



AECC
University College
*Transforming lives
through Health Sciences*

School of Health and Rehabilitation Sciences

MSc Physiotherapy (pre-registration)

Practice Educator Handbook

Introduction

Practice-based learning forms an indispensable part of the physiotherapy learning process. Learning gained in practice settings is vital to students' educational and professional development. Experience gained enables the acquisition of new knowledge and skills as well as the application, consolidation and reflection upon the learning gained in the university environment. Therefore, the aim of practice placement learning on the MSc Physiotherapy (pre-registration) is to offer students opportunities to develop core clinical and transferable skills across a range of clinical specialities and client groups. The Health and Care Professions Council (HCPC 2014) states within their Standards of Education and Training, that within practice learning, teaching and supervision must be designed to encourage safe and effective practice, independent learning and professional conduct. As such, the role of the Practice Educator is crucial in ensuring the quality of the student learning experience in the placement setting.

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SECTION 1 The role of Practice Educator

1.1 Your role as a Practice Educator

Learners on the AECC University College MSc Physiotherapy (pre-registration) course will, throughout their two years of study spend some time each year in a variety of clinical settings. This allows the learner to develop the knowledge required to provide safe and competent care for patients. Placement enables learners to translate their knowledge into practice affording them the opportunity to learn through experience and alongside experts.

All learners will be allocated a named Practice Educator to support them in practice, as the named educator you are expected to remain in regular contact with them throughout their time on placement and be responsible for assessing the summative learning outcome element of the practice portfolio. You are the registered health care professional making the decision on whether the learner is safe to practise, and therefore eligible to apply for entry to the HCPC register as a physiotherapist following successful completion of the course.

A PE is principally an experienced clinician, who through promotion of a professional relationship can facilitate another's personal growth and development, create an enabling environment, seek learning opportunities and supportive interventions.

1.2.1 Your main responsibilities as a Practice Educator

- To ensure that the student continues to be fit for practice
- To facilitate student learning and act as a role model
- To supervise, support and guide students
- To safeguard the welfare of the student
- To provide support for the student in achieving broad and specific practice learning outcomes
- To plan learning with the student, specific to individual needs
- To assist the student to develop skills, understanding and abilities through reflections on their practice

Many learners coming onto this course will have very little experience of working within a health or social care role. The many skills that you demonstrate every day in practice without realising it are key to their development, such as:

- How you communicate with the patient, family and other health care professionals
- Skills, in managing acute and non-acute situations
- Level of diverse knowledge and dexterity of managing care and treatment
- Professionalism and integrity
- Desire and motivation to use the best available evidence to improve the

quality of the patient experience, and advance the profession

- Leadership and team working skills, including the multi-professional team situation
- Ability to support and either guide or direct others.
- Decision making

The key to providing a valid placement experience is the knowledge, skills and enthusiasm of the Practice Educator.

1.1. You will be expected to be involved in

- Liaison between Practice Placement Coordinator and the University College course and practice placement team
- Formative and summative competencies as part of the learners practice portfolio
- Formative review points (mid placement)
- Learning contracts at the beginning of each practice block
- Action plans for areas of difficulty
- Documenting meetings and debriefs as necessary (including action plans)
- Regular completion of documents around attendance (timesheets) and punctuality
- Document any issues in relation to learners attitude and communication skills – both positive and negative

The University College are very reliant on feedback and communication from you to your Learner's personal tutor. These roles are closely linked to support the learner; this can only be possible if concerns are raised early on.

1.2. Common feedback on what makes your learner feel valued on placement

- Induction/observation shift, if this cannot be achieved, a pre-placement meeting either face to face or email
- Feeling and being part of the team, involved in discussions
- Discussion around processes / policies / incidents / conditions / treatments
- Time from the Practice educator, taking the time to understand their portfolio / documentation / sign timesheets
- Positive attitude
- Supportive and understanding, to challenge, but not be challenging
- Being allowed to get involved, not simply observing

1.2.2 Learner Health and Well-being

You are in a position where at times you may be the first person to recognise an issue with a learner, you are asked to encourage your learner to seek further assistance or support from their personal tutor. If you feel, or you are aware they are not seeking the necessary support, you need to contact the personal tutor as soon as practicable to raise your concerns.

Learner focussed counselling and Occupational Health services are available to all learners on demand from within the University College , they offer a plethora of support for emotional health and also learning support for academic input. The personal tutor will make referrals and also signpost to the correct support.

1.2.3 Conflict of interest

It is important to recognise when a conflict of interest between you and your learner occurs or has the potential to occur and that you notify both the practice placement coordinator and the personal tutor at your earliest opportunity. A conflict of interest is anything that is an actual or potential risk to the development of a learner in providing safe, effective and person-centred care.

If there is a development of a personal relationship between you and your learner or any learner, this could be considered a conflict of interest and may well be perceived as giving an unfair advantage, or as inappropriate by your peers. Such a situation should be declared to the practice placement coordinator as soon as possible. This will be treated in confidence and likely result in relocation of the learner, ensuring anonymity.

2.0 MSc (pre-registration) programme placements

Four seven-week placement blocks are integrated into the course of study, two in year one and two during year two. Students' placement activity is assessed by Practice Educators.

