


Practice Placement Policy for Applied Social Studies in Social Care

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Practice Placement Policy for Applied Social Studies in Social Care

Revision History

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1. Purpose

The purpose of this document is to outline key policies and responsibilities relating to the management of practice placement opportunities offered to students on Applied Social Studies in Social Care Programmes in TU Dublin Blanchardstown Campus.

The aim of this policy is:

- To ensure the university meets the practice education learning and support needs of the learners.
- To ensure all graduates from Applied Social Studies in Social Care programmes attain all the standards of proficiency relevant to practice placement required by the Social Care Workers registration board.
- To ensure the programme meets the criteria for education and training programmes for social care, which are relevant to practice placement.

2. Scope

This placement policy applies all students on Applied Social Studies in Social Care programmes based at the TU Dublin Blanchardstown Campus. This policy should be considered in conjunction with

3CD12 Fitness to Practice Policy

3CD13 Attendance Policy

Applied Social Studies in Social Care Student Placement Handbook

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Definitions

Agency	The designated social care setting in which the student is required to undertake practice placement
Practice Educator	The designated social care professional with responsibility for supervising the social care student in the agency setting over the course of their practice placement.
Academic Supervisor	The designated academic staff member with responsibility for supervision of the student over the course of their practice placement experience.
CORU	The Statutory Health & Social Care Regulator
TU Dublin	Technological University Dublin

3. Reference

3CD12	Applied Social Studies in Social Care Fitness to Practice Policy
3CD13	Applied Social Studies in Social Care Attendance Policy
3CD15	Applied Social Studies in Social Care Repeat Placement Policy
CORU	Social Care Workers Registration Board Standards of Proficiency for Social Care Workers
CORU	Social Care Workers Registration Board Criteria for Education and Training Programmes

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5.0 Context for Practice Placement

Students must complete two practice placements with two different care groups, each in a different work setting. The placement is supported through close liaison between the University, the placement agency and the student themselves.

- Students undertake professional practice placements in year two and three of their programme. The length of each professional practice learning opportunity is 400 hours (800 hours in total).
- SSSC H2011 Social Care Practice Placement 1 runs in semester 1 of year two, students commence placement in September and complete placement by December the same year.
- SSSC H3018 Social Care Practice Placement 2 runs in semester 2 of year 3, commencing in January and running until May of the same year.
- Placements are not permitted to run over the summer break.

Students can only attempt practice placement modules if they have successfully passed all prerequisite learning and successfully completed the mandatory placement preparation modules as detailed below.

- SSSC H1022 Preparing for Social Care Practice is a prerequisite for SSSC H2011 Social Care Practice Placement 1.
- SSSC H2013 Practice Reflection & Skills Development is a prerequisite for SSSC H3018 Social Care Practice Placement 2.
- SSSC H2011 Social Care Practice Placement 1 is also a prerequisite for SSSC H3018 Social Care Practice Placement 2.

6.0 Attendance

This policy should be read in conjunction with the attendance policy for Applied Social Studies in Social Care. Practice placement is a module with a designated 100%, mandatory attendance requirement. All students undertaking the Bachelor of Arts in Applied Social Studies in Social Care/ Bachelor of Arts in Applied Social Studies in Social Care are required to complete a block practice placement in both year 2 and year 3. Students are required to attend placement for a minimum of 400 hours over the placement period.

Whilst on placement, although it is envisaged that students will predominantly adhere to a standard working day, it is also important that students gain a realistic impression as to normal work practise in the social care sector. Therefore, from time to time, in consultation with students, they may be required to work outside normal working hours (i.e. unsocial hours such as evenings, nights and weekends) and to work outside the unit to which they are assigned (i.e. during trips with service users, whilst attending meetings in other locations, attending training held in alternative locations etc.) If students have particular concerns about any of these points they are reminded of the protocol for discussing issues and concerns and should address any concerns they have with their practice educator and their academic supervisor as soon as is possible.

Any absences will be treated as per an employee i.e. for personal illness or immediate family emergencies students will notify the practice educator and the Technological University immediately. Students are required to complete an attendance log-sheet on a weekly basis, detailing the hours and days that they have worked. It is then the responsibility of the student to provide this to their practice educator to be signed. These sheets are then brought to tripartite meetings and the shifts and hours that students have worked will be discussed. Students must attain a full 400 hours per placement in order to be eligible to be considered by the examination board in the relevant practice placement module.

7.0 Repeat placements

Students are permitted one repeat attempt for each placement module. Students who have not successfully completed placement requirements may apply for an exit award which recognises the learning attained across modules successfully completed. This exit award will not allow students to register with CORU as a social care practitioner.

