MANCHESTER 1824
The University of Manchester

Student Guide
Concerns on Placement

Division of Nursing, Midwifery and Social Work
The University of Manchester

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Glossary of Roles and Terms used within this Guide

Title	Role / Remit
Practice Educator (onsite)	Suitably qualified Practice Educators based in and employed by the placement agency have responsibility for the day to day assessment, support and management of the placement.
Practice Educator (offsite)	A suitably qualified person external to the placement agency that the University will allocate to undertake assessment and support tasks.
Onsite Supervisor (OSS)	A nominated member of staff at the placement agency who will be an on-site supervisor to the student. This person will be the student's first point of contact in the agency.
Lecturers in Practice Learning	Based at the University, they manage and oversee the practice learning element of the MA in Social Work.
Academic Advisor (AA)	University member of staff who provides a crucial link between the University and the placement agency. Each student has a named AA who acts as a first point of contact for all those directly involved in the day to day operation of the placement. The AA also acts the student's first point of contact for pastoral, general academic and professional development support. Monitors performance and offers guidance to the student to assist progress towards professional practice.
Head of Social Work	University member of staff who leads and co-ordinates all activity relating to the student programme. May also provide additional student support. Chair of Concerns Review Panels.
Examinations Officer	University member of staff who oversees student academic performance on each course unit, providing a link between course unit teams, the overall programme and external examiners. Acts as a point of contact for students regarding assessment queries. Member of Concerns Review Panels.
The Practice Learning Unit Administrative Assistant	The administrative assistant based in the Practice Learning Unit within the University of Manchester supports the administration of practice learning in a number of ways e.g. maintaining databases, disseminating information related to available training and ensuring that rooms are available for recall days and training events.
PARE	Practice Assessment Record and Evaluation – online Placement Portfolio.

Introduction

Welcome to your student guide to provide you with information about how best to raise concerns whilst on your practice placement if you need to do so.

We recognise that your experiences in practice contribute significantly to your professional development, and in the acquisition of the knowledge, skills and competencies required to be eligible to enter the social work profession. It is important, therefore, that you have a clear understanding of how to provide feedback on your experiences, and to be aware of your professional and ethical duty requirements of when and how to raise concerns about a colleague's actions or behaviour, or the placement environment if this is needed.

Social Work England's Professional Standards

All students should conduct themselves in accordance with Social Work England's Professional Standards and BASW's Code of Ethics for Social Work throughout your Masters course. This is as relevant within the University setting as it in during the practice placement. An electronic copy of the Code of Ethics for Social Work is available here and the Professional Standards are available here.

Part of developing your professionalism means that you are expected to actively engage with your course. Taking ownership of your own learning is an important aspect of your personal and professional development. This also fulfils your professional obligation to uphold the standing of the profession, Social Work England's Professional Standards and the reputation of the University of Manchester.

The practice learning environment

Each practice learning environment in which summative assessment of practice takes place is required to meet required quality standards for teaching and learning. The placement provider and the University are jointly responsible for monitoring the quality of the learning environment.

Each practice learning environment where a student is summatively assessed ***must*** be able to provide either an onsite Practice Educator or onsite supervisor to support and assess your learning.

Expectations of Students on Placement

As a student on placement you are expected to:

- Develop an understanding of your developmental needs and take responsibility for identifying and contributing to the meeting of your own learning needs.
- Attend all 30 skills days as these are an integral part of the development of your practice preparation and skills development.
- Attend an informal interview prior to starting your placement if requested by the agency.
- Attend and actively contribute to all meetings regarding the placement (e.g. Placement Learning Agreement meeting, interim review, final placement meeting) as required.
- Participate actively in supervision by sharing your work on placement with your Practice Educator (PE). This includes actively reflecting on work issues arising from practice and your learning in the practice setting.

