**University of Edinburgh**

**Social Work**

**Staff Procedure for managing students’ disability placement support**

**(adjustments recommended on the student’s Learning Profile)**

**BSc3 and MSW1 students**

**During semester 1**, students with existing Learning Profiles (LPs) and new students needing a disability assessment and support should access the Student Disability Service (SDS) and meet with a Disability Advisor. This discussion will address whether there are potential adjustments which need to be recommended to the placement practice agency. This discussion needs to take place at an early stage in the semester given that the student Learning Profile form for the Observational Placement is submitted by the end of week 5. This placement takes place during weeks 11 and 12. (Please note that although the SDS encourages students to come forward as early as possible, this may not happen by week 5.)

**During week 13** **of semester 1**, BSc3 and MSW1 students complete and submit their Student Profile form for the placement in consultation with their Personal Tutor. This form provides space for the student to indicate any disability or health issue and to outline the support/adjustments which have been discussed and agreed with the Disability Advisor. The form confirms that by providing the health/disability information, the student realises and agrees to the form being sent on to a social work agency. In effect, the student is agreeing to the disability information and/or the recommended support/adjustments being shared with a prospective Practice Teacher.

This form is subsequently sent by the Practice Learning Development Fellow to prospective practice placement agencies. No other student information is given to a prospective placement at this stage.

**Early in Semester 2,**  the Disability Advisor will meet with the Practice Learning Development Fellow to discuss those students who have a Learning Profile, to consider the recommended adjustments and identify those more complex situations where a pre-placement visit involving the Personal Tutor and Disability Advisor is required. It would be useful if the Practice Learning Development Fellow could in advance of this meeting, send a list of social work students with Learning Profiles to the Disability Advisor in the SDS.

Once a prospective placement has been identified, then a pre-placement visit will be organised. In most instances this visit need only involve the student and the Practice Teacher, with the student taking responsibility for describing their disability/health needs and discussing any recommended support/adjustments. However, in more complex instances the pre-placement visit will involve the Disability Advisor and the Personal Tutor as well as the student and Practice Teacher.

Following the pre-placement visit, the viability of the placement is confirmed by the agency with the Practice Learning Development Fellow.

**BSc4/MSW2 students**

The first placement (BSc3 and MSW1) finishes in June. Over the summer, students complete and submit their Placement Profile form, for the final placement as above. Should the student feel, based on their first placement, that additional attention needs to be given to the existing recommended adjustments, then they should request a meeting with the Disability Advisor to discuss possible amendments.

Sourcing final placements commences over the summer period. Once a match between student and agency is identified, then pre-placement meetings will be undertaken as outlined above.

The final placement commences at the beginning of November, final year.

**Possible Placement Adjustments**

Social Work placements are located in a range of different agencies and locations all with different remits, resources and facilities. It is impossible therefore to view the social work placement agency as a homogenous entity.

The following constitute a range of potential adjustments/issues for discussion with a placement agency in relation to the specific needs of each student:

* Physical Disability access to be assessed
* Consideration of any specific issues in relation to the location of the placement
* Identification of specific IT requirements as related to the specific nature of the student’s disability
* Any requirements regarding provision of furniture or other such resources
* Enhanced and staggered induction to the placement agency, over and above the usual student induction
* Increased number of Personal Tutor placement visits
* Where appropriate and possible, student to be allowed additional quiet time to enable information processing
* Where appropriate and possible, the student’s diary commitments should allow space for information processing
* Regular points of contact and feedback over and above weekly supervision, to ensure clarification of tasks, information sharing and reflection. Language used should be clear, direct and explicit
* Supervision sessions between the student and Practice Teacher to be audio recorded. Confidentiality and storing of supervision content to be discussed with the Practice Teacher in order to conform with agency and professional requirements
* Where required, student to be allowed time out of the placement to attend university specific learning difficulty tuition, meet with their mental health mentor or Disability Advisor

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