



**The British
Psychological Society**

Promoting excellence in psychology

Scottish Division of Educational Psychology

Association of Scottish Principal Educational Psychologists

Universities of Dundee & Strathclyde

Standards for placements for Trainee Educational Psychologists in Psychological Services in Scotland

ASPEP

The Association of Scottish Principal Educational Psychologists

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The British Psychological Society was founded in 1901 and incorporated by Royal Charter in 1965. Its principle object is to promote the advancement and diffusion of a knowledge of psychology pure and applied and especially to promote the efficiency and usefulness of Members of the Society by setting up a high standard of professional education and knowledge.

Background

These guidelines were initially written in response to the *Review of Provision of Educational Psychology Services in Scotland* (Currie Report) (Scottish Executive, 2002) recommendation no. 4, which had asked the SDEP to look at training for practice tutors and the possible accreditation of services to take trainees. They were jointly written by SDEP, ASPEP and the Programme Directors at the University of Dundee and University of Strathclyde and were published in 2005. They were reviewed in 2007 and a further light touch review was commissioned by the SDEP Training Committee in 2014. To review the guidelines, a working group was formed with similar representation to the previous working groups i.e. representation from the Training Committee, ASPEP, each of the groups of trainees and the two Programme Directors. Proposed revisions were discussed by the SDEPTC and there was consultation with ASPEP.

Aims

The purpose of these guidelines is to provide a framework for trainee placement best practice. The overall aim is to support equality of provision for trainees across Scotland and promote best practice.

Principles

Trainee placements are enriching, valuable experiences for all concerned. They provide the trainee with the opportunity to integrate theory and practice thus bridging the learning which takes place in university with that on placement. Successful placements rely on supportive, positive expectations and upon the recognition of the developmental processes that are part of the necessary progression to becoming an independent professional. These developmental processes offer learning opportunities for all parties.

This document is designed to promote positive outcomes given a foundation of these principles.

Status and use of the guidelines

These guidelines are the terms of reference for Educational Psychology trainee placements in Scotland. The guidelines should be referred to throughout the placement. It is expected that all those involved with a trainee placement should be familiar with them. In particular the guidelines should be used as a forum for discussion in three-way meetings with Practice Tutors (placement), Trainees and Associate Tutors (University) to check that standards are being met. A record of these discussions should be kept by the service and by the university. All information will be confidential.

The guidelines should be used for planning the trainee placement within the Service and also inform any short placements negotiated between services and trainee Educational Psychologists. It is also envisaged that use of the guidelines will be reviewed during the Scottish Division of Educational Psychology Training Committee (SDEPTC) University accreditation visits.

Standards for placements for Trainee Educational Psychologists in Psychological Services in Scotland

The Service should:

Planning and organisation of the placement

1. Ensure that the planning of placements is agreed between the University, the Psychological Service and the trainee and is consistent with policies on staff development, review and staff induction.
2. Expect the same commitment from trainees in terms of work and appropriate professional conduct as for a psychologist working for the host Service, with some degree of flexibility regarding location (service base).
3. Ensure that reasonable adjustments are made to meet the needs of disabled trainees in line with statutory obligations under the Equality Act 2010.
4. Ensure that the trainee is provided with a functional office environment of equivalent standard to practising psychologists (desk, telephone, IT, filing space) and equivalent access to clerical and administrative support.
5. Have reasonable expectations regarding the trainee's travelling distances and travelling time while on placement.
6. Ensure that the trainee receives information on and invitations to Service INSET days and staff meetings along with relevant papers, minutes and agendas.
7. Ensure that trainees have the opportunity to participate and contribute as appropriate to staff meetings.

