Your guide to Social Work Practice Placements
Welcome

We’re delighted that you are considering studying with our Faculty of Health, Social Care & Education.

As a future professional and a student within our Faculty you will spend a significant amount of your time working within a professional setting. This is an important and exciting aspect of your training. For all our students this is one of the most satisfying and enjoyable parts of the course.

As your experiences in the professional settings are such an integral part of your course, this brochure has been designed to provide you with some of the initial information you may need when considering your future study options.

We hope you find it helpful, and we look forward to welcoming you to the Faculty of Health, Social Care & Education.

Dr. Ruth Taylor
Dean and Pro Vice Chancellor
Faculty of Health, Social Care & Education

What is a professional course?

Students who study on a professional course are being specifically prepared for their chosen career. Such courses are required to meet professional as well as academic standards. To meet these standards students must be able to demonstrate the attitudes, behaviour and commitments of their chosen profession.

These professional standards are governed by the statutory and professional bodies, including the Nursing & Midwifery Council, Health and Care Professions Council, National College of Teaching and Learning and Ofsted.

On successful completion of the course, graduates will be eligible for recommendation to their relevant professional body. For Social Work students, the university completes paperwork recommending to the Health and Care Professions Council that you are registered as a Social Worker. By completing the degree you will demonstrate that you have met the required standards of the profession.

Whilst on placement, you are required to work the usual length of the working day for that agency. This must be a minimum of 7.5 hours, and you are expected to attend placement during some of the university vacation.

Child care

Please be advised that you are expected to arrange childcare to enable you to attend placement according to the hours of the agency.

What is the time commitment for Social Work students?

You should plan for 4-5 day weekly commitment for the full-time courses plus private study and research. Our part-time courses are likely to require attendance of 3-4 days weekly during placement period plus private study and research.

All Social Work students will complete a minimum of 170 days of placements within the duration of their course.

- MA Social Work student will undertake a minimum of 70 days in year one and a minimum of 100 days in year two.
- BA (Hons) Social Work student will undertake a minimum of 70 days in year two and a minimum of 100 days in year three.
- Part-time BA (Hons) Social Work student will undertake a minimum of 70 days in year two and three, and a minimum of 100 days in year four.
Your placement

Before you start a placement
When you start your course, you will need to make sure that the following are completed before you can attend your placement.

Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS)
Agencies offer practice placements subject to a satisfactory DBS check. You will need to be in a position to present your DBS certificate to your placement agency prior to commencing your placement. Any student without a DBS check will not be able to go onto placement. Please be aware that checks can take on average 4 to 6 weeks, potentially much longer if you live in Greater London.

Occupational Health
If you have a disability or a health condition that may impact on your ability to undertake placement tasks we may request that you have an Occupational Health assessment. The purpose of this is to ensure that students are fit to perform the tasks involved effectively and without risk to their or others’ health and safety. Assessments are carried out confidentially by a health provider contracted by the university.

Location of Placements
Anglia Ruskin University works closely with the following Local Authorities when placing students and you will probably only be offered a placement within the following areas according to the campus where you study.

Chelmsford Campus
Essex County Council
Southend-on-Sea Borough Council
Thurrock Council

Cambridge Campus
Cambridgeshire County Council

Peterborough Campus
Peterborough Council

This is in response to the Social Work Reform Board’s requirement for Higher Education Institutions to have formal partnership agreements with Local Authorities.

Travel to your Placement
Travel Time
Many students may find that they have to travel a distance to their placements. We aim to place students within 1.5 hours travel from their home address or the campus where they attend for study. If a student travels to the campus for study then it is expected that they can travel to that same geographical area for their placement. Where such journeys regularly take in excess of 1.5 hours each way, adjustments to the working day may be made in consultation with the placement provider and the Practice Learning Co-ordinator. Personal and domestic issues should be planned well in advance to accommodate travelling times.

Car Use
Students are advised that being a car driver is an essential requirement for undertaking placements because the majority of our local placement providers require students to drive to enable them to work with service users in the community. If you do not drive or own a car you may feel that it would be a good idea to learn and organise access to a car that you can use during your placements.

Motor Insurance
If you will be using your car in the course of a practice placement, the insurance cover must include an endorsement that the policy covers use for business purposes by the student personally. It is a student’s responsibility to see that his/her policy covers this. A business use certificate of insurance at the relevant level of cover must be shown to an appropriate manager at the placement.

Costs
As part of your bursary you will receive a fixed sum toward your practice learning placement travel expenses. It is expected that students take the responsibility for budgeting for their travel expenses across their placements. For further information about the social work bursary please visit NHS Business Authority at www.nhsbsa.nhs.uk/825.aspx

I have really enjoyed my placements, they have given me a vital insight into the quality of life that some service users experience and an understanding in the complexities of social work."

Amy
BA (Hons) Social Work
Placement allocation

The process of matching students to placements

Students are requested to submit their application as per the instruction in the Practice Learning Application Pack that will be sent to you in the Spring.

After we receive the application forms we check content and presentation. Some forms are returned for review and resubmission by the students.

We then start matching students to placements. You will be advised if your details have been sent to an agency for consideration. Where possible we will send you a link to their website and expect you to carry out research on the agency and the needs of the service users supported. Please do not contact the agency at this stage as they are deciding if they want to invite you for interview and will only contact you once they have made this decision.

Sometimes agencies agree to consider students, but decide at a later date that they can no longer provide this opportunity for a variety of reasons. We will contact you to advise that an agency can no longer offer a placement, noting that this is no fault of yours. We will then look for a new placement for you.

Some students will hear about their placement soon after their application is submitted, others may hear very close to the start date of the placement. Please do not panic, we have not forgotten you and are working hard to find a suitable match for you.

Communication

Communication by the Practice Team is by email to your university address. Please make sure you check your student email account at least every 3 days as per university guidance.

Rejecting a Placement

Students are reminded that they do not have an option to reject a placement allocated unless there are significant mitigating circumstances.

Starting a Placement

Due to the high demand for placement opportunities, the university cannot guarantee that placements will start on the due date specified in the course handbook or any other published material. There are a number of factors, many of which are outside of the university’s control, which can impact on the availability and timing of placements.

In these circumstances a student might find that the start of their placement is delayed and on occasion this delay may be of an extended duration.

A late start can potentially result in a late finish. Students in this position should be mindful that they may not be able to commit to paid employment in the summer period until their placement dates are confirmed.

In the final year a late placement might result in delays in completing the programme and thereby registration with the Health and Care Professions Council.

My placement experiences were invaluable as they allowed me to apply the theory and ideas I have already developed. My placements have provided me with experiences and learning opportunities.

Simon
MA Social Work
Helping you help others

For further information our courses:
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Cambridge Campus
East Road, Cambridge CB1 1PT

Chelmsford Campus
Bishop Hall Lane, Chelmsford CM1 1SQ

Peterborough Campus
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