Timetable of all placement dates

Placement Dates	Placement	Level	unit code	No. of Weeks	Cohort
24.06.24 – 09.08.24	1	6	PHY6001	7	Year 1
26.08.24 – 11.10.24	2	6	PHY6001	7	Year 1
24.06.24 – 09.08.24	3	6	PHY6002	7	Year 2
26.08.24 – 11.10.24	4	6	PHY6002	7	Year 2

Sourcing and Allocation of Placements

Placements are sourced through an on-going and regular process of negotiation between the University College and placement providers across the the Wessex region. All offers are managed within a database system by the placement administration team. All placements are quality monitored at the outset of partnership, and every other subsequent year via self-audit.

Placements are allocated to students by the physiotherapy Placement Co-ordinator, and placement providers share as much information as possible to support the process. Each student is allocated a range of placement experiences enabling them to meet the requirements of the course and graduate as a physiotherapist who is fit for UK practise. As far as is practicably possible all students will undertake placements in both acute and community settings as well as across a range of clinical specialties. During allocation student's specific personal or learning needs are considered (e.g. relating to childcare or students with a disability who may need reasonable adjustments to be made). Students may be required to travel up to 1.5 hours each way to attend a placement.

Some placement partners operate a seven day working system. Students may therefore be required to work the occasional Saturday or Sunday instead of a weekday. Placement providers are asked to alert the University College at the time of making an offer if this is the case, so students personal circumstances can be taken into account accordingly during the allocation process.

Placement Scheduling Times

AECC University College aims to allocate and notify placement providers of student names eight weeks prior to the placement start date. Students can expect to be notified of their placement location approximately six weeks before. However, due to the nature of sourcing placements these times may differ on occasion.

Resources

There is a wide range of resources available for maximising a student's experience and learning in the practice placement environment. These resources are most effectively

deployed when used as a means to fulfil the course curriculum and learning objectives identified in the learning contract (see below) at the start of the placement. Practice educators and students should consider what can be gained, and how this relates to the learning objectives, from accessing and engaging with these resources and experiences. Some resources and experiences are common to all practice areas, whilst others are less widely available.

Working with patients is one of, if not the most valuable learning experiences available on practice placement. Working with patients gives students the opportunity to apply the knowledge and skills they have learned at the University College, observe the outcomes of their interactions and interventions in the real world and receive feedback about their practice. While it is valuable for students experience to be broadened by seeing patients with different conditions and problems, it is also useful for them to see patients with the same or similar problems, as this reinforces learning and emphasise the need to modify their approaches to meet individual patient needs.

The opportunity to discuss, observe and work with a variety of other practice-based staff, including those from other professions, is very useful. These experiences emphasise the importance of a holistic approach to patient management, allowing students to experience involvement with the multi-disciplinary team and give different perspectives on patients and their problems. Interactions with other practice-based staff also help students understand the organisation and management structures of physiotherapy departments and the healthcare providers.

Patient facing activities such as participation in ward rounds and case conferences, observation of surgery and clinics help students understand the wider roles and responsibilities of a Physiotherapist, other professionals, the function of the multi-disciplinary team and the place of physiotherapy in overall patient care.

Placement experiences often stimulate students' interests and desire to explore a subject further. Thus it is helpful if students have access to books, journals and other facilities on site such as department protocols and treatment regimes. These are useful in giving students information about the rate of progress to expect from patients with specific conditions. Students will also have access to some University College library resources online.

Practice Educators themselves are an important learning resource for students. An essential practice educator role is to help students make sense of their placement by planning and organising a timetable and facilitating access to patient facing experiences. The agreement of learning outcomes in the learning agreement helps to achieve this. Practice Educators should consider their role as one of 'facilitating learning', rather than teaching. This means supporting the student to identify and access learning experiences, offering critical and constructive feedback about performance and support for articulating the learning achieved, as opposed to committing time to organising and running teaching sessions and tutorials. Although students need and benefit from the Practice Educator's expertise, being approachable and a good listener is just as important.

Organising and planning placements

Before the placement commences students will have access to the following information via the University College virtual learning environment, Moodle (but it will be provided by the placement provider):

- A contact number and reporting arrangements for day one
- Pre-placement reading
- General location information including maps, car parking, accommodation etc.
- Learning resource facilities including library, study areas, reference literature and computer access

On the first day of placement students will be given a range of information including:

- The name of a physiotherapist to contact in an emergency
- Information about the communication system; bleeps, telephones etc.
- Department information; changing facilities, staff room, lunch time, start and finish times etc.
- Departmental policies and procedures; Health and Safety and Manual Handling policies, bullying and harassment, complaint procedures etc.
- General information about the site; banks, shops, canteens
- Departmental staffing structure

Students need real practice experience rather than academic and theoretical input. Thus, the focus of placement experience should be upon patient contact, interaction and treatment in a variety of contexts and settings e.g. one to one, classes, triage, telephone etc. This will enable students to appreciate and experience how the theory learned in University College practically underpins patient care. Students are usually very keen and motivated to get involved in this way.

It is important educators and students agree placement aims and objectives within the first week of the placement. The learning contract is designed to achieve this and provide a record against which outcomes can be compared. Students' should attend placement with a draft of their learning outcomes. Students may require some support in refining their objectives but the educator's primary role in the objective setting process is the identification of particular learning experiences the students can access within the context of the placement environment to achieve the outcome. Not to adjust outcomes so as to align with previous students learning experiences. Do not hesitate to contact the practice placement lead if any guidance is needed.