- Prepare for your supervision through contributing to agendas and undertaking written work and reading as requested by your PE.
- Inform your PE and Academic Advisor at an early stage of any difficulties or issues that may occur and may be impacting on your learning in placement.
- Provide the evidence required for your Interim placement review and any other evidence of competence requested by the PE.
- Be accountable to your placement agency and comply with agency policies and procedures.
- Always act professionally and in accordance with social work ethics and values.
- Be observed in practice and provide direct evidence of competence.
- Submit 2 Critical Analyses of Practice (CAPs) in your PARE.
- Inform your PE and Programme Secretary of absence or illness **and comply with the agency absence reporting procedures.**
- Complete and record the minimum number of days of placement (70 in year 1 and 100 in year 2) and complete extra days if necessary to reach the required threshold of capability.
- Ensure that your placement assessment report (Part 2) and PARE are provided for your PE two weeks prior to the end of the placement in time for preparation of the placement assessment report (Part 1).

Raising Concerns Regarding a Practice Placement Experience

What is an unsatisfactory practice learning environment?

We endeavour to ensure that your placement offers you a positive learning experience and helps you develop as a social worker. Your personal experience on placement is unique to you, but you may consider that your practice placement learning experience has been unsatisfactory in relation to the following areas:

- ***Support:*** You may consider that you have not been provided with appropriate support. If so, it may be helpful to reflect on the following questions:
  What support *is* available for you in your placement? Have you discussed your support needs with your Practice Educator / Onsite Supervisor (if appropriate)/ Academic Advisor? What support do you think you need that has not yet been provided? How do you think your support needs might best be met? What do you see as your role and the role of others in this process?
- ***Learning opportunities:*** You may consider that you have not been provided with appropriate learning opportunities. If so, it may be helpful to reflect on the following questions?
  How do you maximise the learning opportunities available to you on placement? Have you discussed your concerns with your Practice Educator/ Onsite Supervisor? What factors may be affecting your learning? What additional learning opportunities do you think would be helpful for your learning? What do you see as your role and the role of others in this process?

Why is it important to raise concerns regarding an unsatisfactory practice learning environment?

It is important that we know about your experience because the University and the placement provider are responsible for ensuring that students are exposed to positive learning environments and best practice.

Who do you raise concerns regarding an unsatisfactory practice learning experience to?

It is important that you raise your concerns at the earliest possible time. Please do not leave this until you have left the placement. Practice Educators should have the opportunity to address your concerns prior to you leaving the placement.

It is recognised that you may find raising your concerns to be difficult and stressful, but there are various people in place in both the University and the placement to offer you help, guidance and support along the way. These are your:

1. Practice Educator
2. Agency Placement Coordinator
3. Onsite Supervisor (if appropriate)
4. Academic Advisor

This section outlines the process for raising concerns regarding a practice placement experience. If you have any concerns regarding your practice placement experience, please discuss these with your Practice Educator or Onsite Supervisor in the first instance. If you feel unable to discuss your concerns with the Practice Educator or Onsite Supervisor, or your concerns are not resolved at this level, you are advised to contact your Academic Advisor for guidance and support.

