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**Physiotherapy**

**Practice Based Learning**

**Practice Educators Handbook**

Welcome to the **Practice Educators** handbook.

We are grateful to all Physiotherapists and Physiotherapy Departments who offer placements to QMU Physiotherapy students and recognise that sometimes you may need to find out a little more about some aspects of being a Practice Educator. We hope this Handbook will answer some of the frequently asked questions about taking QMU students.

The purpose of this handbook is to bring together the following information:

* *An overview of Practice-based Learning (PBL)*
* *An overview of roles and responsibilities of the practice educator, student and supporting staff while on placement*
* *Information on the practicalities of supporting QMU students on placement*

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# Further and more detailed information be found on the Practice Based Learning website.

# [http://www.qmu.ac.uk/pbl](http://www.qmu.ac.uk/pbl/PhysioTherapyHome.htm)

# The Practice-based Module Team

At present, the QMU practice-based team consists of Monika Czudowska and Janet Thomas.

**Janet Thomas** is the module co-ordinator for Physiotherapy Placements.

Janet works on Tuesdays and Fridays. Email: [jthomas@qmu.ac.uk](mailto:jthomas@qmu.ac.uk)

Monika Czudowska is the Placement administrator for Physiotherapy. Any enquiries regarding placement administration should be processed through Monika who is based in the Health Sciences School office. Email: [physiotherapyplacements@qmu.ac.uk](mailto:physiotherapyplacements@qmu.ac.uk)

The **School Office** also deal with pre-placement issues such as Health Clearance checks and mandatory preplacement requirements such as professional body membership for professional liability insurance and PVG checks.

# You may also wish to contact a Personal Academic tutor (PAT) about a specific student. A student should have written their PAT contact details on the front page of the placement assessment form.

# Practice-based Learning overview

Placements are full-time blocks of study within the clinical area. During a placement the student is expected to mirror the practice educators work patterns and hours.

**All students will undertake 1050 hours of Practice Based Learning**

For undergraduate students this will usually comprise of:

Level 1: A 2 week Foundation (Observational with associated tasks)

Level 2: A 6 week placement (PBL1)

Level 3: Two 6 weeks placements (PBL 2 and 3)

Level 4: A 6 week placement (PBL4) and a 5 week Elective

For Pre Registration graduate students will undertake

Year 1 : A 2 week Foundation (Observational with associated tasks)

Year 1 : 2 x 6 week placements (PBL 1 and 2)

Years 2: 2 x 6 week placements (PBL 3 and 4) and a 5 week Elective.

## Placement Models

Placement Models relates to the structure of supervision provided at the placement site by one or more practice educator. A model of **1:1** or one practice educator to one student has been commonly used. However, other models of supervision are increasingly used providing flexible, supportive, innovative and varied learning/teaching experiences for both practice educators and students. All are supported by QMU as we recognise each individual sites and educators varying needs.

These may include:

* **1:1 model** – one practice educator to one student.
* **Peer assisted learning model (PAL)** - whereby one practice educator supervises two or more students.
* **Two practice educators supervising one student** - one practice educator may take the leading role.
* ‘**Split’ placement** – this may be either over the working week or the placement site/ service changes half way through a full time placement.
* **Part time practice educators**- this would be similar to two practice educators, as students will require access to someone in a supervisory capacity in the practice educator’s absence.
* **Long arm supervision**: Some of our emerging practice placements have an element of long arm supervision, whereby you will be remote from your educator for one or more days of the placement but in contact via phone / Email or similar.
* **Project based placements**: All or part of a placement might be completed by working on a project. These are typically hosted by organisations outside of clinical settings, but a more clinically based placement could also include project work. This can be completed by the student working at home with long arm supervision.

# Yearly timeline:

These timings have been agreed between all of the universities in Scotland currently offering pre-registration Physiotherapy placements.

# During the year there are inevitable changes and updates to placement allocations due to cancellation and other changed circumstances (for example, student withdrawal). QMU will liaise directly with sites regarding this, but ask that the site contact QMU as soon as possible with any potential changes or cancellations having used the NES Cancellation policy. <http://www.knowledge.scot.nhs.uk/media/CLT/ResourceUploads/4087751/b6d64023-76a8-47b7-b71e-d61853050429.pdf>. Occasionally sites may be informed about placements changes close to the start date. We apologise if this happens but it will be due to unexpected changes in student’s circumstances.

