LEEDS BECKETT UNIVERSITY

**PRACTICE**

**PLACEMENT 1**

**HANDBOOK 2023-24**

**MA Social Work**

**BA (Hons) Social Work**

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Introduction

Practice learning is central to the assessment of Social Work students. It enables students to integrate theory to practice in a range of ways according to the practice setting and the level of study. Guidance and supervision from Practice Educators supports this process. Practice learning arrangements are designed to prepare students for the realities of frontline practice in social work by the provision of quality placements.

The organisation of practice learning is the responsibility of Leeds Beckett University working in partnership with Leeds and Wakefield Social Work Teaching Partnership. Social Work England (SWE) is the regulatory body for social workers in England, who provide standards that should be adhered by students throughout their social work placement. The practice placement learning is assessed against the Professional Capabilities Framework (PCF), but is aligned within the Knowledge and Skills Statements (KSS).

In order to pass the PP1 module students must gain:

* A PASS in social work placement (practice assessment agreed and signed off by a PE2). This is assessed against the relevant PCF domains, found at <https://www.basw.co.uk/resources/student-pcf-level-descriptors-pre-qualifying-levels-and-asye>
* A passing academic mark across two sections:

PebblePad portfolio

Synoptic Assessment

Please see the relevant module handbook for detail of the academic assignment.

This handbook is for Practice Placement 1 (PP1) (First Placement). Please note that the handbook should be read in conjunction with information on the relevant Practice Placement 1 (PP1) My Beckett site and the module handbook.

Practice Educators: students should support your access to electronic sites such as PebblePad.

Please note that all sections are subject to update and change.

We very much hope that both students and PEs enjoy the practice learning experience.

Paula Beesley [P.H.Beesley@leedsbeckett.ac.uk](mailto:P.H.Beesley@leedsbeckett.ac.uk)

Academic Practice Lead

# Placement Process

## Key Placement Process Information

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Date** | **Activity** |
| 10 October | PAF due in |
| Late January | Placement matches released |
| Jan-Feb | Introductory placement meeting and Practice Learning Agreement (PLA) meeting |
| Jan-Feb | Pre-placement teaching (tbc) |
| 26 February | First placement begins |
| April | Interim meetings |
| 23 June | First placement approximate end-date (subject to completion of 70 days) |

## Placement Application Forms (PAF)

In order for the student to be matched to an appropriate placement, the student must complete a Placement Application Form (PAF). Please see placement documents (left hand tab of module information within MyBeckett) for the form.

The PAF should consider the student’s previous experience and the student’s learning needs for placement. It is recommended that consideration is given to learning about self from previous learning within the social work course is used to aid this process. What do you do well? What do you need to develop? It can be helpful to do this against the PCF domains, but do not do this as a bullet point list.

Remember that this will be sent to your placement, so will be their first impression of you. Therefore, grammar and spelling are important, as is an accessible style of writing.

## Reasonable adjustment and Individual Support Plans (ISP)

Where a student has a Reasonable Adjustment Plan (RAP) due to an assessed learning need they will be asked to complete an Individual Support Plan (ISP), which is located in the placement documentation tab in MyBeckett.

Where a student has a health or personal issue that may impact upon their learning on placement, they will be asked to complete an ISP. Please note, this does not include childcare.

The ISP is designed to be a voluntary form that enables the student to set out the support that they feel that they will require on placement. It will be completed in consultation with the tutor; and sent to the placement provider with the PAF. Please be aware that the student choses what to share with placement, but if they chose not to share details cannot later cite lack of specific support against a placement outcome.

Wherever possible, the placement will consider the student’s requirements and make adaptions to facilitate learning.

## Introductory Meeting

Before being accepted on placement you will be invited to meet your prospective Practice Educator. You will receive an email informing you that the placement details can be viewed on the student placement management system called InPlace. This is accessed through the modules tab of MyBeckett. Please contact your PE swiftly to facilitate arranging the introductory meeting.

You should prepare for your visit in the following ways:

* Treat the visit as a job interview. Remember, the agency will not offer you a placement if you do not make a good impression. Be enthusiastic and interested.
* Be on time and dress appropriately.
* Prepare for the visit by reading relevant information (e.g. policy guidance, agency website, information about the service / kind of work undertaken) and discuss this with your Tutor.
* Consider the placement questions that are provided later in the handbook. You will not be asked all of these questions, but should have thought about relevant answers. PEs will be provided with these questions.

Please inform your Tutor and the Health & Social Care Practice Learning Team of the outcome of the meeting and whether you have been offered a placement or not by emailing [socialworkplacements@leedsbeckett.ac.uk](mailto:socialworkplacements@leedsbeckett.ac.uk) as soon as you know the outcome.

## Placement Learning Agreement (PLA) meeting

Prior to placement commencement a meeting between relevant staff and the student should take place**.** The key aim of this meeting is to complete the Practice Learning Agreement (PLA)**. Do not start placement without clear arrangements being in place**. It is important that the PLA meeting includes all relevant parties (student, Tutor and Practice Educator(s)).

The PLA serves as the contractual basis of the student placement. It should take account of the Professional Capabilities Framework (PCF) and Knowledge and Skills Statement (KSS), the learning opportunities afforded by the placement, student learning needs, arrangements for supervision and finalise a range of practical information. The Tutor should explain the purpose of the PLA ensuring all parties understand their roles and responsibilities (see section 2).

