

RAISING CONCERNS POLICY AND PROCEDURE FOR DENTAL HYGIENE & THERAPY PLACEMENTS

1. Introduction

This procedure outlines the process for addressing concerns related to the clinical placement learning environment for the University of Essex's Dental Hygiene & Therapy students. A positive and safe learning environment is essential for student development, and we are committed to promptly and fairly resolving any issues that may arise.

2. Definitions

- **Concern:** A formal or informal expression of dissatisfaction with an aspect of the clinical placement experience or environment.

3. Scope

This procedure applies to concerns regarding the following:

- **Practice environment:** Safety concerns, hygiene standards, appropriate learning opportunities, and access to resources.
- **Clinical educator behaviour:** Unprofessional conduct, lack of support or supervision, unfair treatment.
- **Assessment practices:** Clarity of expectations, fairness in evaluation, and feedback mechanisms.

4. Outside of Scope

- **Discrimination or harassment:** Based on race, ethnicity, gender, disability, and any incident that contravenes the Equality Act (2010), as this is covered in the ***Procedure for Raising Concerns About Practices and Behaviours in Practice Partner Organisations and the [University's Whistleblowing Policy](#)***.

5. Raising a Concern

Students can raise a concern through the following methods:

- **Formal written concern:** Submit a completed concern form (available from the Dental Hygiene & Therapy Placement lead and on Moodle) detailing the issue and the desired outcome.
- **Informal discussion:** Discuss the concern directly with the Clinical educator, Placement lead, or another relevant staff member.

6. Concern Acknowledgment

The student will receive written acknowledgement of their concern within **3 business days**. This acknowledgement will confirm receipt and outline the next steps in the process.

7. Concern Investigation

- **Formal Concerns:** The Dental Hygiene & Therapy Placement lead (or another relevant staff member) will investigate the concern, gathering information from the student, clinical educator, placement provider, and any relevant witnesses.
- **Informal Concerns:** The Dental Hygiene & Therapy Placement lead will work with the student to address the issue informally, potentially involving mediation or conflict resolution strategies.

8. Communication with the Student

The student will be kept informed throughout the process and receive updates on the investigation's progress.

9. Concern Outcome

The student will receive a written communication outlining the outcome of the investigation, including any actions taken or resolutions proposed.

10. Right to Appeal

If the student disagrees with the outcome, they have the right to appeal the decision. The appeals process will be explained in the written communication.

11. Confidentiality

The University will fully maintain confidentiality throughout the process as possible, adhering to data protection regulations.

12. Timeframes

- **Concern Acknowledgment:** 3 business days
- **Investigation Completion:** 4 weeks (may vary depending on complexity)
- **Communication of Outcome:** 10 business days after investigation completion

13. Reporting Serious Concerns

Some concerns may require immediate action. If a student experiences serious issues like discrimination, harassment, or a safety threat, they should report it immediately to the Dental Hygiene & Therapy Placement lead, or relevant authorities.

14. Support for Students

Students raising concerns are encouraged to utilise the support services offered by the University, such as personal tutors, student counselling, and Student Wellbeing and Inclusivity Services (SWIS).

15. Review and Revision

This procedure will be reviewed and revised periodically to ensure its effectiveness in addressing student concerns and fostering a positive learning environment.

Next review due September 2027.

Appendix 1: Formal Placement Concern form

Please complete all sections of this form to the best of your ability.

1. Student Information:

- Student Name:
- Programme Name:

2. Placement Information:

- Placement Name:
- Clinical Educator Name (if applicable):
- Dates of Placement: (From) _____ (To) _____

3. Concern Details:

- Briefly describe the issue or concern you are raising:
- When did this issue occur (date and time, if applicable)?
- Have you discussed this issue with anyone previously? If so, with whom and what was the outcome?
- Are there any witnesses to this incident? If so, please provide their names and contact information (optional):
- What specific outcome are you hoping for by filing this concern?

4. Additional Information:

- Please use this space to provide any additional details you feel are relevant to your concern. You may attach documents (e.g., emails, notes) if necessary.

5. Submission:

- You can submit this form electronically by emailing the Placement Lead and HSC Placements directly.