

# Practice Placement Manual



Bachelor of Arts in  
Applied Social Studies (Social Care)



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2nd edition ( 2009) was compiled by members of the Placement Sub-Committee of Irish Association of Social Care Educators. (www.iasce.ie), based on original material written by Majella Mulkeen and Margaret Gilmore at the Institute of Technology, Sligo; John McHugh, and Monica Dowling at Carlow College.

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## Important Numbers

Role: Name	Phone number	Email
<i>Student:</i>		
<i>Supervisor:</i>		
<i>Placement Co-ordinator:</i>		
<i>College visiting tutor:</i>		

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# 1: Context for Practice Placements

## Introduction

Social care is a relatively new profession, emerging in response to the social needs of families and individuals in community or residential settings. Graduates of the Bachelor of Arts in Applied Social Studies (Social Care) work in a wide variety of settings, such as community-based projects for young people, in residential care for children who cannot be cared for by their own families at that time, or with adults or children who have disabilities. Social care practitioners are employed in statutory or voluntary settings. Many graduates continue their studies to Honours BA degree or Master's degree levels.

These guidelines for social care practice placement are compiled to clarify the roles of supervisors, students and Institute/College tutors. They have been compiled bearing in mind feedback on previous guidelines received from supervisors and students.

It is our sincere hope that they will prove useful. We welcome further feedback. Any comments and suggestions can be emailed to Margaret Gilmore at Institute of Technology Sligo. Email: [gilmore.margaret@itsligo.ie](mailto:gilmore.margaret@itsligo.ie)

We look forward to a happy and productive professional partnership between the students, the Social Care profession and the Institute/College teams.

## What is social care?

Social Care is the provision of professional care, providing support, protection, welfare and advocacy for vulnerable or dependent service users, individually or in groups.

This is achieved through planned individualised and group programmes of care, which are based on needs that have been identified in consultation with the service user; these programmes are delivered through shared experiences and evaluated systematically. All interventions are based on established best practice and knowledge of relevant theory.

A basic definition agreed by the Irish Association of Social Care Educators [IASCE], the body that represents the educators in the field, runs as follows:

social care is ‘a profession committed to the planning and delivery of quality care and other support services for individuals and groups with identified needs.’ (Lalor & Share, 2009, Ch. 1)

## The importance of practice placements

We remember what we do better than what we read or hear. By working alongside experienced practitioners, and under the direction of a supervisor, the student is enabled to grow and develop, to understand and empathise, to mature and become a reflective and effective practitioner.

We cannot over-estimate the importance of placements in each student’s development, and we in the Institutes/ Colleges are most appreciative of our colleagues in the workplace who give of their time and expertise.



## Course Objectives

1. To prepare students for professional social care employment in the statutory and voluntary sectors.
2. To help students develop an understanding of society and culture.
3. To provide students with an understanding of the range of social and family services (with a strong emphasis on the Irish context of social care practice).
4. To provide the theoretical frameworks necessary to inform student’s practice in social care, child care and family support work settings.
5. To assist students in acquiring and applying practice skills and techniques used by social care practitioners.
6. To promote the self-development of students to help them become more self-aware and to develop their critical thinking skills.
7. To provide a solid training base to Bachelor of Arts level with the option to progress to further studies at B.A.(Hons.), M.A. and Ph.D. levels.

## Course Programme and Content

The course is taught through the medium of lectures, tutorials, workshops, practicals and placements. Assessment is by continuous assessment, end of year exams, project work and placement performance. The following are all important components in the students’ training:

<b>Academic development:</b>	<i>Social care and related theory...</i>
<b>Skill development:</b>	<i>Communication, interpersonal and personal effectiveness...</i>
<b>Professional development:</b>	<i>Social care principles and good practice...</i>
<b>Personal development:</b>	<i>Self-awareness, identification of learning needs ...</i>

## Placement Objectives

The Practice Placement is central to the student’s learning journey. It is where theory and practice meet. For each student this will be a different experience because added to the mix of theory and practice is the individual student’s own personality, personal development and talents. The challenge provided by the placement is for the student to integrate all this learning and to develop a critical self-awareness and reflective practice skills.