When planning the running of the placement it should be remembered that, because students work more slowly than experienced clinicians, they can usually cope with about half a 'normal' workload. If there are two students on the placements, this means that the Practice Educator can be completely free to supervise the students, deal with problems and queries which arise and be able to assist in the more complex patient management procedures. If there is only one student on the placement, the practice-based educator should plan the half caseload for which they are responsible so that they are still able to support the student who is working on the other half of the caseload as required. There is a perception that having students reduces the workload that can be covered and reduces the quality of patient care, but research has shown this to be a misconception.

Teaching and learning strategies

Although it is tempting to share technical knowledge and information with students, this may not be helpful to them. Their knowledge, experience and clinical reasoning abilities are different to those of experienced clinicians and being provided with a lot of new information, although interesting, may create confusion. Instead Practice Educators are advised to take time to, understand and then build upon the knowledge and skills each individual student already possess. In this way the learning process is likely to be more productive for students and less frustrating for the Practice Educator.

Some observation of the Practice Educator may be useful, but this should be kept to a minimum because students learn more by being actively involved in patient care, leading assessment, treatment and decision making or contributing to that of others. While observation can be interesting, students frequently do not learn from it what their Practice Educator expects. Such lack of insight reflects students' lack of prior experience and the best way to improve this is to facilitate them experience working with patients themselves.

Even when working actively with patients, students may not learn what they and their Practice Educator anticipate. This problem can be largely avoided if the Practice Educator and student identify in advance what to focus upon during a learning experience.

Direction which could be given to students could include identifying:

- What the Practice Educator wants the student to learn and how it relates to placement objectives
- What the students wants to learn and how it relates to placement objectives
- What task(s) or techniques to carry out
- What to be thinking about during the activity
- How the student should report back to the Practice Educator, and about what.
- How to use the knowledge and skill they have learned in the future practice

Not only does structuring students' learning give them direction, it also frees up time for the Practice Educator, as many of the tasks involve students working independently. A structured approach like this also makes debriefing easier and productive and helps provide a clear insight into students' learning. With experience of taking students, Practice Educators tend to develop teaching and learning strategies suited to their speciality, place of work and available resources.

Models of supervision

Students can be supervised by a single Practice Educator or using a team approach in which multiple physiotherapists input into the learning experiences of the student. Band 5 physiotherapists have a valuable role in this team approach which helps prepare them for their future role as a Practice Educator. It is also possible for Practice Educators to supervise more than one student at a time, the peer learning and support that takes place in this model has been shown to be beneficial. Research has shown that no one model of supervision is superior to another, and AECC University College proactively supports educators to think critically about the models of supervision that best suits their unique working environments and personal preferences.

Feedback

Giving effective feedback to students is important, but not always easy. Although criticism may be necessary, this should be tempered by consideration of good aspects of performance and always directly related to the assessment criteria. Students are often aware of their limitations and can become very dispirited if only these are identified. If good aspects are discussed then these can be built on to improve weak areas. When criticism is needed, it is important that possible solutions to the problems, or different ways of behaving/acting are discussed so that students have something practical to refer back to. One way to achieve this is to use feedback opportunities as debriefing sessions. Such an approach would involve students in self-evaluation and facilitate the identification of strategies for improvement. Debriefing could involve discussion about what has happened, how this is reflected in the marking grid, why students acted as they did, the knowledge students use as the basis for their actions, praise for appropriate actions, how their actions made others feel, identification of areas which need improvement and agreement on strategies on how to achieve the improvements. As a minimum Practice Educators should sit down with their student (s) and undertake a formal feedback session half way through a placement and again at the end. Informal feedback sessions should occur throughout the placement, depending upon the student and educator needs.

Assessment of Practice Placement Education

Students are required to complete two practice placement portfolios, one for each of the two Practice Placement units (PHY6001 and PHY6002).

At the beginning of the practice experience, the student and Practice Educator negotiate specific learning objectives and how these will be met in the practice setting. These learning objectives will build upon the specific aims and learning outcomes of the relevant placement unit. Practice Educators are responsible for enabling the student to address the aims and content of the clinical modules and for helping them to develop the knowledge, skills and values reflected in the general educational aims of the course.

The Placement Portfolios will include all of the student's practice learning needs, placement objectives to be achieved, and practice tasks; and will also encompass practice competence verification and a range of tasks and objectives. Aspects of the portfolio are required to be signed off by the Practice Educators and a member of the course team at the University College.

Practice competence verification and assessment is documented in the portfolio. This takes the form of defined tasks and activities written up in the portfolio, which are then discussed with the Practice Educator and Link Tutor, along with verification of practice activities which are signed off by the Practice Educators and a member of the course team at the University College.

The portfolio is assessed with an overall classification mark given as pass/fail. The student must successfully complete and document all of the specified activities in order to progress or qualify. Competence assessment in this case is an exercise where the student either is, or is not, competent in any particular area. Therefore, if competence is established then the student is deemed to have completed that area of practice successfully.

Students are required to complete a minimum of 500 hours of practice (across 2 placements) for the relevant placement portfolio to be assessed and to be eligible to pass the unit.

The Learning Contract

Each student should arrive at the placement with their draft learning outcomes formulated and then within the first week of the placement each student and their Practice Educator will agree and draw up a learning contract on the assessment form. The learning contract is primarily the responsibility of the student to complete and should result in the student progressing personally and professionally throughout their practice-based education. The student should reflect on their individual achievements, although they may also request guidance and input from their Practice Educator. The student and practice educator should discuss learning needs and identify individual goals to achieve on the placement within the resources available.

