Managing a Placement

When managing a placement, workplace educators are involved in the planning, preparation and administration of the placement to ensure its smooth operation. This involves preparing for access to resources and physical space, an orientation program and identifying learning opportunities for students throughout the placement. Once the student has arrived, their learning goals, learning experiences and performance are managed by the workplace educator. Educators provide feedback on performance and finally evaluate the student within the guidelines of the assessment tool provided by JCU.

This module explores the requirements of managing a placement from before the placement begins, planning, preparation, orientation and facilitation, until the placement is finalised.
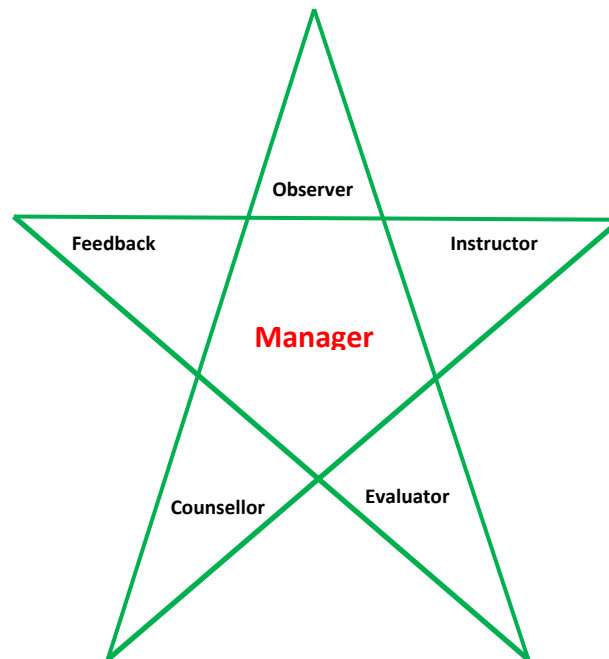
This module includes:
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Introduction

As discussed in the previous module, You as Educator, the role of manager is one of several roles undertaken by the workplace educator and is central to the planning, maintenance and evaluation of a placement.

Roles and Relationships of an Educator
(Adapted from Turney et al. (1982), cited in Best, 2005, p.48)

The role of manager may include:

- Planning and negotiating for a student placement
- Providing orientation to students;
- Developing student folders;
- Providing regular and structured supervision sessions – adhere to set times;
- Providing timetables to students;
- Organising required space for students;
- Providing access to resources for students;
- Ensuring appropriate introductions;
- Providing clarification of expectations of all parties;
- Providing clarification of learning plan and goals;
- Providing quality improvement;
- Ensuring the completion of risk assessments to ensure safety of clients & student;
- Ensuring the completion of the learning plan; and
- Identifying, organising and planning graded learning opportunities.

(Brown & Kennedy-Jones, 2005)

The role of manager is particularly important in the planning and setting up for the student and in orientating the student at the commencement of the placement.

Placement Establishment

Pre placement requirements

Before a student can commence any practical education, they must meet certain requirements specific to their area of practice or placement provider. These relate to safety, disease prevention or legal requirements and are monitored and verified by JCU staff. For example, health sciences students must meet the requirements for:

- Immunisation for Hepatitis B
- Current First Aid and CPR certificate and working with children check (Blue Card)
- Successful completion of course content prior to starting the placement
- Pre requisite course subjects and national registration

Please advise JCU if your facility has specific needs for student placements well in advance of the placement timeframes e.g. Criminal History Check, additional vaccinations.

Preparing for a student

Preparation for the arrival of a student will need to begin well in advance of the start of the placement. You will need time to reflect on how you will manage the student and what needs to be considered to ensure a successful and rewarding experience for you both. Some workplaces may have a policy and procedure to follow for setting up student placements. Approval to set the process in motion may have to come from your supervisor or head office, in larger organisations.

The following questions provide a guide to assist in planning and preparation for a student placement.

What can your centre offer to students?

What is unique about your service in terms of:

- case load and role?
- style of service delivery?
- broader system in which the service operates?
- geographical setting?
- Resources?
- organisational culture?

What can you teach the student directly?

This may include:

- particular style of report writing
- a particular skill e.g. assessments, family therapy, group work, counseling

What can students offer your centre?

Students may be able to offer:

- intensive time-limited support for a particular client
- extra services that you couldn't otherwise offer

- extra pair of hands
- project development
- research specific activities

What do you expect of or require from students?
- What level of independence?
- What is the student's scope of responsibility?
- Who will the student be responsible to?
- What skills will they need to develop?
- What consistency of skill behaviour is required?
- What knowledge will they need to use?
- What procedures will they need to follow?