## Real-life, relevant situations

It is only when encountering real life situations that the relevance of much of the material covered in class becomes obvious to the student, and it is in the placement that they are given the opportunity to develop their interests, skills and enthusiasm, work towards a professional standard and to get know their own strengths and areas for improvement.

On placement, a student experiences the world of work, with its ups and downs,

- Seeing the impact of dedicated staff in difficult situations.
- Encountering the teamwork that goes on behind the scenes in meetings and networking.

- Getting to know how organisations work, and how agencies relate to each other.
- Seeing at first hand the impact of social circumstances and policies on the lives of people, which they may not have encountered in their own personal circles.

### To maximise these opportunities:

- The placement must take place in an appropriate work situation with a suitable agency, either statutory, voluntary or private. Work opportunities may arise in a wide variety of settings including Residential care centres, Community projects, Day/Residential centres for disabled persons, Special Schools, Health Service Community Childcare projects etc.
- The student must be linked to one named person who is suitably qualified and sufficiently experienced to supervise the student. We recommend at least 3 years post-qualification experience.
- It is recommended that supervisors who are relatively inexperienced should also have support from a more experienced colleague/manager and the manager of the centre should countersign the final report form.
- The placement should comprise a normal working week between 30 and 35 hours
- The Institute/College should ensure that appropriate contact by tutors is maintained with students while on placement (usually through regular phone contact and visits).



The Placement will also provide the student with opportunities to

- Apply theoretical aspects of social care as taught in Institute/College to actual practice
- Practice, under supervision, social care skills
- Learn about social care in a working situation
- Establish suitability towards the work as a social care practitioner
- Clarify the preferred areas of practice
- Identify and explore issues relating to personal effectiveness and development

It is recognised that while on placement the role is ambiguous, somewhere between that of learner and professional; this may sometimes make it difficult to know what the limits are. It is also recognised that placement is a developmental process; it may involve varying levels of competence, responsibility and autonomy.

### Tip for students!

Remember: Placement is an opportunity to be grasped, not merely an exercise to be completed.



## 2: Principles and Commitments Underlying Placement

This statement has been agreed by the Irish Association of Social Care Educators (IASCE). This body represents the Institutes/Colleges offering professional social care education in the Republic of Ireland. It is designed to help the student, the agency and its service users to obtain the maximum benefit from the placement experience and it should be used to inform student practice while on placement.

### Statement of IASCE principles

1. You should ensure that you are physically, mentally and emotionally prepared to undertake your placement
2. You should recognise the limits of your competence but, in consultation with your academic and practice supervisors, seek to explore and develop new skills and understanding
3. You have a responsibility to be open and honest in relation to all aspects of the practice programme
4. You should be prepared to engage fully in the supervisory process, to accept constructive criticism and to reflect critically on your own practice
5. You must observe the norms and regulations of the working environment. If you disagree with any aspect of these you must bring this to the attention of your supervisors for discussion
6. You have a responsibility to be sensitive to and to respect the organisational culture of the agency, its service users and employees
7. You should respect and understand the importance of confidentiality in all aspects of the placement and adhere to this principle in practice
8. You should always be aware of boundary issues, in particular between personal and professional engagement, and demonstrate this awareness in your practice
9. Any form of physical, verbal, emotional or sexual abuse of service users is regarded as most unprofessional and may be grounds for dismissal
10. If you are involved in any research practice while on placement, you must ensure that you are informed about and adhere to ethical research principles

Irish Association of Social Care Educators (IASCE) 2004 [www.iasce.ie](http://www.iasce.ie)

## Key Parties to the Practice Placement

### i) Commitment of the Institute/College regarding practice placements

1. An appropriate placement will be arranged with regard to the course and the student's expressed preferences. The Institute/College will provide lectures and tutorials to prepare the student for the practice placement, to enable maximum benefit to be derived. The student is expected to present and discuss their personal learning objectives with their tutor and supervisor.
2. The Institute/College will provide the agency with a set of learning objectives for students appropriate to their stage of development. The Placement Supervisor has the freedom to adjust these in the light of the priorities of the agency.
3. The Institute/College will provide the student with a clear outline of the principles (see page 9) they are expected to work by during their time in the practice placement agency and the work they are expected to carry out.
4. The Institute/College will furnish the Placement Supervisor with all appropriate documentation in relation to the placement: hours and dates of placement, insurance cover and contact details for Placement Co-ordinator. The assessment forms are brought personally by the student to the supervisor, and when completed are brought personally back to the Institute/College by the student.
5. The Institute/College will provide a personal tutor visit to the student and the supervisor in the course of the placement, during which a three way meeting will take place. The times and date will be agreed by all involved. The purpose of the visit is:
  - To be informed about the agency and to meet with the supervisor and student
  - To discuss with the student and supervisor the progress and learning taking place
  - To receive feedback from the student/supervisor and address any issues arising for either party. (See Appendix A.)
6. The Institute/College will provide students with an opportunity to explore their learning on placement at a review programme after the placement. This review will take place in the Institute/College, and is a compulsory part of the placement.