The learning contract should be reviewed half-way through and at the end of each placement. The learning contract is a 'living' document and may be changed throughout the placement, as appropriate. During discussion of the learning contract with the student the Practice Educator should consider the following:

- Emphasise what the student could learn, available opportunities and what you feel this student needs to learn or develop with you.
- What are the clinical learning outcomes for your location?
- Have any unusual or unexpected situations arisen which might affect student learning?
- What is your own preferred teaching style? How well will it suit this relationship?
- What did you learn from previous students that could be implemented in this placement?
- On brief acquaintance, is there anything about this individual student that suggests they might need help in a specific area? Tackling such issues at an early stage could prevent them from escalating.

The half-way assessment

Students have to reflect upon their development throughout placements and feedback on specific strengths and limitations in the four key areas should be given to students by the Practice Educator as often as possible. Students should be assessed in the middle of their placement and given the opportunity to evaluate their own skills in consultation with their Practice Educator. The half-way assessment enables students to identify their strengths and weaknesses and gives them time to improve skills before the end of placement assessment. A halfway assessment of the 10 learning domains within the CPAF will be graded as pass/fail with an indication given to students of the overall grade boundary with which they are working within. Both students and practice educators assess at this stage.

Final assessment

At the end point of the placement you will assess the student's overall performance while on placement utilising the criteria outlined in the student placement portfolios, this is an electronic version of the 10 domains within the CPAF. Students are being assessed as pass/fail across the Practice Learning Units, however it is

requested that for each learning domain an indication of grade boundary the students has achieved would support students awareness of strengths/limitations. For further details visit the Physiotherapy Practice Educator website.

Students who are not attaining the required level

If **at any stage** of the placement there are **any** concerns about a student's performance **please immediately contact the AECC University College Placement Coordinator.**

Fitness to Practise

In some cases, an educator may have significant concerns about a student's conduct, behaviour or performance that question their fitness to practise. Concerns about a student's fitness to practise refer to actions and omissions relating to professional conduct and professional suitability, including:

- actions that are harmful to service users, other members of the public or service providers;
- actions that are likely to constitute an unacceptable risk to the student or others;
- contravention of the relevant professional code of conduct;
- concerns about health, disability or wellbeing , including a failure to seek appropriate medical treatment or other support, which might impair fitness to practise;
- actions that are prejudicial to the development or standing of professional practice.

Failure of a practice placement

In the event of failure of a practice placement, arrangements for the student to repeat the practice experience at a suitable time and in an appropriate location will be arranged. Whenever possible the next scheduled practice placement will be the repeat placement. The repeat placement will be capped at 40%. A second failure of the repeat placement will normally result in termination of the student's registration. Two failed practice placements are permitted to be retaken as a second attempt. Students who fail more than two practice placements will normally be required to leave the programme. If a student withdraws from a placement without university sanction it will be deemed a fail and the repeat placement will be capped at 40%.

Consistency of placement assessment

AECC University College uses a standardised assessment process, paperwork and assessment criteria for all placements, Common Placement Assessment Form (CPAF).

Educators attending the induction workshop receive specific guidance about how to operationalise the assessment criteria. Educators are advised to pay close attention to the wording in the paperwork and provide specific examples of the students practice to justify their judgements during feedback half-way through and at the end of the placement. Educators are advised to base judgements of student practice upon the

preceding 3-4 days activity and are encouraged to liaise with colleagues who have worked with the student to formulate these judgements.

During the halfway visit, visiting tutors pro-actively check educators are operationalising the assessment criteria appropriately and provide support to do so if required.

After each placement, the practice placement lead reviews all the marks and feedback recorded in student's assessment booklets for consistency between written feedback and pass/fail awards.

Deferring a practice placement

Placements cannot be deferred except in exceptional and unavoidable circumstances, such as unexpected illness or injury. In such circumstances, the issue must be discussed with the practice placement lead. However, please note that, in such circumstances an assessment from the University's Occupational Health Department will usually be required prior to any deferral being approved.

Student Responsibilities and Rights

Students have a right to a safe placement environment and to be treated in accordance with any applicable legislation. Placement providers must ensure the health and safety of students on placement and the University will seek reassurance of compliance with health and safety standards in all placement areas. Students must comply with the health and safety policies whilst on placement and take reasonable care of themselves and others. This includes high standards of personal hygiene and awareness of issues of cross infection (including hand washing and the use of aprons).

Students have a right to be treated fairly and consistently, and with dignity and respect, wherever they study or undertake practice placements. Placements should also be free from undue stress, anxiety, fear and intimidation or bullying. Bullying is commonly deemed to be offensive behaviour, which violates a person's dignity, or creates an intimidating, hostile, degrading, threatening or offensive environment or which humiliates or undermines an individual. The CSP guide to dealing with bullying (CSP 2015) is on the Practice Educator website.

Students have a responsibility to comply with the Code of Members' Professional Values and Behaviour (CSP 2011) in addition to the clinical governance arrangements within the placement organisation. As future registrants of the Health and Care Professions Council students should also be aware of and comply with the Standards of Proficiency (HCPC 2013).

Within the first week of each placement a learning contract must be negotiated between the student and the Practice Educator which will take account of the student's needs within the parameters of the placement.

