are required to submit portfolios within two weeks of the final placement day. However, final submission dates for level 2 and 3 portfolios are set around exam boards and are final. The student and Practice Learning Team must be aware of the submission deadlines as per the module handbook. Failure to submit the portfolio within [UWE submission guidance](#) will be considered a non-submission.

Service User/Carer Feedback

Students are expected to obtain service user/carer feedback during placement in order to inform and develop their practice as a student social worker. Discussion and agreement on how this can be achieved should take place at the Placement Learning Agreement meeting with subsequent anonymised feedback and student reflection captured in the dedicated tab on PebblePad.

Social Networking/Media

Many students use Social Networking as a means of communication. UWE encourages appropriate use to promote positive social and working relationships, the sharing of information and ideas, learning and good practice. However, students should ensure use of social networking is in line with the [UWE Conduct Policy When Using Social Media](#) guidance. Any individual deemed by the university to be using a social networking site in an inappropriate or offensive manner may be subject to action under the [Professional Suitability and Professional Conduct Policy](#).

Student actions prior to starting placement

4-day observational placement

- Disclosure Barring Service (DBS) clearance (admissions stage)
- Occupational Health clearance
- Student Information Form completed and submitted by required date
- Complete declaration of conflict of interest via ARC

First Placement (70-days)

- Student Information form completed during year 1 and submitted by required date
- Complete declaration of conflict of interest via ARC

- Pass Readiness for Professional Social Work Practice module (this evidences [Readiness for Direct Practice](#) outline by the PCF) and have no more than 30 Level 4 credits to carry over into Level 5
- Level 5 registration – complete Good Health and Good Character Declaration made
- Attend the module induction for Social Work Placement 1 (UZVSMF-30-2)

Last Placement (100-days)

- Student Information form completed during year 2 and submitted by required date
- Complete declaration of conflict of interest via ARC
- Social Work Placement 1 (UZVSMF-30-2) passed at Level 5 and no more than 30 Level 5 credits to carry over into Level 6
- Level 6 registration – Good Health and Good Character Declaration made
- For students, whose Disclosure Barring Service (DBS) is over 3 years old, a new application will be required for clearance
- Attend the module induction for Critical Reflection in Practice 1 and 2 (UZVSJ8-30-3 & UZVSJ7-30-3 respectively).

Returning students (in addition to the above)

- Occupational Health clearance may be a requirement of returning to the programme from a period out due to illness
- DBS clearance (if the break in studies is longer than 12 months) and/or the DBS clearance is over 3 years old)

If completion of any of the above has not taken place the placement cannot commence and consideration may be given to starting processes under [UWE's Professional Suitability Policy](#) , this policy will also be considered if students are found to have misrepresented their circumstances within the Good Health/Good Character declaration.

Student Pregnancy, Maternity, Adoption and Partner Leave -

Students who become pregnant during their studies should inform their APT at the earliest opportunity. If students are on placement during this time, they should inform their Practice Learning Team at the earliest opportunity to ensure that appropriate risk assessment can be undertaken, in line with the agency's policies. For more information, see [Student Pregnancy, Maternity, Adoption and Partner Leave](#) webpages.

Study Time During Practice Placements

Students should be allocated protected time each week, equivalent to half day a per week or where negotiated, one day a fortnight for the purpose of placement related study activity and the completion of their PebblePad Portfolio. Students are not entitled to self-directed study days during practice placement for the purpose of other academic study. Study time cannot be negotiated for dissertation supervision or other coursework preparation which should be conducted outside of placement days.

Supernumerary Status in Placement

Students have supernumerary status and should be not counted as part of the staffing numbers. [Social Work England](#) states that “*Students are not part of the normal staff team so should not be asked to cover staff shortages or absences or respond to pressures being experienced in the team/setting, unless doing so is consistent with meeting their learning needs.*” and that “*Allocation of all workload for students should not, therefore, be determined by the volume of work within a team or setting but should be at the professional judgement of the practice educator/work-based supervisor and appropriate to the student’s level of capability and agreed learning needs*”. This ensures that as a student they undertake the placement as a learning experience and are not considered part of the workforce. When supernumerary status is not upheld, this appears to have a negative impact on mentors, students, and service users. If a student experiences this as a problem on placement, they should discuss with their Practice Tutor.

Time Keeping

Good time keeping links with professional conduct, demonstrating motivation, reliability, and commitment. Social work placements may involve a variety of working patterns. To be and feel part of a placement team, it is essential to experience the setting fully. This includes being on time to attend any shift handover, team meetings, supervision and team debrief. It also ensures that students are up to date with the daily running of the placement, any changes which may have occurred since they were last there and any safeguarding issues. If a student knows they are going to be late, it is courteous and professional to let someone know. In placement this should be the Practice Supervisor and/ or Practice Educator.

Timesheets

Timesheets must be completed via ARC to accurately reflect the student’s days in practice and should be authorised by the Practice Educator / Supervisor at least once

per week. Failure to submit timesheets will be classed as a non-submission against the practice module and results in delays processing payments to the agency offering the placement.

