MA (Hons) Learning in Communities: Professional Practice Placement 2.

Placement handbook: Guidelines for Students and Supervisors 2024/25

EDUA08121



Placement Handbook



Professional Practice Placement (PPP2): Guidelines for Students and Supervisors 2023/24

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# 1. Welcome.

Welcome to the 2024/25 Learning in Communities: Professional Practice Placement 2 (PPP2) Handbook. It is designed to give both students and supervisors a broad picture of the aims and objectives of the professional practice placement and the related procedures and processes. Blank copies of all the relevant paperwork and required reports are available as appendices to this document. These appendices and other relevant paperwork are now stored in a folder on our on line placement course website. Both supervisors and students are able to access the appendices via [this direct link](https://bit.ly/MH-MALIC) (once on our placement site, open the *‘Placement paperwork’* folder and then *‘Appendices’*).

We hope this handbook proves useful to you but if you have any questions, please don’t hesitate to contact us at any time. Students should also consult the course handbook and the course learn pages for specific details of the course and the assessment procedures.

The partnership between the university and the field of practice remains a central component in the education of professional Community Learning and Development practitioners (CLD) both in terms of their skills base and their ability to analyse practice. We value this partnership highly and work to strengthen it in the future. We are grateful to those who continue to support the professional preparation of emerging generations of community educators through offering their time and the resources of their agency as a site of learning for students. Thank you for your commitment.

## 1.1. Key Contacts

**Course Organiser**

Dr Gary Fraser gary.fraser@ed.ac.uk

**Placement Tutors**

Dr Gary Fraser gary.fraser@ed.ac.uk

TBC

**Placements Officer**

Sylvia Newbon [Placement.Unit@ed.ac.uk](mailto:Placement.Unit@ed.ac.uk)

**To request this document in an alternative format, such as large print or on coloured paper, please contact the Placement Unit.**

# 2. Significant dates for Placement 2024/25

## 2.1. Placement preparation & reflection

Please note, the sessions indicated in the table immediately below are for the attendance of students only.

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Introduction to PP2: this session will provide an overview of PPP2, introduce the placement process and assessment tasks. | Monday 16th September 2024  10-1pm, Paterson’s Land, Room G.37 |
| Individual meetings between student & placement tutor to identify placement preference.\*  *\*Please note: Students will be asked to select a time and day to meet from the timetable offered by placement tutors at the beginning of the Semester.* | Conducted during weeks beginning:  30th September and 7th October |
| Placement preparation recall & briefing session. | Monday 13th January 2025 13:10-15:30, Charteris Land, Room 4.02 |
| Placement begins | Tuesday, 14th January 2025 |
| Placement contract submitted | Friday, 7th February 2025 |
| Recall Session | Monday 24th February, 13:10-15:30, Charteris Land, Room, 4.02 |
| Individual mid placement review\*  *\* This review meeting will take place either online or in the practice setting.* | Conducted during Weeks beginning:  2nd and 9th March 2025 |
| Mid placement report to be submitted | On or before Friday, 14th March 2025 |
| Placement ends | Friday 9th May 2025 |
| Final Report to be submitted | Friday 9th May 2025 |
| Summative Assessment Briefing Session | Thursday 8th May 2025 – Room TBC |
| Summative assessment submission details: Panel presentation  *\*Please note: The dates offered here are provisional. Students will be allocated a specific time and day in due course.* | Thursday 22nd May 2025 (Room TBC)  Feedback and provisional mark will be available from 17.00 hrs 15 days from the day of the presentation. |

# 3. MA (Hons) Learning in Communities (MALiC): The professional practice placement in context.

## 3.1. Introduction

A distinctive feature of the MA (Hons) Learning in Communities (MALiC) degree programme is the interface between academic and vocational standards. These different but complimentary standards create a dynamic which ensures that the relationship between theory practice is central to our work. The Programme is also informed by the changing policy context and its implications for practice. The professional practice placement is an important setting where students experience and begin to understand this dynamic relationship.