Informed consent must be gained for any patient intervention. All students must read Consent and Physiotherapy Practice PDO78 (CSP 2016)
<http://www.csp.org.uk/publications/consent>

Whistle-Blowing and Escalating Concerns for Students

For situations in which you have concerns about any aspects of Physiotherapy care or professional practice you encounter while on placement, guidance on professional conduct and duty to raise concerns can be found on CSP website : <http://www.csp.org.uk/professional-union/professionalism/resources/duty-report>: Quality Assurance Standards for Physiotherapy (2012): Code of Member's Professional Values and Behaviour (2019) and HCPC Standards of Proficiency (2013). Should the student, at any time, have concerns they must discuss this with their Practice Educator or the service manager in the first instance. The student must also inform the University College of these concerns; either by discussing with their visiting tutor or the placement co-ordinator. The tutor will listen to their concerns and may involve other members of the team to establish further information. If appropriate the decision may be taken to remove the student from the placement. A representative from the University College will take the student's concerns forward with the relevant authorities.

Clinical Uniform and Appearance

Students must wear the official AECC University College uniform whilst in practice placement, except when working in specific practice areas in which appropriate clothing must be worn as supplied by the Practice Placement.

Students will be provided with the appropriate, official AECC University College uniform at the commencement of their pre-registration course. Students who require uniform replacements for whatever reason must see their Course Leader.

The AECC University College student uniform must only be worn when undertaking student practice learning.

Students should wear clean uniforms that are not creased. The uniform must be changed daily to reduce the risk of cross-infection and must be washed at a temperature of 60 degrees centigrade. The uniform must not be worn outside practice placement. A uniform may be worn when travelling to a practice learning experience providing it is completely covered by a full-length coat only if this is acceptable within the Practice Placement's policy.

The Practice Placement's policy for shoes must be followed. Shoes should be suitably protective and supportive for moving or handling patients/service users. Lace-up shoes give a firm fitting and support. Wearing trainers, open-toed shoes and canvas or suede shoes is not permitted in practice placements.

If a student wears a headscarf, it should be unadorned and tucked into the collar of the uniform. It must be changed daily to reduce the risk of cross-infection. Practice Placement policy must be followed

Attendance

Students must complete all required hours/days for the specified length of the practice placement. This is calculated based on 37.5 hours per week. It is a requirement of the

European Working Time Directive that students do not work more than 48 hours in a seven-day period. Consequently, working hours in excess of this limit will not be accepted. There is no provision on any pre-registration course for a student to opt-out of the European Working Time Directive.

Students are expected to undertake all shifts that reflect the normal work pattern of the practice placement. The Practice Educator for each practice placement will determine what shifts a student is expected to undertake. When a student has commenced in a practice placement it is expected that students will have their planned shifts at least 2 weeks in advance to enable them to make personal arrangements.

A meal break is not included in the practice hours. Short tea/coffee breaks are inclusive of practice hours. The provision of breaks will be determined by the Practice Educator for each practice placement.

All hours completed and any sickness or absence from the practice placement must be recorded in the appropriate section of the student's placement portfolio. All hours must be signed for at the end of a shift or as soon as possible afterwards by the Practice Educator. It is the student's responsibility to maintain a personal record of all the shifts/practice learning they have undertaken.

Procedure in case of absence from placement

It is imperative for the student's ultimate qualification as an HCPC registered professional that an official record of their practice hours is maintained by the Placement Administrator. Details of absence, hours/days missed, and when they are consequently made up should be communicated to the Placement Administrator who will record these details on the student's practice hours record. Local policy regarding sickness/absence reporting may differ between practice placements. It is the student's responsibility to confirm and comply with these arrangements.

As soon as the student knows that they will be unable to attend their shift due to sickness/absence, the student must contact the Practice Placement / Practice Educator and the University College's Placement Administrator.

Although the student may not wish to be specific about the nature of their sickness/absence, the student should adhere to the following procedure:

1. Telephone the Practice Educator or telephone the practice placement and leave a message with the most senior member of staff on duty.
2. Clearly state their name, the University College name, and year of the course
3. Clearly state that they will be taking sick leave or will be absent.
4. Give some estimate of how long they feel they may be off sick or absent.
5. Keep a record of who took their message.
6. Ask the person to make a note of their message in the work diary/ message book.

7. Email the Link Tutor and Placement Administrator

Throughout the period of sick leave, the student should keep their Practice Educator, and the Placement Administrator updated including an indication on how long they may feel they will continue to be on sick leave for.

When the student is ready to return to the Practice Placement, they should adhere to the following procedure:

1. Telephone the Practice Educator or telephone the practice placement to notify when they will be back on duty.
2. Email the Placement Administrator stating when they will be back on duty.
3. Complete a Self-Certification of Absence form for the first 5 calendar days of sick leave and obtain a Doctor's Certificate for the remainder of leave if the sick leave exceeded 6 calendar days.
4. Send the Self-Certification of Absence form (and Doctor's Certificate if required) to courseadmin@aecc.ac.uk
5. In certain instances, e.g. following surgery, injury, an occupational health assessment may be required before returning to practice. The student should check with their Course Leader or AECC University College Human Resources Department if they are unsure if this might be required.

Evidence of the reasons for the absence is required and must be presented with any evidence of exceptional personal circumstances if applicable.

Placement travel and accommodation expenses

NHS commissioned students in receipt of a bursary or self-funding students who have access to the NHS Learning Support Fund may be entitled to have the cost of journeys between their term time residence and the placement site reimbursed. This applies when the cost of travel to the placement site is greater than the normal travel cost from their term time residence to University.

