



GLoucestershire
**CHILDREN'S
SOCIAL WORK
ACADEMY**

**Supporting Student
Placements**

**Information for Managers, Supervisors
& Practice Educators**

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1. Introduction

Thank you very much for supporting a Student Placement in your team. Students are consistently grateful to their Supervisors and Educators for playing a major role in helping them to achieve their professional aspirations.

The aim of this document is to give you the information that you need to support your Student, from receiving the profile and the pre-placement visit, right through to the end of placement.

2. The Student Offer

Most Social Care teams will host one Student during the year, usually for the final student placement which lasts 100 days, running from September to March or January to June.

High quality placements for Students are important because they provide:

- An opportunity for Students to apply learning to the realities of practice.
- An opportunity for us to train the Social Workers we want to work with in the future: 2/3 of those on final placement are likely to be employed as ASYEs (2020/21 data).
- The only opportunity to undertake statutory work before qualifying.

Gloucestershire Children's Services have a good track record of providing final placements for a range of universities; mainly the University of Gloucestershire, but also Bristol, UWE, Worcester, Heart of Worcestershire College, Bath and the Open University. This enables us to recruit students with a diversity of background and experience.

3. Who can become a Practice Supervisor or Educator?

Becoming a Practice Supervisor or Educator provides a good opportunity for professional development that can support ongoing career progression within Gloucestershire.

The new Practice Educator Standards apply to both Practice Educators and onsite Supervisors for final placement. They state that:

- All Practice Educators must be registered social workers. Practice Supervisors for the first placement may be experienced or hold qualifications other than social work.
- All Practice Educators should be able to demonstrate that they are practicing at Professional Capabilities Framework (PCF) Experienced Social Worker level in their practitioner role before enrolling on a Practice Educator course.
- Practice Supervisors at PEPS Stage 1 should be experienced and skilled Social Workers with at least 2 full years post-qualifying experience at the start of the programme.

- Practice Educators at PEPS Stage 2 will have a minimum of 3 years relevant Social Work experience and must have undertaken tuition, self study and assessment as specified in the PEPS refresh document. They must have taught, supervised and assessed at least two social work learners, including at least one social work student.

The PEPS stipulate that there should be a selection process for Supervisors and Educators. Team Managers are currently responsible for putting forward team members for this role, but the above criteria needs to be taken into account. An application form for Practice Educator training (available from the social work academy) must be completed and approved by the line manager prior to sponsorship being completed & signed off.

The current PDR is also linked to the Experienced Social Worker level of the PCF, so a recent PDR may provide evidence that the Social Worker/Senior Social Worker is practicing at this level. It is expected that the AP will be the Practice Educator and the Senior Social Worker (or aspiring Senior Social Worker) will be the Supervisor unless there are exceptional circumstances, which would need to be agreed with the Social Work Academy.

4. Training for Practice Supervisors (PEPS 1) and Educators (PEPS 2)

PEPS stage 1 is a two day in-house training course. Assessment is through observation and completion of a portfolio.

PEPS stage 2 is a 4 day course run once a month over 4 months. Assessment is through observation and completion of an assignment. This course is provided by the University of Gloucestershire.

There are monthly Practice Educator/Supervisor reflection and training sessions. Attendance at six of these over the two stages of training is required in order to fulfil the training hours required under the new PEPS. Each new Practice Educator will also be assigned an experienced Practice Educator mentor.

5. Supporting Students on Placement - Enabling Practice Supervisors and Practice Educators to undertake the role

When considering having a student in your team, it is vital to take into account the commitment needed to supervise a student. The quality of the placement is dependent on the Supervisor and Educator being enabled to have time to plan, teach, coach, reflect with and support the student throughout their placement. The Team Manager, Advanced Practitioner (AP) and Supervisor need to have a clear agreement about how the student supervision expectations will be fulfilled, and how this will be accounted for in workload allocation. Where possible, the children and families the student is working with should be included in the caseload "count" of the Supervisor, and APs who are Practice Educators need to have a sufficiently limited caseload to allow them time for their training role. An approximate estimate of time for the supervisor is: 1 day a week for the first 4 weeks of

placement, which would involve sharing knowledge, skills and experience through shadowing and reflective conversations, dropping to ½ day a week until the mid-way point, after which the student should be working more autonomously, and so most of their needs should be able to be addressed through supervision.

