

Guidance in the event of difficulties on placement

Trainees normally find the clinical placement aspect of their training to be valuable and enjoyable. Occasionally a trainee may experience difficulties whilst on placement. In this case, the supervisor is normally the first person they should approach and often issues can be quickly resolved. If, however, this is not satisfactory or does not seem appropriate, trainees should approach their appraisal tutor as soon as possible. If the issue is urgent and their appraisal tutor is unavailable they can contact one of the Clinical Tutor Team or the Programme Director. Depending upon the nature of the difficulty it may also be helpful for a trainee to contact a Personal Tutor for support. Issues can arise on placement such as: absence of supervisor; feeling overloaded with work or feeling criticised and trainees are encouraged to share their concerns. Often these issues can be resolved with the help of a member of the course team, so as to ensure a satisfactory outcome for all. In the same way supervisors can experience difficulties and we also encourage them to raise their concerns initially with the trainee and the trainee's appraisal tutor as soon as possible.

Concern that a trainee may fail a clinical placement

When concern is expressed about the behaviour, performance or competence of a trainee on a clinical placement this will, in the first instance, be investigated by the appraisal and/or clinical tutors in order to assess the seriousness of the concern. **It is important that supervisors raise any concerns they have as soon as possible.**

If the clinical tutors and/or appraisal tutor feel that the concern is such that the trainee may fail the placement, the following procedure will be invoked, culminating in the Programme Director and Clinical Director and/or another senior member of the programme team taking the final decision as to the appropriate placement grade, in consultation with the external examiner.

The reasons for having such a procedure are as follows:

1. It is important that trainees receive the correct grade for their placements.
2. To protect trainees from idiosyncratic judgements being made about their clinical competence.
3. To support supervisors when it is necessary to make a difficult decision over a trainee's clinical competence.

The procedure will operate as follows:

1. If a supervisor has concerns over a trainee's behaviour or competence, they should inform the trainee's appraisal tutor as soon as possible. If anyone else connected with the trainee on placement (e.g. a clinical psychologist or another professional with knowledge of the trainee's activities, or a member of the course team) has similar concerns they should initially discuss these with the named supervisor. If this is not fruitful the individual may document this to the appraisal tutor.
2. The appraisal tutor and clinical tutor team will investigate the seriousness of the concern. If appropriate, the concern will be dealt with without invoking the remainder of this procedure.
3. If the concern is sufficiently serious, or cannot be easily resolved, the trainee and supervisor will meet with the appraisal tutor and/or clinical tutor team (and any other appropriate person), to identify clearly the concern and to draw up a remedial plan of action. This must clearly state what the trainee needs to do in order to address the concern and reach the required level of competence.
4. It is recommended that the supervisor, trainee and Appraisal Tutor remain in close, regular contact throughout any times of difficulty or during the implementation of remedial action in order to continuously review progress.
5. Towards the end of the placement the supervisor should fill out the End of Placement form without assigning an overall grade, and the trainee should complete their End of Placement form. In these circumstances it would be usual for an end of placement visit to take place whereby the Appraisal Tutor will visit the supervisor and trainee again to discuss the feedback on these forms.
6. If the supervisor grades the placement as failed, **this grade is treated as a recommendation** and the final decision over failure is taken by the Programme Director alongside the Clinical Director and/or another senior member of the programme team, who will discuss these issues separately

with both the supervisor, and the trainee (who may be accompanied by a personal tutor) and decide on the overall grade.

7. In some situations, a supervisor may have concerns with regards to a trainee's performance, which have not come to light, until near the end of the placement. On these occasions, the End of Placement Form is completed, without a recommended overall grade. The Programme Director alongside the Clinical Director and/or another senior member of the programme team will make the decision as outlined above.
8. On some occasions, the trainee may be passed on one placement by the Programme Director with the proviso that an area of concern is addressed on the next placement, as an explicit goal of the new placement.

The final decision over any placement grade will be taken by the Programme Director, Clinical Director and/or another senior member of the Programme Team and ratified by the Programme Assessment Board, the external examiner will also be informed of any placement fail.

It is not considered helpful to the trainee, supervisor or programme team for areas of concern to not be highlighted in advance of completing the end of placement form.

If a supervisor considers that the practice or behaviour of a trainee raises serious concerns about their fitness for training as a Clinical Psychologist this should be dealt with under Procedures for Professional Suitability (*see Appendix 12* or check the following link to ensure you have the most up to date version: <https://share.coventry.ac.uk/sites/hls/Pages/Fitness-to-Practise-and-Professional-Suitability.aspx>).