



ENSURING AND SUPPORTING
PROFESSIONAL STANDARDS ON
PLACEMENT

GUIDELINE AND PROCESSES

SCHOOL OF EDUCATION

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STUDENT FITNESS TO PRACTISE ON PLACEMENT - OVERVIEW

The School of Education has a responsibility to ensure that all our students, who are involved in placements in professional settings should maintain appropriate behaviour and standards.

The School of Education also has a responsibility to ensure that students following a programme of study leading to a professional qualification which is registrable with a statutory regulatory body are suitable to enter that profession.

This document outlines the expectations for all students from the School of Education at Aberystwyth University and also outlines the procedure when there is a cause for concern about a student's fitness to practice, or behaviour whilst on placement.

STANDARDS

All students of the School of Education involved in a placement in a professional setting should aim to meet the standards as set out in the 'Code of Professional Conduct and Practice for Registrants with the Education Workforce Council' (<http://www.ewc.wales/site/index.php/en/fitness-to-practise/code-of-professional-conduct-and-practice-pdf>) and /or the 'Code of Professional Practice for Social Care' set out by Social Care Wales (https://socialcare.wales/cms_assets/file-uploads/Code-of-Professional-Practice-for-Social-Care-web-version.pdf).

All students at the School of Education are expected to adhere to the Aberystwyth University rules and regulations as well as those explicitly set out by the School of Education, since all students are considered to be representing the University and the School whilst on placement.

STATEMENT ON DBS DISCLOSURES

Please see the document 'Process for DBS Disclosures in the School of Education'

CODE OF PROFESSIONAL CONDUCT FOR STUDENTS ON PLACEMENT

Maintaining the highest standards of professional conduct is an integral part of a practitioner / teacher's responsibility. It is essential that relationships with pupils and staff are based on mutual respect and that students' attitude, demeanour, dress code and language are always appropriate and professional. The EWC's 'Code of Professional Conduct and Practice for Registered Teachers' - <http://www.ewc.wales/site/index.php/en/fitness-to-practise/code-of-professional-conduct-and-practice-pdf> provides clear guidance on these matters and forms the basis for this code of conduct. Throughout the course you should show that you understand and uphold the principles outlined in this document. Adherence to the Code of Conduct should enhance your enjoyment, success and reputation as a practitioner / teacher and you should pay particular attention to the matters outlined below.

Please ensure that:

1. you have understood the policies and practices of the school/organisation and follow the advice and guidance of your mentors carefully.
2. you have regard to the safety and welfare of children/young persons, colleagues and yourself;
3. you do not have inappropriate physical contact with children/young persons or use inappropriate language or discuss inappropriate subjects;
4. you arrive at your placement school/organisation in good time every day and attend meetings and discussions after school/organisation hours as required;
5. you inform your school/organisation, your tutor and the School of Education office of any absences due to illness or other exceptional circumstances according to your school/organisation's policy. In the case of illness, you will need to provide a self-certification note if absent for more than three working days and a doctor's certificate if absent for more than five working days;
6. in the event of planned absences, such as interviews, you will need to provide work for your children / young persons according to the school/organisation's policy and practice;
7. your demeanour and appearance are suitable (including maintaining appropriate dress codes, hair styles and high standards in personal hygiene) according to the school/organisation's policies;
8. you check the school/organisation policy and expectations at the start of your placement regarding body adornments such as tattoos, nails or body piercing jewellery;
9. you are aware of the school/organisation policies for Safeguarding and Child Protection as well as the All Wales Safeguarding Procedures <https://safeguarding.wales/en/> and you know who is the designated 'Safeguarding officer/lead' at the school/organisation.
10. you understand and are aware of the potential risks of being in a one-to-one situation with a child/young person at any time but especially outside the school setting. You must not to give lifts to children/young persons, visit their homes or contact them in a social context;
11. in the course of carrying out any pastoral role you conduct conversations with a child/young person about sensitive issues professionally and inform a relevant member of staff or follow the child protection policy of the organisation, if appropriate;