8. Ensure that the trainee receives information on current projects in which psychological service staff are involved and has the opportunity to participate in these as appropriate.
9. Ensure that the trainee is aware of Child Protection legislation.
10. Ensure that the trainee is aware of relevant Health and Safety regulations, policy and practice.
11. Ensure that the trainee is aware of the British Psychological Society's *Code of Ethics and Conduct*, the *Code of Human Research Ethics* and any similar documents arising from statutory regulation.
12. Actively seek to provide opportunities for the trainee to be included in service development.
13. Recognise that the transmission of ideas, knowledge, skills and experience during placement will be a two-way process and that staff too will benefit from the ideas brought to the service by the trainee.

Supervision of trainees

14. Ensure that all team members are clear about what is expected of them with regard to contributing to the placement experience of the trainee:
 - awareness of the requirements of the placement;
 - having the trainee accompany them on visits;
 - facilitating contact and involvement with the schools in which they work;
 - making themselves available to work collaboratively with the trainee;
 - being available for informal discussion throughout the trainee's placement;
 - offering constructive comments.
15. Ensure that all psychologists advise the Practice Tutor about a trainee's work, including any concerns.
16. Support the development of a critically reflective practitioner.
17. Appoint, where possible, an additional Depute Practice Tutor to work with the trainee in cases of long term absence.
18. Provide on-going feedback and assessment on the trainee's performance in the placement.
19. Ensure that the trainee is encouraged to adhere to the principles of best practice.

The Principal Psychologist should:

1. Encourage a range of psychologists to put themselves forward as Practice Tutors.
2. Select Practice Tutors according to their skills and competences in relation to the tasks involved, not on the basis of length of service or grade.
3. Review the selection of Practice Tutors routinely in collaboration with the Programme Director.

4. Provide protected time for the Practice Tutor: The British Psychological Society requires that trainees should receive at least one hour of supervision per week. An indicative amount of time that a practice tutor requires for supervision, planning and support of a trainee is one half day per week.
5. Encourage all members of the service to take an informal role in supporting the trainee.
6. Ensure that there is a means of systematically checking that a placement and its supervision is proceeding in a satisfactory way.
7. Provide the trainee with access to the work of the Service's management team, including the opportunity to observe meetings at which members of the management team act as representatives of the Service.
8. Comply with University and local authority requirements in regard to Health and Safety Policy issues and responsibilities under relevant disability legislation.
9. Take account of the time, commitment and other demands placed on staff and the service when providing a quality placement experience.

The Practice Tutor should:

Planning and organisation of the placement

1. Be involved in planning and agreeing the placement jointly with the University, the Psychological Service and the trainee.
2. Act as the local co-ordinator and facilitator of the trainee's placement.
3. Involve the whole team in the planning and overall co-ordination of the placement.
4. Make themselves and team members aware of programme expectations and the requirements of the placement with regard to the tasks that the trainee has to undertake and the corresponding arrangements which will have to be made.
5. Ensure that there is a match between the placement experiences, the level of supervision provided, the programme requirements, the trainee's level of experience, the opportunities existing within the Service, and the trainee's disability-related needs where relevant.
6. Ensure that the agreement of all relevant people (e.g. head teacher, parents, young person, colleagues in the psychological service) is obtained in good time prior to involving a trainee in any work.
7. Ensure that the trainee liaises with the link psychologist.
8. Ensure that the trainee is provided with a staff list, a copy of the staff handbook, the prospectus and other relevant service documentation, such as lists of local schools and maps of the local area.
9. Ensure that the trainee participates in a variety of work (i.e. casework, research projects, staff development and policy development, across a range of establishments).