Towards the end of the placement, both the Supervisor and the Educator will need to oversee the handover of cases, and contribute to, or write the final assessment. Supervisors and Educators need allocated time to fulfil these roles satisfactorily.

The PEPS Refresh (new Practice Educator Standards) emphasise the importance of workload relief while a student is on placement: (para 3.8). The full document can be found here: [PEPS for Social Work](#)

6. The Placement Process

The Supervisory Training Team around the Student:

➤ The Placement Supervisor (SSW or aspiring SSW):

- Oversees the day to day support and informal supervision of the student.
- Liaises with the Team Manager on allocation of work and oversight and holds the children on their LL caseload with their student as the additional worker.
- Provides fortnightly formal supervision.
- Writes an input for the final report.
- Attends all key placement meetings
- For the final placement, undertakes 1 formal direct observation of their student in practice.

➤ The Practice Educator (AP):

- Provides fortnightly reflective supervision for the student focussing on the application of learning, theory and research to practice.
- Completes a minimum of 2 formal observations of their student's practice.
- Contributes to the interim report, evidencing that their student has met the requirements of the PCF.
- Writes the final report and, following consultation with the Supervisor and Team manager makes the final Pass/ Fail recommendation.

➤ The University Link Tutor:

- Provides the link for the supervisory training team with the university.
- Attends the placement meetings and monitors the student's progress.
- Chairs most meetings for students in difficulty, should these be required.

➤ The Team Manager:

- Provides oversight and holds accountability for the Student's work with children and families.
- Works with the Supervisor and Student to ensure allocation is managed within the student workload policy (maximum caseload of 10 children).
- Supervises the Supervisor with regard to the children held by the Student.

- Ensures the Supervisor and Educator have the time to attend training and fulfill their roles.

7. What Makes a Great Placement?

- ❖ A team with a culture of learning, support and challenge.
- ❖ A good team induction.
- ❖ The student is clear about the sources of support available to them.
- ❖ The whole team supports the student to apply their university learning in a varied range of practice opportunities.

8. What Happens Before Placement?

1. Student Profiles are sent to the Social Work Academy and provisionally matched by the Practice Learning Organiser. Matching takes into account the Student's preferences, experiences and needs. The Student's DBS number and date of their DBS should be provided on the Profile and will be confirmed with the University by the Academy.
2. The Practice Learning Coordinator sends out profiles to Managers and Practice Educators /Supervisors.
3. Supervisors read the profile, and if they are willing to consider the student, they will inform the Practice Learning Coordinator at the Social Work Academy.
4. The University sends a request to the Student to contact their Supervisor to arrange a pre-placement visit.

9. Pre-placement visit

All Practice Educators/Supervisors must have a pre-placement visit with their prospective student. Team Managers may also wish to be involved in this meeting. The purpose of this visit is to assess the suitability of the Student to be offered a placement in the team and to familiarise the Student with their potential placement setting.

All students should attend their pre-placement visit on time and present themselves as a professional. They should bring with them the following **documentation**, which should be shown to the Supervisor/Educator and kept on record for the duration of the placement by the team Administrator:

- Car Insurance with business cover, MOT and full driving licence (if they intend or need to drive whilst on placement).
- Previous portfolio.
- Practice Educator's report (if applicable).
- Learning support statement (where applicable).

At the pre-placement visit, certain forms can also be completed that will help to support an effective transition into the team on their arrival in placement:

Item	Where to find it
ICT & Mobile phone	The Social Work Academy will arrange via the CYP Business Support Team - GCC new starter account, remote access, Laptop & mobile phone. Please advise of any assistive software identified via an assessment by the university.
Arrange Liquid Logic training	https://staffnet.gloucestershire.gov.uk/internal-services/the-ict-service/apply-for-applications/liquidlogic-ics/
Arrange ID Card access for new starter	https://staffnet.gloucestershire.gov.uk/employee-information-and-support/security-and-id-cards-for-staff/new-security-photo-id-cards-for-staff/
Order parking permit (if required)	https://staffnet.gloucestershire.gov.uk/your-health-and-wellbeing/travelsmart-and-car-parking/car-parking/

Questions you may wish to ask at the pre-placement visit

1. Can you tell me about any previous experience you have that you think will be relevant to the work you will undertake on this placement?

If the interview is for anything other than a first placement, please ask the student for a copy of their previous portfolio so that you can look at their work and the previous Practice Educator's report. If this is a first placement, you may ask them to talk about previous work or personal experience and their shadowing placements.