#### Tip for students!

A student's enthusiasm and constructive observations can be valuable even to a well-established team.

### ii) Commitment of practice placement agency

1. A suitably qualified professional is appointed as supervisor (ideally one who has Diploma or Degree in Applied Social Care and is three years post qualification; someone with related qualification may also be appropriate). This person should attend the supervision workshop provided by the Institute/College, and s/he agrees

to support the student's development and learning for the duration of the practice placement. An alternative supervisor may be appointed in the event of their unforeseen absence.

2. The supervisor and student discuss and agree appropriate learning objectives for the placement, which are then written, signed and copies retained by all concerned, i.e. the supervisor, the student and the Institute/College (see Student Contract Form, Appendix B).
3. The student is provided with an opportunity to discuss their learning and progress in the work throughout the placement period. This will require the provision of supportive supervision meetings of approximately one hour weekly.
4. A timetable of work is organised with the student's learning objectives and the requirements of the Institute/College in mind, and any change to this is communicated to the relevant personnel.
5. The supervisor meets with the Institute/College visiting tutor by appointment, to discuss the student's progress in the light of the objectives set by the Institute/College and the student.
6. The supervisor appoints other staff to work with the student where appropriate to their learning.
7. The supervisor will contact the Institute/College Placement Co-ordinator if any concerns arise in relation to the student's placement.
8. The supervisor completes the assessment form giving a true reflection of the student's learning and development.

#### Tip for students!

Becoming a skilled social care practitioner starts in the classroom. Listen, question, reflect and understand.

### iii) Commitment of the student on practice placement

1. Each student should become fully informed of the general rules and regulations of your educational institution, and those of the agency with which they are placed.
2. The student should attend all placement preparation/professional practice seminars in the Institute/College. Failure to do so may result in placement being deferred until suitable preparation is undertaken.
3. The student must co-operate with the Placement Co-ordinator with regard to placement choices and follow up all recommendations.

#### Tip for students!

It is very important for your own personal and professional development that you work through, rather than get through, this experience. Keeping a record of your journey will help you to examine your attitudes and develop your own sensitivity and capacity for insight.



## 3: Practicalities of Placement – How to Achieve These Standards

4. The student should set out their own learning objectives, along with those set out by the Institute/College, submit them to the practice placement agency on the preliminary visit.
5. The student understands and signs up to the Irish Association of Social Care Educators Practice Placement Statement of Principles.
6. The student carries out their preliminary visit and speak to the Placement Co-ordinator if any issues regarding suitability of placements arise.
7. The student takes all relevant Health and Safety precautions e.g. Hepatitis vaccination. If in doubt, ask.
8. The student contacts the Placement Co-ordinator if there are any concerns about which they are unable to speak to their supervisor.
9. The student attends practice placement in line with the Institute/College requirements.
10. The student discusses with the supervisor and the Institute/College if the placement is not sufficiently challenging.
11. The student is sensitive to their impact on the agency, and how the agency work affects them.
12. The student observes and participates in good teamwork to the best of their ability, recognising that each worker has a role to play.
13. The student keeps a log of personal learning while on placement, to encourage reflective practice. This will form the basis for many of the supervision sessions and for the written assignments and the visit from the Institute/College tutor.
14. The student completes the assignments, according to the guidelines set out for the relevant year of the course.
15. Any assignments other than documents arising from the placement should have no identifying details or names unless specifically required (e.g. agency profile), and should not be left in public places. Confidentiality and respect for service users are essential in this work
16. The student attends the three way meeting with the Institute/College visiting tutor with required preparation and has the relevant documents available.
17. The the student attends and fully participates in the practice placement review at the end of placement at the Institute/College.