Supervision

10. Provide a model of supervision which supports the development of a reflective practitioner and avoids a narrow apprentice model of supervision.
11. Ensure that the trainee's work will be carried out under the supervision of an appropriately skilled and competent psychologist who will oversee the quality of the trainee's work and will retain responsibility throughout.
12. Be accessible, be a good listener and provide information on their interests and expertise and those of team members.
13. Have protected time for regular weekly tutorial meetings with the trainee at which progress can be reviewed in terms of placement aims and programme requirements. One hour of supervision per week is required by The British Psychological Society standards for accreditation of the MSc Educational Psychology programmes. An indicative amount of time that a Practice Tutor requires for supervision, planning and support of a trainee is one half day per week.
14. Encourage the establishment of informal and ongoing support for the trainee from other psychologists within the team.
15. Ensure that the trainee is made aware of areas for their own ongoing development and review development targets.
16. Ensure that the trainee is provided with opportunities to develop an appropriate degree of initiative and responsibility in relation to competence.
17. Develop a clear plan to support progression for the trainee from shadowing to independent work, with opportunities for joint working.
18. Ensure that they see all the of the trainee's correspondence and reports, which must be countersigned by an assigned supervising psychologist.

Feedback

19. Discuss concerns about the quality of a trainee's work with the University Tutor, after discussion with the trainee, so that appropriate support can be made available (similarly, University Tutors will contact Practice Tutors if they find that a trainee is experiencing difficulties either in their University or placement work). These discussions should take place as soon as issues arise in order that support can be offered at the earliest opportunity.
20. Provide on-going feedback and summative assessment on the trainee's performance in the placement including information from professionals and service users.
21. Ensure that the trainee has access to reports on their placements and opportunities to discuss these prior to submission to the University (similarly, Practice Tutors and Principal Psychologists should have access to material in their workfile/placement activities file).
22. Employ clear criteria for the assessment of the trainee's progress by use of the programme's performance indicators.
23. Attend Practice Tutors' meetings, three-way meetings and University study days.

The Trainee should:

Placement planning

1. Disclose, as early as possible, any known disability which will require reasonable adjustments to be made by the University and/or by the placement provider.

Expectations of time commitment

2. Give two full working days per week to the psychological service in order to meet programme requirements.
3. Give five working days per week during the block placements.
4. Take no more than five weeks holiday (plus agreed public holidays) per year (or as specified in the contract as appropriate) and these should be out-with school and University term time.
5. Agree flexible working arrangements during the University vacations with the Practice Tutor with regard to the completion of course work and practical work.
6. Follow the agreed practice of the placement service in terms of the length and pattern of the working day.

Supervision

7. Have protected time to attend regular weekly tutorial meetings with the Practice Tutor at which progress can be reviewed in terms of placement aims and programme requirements. Be encouraged to seek informal discussion and support from other members of the team in line with service procedures.
8. Question constructively professional practice but accept advice and direction from their Practice Tutor (and, where appropriate, the Principal Psychologist or other supervising psychologist) in matters relating to the interests of clients.

Professional practice

9. For the protection of all identify themselves as trainees. Seek permission for involvement in any work before it is undertaken and discuss with their practice tutor the procedure for obtaining permission.
10. Maintain a work-file containing samples of work as specified separately in the Programme Handbook, such work to be rendered anonymous as far as children, parents and institutions are concerned (this entails excising all names and addresses of children, parents, teachers, schools, and other professionals from notes, reports, etc. Similarly, in discussion with trainees placed in other services or with university staff, it would not be appropriate for trainees to identify by name any psychological service clients).
11. Present all correspondence to their Practice Tutor (or other designated supervising psychologist) for approval and counter-signature as appropriate.
12. Take opportunities to contribute to Service development.
13. Advise the Principal Psychologist and the Programme Director of any concerns regarding Health and Safety.

Feedback

14. Trainees should keep their work files up-to-date and ready for presentations for formative and summative assessment at the appropriate times.
15. Provide their Practice Tutor and University Tutor with ongoing feedback on the placement.
16. The trainee will participate in the three-way meetings as appropriate. This might include: acting as 'chair' of the three-way meetings, recording agenda items and summarising the details of discussion regarding training needs and outcomes in their work-file, using the pro-forma provided for this purpose.

