Practice Learning & Placement Approval Audit
(Procedures and Guidance)

Appendix A:
Health and Safety of Student Placements

Appendix B:
Risk Assessment Matrix

Practice Learning Documentation, Procedures and Policies are available on the Sheffield Hallam University practice placement site for students and educators at:
http://www3.shu.ac.uk/HWB/placements/SocialWork/Index.html
Professional Capabilities Framework (PCF)
The PCF has nine domains that are used as a holistic assessment mechanism for under and post graduate social workers. The capabilities should be seen as interdependent, not separate. As they interact in professional practice, so there are no overlaps between the capabilities within the domains and many issues will be relevant to more than one domain.

The PCF has been mapped against the HCPC standards of proficiency - Social workers in England (©Health and Care Professions Council 2012, Publication code: 20120521POLPUB).

The standards of proficiency outline what a social worker in England should know, understand and be able to do when they complete their social work training so that they can register with the HCPC. They set out clear expectations of a social worker’s knowledge and abilities when they start practising.

Practice Educator Professional Standards (PEPS) for social work
The PEPS set out requirements for practice educators at two stages, commensurate with the different levels of complexity and responsibility in teaching, assessing and supervising social work degree students.

These standards came into effect in October 2013, and are minimum requirements for all placements from the academic year 2013/14. From October 2015 all practice educators of social work students must be registered social workers (RSWs) with the HCPC. These are minimum expectations. Employers and HEIs are free to develop requirements at a higher level individually or collaboratively.

A transition period is in place until October 2015 for practice educators who are not RSWs, if agreed with SHU.

Stage 1
Practice educators at this stage will be able to supervise, teach and assess social work degree students up to but not including the final assessment prior to qualification. At this stage they may contribute to the last placement but not take full responsibility for assessment or act as the practice educator they can be the day-to-day practice supervisor.

Stage 2
Practice educators at this stage will be able to supervise, teach and assess social work degree students up to and including the last placement. In effect, these practice educators will have the authority and capability to recommend, on the basis of appropriate evidence, that social work students are fit to practise at the point of qualification.

All practice educators in training should be supported by a stage 2 practice educator/mentor. With these arrangements in place, a practice educator in training can take responsibility for a student social worker in a placement - including a final year student. If your agency has a stage 2 Practice Educator they should provide this support. Sheffield Hallam University (SHU) offers a drop in session for candidates who do not have a stage 2 Practice Educator. This is by appointment. Please Contact Jo Copley on 0114 225 5636 or email her on j.copley@shu.ac.uk
HCPC requirements for on-site and off-site practice educators

- PL1 (First placement) BASW and MSW and
- PL2 (First social work placement) ANSW LD (Social work only, not learning disability)

**Practice educator (RSW) stage 1 or 2**

Non-RSWs are no longer able to assess students. They may be able to be Practice Supervisors with a Stage 2 Independent Practice Educator, providing the Stage 2 Independent Practice Educator has completed the Practice Educator Training at SHU. If the Stage 2 Independent Practice Educator has completed the Practice Educator Training elsewhere, proof of training will be required by SHU.

- PL2 (Final placement) BASW and MSW and
- PL3 (Final social work placement) ANSW (LD) (Social work and nursing learning disability)

**Stage 2 On-site Practice Educator or a Stage 2 Independent Practice Educator.** *

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**On-site practice supervisors**

**HCPC RSWs**

On-site practice supervisors who are RSWs may not have reached stage 1 proficiency to support and supervise the day-to-day work of a social work student. It is recommended that they should be working towards the stage 1 learning outcomes *as covered in the university’s four days course Introduction to Practice Education* and be supported by their line manager and a stage 2 PE/mentor. It is for the line manager to ensure that a practice supervisor has the professional capability to provide day-to-day practice supervision of social work students.

If an RSW meets the stage 1 learning outcomes and the assessment requirements needed by a PE, then they may become a stage 1 PE.

**Non-RSWs**

Practice supervisors who are not RSWs may still use the learning outcomes *as covered in the university’s four days course Introduction to Practice Education* as a development framework, but they will not be eligible for stage 1 status.

For all placements, if the practice supervisor is not a RSW then the PE (on-site or off-site) must be a RSW at stage 2. This is required to ensure that all social work students are assessed by an RSW from October 2013 (all students need a RSW contributing to their assessment)

**Final Placements**

Final placements also need to adhere to the social work profession’s placement criteria for statutory interventions which state that *where the PE is not on site, the student will work alongside a social worker who must be HCPC registered*. This will normally be the placement supervisor/or practice educator, who should also be a RSW, but in exceptional circumstances, where this cannot be provided, the student must have the additional support of working alongside a registered HCPC social worker in order to undertake statutory tasks. Additionally, to support the development of professional identity, *students should not be the sole social work representative in a setting*. 
Qualified social workers who are not registered with the HCPC can still act as practice supervisors for the first placement for the foreseeable future (providing they meet the stage 1 learning outcomes and have a Stage 2 Independent Practice Educator working with them). SHU recommends that the placement encourages the qualified social worker to register with the HCPC.