# Roles and responsibilities

The Practice Educator, their manager, QMU and the student all have roles and responsibilities to ensure the smooth running of placements. These are outlined below:

# *The Practice educator is responsible for:*

# Orientation of the student to the placement; discussing and implementing reasonable adjustments to the placement where an Individual learning plan (ILP) is disclosed.

# Facilitating and managing the students learning by considering the context in which the learning takes place (learning environment).

# Selection of appropriate patient case load with attention to relevance of range and taking account of the staged learning outcomes and student competence.

# Provision of feedback throughout the placement to support positive growth.

# Student performance evaluation at mid-placement and end of placement with explicit guidance and support given to aid future development.

# If the student(s) is felt to be failing or there are issues which could indicate a possible fail please contact the student’s PAT at the university as soon as issues are raised and no later than mid-way. The university will give guidance and will suggest the ‘Record of Warnings’ section of the CPAF is completed to ensure the students is aware of the issues and that a support plan is agreed for the remainder of the placement.

# Complete the Practice-based learning assessment form, with a view to the appropriate attributes of performance for the stage.

# Maintaining contact as appropriate with the QMU Personal Academic tutor (PAT) or PBL coordinators.

# Providing students with up to date knowledge of practice.

# Participating in meetings between clinical sites and QMU as relevant.

# Countersigning student records.

# Contacting [physiotherapyplacements@qmu.ac.uk](mailto:physiotherapyplacements@qmu.ac.uk) within 48 hours of student’s planned or unplanned absence from placement.

# *The Clinical Site manager is responsible for:*

# Facilitating placements within areas under their management.

# Including the responsibility of staff to act as practice educators in all relevant job descriptions.

# Actively seeking new placement opportunities alongside new care delivery developments.

# Fostering a culture whereby clinical placements are seen as a positive activity contributing to staff CPD and recruitment within the department.

# Ensuring staff acting in capacity as practice educators have adequate training and updates.

# Responding to placement requests and placement confirmations, where possible, within the timescale identified. If not possible inform QMU Co-ordinator and decide appropriate deadline.

# Distributing the results of the student feedback evaluations to staff concerned.

# Appropriately responding to issues raised within the Student feedback evaluation.

# Offering alternative placement arrangements in the event of a placement cancellation when reasonably practicable.

# Bringing to the attention of the QMU Co-ordinator as soon as possible potential difficulties which may result in the cancellation of a placement and attempt to make alternative arrangements.

# Offering pastoral support as required to students and practice educators.

# Bringing to the attention of the PAT any issues creating difficulty on placement which may not be reported by the practice educator or student.

# Ensuring the student completes an induction of the clinical department/unit within the first week of placement (including health & safety)

# Ensuring the student has access to Trust/Site policies and procedures.

***The student is responsible for:***

* Ensuring adequate funding is in place to support attendance at placement.
* Contacting the clinical site prior to each placement. **This should be done a minimum of two weeks before the start of placement, three weeks if they have an Individual Learning Plan (ILP).**
* **Completing all necessary pre placement paperwork for IT access in the published timescales to ensure a smooth start to placement.**
* Adhering to the HCPC Code of Conduct, Performance, and Ethics.
* Adhering to all relevant placement site policies and procedures.
* Ensuring the patient has consented to participate in their learning.
* Ensuring the Practice Educator has countersigned their records of the patients’ assessment and treatment.
* Notifying the placement site of any absence due to illness at the earliest possible time following local protocol identified at induction.
* Informing [physiotherapyplacements@qmu.ac.uk](mailto:physiotherapyplacements@qmu.ac.uk) of any update required on placement information held on Hub@QMU.
* Informing [physiotherapyplacements@qmu.ac.uk](mailto:physiotherapyplacements@qmu.ac.uk) of any absences from placement
* Obtaining medical certification for all sick leave of more than 5 days
* Informing their Personal Academic Tutor [PAT] of any issue that may be impeding development and learning on placement.
* Attending the placement during the appointed time and date.
* Respecting the other demands placed upon the Practice Educator and working co-operatively with them.
* Discussing any planned absence from placement with the Practice Educator, Module Co-ordinator and Programme Leader (planned absence will be permitted only in **exceptional** circumstances)
* Discussing any issues regarding the format and content of the placement with the Practice Educator.
* Bringing all the relevant assessment documentation to each placement and filling out the relevant sections prior to and during placements.

