University of Essex

Physiotherapy Practice Education Handbook

School of Sport, Rehabilitation and Exercise Sciences MSc

Physiotherapy (Pre-registration)

BSc Physiotherapy

BSc Physiotherapy Degree Apprenticeship

2026-2027



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Introduction

Welcome to the University of Essex Physiotherapy Practice Education Handbook. Practice placements are an integral part of professional education programmes and should be a positive and satisfactory experience for both practice educators and learners. To maintain quality, practice education requires collaboration between the University of Essex and all health and social care providers. Both parties have a responsibility to enhance the student experience through open communication channels.

If you have any queries about any aspect of practice education, please contact: sresplacements@essex.ac.uk.

If you have a **specific** and/or **urgent** matter relating to a **placement currently in progress,** please contact the SRES physiotherapy placement phone to speak to a member of the team on **07785286371**.

Your feedback is important to us, and we aim to resolve any issues of complaint as speedily as possible. If you are a student and wish to raise a complaint, please follow the University of Essex Complaints Procedure.

If you are a Practice Educator and wish to make a formal complaint about any aspect of practice education, it should be addressed to:

Paul Freeman (Head of School)

School of Sport, Rehabilitation and Exercise Sciences

University of Essex

Wivenhoe Park

Colchester

CO4 3SQ

E pfreeman@essex.ac.uk

Introduction to the Physiotherapy programmes

The University of Essex physiotherapy programmes have been designed to fulfil the mission: "**Empowering physiotherapy students to transform lives**". This is built upon an ethos of providing experiences, which allow individual physiotherapy students to thrive by recognising, developing, and leading through an enhanced understanding of self and others.

All stakeholders, including educators, share this vision to work together to foster:

- A supportive culture and environment to empower active learning skills and an appetite for lifelong learning.
- Inspiring, innovative role models for the future physiotherapy profession; open, honest and caring.
- Enquiring minds through research-led learning.

The curriculum design recognises the shift in healthcare policy and delivery in future years, such as the advancement of physiotherapy roles and greater integration of health and social care services. The physiotherapy programmes have been designed around the 4 pillars of practice (Clinical, Research, Education, and Leadership - Chartered Society of Physiotherapy, 2020), and with four central themes which are prevalent throughout all levels of study.

These themes are:

1. Personal Development of self and others – learners explore and develop their understanding of physiotherapy and the broader role of the Physiotherapist in contemporary and evolving practice, before applying, evaluating, and analyzing approaches to developing themselves as professionals and others such as service users and peers. In the final stages of their programmes, learners will be equipped to promote and lead change within the healthcare environment.
2. Professional Craft Skills – the programme recognise change in healthcare delivery and will equip learners to meet the challenges of first-contact and multi-pathology presentation. There will be an explicit shift in the integration of clinical specialties, promoting a blurring of these specialties to recognise the predicted future working approach of a graduate physiotherapist.
3. Propositional Skills – the approach to research will include enabling learners to find and appropriately use best evidence, as well as being encouraged to help promote the use of evidence-based practice and contributing to the evidence-base.
4. Preparation for Practice – The physiotherapy placements and a module at the completion of the learners' period of study ensures a University of Essex graduate is fully-prepared to meet

the challenges of practice. Including inter-professional working, service-improvement and "being comfortable being uncomfortable".

Introduction to Practice-Based Learning

Practice-based learning forms an indispensable part of the physiotherapy learning process. Learning gained in practice settings is vital to learners' educational and professional development. Experience gained enables the acquisition of new knowledge and skills as well as the application, consolidation, and reflection upon theoretically led learning. Therefore, practice education aims to offer learners opportunities to develop clinical and transferable skills across a range of health and social care environments, in service user-facing and non-service user-facing settings, that align with the 4 pillars of practice (CSP 2020), as they develop individual professional identities. The Health and Care Professions Council Standards of Education and Training (HCPC 2017) state that within practice, learning and supervision must be designed to encourage safe and effective practice, independent learning, and professional conduct.

Overview of practice-based learning within the MSc (Pre-registration), BSc (Hons) Physiotherapy and BSc

Physiotherapy Degree Apprenticeship programmes

A variety of health and social care organisations are working in partnership with the University of Essex to provide opportunities for practice-based learning, including the NHS, charitable organisations, and the independent sector. Representatives of practice placement providers have been instrumental in developing our programmes and play a central role in the ongoing monitoring and review of our curriculum.

Practice based learning takes place in the form of practice placements which provide learners opportunities to develop, apply and reflect upon their personal and professional development. Final placements aim to consolidate practice and prepare learners for transition into independent autonomous practitioner.

Placement activity is assessed by practice educators at academic levels five and six. **Both BSc and MSc students** complete two level 5 and three level 6 placements. **BSc Degree Apprentices** complete 2 level 5 and 2 level 6 placements. All placement grades are pass/fail.