Professional Capability Framework

Students are required to attend 30 Skills Days during their Social Work programme, some of which are completed before they start their first placement. Further information is provided on the Social Work Placement Information website (https://www3.shu.ac.uk/hwb/placements/SocialWork/index.html).

Readiness for Practice Capabilities

By the point of assessment of readiness for direct practice (prior to first placement), students should demonstrate basic communication skills, ability to engage with users, capacity to work as a member of an organisation, willingness to learn from feedback and supervision, and demonstrate basic social work values, knowledge and skills in order to be able to make effective use of first practice placement.

End of First Placement Level Capabilities

By the end of the first placement students should demonstrate effective use of knowledge, skills and commitment to core values in SW in a given setting in predominantly less complex situations, with supervision and support. They will have demonstrated capacity to work with people and situations where there may not be simple clear-cut solutions.

Qualifying Social Worker Placement Two Level Capabilities

By the end of last placement/ the completion of qualifying programmes newly qualified social workers should have demonstrated the Knowledge, Skills and Values to work with a range of user groups, and the ability to undertake a range of tasks at a foundation level, the capacity to work with more complex situations; they should be able to work more autonomously, whilst recognising that the final decision will still rest with their supervisor; they will seek appropriate support and supervision.

Assessment progression

An important part of how the PCF will be used is the assessment of progression from one career stage to another. Assessment will be undertaken by a range of organisations, in different ways, at different thresholds. It is important that all such assessments should be made holistically within each capability: whilst there will be several expectations specified within each capability at a given level, these should not be evaluated in isolation from each other. The essence of the capabilities framework is to support judgments about readiness to progress in a holistic way for each capability. This represents a different conceptual approach to the frameworks that have been used in social work previously, many of which have focussed on defining competencies at a given level, each one of which must be evidenced. The concerns articulated about those approaches suggest that judgements about overall capability may get lost where there is a micro focus on competence. It is anticipated that some exemplars for assessing the capabilities at different levels will be developed.

Progression between levels is characterised by development in terms of:

- Level of confidence, underpinned by practice experience, reflection and deepening understanding
- The increasing ability to work independently and to collaborate on equal terms with members of other professions
- The quality of the judgments made, and the level of ability to explain and justify them
- Efficacy of the work undertaken and the outcomes achieved, including opportunities for preventive work
- The ability to take initiative, form constructive alliances and to act as a change agent
• The ability to engage effectively with situations of increasing complexity and challenge, for example those with:
  o multi-agency input
  o complex family / organisational dynamics
  o serious hostility and conflicts of interest
  o multiple problems / disadvantages
  o multiple / significant risk factors
  o need to take into account the public interest
• The appropriate use of authority and challenge
• The ability and commitment to educate and provide professional supervision to others
• Demonstration of leadership, management and research.
Appendix A: Health and Safety of Student Placements

GUIDANCE ON ASSESSING PLACEMENT HEALTH AND SAFETY RISKS

Part 1: INTRODUCTION

1.1. Student placement will require two risk assessments:

a) **ASSESSMENT BY THE PLACEMENT PROVIDER OF THE IMPACT OF THE WORK ACTIVITY ON THE STUDENT.**

   This is a legal obligation on the part of the placement provider, although the University will be requesting confirmation of this through the questionnaire sent to providers in the build up to reaching an agreement about the arrangements. In all cases the University will be reliant upon the provider’s competence to ensure this assessment is undertaken properly. It will however be appropriate for the Placement Organiser (PO) to check these assessments have taken place, and to factor in the significance of the work-related risks into an overall assessment (described in 1.1 b).

   In certain circumstances a PO may choose to prevent a placement where there are legitimate concerns over the competence of the Placement Provider to undertake suitable and sufficient assessments (University Health and Safety Service will be available to support PO’s around these decisions).

b) **ASSESSMENT BY THE UNIVERSITY (E.G. THE PLACEMENT ORGANISER) OF THE OVERALL RISKS FROM THE PLACEMENT ON THE STUDENT**

   Including recognition of the work-related risks (to the extent to which these are understood by the University), but extended to consider other issues which fall within the duty of care owed by the University toward the student whilst on placement. These other considerations include:

   - Work related risks
   - Travel and transport risks
   - Location and/or regional factors (particularly relevant to international placements, or relating to areas in the UK where security or other risks could be considered high)
   - Health factors - either local risks or special medical considerations for a specific student
   - UK Insurance factors

1.2 This guidance concentrates on item 1.1 b), and includes a Risk Factor Guidance (see Part 2) which allocates a nominal level of risk (colour coded red, amber and green), and a checklist to serve as a record of the key considerations (see Part 3).

1.3 In all cases student placement must be subject to these risk assessments, although the formality of the assessment is determined by the nature and significance of the risks. Low risk activity, undertaken in the UK, and not presenting any significant security, safety, or health risks may be undertaken with an informal unrecorded assessment. Placements where the risks cannot be dismissed as trivial will justify formality, and the highest risks circumstances, the risk assessment exercise should be fully documented.

