

Social Work Placement Allocation Strategy

Principles

- Teaching Partnership (TP) agencies will be the main providers of placements, aiming to provide 75% of statutory placements per placement cohort;
- The TP will work with the academic Practice Education Leads (PELs), the Practice Education Support Team (PES Team), and the Practice Education Course Leader (PECL) to ensure that placements are allocated in the agreed timeline, and that the number of Practice Education Professional Standards (PEPS) trainee practice educators (where relevant) will not exceed the expected number of students;
- First placement students will be allocated to Stage 1 trainees and final placements to Stage 2 trainees. Where this is not feasible plans will be discussed with the PECL in advance, and arrangements agreed with the university placement team, course leader, and placement provider on how the final assessment of the student will be signed off by a Stage 2 qualified PE;
- Final placement students will have priority for placements and will be allocated before first placement students where placements overlap;
- Final placement students must have opportunities to work alongside a qualified social worker;
- Students will be provided with a contrasting placement experience in each of their placements;
- Students who do not have current DBS or OH clearance will not be allocated to placements;
- Creative strategies should be considered to accommodate students who do not have a car within placements traditionally requiring car drivers;
- The InPlace system will be used to assist with the allocation of placements and to communicate, record and report on placement allocation and completion;
- Three placement allocation meetings (PAM) will be held by the TP each year to finalise upcoming placement allocations prior to communicating the information to students;
- For student internships and employed students the hosting organisation / employer will be responsible for the provision and allocation of a placement. The details of the proposed placement should be communicated to the PES Team in advance of the relevant PAM and confirmed within this meeting.
- The PES Team will inform placement providers about any delay due to a student not progressing or other issues as soon as this is known;
- Where a provider decides that they are not able to provide a placement, this must be confirmed in writing to the university stating the reason;
- All eligible students will be provided with a placement within the above arrangements. This includes students with a previous placement fail or non-viable ending to a previous placement.

Student Expectations

- For the first placement, students must accept the placement allocated. Students will be referred to the Practice Learning Handbook for guidance on what to do when turning down a placement;
- For the final placement, students may state their preference for working with either adults or children & families but the Department cannot guarantee that a placement will be found within their preferred service or geographical area, as the number and type of placements may vary from year to year;
- Students expressing a preference for a Children & Families placement must be available for possible meetings with families in the early evening;
- Students will be allocated in line with the Faculty policy of less than 2 hours travelling to placement;
- Students must not arrange their own placements or contact agencies without explicit permission from the PEL;
- Students will be expected to follow the normal practices of the team to which they are allocated.

Quality Assurance

- It is the responsibility of all parties to support the quality assurance (QA) of placements by contributing to QA processes and the prompt completion of all Quality Assurance in Practice Learning (QAPL) documents.

Please see the following page for a high-level timeline of the placement allocation strategy.

Timeline

6 months in advance of the start of the academic year, the TP Team contact TP agencies to identify the likely number of placements available for the upcoming year and communicate this information with the PES Team



PES Team and PEL forecast requirements for placements 6 months (MSW) – 8 Months (BA) prior to each placement block using InPlace



PES Team communicates the required placements, considering geographical areas, with placement providers and PECL



At least three months before the placement block, Students complete Placement Application Form (PAF) on InPlace



Tutors review the PAF and provide feedback to students



Placement Information Forms (PIF) are completed by PEPS trainees at point of application to the PEPS course



One week prior to Placement Allocation Meeting (PAM), initial allocation is completed and shared with Workforce Development Leads (WD Leads)



WD Leads review their allocations in advance of the PAM. Where possible WD Leads should notify the PES Team of the team that the student will be placed in to assist the allocation process



Placement Allocation Meeting held to finalise placement allocations (in May for BA1 and BA2 placements, Nov for MSW2 placements and Feb for MSW1 placements)



Any outstanding placement arrangements are finalised between the PES Team and WD Leads



PES Team notifies students as to where their profiles have been sent



Within two weeks of PAM, WD Leads confirm details of allocated PEs/Onsite Supervisors (OSS) with the PES Team (if not already confirmed)



PEs/OSSs are contacted by the PES Team (copying in WD Leads) and invited to arrange Pre-Placement Meetings (PPM) with students -

PPMs should be held within 3 weeks of being invited to do so. PEs/OSSs should **not contact** the student prior to this.



PEs/OSSs communicate the confirmed date of PPMs to the PES Team, copying in their WD Lead.



After three weeks, if no PPM date confirmation is received by PES Team from the PE/OSS, the PES Team will contact PE/OSS directly, copying in WD Lead, to expedite



Within one week following the PPM, PEs confirm to the PES Team and student that placement will go ahead, copying in WD Lead.



Where an Offsite PE is required, arrangements are made to identify and confirm who this will be



At least three weeks before placement start date, the PES Team sends out placement documents to Tutor, Student, PE, WD Lead (and OSS where applicable)