***QMU coordinators are responsible for:***

* Development of practice-based placements with a view to ensuring sufficient range, quantity and quality to support the pre-registration programmes offered.
* Communicating with site managers and student placement co-ordinators as required in the support and development of placements.
* In collaboration with the sites, securing sufficient placements to supply the student number for the forthcoming range of placements.
* To allocate the placements to the students ensuring as rounded and fair allocation as possible.
* Ensuring Practice educators are kept up to date with any proposed changes.
* Ensuring the annual review of practice based learning takes account of the issues raised through feedback from Personal academic tutor’s students and clinical sites.
* To communicate allocation of placements to students and to clinical sites.
* To respond to issues raised by students through the placement feedback form.
* To raise issues causing concern from student feedback to the sites as appropriate.
* To collaborate with other partners e.g. NES and other stakeholders in the development of practice-based learning.
* To support Personal Academic tutors as they act as first point of contact for both students and practice educators on placement.
* The maintenance of the Canvas site to allow students to access the information supplied by practice educators prior to each placement.
* The updating and collating of information required for the Hub site.
* Maintaining an up to date register of practice educators.

***Personal Academic tutors are responsible for:***

* Contacting the practice educator approximately half way through a placement to initiate a conversation about the student’s progress. Or during week one where there is an ILP.
* Responding in an appropriate manner to any concerns raised.
* Liaising with the PBL coordinators as necessary to follow up any concerns.
* Arranging a follow up call or visit in response to any concerns during the placement.

***The placement administrator is responsible for:***

* Distributing and then collating the placement offer forms from all placement sites.
* Liaising with the clinical coordinators with regard to collation of placement offers and any ongoing changes.
* Fielding any enquiries around the administrative aspects of practice based learning.
* Being a point of contact for students on placement to report absences from placement.
* Collating the placement checklists and placement information from each clinical site.

***The Pre-Placement support officer is responsible for:***

* Checking and countersigning Protection of Vulnerable Groups scheme record membership applications (ensuring that all have been received prior to placement).
* Organising and coordinating Health Clearance Appointments prior to students commencing placement.
* Ensuring that students have appropriate Professional Indemnity Insurance prior to placement – this is most usually obtained via a Chartered Society of Physiotherapy Student membership.
* Organising provision of name badges and NHS Scotland student uniforms to students.
* Providing secretarial support to the Health Sciences Practice placement Committee.

## Frequently asked questions and general information

**What if my student has to self-isolate?**

If a student has to self-isolate but is otherwise fit and well, then the student can continue with agreed and appropriate placement work at home. This is commonly project based work supported by long arm supervision by the practice educator. This is at the practice educators discretion and would start only after discussions with the student and their PAT. Practice educators may like to have a suggested project ‘ready to go’ in case students need to self-isolate.

If a student is self-isolating and unwell then the sickness absence procedures should be followed.

**What do I have to do before the student comes on placement**?

You should have received notification of when to expect any students allocated from the QMU administrator via your manager or local placement coordinator. This should arrive in sufficient time for you to plan, but occasionally we do have to ask sites to take students at short notice due to situations such as other cancellations.

In your planning you may wish to consider:

* Preparing and planning the work that you expect the student to undertake by the end of the placement.
* Reviewing any reading or notes that you are to give the student to assist their learning.
* Planning any project work or presentation that you would wish the student to do on placement to assist their learning.
* Making plans with any other team members either multidisciplinary or physiotherapy.
* Ensuring that QMU hold up to date information on your placement to pass onto students ahead of placement.

If you have any concerns about taking a student please contact any member of the QMU team.

**What if the student has an ILP?**

Students who have a disability, a learning difficulty or who have physical or mental health issues may have an **‘Individual Learning plan’** (ILP) in place. This is an assessed statement of any additional learning needs a student may have. It is a legal responsibility to make ‘reasonable adjustments’ to allow a student with difficulties to participate fully in education and practice based learning without substantial disadvantage.

