

Managing and Supporting the Student

Allocation of work

The agency i.e. the practice educator, supervisor or team manager is expected to provide the student with a range of work that is suitable for them to undertake with the aim of learning about Social Work practice and demonstrating their ability in relation to the Social Work England Professional Standards. Workloads should be balanced and offer a range of different activities to ensure that the student also has opportunity to demonstrate their ability to produce work of high quality against realistic time frames. Quality as opposed to quantity is important.

Practice educators/supervisors need to make decisions about the type, amount and complexity of work allocated to individual students according to their past experience, particular abilities and whether the student is undertaking a first or final placement. In the early days of a placement, students will need to shadow and observe other workers, gain insight and knowledge into the actual work of the agency, practice existing skills and learn new ones in a safe environment. Co-working with another professional taking the lead role offers students a unique opportunity to listen and learn without having to take overall responsibility. It will also probably take some time for the student to become familiar with agency paperwork, procedures, professional language and the office culture. The build up of work allocated needs to be planned, appropriate and interesting to ensure a steady pace of learning. It should also provide evidence of progression/development of skills.