The University should:

Planning and organisation of the placement

1. Ensure that the planning of placement is agreed between the University, the Psychological Service (Principal Psychologist and Practice Tutor) and the trainee.
2. Ensure that information on placements (expectations, learning outcomes, assessment, etc.) is explicit in programme publicity/recruitment material to enable potential applicants to make informed choices.
3. Ensure that the trainee has repeated opportunities to disclose any disability which might require reasonable adjustments to be made by the University and/or by the placement provider and that this information is handled in accordance with the requirements of the Data Protection Act 1998 and the University's procedures for disability disclosure.
4. Share the relevant information with the placement provider, when a trainee discloses that they have a disability, provided that the trainee is in agreement to this information being shared, taking Health and Safety issues into account.
5. Ensure that arrangements and provision for disabled trainees meet the University's statutory duties under the Equality Act 2010.
6. Ensure that the trainee is aware of the codes of conduct applicable to the profession, including the British Psychological Society's *Code of Ethics and Conduct*.
7. Support trainees in their preparations for placements so that they are purposeful and motivated for the experience.

The Programme Director (in collaboration with University Tutors) should:

Planning and organisation of the placement

8. Liaise with the Principal Psychologist in regard to Health and Safety Policy issues.
9. Review the selection of Practice Tutors routinely in collaboration with the Principal Psychologist.

10. Ensure that there is a means of systematically checking that a placement and its supervision is proceeding in a satisfactory way.
11. Ensure that the training programme is responsive to the issues and challenges experienced by trainees on placement.

Feedback

12. Ensure that there is a system for discussing concerns about the quality of a trainee's work with the Practice Tutor after discussion with the trainee so that appropriate support can be made available. These discussions should take place as soon as issues arise in order that support can be offered at the earliest opportunity.

Support for Practice Tutors

13. Provide staff development and guidance for Practice Tutors in a systematic way through regular meetings.
14. Arrange regular (minimum of twice per year) group business meetings between University and Practice Tutors. Ensure that the first business meeting is held at a timely point in the academic year to meet the needs of Practice Tutors, especially those new to this role..

Managing difficulties

The above sections are intended to guide practice and so prevent emerging difficulties from escalating. What follows is a set of principles for the management of any difficulties that do arise.

1. Programme staff have a responsibility on behalf of the University to support and scaffold the trainee in seeking resolution to any difficulties on placement.
2. Just as trainees are encouraged to raise any programme issues with the programme team as soon as they arise, so all are asked to openly discuss any placement difficulties or concerns as soon as possible with their Practice Tutors. It is expected that difficulties raised at the three-way meetings will already have been discussed beforehand. All involved in trainee placements have a responsibility for raising any difficulties at the earliest opportunity.
3. Where difficulties remain unresolved, trainees, Practice Tutors or Principal Educational Psychologists should:
 - (a) Involve programme staff in further discussion. This may be by telephone conversation (three-way, if possible), or through additional placement visits by the University tutor, or, if necessary, through problem-solving meetings including the Programme Director.
 - (b) Seek advice from the SDEPTC. The SDEPTC can be consulted in circumstances where the problems are associated with failure to comply with accreditation criteria.
4. The Universities, as awarding bodies, have ultimate responsibility for ensuring that trainees are provided not only with good quality teaching but also good quality placement experiences. They also have overall responsibility for decision-making with regard to trainee progression on the programme, in both academic and placement modules. In decision-making about progress on placement the programme staff work in close partnership with local authority psychological service staff.
5. In the unusual event that a trainee fails to complete a placement satisfactorily, their studies may be terminated. The trainee then has the right of appeal through the appropriate University committees as set out in the Programme Regulations.
6. There are a number of ways that systemic issues concerning placements can be discussed and addressed. These are through:
 - The regular Practice Tutor network meetings, hosted by the Universities.
 - Discussion of placement surveys that are fed back to the practice tutor networks, SDEPTC and ASPEP.
 - The SDEP Training Committee which includes trainee, probationer and university representation.
 - The bi-annual meetings between the SDEP and ASPEP Executives.



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