

UK FRAMEWORK Confidentiality Policy

Social workers have a professional responsibility to ensure that confidentiality is maintained at all times. Failure to do so demonstrates a breach of trust. When submitting work for assessment to either the Assessment Panel or to an Accredited Programme care must be taken to ensure that the information presented does not lead to the identification of a service user. The term service user for our purposes is interpreted broadly to include other individuals such as relatives, carers, foster and adoptive parents, and students.

Guidelines on Confidentiality for Portfolio Submissions

- a) Candidates should include a statement as to how they have ensure confidentiality.
- b) No identifying features or fictitious names should be used which could lead to the identification service users. Candidates are advised to sue letters, such as Mr A rather than invent more involved pseudonyms which can lead to misunderstandings. Similarly, letters should not correspond to real names.
- c) Candidates must ensure that information referring to colleagues, other individuals or agencies is not derogatory. If comments critical of practice are being included in the portfolio candidates should ensure as much as possible that the individual or agency is not identifiable.
- d) Video and / or audio tapes which show or record service users may not be submitted as evidence. Relevant excerpts of transcripts are however good samples of direct evidence.
- e) Where correction fluid has been used to remove identification from evidence, the original page must not be submitted. The candidate should submit a photocopy of the original evidence.
- f) The use of all agency records must be authorised by the candidate's line manager.
- g) Service user or carer permission must be sought, wherever possible, before any material is submitted for assessment. A statement must be included in the portfolio indicating that permission was sought. Where permission has not been sought the candidate must explain the circumstances as to why they did not seek permission and why they, nevertheless, are including the material. Materials must not be submitted in any situation in which the service user or carer has refused permission for it to be used.
- h) In regards to cases which are in the public domain it may be more difficult to ensure, even when these guidelines are followed, that the

case will not be recognisable to a portfolio assessor. Candidates should not be discouraged from submitting such material but should ensure that their submission adheres to the guidelines. Assessors are also bound by confidentiality.

Breaches of Confidentiality

There should be no breaches of confidentiality in work submitted for assessment.

Assessors are requested to identify and comment on any breaches of confidentiality as part of the assessment pro-forma.

Where breaches of confidentiality have been identified the assessors are required to bring the matter to the attention of the Assessment Panel where possible responses are discussed. The Panel may consider the following options:

1. Minor: Noted but no recourse required.
2. Moderate: Serious enough for candidate to be required to amend the breaches before a recommendation for Requirements to be awarded is progressed to the Quality Assurance Board
3. Serious: Serious breaches that require referral on basis of Core B. For the re-submission candidate is asked to amend all breaches and address the issue of confidentiality in context of social work values. The line manager is also asked to address the issue of confidentiality in the up-dated line manager's verification report.

Where Serious Breaches of Confidentiality have been identified through the assessment process, the relevant Agency Representative of the candidate on the Management Board will be informed by the Chair of the Assessment Panel.

Serious Breaches of Confidentiality require the candidate to:

- Amend the breaches
- Submit a piece 750 – 1,000 words on the importance of confidentiality to social work practice
- The Chair of the Assessment Panel may designate a timeframe for this to be enacted.