The following inform discussion at the PLA meeting:

* Practical arrangements should be clearly stated and understood at the meeting e.g. travel required, provision of equipment such as mobile phones and general working arrangements.
* Absence arrangements should be discussed.

The requirements of whom to inform when unable to attend on the day due to sickness should be agreed. Regular or prolonged periods of sickness should be discussed with the Tutor, by both student and PE.

Student is entitled to 5 days holiday. Holidays must be agreed and discussed at the PLA meeting.

Days off from placement, be it through sickness, holiday etc, must be made up at the end of the placement.

* Any issues that may impact on the learning process should be shared. In particular a discussion should take place concerning how feedback will be given to students both informally and formally. Additionally, all parties should discuss how issues of conflict or regarding performance are managed within the assessment and learning process.
* Students are expected to work normal agency hours over five days per week. Where the agency hours are less than 7 hours per day, students will need to extend days to reflect this. Meal breaks are not included in the hour calculations.
* Study time must be discussed and agreed at the PLA meeting, based on one study day a fortnight.
* Students MUST complete the requisite 70 (first placement) or 100 (final placement) days. The PE must should be satisfied that the student as completed the days.
* Practice Educator roles within the placement should be discussed and agreed at the PLA meeting.
* Set the date of the interim meeting.

The PLA should be completed **by the student** in draft form at the PLA Meeting and the student should ensure a completed version of the PLA is uploaded to PebblePad two weeks after placement commencement.

## Induction

It is important that students have a clear and comprehensive induction. This allows early assessment of progression and development and identifies any difficulties early on in the placement. This does not mean that all activities for the first fortnight need to be arranged and overseen by the PE. **The following may be included for students:**

* Training concerning use of on-line systems
* Attending relevant mandatory training
* A general induction to the agency
* Student contacting and arranging visits to agencies and practitioners as directed
* Familiarity with key processes and procedures
* Arranged shadowing and developmental opportunities
* Attendance at team meetings or other practice forums
* Arrange an early meeting to book supervision and reflect on the induction period.
* Clarify boundaries in relation to service users, staff, time, and role, as a member of the team.

It is important that students take a proactive role to support their induction.

## Supervision

Supervision is a crucial element of Social Work practice. The tasks undertaken by practitioners are so complicated that support and advice from others is necessary in relation to Statutory responsibilities and agency policies and procedures; accountability to employers for the work undertaken; our need to discuss our feelings about the emotionally challenging work we do; and the need for a more objective viewpoint from an experienced colleague or manager.

Supervision of students obviously involves similar functions but the major emphasis should be on facilitating the student's learning to practice in relation to the PCF. It will range, early on in the practice learning setting, from information-giving and direction from the PE to a much more reflective process in relation to the direction of the work and helping the student to assess their capability and progression.

**Students should receive supervision weekly in the first half of the placement. Supervision can then reduce to fortnightly at an appropriate point agreed by tutor, PE and student**.

Both student and PE should prepare an agenda and a written record of supervision should be kept, agreed and signed by both parties. The record of supervision may be made by the student or PE. However, we would recommend that where there are concerns about a student’s performance it is the PE that writes up supervision records.

Supervision records should include:

* Date, venue, time and length of session
* Confirmation of the agenda
* Review of work previously agreed
* Service users seen / tasks / visits or project work undertaken
* Review of student's Reflective Blog entries and work for PebblePad
* Detailed discussion of aspects of the student's work, for example assessments and case records
* Evidence of progress against the domains of the PCF and KSS
* Discussion about the application of theory to practice and relevant values issues and ethical dilemmas
* Actions agreed to be reviewed at next supervision and date for next session confirmed

Each student is different and will arrive at the placement setting with varying levels of competence and experience. Early planning, close observation and supervision of the student will allow the PE to assess the student's current level of ability in practice and to identify learning opportunities which will help in the development of practice. *It is as important to challenge a more experienced student as it is to provide appropriate support to a more inexperienced student.*

## Absence from placement

If you are going to be absent from placement for whatever reason you must phone your PE at the very start of the day and advise of any work commitments for that day that will need covering or re-arranging. You should provide information about the nature of your absence, the expected duration of the absence and the anticipated return to work date. Failure to do so will lead to discussion about your ability to demonstrate domain one: professionalism.

From a LBU perspective, please log any absence on the Placement Absence Reporting form via MyHub (link below).

https://myhub.leedsbeckett.ac.uk/students/login?ReturnUrl=%2fForm.aspx%3fid%3d1488532

Any time off for any reason must be made up at the end of placement. You must complete the full 100 days on placement.

If your sickness absence exceeds five placement days you will be required to provide a Statement of Fitness to Work or ‘Fit Note’ from your doctor and this should be sent to your Student Administrator (not your Placement).

You are entitled to a week’s leave during the placement. Please ensure that this is booked at the PLA meeting.

Please contact your Tutor if you have any concerns about your attendance and also to inform them when you have been absent from placement for more than a couple of days.