The time allocated to practice education is approximately 1000 hours. For BSc and MSc students this is split into 6-week placement blocks. For Apprentices, 825 hours are accrued during practice placements and the remaining 175 hours from employed activities/tasks. (The 175 hours accrued through employed work activities is evidenced and logged through the production of a skills journal.)

Learners are expected to undertake a **minimum** of 35 hours of practice-based learning per week

(excluding lunch breaks), and a cumulative record of completed hours is maintained by the learner in their ePAD. The ePAD is a cloud-based platform that hosts all the learner's placement paperwork, including assessment (for more information on this, please see 'practice educator development' in this handbook. This record is monitored by the university to ensure the requirement is met.

In physiotherapy practice, it is common for caseloads within services to be mixed. Placements are, therefore, not referred to by a 'specialism'. Instead, recognising the broad and individualistic experience of placement, they are referred to as placements 1, 2, 3, 4, and 5. These placement opportunities will align with one or more of the 4 pillars of practice, and thus may focus on leadership, research, or education, as well as the more standard clinical experience.

Apprenticeship placements only: Apprentices should expect to complete placements in settings outside of their employing teams and to experience an acute ward setting, a clinic/outpatient setting, a community setting, and a project-focused placement setting.

Participation in placements begins in year 2 and proceeds as follows:

- Placement 1 is 15 credits and assessed at level 5. Occurs in year 2
- Placement 2 is 30 credits and assessed at level 5. Occurs in year 3
- Placement 3 is 15 credits and assessed at level 6. Occurs in your 3
- Placement 4 is 30 credits and assessed at level 6. Occurs in year 4

For the two 30-credit placements, the practice educator's assessment is supplemented by submission of a summative piece of academic work. Level 5 placements are 187.5 hours long (5 weeks) and level 6 placements are 225 hours long (6 weeks). Within the programme timetable, placements are allocated at a time frame of at least 7 weeks in which the placement hours must be completed. The exact placement dates are for agreement between the placement provider, university practice placement team, and apprentices' employer/workplace mentor. Ideally, placements will be completed over continuous weeks.

For more information on specific themes and module content, please see the programme information box on our Open Essex webpage.

Timetable of placement dates*

Placement Dates	Placement	Level	No. of Weeks	Cohort
02/11/26 – 13/12/26	**3**	**6**	**6**	BSc
02/11/26 – 13/12/26	**3**	**6**	**6**	MSc
11/01/27 – 21/02/27	**1**	**5**	**6**	BSc
22/02/27 – 04/04/27	**4**	**6**	**6**	BSc
26/04/27 - 06/06/27	**5**	**6**	**6**	BSc
26/04/27 - 06/06/27	**2**	**5**	**6**	BSc
14/06/27 – 25/07/27	**1**	**5**	**6**	MSc
14/06/27 – 25/07/27	**4**	**6**	**6**	MSc
02/08/27 – 12/09/27	**5**	**6**	**6**	MSc
30/08/27 – 10/10/27	**2**	**5**	**6**	MSc

Physiotherapy Degree Apprenticeship:

Year 2 - Placement 1: 187.5 hours between 31/05/27 – 06/07/27. 5-week placement at level 5.

Year 3 - Placement 2: 225 hours between 12/10/26 – 06/12/26. 6-week placement at level 5.

Year 3 - Placement 3: 187.5 hours between 17/05/27 – 18/07/27. 5-week placement at level 6.

Year 4 – Placement 4: 225 hours between 12/10/26 – 06/12/26. 6-week placement at Level 6.

*It should be noted that whilst placement blocks are planned to occur at pre-determined points within the academic year, this is entirely dependent on capacity with partner providers. There may be occasions

where students are expected to complete a placement outside of this planned block, and possibly outside of university term time.

Practical Issues in Practice-Based Education

Professional Liability Insurance

Legally, learners are considered members of staff at a placement providers' organisation. This means they must be covered by the placement provider's insurances(s).

All University of Essex physiotherapy learners are encouraged to register as a student or Apprentice members of the Chartered Society of Physiotherapy. In doing so, they benefit from the additional professional liability insurance cover that this provides. Not all learners will choose to become CSP members.

A learner's named practice educator must be a UK-registered healthcare professional for the insurance cover to be valid. The Practice Educator must ensure adequate supervision is in place for the activities delegated to their learner. 'Supervision' does not necessarily mean the learner must always be within eyeshot of their educator. The HCPC offers guidance about effective supervision.

A service user's consent to be assessed and treated by a learning physiotherapist must be documented at every interaction.

Sourcing and Allocation of Placements

Placements are sourced through an ongoing and regular process of negotiation between the University and placement providers across the East of England. All offers are managed within a database system by the placement administration team. All placements are quality monitored at the outset of partnership, and then as required, if anything changes.