### Tip for students!

Do not be afraid to discuss your real feelings, which are understandable as a person new to this type of work. They are not a sign of unsuitability or failure. How you learn to cope with these feelings is more important. In care work your most valuable asset is yourself and the more you know of yourself the better, for your personal and for your professional development.

High standards are achieved by setting clear Learning Objectives. Setting objectives demands

- Clear thinking
- Taking responsibility for one's own learning
- Seeking advice and guidance as to what is manageable and appropriate

Guidance is available from the supervisor, placement co-ordinator and the Institute/College visiting tutor.

Achievement of these learning objectives is the primary indicator of developing fitness to practice as a social care practitioner.

### Learning Objectives Need to Cover the Following Skills

#### 1) Knowledge-based (information) skills

Students need to

- Know about the work of the agency and the context in which it works
- Be able to relate course work to practice.

#### 2) Interpersonal Skills

Students need to be able to

- Introduce oneself, start conversations, be receptive to others, form relationships at a variety of levels with staff and people using the service
- Manage the routine and challenges of interpersonal communication
- Demonstrate this in, for example, remembering peoples' names, starting and building on conversations, questioning and taking benefits from the knowledge and insights of staff and people using the service, reflecting on and dealing with conflict.
- Active listening skills in supportive conversations with service users.

### 3) Self-awareness skills:

Students need to

- Be aware of personal strengths and shortfalls within the practice setting and be open to reflect on these and take direction on appropriate action
- Be aware of the challenges posed by work in this particular field and how to deal with the difficulties being encountered or which appear too much to tackle
- Be aware of fears, stereotypes or prejudices which may be held about service users, and be open to exploring how this impacts on work, as well as understanding the impact of discriminatory behaviour by professionals
- Develop an ability to demonstrate this awareness of discrimination in discussions with the supervisor and in subsequent reflections in each one's personal daily journal.

### 4) Professional and work skills

Students need

*a) To acquire a professional identity as a social care practitioner*

- To be aware of and practice the key skill of confidentiality
- To be able to work under direction and on one's own initiative when appropriate
- To demonstrate the ability to plan and evaluate all work
- To observe punctuality and other time and organisational norms
- To prepare for and participate in supervision and the three-way meeting with Institute/College tutor
- To keep a log of learning and activity, and to complete required written work
- To use the support system available through supervision, to question, discuss and develop awareness of strengths and future training needs

*b) To be able to locate the agency within its legislative and regulatory context*

- To understand and be able to reflect on the mission statement, aims and objectives of the agency in co-operation with the supervisor,
- To be informed about Codes of Practice in the agency which influence professional work e.g. Complaints Procedure and how it operates; Health and Safety Procedures as they apply to this practice placement, and Child Protection Policy and Procedures as they operate within the agency; Anti-discrimination and equality policies and how these impact on the work of professionals within the agency.



## 4: Supervision is the Key to a Successful Placement

#### Tip for students!

Students need to develop the following skills, at a more in-depth level with progress through the course and the placement:

1. Knowledge-based (information) skills
2. Interpersonal skills
3. Self-awareness skills
4. Professional and work skills

### What is Professional Supervision?

“Professional Supervision is a partnership process of ongoing reflection and feedback between a named supervisor and supervisee/s to ensure and enhance effective practice. Provided in a supportive manner, it offers a structured opportunity to discuss work, to reflect on practice and progress and to plan for future development.” (O’Neill, 2005: p.163)

Supervision is essential to the caring professional in maintaining their own health, effectiveness and development. It does this by helping them to explore their work and how it affects them, therefore enabling them to identify areas for future development. This process of reflective practice ultimately ensures that the interests of those they work alongside are protected.

It is important that supervision is part of the training experience of the potential caring professional. As well as learning the ‘what’ and ‘how’ of the social care profession, the student must develop self-awareness and an ability to explore new practice challenges in a safe way. It is a central role of the supervisor to facilitate this process.

Work allocated should be real work and not just to keep the student busy. The student is on placement to learn, so work needs to be a learning process. This learning needs to be supervised to ensure that the student is picking up good practice.