## Direct Observations

It is a requirement that students' practice must be directly observed in relation to the PCF holistic assessment. Direct observation of practice must take place **a minimum of three times.**

One piece of direct observation may be carried out by the PE2 mentor or OnSite Supervisor (OSS) as appropriate, but on at least two occasions in each placement, the PE must directly observe the student working with service users.

**One direct observation** must take place **before the Interim meeting**, in order to inform the assessment of student progress at that stage.

The pro-formas (see later in handbook) should be used when observing the student’s practice, briefly noting relevant examples of how a student does or does not demonstrate his / her skills in the required areas. Plainly, all of these areas may not be covered or evidenced in observed situations so some gaps in the form are acceptable.

The student will need to include the written summaries of the 3 direct observations in submission of their work on PebblePad and may refer to them (in their Evidence Grid) as evidence of meeting the PCF.

## Reflection

You are required to reflect on all work that you undertake, this can take the form of internal reflection (thinking), external reflection (discussion with your PE) and written reflection (both regular written reflections and a fortnightly Pebblepad blog entry). Experiential learning helps you to identify your strengths and transfer learning to future situations; reflect on your areas for development and plan solutions to develop your skills; and develop an understanding of the theory behind your work that will enhance future interventions.

The Pebblepad portfolio requirement is that you provide fortnightly reflections that provide a critical analysis on your learning within a practice experience. Each reflection should include at least one academic reference, taken from an academic social work book or journal article. They should abide by confidentiality rules before being uploaded to Pebblepad. They should be around 500 words per reflection. It is always a good to have a breadth of practice experience examples demonstrating your breadth of work from your placement learning.

These should be uploaded as a minimum of one per fortnight, and your practice educator should provide feedback on them to enhance your reflective writing. If you enhance a reflection, please leave the original on the blog and upload a Version2 (V2) of the same example so that progress can be identified. At interim, your tutor will provide formative feedback on two of your reflections within the reflective blog

## Evidence Grid

As part of your e portfolio on PebblePad, you are asked to complete the Evidence Grid form, which is appendix 8.5, and Placement Documents in PP1 on MyBeckett.

You identify one piece of evidence by interim and an additional piece of evidence (making two in total) per domain by the end of placement. These should be supplemented with a brief explanation of how you met the domain. Evidence can come from reflections, work products, direct observations, service user feedback or supervision notes.

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Domain** | **Examples of evidence**  **(please feel free to use alternative examples)** |
| Professionalism | Direct observation, supervision minutes, service user feedback, reflections |
| Values and Ethics | Supervision minutes, Direct Observation, Reflections |
| Diversity | Case document, Supervision minutes, Reflections |
| Rights, Justice and Economic Well Being | Case documents, Reflections |
| Knowledge | Case document and Training Reflection Form, Reflections |
| Critical Reflection and Analysis | Supervision minutes and case documents, particularly assessment, reflections |
| Intervention and Skills | Case documents, Direct Observations, Service User feedback, reflections |
| Contexts and Organisations | Meeting notes (where student takes a role), Assessments for panels/funding request, supervision minutes, direct observation, reflections |
| Leadership | Presentations, Group leadership minutes, Meeting notes (where chair), presentation to team meeting, information document developed by student, reflections |

## Confidentiality

Ensuring that service users, carers and professionals cannot be identified by others who have no need to know who they are is an essential part of demonstrating respect for others. **People’s rights to confidentiality must be rigorously respected at all times.**

Work may be read, quite properly, by people (for example members of assessment panels, Tutors and external assessors) who know the individuals referred to as neighbours, friends and colleagues or in some other capacity.

It is essential that effective steps are taken to ensure that individuals cannot be identified from any documents relating to your practice or academic assessment. Please ensure that dates of birth, full names and addresses of service users and the full names of other professionals are removed **from all submitted material.** This is not just for the final submission, but throughout the placement.

The following Guidelines should be adhered to in ALL CASES:

* Do not put confidential information about service users or agencies on any portable electronic storage device (unless this is encrypted, provided by the agency and stored securely).
* Documents should be included only after they have been rigorously checked to ensure anonymity.
* Real names, addresses or other identifying details should never be included.
* Actual dates of birth should never be included; ages may sometimes be relevant, but need not always be exact.
* When false names are used, there should always be an explicit declaration in each document that they are false names. Best practice is for student and PE to agree a reference at the start of a piece of work and to use this in all notes or documents not being kept for agency purposes. Please use false names, numbers or codes rather than real initials.
* When submitting copies of documents on PebblePad, please ensure that there is no trace of residual information.

It is the Practice Educator’s responsibility to monitor during placement and at final submission that the evidence folder does not contain any breaches of confidentiality, as the LA representative. They should advise the student of any breaches and give them 24 hours to amend before further concern is raised with the student, which would include consultation with tutor if and Action Plan in regards to professionalism is required.

On final submission, if the student’s work contains a minimal breach of confidentiality, they will be given 24 hours to make amendments and address any and all breaches. After 24 hours, if this breach is not amended, they will be awarded a fail, and be offered a second, capped submission date.

On final submission, if the student’s work contains multiple breaches of confidentiality, they will be awarded a fail, and be offered a second, capped submission date.

If further breaches occur we will consult with University procedures and Registry and further action may be taken.Serious lack of attention to issues of confidentiality will call into question whether students have met SWE Professional Standards and further action will be taken.