2. What do you think you will bring to this placement?

Students should demonstrate insight into issues they might face in social work practice, both in generally and specifically to this placement, they should be able to demonstrate self-awareness and be able to analyse their own strengths and weaknesses.

3. What are your learning needs on this placement?

Students should demonstrate the ability to discuss their own learning needs clearly and have prepared prior to the interview in order to do this.

4. Can you tell me some of the qualities and attributes that you think are important for a Social Worker?

Students should show understanding of the roles and responsibilities of a Social Worker, and an interest in the work of the team they will be joining.

6. What do you think are the important factors that you will need to take into account when working in a team?

Students should demonstrate some understanding of working in teams and of inter-disciplinary working.

7. Do you have a learning support statement? Do you have any disabilities or health needs that we would need to take into consideration whilst you are on placement?

It is suggested that you take a copy of any learning support statement. Ask the student to fully explain their support needs whilst on placement. If software is needed for dyslexia or any other reasonable adjustments are needed that cannot easily be accommodated by the team, please contact the Practice Learning Coordinator at The Social Work Academy.

8. Do you have any personal issues that you may need support with while on placement?

The stressful and statutory nature of social work means that undisclosed needs can lead to difficulties in placement or re-triggering of past traumatic or difficult experiences. If we are aware of difficulties, we can help to overcome any barriers to learning at the earliest opportunity. Be specific about the sorts of situations students might face in placement and how these might impact emotionally and physically.

The student should also have the opportunity to ask plenty of questions about the placement setting and arrangements.

Following the pre-placement visit, please inform the Practice Learning Coordinator and Organiser whether the team is willing to offer a placement to the student. If you do not think a placement within your team would be suitable for the Student, please discuss this with the Practice Learning Organiser who will provide feed back to the university.

10. Conflict of Interest

Universities are now asked to provide a conflict of interest statement that outlines any potential conflict of interest relating to a Student's placement. These are normally relevant where the student or a close member of their family has previously had contact with social care. This information initially comes to the Social Work Academy, where it is checked, and then, where necessary, further discussion is had with the Student and University Tutor. Relevant information will then be communicated to the Student's Supervisory Training team on placement. Any related children and families on Liquid Logic will need to be locked (achieved via a request from the Team Manager).

If a conflict of interest comes to your attention during the placement, please inform the Social Work Academy and we will support you with the process of decision-making about any potential impact on the placement.

11. Preparing for the Placement

1. Ensure your Team Induction Pack is ready for you to share with your Student.
2. Arrange for your Student to have access to buildings, laptop, phone, IT system, training etc. (see pre-placement visit for relevant links).
3. Your Student may access the car pool if they wish to do so and this meets the Team's needs [Car Pool](#)

Or, they may use their own car and claim expenses using this process [Student mileage & expenses](#). You should ensure that the transporting of children and families is risk assessed before the Student takes them in their car.

4. Speak to your team about your Student's role and learning needs. Arrange some early shadowing opportunities and the broad outline of a two week Induction Programme.
5. Prepare reading for your Student that is relevant to your area of service, below are some links:

Ofsted report :	Ofsted
Improvement plan	GCC Children's Service Improvement Plan
Practice Standards	Practice Standards
Ensure that the student is aware of key websites, including:	
Gloucestershire Children's Social Care Procedures Online	http://gloucestershirechildcare.proceduresonline.com/
Gloucestershire Safeguarding Children Partnership	https://www.gscb.org.uk
RIP- the student will need to register for an account	https://www.rip.org.uk/ Go to the website and use your GCC email address as your user name. You will be asked to create a password.
Community Care	http://www.communitycare.co.uk/
Social Work toolbox- resources for intervention and direct work	http://www.socialworkerstoolbox.com/

12. Student Induction Plan

The Supervisor is expected to design an Induction Programme for the first two weeks of placement. This should incorporate: shadowing, reading essential information and visits to teams and agencies. Feedback from students has shown that a well-planned Induction, involving the whole team, makes a significant difference to the overall placement experience. During Induction, the student should be informed of team processes including:

- How to apply for TOIL/Flexi
- Coffee/tea fund etc.
- Lunch and other breaks
- Any other aspects of team culture

Below is an example of an Induction timetable for a Student in an Assessment Team that was developed by an Advanced Practitioner:

Example Timetable:

Getting started

Date	Morning	Afternoon
Day 1 & 2	First two days you will receive an induction with the Social Work Academy Team	
Day 3	<p>This morning you will be shown around the office and shown where all facilities are.</p> <p>Our admin will support you with arranging parking, gaining access to the IT system and introduction to Liquid Logic.</p>	<p>Please see induction folder. This includes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Our vision and values in Gloucester R&A Core practice standards for Children's Services Link for GCC corporate induction including health and safety, data protection policy etc. Standards for Purposeful visiting Single Assessment Guidance Learning from SCR's in Gloucester Working together to safeguard children CSE Policy and Screening Tool Our Ofsted improvement plan Missing Child Protocol and Quick Reference Guide Link for Procedures online including how to conduct s.47 Enquiries
Day 4	Liquid Logic training (online)	Shadowing visit
Day 5	Shadowing visits or meetings	Complete Liquid Logic Training (online)

Meet the team

On the second week I felt that it was most important for the Student to be visible within the team. I had pre-arranged some home visits for them to attend with me, however wanted them to shadow other workers within the team to highlight how people's practice may differ. By the end of this week the Student had the opportunity to shadow many members of the team, a range of different meetings and visits, and they were known by all team members.

Example:

Week 2	Morning	Afternoon
24/01/22	Shadowing home visit	Observing conference
25/01/22	Completing GCC induction	Shadowing CIN meeting
26/01/22	Team meeting	Reading assessment on Liquid Logic
27/01/22	Arrange visits to agencies	Shadowing Social worker
28/01/22	Supervision	Study Time

Shadowing other teams

Once the Student had a good understanding of their role within the team and the expected work to be undertaken, the student had the opportunity to explore other agencies. The purpose of this was to develop a better understanding of the context of the assessment team in terms of wider support services and interventions within the local area, and how to access them.

Learning Practice Skills

Allow the Student time to have a practice at writing a Single Assessment for a family allocated to the Supervisor that they had shadowed and had taken notes. As Supervisor you will be able to identify their learning needs from this piece of work before they are allocated work of their own.

Where possible enable the Student to conduct a home visit with you shadowing them. You can then check that they are ready for practice and use this as an initial informal observation.

Agencies/Teams to Visit

Visits will depend on the work of the team and may be include:

- Families First +
- Family Group Conference

Suggested workload planning:

Stage 1: First two weeks: Induction – no children/families allocated.

Stage 2: To Mid-Point Review: Small caseload rising slowly with your Student working increasingly independently with children and families, learning the work of the team. At this point emphasis should be on learning and development in relation to:

- Assessment, planning, intervention and review.
- Building relationships and direct work with children.
- Developing empathic and authoritative relationships with parents, carers and wider family.
- Developing a clear understanding and ability to assess and manage risk.
- Liaising with a range of professionals.
- Critically reflecting on and analysing information.
- Case recording to a reasonable standard for a social work professional.
- Being a positive advocate for the profession within families and in professional contexts.

Stage 3: From Mid-Point the caseload should rise to a maximum of 10 and your Student should work increasingly autonomously, developing organisational and decision-making skills.

Stage 4: Towards the end of the placement, there should be a reduction in workload and no new children and families, enabling the student to consolidate their learning, and complete their portfolio.

14. Supervision

Contract and Template




Supervision will take place weekly, with the placement Supervisor and Practice Educator alternating sessions. Each Student, Supervisor and Practice Educator should complete a supervision contract at the beginning of the placement. You can find the template here

[11-002 Supervision Contract](#)

Supervisors and Practice Educators can use the University template or may choose to use the GCC Supervision template. A record must be kept of each supervision session and the Supervisor or Educator is responsible for ensuring that the notes are completed.

Resources to support Reflective Supervision

All practice areas should have a collection of resources to support supervision:

-  Theory cards pack
-  Reflective cards pack
-  Developing a Practice Learning Curriculum: A guide for Practice Educators

- ✚ RiP Reflective Supervision Resource Pack (hard copy available from the SWA and electronic copy [here](#) (you will need to be logged into your RIP account))

If your Team/Area does not have a copy of these resources, please contact the Social Work Academy (SWA-admin@gloucestershire.gov.uk)

Locality offices should also have a copy of two books:

- ✚ *Practice Education in Social Work; Achieving Professional Standards* by Pam Field, Cathie Jaspar and Lesley Littler
- ✚ *Supporting Struggling Students on Placement* by Jo Finch

Within the Social Work Academy we also have a number of resources to support Practice Educators, and you are very welcome to come and use these.

