



STRANMILLIS
UNIVERSITY COLLEGE

A College of Queen's University Belfast

**Guidance on
School Placement
for
International Students**

SSW 2017/2018

Code of Practice

Introduction

Placement in schools involves classroom observation and supporting children of different ages and abilities with their learning. Students will develop their knowledge and skills and have the opportunity to participate in the wider life of the school. Schools work in close partnership with the University College to ensure high standards and support students in developing their professional practice. This booklet sets out the general expectations for students and schools.

For Students

School placements are an integral part of your studies at Stranmillis and contribute to your academic experience as an international student. A positive, professional attitude is required whilst on placement. It is a very enjoyable and rewarding experience but can also be demanding and challenging. The teachers in the placement school and Stranmillis staff, who will be visiting you, are familiar with the processes and appreciate that you are learning and developing your skills as an educational practitioner.

For Schools

Thank you for agreeing to host our Stranmillis international students. As part of international initial teacher education (ITE), incoming students undertake a placement in a local school as a **Classroom Assistant** in order to familiarise themselves with the NI Education System. This is usually a **20-day placement in Semester 2, within an allocated 7 week period**. The students will spend 3 days in school each week, from Tuesday to Thursday. Please mutually agree with the student appropriate timings for the school.

The students are expected to **observe and support learning within the classroom / school** for the duration of their placement. **On the first week of placement, the students will be carrying out observation tasks**. In post primary schools they may follow a class across different subjects throughout the school day, observing learning across the curriculum. From the second week of placement, the students will commence their classroom assistant role, supporting learning as appropriate in your setting. In successful previous placements, students have supported small groups and individuals, marked pupil work, prepared wall displays and accompanied groups on visits and trips. **Although there is no obligation to teach a lesson, where appropriate, and by mutual agreement, students can contribute to teaching in relevant areas also**. In all cases, students are encouraged to become involved in the wider life of the school. Students generally have a very good command of English; however, allowances may need to be made as English may not be their first language. Also,

it is important to note that the classroom assistant role may be very new to these international students as this may not exist in the same way in their respective jurisdictions.

There will no formal assessed lesson observation of teaching, but a supervising tutor from the college will visit the school to talk briefly with the student and staff, and, on both occasions, observe the student working in the learning environment. Tutors will also endeavour to communicate with teachers by phone, email or in person, to collate any relevant feedback for the compilation of the student report. **Schools are not required to submit a written report; this is the responsibility of the supervising tutor. Verbal feedback however is important and can be shared with the visiting tutor each time they visit.**

As College staff and students, we greatly appreciate the time you dedicate to working alongside our students and sharing your wisdom and experience with them. We hope that contributing to the development of future global educators is rewarding for you also. We know students benefit professionally from their time in practice and we hope that your school will also gain much from hosting them.

We try to ensure good communication with our placement schools and understand that it is essential that communication is clear and timely. We would encourage our placement schools to keep us regularly updated on any changing circumstances by emailing our International Office international@stran.ac.uk and/or Mr Stuart Dickinson (International Exchange Coordinator and Placement Supervisor) s.dickinson@stran.ac.uk. Likewise, we will commit to keeping schools regularly updated.

We would ask that schools work with students on arrival to let them know any specific expectations. In addition, we ask students to commit to the Student Placement Charter which can be found as an Appendix to this document (Page 12).

Expectations: Students

1. Prior to Placement

Incoming International Students are asked to provide information to the International Office, international@stran.ac.uk, to enable us to find you a suitable placement. All information provided must be accurate and up-to-date. Late submission of accurate information could impact upon securing a suitable placement. All administration associated with placements is undertaken by the International Team located in Central Building. Support sessions will be held before placement starts and on a weekly basis in college with a member of faculty. This will show on your timetable.

2. During Placement

(a) Professionalism

Being in a school and playing a role in the development and education of pupils is a great privilege. In order to make the most of the time in school, students should behave and be treated as fellow professionals. As well as preparing appropriately each day, and contributing fully to the life of the school, students should be mindful of such issues as professional dress code (no denim), punctuality and professional interaction with **all** school staff. Please ensure that you bring your school based work portfolio file with you to school each day to support the evidence gathering process and supervising tutor visits.