All NHS funded students should have received from the NHS Student Grants Unit a Grant Notification Letter that will detail the amount and type of bursary they receive. If the student is assessed as 'European Fees Only' or Assessed Fees Only' they will not be able to claim travel or accommodation expenses.

Students should also look to see if there is any amount detailed on the Grant Notification Letter as a 'Travel Disregard'. If they do have travel disregard this means that they will be in receipt of a '0.00' award and it is considered that students must pay the amount detailed as the travel disregard from their own resources to cover any placement expenses they may incur. Students may still submit claims but no additional payments can be made to cover placement travel and/or accommodation expenditure until the total of their claims exceeds that of the travel disregard.

A claim form must be completed by the student for each placement then signed and stamped by a placement administrator, before being sent to the NHS Student Grants

Unit for processing. It is the student's responsibility to photocopy the claim form for their records and to send the original to the bursary office. A placement administrator is unable to sign and stamp the form without a personal coversheet attached. This cover must be printed by the student from their Bursary Online Support System account.

For students who are not eligible for a NHS Student Grant bursary, students can apply for the NHS Learning Support Fund.

A claim form must be completed by the student for each placement then signed and stamped by a placement administrator, before being sent to the NHS Learning Support Fund for processing. It is the student's responsibility to photocopy the claim form for their records and to send the original to the grant office.

Students should ensure that all tickets/receipts for public transport, parking and accommodation are kept as evidence in the event of a claim being made. Claim forms and information sheets with full details of how to claim are available from the placement administration office.

Car insurance information

If it is necessary for a student to use their car for official business purposes, other than getting to and from their placement i.e. on a community placement, they must check that their insurance policy covers "official business purposes" and not just "social, domestic or pleasure purposes".

Disclosures and Barring Service (DBS) formerly Criminal Records Bureau

At AECC University College all physiotherapy students have completed a full check for previous convictions prior to commencing their first clinical placement.

Mandatory Training

All pre-registration health students undertake a range of mandatory training annually. This mandatory training consists of online and practical sessions on the following topics:

- Basic Life Support – theory and practical
- Moving and Handling – theory and practical
- Information governance and record-keeping
- Infection Control
- Safeguarding Vulnerable Adults
- Fire Safety
- Safeguarding Children
- Personal Safety and Security Awareness
- Disability Awareness
- Equality and Diversity

- Health and Safety Awareness
- Risk assessment
- NHS values and the constitution

Student Support

The practice educator

Practice Educators are experienced physiotherapists who have been prepared for their role as Practice Educator. For each placement students will be assigned to a named Practice Educator who will supervise the student and negotiate with them the learning opportunities necessary to meet the required outcomes. Normally the Practice Educator supervises the student's work during the time the student spends in the practice setting but other team members are encouraged to support the educator in this supervision. The Practice Educator is responsible for assessing the competence of the student, including consulting with others who have been involved with the student in practice.

A key element of the Practice Educator's role is to provide regular feedback to the student about their progress and to support them in the development of action plans and learning contracts to assist in the achievement of outcomes and identification of learning opportunities. Student progress should be discussed with the student, and the visiting Tutor at the halfway visit.

The Practice Educator is required to complete the student's assessment documentation and discuss it with the student. This enables the mutual validation of the evidence provided by the student to support the acquisition of skills and appropriate level of competence.

The Practice Educator is required to demonstrate through their own practice and teaching the core skills and values expounded in the NHS constitution (2015) <http://www.nhs.uk/choiceintheNHS/Rightsandpledges/NHSConstitution/Pages/Overview.aspx>

Equality Act (2010)

The Equality Act applies to universities and placement providers. AECC University College recognises its responsibilities under the legislation and is committed to working in the best interests of people with a disability and therefore aims to generate a more 'enabling' environment and to create a non-discriminatory culture, for the benefit of all University College students, staff and visitors.

All Staff have a responsibility to ensure that they do not:

- treat a student with disability less favourably than someone else for a reason relating to the student's disability
- indirectly discriminate against a student with a disability by failing to make a

'reasonable adjustment' when a student with a disability is placed, or is likely to be placed, at a 'substantial disadvantage' in comparison with a person who is not disabled

- The legislation identifies that Practice Educators act as facilitators for AECC University College students and hence students are encouraged to discuss any disabilities and strategies with them. The learning contract section of the practice placement assessment form is used to ensure that students have an opportunity to disclose specific needs which may impact on the learning experience and discuss these with their Practice Educator. During induction Practice Educators must ask all students whether they want to disclose a disability or specific learning need. The learning contract statement: **I have disclosed a disability or specific learning need to my educator Yes/No** must be completed, dated and signed by the educator:

If a student discloses a disability, educators must request their permission to give this information to relevant colleagues. Practice Educators who wish to discuss anything to do with a student's disability should contact the placement coordinator as long as the student has given their permission for their disability to be discussed. Should students choose to withhold information about a disability or specific learning need the placement provider has no obligation to make reasonable adjustments and the lack of reasonable adjustment cannot latter be used to gain extenuating circumstances if the student under performs during the placement.

Support for Practice Educators

Practice placement visiting

Visiting tutors from AECC University College will usually visit the students at least once during the placement, usually in the middle week. On some occasions a telephone 'visit' maybe more appropriate, i.e. geographical distance. Practice-based educators and/or students may request additional visits if they have particular concerns. The visits are intended to provide educational support for students and educators working within the practice setting. These visits may incorporate a period of observation of the student's practice skills and provide an opportunity for pastoral support. The visiting staff will facilitate student/ Practice Educator interaction, and promote communication between the practice and academic environment.

