



UNIVERSITY
OF TASMANIA

School of Nursing and Midwifery

Communication Policy

Last revised 11 Jan 2006

Introduction

The School of Nursing and Midwifery (SNM) has a number of interfaces within the University of Tasmania and across a diverse range of Tasmanian, national and international health care facilities. These interfaces require the SNM to communicate effectively with all stakeholders including students. This policy outlines the communication pathways for students in the SNM and includes a *case management* approach that can be implemented in the occurrence of complex communication issues.

Related University policies are available at: http://www.utas.edu.au/compliance/admin_support_students.html#admin

Communication Mechanism for Students

In the SNM students are encouraged to communicate with their Unit Coordinator on matters to do with academic progress and personal issues that may affect their University experience. Students can self select or be referred by SNM staff to Student Services counselors or Disability Advisers and/or Student Association representatives. The SNM is committed to meeting students' needs as far as circumstances reasonably allow. Students should follow the three (3) steps outlined below when concerns over their academic progress occur:

1. In the first instance the Unit Coordinator is to be contacted.
2. Concerns that cannot be managed by the Unit Coordinator are normally referred to the Year Coordinator and/or Degree Coordinator.
3. Should concerns not be resolved through the first two (2) steps students can refer the matter to the Head of School through the Director: Teaching and Learning.

Students should note that if they require further assistance or information they can access the following website at anytime: http://www.admin.utas.edu.au/ac_serv/complaints_info.html

Communication Relating to Assessment Issues

In cases where students wish to appeal a result, communication is through the Unit Coordinator who will normally instruct the student to seek advice through the SNM Administration Office. The SNM Assessment Policy details matters related to re-marking, appeals and details the policy approach to other particular queries that may arise for students in regards to assessment.

Communication During Clinical Practice

Non-completion of practice in allocated time

1. In the first instance the Unit Coordinator is to be contacted and matters discussed.
2. Issues that cannot be managed at that level are to be referred to the Degree Coordinator.

Student initiated withdrawal from practice

1. In the first instance the Unit Coordinator is to be contacted and matters discussed.
2. Issues that cannot be managed at that level are to be referred to the Degree Coordinator.
3. In the event that there are complex matters to resolve, the Degree Coordinator might initiate a *case management conference* or refer the matter to the Head of School through the Director: Teaching and Learning.

Communication with Other Parties

1. The SNM communicates directly with students in regard to all academic progress matters. The SNM must gain written permission from the student prior to communicating with others in relation to that student.
2. Where students wish to have other parties, or support people, in consultation processes related to academic progress then this should be negotiated prior to such meetings or interviews¹. Related University policies are available at: http://www.utas.edu.au/compliance/admin_support_students.html#sss

Disclosure of Personal Information

In the event that students believe that disclosure of their personal information may affect their academic progress, the onus is on students to discuss these matters with the Unit Coordinator, who may refer the matter to the Degree Coordinator.

Case Management in the SNM

What is Case Management?

1. *Case management* undertaken in the SNM refers to the process whereby issues or problems that have the potential to impede a student's academic progress are collaboratively investigated and managed by relevant staff.
2. The need for case management may be identified by academic staff, support service staff or the student themselves.
3. Case management is initiated in situations where a student may have *complex needs*, e.g. those that require negotiation within the SNM and between the SNM and health care agencies in order to facilitate learning outcomes.
4. Case management aims to ensure that all stakeholders are involved and/or advised of students' particular circumstances and the implementation of strategies to resolve issues.
5. The case management process is then used to monitor strategies and review progress.

Stakeholders in Case Management

Stakeholders vary according to the nature of the issue/s.