Students should continually seek advice from the class teacher(s) with regard to preparation and delivery of learning activities in the classroom(s) and other aspects of school life. Students should become familiar with school policies from the outset of the placement (policy document to be completed in portfolio).

All students should take the opportunity to participate fully in the wider life of the school for example, in attendance at morning assembly, in supervision duties, in exploring formal structures set up for example pastoral care or SEN and in extra-curricular activities (clubs and societies).

This will naturally give students access to confidential information, both through conversation, discussion and observation and in relation to recorded data. This information must be treated professionally and not disclosed, outside the school environment.

Students should NOT share ANY information about schools, pupils, fellow teachers or other aspects of their placement on social media.

(b) Field Trips and other Out of School Visits

International Students may participate in out of school visits and field trips only when accompanied by the class teacher or an alternative member of the school staff. Such trips should have an adult-pupil ratio that complies with current Department of Education regulations.

Students **MUST NOT** transport children in their own car at any time.

If students are invited to participate in an extended school field trip, they require the **prior** permission from the College in writing. The student should contact the International Office about this and seek specific guidance on safety procedures.

(d) Absence

On the morning of any absence, students must:

- inform the school as soon as possible.
- contact the International Office **before 9.00am** by emailing: international@stran.ac.uk stating: their name, school, the reason for, and possible duration of the absence. This will allow the Team to notify any tutors of absence and avoid visiting the school unnecessarily.
- Cc into email above your supervising tutor Stuart Dickinson (s.dickinson@stran.ac.uk).

Absence of more than seven calendar days requires a medical certificate which must be forwarded to Student-Absence@stran.ac.uk with your completed absence from <https://stran.sharepoint.com/sites/StranmillisStudentIntranet/SitePages/Absence.aspx?web=1>

Students should not normally be absent for any reason other than illness during placement. However, if there are other **exceptional** circumstances that may need an absence, students should complete the relevant online form

<https://stran.sharepoint.com/sites/StranmillisStudentIntranet/SitePages/Absence.aspx?web=1>

at least 2 weeks beforehand and email to Student-Absence@stran.ac.uk, giving adequate reasons to support the request. Any planned exceptional absences must also be discussed and agreed with the School Principal. Students are expected to behave as members of staff in the school and as such should not be taking any time off for purely personal reasons such as routine dental appointments, driving tests etc.

(e) School and College Closures

If a school is closed for any reason during placement, the student must inform the International Office international@stran.ac.uk at the earliest possible time (Cc your supervising tutor). No additional attendance in lieu of a school closure is normally required. Should the University College be closed at any time during the period of school-based work and the school **remains open**, the student is to **remain** at school. (NB if St Patrick's Day 17th March is a day you would normally attend school, this is no requirement to attend on this day).

(f) Issues and Concerns

Students' first point of contact if any issues or concerns arise during placement should normally be the classroom teacher in school or the tutor from Stranmillis University College depending on the nature of the concern. If further help or advice is required, then these professionals will guide you to further support. If the issue however is with regards to a child protection issue, then the first point of contact is the Designated Teacher in the school (please ensure you are aware of who this is). Students should also remember that full Stranmillis student support service is available during placement and this can be accessed in the usual way using the information on the student intranet:

<https://stran.sharepoint.com/sites/StranmillisStudentIntranet/SitePages/Student-Support.aspx>

4. After Placement

At the conclusion of a period of placement students should ensure, where appropriate:

- all borrowed materials have been returned.
- all meals and other refreshments have been paid for.
- **appreciation has been expressed to the Principal and school staff for their support and guidance.**

Supervision & Assessment

It is important that schools, students and the College work together to ensure an effective placement for students. Partnership is about the positive and progressive development of students on their personal and professional journey. In this regard it is our hope that students, tutors and teachers work together effectively in a spirit of collaboration.

University College Tutors

Students will have a member of the University College teaching staff or other experienced professional who will act as their supervising tutor during placement. The tutor's responsibilities will be to:

- ensure that they are fully aware of the placement expectations.
- act as the main supervising tutor during their placement.
- **make in person supervisory visits to the students (usually 2 visits per placement block).**
- liaise with the relevant staff in monitoring student progress.
- assign final mark for placement element of module.