Placements are allocated to learners by the physiotherapy practice education team. Providers share as much information as possible to support the process, via a placement profile (completed and shared via the university placement administration system 'PEMS'). Each learner is allocated a range of placement experiences across the 4 pillars of practice, enabling them to meet the requirements of the programme and apply for HCPC registration. During allocation, learners specific personal and learning needs are considered (e.g. relating to childcare or students with a disability who may require reasonable adjustments) in line with the student placement agreement. Learners are required to travel up to 1.5 hours each way to attend a placement.

Some placement partners operate a seven-day working system. Learners may therefore be required to work Saturdays or Sundays instead of weekdays. Placement providers are asked to alert the university at the time of making an offer if this is the case. If a student is required to work working hours that are problematic, they should contact the practice education lead on **07785286371** to discuss.

We aim to allocate and notify placement providers of allocated student names twelve weeks prior to the placement start date. Students can expect to be notified of their placement location at least six weeks prior to the placement start date. However, due to the nature of sourcing placements, these times may differ on occasion e.g. if a placement is cancelled at short notice and a replacement is required.

Refusal to attend an appropriately allocated placement by a student may result in the placement being failed, and a possible referral for Fitness to Practise. Students will then re-take the refused placement at another time.



Resources

There is a wide range of resources available for maximising a learner's experience and learning in the practice placement environment. These resources are most effectively deployed when used to provide an opportunity to meet the assessment criteria and learning aims identified in the learning agreement at the start of the placement (see below). Practice educators and learners should consider what can be gained, and how this relates to the learning aims, 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 service users is an important learning experience, but not the only valuable one. Working face-to-face with service users in person or via telephone, video call, and social media gives learners the opportunity to apply their developing clinical knowledge and skills, observe the outcomes of their interactions and interventions and receive feedback about their practice. While it is valuable for a learner's experience to be broadened by seeing service users with different conditions and problems, it is also useful for them to see service users with the same or similar problems. This reinforces learning and emphasise the need to modify their approaches to meet individual needs.

The opportunity to discuss, observe, and work with a variety of other practice-based staff, including those from other professions, is also very useful. These experiences emphasise the importance of a holistic approach to management, allowing learners to experience involvement with the multidisciplinary team and give different perspectives on situations and people's problems. Interactions with other practice-based staff also help learners understand the organisation and management structures of physiotherapy departments and healthcare providers. It also allows learners to develop their awareness of the wider team and make appropriate referrals.

Non-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 care.

Placement experiences often stimulate students' interests and desire to explore a subject further. Thus, it is helpful if learners have access to books, journals, and other facilities on-site such as department protocols and treatment regimes**.** Learners will also have access to a wide range of online University learning resources. Placements that focus more on the education, research or leadership pillars of practice will also help students to understand the wider scope of physiotherapy and service provision and develop additional transferable skills relevant to their future employability.

Practice educators and supervisors themselves are an important learning resource. An essential practice educator role is to help learner make sense of their placement by planning and organising

a timetable and facilitating access to learning opportunities and personal experiences. The agreement of learning aims in the learning agreement helps 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.

Placement planning and organisation

Before a placement commences, learners should have access to the following information via the University placement administration system: PEMS (This information must 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.
- Any risk assessment or IT or access paperwork for completion pre-placement.

On the first day of placement, learners will be inducted to the placement, team, and organisation. They will be provided with 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, lunchtime, start and finish times, etc.
- How to access departmental policies and procedures; Health and Safety and Manual Handling policies, bullying and harassment, complaint procedures etc.
- Departmental staffing structure.

A record of placement induction must be made on the learners ePAD.

Students need real practice experience rather than academic and theoretical input. Thus, the focus of placement experience should be on performing the role of a physiotherapist within the context of the placement setting. This enables learners to appreciate and experience how the broad-ranging theory learned in university is practically applied in professional physiotherapy practice. Whilst it is appreciated that there may be some observation or coaching of tasks, the expectation is that learners will be actively practising regularly throughout their placement. If you feel there are issues with a student's underlying theoretical understanding, please contact the placement phone asap so this can be discussed further. If you feel there is an issue with the theoretical knowledge of **multiple** students, please feed this back to us, so we can explore the reasons why.

It is important educators and learners agree on placement aims within the first week of the placement. The learning agreement is designed to achieve this and provide a record against which aims can be compared (the learning agreement is found in the learner's ePAD in the 'Learning Agreement' tab). Learners should attend placement with a draft of their learning aims. Learners may require some support in refining their aims but the educator's primary role in aim setting is the identification of learning experiences that can be accessed within the context of the placement environment to achieve the aim. Not to adjust aims to align with previous learning experiences.

Do not hesitate to contact the practice education lead if any guidance is needed. This can be done via the SRES placement phone on **07785286371**.