## 3.2. Professional endorsement

The MALiC programme is professionally approved by the CLD Standards Council for Scotland (CLDSCS). Like any profession, making the link between practice and academic learning is essential for Community Learning and Development (CLD) practitioners. CLD professionals require a wide range of skills and knowledge to encourage, share and deliver learning opportunities. For professional CLD practitioners, quality and effectiveness depends on the rigour and critical awareness that comes from professional learning on placement. The professional learning and assessment of the placement is informed by the [competence framework set out by the CLDSCS](https://cldstandardscouncil.org.uk/resources/the-competences/). This framework seeks to ensure that students are operating to an appropriate professional standard. Students have been collecting evidence of their competence from their previous experience and placements so they should be able to share that with supervisors. It is important for the student to review this and set out to fill any gaps that may exist. It is important that competence is defined in a way which is developmental rather than prescriptive and that ‘evidence’ should be collected in a way that is conducive to the work undertaken on the placement. For example, reports of meetings, analytical recordings, discussion papers, work-plans and the setting of aims and objectives can all provide evidence that the student has met the performance criteria of a particular competence. This kind of evidence should be collected by the student so that it is available to supervisors and external examiners. The competence framework is available as ‘appendix 1’ via the appendices folder on the placement course learn page.

## 3.3. Integrating the taught curriculum and placement in the MALiC

The MALIC programme has four distinct learning strands focused on; informal and non-formal educational methods and approaches, theoretical ideas and conceptual frameworks, research capacity, and professional practice placement experiences.

The student learning experience has been designed to embrace these strands iteratively over the four years of the degree programme which addresses both the distinctiveness of each strand and articulation between them. In addition, we have systematically integrated the professional practice and the taught programme so that they complement and enhance each other. Below is an outline of each year of the programme which indicates how this works:

### 3.3.1. Year 1

First year has an important formative and foundational function building on the existing experience of students. The taught programme includes a broad introduction to the theory and practice in CLD. This is intended to stimulate students to extend their thinking as a precondition for critical reflection on policy and practice. They will be introduced to frameworks for locating practice in the wider policy context and encouraged to consider some of the implications. They will be prepared for the task of developing disciplined and systematic approaches to practice and will be introduced to a range of teaching and learning strategies in CLD settings. Students will also undertake their first supervised professional practice placement which focuses on developing professional identify and studying the CLD agency in the context of community.

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Year 1 SCQF Level 7** | | | |
| **Semester 1** | | **Semester 2** | |
| **Core Courses[[1]](#footnote-1)** | **Credits** | **Core Courses** | Credits |
| Domains of practice 1: Engaging with the Literature in Community Learning and Development | 20 | Professional Practice 1 | 40 |
| Ideology and social problems | 20 | Community-Based Research 1: Understanding the Community | 20 |
| Community Learning 1: Building Professional Identity | 20 |  |  |

### 3.3.2. Year 2

The second year will enable students both to consolidate previous learning and to develop a discerning understanding and awareness of core theoretical concepts and principles. Their existing knowledge and skills will be developed in relation to the four strands of the curriculum. Students will study the principles and practice of working with people and groups. They will explore the historical development of, and debates relating to, the distinct domains of practice. Students will also research the structure, culture, operation and resourcing of community-based agencies. Students will undertake a 2nd professional practice placement where they can further develop and understand the relationship between theory and practice. The second year gives students the opportunity of studying an outside subject.

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Year 2 SCQF Level 8** | | | |
| **Semester 1** | | **Semester 2** | |
| **Core Courses** | **Credits** | **Core Courses** | **Credits** |
| (Placement prep 1 or 2 days) |  | Professional Practice 2 | 40 |
| Domains of practice 2: Introduction | 20 | Community-Based Research 2: Understanding Organisations | 20 |
| Community Learning  2: Working with Groups | 20 |  |  |
| **Outside course elective** | 20 |  |  |

### 3.3.3. Year 3

The third-year will enable students to develop a critical understanding of the defining features and scope of the professional sector. This will nurture their capacity as autonomous practitioners to draw on a range of theoretical sources to make competent, confident and defensible judgements in practice. Students will deepen their understanding of the domains of practice through critical analysis of contemporary issues arising from forefront developments. Students will apply their knowledge, skills and understanding of practice through the use of routine methods of enquiry and research. Students will learn how to design, plan and implement programmes of education and action in communities. The final professional practice placement offers the opportunity for the students to complete their professional portfolio of evidence and present a professional viva as evidence of their overall learning. At this stage in their studies students will have the option to exit with an ordinary degree and a professional CLD qualification.