The main purpose of tutor visits to students in schools is to provide guidance, advice and support. However, the supervising tutor will monitor that the student has the required elements in place in their file and spend time discussing this with the student.

Careful and sensitive observation of learning activities is an integral part of a supervising tutor's visit to a school, as is the development of an ongoing dialogue between the student and the classroom teacher.

When observing, tutors use the Classroom Assistant Tutor Report Form. These reports are part of the overall assessment for the student. Student final grades are determined based on a holistic overview which includes:

- feedback from school staff and their comments on students' attitudes and work in school,
 - personal and intellectual qualities exhibited in professional discussion with the university college supervising tutor.
 - learning experiences observed.
- Assessment

In addition to the assessment of school based work, a further submission (essay) is also required for this module (See Module Guide). Further information, support and guidance will be issued during weekly mandatory tutorials with your supervising tutor.

Placement Folder

This should be brought to school/placement each day.

Students are expected to create and maintain the following:

Section 1: School Information

This folder should include a MS Word document with name and student number; name of school and Principal's name; names of Stranmillis Tutor (Faculty member) and the Host Teacher in your school. This folder should also contain:

- Student timetable
- Background information about the school (location, catchment area, enrolment details)
- Significant times (school starts, break-time, lunchtime, term and holiday dates)
- Number of pupils, teachers, classes. Names of relevant class teachers
- Facilities in the school (library, ICT resources)
- The range of extra-curricular activities & clubs
- Ability groupings for literacy/numeracy/spelling/reading (pupil first names only)
- Relevant SEN information
- Seating plan(s)
- Placement Charter
- Copy of police check from home jurisdiction
- Copies of or links to the following school policies (please include a completed policy proforma, available on Canvas):
 - **Pastoral care**
 - **Child protection**
 - **Behaviour Management**
 - **Assessment**

Section 2: Observation and weekly written evaluation

Section 3: Evidence of Learning

This folder should contain evidence of pupil learning such as:

- Any relevant planning documents / notes
- Copies of resources, where possible
- Exemplars of student work
- Completed pupil work e.g. literacy/numeracy tasks – annotated with feedback

- Notes explaining learning activities
- Photographs of the learning environment / wall displays
- **NB Photographs should be taken only with the teacher's permission, on a school device, and should NOT include images of pupils.**

Section 4: Evaluation and Assessment

This folder should contain

- Tutors' reports
- Completed school attendance record
- Feedback from school staff

Classroom Teachers and/or Teacher Tutors

The main role of classroom teachers and teacher tutors in relation to our international students placed in schools as classroom assistants is to provide guidance, advice and support. The University College very much appreciates the participation of class teachers and teacher tutors in the supervision of its students. It recognises that a much more rounded view professional development in the educational setting can be made by the class teacher. Students should be aware of the importance which is placed on class teacher and teacher tutor feedback received by the University College. If a teacher identifies an area of concern with a student's progress, then the school should contact the relevant University College supervising tutor.

Child Protection and Safeguarding

Students have received training with regards to child protection and safeguarding.

Everyone plays a key part in protecting children and keeping them safe.

There are three vital aspects to this role:

- creating a safe and supportive environment for children
- recognising children who are at risk or suffering from harm
- taking appropriate action.

Students on placement can contribute to creating a safe and supportive environment for children through their work ethos and professionalism and in the way they communicate with and respond to children directly. By re-familiarising themselves with key indicators of adversity, students will increase the likelihood of recognising when a child is at risk or suffering from harm. Most importantly, if students are concerned about a child they can take appropriate action by reporting the concern immediately as outlined in the next section.

For Students

This information tells you what to do if you are concerned about a child or young person during your placement or school-based work and where you can get information or help. It is very important that you become familiar with your setting's legal child protection and safeguarding duty. You must adhere to the Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy within your placement setting. We strongly suggest that you use the check list below prior to and during your first day of placement or school-based work.

School-Based Work/Placement Checklist

- Read the College Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy.
- Revisit your child protection notes and presentations from the University College training.
- Read your setting's Child Protection and/or Safeguarding Policy.
- Identify the setting's Designated Teacher/Person and Deputy Teacher/Person.
- Keep a note of contacts in your placement folder.