What is your capacity for hosting students?
- How many students can be hosted at any one time?
- Does the size of your workplace present any issues e.g. small workplace may need to share student with another site?
- How often can a student/s be hosted e.g. how many placements per year, duration of placement, year level of the student, breaks between placements or back to back?
- How much time is available to offer the student/s?

What model of supervision best suits your workplace?
Part of placement preparation includes determining the model of supervision that best suits the workplace. There are a number of ways effective supervision can be provided. The most common models of supervision are;

- Apprenticeship models
    - emphasis on the educator; their skills, knowledge, experience
- Growth models
    - emphasis on student's experience, growth, self-awareness
- Educational models
    - mix of student learning, educational aims, course requirements
- Self-directed Learning models
    - student determines own needs, formulates learning goals, chooses strategies and outcomes
- Collaborative Models
    - one Educator to 2+ students
- Project / Role-emerging Placements
    - complete a workplace-based project or develop discipline-specific role in that service
- Interagency Models
    - supervision shared between agencies

(Alsop & Ryan, 1996)

Which model or models you use will depend on the setting and needs of the student, the requirements of the placement and JCU, as well as your personal style of teaching/learning. Determining the model that best suits your workplace can be done in collaboration with JCU staff. More information about supervision can be found in the module, Facilitating Student Learning.

Preparation activities for the workplace educator

The following activities need to be considered before the student arrives at the workplace.

- Familiarise yourself with JCU requirements and JCU communication –who to contact and how (phone and email).
- Familiarise yourself with the assessment tool used for evaluating student performance.
- Attend any training offered by the university for workplace educators.
- Review the general and detailed objectives as well as the specific learning objectives for the placement discipline (this information will be provided by your JCU contact).
- Confirm the number and names of students attending, and dates of placement.
- Identify resources required by the student e.g. desk space, computer access.
- Send out any pre-placement information to the student. This may be about the placement itself (facility specific information) or about the general region such as local highlights, accommodation, activities etc. This may be particularly useful if the student is not from the same region or town.
- Ensure colleagues and co-workers are aware of the placement and the student arrival date.
- Identify learning opportunities for the student.
- Book students into any mandatory training required by the workplace.
- Ensure the orientation program, timetable and information is up to date.

A Checklist for preparing for a placement is provided to assist with this process.

Student preparation for placement

Initial contact

Once the student has been allocated a placement and notified of the name of the facility and the workplace educator and their contact details, the student is required by the university to make contact with the workplace educator. The initial contact should be made according to the educator's preference (phone or email).

During this initial contact the student should:

- Introduce themselves;
- Provide the educator with their contact details (phone numbers, email address);
- Confirm the dates of the placement;
- Confirm the area of practice, and the opportunities that are available;
- Confirm location and directions;
- Make arrangements for first day (place to meet, time, date);
- Clarify dress code for placement;
- Identify any past experience or interest relevant to placement;
- Identify any preparation reading that might be useful;
- Confirm accommodation if relevant; and
- Thank the educator for placement.

If there are any additional health or legal requirements, please inform the student of these when they contact you.

Pre-placement preparation

JCU prepares students for their practical education experience by giving them information on a range of topics related to professional behaviour. A summary of key topics is included below for your information.

Punctuality

Punctuality is a core component of being a professional and an expectation of students. Students need to adhere to punctuality standards required of them, which can include:

- Always arrive on time or several minutes early to work and for any appointments;

- Notify the workplace educator if unavoidably delayed. If unable to attend a pre-arranged appointment, re-arrange or cancel the appointment as soon as possible;

- Prepare for work tasks appropriately. This may include finding out details of venue, times, equipment, preparation requirements for appointments, treatment sessions, group session etc.;

- Use a daily diary or timetable; and

- Students are expected to book any personal appointments e.g. doctor's appointment outside of placement hours where possible. If not possible, students are expected to negotiate time away from placement with their workplace educator and make up time as required.

Dress Requirements / Uniforms

Professional presentation and attire is required at all times. The JCU uniform should be worn, unless the workplace educator advises otherwise.

Students should be mindful of the following professional dress standards:

- Clothing should be clean, neat, tidy and modest
- If a uniform is not required, clothing should be professionally appropriate
- Hair should be neat, tidy and tied back
- Name and photo ID badges must be worn visibly, unless a centre requests they are not to be worn

Confidentiality and Ethical Considerations

Confidentiality of all patient details, records, circumstances and information is to be strictly maintained at all times during placement. Students agree to abide by confidentiality requirements when they sign the JCU Confidentiality Acknowledgement prior to commencing placements.

