

Non-medical Student Placements in Primary Care



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Introduction

Students are the workforce of the future. Placements in primary care will give students and learners an opportunity to be involved and participate in the fundamentals of patient care, develop their understanding of the patient journey and wider factors influencing health and wellbeing, as well as raise the profile of opportunities within primary care.



A placement in primary care will also enable them to further expand their knowledge and understanding of the role of other members of the health and social care team and their contribution to service user care. It is a great opportunity to showcase multidisciplinary working and what the world of Primary Care can offer.

Quality primary care placements are key to engaging new talent and building the multidisciplinary workforce of the future.

Benefits of Hosting Students

- Encouraging best evidence based practice – through questioning, students encourage clinicians to reflect on and improve their practice
- Support practices with research and quality improvement work
- Contributing to the development of your personal clinical education, supervision and leadership skills
- Contribute to NMC revalidation & HCPC renewal
- Tariff payment for each placement
- Attract staff with the right values to aid recruitment
- Supports career development and retention of existing staff
- Enhance a culture of learning in practice, impacting on care and clinical effectiveness

Becoming a Placement Provider

What is involved in becoming a placement provider and how long will this take?

- An initial conversation – to discuss learning opportunities and development needs of mentors
- The development of a practice placement profile for your placement area
- Completion of a learning environment audit
- Approving the placement agreement
- The setting up can take from a few weeks up to six months.

How long are students placements and when will I know that a student will be coming on placement?

- Nursing students - Placements are between 5-12 weeks
- Paramedic students – 1-3 week placements (practice educators within the ambulance trust are responsible for assessment of paramedic students)
- Physiotherapy placements – 5-10 week placements
- Physician Associate students – one day a week for year one and a six week placement in year two (may vary depending on the HEI)

The training hub will negotiate placements on your behalf with higher education institutes. Practices often have a designated contact for learners.

How many hours do the students work?

When students are on placement, they work 37.5 hours a week. However, this does not mean that students have to spend the whole time in practices/clinics.

All students will have learning outcomes/ competencies that they need to achieve, they will discuss these when they begin their placement and agree with their practice assessor how to achieve them.



They can spend time away from clinics/practices, researching evidence for their learning outcomes, completing relevant online learning to supplement their knowledge and understanding, completing case studies etc.

Students can also contribute to research/audit etc that is happening in practice.

Whilst students remain supernumerary, they are able to run clinics with the appropriate level of supervision.

Which Universities will students come from?

- Bucks new university
- University of Surrey
- University of West London
- Kingston and St Georges
- University of Reading
- Oxford Brookes
- Brunel University
- University of Winchester

Many universities use the same/similar paperwork

How are students prepared?

- The university will provide;
- Enhanced DBS clearance
- Appropriate preparation of the student, commensurate with the placement being undertaken
- Adequate statutory and mandatory training
- Occupational health clearance
- Skills-based training
- Preparation on professional behaviour
- Uniform

What support will be available?

- Ongoing support will be provided by the University for both student and placement provider
- All universities have a placement contact that is available to support the placement
- The Training Hub Learning Environment Lead is also able to support students, especially if a student is not achieving and the practice needs support

What is a placement agreement?

The practice education of Health and Social Care students is a partnership between students, university staff and placement areas. This agreement outlines the expectations and responsibilities of all those involved. The underlying principles will be that all individuals will be treated with courtesy and respect and to be treated as a valued member of the wider multi-disciplinary team. Any issues regarding an individual's safety are raised and escalated as per policy.

The placement agreement includes;

- That the placement providers will provide a safe and supportive learning environment
- Agreement that the student will be suitably supervised while in practice

- That staff supporting students are appropriately trained
- Insurance arrangements
- Ensure health and safety policies are in place
- Ensure an appropriate induction is in place
- Allowing access to relevant policies and procedures
- Access to evidence based resources

Will the practice receive payment for hosting students?

The payment for placements will come from Health Education England as per the Non-Medical Placement Tariff (approx. £90 per week),

What if something within the practice and we can no longer host the student?

A placement changing at the last minute can be really disrupting for the student, we ask at least 4 weeks' notice if practices are no longer able to host the student or negotiate with other practices within the PCN to host the student



Why are learning environments audited?

Learning environments are audited to ensure they are conducive to meeting learning needs, commensurate with their level of competency and programme outcomes in order to achieve the learning outcomes for progression and registration. Placement audits include;

- Ensuring learners have access to policies and procedures
- Staff supporting students have sufficient training requirements
- Learners are allocated a member of staff to support them
- There is a process for induction – fire, emergency procedures etc.
- Learners should work as part of MDT
- Staff provide support, teaching, supervision and feedback
- Required documentation completed in a timely fashion
- Any adverse incidents are fed back to university
- Feedback from evaluation will be given
- Access to IT systems

Most universities will accept an existing learning environment audit to prevent duplication

Who can students work within the practice?

Students can benefit from working with the whole multidisciplinary team, clinical and non clinical.

Supervisors in Practice

For student nurses

Practice supervisors are responsible for supervising and supporting students on placement. All registered nurses, midwives and nursing associates can be practice supervisors. They is no longer a requirement to have completed an NMC-approved training programme, but all practice supervisors should receive appropriate preparation and support to ensure they have up-to-date knowledge and experience that is relevant to the student/trainee and area of practice they are supervising. Practice supervisors may be supported in their role by other health and care staff, such as a physiotherapist or phlebotomist, to contribute to the learning for the student.

Practice assessors assess the students' overall performance while on placement. They will work with practice supervisors and there should be evidence of dialogue between practice supervisors and assessors, this feedback from practice supervisors will inform and evidence the decisions that are made by practice assessors.



Practice assessors may be registered nurses, midwives or nursing associates, but will only assess within their scope of practice. However registered nurses may also assess trainee nursing associates. There is no specified amount of time that practice assessors must spend with the students that they are assessing. However, practice assessors must be confident that the students are meeting their required level of proficiency and are ready to progress to the next part of their programme.

Training to become a practice supervisor and/or practice assessor is freely available. For colleagues with a previous mentoring qualification a 3 hour face to face session is available for conversion to practice supervisor/practice assessor. For colleagues new to supervising students, there is an elearning package and a 3 hour face to face session.

Proficiencies

Registered nurses play a vital role in providing, leading and coordinating care that is compassionate, evidence based, and person centred.

Registered nurses make an important contribution to the promotion of health, health protection and the prevention of ill health. They do this by empowering people, communities and populations to exercise choice, take control of their own health decisions and behaviours, and by supporting people to manage their own care where possible.

The NMC standards framework for nursing include some additional proficiencies that nurses are expected to demonstrate. Examples of these include chest auscultation, taking blood and intravenous cannulation and interpreting findings of ECGs.

Read more about the NMC standards of proficiency for registered nurses [here](#)

For Allied Health Professions

It is a requirement of the HCPC Standards for education and training that ‘practice-based learning must take place in an environment that is safe and supportive for learners and service users’

There must also be an adequate number of appropriately qualified and experienced staff involved in practice-based learning. This includes ‘practice educators’ who the HCPC define as a person who is responsible for a learner’s education during their practice-based learning. They must ‘have relevant knowledge, skills and experience to support safe and effective learning and, unless other arrangements are appropriate, must be on the relevant part of the Register’

More details on training for practice educators can be gained from the training hub.

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