School/Placement Setting

All schools in Northern Ireland must follow the legislation and guidance from the Department of Education and the Education Authority. If a setting is worried about a child's welfare, they must refer this to the appropriate services, usually the Gateway Team to Children's Social Work Service.

- Your setting will have a designated person/teacher for pastoral care or child protection. This person is responsible for all child protection matters affecting children at the setting.
- Your setting must have a child protection policy. This may be contained within a safeguarding policy or as a separate document. You must ask for a copy of this document and make yourself fully aware of its content.

Student's Role

- In general, students must be observant of children's learning, classroom behaviour and social relationships.
- If you are concerned about the welfare of a child, you **must** report this to the designated person/teacher in your setting **immediately**.
- If the designated person/teacher is unavailable, you must report your concern to your class teacher/person in charge **without delay**.
- If you have made a report about a child's welfare during placement, you must inform a member of the College Child Protection & Safeguarding Team that you have done so.
- If you are unhappy with decisions made in the school/setting about your concern, you must report this to a member of the College Child Protection & Safeguarding team **immediately**.
- If you are concerned about a child, you should **NOT** approach the parent/guardian or discuss your concern with anyone else other than the designated teacher/person.

Key documents which set out your setting's responsibilities for child protection are available in the Stranmillis University College Library:

- ACPC (2005, 2010) *Regional Policy and Procedures* Belfast: ACPC
- EA (2107) *Safeguarding and Child Protection in Schools: A Guide for Schools*, Belfast: Education Authority.
- Safeguarding Board for Northern Ireland (2017) *Safeguarding Board for Northern Ireland Procedures Manual*, Belfast: SBNI. Available at: <https://www.proceduresonline.com/sbni/>

- Department of Health (2024) Co-operating to Safeguard Children and Young People in Northern Ireland, Belfast: Department of Health. Available at: <https://www.health-ni.gov.uk/publications/co-operating-safeguard-children-and-young-people-northern-ireland>
- Education Authority (2024) Safeguarding and Child Protection in Schools: A Guide for Schools, Belfast: Education Authority. Available at: <https://www.education-ni.gov.uk/publications/safeguarding-and-child-protection-schools-guide-schools>

SUC Child Protection and Safeguarding Team

Noel Purdy Deputy Child Protection & Safeguarding Co-ordinator		Stranmillis House, Second Floor Tel: 028 9038 4305 Email: n.purdy@stran.ac.uk
Claire Kerr Director with overall responsibility for Child Protection & Safeguarding		Stranmillis House, Third Floor Tel: 028 9038 4401 Email: c.kerr@stran.ac.uk
Heather Lyle Safeguarding Officer		Central Building, First Floor Tel: 02890384405 Email: hlyle@stran.ac.uk
Michael Ievers (Post-Primary)		Orchard Building, Level 2 Tel: 028 9038 4474 Email: m.ievers@stran.ac.uk
Rachel Campbell (Primary & HPAS)		Orchard Building, Level 3 Tel: 028 90 384 443 Email: r.campbell@stran.ac.uk
Andy Brown (International)		Central Building, Ground Floor Tel: 028 9038 4259 Email: a.brown@stran.ac.uk
Anita Gracie (PGCE)		Central Building, First Floor Tel: 028 9038 4391 Email: a.gracie@stran.ac.uk

Catriona Rogers (ECS)	Central Building, First Floor Tel: 028 9038 4392 Email: c.rogers@stran.ac.uk
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Belfast HSC Trust			
Telephone (for referral)	028 90507000	Website	http://www.belfasttrust.hscni.net/
Areas	Greater Belfast area		
Further Contact Details (for ongoing professional liaison)	Greater Belfast Gateway Team (GT) 110 Saintfield Road Belfast, BT8 6HD		
Out of Hours Emergency	028 95049999 (after 5pm each evening at weekends, and public/bank holidays)		

Stranmillis Placement Charter

As a student engaging in placement I:

- Accept the role that I have to play in making sure that the areas in which we live, work and study are as safe as they can be. By doing so, I will be protecting myself, my family, friends, colleagues, and pupils, as well as protecting the wellbeing of others in my placement school.
- Accept I have a duty to help create an environment where we all feel respected and one in which it is safe to study, work and live.
- Understand that I have a moral responsibility to act in the best interests of the pupils I teach and those teachers and other staff I work with in my placement school. I will follow guidance from the Public Health Agency as well as any additional guidance provided by my school.
- Will show understanding and respect to others within and around the school community including pupils, staff, other students, and all of those who work in the school community. I recognise that I may not know the individual personal circumstances and concerns of others (especially those with hidden disabilities and/or underlying health conditions) and I therefore commit to being respectful of others at all times, and acknowledge my role in

helping others feel safe. I understand that posting photographs or any other placement information on social media is inappropriate and unacceptable. I will ensure that photographic evidence of learning included in folders should not include photographs of children's faces, and should be taken on a school device rather than a personal one.

- Agree that if I am challenged about my behaviour I will respond in an open, positive, and respectful manner.
- Will follow both school and College protocols and guidance concerning all aspects of my professional, personal and social life and know that failure to do so may lead to the College's disciplinary process being initiated, and/or my placement being rescinded.

International School Placement Mark Scheme

(Grading follows the QUB Conceptual equivalents)

<https://www.qub.ac.uk/directorates/media/Media,837251,smxx.pdf>

	Outstanding (Grade A) 72, 77, 82, 87, 92, 97	Very Good (Grade B) 62,65, 68	Good (Grade C) 52, 55, 58	Adequate (Grade D) 42, 45, 48	Unsatisfactory (Grade F) 0, 7, 19, 29, 37
Level of engagement with placement	Students should show outstanding levels of enthusiasm and initiative and are highly flexible, adaptable and very creative. Their willingness to support learning in its widest sense is outstanding.	Students should show very good levels of enthusiasm and some initiative. They are flexible, adaptable and quite creative. Their willingness to support learning in its widest sense is very good.	Students should generally show a good level of enthusiasm. They are generally flexible, adaptable. Their willingness to support learning in its widest sense is good.	Students only occasionally show enthusiasm and adaptability. Their willingness to support learning in its widest sense is limited.	Students show limited enthusiasm and adaptability. Their willingness to support learning in its widest sense is very limited.
Managing the environment	There is evidence of excellent work managing the environment.	There is evidence of very good work managing the environment.	There is evidence of good work managing the environment.	There is evidence of some work managing the environment but this is limited.	There may be evidence of some work managing the environment, but this is very limited.
Relationships and working with others	Students should demonstrate an excellent rapport and excellent skills in collaboration with colleagues and learners.	Students should demonstrate a very good rapport and very good skills in collaboration with colleagues and learners.	Students should demonstrate a good rapport and good skills in collaboration with colleagues and learners.	Students should demonstrate that they have some rapport with colleagues and learners, but skills in collaboration are limited.	Students do not have a good rapport with colleagues and learners and skills in collaboration are very limited.
Communication with staff and pupils/young people	Students should demonstrate excellent skills in communication with staff and pupils/young people.	Students should demonstrate very good skills in communication with staff and pupils/young people.	Students should demonstrate good skills in communication with staff and pupils/young people.	Students' skills in communication with staff and pupils/young people are limited.	Students' skills in communication with staff and pupils/young people are very limited.
Observation/reflection skills	Students should demonstrate a highly developed and mature approach to professional	Students should demonstrate a very effective approach to professional	Students should demonstrate a sound approach to professional	Students demonstrate limited ability in professional reflection for improvement,	Students demonstrate very limited or no ability in professional reflection for improvement with

	reflection, clearly recognising their strengths and areas for development, and formulating steps to improve their knowledge and practice.	reflection, recognising their strengths and areas for development, and taking effective steps to improve their knowledge and practice.	reflection for improvement, with fair to good awareness of their strengths and areas for development, and taking some steps to improve their knowledge and practice.	with limited recognition of their strengths and weaknesses, and limited evidence of steps taken to improve their knowledge and practice.	little or no recognition of their strengths and weaknesses, and no evidence of steps taken to improve their knowledge and practice.
Placement Folders	Collation of evidence and written reflections in folders should be excellent: very thorough with signs of originality.	Collation of evidence and written reflections in folders should be very thorough.	Collation of evidence and written reflections in folders should be thorough.	Collation of evidence and written reflections in folders is minimal or lacking in detail.	Collation of evidence and written reflections in folders is lacking or very weak.