Any unethical or inappropriate behaviour by students must be reported promptly to the JCU Coordinator so that appropriate action can be taken.

Students' rights to confidentiality are respected by only discussing performance of an individual student with those involved in assessing that student and not identifying a student when discussing student performance with people not involved in assessing that student.

JCU staff members are not permitted to provide explicit information about students' past performance. Students are encouraged to identify strengths and weaknesses while discussing the Learning Plan with workplace educators.

Placement Hours

Students are expected to work a minimum number of hours per week, over the required number of weeks, depending on their course. You will be advised of the required hours by the JCU Co-ordinator. Generally, students will not work excessive overtime or afterhours/weekend work. Generally, sick days and public holidays are not included in the placement hours and cannot be claimed. Excessive sick leave by the student may impact on placement hours and performance and should be reported to the JCU Co-ordinator.

Student Accountability

Students are expected to be moderate with the use of resources and materials, avoid damaging equipment and ensure accountability for any equipment that is used during the placement.

Some workplace educators travel to provide outreach services to rural areas which may include airfares and overnight accommodation. If students are invited to join staff for these trips they may need to do so at their own expense therefore early notification of such visits is greatly appreciated by JCU staff and the student.

Student Orientation

A well planned and thorough orientation takes place in the first week of placement and is crucial to the overall success of any placement. Educators will find that by making time to provide a comprehensive orientation to the placement, the student's connection and immediate involvement with the facility, as well as their subsequent learning opportunities, will be facilitated. The orientation provides the context for learning and will help the student to begin to identify their role within the service provided. Some of this material is best covered in an interactive orientation; much of it also needs to be written and readily available in a student orientation folder.

The orientation should include discussion and information sharing on:

a) The supervisory framework
b) Workplace policies and operational management
c) Communication and reporting methods between the educator and the student

The supervisory framework

In the initial stages of the placement, it is important to:

- Discuss your role and how you intend to manage the student placement;
- Clarify your expectations as the supervisor and also those of the organisation;
- Discuss the level of supervision to be provided and establish a schedule for regular meetings (e.g. weekly) with the student throughout the placement to review learning outcomes and the placement in general;
- Assist the student in identifying learning needs and objectives for the placement;
- Identify student and educator collective workplace responsibilities including documentation requirements;
- Discuss the provision of feedback and evaluation of student performance using the assessment tool; and
- Discuss the way in which safe practice and the safety of clients/ services users will be ensured.

Workplace policies and operational management

It is important for students to have a comprehensive knowledge of the workplace policies and operational management throughout their orientation to assist with a successful placement. Areas to consider can include:

Initial introductions:
- to yourself, your previous experience and current role; and
- to other key staff, e.g. reception staff, other team members, your manager, etc.

Physical orientation:
- to the student work space and where to keep personal belongings;
- to the location of toilets and staff rooms, where lunch can be bought or kept in a refrigerator; and
- to the facility and explanation of the 'rules and regulations' of the workplace including work hours.

An orientation to the placement:
- a timetable for the first week, including any special arrangements made for orientation;
- a schedule of regular 1:1 time to provide feedback (e.g. daily debriefing, planning at beginning of week, review at end of week);
- a timetable for the entire placement with as much detail as possible;
- a review of the Assessment Tool with the student;

An overview of the facility:
- an explanation of administrative policies and procedures;
- an explanation of the facility's place in the community; government regulations which prescribe the facility's function etc;
- information on the filing system, policies regarding access, storage and recording notes
- a timetable of regular meetings (location and purpose);
- information on photocopying, faxing, computer email, etc;
- phone lists and instruction on how to use the internal phone systems;
- information on resources – organisational e.g. library, other services;
- security information, including accessing keys/cards to offices, computer password issue, where files are kept, etc;
- a review of ethics and confidentiality issues pertaining to the setting – the student needs to understand the specific requirements of the facility;
- information about universal infection control;
- workplace health and safety information– fire procedures, manual handling etc;
- information on regional resources e.g. resource centres, library, community groups; and
- information on timesheets, car bookings, mail and pigeon holes, petty cash procedures.

Additional information which can be helpful could include:
- Maps of the organisation, local area, town centre;
- Bus timetables, other tourist information; and
- Special interest features of the region.