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Year 3 – SCQF Level 9** | | | |
| **Semester 1** | | **Semester 2** | |
| **Core Course** | **Credits** | **Core Course** | **Credits** |
| Domains of Practice 3: Critical analysis | 40 | Professional Practice 3 | 40 |
| Community Learning 3: Education and Action in Communities. | 20 | Community-Based Research 3: Understanding Practitioner Research. | 20 |

### 3.3.4. Year 4

The fourth year is a summative year which draws many strands of study together and focuses on the Honours Dissertation Project. However, there is no placement element in the fourth year as the professional requirement has been met at the end of year three. The students enter a more autonomous mode of study in which they take a more active role in the development of content. An honours seminar programme offers the opportunity for students to share research relevant to their honours project and enter a more collegial relationship with academic staff as they share their research with the student group. A series of research workshops allows students to share the practical approaches they are taking to their research projects and to draw on academic knowledge and advice. An advanced policy analysis course will encourage students to interrogate specific policy and policy discourses. This will engage students in theoretical debates about community, equalities, social justice, citizenship and democracy and how these both open up and constrain the possibilities for professional action. The honours research project is an opportunity for the students to focus on a particular area of interest that is relevant to the field of CLD. The form of presentation could be either a dissertation, a fully developed research proposal, a written submission in the form of an academic journal article or a literature review.

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Year 4 SCCQF Level 10** | | | |
| **Semester 1** |  | **Semester 2** |  |
| **Core Courses** | **Credits** | **Core Course** | **Credits** |
| Applied Policy Analysis | 20 | Honours Dissertation Project | 40 |
| Honours Research Workshops | 20 | Honours Seminar in Social and Educational Theory | 20 |
| **Course elective** | 20 |  |  |

# 4. Professional Practice Placement 2: Processes and procedures

## 4.1 Overview of placement process

The second year placement (PPP2), like all other placements on MALiC, will take place in Semester 2 and students are expected to attend their placement for the equivalent of 3 days per week, working 7.25 hours per day for 17 weeks. However, please note that whilst the above is offered as a helpful guide, there is some flexibility in this.

The exact hours a student works per week will be the outcome of a mutually negotiated and agreed settlement that takes into account the commitments and needs of both the student and the placement agency. For example, students might vary the hours they work each week. Or, students may have to slightly reduce the number of hours they work per week with the corresponding delay in the end date of the placement.

Nonetheless, whatever the specifically agreed weekly work schedule is, to meet the professional requirement to pass the placement, students must complete 370 supervised placement hours by the end of the placement.

In order to ensure that there is a measure of consistency and coherence across the placement experience and the student cohort, we have devised a general process for selecting, matching and assessing placements.

1. Placement agency profiles of potential fieldwork placement opportunities are sought and offers are processed by the Placement Unit.
2. Tutor, student and Placement Unit work together to match up individual learning needs with fieldwork practice offers received. Initial contact is generally made by the student’s university tutor or the placement unit. Once a possible placement is identified students are notified and asked to organise a preliminary visit between the student and agency.
3. Students make an initial visit to the agency to discuss their learning needs and interests and check that these match with the available learning opportunities.
4. If agreement is reached, the student will notify the placement tutor and the Placement Unit that they are satisfied with the visit and wishes a placement to be set up. The Placement Unit confirms with the fieldwork supervisor that they are happy to host the student and then confirm the exact placement dates. As noted on page 3, all the paperwork (i.e. handbooks & appendixes) associated with the placement is now available on line and the Placement unit will provide the supervisor with the details of how they can be accessed. If agreement is not reached, the process outlined above will continue.
5. Once the placement has started, the induction period is complete and the student has greater knowledge of both the requirements of the placement and the supervisor has greater knowledge of the student, the Placement Contract should be negotiated between the student and the placement supervisor (appendices 4), usually by the end of week 4 of the placement. On completion of the contract, the supervisor should send it on to the Placement Unit. This forms a helpful reference point and base line.
6. The University is now required to monitor students’ hours whilst on placement. Therefore, a Placement Hours Log (appendix 5), should be completed by the student and then approved and submitted by the supervisor at the times specified on the log to Jo Laing ([Placement.Unit@ed.ac.uk](mailto:Placement.Unit@ed.ac.uk))
7. About mid-way through the placement, a mid placement review session is held. The review will take place either in person or online. A mid placement report form (appendix 6) is submitted by the supervisor, usually a week after the review session.
8. At the end of the placement the fieldwork supervisor, in discussion with the student, undertakes an assessment of the student’s overall competence and completes and submits a final of report (appendix 7) which should be forwarded to Jo Laing ([Placement.Unit@ed.ac.uk](mailto:lorna.dunbar@ed.ac.uk)) at the placement unit.