## Interim Meeting

This meeting takes place halfway through the placement, when the Interim Report is due, and involves the Tutor, PE and student. At least one Direct Observation must have been completed by this meeting. The student should provide relevant work undertaken for their practice assessment to the PE prior to the meeting – this should include evidence of the student’s progress in meeting the PCF. (One piece of evidence per domain should be included in the Evidence Grid on PebblePad).

The purpose of the meeting is:

* To discuss and finalise the Interim Report. A draft of the report should be available for discussion at the Interim Meeting
* To evaluate the student’s performance to date and to review the PLA – this includes discussing if there are potential gaps in the learning opportunities provided in the placement and to explore strategies which allow the student to demonstrate their ability in all the PCF domains.

A copy of the final version of the Interim Report should be e mailed to the Tutor, and put onto PebblePad.

## Where the Student may be Experiencing Difficulties

It is the Practice Educator’s responsibility to raise concerns with a student at the earliest opportunity and to alert the Tutor to enable support and monitoring.

Where a student is experiencing difficulty in demonstrating evidence of meeting any of the PCF domains, an Action Plan to address these concerns must be drawn up by Tutor, PE and student and agreed in a timely fashion. This should include clear expectations for the student’s progress and the support that all involved will offer. The Tutor needs to ensure that the Practice Assessment Exam Committee (PAEC) has a copy of this Action Plan.

Where a student is experiencing difficulties with the placement, in the first instance they should discuss this with the PE and then tutor.

## Final Report

The PE’s Final Report is a concise assessment summary of the progress of the student within the placement based on the evidence of the student’s capability. The report is intended to provide examples of evidence of the student’s capability against the nine domains of the PCF. Please see the Practice Curriculum guidance and the PCF guidance on what should be expected of students by the point of qualifying practice.

The Final Report needs to indicate clearly that the student has passed or failed the placement, and if the student has demonstrated capability against each domain. We would normally recommend providing at least two examples of how you know that the student is capable against each domain.

However, if there are concerns in respect of the student not being able to demonstrate capability, then it may be appropriate to provide further evidence and / or a chronology. Any differences of view between PE and student in relation to the assessment of the student’s performance must be clearly recorded by the PE. In this case, the student has the right to submit an Addendum to the Report.

An exemplar report is available to support practice educators with this task. Additionally, the Practice Educator Support Groups provide support with report writing.

***The PE must also email a copy of the Final Report to the University Practice Learning Co-ordinator at*** [***socialworkplacements@leedsbeckett.ac.uk***](mailto:socialworkplacements@leedsbeckett.ac.uk)

***The student should put it into their PebblePad portfolio***

# Roles and Responsibilities

## Responsibilities of the Student

* To operate within agency policies / procedures and the SWE Professional Standards
* To undertake and take responsibility for work agreed with the PE
* To negotiate involvement with service users in consultation with the PE
* To abide by agency and University procedures concerning confidentiality
* To take responsibility for identifying their own learning needs including being open about any personal or professional issues affecting the learning process
* To use supervision to evaluate performance and use any other support and guidance offered
* To use the Practice Curriculum as a guide to placement progression
* To ensure that service users are provided with information about the purposes of the direct observation (including the role of the PE) and that agreement of service users is secured in advance of any planned direct observation
* To obtain feedback from service users and carers
* To terminate contact with the agency and its service users, which forms part of their professional training, at the end of the placement (NB: if students make arrangements to continue as a worker / volunteer with the agreement of the agency, then that is solely an agreement between the person and the agency).

**Students should also look at the Course Handbook regarding relevant University procedures.**

Students must follow agency policies and procedures regarding the storage and movement of agency documents and should take similar care of documents such as assignments and reports to ensure that they are not lost or stolen, for example on public transport or from cars. Please also see the above point regarding the use of electronic portable devices which hold confidential information.

Students must also be aware of agency policies and procedures relating to their use of confidential records, reports and other information about service users and carers throughout their placement. Students need to be aware that access of on line records is generally now tracked. Students should only access information about service users which is relevant to cases they are working with or that they have specifically been told they can look at.

**Any conflict of interest in relating to relatives or friends must immediately be made known to the PE.**

## Responsibilities of the Practice Educator

Students may be supported solely by a fully qualified Practice Educator (PE2) or they may be supported by a PE1 in training or a PE2 in training, who will be mentored by a qualified PE2 mentor. It is important that this is discussed at the Practice Learning Agreement meeting between all parties at the commencement of the placement.

To provide opportunities to meet the learning needs of student, the PE’s responsibilities are:

* To support student learning meeting the nine domains of the Professional Capabilities Framework and the SWE Professional Standards
* To plan the placement in order to meet the learning needs of the student
* To become familiar with and apply guidance about the Practice Curriculum
* To organise a planned Induction for the student for the first two weeks of placement to enable them to become settled in the placement agency
* To provide students with an equal opportunities’ environment for learning. This includes being aware of issues of power within the assessment process
* To operate within agency policies / procedures and the relevant SWE guidance
* To provide regular formal and informal supervision.
* To ensure issues of conflict and/or concerns about performance are raised as they occur within the placement
* To ensure alternative arrangements for supervision are in place in the event of their absence
* To ensure accurate notes of supervision meetings are kept
* To observe directly and assess the student's work with service users on a minimum of three occasions and provide written feedback to the student
* To provide regular verbal and written feedback to the student throughout the placement giving clear messages to the student about whether s/he is on course to pass, and if not, what steps need to be taken to demonstrate capability. An Action Plan may be required
* To prepare for and participate fully in the Practice Learning Agreement and Interim Meetings
* To provide an Interim and a Final Placement Report that follows the recommended guidelines.