12. any photographing/ videoing of children/young persons complies with LA/school/organisation guidelines;
13. you do not engage in personal correspondence with children/young persons, for example via mobile phones (texting etc) and the internet (e-mail, chat rooms, social networks etc);
14. any correspondence with outside agencies (e.g. parents, guardians, carers, other professionals) should only take place with the guidance and permission of a senior member of staff at your school/organisation;
15. you are aware of the dangers of using social websites and media (e.g. Twitter, Facebook, You Tube) accessible to children/young persons and parents and should avoid publishing, or allowing to be published, any pictures or comments that could damage your professional reputation;
16. your use of mobile devices is always professional and respectful and meets the policy and requirements of the school/organisation. You should not use your personal phone for work purposes.
17. you do not discuss your own personal relationships with children/young persons;
18. the language you use at all times is respectful, appropriate and professional to all and thus you do not swear at children/young persons, use offensive names or make inappropriate remarks about their gender, race, religion, sexual orientation, appearance, age, language, additional learning or special needs or personal circumstances;
19. you treat all information related to the school/organisation, colleagues and children/young persons appropriately and professionally at all times and in line with current data protection policies and practice;
20. you behave professionally and with respect towards all colleagues in all discussions, meetings and correspondence including e-mail messages;
21. you are open to and respond positively and constructively to feedback and advice;
22. that you safeguard and uphold your own, the school/organisation and the University's professional reputation at all times.

I agree to adhere the Professional Code of Conduct as outlined above.

Name (please print): _____

Signed: _____ Date: _____

Please ensure that you have handed in a signed copy of this form to the Education Office. Students who do not do so in good time may be prohibited from starting their placement. A breach of this Code could lead to a disciplinary meeting.

'CAUSE FOR CONCERN' PROCEDURE

This cause for concern procedure is a guidance process for placement staff, university staff and students/trainees, to be applied where there is concern for a student's ability to succeed appropriately on placement.

A 'cause for concern' is intended to be a developmental and supportive process. A cause for concern will be issued when:

- a student does not make the expected progress on placement;
- a student struggles professionally or due to personal circumstances to meet expected standards
- a student fails to demonstrate high standards of personal and professional conduct

A cause for concern will outline the concern and set targets, identify training and actions and agree review points. It will result in increased agreed placement and university-based support and monitoring.

Specifically, a cause for concern:

- can be raised at any stage of the placement;
- will usually relate to specific aspects of the student's conduct and be characterised by a lack of expected progress

Targets

- Targets for improvement must be explicitly linked to areas of concern in the student's conduct and engagement.
- Targets will require agreed actions for both the student and all those working with them in the placement.
- The setting and revision of targets must be based on the review of the full range of evidence; there must be clear alignment between the identified issues, the assessment made, and the targets set.

A suggested typical cause for concern process for professional concerns is shown below. The cause for concern procedure should include a statement of concern, targets for improvement and related training and actions.

THE 'CAUSE FOR CONCERN' PROCESS

This outlines the steps taken by school or university staff to support and offer developmental targets for students/trainees. Where necessary, students/trainees may ask for a supportive representative to attend their meetings.

STEP 1

- At the earliest opportunity the placement mentor discusses the concerns with the student in a respectful manner.
- The student/trainee should be informed they are a cause for concern and that the issues must be addressed. A review meeting is held to agree targets which are focused explicitly on areas of improvement with agreed actions, timed expectations and success criteria.
- There should be a maximum of three targets
- University tutor should be informed immediately and receives a record of the concerns, targets and actions for the student/trainee.

STEP 2

- If necessary, a joint review meeting with placement mentor and university tutor to take place.
- Review targets, using the full range of evidence.
- If sufficient progress has been made by the student, normal placement routines continue.
- If insufficient progress has been made, proceed to STEP 3
- The continuing concerns, targets and actions for the student/trainee must be recorded and emailed to the University tutor.

STEP 3

- University tutor to inform senior programme leadership.
- A further review meeting with Placement mentor and Senior programme leadership staff to take place after a week.
- If insufficient progress has been made proceed to STEP 4

STEP 4

- The placement is terminated immediately.
- The placement organisation produces an end of placement report noting the issues leading to the termination of the placement.
- Student/Trainee to be informed of their right regarding options.
- If there are concerns regarding the student/trainee's professional 'Fitness to Practise', then the University's Fitness to Practise process will be followed.

STEP 5

- If placement work impacts on the academic qualification, then placement mentor can be invited to report to the internal Exam Board.
- The final decision is confirmed by the relevant Exam Board.

Fitness to Practise

This document corresponds to the Aberystwyth University Fitness to Practice policy. Please see:
<https://www.aber.ac.uk/en/academic-registry/handbook/fitness-to-practise/>