Essential participants for placement issues are:

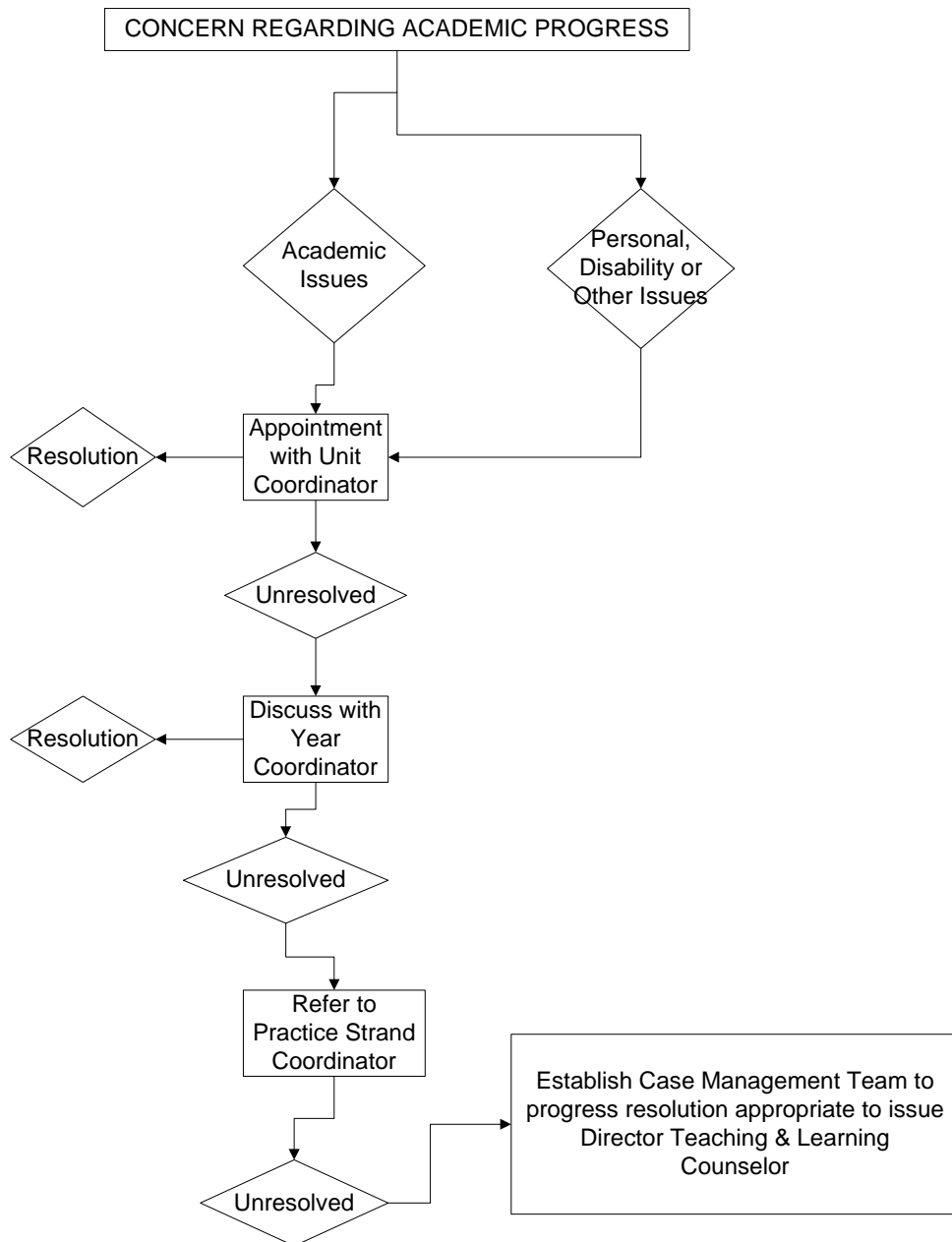
- Degree Coordinator (Case Manager)
- Unit Coordinator
- Student
- Student advocate nominated by student if requested.