Student Orientation File

It is recommended an orientation file for students be compiled by each organisation, which can be regularly updated and to which students can refer. Contents of the file may include written information on workplace policies and operational management discussed above, as well as the items below:

- A copy of an orientation checklist, completed on Day One;
- Organisational structure, including how your profession fits in to the overall organisation;
- Team members and contact numbers;
- Mission statement, philosophy, objective;
- Your professional role and the service provided;
- Discipline specific referral forms, checklists and proformas;
- Report writing (example of typical reports written);
- Articles and readings that relate to the learning;
- Jargon and Acronyms used in the setting;
- Community networks and organisations liaised with, and contact numbers; and
- Policies, procedures and documentation.

An Orientation Checklist is provided to assist with the process of planning and organising the student orientation.
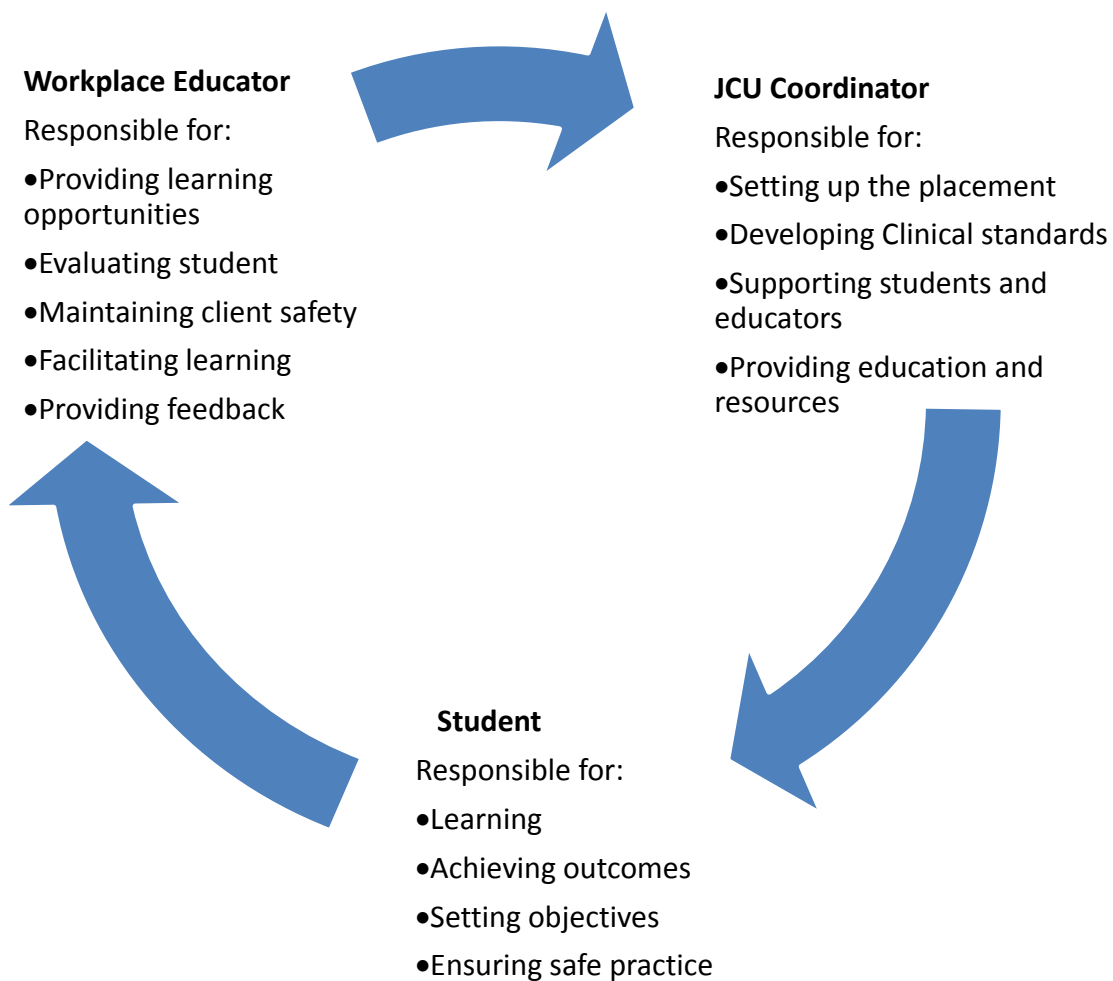
Communication between educator and student

Effective communication is essential for a successful placement and needs to be discussed throughout orientation. It is important to:

- develop guidelines in conjunction with the student regarding how and when regular feedback will be given (e.g. in the presence of client /or not);
- negotiate with the student the timing and frequency of information sharing. Depending on the stage of the placement you may request the student report back to you at regular intervals e.g. early in the placement you may want to hear the initial investigation results of a task and the student's plan for action before they undertake it. Later on you may be happy for the student to complete their task and report to you on the outcome. Towards the end of the placement you may be happy for the student to manage more independently with daily reviews; and
- inform the student of any circumstances requiring your immediate notification e.g. incidents related to workplace health and safety issues or adverse affects of student action.

