Portfolio requirements

2 Critical Analysis of Practice (CAP) (70 day placements) and 3 CAPs (100 day placements) are to be written as fully as possible and submitted in the student’s placement portfolio for the university tutor to assess as examples of evidence of capability which has informed the practice educator’s assessment. Service user feedback must be sought and reflected upon in the CAPs selected for inclusion in the portfolio.

The CAP should evidence a student’s ability to critically reflect on casework and link theory to practice.

Please note that the word counts are given as a guide only.

What is a Critical Analysis of Practice (CAP)?

The Critical Analysis of Practice (CAP) should be viewed as a tool that promotes and documents social work students’ thinking about the social work process, rather than as a form to be filled in. The CAP should not be seen as a case study: it is intended to reflect and underpin planning and interventions at relevant stages of the student’s work with service user(s) in order to ensure the student can understand and explain their decision-making and professional judgements. They are to be used on an ongoing basis during an intervention i.e. the assessment section should be completed during the assessment stage of the work, not retrospectively at the end of the placement.

It should help the student, with the support of the practice educator, to consider what takes place as part of social work and, crucially, why and how assessments and interventions are undertaken. The aim is to promote on-going critical thinking and analysis of knowledge, skills and values.

The CAP can be completed on a range of work: for example it can be a situation where multi interventions take place over a sustained period of time, a one off piece of work, can be used different practice analysis for separate interventions with members of one family, or an event or circumstance that challenged learning, values etc.

It can be helpful to complete a CAP on work that has not gone as planned or that has been challenging to values or professional development.

The CAP is a useful guide for structured discussion, critical reflection and analysis of cases. The student should complete elements of the template in respect of their cases and bring them to supervision sessions in order to engage in discussion with the practice educator. The practice educator will be able to verify the student’s work and development and refer to the CAPs in the Interim Assessment and Final Assessment reports. At least one CAP should be available at the Interim Assessment Meeting (this may be partially complete dependant on whether or not the case is active or closed).

The CAP can be used flexibly to reflect the type of work and student’s learning needs. It is intended that the document is used on an on-going basis: thus separate entries and discussions during supervision sessions can be dated and subsequently updated. The CAP is just one of a range of tools that practice educators may use to support students to take a structured approach to their work.

Whilst there is a minimum number that should be included in the portfolio of evidence, practice educators and students may find them a useful tool to use with a larger number of cases.