The supervisor may not necessarily teach everything but has to ensure that learning is taking place which is accurate and appropriate. This involves finding a balance between: (a) amount of work and study the student does, (b) supervisor having a sense of the student's level of understanding and evaluating the quality of the learning that is taking place.

#### Tip for supervisors

Remember that information overload is common in the beginning, and it may be necessary to return to some points later, when the student has had an opportunity to understand the context better.

## Regular Supervision Meetings

The purpose of supervision meetings is to provide a formal supportive environment to assist the student in their learning and development while in the practice placement.

In order to ensure such opportunities are built into the timetable of all parties involved we recommend that the student and supervisor agree to a formal arrangement or contract in respect of supervision meetings (See Appendices B & C for suggested contract, agenda and recording template for the supervision meetings).



### Supervision has 3 elements

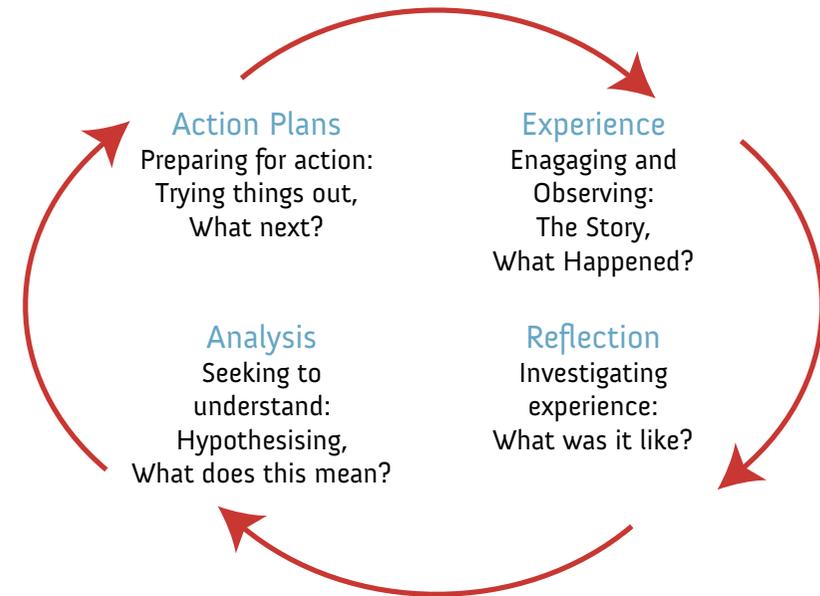
- **Accountability:** The student is accountable to the supervisor
- **Support:** The supervisor supports the student in achieving set objectives
- **Learning:** Set objectives are reviewed and re-set in the light of achievements

<i>Supervision is for</i>	<i>Supervision is not for</i>
Monitoring the quality of work	A telling off
Reviewing and planning work	Counselling
Reflecting on what is done and how to do it (Task and Process)	Something to do only when problems arise
Exploring and expressing issues brought up by work	Something to do when nothing is happening
Challenging the worker	A test or examination
Being proactive rather than reactive	A grievance session

- Often the focus is on TASKS,
- Other times it is exclusively on the PERSON.

(modified with permission from Eileen O'Neill)

## Supervision cycle: adapted from Kolb, 1988



In reflecting on an experience which the student or supervisor wants to discuss, the Supervision Cycle adapted from Kolb (1988) is a useful method to follow. There are four parts which follow logically from each other, in an upward spiral:

1. **Experience:** The student describes what happened in the story or incident, how s/he engaged and observed the event (What?)
2. **Reflection:** The student and supervisor together reflect on what that experience was like and how it felt for that student (How?)
3. **Analysis:** Together they seek to gain understanding of the incident, why the events unfolded as they did, why emotions were heightened or reactions occurred, can any theories explain the events (Why?)
4. **Action plans:** what might the student do differently in similar circumstances in the future? Are there alternatives? (When, what?)

### Hints for Supervisors

## Starting well: Preliminary visit and weeks 1 & 2

Supervisors need to

1. Arrange time and place for arrival of student, and appropriate induction
2. Make introductions and if possible, show the student around the agency
3. Explain practical issues e.g. Timetable, open/close times, canteen/lunch arrangements, any particular requirements re clothing, office/room/storage space, access to computers/phones etc., holidays/training days over placement period, regular supervision time slots, code of practice of the agency.
4. Suggest/provide background reading material e.g. agency reports, evaluation reports, agency policies and associated procedures, health & safety policies.
5. Explain the expected work and set student's timetable.
6. Identify manageable learning objectives in discussion with the student, and set tasks associated with their achievement.
7. Complete and return Placement Contract to Institute/College, together with directions for visiting tutor to get to the centre.