## 4.2. Placement in detail: before, during and after

### 4.2.1 Pre placement

In preparation for the placement, students will undertake a taught session early in Semester 1 designed to introduce them to the placement process and prepare them for going on placement in Semester 2. Each student will also be allocated an academic Placement Tutor to provide support and guidance in relation to preparation for and engagement with the placement setting. This support will initially involve individual one to one meeting/s early in Semester 1. The student will be able to clarify their development needs and a suitable placement will be identified that best matches these needs. Please note it is the responsibility of the university to source and provide professionally appropriate placements for each student.

### 4.2.2. During placement

In the early weeks of the placement, a Placement Contract between the student and the Placement Supervisor will be negotiated and agreed and then submitted to the placement unit (see appendix 4) by the supervisor. This contract should stipulate the agreed days of attendance, an estimate of the weekly hours and the range of work activities which will allow the student to meet the required target of 370 supervised placement hours. The student’s progress should be monitored through their own continuous reflective practice and through discussion with the placement supervisor during supervision sessions, ideally conducted weekly. Students will also be compiling a digital portfolio using a university online platform. Guidance on how students do this was incorporated into the placement preparation taught sessions of the 1st year placement course.

A mid placement review will take place. For PPP2 this takes the form of a group session involving all supervisors, students and placement tutors and is held at Moray House. The student and supervisor should also collaborate to produce a mid-placement report and the supervisor should submit this to the placement unit (appendix 6).

### 4.3.3. End of placement

Towards the end of the placement the fieldwork supervisor should begin the final professional assessment of the student on placement. This is carried out in relation to both the CLDSCS competence framework (appendix 1) and the demonstrated professional quality of the student’s engagement with the placement. These combined measures should form the basis of a pass/fail assessment by the fieldwork supervisor. The student should have assembled a portfolio of material which will represent evidence of the student’s work and performance on placement and how they have met the competencies. The supervisor, in discussion with the student, can draw on this evidence to help inform their assessment. The student will be asked to add their own comments to the placement report.

On completion of the placement the supervisor should complete and submit the final placement report (appendix 7).

If there are any reasons to suggest that a student is not making sufficient progress and is at risk of failing the placement, these should be notified to the University tutor as soon as possible so that any shortcomings might be addressed and overcome. It is obviously extremely important that there is common understanding of the placement expectations and these should be carefully considered in formulating the contract and subsequent assessment.

# 5. Assessment & Feedback.

The assessment for this course has 2 components.

## 5.1. Components of assessment:

**5.1.1. Component 1. Practice placement.**

Students will achieve a pass mark for the placement component by demonstrating professional competence relevant to the year 2 stage.

The final assessment of the student on placement is carried out by the fieldwork supervisor in relation to both the Community Learning and Development Standards Council for Scotland (CLDSCS) competence framework and the professional quality of the student’s engagement with the placement as a whole. These combined measures should form the basis of a pass/fail assessment by the fieldwork supervisor.

**5.1.2. Component 2. Panel presentation.**

Students will prepare and deliver a 15 minute presentation to a panel comprising a placement tutor and a fieldwork practitioner, followed by 10 minutes responding to questions from the panel. Students will describe the organisational management and funding structure of their placement organisation and critically analyse the implications for the educational work of the practitioner. 100% of academic mark.

## 5.2. Feedback to student

Students will receive regular feedback throughout the placement from their supervisor. Students will also have sight of the supervisor’s final report before it is complete and have an opportunity to comment on the content of the report and the placement as a whole. When appropriate students will receive formative feedback from placement tutors on their contributions to the weekly discussion board and at the mid placement review. Summative feedback will also be offered on the assessment for components 2 and 3. An optional individual post-placement tutorial with the Placement Tutor will be available on request.