**Students who have an ILP (and who have agreed to disclose this to their Practice Educator) are asked to make contact with their placement site at least 4 weeks prior to placement in order to share their ILP and pass on details of their educator to their Personal Academic Tutor (PAT)** They will send an e-mail communication to the educator with information about the specific difficulty a student may have; examples of how this may impact on placement and the recommendations about adjustments that the placement site may make to support the student. An example may be a student with dyslexia who needs extra time to process written information and who would benefit from tutorial materials given in advance.

A member of QMU staff will be in contact the first week of placement in order to discuss any issues the site may have with making reasonable adjustments. The educator can contact QMU at any time regarding this.

## What if I find out that I can’t take a planned or attending student?

It is hoped that termination of a placement before or during a placement is a rare event. However it can occur and a practice educator may be unable to facilitate a placement for a variety of reasons such as:-

* Unforeseen staffing shortages
* Outbreak of infectious disease
* Other hazards that pose a risk to the safety of the student and others

Where this is the case, placement providers should follow the procedure outlined in the NES Managing AHP Practice Placement Cancellations: Guidance document (See Appendix 5)

Possible actions taken to support the current placement might be:

* The placement continues with extra support from the placement provider and the University;
* Another practice educator is able to facilitate the placement for the student in the same practice area;
* Another practice educator is able to facilitate the placement for the student in a different placement area;
* The placement is terminated to be undertaken at another time dependant on decisions made by the relevant Board of Examiners.

If the placement is cancelled then the Cancellation form (Appendix 5) should be completed and sent to your local Practice Education Lead.

**What information should the student have about the placement?**

#### The placement details are accessed by the student on a QMU website called Canvas. This includes information given by practice educators about practicalities such as who to contact prior to the placement and where to go to on the first day. It should also have information regarding pre-placement preparation and reading. In a number of cases QMU do not hold up to date information about each site and clinical area as this has not been updated recently. If you think your area needs the information updating please fill out the form in Appendix 2 and return to physiotherapyplacements@qmu.ac.uk

**How can I find out what students have been taught at university before coming on placement?**

Many educators have commented that would like to know what has been covered at university so that they know what to expect on placement. We acknowledge this and have put together a set of documents, which explain the detailed context of the main university modules. We would be very happy to forward this documentation to you.

#### What uniform should a student wear?

#### The students are supplied with the standard NHS Scotland student tunic, embroidered with the QMU logo and the standard trousers, together with a name badge. They are advised to follow all national and local uniform policies and educators are asked to let students know prior to their placement if any variations from the standard uniform are required for specific situations. Students are advised to check locally if trainers are allowed rather than black or blue shoes. Additionally, all students must show their QMU photographic smart card to educators on the first day of placement and educators are required to sign to say they have checked their card and confirmed their identity.

## Does my student have a disclosure (PVG) certificate?

All students are required to have an **enhanced** background check in their first year of entry into the programme. No student will be sent on placement by QMU without a satisfactory PVG in place. Please note that students should not be asked for sight of their PVG under normal circumstances; only certain people within the University / NHS Boards with appropriate clearance can do this.

## What should I do if a student is absent?

Students are expected to inform practice educators immediately of any absences from placement. Practice educators must be informed daily of any extended absence. Failure by the student to inform the practice educator that they are not attending placement will be regarded as unprofessional behaviour.

**The Practice Educator must let the School office know of any planned or unplanned absence by the student within 48 hours of that absence by emailing** [**physiotherapyplacements@qmu.ac.uk**](mailto:physiotherapyplacements@qmu.ac.uk)

If, prior to attending a placement, students are aware that they will be unable to start that placement on the appointed date, they should contact the Manager or appointed contact person of that department as soon as possible.

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**What if there is an emergency situation concerning the student?**

If the student suddenly becomes unwell or injured on placement so that they cannot themselves make contact with their emergency contact for assistance, you should contact the University. The University holds up to date information about who to contact in case of an emergency for all students. The switchboard at QMU can deal with **emergency** issues over a 24 hour period.