### Tip for supervisors!

The most helpful supervision is regular balanced feedback that is supportive and honest. If there are difficulties say so and if things are going well, tell the student.

## As the placement progresses

1. The supervisor can allocate some time in timetable for student to complete his/her written work i.e. daily log and portfolio
2. Once settling in period is complete, timetable may be re-negotiated if this helps the student's learning re their objectives and associated tasks e.g. agency visits, relationships with people using service, active involvement with groups, planning and implementation of programmes in centre, practice of skills required in communication with users of service, etc.

### Tip for students!

Remember that respectful questions are welcome and show that you are interested in the work

## Endings: Last 1-2 weeks

The supervisor can

1. Plan the student's departure, inform anyone concerned, discuss closure with student. There may be a card or some appropriate way to acknowledge the student's contribution to the agency
2. Review learning from all work, and seek feedback from student on agency, learning, placement organisation and any other outstanding issues
3. Fill out assessment form in agreement with student
4. Check with the student that all required written work is completed.

### Tip for students!

Students are reminded of the contract signed in Institute/College, to abide by the IASCE Social Care Practice Placement Statement of Principles. Please refer to it at all times during your practice training.

## Role of Visiting Tutor

The tutor who visits from the Institute/College has a supportive role on behalf of both the student and the supervisor. S/he will make an advance appointment and the student is expected to participate actively in the meeting.

It is important that the visiting tutor gets to meet both student and supervisor together in a tripartite meeting, and also to spend a little time with each of them individually. In this way, any difficulties can be discussed and solutions can be generated. There is a suggested agenda for this meeting in Appendix A.



## 5: Frequently Asked Questions

### Police Vetting:

Each Institute/College obtains Garda Vetting for its students, valid for 3 years. The student is obliged to inform the Institute/College if there is any change to their status e.g. new charge pending.

In the present climate of professional accountability and good practice, we recommend that placement agencies consider the following in addition if they deem it necessary:

1. Following up all the referees nominated by every student
2. The report from the student's previous placement, if any is available
3. The recommendation of the Placement Co-ordinator

### Trouble Shooting, What If...

#### Placement is not working smoothly or the student is apparently not engaged by the work of the agency

Any concerns by student or supervisor should be resolved locally, as early as possible. If this is not possible, please contact the Placement Co-ordinator to discuss the concerns so that valuable time is not wasted. We will do everything possible to ensure a satisfactory solution is achieved for all concerned. It is not necessary to wait for the Institute/College tutor to visit.

#### The student is not punctual or attending regularly

Adherence to an agreed timetable is an essential skill for competence in the workforce. Any difficulties must be resolved immediately by discussion e.g. is there a problem with transport? Could a different timetable be negotiated?

## Non-attendance

Any absences will be treated as for an employee, i.e. for personal illness or immediate family emergencies. It is the student's responsibility to notify immediately by phone and later in writing, to the Placement Supervisor and to the Institute/College even for a day. Any absence greater than two days requires official /medical certification, and may require extension of the placement beyond the original dates, with the agreement of the agency.

If there are exceptional circumstances that necessitate the closure of the agency at any time during placement the student is required to make alternative arrangements with the agency to ensure they receive adequate experience.

## Supervisor and student experience a personality clash

This cannot be foreseen, and is not anyone's fault. In this event, we would encourage the supervisor to acknowledge this with the student, and to work to continue to ensure a positive learning experience for all concerned. If it remains a serious obstacle within the practice placement, it may be possible to arrange for an alternative supervisor to take over.

## The student is too critical

It is good for the students to question constructively, as a means to ensure learning. It should always be undertaken in a positive spirit. The student should be encouraged to express respectful views that may be constructively critical of the agency and its work. This can be used as the basis for significant learning for the student and the agency.

## Student is experiencing personal difficulties

In the event of a student experiencing personal difficulties such as illness or bereavement it may be necessary to defer completion of the placement. If such issues arise it is required that they be brought to the attention of the Institute/College as soon as possible. Suitable arrangements can be negotiated with the student, the placement agency and the Institute/College.