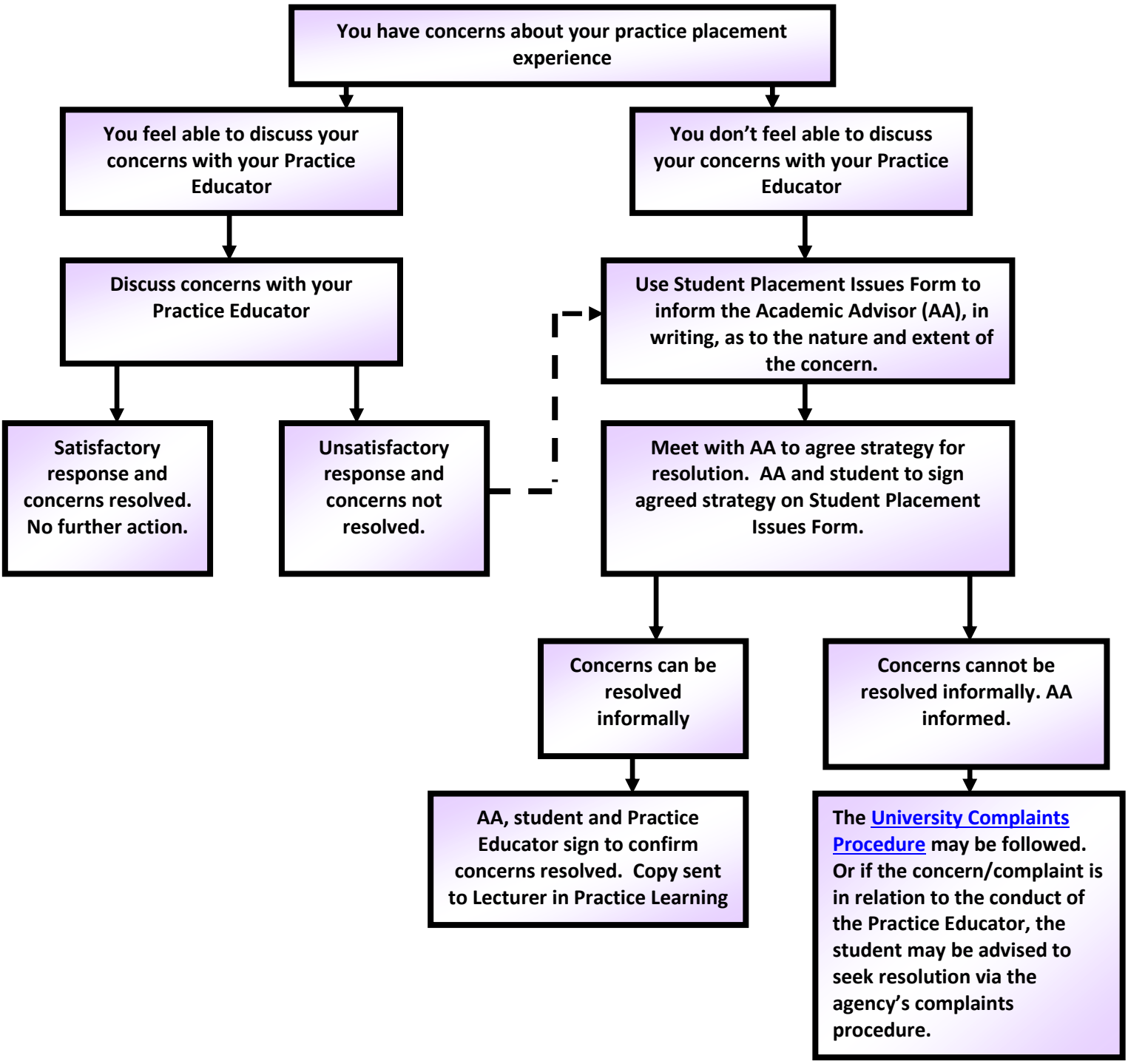
Provided on the next page is a flow chart outlining the process for raising concerns.

What do I do if I witness poor or dangerous practice?

It is important that you read and follow the whistleblowing policy at your placement agency if you witness either poor or dangerous practice whilst on your practice placement.

You must also raise your concerns at the earliest possible time with your Practice Educator or Onsite Supervisor. If you feel unable to discuss what you have witnessed with the Practice Educator or Onsite Supervisor, then you are advised to contact your Academic Advisor as soon as possible for guidance and support and to decide on further action needed.

Raising Concerns Regarding a Practice Placement Experience



What if concerns are raised about my conduct whilst on placement?

