Queen Margaret University

Queen Margaret University
EDINBURGH

QMU Guidelines for Responding to Serious Student Concerns and incidents on Placement.

These guidelines outline Queen Margaret University's approach to responding to serious student concerns raised during practice-based learning placements. They apply to students and staff involved in placement activity and should be used alongside relevant placement provider policies and procedures. Students will be supported throughout any reporting or investigation process.

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2. Purpose

These guidelines outline Queen Margaret University's (QMU) approach to supporting and safeguarding students who report serious concerns during practice-based learning. It aims to provide a consistent, trauma-informed and student-centered response across all placement environments.

3. Scope

These guidelines offer guidance to all QMU students, Academic Staff, Placement Coordinators and Student Support Services. Placement Partners including NHS, Schools, local authority, third sector and independent organisations will have their own policies regarding reporting concerns and should be followed in parallel to reporting concerns to QMU. A QMU representative will support students to do this if the student wishes. This could be the PAT, Placement coordinator/Tutor, programme lead or any other appropriate individual from QMU familiar with placement processes and procedures.

4. Definitions

A serious student concern refers to an incident that negatively affects a student's safety, wellbeing or learning. This may include bullying, harassment, discrimination, racism, sexual harassment, poor practice or unsafe care (of service users/client group). Further guidance is available via the QMU Report + Support platform. Report + Support - Report + Support - Queen Margaret University and QMU's Anti-Bullying and Harassment guidance

5. QMU Statement

QMU is committed to ensuring that students are safe and supported while on placement. Practice Educators and Placement Tutors are expected to respond sensitively, and QMU will provide timely intervention, assessment of risk to student and appropriate support when concerns are reported.

6. Training Expectations.

Staff supporting students in complex practice-based learning incidents could consider engaging with trauma-informed practice training and maintain familiarity with relevant University procedures, including the QMU Complaints Procedure, the Report and Support platform, and guidance on supporting students during placement.

Where a staff member does not feel adequately equipped to manage a situation, they must seek guidance from an appropriately experienced colleague. Further development opportunities & training for staff may need to be arranged through Human Resources.

7. Procedure

These guidelines outline how QMU responds to concerns raised during placement relating to interpersonal interactions, including bullying, harassment, racism, discrimination, sexual harassment, assault or violence.

The process includes recognising concerns, supporting safe disclosure, reporting concerns promptly, using appropriate reporting channels, implementing support measures and maintaining accurate documentation.

- Concerns may relate to interactions with placement practice educators, staff, volunteers, service users or other students.
- Students should remove themselves from unsafe situations where possible, follow local escalation routes and inform the practice educator and QMU at the earliest opportunity.
- Concerns may be raised informally (where appropriate) or via formal reporting at the placement site and through QMU and the Report + Support platform.
- QMU will acknowledge concerns, liaise with placement providers, implement support measures.
- Outcomes may include additional supervision, mediation, placement adjustments or referral to placement provider processes such as NHS complaints or HR procedures.
- All documentation will be stored securely and used to support quality improvement across practice-based learning environments.

These steps intend to guide QMU staff through the process once a concern has been raised. Each step should be carried out in consultation with the student

8. Staff Guide

These steps intend to guide QMU staff through the process once a concern has been raised.

1. **Receive the Concern - this might be direct from the student, from Report+Support or a third party**
   - Provide a safe, calm, trauma-informed environment to meet the student.
   - Check immediate safety and follow local emergency or safeguarding procedures if necessary.

2. Clarify the Concern

- Identify what happened, where, when, who was involved, and impact.
- QMU staff should collect factual information and evidence but any formal investigation would have to be carried out by the placement provider in line with their policies and procedures. QMU can support students through this process
- Explain confidentiality & Data Protection and its limitations. Queen Margaret University Data Protection Policy & Confidentiality and Information

3. Document the Concern

- Record factual notes: incident summary, dates/times, people involved, actions taken.

- Store documentation securely using QMU systems.
- Discuss with the student their options and what they would like to see happen next. If the issues is in relation to a criminal offence, safeguarding, health & safety or professional standards let the student know that we have a duty to report.
- At this stage a formal complaint may not be required as some concerns can be resolved informally. This should be the first strategy. Discuss the options and processes with the student.
- QMU have a duty to ensure student safety and report incidents accurately internally.