## Student or supervisor has ethical concerns

A student who is concerned about practices witnessed while on placement e.g. abuse or bullying should discuss it immediately with the supervisor and/or the Institute/College tutors, and be prepared to follow up with a written statement.

In the event of a student engaging in unethical or unprofessional conduct, they will be deemed to have broken their Placement Contract, thus ending the placement. The Institute/College, the placement agency, the student and any other relevant party will discuss an appropriate course of action.

Reporting your concerns is not *telling tales*. The Institute/College has a responsibility to respond to any concerns brought to its attention during placements organised by it on your behalf. This is particularly the case where such concerns relate to the welfare and protection of any vulnerable person in your care.

Confidentiality is a vital element of the professional care relationship. Discuss the limits of confidentiality with your supervisor and be clear about the policy of the agency in relation to the protection and welfare of those using the service or facilities.

## Dignity and respect at work

Everyone in the work environment is entitled to be treated with dignity and respect. Sexual harassment is defined as any unwanted behaviour of a sexual nature which is offensive and causes discomfort or humiliation to the individual who is harassed. It is illegal under the Employment Equality Act 1998. The maintenance of a safe and secure working environment is the responsibility of the placement agency in this instance. If such a situation arises the student should tell the person/harasser they must stop as this behaviour is unacceptable. Report any such incidents directly to your supervisor, centre manager and your Institute/College tutor if necessary. Refer to agency's dignity at work policy.



## Cultural differences

If cultural differences pose a challenge, these should be discussed in supervision and appropriate actions can be devised, bearing in mind anti-discrimination legislation.

## The student is at risk of failing placement

It is expected that the vast majority of the students will present themselves for their placement energised and focused on a clear set of learning objectives. It should prove to be a profound learning experience, and will, it is hoped, conclude with a satisfactory three-way assessment meeting.



## 6: Written Materials

In cases where the Supervisor has significant reservations about some aspects of the student's performance, the Placement Co-ordinator should be notified as early as possible. It may be necessary to terminate the student's placement before the completion date if it is not possible to rectify the situation in the context of time limits.

However, it may be possible, following discussions between all concerned, for the student to continue with his or her studies subject to a further satisfactory placement and/or evidence of appropriate attention to presenting difficulties. For example, it may occasionally be advisable for a student to receive professional counselling for personal issues before proceeding with further training. The Placement Assessment Report Form should be completed by the supervisor indicating placement outcome.

### Tip for students!

Student must ensure that any unfinished work is notified to staff.

It is the Institute/College's responsibility to counsel the student in such situations. To this end it will be necessary for the Placement Co-ordinator to have a full and frank discussion of the situation with the Placement Supervisor, in person.

### Student is deemed unsuitable for social care practice

Some students, who may present with major difficulties, may need to be counselled out of training while others may be required to defer their training, to undertake a further placement or perhaps to seek professional counselling.

While the headings in the Assessment Forms provide a framework for assessment, the bottom line must always be whether or not the student is fit to train and eventually practice as a social care professional. This needs to be answered clearly and unambiguously.

### Appealing a failed placement

Should the student profoundly disagree with the decision to fail the placement a written appeal can be made according to College/Institute appeal procedures.

### Documentation required

Formal documentation of the Practice Placement process is essential in each Institute/College. An Institute/College may require any or all of the following to be completed.

#### a) Placement contract: to be completed and returned to Institute/College and copy kept by student and supervisor

This document ensures that all parties agree to support the student's learning objectives.

#### b) Supervisor reports

Summary of the issues raised at each supervision session. See Appendix C.

#### c) Placement Assessment Report Form to be completed by the Supervisor

This vital document allows the supervisor to document the student's strengths and weaknesses as observed during the placement. It is based on the learning objectives, set out in placement contract.

This document is confidential to the student, the supervisor and the Institute/College staff. Many of the headings may be useful in supervision sessions also. The supervisor should discuss any comments under the various headings with the student, sign it and give to the student to personally return to the Institute/College at the end of the placement. The student's placement is not considered complete until this form is received.