## Responsibilities of the Practice Educator 2 mentor (PE2 mentor)

Where the PE is in training, they will be supported by a PE2 mentor. Whilst guidance is given elsewhere for the required level of support to be given to the PE in training,

the student-orientated responsibilities are

* To attend initial, interim and action plan meetings
* To discuss with PE and tutor the student’s progress
* To undertake a minimum of one direct observation of student
* To provide timely constructive feedback to the student where appropriate
* To approve and sign-off the interim and final reports
* To be responsible for the decision about placement outcome
* To be involved to support PE and student where there are any challenges within placement

## Off Site Practice Educator (OSPE)

In some first placements, there will be an OSPE/OSS arrangement, where the student has an placement located OSS who may not a qualified social worker or practice educator and is supported by an OSPE, who supplements the practical learning with reflective and theoretical discussions.

Where the placement requires an off site practice educator (OSPE), the responsibilities are

* To provide theoretical and reflective learning experiences for the student in supervision
* To offer 1.5 hours supervision per fortnight
* To attend initial, interim and action plan meetings
* To discuss with OSS and tutor the student’s progress
* To undertake a minimum of two direct observation
* To provide timely constructive feedback to the student
* To write the interim and final report
* To be responsible for the decision about placement outcome

## Responsibilities of the On Site Supervisor (OSS)

Where the placement requires an on site supervisor (OSS), their responsibilities are

* To provide clear learning experiences for the student in placement
* To offer 1.5 hours case management discussion per fortnight
* To attend initial, interim and action plan meetings
* To discuss with OSPE the student’s progress
* To undertake a minimum of one direct observation
* To provide timely constructive feedback to the student
* To gather service user feedback
* To contribute to the interim and final report

## Responsibilities of the Tutor

* To identify, in consultation with the student and the PE, how the student's learning needs can be met through relevant learning opportunities and to highlight these in the Practice Learning Agreement
* To operate within the University’s policies / procedures and the relevant SWE Professional Standards
* To oversee the learning experience and ensure that the placement provides suitable learning opportunities for the student
* To advise and support the PE throughout the placement and attend placement meetings as agreed. Tutors will offer additional support where difficulties arise and will ensure an appropriate Action Plan is put in place where necessary
* Provide and clarify information regarding the University’s course work requirements
* To provide feedback to the PE on their reports as needed
* Where there are concerns about a student’s performance, to prepare a report for the Practice Assessment Exam Committee (PAEC)
* Where difficulties continue on placement, to discuss the process re students withdrawing or failing placement with all relevant parties (see section 4).

# Professional Standards and Guidance

## Fitness to Practice

All students must have an accepted enhanced Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) check and an accepted Occupational Health (OH) clearance, with details approved through the Admissions process. Students should ensure that they keep their own copy of the DBS report safe as the law does not permit the University to keep a copy on file. Should you lose your report you will be required to pay for a further check to take place.

Students are also required to complete an annual Character and Conduct declaration form. This details any personal issues that may impact upon placement learning, professional suitability and fitness to practice.

Placements cannot start unless this process has been satisfactorily completed at each level.

All students who have a break in registration are re-checked prior to returning to the programme. Students are required to self-declare annually upon re-registration any offences or behaviour likely to bring the profession into disrepute.

Any concerns raised will be referred to relevant Leeds Beckett staff.

## SWE Professional Standards

Social Work England provide Professional Standards that all social work students are expected to adhere during both their academic training and practice learning opportunities. They can be found at: <https://www.socialworkengland.org.uk/media/1640/1227_socialworkengland_standards_prof_standards_final-aw.pdf>

## Knowledge and Skills (KSS)

Assessment against the Knowledge and Skills (KSS) will be considered by the PE where appropriate within their placement.

<https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/338718/140730_Knowledge_and_skills_statement_final_version_AS_RH_Checked.pdf>

<https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/411957/KSS.pdf>

## The Professional Capabilities Framework (PCF) for Social Workers

The PCF (BASW, 2018) aims to support judgements about the quality of practice in relation to individual capability across nine domains. By the End of First Placement social work students should have demonstrated the knowledge, skills and values to work with a range of user groups. They should have the ability to undertake a range of tasks and the capacity to work in more complex situations. They should be able to be autonomous, whilst recognising that the final decision will still rest with their supervisor; they will seek appropriate support and supervision.

The following document provides further detail about the PCF domains for End of First Placement level and ways in which students can demonstrate their capability against each domain. This should be read in conjunction with the Practice Curriculum for Practice Placement 1.