Maintaining the Placement

A quality placement experience that aims to enhance the development of students' competence involves a three-way partnership between the student, the workplace educator and JCU. This partnership works best if there is open communication between all parties. The diagram below summarises the responsibilities of all **three** partners in maintaining a quality placement experience.

Workplace Educator

Responsible for:

- Providing learning opportunities
- Evaluating student
- Maintaining client safety
- Facilitating learning
- Providing feedback

JCU Coordinator

Responsible for:

- Setting up the placement
- Developing Clinical standards
- Supporting students and educators
- Providing education and resources

Student

Responsible for:

- Learning
- Achieving outcomes
- Setting objectives
- Ensuring safe practice

For the workplace educator, the following activities assist in maintaining a quality placement experience:

- Providing regular feedback throughout the placement as planned, based on observations of student performance;
- Maintaining regular 1:1 time each week to provide feedback and review supervisory requirements with the student;
- Developing a working relationship with the student to ensure a clear understanding of individual and collective workplace responsibilities;
- Providing learning opportunities and resources that help the student to meet their learning goals;
- Providing an environment that stimulates learning and helps the student connect theory to practice by regular discussion, especially concerning professional reasoning, assessment and management outcomes;

Feedback, both informal and formal, from a workplace educator is an essential feature of a quality placement experience however the student must also take responsibility for participating actively in the supervisory process and for monitoring his/her own performance in practice.

Managing Performance

A number of factors may impact on a student's performance during placements. These generally relate to:

- Student attitude, communication, professional practice, self-management or clinical skills in the workplace
- Cultural or linguistic diversity
- Health and /or personal issues

When any of these issues arise, it is the responsibility of the student to inform the workplace educator, however this may not always occur and the student's performance may be affected.

Some common problems

Some common problems that may be encountered from the student throughout the placement may include:

- Inappropriate or unacceptable behaviour and/or presentation; this behaviour creates a risk to clients, causes stress or upsets others or creates feelings of anger and/or frustration in educator/staff;
- Inconsistent levels of clinical performance;
- Limited interaction and communication skills;
- Lack of interest, motivation or initiative;
- Inadequate preparation, organisation and prioritisation;
- Difficulty translating theory into practice - "not getting it";
- Difficulty adjusting/relating to placement situations that are outside their usual experiences;
- Inadequate or inappropriate response to feedback – i.e. behaviour keeps occurring; and
- Lack of knowledge.

Some common causes

Some causes for the above-mentioned problems can include:

- **Personal Factors** – e.g. health issues, disability, difficulty with personal relationships outside the workplace, financial stress, homesickness, cultural and language issues, difficulty adjusting to workload, not well orientated to placement, unclear expectations, not feeling welcome or part of team, difficulties in the relationship with the supervisor.
- **Learning Environment/ Placement Structure** – e.g. multiple supervisors with differing expectations, multiple caseloads with high demand, workload issues (too little or too much), insufficient or unhelpful feedback, limited access to resources and space, poor organisation and timetabling;
- **Clinical and professional competency issues** – e.g. lack of knowledge, poor time/self management, unsuitable presentation, difficulties in communicating, poor clinical judgment, difficulty linking theory to practice, not demonstrating clinical reasoning strategies, unsafe behaviour with clients; and
- **Challenging behaviours, attitude or personality** – e.g. student may be disinterested, unmotivated, lacking initiative, unwilling to meet deadlines or follow directions, not confident, withdrawn.

Many disciplines schedule a mid placement assessment with student to review their performance and identify areas for development for the remaining weeks of the placement. If a student is at risk of failing or if the workplace educator has any concerns about the student's performance it is important to contact JCU as *early* as possible. This can be done either by contacting your JCU Co-ordinator or sending in the Concerns Exist Form.

What to do when concerns exist

When the educator identifies a problem with the student's performance and considers them to be at risk of failing, the following steps should be followed.