The Visiting Tutor

The visiting tutor is a member of AECC University College staff who has a working relationship and role within practice settings, providing support to staff, developing the practice learning environment, and engaging in staff development activity where appropriate. However, the academic staff member is primarily concerned with the student's educational development and the Tutor's knowledge of the content and structure of the physiotherapy course enables them to help students to set their current experience within the context of their theoretical work. It is helpful if discussion involves the Practice Educator as well as the student as this helps to emphasise the link between the academic and practice-based learning contexts.

The visiting tutor ensures that the placement setting is able to provide the relevant experiences for students and that communication mechanisms are in place to explore all issues related to student assessment Placement visits also facilitate monitoring of

how prepared students have been for their placement experiences. Following a placement visit the visiting tutor formally feeds back to the placement co-ordinator who uses the information to inform quality assurance processes (See placement evaluation below). Effective communication between the University College and the Practice Educator is essential if the placement is to be an effective and productive learning experience.

The Placement Co-ordinator and the visiting Tutors are available to support the placement process at all stages, from initial set-up, through the course of the placement and the final assessment. Placement visits are arranged by staff and students; these are aimed at the development of partnership working between the University and placement providers. The visits do not form part of the assessment process for the student.

Placement evaluation

After each placement both students and educators are emailed a link to complete an online placement evaluation. We ask that students and educators complete these honestly, but professionally and constructively to allow our placements to continue to improve.

Within NHS placement settings the Education Liaison Managers will be reminded that feedback is available two weeks after every placement. Both student and educator feedback is reviewed by AECC University College Placement Coordinators to continue to monitor placement experiences.

Placement monitoring is a regular item on the Physiotherapy Course Steering Group agenda and placement quality and issues are regularly discussed. The University College physiotherapy Placement Coordinator may also table any placement quality issues for discussion at the relevant Practice Education Committee.

Practice Educator Development

The School of Health and Rehabilitation Sciences at AECC University College adopts a blended approach of face to face workshops and online resources to achieve CPD support for all Practice Educators.

Educators who have not supported AECC University College students previously can access an introductory workshop which introduces relevant policies and procedures, explores the responsibilities and expectations of educators and students and highlights sources of ongoing support. Workshop attendees receive a certificate which can be shared with their organisation as evidence for inclusion to any internal practice educator registers.

The CSP continues to promote the importance of quality practice education, and has produced and keeps under review guidelines, publications and learning resources for educators which are available via the CSP e-portfolio (www.csp.org.uk) and includes an

online networking space for educators across the UK. Educators are signposted to these resources during visiting tutor visits and educator workshops.

MSc course structure

Strategies to support student learning

Placements can be a challenging time particularly for students. A new environment with the accompanying new stresses means that the strategies for success they have already developed may not now work so well. It is important that students prepare carefully and to try to anticipate where difficulties may be encountered. Their current coping methods or ways of working may be useful in these new situations or new ones need to be considered and developed. To make the most of the learning opportunities available there needs to be discussion and collaboration between the student and Practice Educator/Mentor.

Before Placement

Students will have been encouraged to identify and disclose individual learning needs, strengths and areas for development and are urged to share these with you. They will have also undertaken some preparation for practice sessions and can continue to access support resources via Moodle (student intranet).

We encourage all students to contact you well in advance of starting placement.

Writing

There are several problems that commonly arise with writing on placement. These include speed of writing, making mistakes, having to rewrite or copy up notes, and making writing legible. Spelling and grammar needs to be consistent. Writing whilst listening to what is being said can be a new challenge.

How notes are structured and forms that are used can vary from place to place and so they need to familiarise themselves with the requirements as soon as possible.

Care needs to be taken to write the correct date, and not to transpose numbers (writing 261 instead of 216). The use of appropriate language, terminology, and approved abbreviations is a skill that needs to be acquired.

Strategies that may help:

- Give extra time and a quiet place to write notes

- Give copies of any templates, or notes systems pre placement if possible
- Encourage them to take time to reread and check what has been written
- Suggest a crib sheet for assessments
- Use spell checkers, (could be on phone)
- Electronic notes
- Bullet points may help
- Use of a notebook to make a glossary of medical terms and drugs
- It may be possible to use a digital recorder
- Create a mind map or spider diagram of the important pieces of information first
- Give copy of approved abbreviations for that clinical area
- Write up notes after each patient contact

Reading

Problems commonly associated with reading on placement include slow reading, misreading words or difficulties reading unfamiliar medical words and terminology.

Medical information may be presented on charts or forms which can be difficult to interpret until they are more familiar with them. It can be difficult to pick out relevant information from a large set of medical notes.

Strategies that may help:

- A quiet place and extra time to read
- Use a pen, ruler, or finger to help track where they are on a page
- Read smart: ask; what are you reading and why?
- Start with the most recent part of medical notes
- Jotting down relevant information into their notebook, underline, highlight
- Using notebook to record new words and their definition
- Using the electronic dictionary on computer or phone
- Using a coloured overlay if they have one
- Make handouts on coloured paper (rather than white) if this helps
- Give a blank copy of relevant charts to look at in their own time
- Whiteboards may need layout altering to help

Organisation

Organisation can be very challenging. Not only are the students now going to be working rather than studying, but they are also in a completely new environment; which is very stressful.

