

Faculty of Health Sciences (Nursing (all fields), including apprenticeships and Specialist Community Nursing, Trainee Nursing Associates, ODP, Midwifery, Paramedics, Physiotherapists) Guidance for students on health and social care placements to escalate concerns about the quality of learning environments

Background

Effective placement learning environments should empower students to take responsibility for their own learning, to seek out learning experiences and develop their own practice, without compromising patient safety/care. Students should be given the opportunities and space on a practice placement to develop their own practice and understand their role in that practice environment in the wider context of healthcare provision. It is expected that the level of practice supervision will change in line with a student's increasing proficiency and confidence as they progress through their chosen field of practice.

An effective placement learning environment is one which provides opportunities for learning experiences that enable students to meeting their personal learning needs as well as the outcomes required for assessment in clinical practice. An effective learning experience also takes account of any equality and diversity considerations or reasonable adjustments that need to be made to student learning and assessment.

Definition of a Placement Supervisor: this refers to all trainers/supervisors/coordinators/mentors/educators/assessors who are appropriately qualified/suitably prepared to support learners. In the practice placement, learners are provided with a named member of staff who will oversee their learning on placement and is usually responsible for the assessment of the learner's practice. The title of this person varies according to each profession and as such we have used a generic term of placement supervisor.

Key Staff: Practice Support Staff (Practice Learning Facilitators (PLFs), Clinical Skills Tutors (CSTs), Practice Development Nurses (PDNs), Clinical Practice Educators (CPEs) and Practice Education Facilitators (PEF)). In most cases, the Practice Support Staff would be the main organisational point of contact for student issues.

Scope of the guidance

Though it is not possible to outline every circumstance in which concerns may need to be escalated by a student to the Faculty of Health Sciences (FHS), there are three broad categories encompassed by this guidance. These categories are:

- Where a student perceives the standard of the learning environment in the placement area is unacceptable
- Where a student perceives there to be a lack of placement learning opportunities
- Where a student has concerns relating to learning support

During the Covid-19 pandemic, this guidance also provides students with the ability to raise concerns about the safety of the learning environment. This may include any issues related to the provision of appropriate training and/or Personal Protective Equipment when expected to care for patients with coronavirus. Where students do have any concerns of this type, they should follow the guidance in this document to escalate to the University where necessary.

This guidance does not encompass:

- Raising concerns about the safety or wellbeing of people in health and social care placements. In **all** circumstances where there is a concern about the safety or wellbeing of people in health and social care placements the *Faculty of Health Sciences Policy for raising concerns about the safety or wellbeing of people in health and social care placements* **must** be followed.
- Allegations of bullying and/or harassment by staff members which should be addressed following the *FHS Guidance for actions in the event of bullying while on placement* and the host organisation's bullying and harassment guidance.

Both the *Policy for raising concerns about the safety or wellbeing of people in health and social care placements* and *Guidance for actions in the event of bullying while on placement* documents can be accessed on the University of Hull's Placement Learning Unit website via this link: [CLICK HERE](#)

Page 5 of this guidance summarises the process when a student raises concerns about the standard of the learning environment, a perceived lack of learning opportunities and concerns relating to learning support.

Quality Monitoring

The FHS has established procedures in place to quality assure and monitor the quality of the practice placement experience which includes:

- Audit of placements
- Ensuring placements meet educational standards
- Reviewing student's evaluations of placements
- Liaising with designated Practice Support Staff who will advise on suitability of placements and capacity
- Providing placements with feedback from students' evaluations

Each practice placement area will have a designated education link (University employed Link Lecturer) who will act as a point of contact for students and practice staff.

Educator Register

It is the responsibility of every placement provider to maintain a local register of qualified educators. Registers should include: details of the educator preparation programme; dates of updates that have been undertaken, and where applicable, date of triennial review.

Audit

All placement areas are audited on a regular basis, as required by the Professional, Statutory and Regulatory Bodies (PSRBs). The placement audit requires information such as the number of available assessors, the learning opportunities available and evidence of how risk is assessed and managed.

Post-placement Evaluation

Students contribute to quality assurance activities through the completion of the post-placement evaluation and students are encouraged to complete these evaluations after their placement to allow placement areas to enhance the learning environment accordingly. The evaluation is provided through the online PARE tool. The evaluations are reviewed in partnership with practice staff and Link Lecturers and the evaluation information is shared and discussed with the placement team so that future learning and action points can be agreed.

Disclosing Health/Disabilities

Students are reminded of their own responsibilities in disclosing any illness or disability that may be a risk during a placement so that a risk assessment can be undertaken and adjustments recommended by any such assessment can be considered. Any reasonable adjustments applied to student placement learning will not detract from the level of competence that needs to be met for that stage/programme

Supervision in Practice Placements

It is expected that students will work with a range of staff in addition to their nominated Placement Supervisor, in order to gain experience while on placement. At all times, students should be supervised by staff that are appropriately qualified for that practice learning area. It is acknowledged that not all staff involved will have received formal training/preparation, which means that they cannot sign summative assessment documentation. It is, however, desirable for students to gain experience of working within the wider professional team.

What to do if you have concerns relating to the quality of the learning environment, availability of learning opportunities and/or the learning support:

While the FHS is proud of its strong collaboration with practice learning partners to provide quality assured placements through the education audit process and listening and responding to student placement evaluation, we recognise that there are occasions where students perceive the learning environment and placement experience to fall short of their expectations.

As a student on a placement area, you have a responsibility to report any concerns relating to the quality of the learning environment, availability of learning opportunities or the placement learning support.

In the first instance you must raise your concerns within your placement area, if appropriate, through your placement supervisor or a member of the Practice Support Staff. If this is not possible the ward/placement manager may be able to help to resolve the issue at a local level. However, if this is not possible or the issues are not resolved, you must escalate your concerns to the Link Lecturer for the placement area.

In cases where students believe that the standard of the learning environment in the placement area is unacceptable or have concerns about the availability of learning opportunities or the learning support provided, Practice Support Staff will undertake an initial assessment of the learning environment. The Practice Support Staff will work with the ward/placement manager and the Link Lecturer to review the learning environment and opportunities for learning experiences.

If the concerns raised are unable to be dealt with at this stage, the concerns will be escalated to the relevant Faculty programme director/professional lead for a review of placement arrangements. This may in certain circumstances result in a new placement being found for the student.

If you remain unhappy about any aspects of the experience or you feel that your concerns have not been addressed satisfactorily then you are advised to raise the issues with your Personal Supervisor (University Support Tutor). If your Personal Supervisor is unable to resolve matters to your satisfaction, it may be appropriate to use the FHS formal complaints procedure. Students can access

details of the Faculty of Health Sciences Student Complaints Process via the University of Hull website which can be accessed via this link: [CLICK HERE](#)

Escalation of concerns process when a student has concerns about the standard of the learning environment and/or concerns relating to learning support