1. **Talk to the student**

   The first step is to discuss with the student that he/she is at risk of failing the placement, and to identify or define the problems the student is having that are affecting their placement. In some situations, the workplace educator and the student are able to resolve the issues at this stage, and put in place some goals for improvement.

2. **Contact the JCU coordinator**

   If the situation is not resolved satisfactorily, either the Student or the workplace educator should contact the JCU Coordinator. This can be done by direct contact (e.g. phone or email) or the educator can complete a Concerns Exist Form and fax the form to the JCU Coordinator.

   The JCU Coordinator will discuss the issues, problems and possible consequences with both the student and the workplace educator. This can be done either face-to-face or over the phone. Depending on the severity and type of problem, possible consequences may include:

   - implementation of an improvement plan;
   - extension of the placement; or
   - deferral of or withdrawal from the placement.

   Once again, resolution may be achieved at this stage with some minor modification; however instigating an improvement plan is a good way to ensure the student has a clear understanding of what needs to be achieved for the remainder of the placement.

3. **Develop an improvement plan**

   The JCU Coordinator, in conjunction with the workplace educator, develops an improvement plan that outlines specific goals, timeframes and outcomes, which are implemented for the remainder of the placement. The JCU Coordinator discusses the plan and its implementation with the student and monitors it regularly. The improvement plan should:

   - Outline specific actions/activities that the student is expected to meet to pass the placement
   - Identify strategies that aim to change the student's performance
   - Identify criteria that is observable and able to be evidenced for successful achievement of the actions

   The improvement plan can be written by either the workplace educator or the JCU coordinator in collaboration with the educator. The student can also have input into the improvement plan.

   An example of an Improvement Plan is provided to assist with this process.

4.   Monitor progress

The workplace educator should refer to the improvement plan during regular supervision times with the student. The JCU Coordinator is also responsible for regular contact with the student and the workplace educator to monitor progress throughout the remainder of the placement.

Progress should be monitored weekly by phone and/or workplace visits, and the plan can be revised as needed. The JCU Coordinator may attend the Final Evaluation if required.

In rare situations, performance issues may continue. If significant performance improvement is not demonstrated the student may fail the placement.
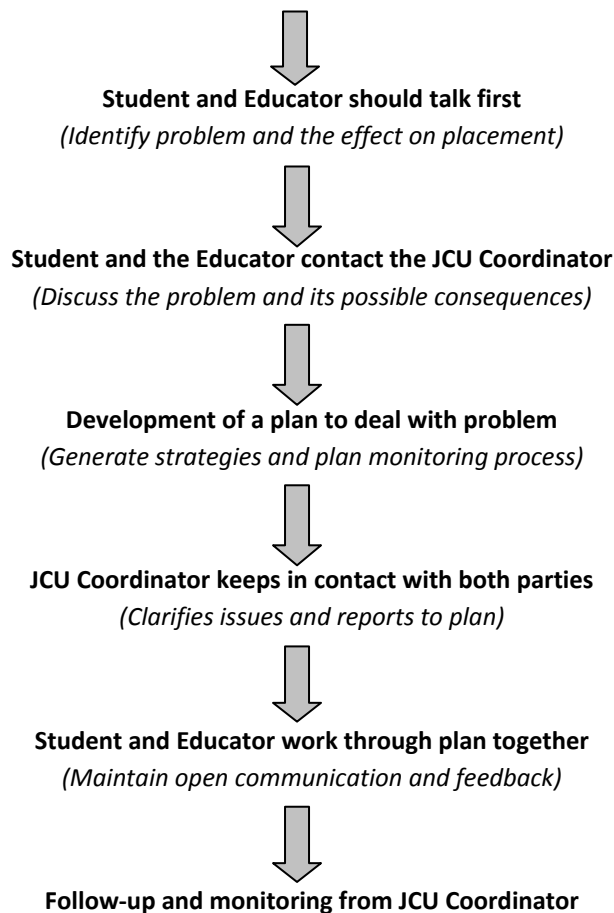
5.   Maintain confidentiality

It is a JCU requirement that staff, and those involved in supervising the students protect the confidentiality of JCU students.

This protection relates to their academic performance, university grades, their performance on placement and any personal matters raised in the course of communications with students. A student's progress and performance should **only** be discussed with the necessary people at both the placement site and JCU.

The following flow chart summarises the process when problems or concerns exist with a student on placement.