<https://www.basw.co.uk/resources/student-pcf-level-descriptors-pre-qualifying-levels-and-asye>

# Programme Procedures

It is important that all those involved in practice placements are clear about policies and procedures which are relevant where students are experiencing difficulties on placement. Relevant policies and procedures will depend on individual circumstances. University policies and procedures can be accessed via <https://www.leedsbeckett.ac.uk/public-information/student-regulations/>

## Students withdrawing from placement

There may be occasions where students are experiencing personal or health issues which may be impacting on their performance on placement. This should be discussed with the PE as soon as possible. If this affects performance in the practice learning opportunity then the student needs to consider withdrawal or taking time out. If these difficulties are significant, the student has a responsibility to consider the needs of service users and carers and colleagues as well as self, as stated in SWE Professional Standards and the Leeds Beckett University Fitness to Practice policy. A student can choose to suspend or withdraw from placement to enable them to address the issues.

In the case of a student withdrawing from placement, the PE will provide an interim or final report (as appropriate given the number of days completed) that reflects capability against each PCF domain at point of withdrawal.

If a student withdraws from placement following practice concerns being raised or if an action plan has been developed, then the placement will be deemed to be a failed placement. In such circumstances, students will normally have only one opportunity to repeat a placement throughout the BA/MA programme

Students who have withdrawn from placement must complete a Readiness for Placement Plan as determined by their Tutor which will be considered by the PAEC. Students who fail to undertake or complete a Readiness for Placement Plan will not be offered a further practice placement.

## Students where areas for development or concerns about meeting the PCF domains are identified

Where a PE identifies areas for development in a student’s practice this should explored with the student immediately to facilitate the student to reflect and develop that skill with the support of the PE. PEs should be guided by the Practice Curriculum as to whether students are meeting the relevant indicators for satisfactory progression against the PCF. This will depend on the particular stage of the placement.

Difficulties may arise between the PE and the student, which should be discussed as soon as possible. It is important that students learn to manage conflict issues as this is part of professional practice. However, where these cannot be resolved then a meeting needs to be convened with relevant staff, facilitated by the Tutor. Where appropriate, it may be agreed that the student does not attend placement until a meeting with the relevant people has been held. The PE should discuss this course of action with the Tutor.

Where a PE identifies that the student may not be developing any PCF domain in placement an Action Plan addressing the difficulties should be drawn up at a meeting involving the student, PE and Tutor. This should include the progress that the student should make with clearly identified timescales and the support that a student will receive from all involved. The student should be given sufficient opportunity to address concerns (it is recommended this is approximately 20 days) and a review meeting concerning the action plan should be agreed.

Where the student is experiencing difficulties in obtaining tasks to meet the PCF domains this needs to be discussed with the PE as soon as possible. It may be possible in such circumstances to extend placement beyond the required number of placement days. Any extension must be discussed with the PE and Tutor. An extension will only be considered where there have been significant difficulties in providing the appropriate learning opportunities within the normal placement period or where an extension could enable progress in relation to a particular area of concern. The extension would normally be for no more than 20 days. If, following discussion it is felt that appropriate learning opportunities cannot be made available in the placement setting, then alternative placement arrangements need to be made

If it is felt that the student will fail, this should be discussed fully with all concerned. Evidence detailing the fail needs to be provided in the Final Report, as well as recommendations for the future.

## Mitigating Circumstances in Relation to Practice Learning

A Social Work student cannot present extenuating circumstances to the Mitigation Panel in relation to poor performance in their practice placement. A Social Work student experiencing extenuating circumstances that affects their performance in their placement must withdraw from the placement and inform their Tutor. The rationale for this is to not compromise work with service users and to safeguard vulnerable people. SWE emphasises the importance of self-regulation by professionals in order to ensure high standards of conduct and safe practice. SWE requires Universities to continually monitor professional conduct and suitability throughout training.

A student may submit mitigation concerning extenuating circumstances in relation to the **academic** components of practice learning as guided by University Assessment regulations.

## Suspension of Practice Placement

If a PE considers that, in their professional judgement, the practice of the student:

* Is damaging and dangerous to service users and / or colleagues
* Creates an unacceptable risk to themselves or others
* Shows a serious failure to follow the SWE Professional Standards
* In any way gives rise to questions regarding a student’s professional suitability, fitness to practice or conduct.

The PE should consult with the Tutor and a decision to suspend the placement should be considered. The matter should be referred to the BA or MA Course Leader (as relevant) and may then be investigated in relation to Leeds Beckett University’s Fitness to Practice policy. This may result in termination of the placement. The matter will be referred to the Practice Assessment Exam Committee. This in turn will make a recommendation to the Progression and Award Board for the MA and BA in Social Work.

It is important that all students familiarise themselves with the policy, regulations and procedures relating to Fitness to Practice policy. You can access the Fitness to Practice policy and procedure under Student Conduct at:

<http://www.leedsbeckett.ac.uk/public-information/student-regulations/>

## Where there is a Fail recommendation

In the Final Report, the PE will make as their recommendation either a PASS or FAIL recommendation. The PE makes an overall holistic assessment of the student’s capability in relation to each of the nine domains of the PCF. They must be assessed to demonstrate capability in every domain. Where a Fail recommendation is made:

