Department of Social Work, Social Care and Youth and Community Studies

Placement information and guidance for completing the Application for Placement

Practice Learning Requirements

Practice learning is central to social work training with your academic learning designed to support practice. Practice-based learning is a core element of your course.

Requirements for practice learning, identified by the Social Work Reform Board and The College of Social Work are:

- 30 days for development of practice and professional skills
- 70 days first placement
- 100 days last placement
- Students will have different practice experiences in the first and last placement
- Students will undertake tasks to prepare them for statutory interventions in the last placement

To meet these requirements, the Social Work placement team at Sheffield Hallam University work collaboratively with placement providers in South Yorkshire, Nottinghamshire and Derbyshire and Lincolnshire. Sheffield Hallam University students are placed in the statutory sector and the third sector. Whilst we try and ensure students have experience in a statutory setting, the requirement is that students 'will undertake tasks to prepare them for statutory interventions in the last placement'; this can be met both in the statutory sector and the third sector. Where possible, students will have experiences in both statutory and third sector settings, but please note this is not a requirement. To meet the requirement of 'have different practice experiences in the first and last placement' students can be placed in settings delivering services across all service user groups, this will not always mean a placement in both children's services and adult services.

All placements are audited in line with regulatory body and university requirements to ensure that you are able to meet curriculum requirements.

Students are required to work a 35 hour week, normally from 9:00 am to 5:00 pm with 1 hour for lunch (time not included in the 35 hour per week); flexible working hours can sometimes be negotiated with the agency. Please note: students on the BSc (Hons) Applied Nursing (Learning Disability) and Generic Social Work programme are required to work a 37.5 hour week.
If you have personal circumstances which you would like the placement team to take into consideration these should be discussed with your academic advisor in the first instance. If you or a family member has used social care services in South Yorkshire, Nottinghamshire or Derbyshire please discuss with your academic advisor and notify the Social Work Placement Manager as this will need to be taken into consideration when allocating a placement.

Placement Allocation

Every effort is made to avoid students having to travel long distances however this is not always possible and therefore a student may be placed in any of the following areas:

- South Yorkshire:
  - Sheffield
  - Rotherham
  - Barnsley
  - Doncaster
- Derbyshire
- Nottinghamshire
- Lincolnshire

The NHS provides a bursary of £500 per year for travel expenses to and from your placement. Some placement providers do pay mileage expenses for travel incurred on placement (e.g. home visits), however, some do not and this is beyond the university’s control. In exceptional circumstances students may be able to request a particular location (e.g. bereavement, pregnancy, medical reasons, or caring responsibilities); this must be discussed with, and agreed by, the Practice Learning Manager. Please make sure you have this discussion before completing your application form.

Please note: we have agreed protocols with our placement agency providers which include an agreement that a student should not approach an individual placement agency or Practice Educator in an attempt to secure a placement.

Use of a car whilst on placement

If you state on your placement application form that you will have the use of a car during your placement you need to ensure that you have a fully comprehensive insurance policy which includes business cover. Some placements in the region require the use of a car and therefore please check that you will have the required level of cover before stating you have use of a car.
Completing the Application for Placement

The placement administration team and the Senior Lecturer in Practice Education will give you clear instructions about submitting the Application for Placement and it is important that you follow these and meet the deadline date.

Please complete your Application for Placement as fully as possible. Think of it as similar to a job application and try to show yourself in the best possible light. Think carefully about your skills, strengths and experience and support the points that you include in your application with examples from your life and work experience. You have a place on a university social work course, so you will have experience that you can include in your Application for Placement.

Please bear in mind that you will need to appeal to a wide variety of placements within different settings and with different service users; please do not mention specific placements as this could limit your placement opportunities.

If you have personal circumstances that you think might have an impact on you being able to fully engage with the practice learning opportunity, please discuss these with your academic advisor and the Placement Manager. If you have a Learning Contract or a disability you should discuss this with your academic advisor and agree if you are willing to disclose to the placement for any necessary needs or adjustments to be considered. In this case you will be required to complete forms RA1 and RA2 which are then submitted to the placement team with your application for placement form.

You can chose not to disclose any disability you may have, in this instance you would need to complete the necessary section on the RA1 form and submit with your Application for Placement; the implications of this should be discussed with your academic advisor.

Your completed Application for Placement should be submitted to your academic advisor for feedback by the submission deadline. You need to give yourself time to make any changes suggested and have the form signed off before the submission date. **Late forms will be the last to be allocated.**

Finally, before you hand in the form, check for any spelling mistakes, grammatical errors and that all the information that you are required to provide is included. Please also ensure that you sign and date your application on the last page. A good Application for Placement is the first step to a good placement so do the best job you can.

Students should ensure that their academic advisor has approved and signed a hardcopy of your Application for Placement. Please follow the instructions for submission provided by the placement administration team on your year Blackboard site. Further information can be found on the following Practice Learning websites:

Social Work
Applied Nursing (Learning Disability) and Generic Social Work

This is a full-time course and students are expected to give priority to their placement commitments.
A student who refuses an offer of a placement will have to wait until another suitable placement is available, which could be the following year. Placements are in high demand by all universities in the Yorkshire and Humber region. In these circumstances you should complete the Mitigating Circumstances form which can be located on the Practice Learning website (see above).

Sheffield Hallam University, like other universities in the area, operates in a competitive market regarding allocation of placement opportunities so please make sure you complete your application form to promote yourself in the best way possible.

You must attach to the application form and the electronic version:

1. A copy of RA1, RA2, RA3 form as necessary
2. In the case of the BASW and MSW PLE 2, a copy of your PLE 1 Practice Educator's report
3. In the case of the ANSW (LD) PLE 3 a copy of your Practice Educator's report from your first and second social work placement
4. In the case of previous placements or repeat placements, a copy of any Concerns or Termination reports/minutes.

Please ensure that all of the above are attached to the application form, all sections are completed and the form is signed and dated. Any incomplete forms will be returned and this will mean a delay in the allocation of your placement.

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RA1: Learning Contract and Practice Placement Sharing of Information Consent Form
RA2: Learning Contract and Practice Placement Reasonable Adjustments Request Form
RA3: Learning Contracts and Practice Placement Reasonable Adjustments Agreement Form