⬇

Student and Educator should talk first
(Identify problem and the effect on placement)

⬇

Student and the Educator contact the JCU Coordinator
(Discuss the problem and its possible consequences)

⬇

Development of a plan to deal with problem
(Generate strategies and plan monitoring process)

⬇

JCU Coordinator keeps in contact with both parties
(Clarifies issues and reports to plan)

⬇

Student and Educator work through plan together
(Maintain open communication and feedback)

⬇

Follow-up and monitoring from JCU Coordinator

Managing Adverse Events

In the context of supervision of students on placement, the term 'adverse events' refers to a range of issues that require risk management. 'Adverse events' in this context generally fall into five main categories:

- Events in which client safety is at risk
- Events in which student safety is at risk
- Workplace educator absence
- Student illness or disability
- Other student special circumstances

Risks to client safety

Any event which occurs during a placement in which a client's safety is put at risk must be reported by the student immediately to the workplace educator. The facility will have policies to correctly manage events relating to client safety and the student must comply with the directions of the educator and the facility management. JCU students are insured under JCU professional indemnity policy whilst engaged in mandatory work experience required for the completion of the program, and any breaches to client safety must be reported to the JCU coordinator for management.

Risks to student safety

Any event which occurs during a placement in which a student's safety is put at risk must be reported immediately to the JCU Coordinator. Management e.g. medical treatment or debriefing, will depend upon the specific event and the student's health and welfare must take priority. The placement may be allowed to continue if it is deemed safe to do so and that the student's learning opportunities will not be adversely affected in any way.

Workplace educator absence

 Educator absences at a larger facility can often be managed internally through the provision of an alternative staff member to supervise for the period that the educator is absent. If however alternative supervisory arrangements cannot be made internally within the organisation and the educator will be absent for more than 10% of the placement, then the educator or facility representative is requested to contact the JCU Coordinator as soon as possible to discuss the issue. Possible options for management of the issue include negotiating an extension to the student's placement period within the facility to account for the days of placement lost (if this is a possible and an acceptable alternative to the facility, educator, student and university) or a reallocation of the student to another facility. Educator absence for very short periods of time can be used by the student for self-directed learning such as research and reading, attendance at meetings and/or other adjunct tasks relevant to the placement.

Disability or Illness during Placement

Students who become ill during placement and require leave must inform the workplace educator immediately and *if absent for more than one day*, must also contact the JCU coordinator.

 If they are absent for two or more working days (even if those days are separate), it is expected that they will see a doctor and obtain a medical certificate which will be provided to the workplace educator on return to the placement. A copy of the medical certificate should be submitted with the record of hours at the end of the placement to the JCU Coordinator.

Absence of more than one day may affect the total hours for the placement and the overall evaluation. The placement may be extended by negotiation with, and at the discretion of, the workplace educator if necessary. The JCU Coordinator must be informed of any changes in the placement dates and duration.

Other student special circumstances

With respect to the need to respond to student special circumstances such as personal or mental health issues, the over-riding policy pertaining to risk management associated with practical education and placements will apply. This policy requires the workplace educator and student to notify the JCU Coordinator should any significant event or problem become evident which may adversely affect the student's learning opportunities or performance. A number of strategies can be employed in this situation including discussion, counselling and / or mediation provided either by the JCU Coordinator or by another JCU staff member. There are occasions when communication difficulties arise between educator and students, and each party should feel comfortable acknowledging the issues and bringing it to the attention of the JCU Coordinator.

Completing the placement

At the completion of the student placement, there are several tasks to be carried out by the workplace educator.

Final evaluation / Assessment form

The workplace educator is responsible for:

- Final evaluation of student performance and the provision of appropriate feedback. For most disciplines, the final evaluation assessment must be signed by both the educator and the student;
- Forwarding of the completed assessment to the JCU Coordinator together with the student's attendance record within one week of the completion of the placement. This may vary between disciplines. For example in some instances the educator is expected to send in the final assessment form *on the final day of placement* as the progression to a subsequent placement may be influenced by the successful completion of the current placement; and
- Providing an opportunity for the student to give feedback on the placement to you as the workplace educator.

It is recommended that the student keeps a copy of the final evaluation, and for the workplace educator to send the completed original of the final evaluation to the JCU Coordinator. The evaluation is the property of the student, and a copy may *only* be kept by the workplace educator if they have obtained clear permission from the student to do so. In this case, the assessment tool should be stored confidentially and securely, and the content used appropriately.

Attendance record

An attendance record must be provided to JCU for each student placement. During placement it is the student's responsibility to ensure that the attendance record is signed off each week by the workplace educator. At the end of the placement the completed and signed attendance record is provided to the workplace educator who sends it with the final evaluation to JCU. For many disciplines the attendance record is required to record the number of placement hours completed to ensure course compliance and is an important document to maintain.