Falsification of timesheets will be referred to Professional Suitability proceedings within the university and may result in discontinuation of studies.

Tips for a successful placement

Before starting the placement

- Research the placement provider's website and read the placement profile or any other information given in advance
- Familiarise yourself with [PebblePad Portfolio](#), the competencies you need to achieve and what the university expects of you
- Familiarise yourself with the [Professional Capabilities Framework \(PCF\)](#) and the level you are working to, [Social Work England Standards](#) and [UWEs Professional Suitability Policy](#). Social Work England do not regulate students, however they expect students to understand and work towards their professional standards in preparation for when they apply for registration. It is particularly important that you do not do anything that goes against the professional standards.
- Contact the placement in advance of starting to arrange a pre-placement visit to firm up plans, which should include discussing working hours, start date, dress code, induction plans and any required access arrangements
- Research and organise your travel arrangements. A practice run prior to starting placement can be helpful.
- Contact your UWE Practice Tutor as soon as you know who they are.
- Upload your Student Information Form to Pebblepad.

When on placement

- Be enthusiastic and professional in your manner
- Arrange the Practice Learning Agreement meeting with your Practice Learning Team as soon as possible (this should happen within 10 days of starting placement). You should complete the Practice Learning Agreement on PebblePad prior to this meeting where the document will be reviewed.
- Undertake and complete your induction being proactive in your approach to getting to know the team and the wider placement context.
- Be punctual and adhere to the agency's policies and procedures
- Ask your Practice Educator / Supervisor about any learning opportunities internal and external to the placement

- Take the opportunity to reflect on your experiences with peers and your Practice Educator/Supervisor, a reflective diary is strongly recommended for aiding reflection
- Discuss any concerns with the Practice Learning Team as soon as any arise

Travel Arrangements

Students may be placed anywhere within a 60-mile radius of Bristol and are responsible for the costs associated with this travel.

Students using their own vehicle must ensure their car is appropriately insured, taxed, and, where relevant, has a valid MOT certificate. Students will need to ensure that 'business cover' is added to their insurance policy for any driving they do during placement hours and for the purposes of transporting service users in their vehicle. This should be confirmed in the Practice Learning Agreement. Car parking whilst on placement is limited or non-existent in many areas. It is therefore advisable for students to find out before starting their placement if there are any facilities for student car parking.

Students who are required to undertake travel either by public transport or when using their own vehicle should be entitled to claim expenses from the organisation they are placed with. This should be made clear to students as part of the induction process and recorded on the Practice Learning Agreement Meeting. This does not include travel costs to and from placement which are the student's responsibility (see also bursaries).

University Health Centre

The [University Health Centre](#) based on Frenchay Campus aims to provide accessible healthcare for everyone working or studying at the University. All UWE Bristol students can register with the Health Centre.

Working with the Practice Learning Team

The Practice Learning Team consists of the Student, the Practice Educator/Practice Supervisor and the Practice Tutor. When the Practice Educator is from outside the organisation they are referred to as an Offsite Practice Educator.

Student: Has an overall responsibility to provide evidence of their capabilities through learning opportunities provided by the Practice Educator/Supervisor and the placement.

Practice Educator (PE): Has an overall responsibility for the student learning experience and enabling the student to develop capabilities through practice experience. The Practice Educator will act as a role model to the students in developing their social work practice. The Practice Educator is a qualified and registered social worker, they may undertake the role of both the Practice Educator and Practice Supervisor if they are located in the agency, otherwise the support of the student will be split between a Practice Educator and Practice Supervisor. The Practice Educator will be appropriately qualified to PEPS 1 level for first placements and PEPS 2 for last placements.

Off-Site Practice Educator (OSPE): If there is no on-site Practice Educator an offsite Practice Educator will be provided. They will work with a Practice Supervisor who will supervise day to day work or be directly accountable for the student's work. The OSPE must establish a systematic method to assess evidence provided by the student and meet regularly with both the student and supervisor. They are also a qualified and registered social worker and will be an experienced Practice Educator with a PEPS 2 qualification.

Practice Supervisor (PS): The Practice Supervisor provides daily management of the practice learning. If there is no on-site practice educator, they will meet regularly with the student and Practice Educator to verify evidence and facilitate learning. The Practice Supervisor may not be a qualified Social Worker but will have attended a Managing Practice Learning Course.

Practice Tutor (PT): Is a university-based tutor whose remit is to support the student on placement. The Practice Tutor will chair the Practice Learning Agreement meeting and Interim Assessment Review (this may be face to face, virtually or a combination of both). Where is felt necessary the Practice Tutor may also attend the Final Review. They will review the portfolio and provide feed-back on the context analysis, at the initial, interim and final stage assessments. The Practice Tutor will also take responsibility for any supportive actioning planning that may be required as a result of difficulties within the placement.

Quality Practice 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.

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