# 6. Support and Supervision

## 6.1. Placement agency and supervisor

Regular support and supervision meetings should be held between the fieldwork supervisor and student. In an ideal situation we would suggest one hour and thirty minutes at a pre-set time per fortnight. These meetings need to be confidential so pre-arranging a private space is essential. The student and supervisor should take responsibility for organising the meeting, but the student should begin to take the lead in suggesting the agenda and recording the meeting. More detailed information for both students and supervisors on the content and process of supervision is given in the supplementary document, ‘Praxis: Placement Guidelines for Agencies and Students’ which is available online in the ‘placement paperwork folder’. However, as an overview we suggest you might want to consider a set agenda for the meetings which may include some items like the following:

* a look at plans from the previous supervision session and a report on progress is given;
* If appropriate, progress on any research project is reviewed;
* the student presents a reflective recording of a piece of work from the previous week for discussion;
* the student selects an extract from some university literature to discuss with the supervisor;
* the student presents some evidence of competence in relation to the competence framework;
* plans are made for the following period with specific objectives in mind.

## 6.2. University support

The placement will be supported by a preparation period for students prior to commencement and a period of critical reflection at the end. In addition:

* Students will receive formative comments from an academic placement tutor via their contributions to the weekly discussion board.
* Students and placement supervisors will have the support of an academic placement tutor who will be on hand to respond to any questions they might have.
* The Placement Unit is on hand to deal with any administrative issues that may arise.

# 7. Frequently Asked Questions

## 7.1. How many hours should a student spend on placement per week?

As part of the professional approval of the MALiC programme by the CLDSCS, in each placement students are required to complete 370 supervised practice hours in an appropriate professional practice setting. Therefore, for this placement students are expected to work approximately 21.75 hours per week for 17 weeks within the normal working practices of the placement agency. Nonetheless, students will have to balance a range of commitments whilst on placement including time to study, family or work. As a result, there should be some flexibility in how students organise their weekly diary to meet these overall requirements. Therefore, the specific time they are on placement each week will be the product of a negotiation between the student and the placement provider, depending on the needs and requirements of both. Although sometimes challenging, experience shows us that an appropriate and realistic work schedule can be agreed and students can successfully complete the required placement hours within the timescale given. Ultimately, no matter what weekly work schedule is agreed, students should complete all of the required 370 supervised practice hours within the duration of the placement set out in this handbook.

## 7.2. How much study time should students expect to have?

Notwithstanding the response to the previous question, it is important to remember that these are students on placement and we expect them to keep in touch with their studies. It should be noted that students will also be undertaking another university course during the placement period. This is a research focused course which is linked to their placement as they will be asked to draw on their placement experiences and, where appropriate and in negotiation with the supervisor, apply their learning from this course in the placement setting. They may also have other assessments to overtake. Like all of us, they need to learn to manage their time and to create the right kind of balance between the competing demands of work, home, university, life etc. The time that they are on placement should be dedicated to the agreed work set out in the placement contract. Equally the time they spend on other university work should also be committed time. The two should not necessarily impinge on each other so they should not require time off placement to do university work and vice versa. They will need time to read and to think about placement as well as reflecting on practice through analytical recordings, and time to prepare for supervision, mid-placement review and so on. Again, everything is negotiable, but one to two hours per-week is more than adequate. It is good for them to develop good habits in terms of taking time for reflection as long as it is kept in proportion.

## 7.3. What if students need to take time off for illness or other reasons?

If the student has to take days off for any reason, including illness, this should be communicated immediately to the programme secretary, the placement tutor, the placement unit and the placement agency. Either the student or the agency should ensure this happens. Placement is a relatively short period of time and absences of a few days can have a detrimental effect on placement work. It is important to note that a students’ professional approval and their achieving a pass on the placement course requires them to complete 370 hours of supervised practice placement. As a general rule, any days off must be made up before the placement ends. This can be done by adding missed days on to the end of the placement and as a result, slightly extended the end date. Or, if it can be negotiated between the student and the agency, increasing the weekly hours worked. However, if an absence is more than a few days, some other forms of compensation may be required depending on the circumstances.

