**RAISING CONCERNS POLICY AND PROCEDURE FOR ORAL HEALTH PLACEMENTS**

**1. Introduction**

This procedure outlines the process for addressing concerns related to the clinical placement learning environment for the University of Essex’s Oral Health Science 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](https://www.essex.ac.uk/governance-and-strategy/governance/policies).

**5. Raising a Concern**

Students can raise a concern through the following methods:

* **Formal written concern:** Submit a completed concern form (available from the Oral Health 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 Oral Health 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 Oral Health 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 Oral health 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 2024.

**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 Placement directly.