Other possible stakeholders according to case needs:

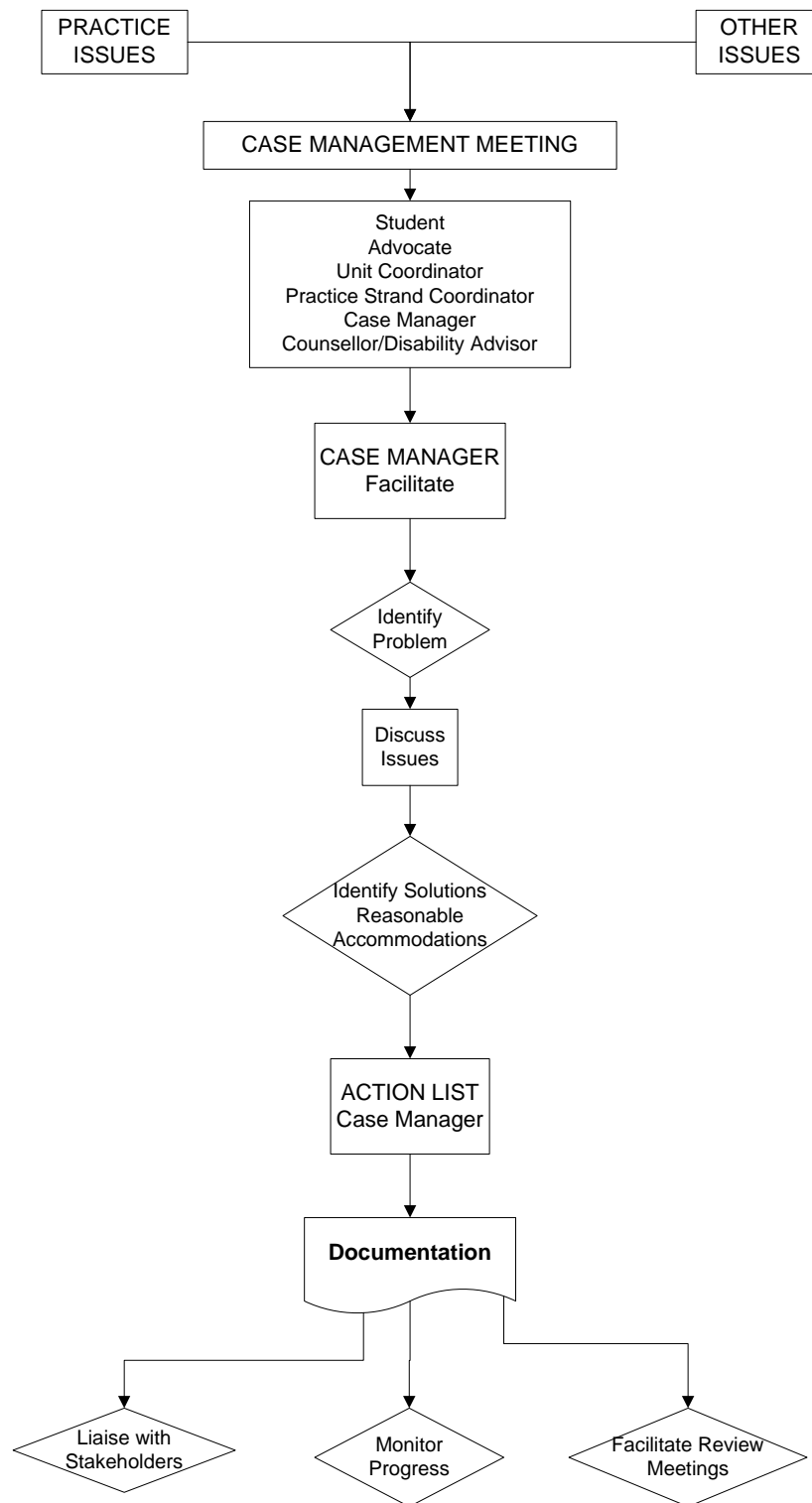
- Academic staff and Year Coordinator or Head of School
- Preceptor from clinical placement
- Counselor
- Disability Adviser
- Community agency representative (e.g. psychologist).

¹ Student Support Services at UTAS has a number of policy and procedures related to this area documented at http://www.utas.edu.au/compliance/admin_support_students.html#sss and make reference to the Commonwealth of Australia Privacy Act.

Appendix 1: Communication Pathway Flowchart



Appendix 2: Case Management Flowchart



** Note: Case Manager is normally the Degree Coordinator, but can also be a Student Services staff member.