Following the placement

Once the placement has ended it is recommended that the workplace educator take time to review and reflect on the supervision experience. It is also recommended that the educator provide feedback to the JCU Coordinator to contribute to quality improvement.

Feedback can be provided on:

- Positive experiences during the placements
- Overall challenges, barriers or difficulties
- Level of student's knowledge prior to placement
- Level of student's knowledge at end of placement
- Recommendations for any changes in the curriculum
- Need for resources or further training

The JCU Coordinator may also be able to discuss any feedback from students regarding the placement with the workplace educator.

Summary

The role of manager is crucial in the design and facilitation of a quality placement experience which will enhance the development of students' competence. Effective placement management involves a three-way partnership between the student, the workplace educator and JCU. Certain activities are expected of each party before, during and after a placement.

Expected activities of the student

Students are advised throughout their curriculum of the expected activities they are required to meet, during the placement. These can include:

- Maintaining professional behaviour at all times and upholding the Code of Ethics;
- Maintaining confidentiality at all times;
- Being enthusiastic, willing, motivated and receptive;
- Orientating self to the workplace with the assistance of the workplace educator
- Clarifying and understanding the expectations of the workplace educator;
- Identifying learning needs and objectives for the placement experience;
- Showing initiative and taking responsibility for own learning and for the successful achievement of placement objectives;
- Maintaining open communication with the workplace educator, being clear about the educator's expectations and completing all reasonable tasks as required by the educator;
- Seeking assistance from the educator or JCU Coordinator when necessary;
- Seeking information and feedback to assist with learning;
- Structuring time to make the most of all learning opportunities available;
- Completing all tasks as required by the educator;
- Learning about the requirements of the workplace with the assistance of the supervisor; and
- Ensuring the student attendance record is signed off each week by the educator, and that the completed attendance record is provided to the educator for posting to JCU at the conclusion of the placement.

Expected activities of the workplace educator

Additionally there are expected activities of the workplace educator throughout the placement process. These can include:

- Orientating the student to the workplace and clarifying expectations;
- Assisting the student with identifying learning needs and objectives for the placement;
- Developing a comfortable working relationship with the student;
- Providing learning opportunities and resources that meet the student's learning goals;
- Observing performance and providing feedback to the student;
- Providing an environment that stimulates learning and that helps the student connect theory to practice;
- Evaluating student performance;
- Ensuring safe practice and the safety of clients;

- Contacting the JCU Coordinator if issues arise;
- Assessing the student's clinical and professional practice using the relevant assessment tool; and
- Posting the final evaluation and the student attendance record to JCU following conclusion of the placement.

Expected activities of the JCU Coordinators

Activities are also expected of the JCU Coordinators throughout the placement process, which can include:

- Arranging placement allocations and coordinating practical education opportunities;
- Maintaining ongoing contact with workplace educators and facilities providing student placements;
- Providing education, resources and support for students and workplace educators;
- Assisting educators in arranging support for students who are at risk of failing;
- Liaising with educators if there is a need to remove a student from a placement;
- Liaising with educators regarding resolving conflict situations;
- Liaising with educators regarding any adverse events;
- Maintaining records of clinical placements and experiences for each student;
- Conducting practical education workshops for educators; and
- Liaising with educators regarding student assessment and results.

When to contact JCU
- The student has failed halfway assessment
- The student is at risk of failing
- Safety concerns
- Considerable personal problems
- Absenteeism and/or illness
- Concerns relating to professional conduct and ethics
- Student not coping with demands of placement
- Significant impact on team/department
- No medical certificate for sick days

What JCU can offer
- Phone contact
- Devise improvement plans
- Provide resources
- Teleconferencing
- Debriefing
- Organise student counseling services
- Management of illness
- Decision to stop/postpone/extend placement

Remember … when managing performance:

Early identification
- Identify the global issues/problems
- Involve JCU Coordinators (especially if failing)
- Define the underlying causes
- Clarify the actual behaviour/s and issue/s to address; BE SPECIFIC

Early intervention
- Identify action strategies (specific, relevant, observable & task related)
- Develop and document an improvement plan
- Implement the improvement plan

Monitoring progress
- Review the plan regularly (all parties)
- Modify the plan as required

Managing a placement requires planning, preparation and motivation. It is also a very rewarding experience as you observe the students develop and transform into young professionals. Use the knowledge in this module to develop and improve your experience as a workplace educator.

References

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