4. Determine Local Reporting Requirements

- Support use of local reporting systems (e.g., NHS Datix).
- If unsafe for the student to report locally, QMU staff may report on their behalf. This would normally be to the Practice Educator. If this is not appropriate report to their line manager or the Placement Coordinator/Practice Education Lead (PEL). QMU has a Placement Advocate who can report on your behalf if required.

5. Report Internally to QMU

- Submit a QMU Report + Support from this can be done by the student, the practice educator or another third party. (anonymously if preferred by the student)
- Notify Programme Leader, Placement Coordinator, PAT, and Student Services as appropriate, on a need-to-know basis only.

6. QMU Assessment of placement and Support Plan

- Consider the risk to the student and suitability of continuing placement.
- In liaison with the student and PE implement adjustments such as supervision changes or placement pause.

7. Liaise with Placement Provider

- Communicate factual information and agree responsibilities.
- Ensure safeguarding, HR or complaints processes are followed.
- If unable to resolve discuss with student if they would like to make a formal complaint. This would usually involve following internal placement provider processes and policies.
- Students have a right not to progress with a complaint however QMU have a duty to ensure student safety and report incidents accurately internally.

8. Provide Ongoing Support

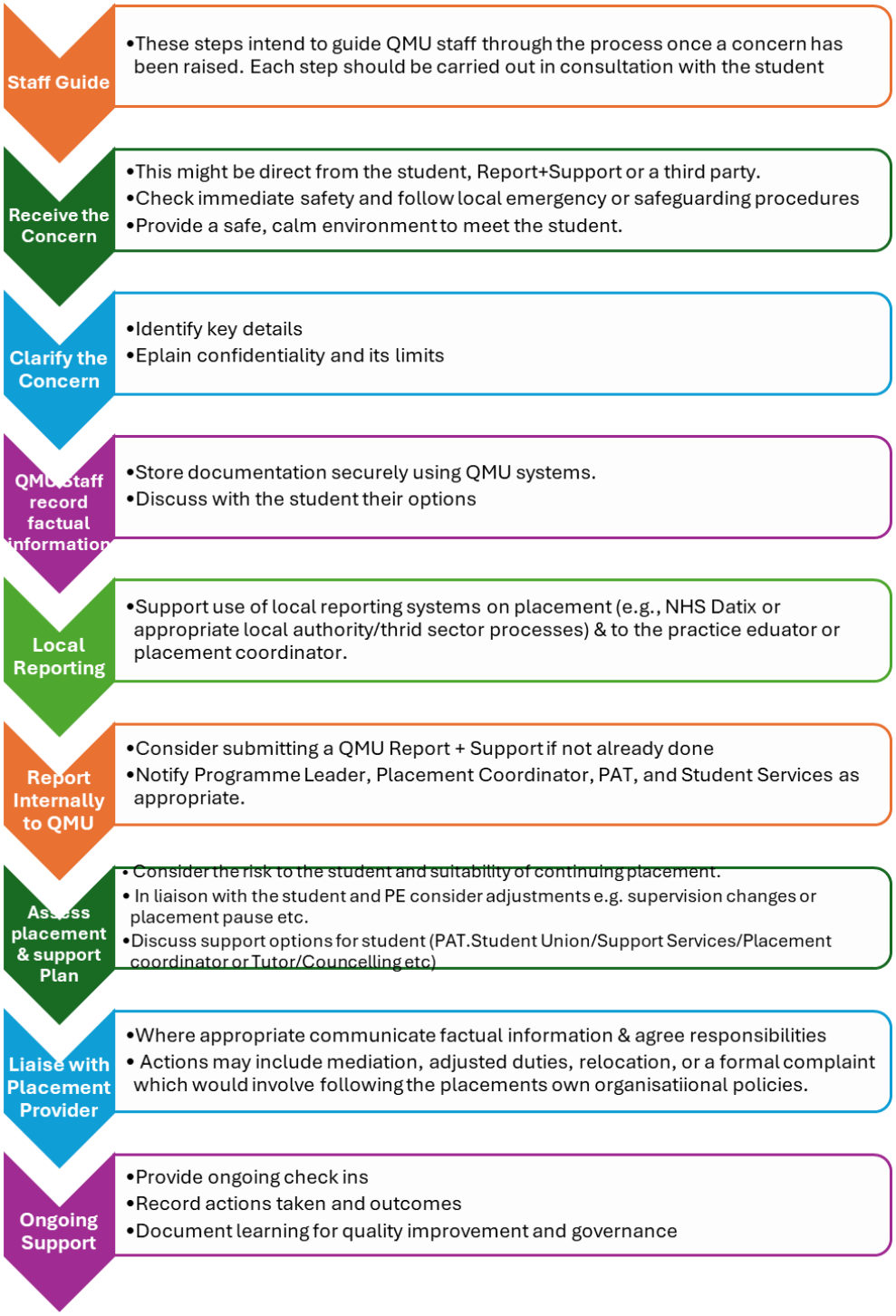
- Offer regular check-ins, wellbeing support, and academic adjustments.