Although we hope you are successful in your placement, it may be that your Practice Educator may express concerns in relation to your practice. This may relate to your level of competence, your professional behaviour and conduct or the values you display in your practice. There is a specific handbook for Practice Educators to advise them what to do if they have concerns about their student's practice on placement. It may be helpful for you to familiarise yourself with this handbook: Practice Educator's Guide to Concerns on Placement See below p. 12 & 13 for flowchart Concerns Regarding Student Progression / Development.

Concerns Regarding Student Progression / Development

It is our expectation that you will be offered the full 70 or 100 day placement. However, if your Practice Educator is concerned that you are making insufficient progress to be able to pass the assessment of your practice; they should express this concern to yourself and the Academic Advisor at the earliest opportunity. It is important that the assessment of your practice is open and transparent and that you are informed about your progress and any concerns in relation to this. Your Academic Advisor is available for support and can offer objective support and consultation to both you and your Practice Educator.

Where necessary a Concerns Meeting can be convened, for reasons such as those detailed on page 5 of the Practice Educator's Guide to Concerns on Placement:

- Poor time keeping / attendance.
- Poor communication or skills development.
- Unprofessional attitude or conduct / good character.
- Not meeting the learning objectives agreed in the Practice Learning Agreement.
- Not engaging in safe practice.
- Not maintaining good health.

Your Academic Advisor will chair this meeting and yourself, your Practice Educator, Agency Placement Coordinator – and where appropriate your Onsite Supervisor will be invited to attend. The purpose of the meeting is to discuss the nature of the concerns raised by the PE, to hear your views on what is happening, and to agree the best way to progress. The Academic Advisor will must complete the Placement Concerns Meeting Report Form that will include a written action plan detailing what needs to be done and by whom within a given timescale to enable you to work towards passing your placement and addressing any concerns. Minutes of the Concerns Meeting and the Concerns Meeting Report Form will be distributed to all present at the meeting.

Arrangements to review the action plan should be agreed at the concerns meeting and regular contact maintained with the Academic Advisor in the intervening period.

As part of a progress review, any concerns about your practice should be discussed at the Interim Review whether or not a Concerns Meeting has previously been convened. It is expected that evidence, such as written supervision notes, is made available and that the Interim Assessment Report clearly highlights any concerns with reference to the Professional Capability Framework level indicators and the Social Work England Professional Standards in full.

If at the progress review, you are showing limited improvement in meeting the action plan agreed at the Concerns Meeting (or Interim Assessment if appropriate) a decision should be made in consultation with the Academic Advisor as to whether or not an extension to the placement should be sought in order to give you a further opportunity to demonstrate your

learning. Extensions should not exceed 20 days in duration and must be agreed by you, the Practice Educator, the Onsite Supervisor and their line manager and your Academic Advisor. The agreement should be formally recorded on either the Concerns Meeting Report Form or Interim Assessment Report. The reason for the extension request should be clearly stated alongside the work you need to focus upon to successfully complete your placement. The Academic Advisor will inform the appropriate Assessment Officer at the University. **You should be aware that no extra funding will be available to you for the duration of any extension and also that you are under no obligation to agree to an extension to the placement.**

If at the progress review it is considered that you are showing no improvement in meeting the action plan agreed at the Concerns Meeting (or Interim Assessment if appropriate), the placement agency may take the exceptional decision to discontinue your placement on one or more of the following grounds:

- any conduct which might conceivably render you a person not fit to be admitted to and practise that profession or calling
- your sustained failure to engage with service users and/or available learning opportunities as required to demonstrate your progress
- the perceived inability of the placement to provide sufficient learning opportunities for you reasonably to be expected to demonstrate competence
- health/wellbeing problems affecting your capacity to fulfil the demands of the assessment of practice

The first three grounds will result in you being referred to the Concerns Review Panel at the University. Please see section below for details.

If you are asked to leave the placement due to health or wellbeing issues you will probably not be referred to the Concerns Review Panel. Instead, you will be referred to Support to Study where your health and support needs will be fully discussed: Regulations | Academic-related regulations | Support to Study Procedure | The University of Manchester

The Concerns Review Panel process is visually represented on page 11 of this guide.

