

University of Southampton

Doctoral Programme in Clinical Psychology

## **Guidance on Completing a Placement Contract.**

### Introduction

The Placement Contract is an important agreement between a Trainee and their Placement supervisor(s) about what will happen on placement and helps to ensure that both parties have a clear understanding of what is expected. It should be used to outline the supervisor's expectations of the trainee whilst on placement and the experiences which the trainee can expect based on the available opportunities and their training needs. The contract setting process also allows for important discussions between trainee and supervisors about the content and process of supervision and ways in which any difficulties on placement will be addressed.

The placement contract should be completed within the first two weeks of placement and should be returned to the Placements Administrator in the Clinical Psychology Office. The trainee's Clinical Tutor will attend this meeting if it is the first placement for either the trainee or supervisor. The Clinical Tutor does not routinely visit at the contracting stage for later placements but is available to visit at the request of trainee or supervisor; or where the Tutor feels that it would be helpful.

The Placement contract will be used to address progress at the Mid Placement Visit and should also be used to inform the decision about whether the trainee has satisfactorily met the Placement goals at the end of the placement.

### Guidance on Completing the Placement Contract

The notes which follow provide guidance about the issues which might typically be included in each section of the contract. However this list is by no means exhaustive and it is important that the contract reflects the individual circumstances of each placement.

#### **1 Placement Description**

Please use this section to outline the trainee's base and facilities available; the nature of the service and the predominant theoretical models used by the supervisors. It is also important to make any specific needs explicit; for example the dress code, the need for anti social or flexible working hours or travel requirements.

#### **2 Times of Placement.**

This section should include the start and finish dates and number of days of placement (usually three with an additional half day for placement related study (increasing to four days in the third year in July and August). Planned annual leave should be agreed here and trainees should detail any commitments which require absences from placement such as research leave. Trainees are allowed one placement day to write up each RCA and a further day to write up their SSP; this should be taken in negotiation with the supervisor.

### **3 Supervision**

This section covers both the practical and process aspects of supervision.

#### **Arrangements**

Please include details of who will be supervising which aspects of the trainee's work and the arrangements for formal supervision (for example the timing, frequency and duration). Details of arrangements for informal and emergency contact should also be included. If the Supervisor intends to take leave during the placement, who will provide supervisory cover in their absence?

#### **Expectations and preferences with regard to the Learning process**

This section is intended to encourage trainee and supervisor to discuss what they have, and have not found helpful in previous experiences of supervision and to arrive at an agreement about how they will organise supervision during this placement. For example, who will take responsibility for setting the agenda and record keeping? How will the supervision be structured and what proportion of each session will be devoted to the various areas in which tasks of supervision (monitoring/instructing/modelling/consulting/supporting)? What opportunities will there be for mutual observation and the audio/video recording of sessions.

It is also helpful to discuss how trainees have found it easiest to learn in the past.

#### **Communication in Supervision**

Successful supervision also relies on a positive supervisory relationship and we encourage you to acknowledge this from the outset. Agreement on the kinds of issues which are and are not appropriate to discuss in supervision and the boundaries of confidentiality is likely to be helpful; for example, at what stage would any difficulties on placement be discussed with the Programme and would the other party be informed beforehand? Other useful questions might include-

'What have you found helpful/unhelpful in your relationships with supervisors/trainees in the past?'

'How will I know when you are feeling uncomfortable or unhappy in supervision?'

'How do you prefer to receive feedback?'

'What might cause you to be defensive? How will I know this?'

'I would be concerned if...'

'What are the things that matter to you?'

This list is not exhaustive and there are many other issues which you may feel are more relevant to your placement.

### **4 Trainee's Previous Relevant Experience**

The trainee should use this section to give a concise account of their experiences prior to, and during training and the transferable skills gained which will be relevant to the placement.

## **5 Induction and Orientation Experiences**

Please list the induction and orientation experiences which the trainee should receive. It may be helpful to divide these into experiences they will need at the start of the placement and those which they can gain as the placement progresses. This should include opportunities to discuss relevant local policies such as health and safety and lone working.

Trainees have the responsibility to ensure that they receive annual update training as specified by their employers; they may request opportunities to attend relevant training whilst on placement.

## **6 What needs to be learned, and how this will be achieved**

The eight headings in this section reflect the organisation of competencies in the Trainee's Log of Clinical Competencies and are also used to report on the trainees achievements on the Trainee Evaluation Form at the end of placement. The trainee's Log of Clinical Competency and feedback from previous placement should be used as the basis for a discussion about the trainee's existing competencies and their training needs. On first placement this will draw on discussion with the trainee about their pre training experience and the Initial appraisal in their Portfolio. Please specify which competencies the trainee plans to work on developing and how this might be achieved.

## **7 Reports and Records**

Please make expectations for maintaining records and writing reports explicit. It is the supervisors' responsibility to ensure that the trainee is aware of current practice in the placement setting and adheres to these guidelines.

## **8 Academic Work**

This section should contain details of any academic work the trainee will be completing whilst on placement and the relevant deadlines. It may be helpful to discuss what, if any support the supervisor will offer with this work and how this is best organised (does the supervisor prefer electronic mail or hard copies? How much time do they need to provide feedback? Do they want to see early drafts or just a final copy?)

## **9 Dates of Future Meetings**

Please organise a date for the Mid Placement review as part of the contract. The contract will be used at the review as a basis for reviewing the placement. Preparation for the mid placement review should include some consideration of the areas covered in the trainee evaluation form and Log of Clinical Competence and how these might be completed if this were the end of placement. Should the supervisor or trainee have any concerns about how the placement is proceeding this should be raised at the mid placement review (or earlier if appropriate) with a member of the Programme team, usually their Clinical Tutor or one of the Clinical Directors.

## **Further Help?**

We hope this will be helpful in developing a contract which will promote a good learning experience on Placement. If you have any concerns about writing a Placement contract please contact either Fionnuala McKiernan or Alison Gold (Joint Clinical Directors) who will be pleased to help.