1.4 There is no expectation that students cannot undertake placements where the risks are high, but clearly in such circumstances the expectation regarding the quality of assessment and risk control measures must reflect the high risks. In such cases, the assessments and controls must be formal and fully documented.
## Appendix B:

### Risk Factor Guidance

Please use this table for reference when profiling the risks associated with the student(s) placement

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Risk</th>
<th>Work Related Factors</th>
<th>Travel and Transportation Factors</th>
<th>Location and / or Regional Factors</th>
<th>Health Factors</th>
<th>Insurance UK Placement</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| **High** | Work with hazards that have potential to cause permanent injury or fatalities, including:  
- Construction site with work at height, dusts, moving machinery, electrical systems.  
- Operation of machinery with mechanical hazards such as high speed rotating parts, crushing or entanglement risks.  
- Laboratory work with toxic/hazardous materials.  
Community work with known high risk groups of clients or locations (drug abusers, homeless, violent patients).  
Agricultural working directly with large or dangerous animals.  
Activities requiring specific licenses or qualification (e.g. diving, operating machines e.g. forklift trucks, crewing an aerial device). | Significant travel to reach the placement, significant overseas travel, prolonged or on local transport facilities known to be high risk (poor driving or vehicle safety standards).  
A significant amount of travel is required during the placement.  
Long daily commute, likely to impact on concentration or tiredness during the working day. | Significant risk of civil disorder, crime or similar danger (e.g. placement in war zones, countries where the Foreign and Commonwealth Office (FCO) advises against all travel and essential travel only).  
Unavoidable lone or remote working in proximity to significant risk (e.g. medical student elective in a refugee camp).  
Medical and rescue services not available quickly or locally.  
Means of communication likely to be difficult or compromised. | The student has personal factors (e.g. health, disability, linguistic or cultural) which may increase the risk of illness or accident during work-related activity even following adjustments.  
The student has personal factors (e.g. health, disability, pregnancy, linguistic or cultural) which may require specific adjustments or support if living away from home, or make them susceptible to episodes of illness.  
The student's knowledge, understanding and skills are low for the type of work. | UK Placements  
Placements whereby the host does not hold Employers' Liability Insurance (I thought all placements had to have some form of insurance for social work placements) or they are exempt under UK Legislation e.g. sole traders, family business, etc.  
Non UK Placements  
Placements whereby the host does not hold Employers' Liability Insurance or the overseas equivalent and / or the student is exempt from the policy. |
## Risk Factor Guidance (continued)

Please use this table for reference when profiling the risks associated with the student(s) placement

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Risk</th>
<th>Work Related Factors</th>
<th>Travel and Transportation Factors</th>
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<tr>
<td>Medium</td>
<td>• Proximity to high risk work hazards as listed above, but not directly working with them (e.g. in the same building as, <strong>but not directly involved in the process</strong>). &lt;br&gt; • Work in the construction environments NOT involving high risk processes. &lt;br&gt; • Work in medical treatment centres involving potential violence risk. &lt;br&gt; Situations where normally low risks listed below may temporarily become elevated (e.g. shop work or community activity where occasionally an angry member of the public might present some short-term elevated risk).</td>
<td>• Travel requirements present short-term demands (comparable with flights or train journeys to mainland Europe). &lt;br&gt; • Night travel. &lt;br&gt; • Comfortable travel schedule. &lt;br&gt; • Daily commute longer than would normally be the case (but not thought to significantly increase the risks). &lt;br&gt; Student required to drive as part of the placement, but only using good condition vehicles on good roads.</td>
<td>Higher than normal risk of civil disorder, crime or comparable danger. &lt;br&gt; Delays likely in communicating with tutors and others. &lt;br&gt; Placements abroad in areas identified as low risk by the FCO.</td>
<td>The student has personal factors (e.g. health, disability, pregnancy, linguistic or cultural) which may require specific adjustments or support during work or in social interactions at work.</td>
<td>Not Applicable. (I thought all placements had to have some form of insurance for social work placements)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### Risk Factor Guidance (continued)

Please use this table for reference when profiling the risks associated with the student(s) placement

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<tr>
<td>Low</td>
<td>• Office or shop working&lt;br&gt;• Schools, colleges, medical treatment centres.&lt;br&gt;• Low risk community activity.</td>
<td>• No significant travel requirements (e.g. typical comfortable daily commute).&lt;br&gt;• Only normal standard transportation will be used.&lt;br&gt;• Student not required to drive as part of the placement.</td>
<td>Placements in the UK with no significant local risks.</td>
<td>• The student has no long-term medical conditions or disability likely to cause episodes of illness or require specific support whilst on placement.&lt;br&gt;• Student has relevant knowledge, understanding and skills for the type of work.</td>
<td>UK Placements&lt;br&gt;UK locations where the Placement Provider has Employers' Liability Insurance cover in place or they are an exempt public body e.g. Local Authority.</td>
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