**What if the student is involved in a reportable incident?**

If the student is involved in a placement based incident (other than being named as a witness to an incident), in which a report is made under your local reporting system such as Datix, you are asked to inform one of the placement coordinators at the time. Please also note this in the ‘record of warnings’ on the placement assessment form.

**How much time on placement can a student miss?**

Students are expected to attend placements full time and for 100% of the available hours. However unexpected or planned absences may occur of course. Where a student might be close to missing 20% of available hours, contact should be made with the PAT to discuss this issue as soon as possible, before a final decision can be made as to whether the placement can be assessed. A student is required to provide a medical certificate or other supporting evidence for absences of over six working days.

Unplanned absence from placement will not be condoned by the university unless for illness or other extenuating circumstances. All absences MUST be agreed by the QMU placement team and programme lead as well as the local educator as soon as possible before the absence occurs. Unauthorised absences are unprofessional and will result in a fail in the relevant section of the placement assessment form

Where absence from placement is as a result of site closure, for example due to adverse weather conditions, the hours are not considered as ‘available’ and the student should not be penalised for lack of attendance.

Although students are expected to work the hours of the practice educator, they are not expected to be with the educator at all times. The educator may ask the student to undertake CPD or other project based activities on site or at home, the hours of which should be counted as clinical hours and the activities should form part of the assessed activities on placement

**Students do not have a half-day ‘off’ at any point in the placement**

**What if my student has personal problems during the placement?**

If the student lets you know about any relevant personal problems that may affect their performance on placement then it is suggested that you ask the student for permission to let their PAT know, if they have not already informed their PAT. QMU does have a counselling service that the student can access via [counselling@qmu.ac.uk](mailto:counselling@qmu.ac.uk)

## Do I have to countersign the student’s notes?

All patient records that the student completes must be countersigned by the supervising therapist. Standard 10 from the HCPC Standards of Conduct, Performance and Ethics states that *‘You have a duty to make sure, as far as possible, that records completed by students under your supervision are clearly written, accurate and appropriate.’* **It is however the students’ responsibility to ensure that the Practice Educator countersigns the patient records.**

**Can a student photocopy notes?**

During placement the student may have assignments to complete for QMU which may include aspects such as a case study. The students are made aware that on no account should they photocopy notes or other records for part of their case study, even if the names are removed prior to copying. Any written information prepared for the case study (or similar) must be completely anonymised, including any reference made to the educator and location.

#### What if my student lets me know about religious or cultural needs?

Organisations facilitating placement for students have policies which address diversity and inclusion and these apply to students accepted on placement. These policies include a commitment to:

* Promoting equal opportunity and diversity during employment
* Ensuring all employees are treated fairly and valued equally
* Ensuring that religious and cultural needs are valued and met

Where students have particular religious or cultural needs in terms of requests (e.g. time for prayers, national holidays, cultural dress) which may conflict with the working practices of the placement provider (e.g. health and safety issues in relation to dress code) consideration will be given, where reasonably practicable to varying or adapting practices to enable such needs to be met. However students have a responsibility to adhere to the local policies and procedures of the placement sites.

**What mandatory training have students undertaken?**

The agreed mandatory training undertaken by students is set within the Boards and Universities Practice Placement Agreement. This includes:

* professionalism and ethical behaviour
* raising concerns about the safety and well-being of patients/ clients and/ or their carers
* information governance
* violence and aggression de-escalation
* basic life support
* moving and handling
* health acquired infection

Practice educators and students have a responsibility to ensure that students on placement are appropriately aware of the health and safety regulations for each setting that they attend

**Is the student insured?**

Due to professional requirements, students on Nursing, Allied Health Profession and Healthcare Science qualifying programmes are required to hold professional indemnity insurance as a pre-condition of progressing to placement. This is most easily gained through the joining of the appropriate professional body, so all students will hold appropriate membership of the Chartered Society of Physiotherapy.

#### Will QMU contact me during the placement?

During most placements contact between the placement site and QMU takes the form of phone or email contact between the student’s Personal Academic Tutor (PAT) and the practice educator at around midway. The student should have informed the practice educator on day one of the placement who their PAT is. The educator can make contact with the PAT at any time during the placement if they have any queries or concerns about the student’s performance on placement.

