1. Purpose

To provide a framework for university staff, students and agencies to discuss concerns related to the placement, such as concerns regarding student performance, expectations or disagreements between the student and their supervisor/s. The goal is to ensure that these concerns are addressed in a timely, constructive manner with proactive strategies.

2. Policy

It is important that all concerns are responded to in a timely manner and principles of transparency and due process apply. Where possible, placement difficulties will be addressed by using the steps below. However, it is important to note that:

- Some issues may also be dealt with through an agency’s policies, grievance and complaint processes (e.g. harassment and discrimination, breach of confidentiality or privacy) and be considered within broader University Work Integrated Learning policies and guidelines and the AASW Code of Conduct

- Students are on placement at the invitation of the agency and on a voluntary basis. An agency may decide not to follow due process and terminate a placement immediately.

3. Procedure

3.1 Identification of concerns

3.1.1 Concerns can be identified at any time during the course of the placement by the student, Field Educator/s or Field Education Coordinator/Liaison Officer

3.1.2 Concerns that may arise could include, but are not necessarily limited to:

(a) Student performance

(b) Student learning needs

(c) Confusion regarding roles, expectations, etc.
(d) Disagreements or challenges in the supervisory relationship

3.2 Concerns arising at the placement agency

3.2.1 Concerns arising on placement between the Field Educator/s and the student should initially be addressed between the two parties

(a) **Exceptions** to 3.2.1 requiring escalation to the Field Education Coordinator/Liaison Officer would include issues where:

I. There is an imminent or significant risk to either the student or the agency (i.e., personal safety, competence, professional conduct, etc.)

II. The student feels that they cannot raise the issue directly with their Field Educator

III. There is a risk of placement termination/breakdown

(b) Most concerns can be addressed in the moment with quick follow-up between the student and the Field Educator

(c) In cases where more significant concerns exist, a meeting should be held between the student and the Field Educator

(d) The meeting should be documented with the minutes shared with both parties. The documentation should include:

I. The issues or concerns that have been identified, including clear examples or evidence that demonstrate the concerns (including dates, times, etc.)

II. Strategies or measures agreed to by both parties to address the concerns

III. The timeframe within which improvement should be demonstrated/resolution achieved.

(e) The Field Education Coordinator/Liaison Officer should be advised of the situation upon the conclusion of the meeting by the party that identified the concerns and kept updated on the situation

3.2.2 Escalation to Field Education Coordinator/Liaison Officer

(a) In addition to 3.2.1(a) above, the Field Education Coordinator/Liaison Officer should be immediately notified in the event that:

I. The original issues fail to be resolved within the agreed timeframe

II. Additional, more serious concerns arise on the part of either the student or the Field Educator (e.g. a student’s ability to engage with and progress their learning or a student’s concern about inadequate supervision)
(b) While the initial notification to the Field Education Coordinator/Liaison Officer may be done verbally by either the student or Field Educator, follow-up in writing is required, including:

I. The concerns (i.e., what, when, where, who, etc.) and any accompanying documentation

II. The measures that have been taken to address the situation

(c) Upon receipt of the concerns from either the student or the Field Educator, the Field Education Coordinator/Liaison Officer will arrange a meeting at the earliest possible convenience with all parties

(d) In the event the issue has been directly escalated to the Field Education Coordinator/Liaison Officer bypassing 3.2.1(b) above, they will:

I. Inform the Topic Coordinator

II. Schedule a meeting with the other party to inform them of the concerns that have been brought forward

III. Obtain the perspective of the other party, advise them of their rights and responsibilities (if applicable)

IV. Obtain the agreement of the other party to participate in a meeting with all parties to resolve the situation.

(e) The Field Education Coordinator/Liaison Officer will chair the meeting to discuss the issues, ensure that both the student and the Field Educator/s have the opportunity to provide their perspectives and try to resolve the concerns.

(f) The meeting should be documented with the minutes shared with all parties, including the student, a student’s Field Educator and the Field Education Topic Coordinator. Minutes will be stored in the student’s file. The documentation should include:

I. A summary of the initial concerns, evidence/examples that demonstrate the concerns and the strategies undertaken to address them thus far

II. The reason for the escalation

III. The perspectives of both the student and Field Educator on the concerns, strategies and sequence of events leading up to the meeting

IV. The key issues identified during the course of the meeting, the outcome and next steps.

V. Where issues concern a student’s progress and ability to engage in learning a Student Learning Contract will be developed. FEC/FELOs
will consult with the Topic Coordinators regarding the development of a SLC. The SLC will document:

i. Learning outcomes that a student needs to progress
ii. Any new strategies or measure to be introduced as a result of the meeting that supports a student to make and demonstrate progress in relation to the identified learning outcome/s
iii. The timeframe within which to see improvement/resolution
iv. A meeting date to review progress (e.g. provision of further evidence and documentation.

3.3 Concerns arising at the University

3.3.1 Concerns arising between the student and the Field Education Coordinator/Liaison Officer should be addressed in the same manner as outlined in 3.2

(a) In the event an escalation is required, the matter shall be escalated to the Topic Coordinator,

3.4 Monitoring

3.4.1 The concerns and the resolution plan/strategies should be monitored and reviewed on a regular basis.

(b) At a minimum, the progress on the strategies/measures to address concerns arising between the student and their Field Educator should be reviewed during each supervision session

I. This does not preclude more frequent monitoring as the situation warrants based on the nature of the concerns

(c) The arrangements and schedule to monitor the progress of the plan/strategies to address concerns arising between the student and the Field Education Coordinator/Liaison Officer will be determined on a case-by-case basis

3.4.2 All monitoring meetings or discussions should be documented with the minutes shared between all parties, including the student, a student’s Field Educator and the Field Education Topic Coordinator. Documentation will be stored in the student’s file. The documentation should include:

(a) The perspectives of all parties on the progress (or lack thereof) in addressing the concerns, including clear examples or evidence

(b) Any adjustments to the strategies to address the existing concerns

(c) Any additional concerns that may have arisen since the last meeting

(d) Any adjustments to the timeframe within which to resolve the concerns
3.5 Outcomes

3.5.1 A range of potential outcomes exist depending upon the situation. These would include, but are not necessarily limited to:

(a) Clarification and/or guidance on agency or university policies

(b) Clarification of expectations

(c) Adjustments to the student’s FEAD or supervision arrangements

(d) Execution of a Student Learning Contract, particularly in cases where a student:

I. Has been deemed at risk of failing the placement

II. Receives a "Not Competent" assessment rating for any Practice Standard at the Mid-Placement Assessment meeting, or a Beginning Competence rating for final placement students

III. Breaches Practice Standard 2: Professionalism and the AASW Code of Ethics

IV. Undertakes a subsequent placement in the same semester or at the next topic offering following a placement termination

(e) Termination of the placement

I. Termination will result in the Manager, Field Education and the Topic Coordinator meeting with the student to discuss the next steps.