9. Outcomes and Actions

- May include mediation, adjusted duties, relocation, or provider investigation or a formal complaint.

10. Close and Review

- Document Actions taken and processes followed and share with student (unless anonymous).
- Document learning for quality improvement and governance.


Staff Guide
•These steps intend to guide QMU staff through the process once a concern has been raised. Each step should be carried out in consultation with the student
Receive the Concern
•This might be direct from the student, Report+Support or a third party.
•Check immediate safety and follow local emergency or safeguarding procedures
•Provide a safe, calm environment to meet the student.
Clarify the Concern
•Identify key details
•Eplain confidentiality and its limits
QMU Staff record factual information
•Store documentation securely using QMU systems.
•Discuss with the student their options
Local Reporting
•Support use of local reporting systems on placement (e.g., NHS Datix or appropriate local authority/thrid sector processes) & to the practice eduator or placement coordinator.
Report Internally to QMU
•Consider submitting a QMU Report + Support if not already done
•Notify Programme Leader, Placement Coordinator, PAT, and Student Services as appropriate.
Assess placement & support Plan
• Consider the risk to the student and suitability of continuing placement.
• In liaison with the student and PE consider adjustments e.g. supervision changes or placement pause etc.
•Discuss support options for student (PAT.Student Union/Support Services/Placement coordinator or Tutor/Councelling etc)
Liaise with Placement Provider
•Where appropriate communicate factual information & agree responsibilities
• Actions may include mediation, adjusted duties, relocation, or a formal complaint which would involve following the placements own organisatiional policies.
Ongoing Support
•Provide ongoing check ins
•Record actions taken and outcomes
•Document learning for quality improvement and governance

9. Student Guide

These steps intend to guide QMU students who have witnessed or experienced an incident on placement through the process and explain what might happen next.

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1. **Recognise**: If something feels unsafe, discriminatory or inappropriate (e.g., bullying, harassment, racism, unsafe practice), it is a concern. Concerns may relate to; staff, service users, Educators, volunteers, other students etc

2. **Safety first:** Remove yourself from risk where possible. Follow local escalation procedures. Call 999 in an emergency.