#### How do I assess the student?

All students will use the CSP Common Placement Assessment form (CPAF), unless they are on a Foundation (2 week) placement. The student should email the relevant assessment form (for their level) to their practice educator. It is the **student’s** responsibility to do this. Forms are available on Canvas (accessible by the student) and the PBL website (accessible by the Practice Educator) or the CSP website.

Throughout the course of the placement, the practice educator should be giving the student feedback on their professional and clinical performance. Approximately halfway through the placement, the student should normally receive a comprehensive feedback session taking the form of the mid-way review.

The nature of this may vary from placement to placement, but should allow the student to have an understanding of their performance so far. The purpose of this is for the student to be aware of their strengths and areas requiring attention in the second half of the placement. If the practice educator thinks that based on current performance the student may fail the placement they should clearly state this at the midway review and ensure this is fully documented. This should also be highlighted during the PAT phone call and the record of warning section used to document this.

At the end of each placement students will receive a documented assessment of their performance on that placement. This is completed by the **practice educator/s**. The student’s performance on all programmes is assessed on a Pass / Fail basis. There is scope to rate their performance within the placement form from Outstanding to Fail ln each of the learning domains, with the overall Pass / Fail being determined by the number of fails in each domain. This is detailed in the CPAF.

The QMU based PBL team and PATs support practice educators through the assessment process, as required. This support can range from formal induction to informal discussion. Practice Educators often may contact the PBL team for advice or support through the assessment process. These approaches are welcomed by the PBL team and should be viewed positively by students.

All assessments must be signed by the student to indicate that they have received and understood the assessment. It is then the student’s responsibility to return the form by the due date.

What if my student is failing?

Whilst being relatively rare, students failing practice placements does happen and can be a very stressful situation for all concerned. A student who is considered to be at risk of failing a placement should be made aware of this as soon as possible and no later than the mid-way evaluation. The PAT should also be notified no later than this point as well.

Any concerns about the student’s performance should be raised with the student and discussed and documented at any stage of the placement. **The ‘Record of Warning’ section of the CPAF should be used to fully document any concerns and to plan an improvement strategy in conjunction with the student and the PAT / QMU as required**. The word “fail” must be clearly used in this discussion and the practice educator should provide examples where there are gaps in the student’s existing repertoire of knowledge/skills and attitudes.

If the placement becomes untenable and a pass unachievable because of either repeated unsafe practice by the student within the placement area or repeated breaches by the student of the HCPC Code of Conduct Performance and Ethics then the PAT should be informed immediately.

Will I get feedback from students or QMU?

Following a placement students are asked to fill out a placement evaluation form. A section on this asks if there is any feedback the student wishes to pass on to the educator. If this section is filled out, then the educator will have this information passed on to them. Feedback is sent out from QMU once per year, at the end of the academic year, and as well as student feedback includes other aspects such as levels of performance for the cohort.

What about training to take students?

There is online training on the Turas platform and the link for this can be found on the QMU website [www.qmu.ac.uk/pbl](http://www.qmu.ac.uk/pbl) QMU will run webinars regularly on a variety of pertinent topics. Physiotherapy staff will also run formal or informal sessions to educators on request.

What if a student contacts me directly about a placement?

All placements are co-ordinated through the QMU placement team. All placements must be arranged through QMU so that we know the student’s profile, can ensure that the student has a wide range of placements and locations and overall a good educational experience. Students should never make direct contact to arrange a placement.

How do I know if I’m offering quality placements?

NHS Education for Scotland offer resources to support sites and educators offering placements. These include ‘The Quality Standards for Practice Placements’ which are an easy to use and auditable set of standards that enable professions in NHS Scotland to monitor and improve the quality of their practice placements. See [www.nes.scot.nhs.uk/education-and-training/by-discipline/allied-health-professions/practice-education/quality-standards-for-practice-placements.aspx](http://www.nes.scot.nhs.uk/education-and-training/by-discipline/allied-health-professions/practice-education/quality-standards-for-practice-placements.aspx) for more details.

Appendix 1

See www.qmu.ac.uk/pbl

**Appendix 2**

**Pre Placement information form (blank)**



Appendix 3

All forms are available on the PBL website

Appendix 4

NES Managing AHP Practice Placement Cancellations: Guidance document.