8.0 Practice Placement Learning Outcomes

Practice Placement 1

On successful completion of this module, the learner will be able to

1. Describe the process involved in developing professional relationships with service users and the multi-disciplinary team (to include establishing rapport, confidentiality, professional boundaries, use of self).
2. Identify the role of the service in supporting the rights and needs of service users within that placement setting.
3. Explain the care planning process from assessment to the evaluation stage being mindful of risk assessment, health and safety needs, informed consent, confidentiality, legislation and professional boundaries.
4. Discuss their professional development needs based on the relationship between self-knowledge, knowledge of the social care worker role within the specific placement setting.
5. While exercising a professional duty of care, plan and carry out a needs-based intervention that supports the participation and engagement of service users in meaningful life experiences.
6. While acting in the best interest of the service user, demonstrate respect for his/her rights, dignity and autonomy.
7. Discuss the relevance of current guidelines and legislation relating to candour and disclosure to the practice setting.
8. Identify the role of self in practice including referring to own attitudes and beliefs, non-discriminatory practice, use of empathy and professionalism in ethical decision-making, appropriate communication, workload balance and self-care.

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9. Produce, clear, concise, accurate and objective documentation that identifies the unmet needs of individual service users and complies with local and national documentation standards.
10. Actively engage in the supervision process, optimise peer review opportunities and appropriately respond to feedback from the practice teacher.
11. Contextualise their practice in a specific social care setting and interpret, identify, record and respond appropriately to behaviours displayed.
12. Apply a Human Rights Based Approach evident through the promotion of the service user's participation in their own care.

Practice Placement 2

On successful completion of this module, the learner will be able to

1. Develop a self-care plan considering work-life balance, confidentiality, professional boundaries, self-awareness, use of supervision.
2. Construct a continuing professional development plan (CPD) highlighting a critical reflection on practice, working in partnership, using professional judgement, meeting service user's needs, opportunities to improve and develop practice (addressing CORU standards of proficiency).
3. Demonstrate proficiency in report writing which comply with local/national documentation standards including terminology and signature requirements.
4. Describe the role of self in relationships developed on placement whereby the student will demonstrate an ability to express professional, informed and considered opinions to service users, health and social care professionals and others.
5. Evaluate their own professional development by reflecting on their practice's experiences on placement (student should include key developments from placement one to placement two).
6. Demonstrate the use of ethical decision making in practice situations while adhering to the best interests, rights, dignity and autonomy of services users.
7. Demonstrate the ability to work with professionals from multiple disciplines.
8. Demonstrate core practice proficiencies in the areas of assessment, risk management, quality assurance (addressing CORU standards of proficiency).

9.0 Placement Preparation

The process of securing a practice placement in essence begins in first year as students are introduced to various social care settings and complete a Preparing for Social Care Practice module (SSSC H1022). Successful completion of this module is a prerequisite for attempting Practice Placement 1. Successful completion of Practice Reflection & Skills Development is a prerequisite for attempting Practice Placement 2. In addition, successful completion of Practice Placement 1 is a prerequisite for attempting Practice Placement 2.

In addition to successfully completing relevant prerequisite modules, students must ensure they meet other relevant requirements

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- Timely engagement with TU Dublin Garda Vetting Procedures and be issued with a letter providing clearance to attempt placement (3AD15).
- Engagement with requirements laid down by the practice placement co-ordinator e.g. completion of the relevant type form, submission of any required documents.
- Completion of any training specified by the agency e.g. Manual Handling, Children First.
- Meet any requirements designated by the agency or placement co-ordinator regarding preplacement interview, preplacement visits etc.

All Applied Social Studies in Social Care students are required to sign a self-declaration form at registration, which indicates that they are aware of the need for Garda vetting prior to commencing the practice placement.

Students must alert placement coordinators of any health related issue which may impact on the students ability to carry out a practice placement in some placement settings. In some instances, a statement of competence from a medical professional to carry out a placement during the designated timeframe may be required.

Where a fitness to practice issue arises the relevant Fitness to Practice Policy will apply (3CD12) In exceptional cases, it may be deemed appropriate by the institute not to proceed with offering a student a placement opportunity on the basis of a decision made within the bounds of the Fitness to Practice Policy.