Scoptbox is a useful set of resources and articles related to Practice Education

<https://www.scopt.co.uk/>

A bank of resources for Supervisors of Students is currently being created on the Social Work Academy website.

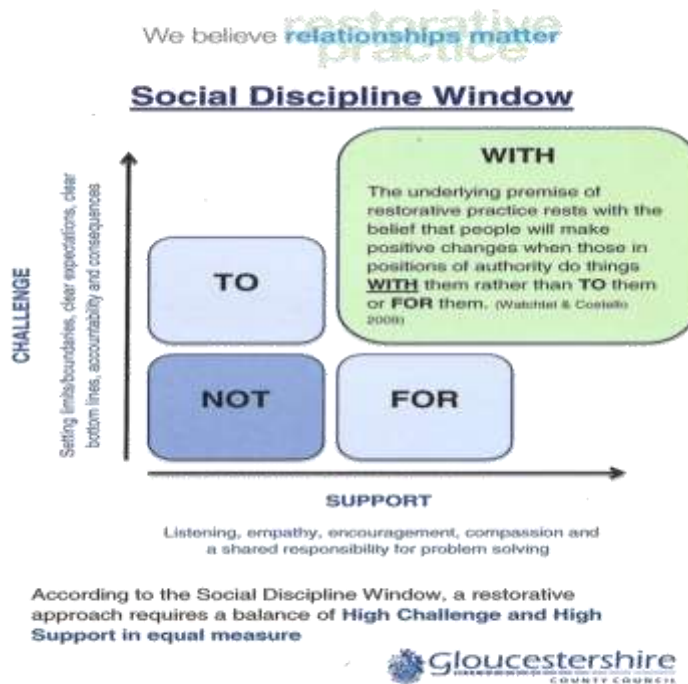
15. Training for Students on Placement

All students should attend one day Child Protection training provided by the Gloucestershire Safeguarding Children's Executive (GSCE) and Essentials Training will be provided for Students on their final placement. Practice is the focus of the placement so any other training should only be undertaken if directly relevant to your student's needs or the work of the team.

All students will attend an induction programme of 2 days provided by the Social Work Academy as well as ongoing monthly reflection, support and training sessions.

Restorative & Systemic Practice – Social Discipline Window

Student supervision is underpinned by Restorative and Systemic Practice and all students will be offered a training session during their placement. The guiding principle of Restorative Practice – doing “with”, not “to” or “for”, and supervising with “high challenge” and “high support” are expressed in the social discipline window:



16. Assessment of Students: The PCF Framework

“The Professional Capabilities Framework (PCF) is the profession-owned overarching framework of social work education and professional development in England.” (BASW 2018)

All Social Work Students on their first and final placements are assessed against the PCF.

The PCF capabilities have been used to define the qualities, knowledge and skills needed to practice social work since 2012. They consist of 9 “domains” of practice, and competence in all 9 is required in the practice of good social work.

During 2018 there was an update of the PCF and three super-domains were introduced: **Purpose**, **Practice** and **Impact**



The full PCF requirements for first and final placements can be found here:

<https://www.basw.co.uk/professional-development/professional-capabilities-framework-pcf>

Assessment against the PCF should take place throughout the placement. All aspects of your Student's work provide evidence for the report, and it is a good idea for your Student to collate evidence that they have met the PCFs as the placement progresses. Methods of assessment could include:

- Supervision notes.
- Formal and informal observation of the student on visits, in meetings and in the office.
- Feedback from children and families gathered by the Student, the Supervisor and Practice Educator in a variety of ways, including use of the MOMO App.
- Feedback from the Team Manager, colleagues and other professionals.
- Case recording, assessments and reports written by the student.

17. The Final Report

The Practice Educator will write the majority of the final report, but this should be a document produced in partnership with the Student and Practice Supervisor. The Practice Educator will make a pass or fail recommendation within the report. The Supervisor will write a section of the report, giving a holistic assessment of the student. Close collaboration between Supervisor and Educator throughout the placement is necessary for a robust and consistent assessment.

Evidence for the report may be derived from:

- Feedback from children and families.
- Feedback from colleagues.
- Written work on Liquid Logic.
- Written reflective pieces.
- Informal and formal observation of your student within the team, on visits and in meetings.