Strategies that may help:

- Suggest a pre placement visit
- Signpost them to placement information
- Provide timetables for placement, prior to placement if possible
- Induction – provide as much information before placement as possible
- Encourage use of their notebook or file to record new and relevant information.
- Have a different page or colour for each list, (eg a list of new medical conditions). A highlighter may be useful.
- Encourage them to prepare crib sheets for assessment – and to use them
- Break down the workload into small chunks, then gradually increase
- Prepare for treatment sessions with ideas in their notebook
- What will they do if the patient is the same, better, or worse?
- Draw maps of routes or plans of ward areas
- Give door key codes for them to put into phone or notebook
- Discuss if it is suitable for them to use their phone as an aid on placement

Time management

In a new environment, with new skills and new tasks, it can be easy to lose track of time.

Strategies that may help:

- Use a watch, or have an agreement that they can use their phone, (perhaps have it in a pocket). A vibrate alarm can help keep track of time when doing tasks like assessments.
- Could use phone for reminders
- Suggest they use a page-a-day diary to enter relevant deadlines, appointments, meetings, new patients, and to-do lists. A highlighter may help.
- Look ahead and prepare for the next day, enter what needs doing on calendar/diary, with timings.
- Lists can help
 - Suggest listing everything that needs doing for a task
 - Help them to break down into smaller steps
 - Prioritise the list – ask what is most important? Most urgent?
 - Highlighting in colours can help
 - Putting timings against list or into diary can help

Verbal

Since there is so much new material to remember it is easy to miss some of what is being said and can be hard to remember or understand all the instructions.

Communication by Email can be very useful as students can refer back to the information that has been given.

When having discussions or giving information it may be worth considering alternative ways of communicating, such as having some of it written to be taken away. It can be that it takes time for a student to respond to questions that you are asking. It is not always that they haven't understood the question but that it takes time for them to assimilate the information and work out their response to you. Rather than repeat the question in a different format, which will restart the whole process, it can be better to pause and wait for a response.

Students can feel embarrassed about having to speak out in front of people or find pronouncing new names and medical terms a struggle. It can be helpful to practise these in a quiet place.

Strategies that may help:

- Encourage using a notebook to write down what is being said
- It may be possible for conversations to be recorded
- Break down instructions, use less words
- Check that what has been discussed has been understood – summarise
- Give thinking time before repeating a question
- Only ask one question at a time
- After feedback sessions or discussions give space for some thinking time
- In team meetings or handovers help the student prepare what needs saying

Patient Skills

Carrying out assessments and treatments with patients for the first time can be daunting, and it can be difficult to focus on the task in hand. Learning to talk to patients, asking questions, listening, interpreting what is being said and writing it down within a set time takes a high degree of multi-tasking that requires practise. It is very different working with patients and service users rather than practising on other students.

As a supervisor it can be difficult to step back when a student is hesitant or unsure with patients but students do need time and space to develop their own way of working. It can be useful to discuss with the student how much support is required and how to progress towards more independent working.

Strategies that may help:

- Preparation and planning
- Break down tasks into small chunks
- Using crib sheets
- Using charts, (eg pain charts) to collect information
- Practise, practise, practise
- Use patient goals to help prioritise treatment plans
- Discuss with the student the levels of supervision

Recall and working memory

Memory problems are often more frequently encountered by people working under stress or experiencing new situations. Remembering everyone's name and names of wards can be a big challenge.

Practice Educator/Mentors often say 'I have to keep repeating myself'. This is not so surprising if you consider that a placement is a highly complex, dynamic environment which is new to the student. Following an assessment or intervention it can be difficult for a student to immediately explain what they have done. This information needs to be synthesised to be able to analyse, clinically reason and to plan what needs to be done next. For it to make sense and be 'learnt' the new experience needs to be linked to prior knowledge and learning too.

Strategies that may help:

- Using a notebook
- Making time following patient contact to write notes, think about what they have done and organise their thoughts before being questioned
- It can help to * or highlight key findings and then focus on these for clinical reasoning and planning discussions
- Mnemonics can be helpful to recall key parts of prior knowledge, such as anatomy
- To encourage students to find their own way of working
- Guide the student towards relating theory to practice
- Encourage the student to reflect on their practice and share with you
- Numbering, using fingers, can help sequence and to remember order

5

TOP TIPS FOR PLACEMENT

SUCCESS



PART OF THE TEAM

Support the student to integrate into and contribute to your team. Involve them in team meetings, peer discussions, inservice training programs and case load prioritising.



FEEDBACK

Feedback regularly, formally and informally. You can't be too specific and use the words from the assessment grid. Try a brief-debrief feedback model.



FLEXIBLE

Try and be led by your student and their unique talents and interests. Be open to all sorts of questions, queries and exploring alternative ways of working. Try a weekly student led problem solving session where the student sets the agenda and leads the discussion.



LEAD BY EXAMPLE

Student will copy what and how you do things more clearly than they will follow your verbal instruction, so role model the behaviour you wish to instil.



CRYSTAL CLEAR EXPECTATIONS

Agree placement priorities and ways of working early. Be explicit, no matter how obvious it seems to you. Students are not mind readers, nor are they yet professionals. Reinforce expectations regularly, especially since they may progress throughout the placement. Try using the learning contract to facilitate this conversation and set a timetable for the first two weeks.