* The PE will provide a Final Report that details the rationale for a fail recommendation. The PE will provide learning goals which can be used to support future development which will be incorporated in the student Readiness for Placement Plan (see below).
* Where students do not complete the full number of placements days, whether failed or withdrawn, the PE must provide a further summary report to the Interim Report or final report, as appropriate.
* Students may repeat placement days up to the maximum amount for a given level as determined by Practice Assessment Examination Committee (PAEC) on the recommendation of all involved parties.
* Students will normally have only one opportunity to repeat a placement throughout the BA/MA programme. Students who fail two assessed practice learning placements across the whole programme will be deemed to have failed the programme and a recommendation made to the Board of Examiners for the student to withdraw from the course and be credited with completed modules. This includes students who withdraw from placement following practice concerns and/or an action plan. Students in this situation will be discussed at PAEC and a fail recommendation will normally be suggested.
* Where a student disputes a fail recommendation, they may present their own written Addendum to their Final Report for consideration by the PAEC and External Examiners. Students will be directed to the University Student Support Service and to the Complaints procedure if they feel issues are not resolved. It is important that if students raise concerns these are shared with all parties in writing as part of informal resolution of the issues.

Students who have failed placement must complete a Readiness for Placement Plan as determined by their Tutor which will be considered by the PAEC. Students who fail to undertake or complete a Readiness for Placement Plan will not be offered a further practice placement.

## Where a student wishes to raise a concern whilst on placement

Students should always seek to resolve any concern with their PE or with their Tutor or other relevant members of the course team prior to instigating the complaints procedure.

**Process for any student who wants to raise a concern whilst on placement:**

Please be assured that placement providers consider the wellbeing of their placement students to be a priority, and all measures will be taken to ensure your experience with us is a positive one. They strive to create a culture of openness, transparency, and support, and this is reflected in agency values. If at any point you do not feel you are being treated equitably, or your needs are not being recognised, please follow this process.

* Whenever possible, discuss with your PE first.
* If not, speak to your Tutor.
* Your Tutor will contact your PE.
* We will try to resolve the issue at this stage via an Action Plan Meeting.
* If further work is needed, your Placement Coordinator will speak to your Team Manager or Practice Educator about your concerns, whoever is most appropriate.
* All attempts will be made to resolve the issue, and all parties involved will work to address your concerns together.
* If you still feel there are issues to address, you can seek advice from HR.
* Please still outline any concerns in the QAPL, once your placement is complete
* If you are struggling to discuss with your PE or your tutor, you can contact the Freedom to Speak Up Guardian for the school. Further details below.

It is important that any parties are open about any concerns as they arise.

**Freedom to Speak Up Guardians School of Health: Healthcare and Social Work/Social Care Guardians**

We know from research within the School of Health and from placement evaluations, that our students can often struggle to speak out about bullying, harassment, racism, sexism, homophobia, transphobia, or other unacceptable behaviour. The School of Health has appointed 2 Freedom to Speak Up Guardians for students on NHS Healthcare and Social Work/Social Care courses whose roles are to support our strategic goal of providing a safe equitable learning environment for every student, building trust and confidence in our reporting and support processes.

The guardians will work closely with the Director of Health Partnerships and other members of the School Senior Executive team with training and development being provided by School researchers and the National Guardian Freedom to Speak Up Organisation. The SoH Freedom to Speak Up Guardians will begin to develop networks with other postholders in local HEIs, NHS Trusts and Local Authorities and will gain support and development from EDI colleagues in the School and wider University.

Please see Information for the Freedom to Speak up Guardians for Social Care– Angela Murphy.

Dr Angela Murphy

I worked in the NHS from 1992 to 2009 and have been in higher education since 2009. Throughout my career I have always placed an emphasis on supporting others and as a Freedom to Speak Up Guardian I will listen carefully, and respond with care, compassion and integrity. I have carried out research into the lived experiences of students and feel strongly that everyone should have a fair chance in life. I am privileged to be granted the role of Freedom to Speak Up Guardian and will do my best to support anyone who requires my support.

Angela’s contact details as below

A.M.Murphy@leedsbeckett.ac.uk

0113 8125709

Students may access the University Complaints procedures independently at any time along with the relevant SWE procedures. **However, students should seek informal resolution through the process above first**. See University Regulations and Student Complaints for more information:

<http://www.leedsbeckett.ac.uk/public-information/student-regulations/>

## Other People’s Conduct and ‘Whistle Blowing’

Student Social Workers have a duty to report to relevant staff supporting placement any breaches of the SWE Professional Standards. The University recognises that this can be a difficult process for students and appropriate support will be provided. Where students are unsure about reporting concerns, they should discuss this immediately with their PE and / or Tutor. For further information on Whistleblowing (public interest disclosure) Complaints Procedure please see Other Regulations:

<http://www.leedsbeckett.ac.uk/public-information/student-regulations/>

## Readiness for Placement Process (RfP)

Where students have failed or withdrawn from a placement, they will be supported to address identified areas for development relating to the fail or withdrawal. These will be agreed and discussed between the student and the Tutor, with input from a PE as necessary. Students must undertake this work before commencing another placement. The Tutor will support this process.

The final stage of the Readiness for Placement Plan may involve a face to face meeting with the Tutor and a PE to assess work completed and readiness for a further placement opportunity.

Furthermore, concerns about a student’s general progress on the course may lead to a Readiness for Placement Plan being required. This will be discussed at a progress meeting. Continued concern about a student’s Readiness for Placement will lead to placement matching being halted.