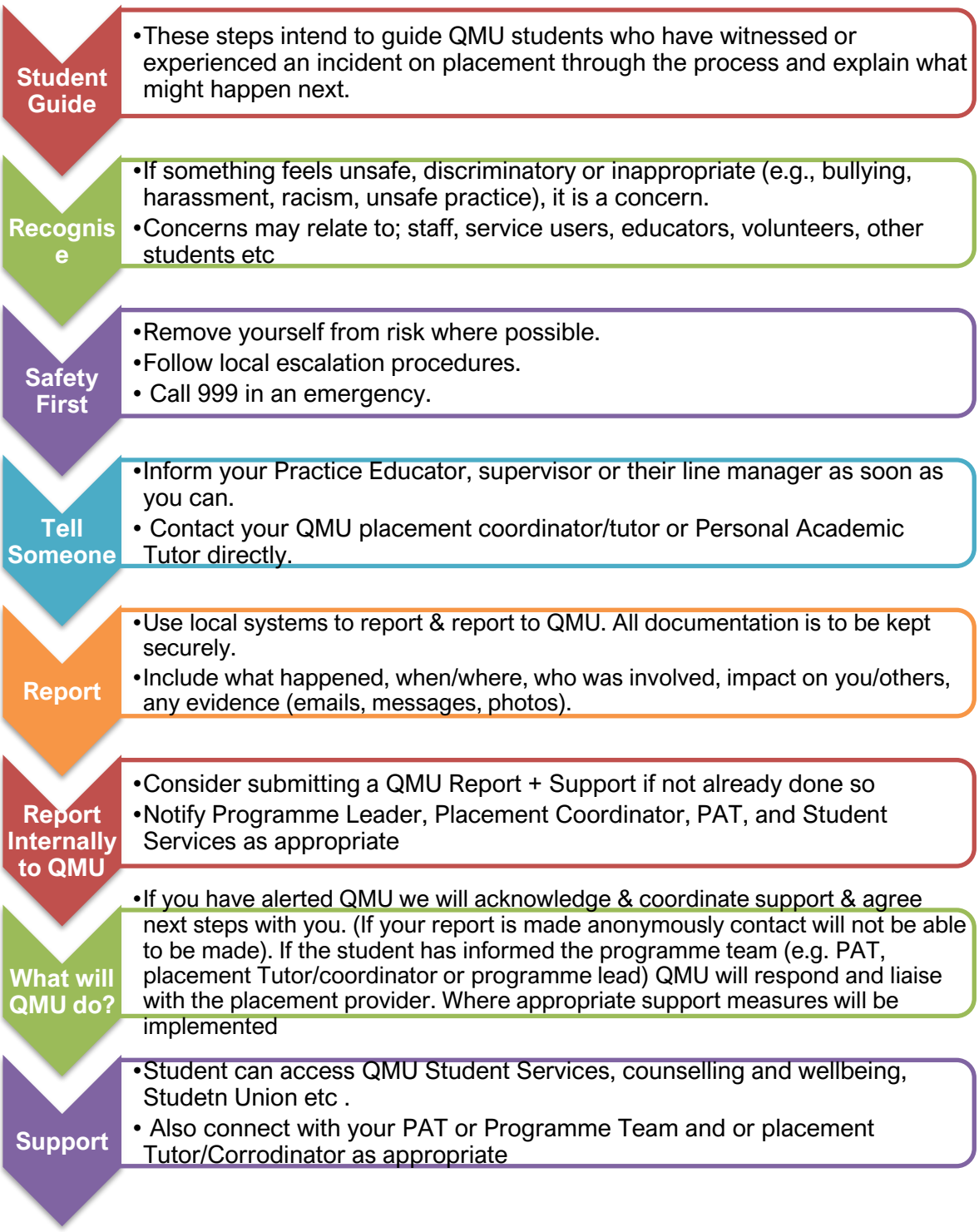
3. **Tell someone:** If appropriate inform your Practice Educator, supervisor or their line manager as soon as you can. Contact your QMU placement coordinator/tutor or Personal Academic Tutor directly.

4. **Report:** Use local systems (e.g. Datix for NHS reporting or the Scottish Education equivalent which can vary) and submit to QMU via the Report + Support platform. All documentation is to be kept securely.

5. **What to include**: What happened, when/where, who was involved, impact on you/others, any evidence (emails, messages, photos).

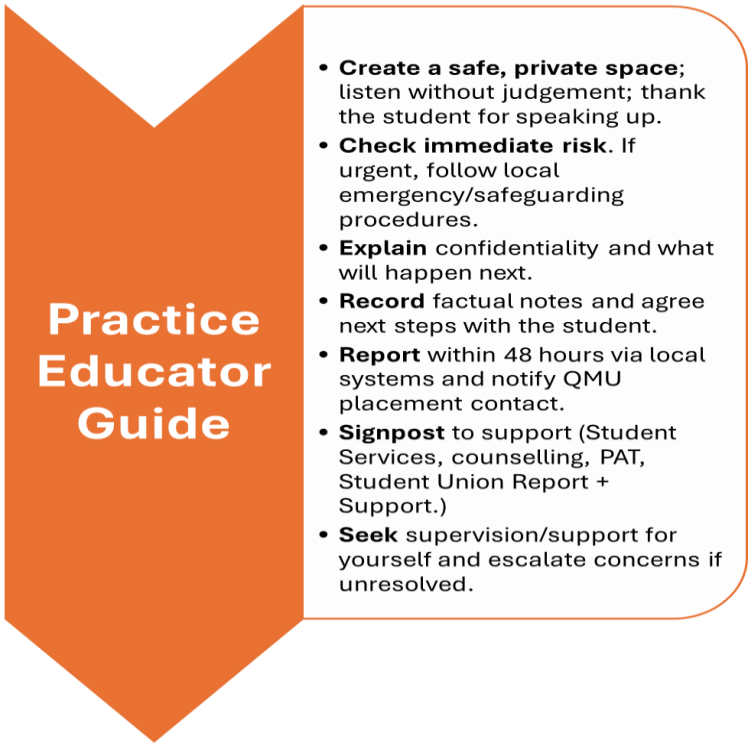
6. **What QMU will do:** If you have used the QMU report & support Platform QMU will acknowledge your report, coordinate support, and agree next steps with you. (Please note that if your report is made anonymously contact will not be able to be made with the person making the report). If your QMU PAT, Programme Lead or Placement Co-ordinator/Tutor has been informed by you QMU will respond and liaise with the placement provider. Where appropriate support measures will be implemented (e.g. mediation, additional supervision and support, adjustments to placement or referral to HR/complaints processes)