The final point to note is that your Practice Educator can discontinue your placement immediately if you breach Social Work England's Professional Standards or engage in dangerous practice. In these circumstances the Academic Advisor and agency placement co-ordinator must be informed immediately.

Referral to Concerns Review Panel

The Concerns Review Panel will comprise of – the Head of Social Work, the MA Examinations Officer and an external experienced social work practitioner who has no direct contact with the placement.

All placement Fail recommendations will be referred to the Concerns Review Panel.

The Panel will read all placement reports – from the Practice Educator, the student and the Academic Advisor. The Practice Educator will be asked to complete a Placement Assessment Report and provide detailed evidence to support their assessment decision. The student will be asked to submit as much of the placement portfolio as possible. A report outlining key issues will also be requested from the Academic Advisor.

The Panel may request additional information – either in writing, by telephone, online or in person – from any of the above parties. Students will be able to see all the evidence put forward in relation to the reports made available to the Panel in advance and will be given the opportunity to provide an additional written statement if they wish to do so.

The purpose of the Panel is to review the fail recommendation and to explore further where there are disputed facts in the assessment of the student. The Panel can recommend the following outcomes:

1. That the student is referred to Occupational Health and/or other support services within the University, including Support to Study.

2. That the Panel supports the Fail recommendation for a first attempt at placement (can be for either 70- or 100-day placement) and recommends this to the External Examiner. The External Examiner then gives their view, and a final recommendation is made to the Examination Board. The student would then normally be offered a repeat placement following the Examination Board decision.

3. The student may be asked to produce a reflective account of their learning as a result of their placement experience and asked to highlight what would be different if they were offered a new placement. The focus of the reflection will be determined by the specifics of the placement fail. Students will submit any such reflections to their Academic Advisor who will sign this off when the work is completed satisfactorily. This reflective account may be shared with the new placement agency if the student is offered a second placement.

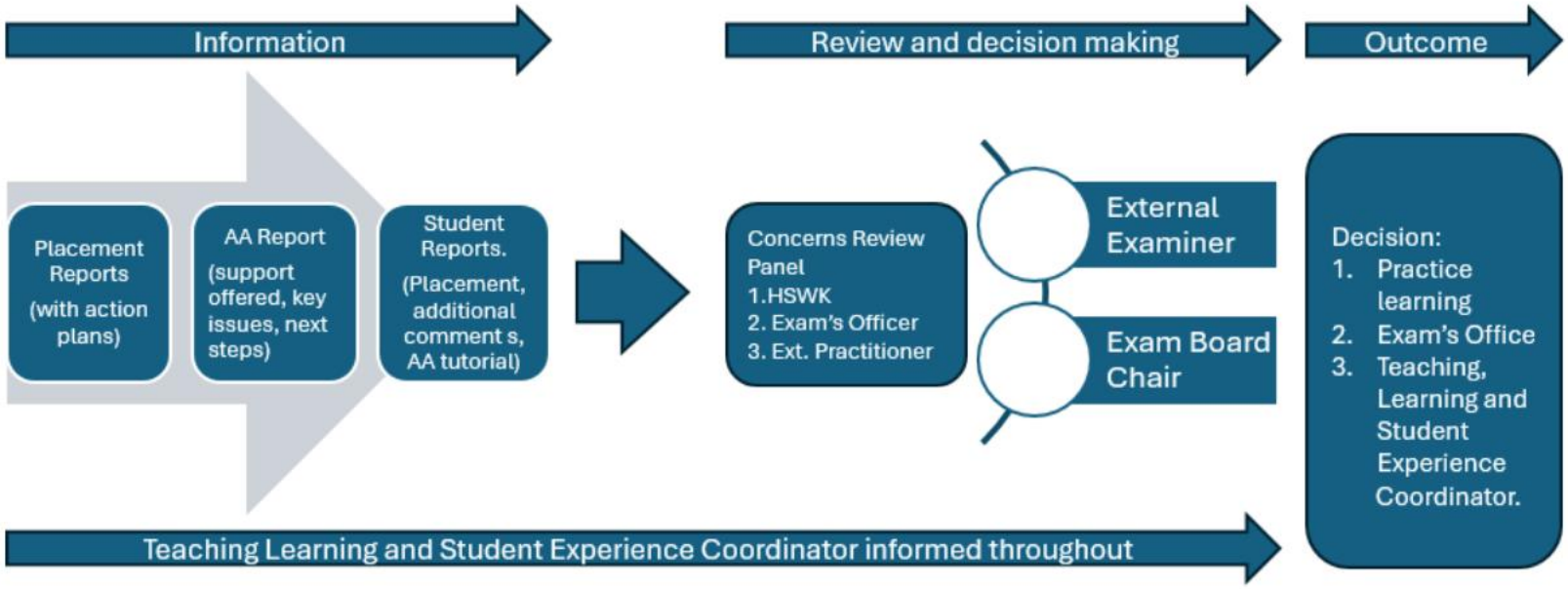
4. That the Panel supports the Fail recommendation of a repeat placement and recommends this to the External Examiner. The External Examiner gives their view and a final recommendation is then made to the Examination Board. The student normally leaves the programme if this is a fail of a repeat practice placement following the Examination Board decision.