## Repeat Placements

The University cannot guarantee to provide repeat placements but will use its best endeavours to do so. Where, after all reasonable attempts have been made, it proves impossible to provide a further placement, the PAEC should recommend to the Exam Board that the student be given the highest award for which they are eligible, which would not include a professional award, but module credits and relevant contained award for the programme of study.

Students also need to be aware that, at the time of writing, repeat placements are often difficult to find, but that every effort will be made to secure a repeat placement.

Repeat placements will be the full placement day allocation (70 days). This is to allow students sufficient time to enable them to familiarise themselves with a new placement setting and demonstrate capability through a standard period of work allocation.

# Practice Educators’ Support and Training

## Agency Support

PEs should ensure that their support needs are met by colleagues, line managers and specialist colleagues, such as training departments. We recognise this can be difficult for PEs with demanding workloads. All PEs in training should have access to the support of a PE2 Mentor.

## Practice Educator Training and Support Groups

LWSWTP provide a robust PESG programme.

PEs in training should attend at least two of the support groups during their student’s placement.

## University Contacts

Tutors are the first point of contact for PEs where there are questions or concerns about students. Tutors can also answer general queries about assessment and the practice learning process.

David Mercer, Course Director and Paula Beesley, Academic Practice Lead, work closely with the Placement Co-ordinators in planning placements, overseeing the student experience, and offering additional support and advice.

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| **David Mercer** Course Director, undergraduate Social Work  BA2 Module Leader, Level Lead **E:** [D.Mercer@leedsbeckett.ac.uk](mailto:D.Mercer@leedsbeckett.ac.uk)  **Gill Impey**  Course Director, postgraduate Social Work  **E**: [g.impey@leedsbeckett.ac.uk](mailto:g.impey@leedsbeckett.ac.uk)  **Paula Beesley** Academic Practice Lead **E:** [p.h.beesley@leedsbeckett.ac.uk](mailto:p.h.beesley@leedsbeckett.ac.uk)  **Mark Williams**  MA1 Module Leader, Level Lead  **E:** [M.P.Williams@leedsbeckett.ac.uk](mailto:M.P.Williams@leedsbeckett.ac.uk) |
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## Practice Learning Team

The team provides a central focus for advice and communication in relation to practice learning and enables close partnerships with other HEIs, Department of Health, Health Care Professions Council and Practice Educators.

The Team provides support and guidance for groups who are developing practice placement partnerships with new and emerging employers, agencies and sponsoring organisations, in order to maximise the learning opportunities across a range of professions.

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| Social Work Programmes Practice Placement Co-ordinator **E:** [socialworkplacements@leedsbeckett.ac.uk](mailto:socialworkplacements@leedsbeckett.ac.uk) |

**W:** <https://www.leedsbeckett.ac.uk/studenthub/placement-information/health-and-social-care-practice-learning-team/social-work/>

# Quality Assurance and Evaluation

All practice learning opportunities for the Leeds Beckett University social work programmes are quality assured by the Practice Learning Team in accordance with the Quality Standards advised by the appropriate Professional, Statutory & Regulatory Bodies.

Quality Standards include the following areas:

* The identification and development of practice learning opportunities
* Preparation of students for practice learning
* The matching process
* The quality and appropriateness of work at the designated placement
* Responsibilities and expectations of partner agencies, students and the University
* Assessment arrangements
* Monitoring and evaluation arrangements

The Leeds Beckett University social work programmes have a commitment to ensure the quality of learning opportunities for all students. Practice based learning is audited, evaluated and monitored in a number of ways.

## Audit and Evaluation

Placements are subject to an initial audit process involving University staff. A further annual audit is completed by University Tutors at the commencement of the placement at the Practice Learning Agreement meeting as part of the Quality Assurance Practice Learning (QAPL) process.

Towards the end of the practice learning opportunity, PEs and students are sent the link to an electronic QAPL Evaluation Form. This form is integral to reviewing practice based learning opportunities. All evaluations are responded to by the Leeds Beckett Practice Lead and the Course Director in conjunction with colleagues from Leeds City Council and Wakefield Council.

The academic components of Learning for Practice modules are evaluated through the University module evaluation process.

As well as evaluation of practice learning opportunities, there are also a number of forums within the University that meet to discuss assessment and practice development.

## Practice Assessment Exam Committee (PAEC)

This is a formal subcommittee of the University. It is responsible for ensuring standards and consistency of practice-based learning and assessment requirements. It reports directly to the Progression and Award Board which oversees the Social Work programmes.

It meets at least twice annually and receives reports from PEs and Tutors. The PAEC makes recommendations to the Progression and Award Board concerning student’s progress in relation to fail or withdrawal recommendations, extension and any other matters relating to student progression.

## Practice Learning Development Forum

Student, University, Agency and PE representatives meet regularly to discuss practice based learning developments and to monitor placement provision. The Forum meets twice annually.

# Placement Documentation

*All templates can be found in the relevant placement module in My Beckett, under the placement documents tab.*

## PAF

## ISP

## Introductory meeting questions

## PLA form

## Attendance tracking sheet

## Evidence Grid

## Direct Observation of Student Practice form

## Service user and carer feedback form

## Practitioner feedback form

## Training reflection

## Interim report

## Final report

## Action plan meeting form