7. **Support:** Access QMU Student Services, counselling and wellbeing. Speak with your PAT or Programme Team and Student Union for additional support.


Student Guide
•These steps intend to guide QMU students who have witnessed or experienced an incident on placement through the process and explain what might happen next.
Recognise
•If something feels unsafe, discriminatory or inappropriate (e.g., bullying, harassment, racism, unsafe practice), it is a concern.
•Concerns may relate to; staff, service users, educators, volunteers, other students etc
Safety First
•Remove yourself from risk where possible.
•Follow local escalation procedures.
• Call 999 in an emergency.
Tell Someone
•Inform your Practice Educator, supervisor or their line manager as soon as you can.
• Contact your QMU placement coordinator/tutor or Personal Academic Tutor directly.
Report
•Use local systems to report & report to QMU. All documentation is to be kept securely.
•Include what happened, when/where, who was involved, impact on you/others, any evidence (emails, messages, photos).
Report Internally to QMU
•Consider submitting a QMU Report + Support if not already done so
•Notify Programme Leader, Placement Coordinator, PAT, and Student Services as appropriate
What will QMU do?
•If you have alerted QMU we will acknowledge & coordinate support & agree next steps with you. (If your report is made anonymously contact will not be able to be made). If the student has informed the programme team (e.g. PAT, placement Tutor/coordinator or programme lead) QMU will respond and liaise with the placement provider. Where appropriate support measures will be implemented
Support
•Student can access QMU Student Services, counselling and wellbeing, Studetn Union etc .
• Also connect with your PAT or Programme Team and or placement Tutor/Corrodinator as appropriate

10. Practice Educator Guide

The following is the guidance that is given to Practice Educators in NHS setting on how to support students who raise serious concerns on placement. They were developed in partnership with Universities and placement providers alongside NHS Education Scotland (NES). They intend to guide practice educators through the process once a concern has been raised. It is for reference as an example of what students can expect. Other placement settings will have similar policies and procedures that should be followed.



Refer to the following Guidelines for more information Supporting AHP Practice Educators to Respond to Serious Student Concerns on Placement

11. Review and Governance

This paper will be reviewed every three years or earlier if national policy, safeguarding legislation or regulatory standards change.

12. Related QMU Resources, Policies and Guidelines

These guidelines should be read alongside the QMU Safeguarding Policy, Anti-Bullying and Harassment Policy and the Practice-Based Learning Handbook.

13. Relevant Legislation, Standards, Frameworks & Resources

- Equality Act 2010: https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2010/15/contents
- Public Sector Equality Duty (PSED): https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/public-sector-equality-duty
- Human Rights Act 1998: https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/1998/42/contents
- Fairer Scotland Duty: https://www.gov.scot/publications/fairer-scotland-duty-guidance/
- Equally Safe Strategy: https://www.gov.scot/publications/equally-safe/
- Race Equality Framework for Scotland: https://www.gov.scot/publications/race-equality-framework-scotland-2016-30/
- HCPC Standards of Conduct, Performance and Ethics: https://www.hcpc-uk.org/standards/standards-of-conduct-performance-and-ethics/
- NHS Scotland Whistleblowing Standards: https://inwo.org.uk/
- NES guidance for Practice Educators https://sway.cloud.microsoft/tYxjQbPXrKslmMOE?ref=Link
- Bullying Harassment & discrimination explained . Bullying, Harassment, Discrimination explained - Report + Support - Queen Margaret University
- The Code of Professionalism and Conduct (COPAC) sets out key principles and values for registered teachers in Scotland. COPAC sits within the wider framework of the Professional Standards and provides advice and guidelines for teachers. Code of Professionalism and Conduct
- The student teacher code
- What is an incident on placement ? What is an "incident" on placement - Report + Support - Queen Margaret University