5. That a recommendation be made that the student may resume the practice placement, subject to agreement of the placement agency and practice educator. Where it is not possible for the student to resume the placement, the student should be offered a repeat first attempt at placement without penalty. In such circumstances the student would repeat the full number of placement days if the placement is in a new agency.

6. That there is insufficient evidence to uphold the decision to fail the placement and that a recommendation shall be made to the External Examiner and the Examination Board that the student should be offered a new first attempt at a placement without penalty. The student would repeat 70 days for a first-year placement repeat or 100 days for a second-year placement repeat.

7. That, where there are concerns about a student's fitness to practise, the student may be referred to the School or Faculty Fitness to Practise Committee.

Concerns Review Panel Process



Referrals to Fitness to Practise Committee

If serious concerns have been raised and substantiated at the Concerns Review Panel then the Panel may refer the student to the School or Faculty Fitness to Practise Committee.

During this process the student can seek further advice from their Academic Advisor and SHS Student Support based in the Division of Nursing, Midwifery and Social Work. Practice Educators can seek advice and support from the agency placement coordinator where one is available or from their line managers in their agencies. Lecturers in Practice Learning can also offer advice about the policy and procedures.

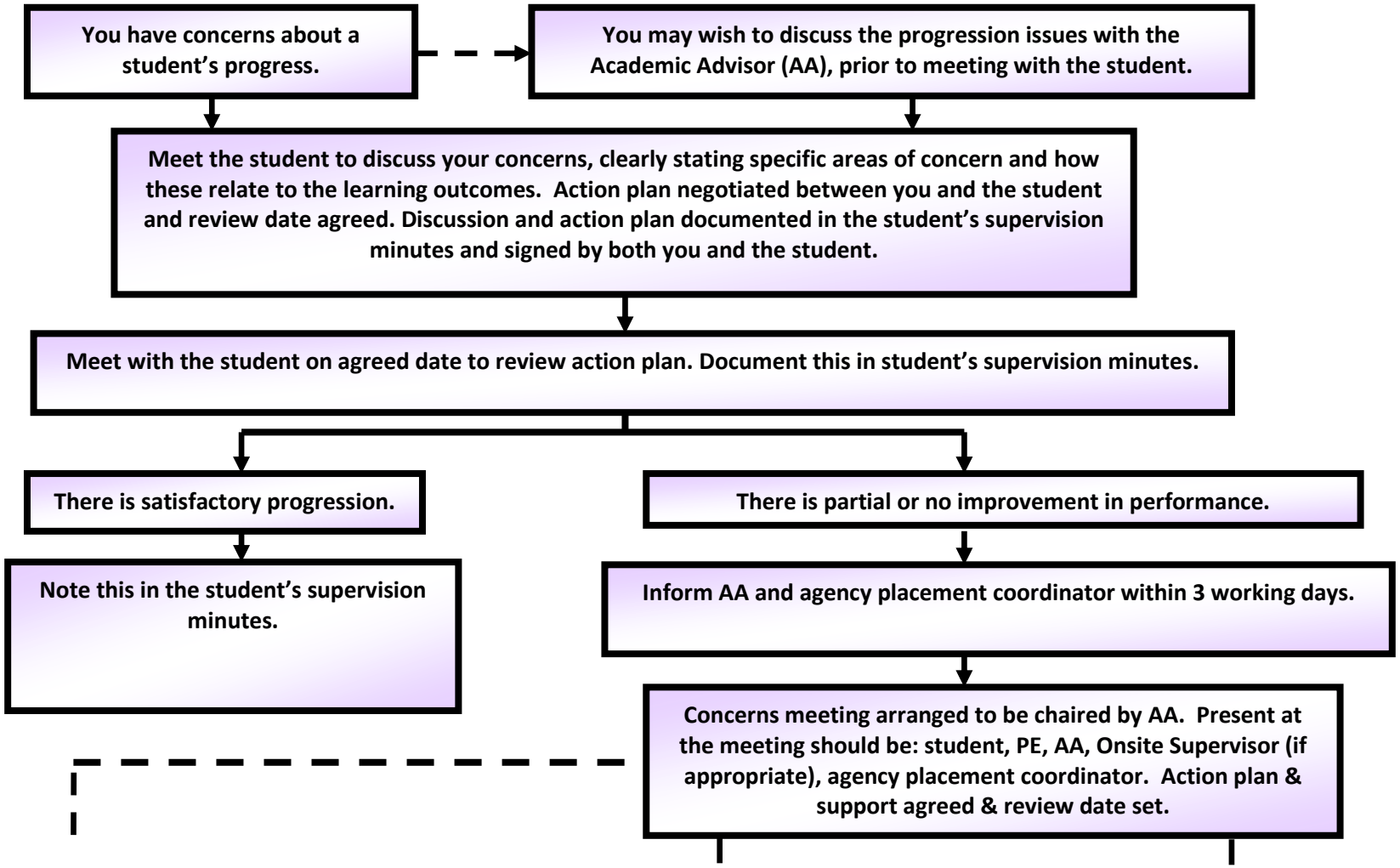
Please see the link below to access information regarding the Fitness to Practise procedure:

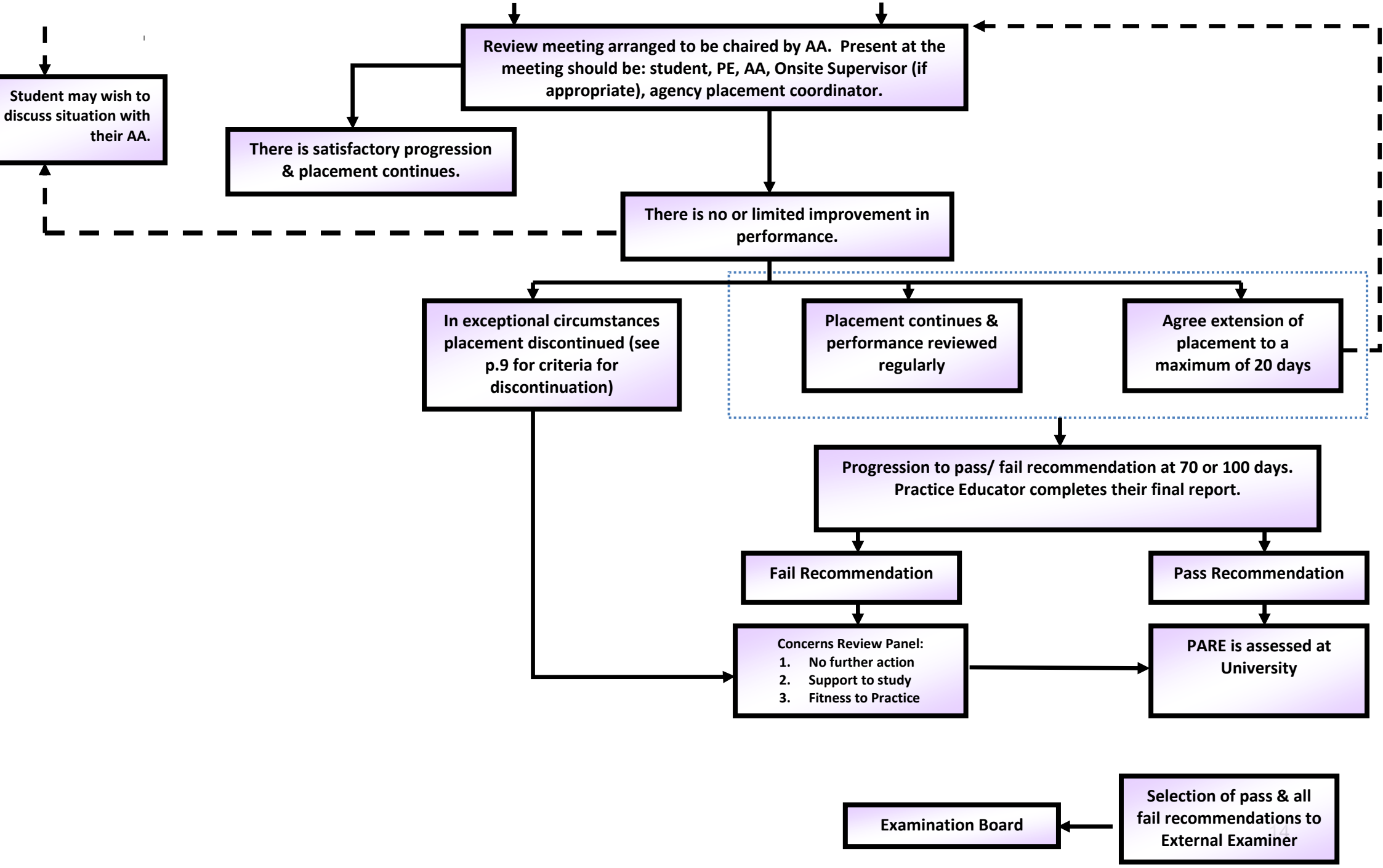
Faculty of Biology, Medicine and Health Fitness to Practise Procedure

This link outlines both the processes involved in a Fitness to Practise referral at both School and Faculty level and outlines the outcomes available at both stages in the process.

Concerns Regarding Student Progression / Development

This flowchart is taken from the Practice Educator's Guide to Concerns on Placement. Therefore, where 'you' is mentioned it refers to the PE.




Review meeting arranged to be chaired by AA. Present at the meeting should be: student, PE, AA, Onsite Supervisor (if appropriate), agency placement coordinator.
Student may wish to discuss situation with their AA.
There is satisfactory progression & placement continues.
There is no or limited improvement in performance.
In exceptional circumstances placement discontinued (see p.9 for criteria for discontinuation)
Placement continues & performance reviewed regularly
Agree extension of placement to a maximum of 20 days
Progression to pass/ fail recommendation at 70 or 100 days. Practice Educator completes their final report.
Fail Recommendation
Pass Recommendation
Concerns Review Panel:
1. No further action
2. Support to study
3. Fitness to Practice
PARE is assessed at University
Examination Board
Selection of pass & all fail recommendations to External Examiner

Contacts

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