Supervisors are encouraged to remember their responsibility to the profession, and if in doubt as to a student's aptitude and level of ability, to discuss this with Institute/College visiting tutor or Placement Co-ordinator and/or more senior colleague at work. Students whose placements are deemed incomplete or unsatisfactory must undertake further placement, either in the same or another agency, before being allowed to progress on the course. Individual colleges set limits as to the amount of times placement can be repeated.

#### d) Student's written assignments (Portfolio)

Each Institute/College will require the student to complete written work, usually known as Student Portfolio which is designed to ensure that the student's learning is systematic and documented.

## Appendix A: Suggested agenda of meeting during the visit by Institute/College staff

- Introduction to supervisor, general discussion of agency work and practice placement. Request any urgent issues to be identified.
- Meet with student and be shown around, if appropriate, allowing the student to describe the agency and its personnel, target group and overall work. Provide an opportunity to hear about experiences to date and any concerns.
- Hold a three way meeting with the student and supervisor with the focus on resolving any concerns together with feedback from the supervisor to the student on his/ her progress and any issues arising for learning and development. Note the progress being made in meeting the student's own and Institute/College's learning objectives.
- Invite the student to present agreed materials. Mark the student's level of understanding and delivery of the presentation. Reinforce the importance of the learning journal.
- Check if there are any issues needing resolution such as hours, timekeeping, boundaries, confidentiality, use of supervision, safety concerns, linking practice to theory.
- Discuss the placement feedback/assessment form with the supervisor and any queries they may have about marking it.

## Appendix B: Sample Student Placement Contract

To be completed at initial visit and copy given to Institute/College.

Student Name:	
Phone number:	
Supervisor's name:	
Phone number:	
Address of agency/location of placement:	
Placement dates:	
Note here any changes proposed to these dates:	
Working hours/ days/ time in lieu arrangements:	
Directions to centre for Visiting Tutor:	

### Specific college requirements:

1. Regular (weekly) supervision meetings
2. Meeting with visiting college Tutor, Supervisor and Student
3. Completion of Placement Report by the Supervisor at end of placement
4. Completion of Placement Portfolio by the Student

### Student's learning objectives for the placement: (these should be specific, measurable and realistic)

1. Knowledge: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
2. Interpersonal: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
3. Self-awareness: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
4. Professional and work skills: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

### Placement Supervisor's Plans for student:

How will induction be organised?

What type of work is the student likely to undertake?

Learning opportunities offered: (The work undertaken should as far as possible reflect the learning objectives)

Arrangements for supervision once weekly:

Time: \_\_\_\_\_

Place: \_\_\_\_\_

Student's statements:

- I agree to abide by the Agency's policy on Confidentiality.
- I agree to work according to the principles and guidelines in the IASCE Practice Placement Manual.

### Signatures:

Supervisor: \_\_\_\_\_ Student: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

## Appendix C: Supervision

### Suggested agenda of supervision meetings

The student should take responsibility for contributing additional items to the agenda and s/he should bring work e.g. be prepared to discuss a critical incident.

1. Minutes of last meeting.
2. Matters arising/outstanding tasks
3. Review of past week from perspective of supervisor and student (highlights and lowlights)
4. Work programmes and practices in Agency – clarify any issues student may have
5. Concerns or difficulties being experienced; how the work impacts on the student
6. Links between practice and theory (identify what student observes about behaviour/ policies/ approaches etc. and seek to link these to theoretical approaches e.g. why has a situation arisen?)
7. Any safety issues? (standards of practice and issues relating to health and safety of staff and target group)
8. Identify any gaps in information and either inform or direct the student to source of information
9. Feedback on student's progress (It can be useful to use learning objectives (see pages 13-14 above and end of placement assessment report form for ideas)
10. Enquire about progress on college written work/portfolio
11. Plan work for next week
12. Agree date & time for next supervision meeting

Complete record of supervision meeting (e.g. 5 minutes at the end) signed by both student and supervisor.

### Template for Supervision meeting

(print on agency headed paper)

Student's Name:	
Supervisor's name:	
Date of meeting:	
Work Base/main centre:	

Actions outstanding from previous meeting:

Issues Discussed	Any Actions Agreed (with time scales and person responsible)

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_ (Student)

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_ (Supervisor)

Date of next meeting:

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<a href="http://www.iascw.ie">www.iascw.ie</a>	see material on Ethics

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