## 7.4. What kind of things should we cover in supervision?

Everyone has their own ideas about structure and content as far as supervision goes so this is entirely up to you. However, we may be able to point to some experiences of supervision which both students and supervisors have found helpful in the past. We encourage students to develop the skills of the critical and reflective practitioner and they have been introduced to the idea of recording. This has been done by keeping a diary of work which is filled in after significant work sessions, especially with groups, where the student may use an informal narrative style, a formal analytical/critical framework or a simple ‘when, who, where, what, why?’ structure. If you would like some advice on appropriate recording tools, don’t hesitate to contact us. Recordings can be given to the supervisor in advance of the supervision meeting to help them to consider what questions might be raised. The students need to be encouraged to continue to engage with reading both in terms of academic texts and the policy arena. Some supervisors find it helpful to share some reading and then discuss it at the meeting. Students can be asked to share some reading they have found particularly stimulating. The contract can be used as an on-going reference point to check progress and it is important to monitor the aims and objectives set by students at the start of the placement.

## 7.5. How much priority should be given to external demands?

There are a couple of factors that are worth noting here. First, many community education students have come to study later in life and have family and other commitments which have to be taken into consideration. Second, the nature of student finances are such that many students have to work to keep solvent, sometimes holding down substantial contracts during their period of study. They should have made clear during the pre-placement period the nature and scale of their commitments in order to allow the placement to consider whether these can be accommodated. We stress to the students that their priority must be the placement and we encourage them to put appropriate arrangements in place well in advance of the placement period in order to ensure that there is no clash of loyalties. However, circumstances can change unexpectedly and in these cases some adjustment may need to be made but we stress again the students should make the successful completion of the placement their priority. If there is any doubt about what is legitimate or feasible, you should contact the placement tutor.

## 7.6. How should I judge whether a student should be given a pass or a fail?

Again there are no hard and fast rules about this but there are a few notes for guidance that we might offer. Drawing on your own professional experience as a CLD practitioner, the student should be assessed based on your judgement of how they have demonstrated their ability to understand and meet the CLDSCS competence framework. This framework helps you consider how the student is progressing in relation to a range of areas of work. Ultimately, as a gatekeeper to our profession, you make the judgement about their potential to become competent, critical and professional in their future careers. At the end of the placement you should record your assessment in the final placement report (appendix 7). Remember that students aren’t expected to be the finished article; they are mostly only embarking on their professional career. But if you are still having doubts about their overall competence or the level of their professional engagement on placement, please contact your placement tutor.

## 7.7. What if things start to go wrong?

Most placements proceed without any real difficulties, but a few present problems for both students and supervisors. Most issues can be sorted out in the process of supervision but sometimes this proves impossible. If you are having any difficulties that you think are beyond a straightforward resolution, please contact the university placement tutor or the programme director as soon as you sense that things are moving beyond the bounds of the straightforward and we will intervene in an appropriate manner. Any possibility of failure should be signalled by the supervisor as soon as possible. The mid-placement review provides an opportunity for problems to be raised and discussed by student, supervisor and placement tutor.

# 8. A note on appendices

The management, monitoring and assessment of placements are supported by a range of documents that are appendices to this placement handbook.

These appendices need to be completed by either the student or supervisor and some are required to be returned to the placement unit at various times throughout the placement.

Instructions on the responsibility for the completion and submission of an appendix are given in each appendix, but in summary see below:

Supervisor responsibility: Appendix 4, 5, 6 & 7.

Student responsibility: Appendix 2 & 3

As indicated at page 3 above, supervisors and students can access blank copies of these appendices online via the ‘Moray House Resources for Placement Providers’ learn pages see [here](https://bit.ly/MH-MALIC).

**The full list of appendices are:**

Appendix 1: SCCLD Competence Framework

Appendix 2: Student Self-assessment and Professional Learning Profile

Appendix 3: Student CV

Appendix 4: Fieldwork Placement Contract

Appendix 5: Placement Hours Log

Appendix 6: Mid-Placement Report Form

Appendix 7: Fieldwork Placement: Final Placement Report



1. [↑](#footnote-ref-1)