Guidance on writing the report is available from the Social Work Academy. Students should be given the final report a week before the end of their placement so they can read and reflect on their assessment. Reports are considered at the University's Practice Assessment Panel, and feedback is provided about the report to the Practice Educator.

18. Social Work England Practice Placements Guidance

From December 2019, Social Work England will take over from the HCPC as the Social Work regulator. They do not regulate Students, and the current understanding is that, on placement, Students will continue to be assessed against the PCF. However, the expectation from Social Work England is that students will be able to meet the Social Work England Professional Standards by the time they complete the course, just as they currently meet the HCPC SOPs.

“Social work courses aim to ensure that students develop the skills and knowledge necessary to meet the professional standards by the time they complete the course. Although we do not regulate students, we do expect them to understand and work towards our professional standards in preparation for when they apply for registration. Students should make sure that during their course, including while they are on placement, they do not do anything that contravenes the professional standards or the policies and procedures of their course or placement provider.”
(SWE Standards document, p18)

The link to Social Work England's new guidance on practice placements is below:
https://socialworkengland.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2019/07/Practice_Placements_Guidance_FINAL.pdf

The main implication of this new guidance for GCC is the stipulation (in section 2.1) that Social Work Students on final placement should have experience with section 17 or section 47 cases. Since this is not always currently the case, the Social Work Academy will be working with Team Managers providing placements over the next few months to identify how it will be possible to provide the required experience to Students who are not placed in Safeguarding teams.

Social Work England also emphasise the importance of good practice in relation to people who are users of social work services. They advise that:

a) There should be consultation throughout the placement and in the development of placement opportunities with people who have experience of services. Students are

encouraged to seek service user feedback on a regular basis and to take account of this feedback as they reflect and improve their practice.

b) Service users should be informed that students are present within a service delivery setting, and specific prior consent should be obtained where students are observing meetings or visits. (Section 2:1, p6).

19. Developing your Student's Knowledge, Capability and Skills around social work process and practice

By the end of their final placement, your student should be able to complete the tasks required in the team to the standard expected of a Newly Qualified Social Worker. Although the PCF is still used as the benchmark for student performance on placement, it is useful for Students, particularly on final placement, to have knowledge of the Chief Social Worker's Knowledge and Skills Statement (2014) which forms the basis of assessment in the ASYE year. The KSS set out what a Social Worker should know, and be able to do, in specific practice settings, in specific roles and at different levels of seniority. The KSS should help guide everyday practice. The document below usefully links the KSS and the PCF. <http://www.centralbedscpd.co.uk/images/11063/DfeKSmappingtoPCFupdated23.04.15.pdf>

*“Together, the PCF and KSS provide the foundation for Social Work education and practice in England at qualifying a post-qualifying levels and are used to inform recruitment, workforce development, performance appraisal and career progression.”
(BASW,2018)*

20. Student Policies

These two policies should act as a guide to practice during the placement. All managers and those supervising students should be familiar with these policies.

10-003 Student Workload Policy

The requirements for caseload limits should be adhered to, and risk in relation to the children students are working with regularly and consistently assessed.

The GCC student workload policy outlines risk assessment for cases allocated to students and workload limits.

10-002 Student Concerns or Complaints/Placements in difficulty

If there is doubt around the capacity of a student to reach the standard for qualification, concerns need to be addressed at the earliest opportunity. The Practice Learning Organiser in the Social Work Academy and the relevant University Link tutor should be informed if there are concerns about the student's practice that cannot be resolved at team level. The book by Jo Finch, "Supporting struggling students on Placement", is useful, and is available from the Academy, and the Practice Learning Organiser and Academy staff are available for consultation in this situation.

Each University has a procedure to be followed when there are significant concerns about a Student's performance, outlined within the placement handbook. GCC also has a procedure which enables GCC to take the initiative through a meeting chaired by the Principal Social Worker, where GCC staff raise concerns about a student that are not recognised by the University. This internal policy regarding student concerns or complaints can be found on [here](#)

21. Ending the Placement – Looking Back, Looking Forward

Good endings help children and families, your Student and the Supervisory Training Team. There will be administrative aspects to the ending of placement; all ID badges need to be given in, phones returned and a request made to ICT for the student's account to be deleted from the system.

The final meeting gives an opportunity for a strength-based final review, and a concise summary of future development needs to be addressed during the ASYE year. Your student should be encouraged to see themselves as being on a continuum of learning, rather than the learning reaching an end as they finish their placement and degree.