9.1 Agency Requirements:

1. The agency will provide induction e.g. student is given a tour of the service, introduced to staff and given a paper copy of all relevant policies/procedures
2. Students will be supervised by a qualified social care worker who intends to apply for registration as such upon the opening of the register.
3. The agency will ensure that a student is provided with a weekly supervision meeting
4. The agency has public liability insurance
5. The agency will make the health and safety statement available to the student.
6. The agency will ensure that a student can avail of work facilities and amenities similar to employees e.g. canteen, car parking
7. The agency has a formal procedure for reporting accidents and incidents.

9.2 Practice educator requirements

1. Students will be supervised by a designated experienced, competent professional.

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2. The practice educator should have at least two years post qualifying experience in a recognised social care setting. Practice educators must also possess a qualification in applied social studies (NCEA/ HETAC or TU Dublin approved) or a relevant higher degree.
3. It is also expected that practice educators will participate in the half day Practice Educator Training Workshop that is provided by the TU Dublin – Blanchardstown Campus.
4. It is recommended that the ratio of students to practice educators be no greater than 2:1.
5. It is also recommended that practice educators commit to supervising a student for approximately one hour per week.
6. This supervision should include supporting the student in evidencing the selected CORU proficiencies in the supervision booklet.
7. The practice educator will complete a final Student Placement Evaluation Report. A fail in the report will necessitate a repeat placement for the student.
8. As part of the role of Practice Educator, practice educators support and guide students in learning about the CORU Standards of Proficiency for Social Care Workers.

9.3 Student eligibility for placement:

In order to be eligible to commence practice placement students must have meet all preplacement requirements including;

- Successful; completion of prerequisite modules (listed in 5.0)
- Completion of all Garda vetting processes in a timely fashion
- Completion of the relevant type forms as determined by the placement coordinator
- Disclosure of any relevant information which it may be necessary to consider in relation to the student placement setting
- Completion of any training or other additional requirements as set down by the placement agency

Where a fitness to practice issue has arisen prior to placement the Fitness to Practice Policy will be applied in order to determine whether there is an issue which may require a student not to be allocated a practice placement.

9.4 CORU Code of Professional Conduct & Ethics for Social Care

Prior to placement, each student is informed of the CORU Code of Professional Conduct & Ethics for Social Care. Each student must agree, confirmed by signature, to uphold these standards during placement.

9.5 Assessment of Placement:

The following assessment criteria applies to practice placements:

Year 2:

There are two elements to the placement assessment procedure:

- Successful Completion of Two Placement Tripartite Meetings- Assessed as pass/fail
- Evaluation Report from practice educator- Assessed as pass/fail

Year 3

The following assessment procedure applies to year 3 practice placements:

- Successful Completion of Two Placement Tripartite Meetings- Assessed as pass/fail
- Evaluation Report from practice educator- Assessed as pass/fail

9.5.1 Tripartite meetings

Throughout the placement a designated member of the social care lecturing staff at the Technological University – Blanchardstown Campus will visit the agency to engage in tripartite meetings.

9.5.2 Purpose of tripartite meetings.

Tripartite meetings provide the academic supervisor with an opportunity to monitor and assess student progress over the course of the placement. The meetings are also intended to provide support to students. Tripartite meetings also aim to ensure that the Student Placement Evaluation Form is completed in a timely and accurate fashion and allow the academic supervisor to verify the practice educator's view regarding the outcome of the evaluation form.

Students who fail to attend their pre-scheduled tri-partite meeting, without informing their academic supervisor and practice educator 24 hours in advance of the meeting will be graded as failing the visit.

9.5.3 Objectives of tripartite meetings

(1) For practice educators

- To discuss student performance and to acknowledge progress and strengths.
- To discuss any difficulties in time to identify any remedial action to be taken.
- To discuss links between theory and practice.
- To obtain feedback on the placement as a learning environment.
- To facilitate the discussion of placement issues in a safe and constructive manner.
- To establish the recommended outcome (pass/fail) of the placement.

(2) For students

- To air feelings about the placement and the learning opportunities offered.
- To receive and discuss constructive feedback on their performance.
- To discuss difficulties or needs revealed on placement and ways of meeting them.
- To facilitate the discussion of placement issues in a safe and constructive manner.

- To discuss future learning goals or where relevant, additional placement needs.

(3) For academic supervisors

- To monitor the practice experience offered to students and its fit with their learning needs and stage in training.
- To ensure that students have sufficient opportunities to gain necessary experience and to establish their competence.
- To assess the existing placement, while also ascertaining to assess students learning needs for any future placements.
- To facilitate the discussion of placement issues in a safe and constructive manner.
- To obtain feedback from practice educators regarding the relevance of the academic course and the requirements of practice teaching.

