

Student Participation and Engagement Policy

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Approved by: Helena Doody, Head of Department

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1.1 Introduction

The BA (Hons.) in Social Care is a practice-based qualification which aims to produce skilled, competent and industry-ready graduates for the field of social care. Teaching and learning methodologies are delivered through modules that support the acquisition of knowledge, values and skills that are essential for competent, reflective social care practice. Participation by students in all modules is a core component of the programme and plays a key role in preparing students for working in the Social Care field.

1.2 Benefits of applied learning

Students are encouraged to avail of and engage with applied learning opportunities. The benefits of engaging in applied learning include:

- Greater understanding of practice and practice scenarios
- Opportunity to develop and practice social care skills
- Opportunity to build confidence within a simulated practice setting
- Enhanced reflexive skills
- Sharing of perspectives, approaches, ideas and styles
- Opportunity to engage in interactive classroom activity and experiential learning
- Gain a deeper understanding of themselves and how they bring themselves to practice
- Opportunities to engage in critical thinking
- Gain a deeper understanding of theory to practice

1.3 Participation in learning activities

To facilitate the integration of theory with practice, students participate in regular skills-based sessions and activities within the classroom which focus on the application of knowledge to practice. Furthermore, applied learning supports the student to develop a reflexive practice. Engaging in reflection enables students to identify personal and professional learning and develop an appropriate level of self-awareness. As such, students are encouraged to consider the impact of social care practice on their own lives, including how their values and experiences shape their work with service users.

In line with this, students will:

- Engage in role play techniques or practice skills specific to the social care profession. As part of this, students may act as services users, professionals or others in practical exercises or activities within the classroom setting.
- Reflect on their own experiences and, where appropriate, share this to enhance their learning and the learning of those around them. Students will only be required to share personal information where they are comfortable to do so, and lecturers will guide students around the appropriate sharing of information in a group setting.
- Participate in group assessment. Depending on the requirements of the subject and the assignment brief, these groups may be assigned or self-selected.
- Engage in experiential learning in applied or creative modules and while completing placement. Experiential learning can be defined as “learning through experience” (Lewis & Williams, 1994 pg.5) and is a core learning process within the programme. While out on placement, students will work with service users and engage in tasks specific to the social care profession. Learning occurs through observing, “doing” and reflecting, and students will have opportunity to develop their practice skills and identify key personal and professional learning.

1.4 Supporting Student Learning

TU Dublin, City Campus has a Duty of Care to students participating on all programmes. As such, the health, safety and well-being of students is paramount. Procedures on managing applied learning within the classroom are guided by this principle and are informed by the *Safety, Health and Welfare at Work Act 2005*. TU Dublin supports students' participation in the following ways:

- During induction students are asked to read the Student Handbook, in particular, section '6.8: Engagement with the Programme' and appendix A 'Student Participation Consent Form'
- Students are asked to complete the 'Student Participation Consent Form'. This asks students to indicate that they have read and understood what is required of them in terms of participation and engagement on the programme. This form is retained for the duration of their academic programme and will be stored appropriately in line with Data Protection requirements.
- Where role play and practical exercises are used within the classroom, lecturers will take account of students' needs and plan accordingly. Lecturers will also engage preparatory work and debriefing where appropriate to support student learning.
- The programme team recognises that, in some circumstances, students may not participate in applied learning activities due to personal reasons or individual circumstances. Lecturers will take account of personal circumstances in the implementation of these activities, and reasonable accommodations can be made. Lecturers are cognisant of the content they may be covering and encourage students, in advance of the activity, to inform them if they have concerns. Internal supports are available for students within TU Dublin, including counselling supports, and students may be signposted to such supports if needs be.

1.5 Non-participation on an ongoing basis

TU Dublin recognises that students may sometimes be unable to participate in applied learning activities within the classroom due to personal reasons or individual circumstances. However, due to the practical nature of the programme, skills-based sessions and activities are an integral part of the learning experience. Students who do not partake in applied learning activities on an on-going basis will be required to meet with their tutor and/or Head of Discipline to ascertain whether the

student can fulfil the requirements of the programme and meet the proficiencies as outlined by CORU (2017).



Student Participation Consent Form

Social Care Workers are “professional practitioners engaged in the practice of social care work. Social care work is a relationship-based approach to the purposeful planning and provision of care, protection, psychosocial support and advocacy in partnership with vulnerable individuals and groups who experience marginalisation, disadvantage or special needs. Principles of social justice and human rights are central to the practice of Social Care Workers” (Social Care Workers Board, CORU, 2018, n.p). As such, a range of teaching and learning approaches and methods are used across the Bachelor of Arts (Hons.) in Social Care (TU996) in order to develop students’ skill, knowledge and competence to become social care workers.

These methods include role play, debates, small group exercises, group work, class discussions and critical friend exercises. This requires students to be fully open to engaging in the range of teaching and learning methods used across the programme in order to examine their own professional development and growth in order to become reflective, self-aware and client-centred social care workers. The range of teaching and learning methods utilised in each module is indicated in module descriptors and is available in the student handbook. Students are not required to share sensitive personal information during these exercises but are requested to contribute constructively and openly to programme content in order to enhance their personal and professional development as social care workers.

Please sign this document to indicate that you are aware of the expectation to fully participate in learning and teaching methods used across the programme and agree to it.

I agree to participate and engage in learning and teaching practices within the modules delivered on the Bachelor of Arts (Hons.) in Social Care (TU996).

Student Signature _____ Date _____

I also confirm I have read the student handbook and have familiarised myself with the information, content and assessment requirements relevant to my year of study.

Student Signature _____ Date _____

Programme Tutor Signature _____ Date _____

References:

CORU (2017). *Standards of Proficiency for Social Care Workers*. Dublin: CORU, Health and Social Care Regulator.

Lewis, L.H & Williams, C.J., (1994). Experiential learning: Past and present. *New Directions for Adult and Continuing Education*, 62.

Safety, Health and Welfare at Work Act (2005). Retrieved from: <http://www.irishstatutebook.ie/eli/2005/act/10/enacted/en/print>.

Policy Revision History

Revision no.	Description of change	Status
1	Adapted from Tallaght for City Campus	Approved