

UWE Bsc (Hons) Social Work – Partner Update September 2021
School of Health and Social Wellbeing
Faculty of Health and Applied Sciences
University of the West of England
Glenside Campus
Blackberry Hill
Stapleton
Bristol
BS16 1DD



UWE Social Work Update September 2021

Dear all,

I hope that everyone is keeping well and that you all had the chance to rest and recuperate over the Summer. It's been a really challenging year for lots of different reasons and self-care is more important than ever.

I want to take the chance to formally introduce myself to you all. My name is Penny and I will be taking over from Kate as Module Leader and Practice Lead at UWE. I'm incredibly lucky as I still have some support from Kate, who is staying at UWE as an Associate Lecturer for the time being. It has been a rather steep learning curve but I am very grateful for the help and support that I have received so far and I look forward to working with you as we progress throughout the year.

I hope that this update will be useful to you and those you work alongside, and if you have any questions or queries then please come back to me.

Penny

Placement Allocations

Due to the knock-on effect from the pandemic, we have had a large cohort of students to allocate to final year placements. This has been due to some students deferring from last year and delays incurred

due to the unavoidable strain on the sector. This has meant that we have more students than usual and less placement available. We have worked incredibly hard to find suitable placements for our students but the pandemic seems to have created some different variables than expected. We have an increased number of students who are non-drivers and require a placement which can support this. This has been very difficult due to the geography of Bristol and the surrounding areas and we continue to need support with placing these students.

We also have students who had a large proportion of their level 2 placement virtually meaning that we are incredibly keen to ensure that they have a face to face experience at Level 3. It would be incredibly difficult for a student if they were to qualify without having the opportunity to meet service users face to face or to complete direct work. These are some of the challenges that are being felt across our team at the moment.

Our level 2 placements are progressing well and we currently have less students to place due to the knock-on effect of the pandemic.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank you for your continued support and your willingness to be flexible and support our UWE student. Despite this difficult time, we have been offered a wide variety of placement opportunities and we are very grateful.

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We extend one last request if anyone has any more level 3 placements to offer us.

Placement Dates (Reminder)

Level 3 placements are planned to commence on **Monday 27th September 2021** with a completion date in March 2022. There will be students who are starting later or earlier depending on discussions within individual teams and this will naturally affect their completion date. We are opting for a blended approach to teaching this year but University recall days will be on Thursdays once students begin placement.

In addition to our usual 4 recall days, we have added a recall day for all level 3 students on **Friday 8th October 2021**. This is to enable students to participate in a national conference which will be incredibly beneficial for their learning. We appreciate your understanding with this slight change of schedule.

Level 2 placements are planned to commence on **Monday 4th October 2021** with a completion date in February 2022. Again, any changes to start dates will have an impact upon completion dates. University days for this module will be on Fridays once students begin placement.

Placement Meetings

We are trialing a blended approach to placement meetings this year, whether this is the Practice Learning Agreement meeting or Interim Reviews. We are finalising our Practice Tutor allocations and we are asking that Practice Tutors attend at least one meeting in person. This is due to feedback from last

year and to ensure that students feel as supported as possible. However, due to the constantly changing Government advice we will remain flexible to ensure everyone's safety. We are conscious that we want staff to feel safe and therefore we would suggest that some suitable reasons for not attending in person are:

- Current Covid spike
- Agency Covid rules
- Personal risk assessment
- Excessive distance to travel

We encourage Practice Tutors to discuss this with the Placement Learning Team and make individual arrangements where needed.

Absence Line and Timesheets

We are continuing to use the absence line and on-line timesheets for the 2021/22 academic year for both level 2 and 3 placements. The on-line timesheet must be completed weekly and will require the supervisor/practice educator to also sign off each week. Having a concrete record of student attendance should hopefully cut down queries about the total number of days completed and therefore speed up payment being authorised to agencies.

We have learned from the last academic year that this process is not without its difficulties. In response to this we have scheduled time specific to these processes into the induction for level 2 and 3 students this month. It is hoped that this will improve their effectiveness.

Staff Changes

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As you will be aware, I have taken over as Module Lead and Practice Lead with Kate currently undertaking the role of Associate Lecturer.

Patrick Moreno and Robert Lomax have both taken on the role of Programme Leads.

Two new members to the team will join us at the beginning of October and a third in November.

Learning and Development

Managing Practice Learning

Our MPL course is being delivered on-line, over six half-day sessions this year, through Blackboard's Collaborate. Whilst the course is predominately for supervisors for both the 70 and 100 day placements, it is suitable for social workers wishing to become Practice Educators, they will be undertaking a whole day further session. This is currently running and will be finishing on 27th October 2021.

Practice Educator/Supervisor and Off-site PE/PS Event

This is an induction and preparation event for practice educators and supervisors who are taking a UWE undergraduate student September/October 2021.

There will be input on online timesheets, absence line, Practice Support Net and Pebblepad.

Dates:

Thursday 23rd September 09:30 – 1pm – Via Teams

Module Schedules

The schedules for both the level 2 and 3 placement modules have now been completed and uploaded to Blackboard for students and they have been asked to download and share with their placement team. However, these have also been attached for your information.

[Practice Support Net](#)

Practice Support has been reviewed for this year and we are just waiting for the changes to be made. We would like to encourage all staff to utilise this resource as it does contain key information such as ARC access and information for students, links to PebblePad guidance, previous partner updates, module handbooks and schedules, timesheets and absence line guidance, links to key UWE policies related to placements and other practice documentation. We anticipate the update to the website being completed by 17th September 2021.