9.5.5 Student Placement Evaluation Report

To be submitted to the TU Dublin – Blanchardstown Campus as per the procedures laid down in the *Return of Placement Assessment Form* process.

The *Student Placement Evaluation Report* involves an assessment of the student's performance in relation to a number of core skills and competencies. At the outset, the practice educator will indicate their recommendation as to whether the student has passed or failed their placement. The report should then act as evidence to substantiate this recommendation.

The content of this report is confidential. It will be shown only to relevant academic staff and with the consent of students completing a year 2 Practice Placement, it will also be shared with the practice educator supporting the student in their final Practice Placement to facilitate the development of relevant learning goals. It should be completed where possible in co-operation with the student and should be as honest and frank as possible for the benefit of the student, the people using services, the Technological University and the profession of social care.

A practice educator can terminate the placement for the following reasons;

- a. If the student behaves in a manner that is actually or potentially damaging for the service users.
- b. If they behave in a manner not appropriate for the service.
- c. If they are not compliant to the tasks presented by the practice educator.
- d. If they have not fully attended placement, and/or not provided certification for their absenteeism.

9.6 Assessment Outcomes:

9.6.1 Tri-partite meetings

Students are informed as soon as is practical after their tri-partite meeting as to whether they have passed their tri-partite meeting. Where issues arise, this process is to enable students to address these issues with their practice educator and provides the opportunity for students to put supports and structures in place to address any difficulties they may be experiencing.

9.6.2 Student Placement Evaluation Form

The student placement evaluation form will be completed by the practice educator in the latter stages of placement. The evaluation form identifies whether or not a student has met the required competencies to pass placement. A student who has not attained a pass grade on the student placement evaluation form will be considered to have failed the practice placement.

9.6.3 Guidelines as to where it is necessary to fail/terminate a student's placement.

With reference to p. 19 of the IASCE Practice Placement Manual *"In the event of a student engaging in unethical or unprofessional conduct, he/she will be deemed to have broken their Placement Contract, thus ending the placement"*.

If a student is deemed not to adhere to the CORU Code of Conduct and Ethics for Social Care Practice, or has engaged in unprofessional conduct the Technological University will follow appropriate Fitness to Practice and/or Student Disciplinary procedures to deal with the scenario, which may result in the deferral or termination of the placement.

10.0 Placement support system for students:

The following outlines the assessment procedure for placement and the support system for students if they encounter difficulties while on placement.

10.1 Procedure to deal with difficulties arising on placement.

(Difficulties may include; perceived personality clashes, differences of opinion, absence or lack of supervision, witnessing inappropriate behaviour of other staff or students while on placement, being asked to perform tasks that are deemed unsafe or demeaning etc.)

1. In the event of any difficulties arising for students the student shall;
 - a. Inform the practice educator of their concern or issue (if appropriate/possible).
 - b. Inform their academic supervisor.
 - c. It is the responsibility of the student to inform either/both the academic supervisor and practice educator as soon as the difficulty arises.

See *Protocol for Student Experiencing Challenges on Placement* for guidance on specific supports available to students experiencing challenges.

10.2 Placement Support System for Practice Educators

The following outlines the support system for practice educators if they encounter difficulties with students on placement.

(Difficulties may include the following; perceived personality clashes, uncompliant student, absenteeism, inappropriate behaviour etc.)

1. Introductory call from the academic supervisor to the practice educator. The purpose of this call is to organise the date of the first tri-partite meeting, and enquire on the student's initial weeks in placement.
2. **Weekly supervision booklet.** The student is encouraged to base their supervision on the content of the supervision booklet. This will enable the student to become aware of their progress on placement. The practice educator is encouraged to sign the relevant sections. Any areas of difficulty for the student should be raised at the following tri-partite meeting. It is important for the practice educator to ensure that the student is reaching the learning objectives each week, and that they are made aware of their strengths and weaknesses, and how they can improve.
3. **Two Tri-partite Meetings.** These meetings provide an opportunity for the practice educator to state how they have experienced the student, how they relate to the service users and staff, how they have met (or not) the weekly learning objectives.
4. In the event of any difficulties arising for the practice educator they shall;
 - a. Inform the student of their concern.
 - b. Inform the academic supervisor of their concern or issue immediately.
 - c. Depending on the context of the call, the following responses may occur
 - i. An immediate visit to the placement, for a tri-partite meeting. The purpose of this meeting is to identify the issue and discuss acceptable solutions for both the student and the practice educator.
 - ii. A phone call to the student to discuss the issues raised by the practice educator.

End///