When planning the running of the placement it should be remembered that, because learners work more slowly than experienced clinicians, they usually cope with about half a ‘normal’ workload. If there are two learners on the placement, this means that the practice educator may be completely free to supervise, deal with problems and queries that arise, and be able to assist in the more complex patient management procedures. If there is only one learner 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 learner 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 learners, this may not be helpful to them. Their knowledge, experience, and clinical reasoning abilities are different from 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 of each individual learner. In this way, the learning process is likely to be more productive for learners and less frustrating for the Practice Educator.

Some observations of the Practice Educator may be useful, but this should be kept to a minimum because learners learn more by being actively involved in practice or contributing to that of others. While observation can be interesting, learners frequently do not learn what their Practice Educator expects. Such lack of insight reflects their lack of prior experience and the best way to improve this is to facilitate their experience working with patients themselves.

Even when working actively with service users, learners may not learn what they and their Practice Educator anticipate. This problem can be largely avoided if the Practice Educator and learner identify in advance what to focus on during a learning experience.

Direction that could be given to students could include identifying:

- What the Practice Educator wants the learner to learn and how it relates to placement objectives.
- What the students want 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 learner should report back to the Practice Educator, and about what.
- How to use the knowledge and skills they have learned in future practice.

Not only does structuring learners' learning give them direction, but 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, more productive and helps to provide clear insight into learner's learning.

One educator supporting one student is a traditional approach to facilitating learning on a placement. Research has shown that no one placement model is superior to another and peer learning and support during placement has been shown to be particularly valuable. We therefore strongly encourage practice educators to support more than one student and a time, and opportunities to optimise peer discussion, problem-solving, and working embedded into their weekly activities.

It is not expected learners should have dedicated 'CPD' time in their weekly timetable for academic work, academic assessment, or preparation of end-of-placement presentations.

Please contact the practice placement lead on **07785286371** if you wish to discuss teaching and learning strategies to optimise student collaborative learning during placement.

Models of supervision

The HCPC explain clinical supervision to be an evaluative relationship that "…. extends over time and has the simultaneous purposes of enhancing the professional functioning of the more junior person and monitoring the quality of the professional services." (HCPC 2020: 8)

Practice educators are responsible for ensuring adequate supervision is in place for learners to undertake the tasks delegated to them, but they do not have to be the only source of supervision.

Supervision can be provided by anyone who can provide learner feedback upon progress toward learning aims and assist students in articulating their learning needs. If the focus of a supervision session is clinical, rather than professional or organisational development, supervision should be with a HCPC registered physiotherapist. If the focus of a supervision session is non-clinical, it may be more appropriate for supervision to be offered by MDT colleagues, service leaders, student peers or service users. Band 5 physiotherapists have a particularly valuable role in a team approach to supervision which helps prepare them for their future role as a practice educator.

Supervision can be undertaken in many ways: immediate observation of practice, remotely via video call, one to one, or in groups. A mixture of these approaches is recommended.

The University of Essex proactively supports educators to think critically about the models of supervision that best suits their unique working environments and personal preferences. Please contact the practice placement lead on **07785286371** if you wish to discuss this further.

Feedback

Giving effective feedback to students is important, but not always straightforward. Although criticism may be necessary, this should be tempered by consideration of good aspects of performance and always be directly related to the assessment criteria. Learners 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 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 learners acted as they did, the knowledge learners 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 learner(s) and undertake a formal feedback session halfway through a placement and again at the end. Informal feedback sessions should occur throughout the placement, depending upon the student's and educator's needs. **It is strongly encouraged to record any feedback given to students on their ePAD. This includes verbal warnings, etc. These entries may be useful throughout the placement to support your student(s) and yourself if you need support from the University.**

Assessment of Practice Placement Education

Throughout placements, student performance is continually monitored and assessed. All formative and summative assessment processes are logged and 'submitted' on the learner's ePAD, using the CSP's Common Placement Assessment Form (CPAF) assessment criteria.

Practice educators award a summative numerical grade for a learning outcome across 10 domains of practice using CPAF marking criteria and the CPAF Domain Marking Tool available in the learner's ePAD. These marks are recorded on the Final Assessment Summary Form and 'submitted' in the learner's ePAD. Placement activity is assessed at level 5 or level 6, depending on where students are in their placement journey: Placements 1 and 2 are assessed at level 5, 3-5 at level 6.

If, at the final assessment, students are marked at less than 40% (fail) in any **one** domain, they will automatically fail the placement.

If a learner behaves unprofessionally at any point during a placement, they will receive either:

1. A written warning against the relevant outcome in the Professional Behaviours and Responsibilities section of CPAF from their educator. Three written warnings against the

learning outcome will result in a 'fail'.

2. Should the behaviour warrant it e.g. compromise of patient safety or security, an automatic failure of the relevant learning outcome in Professional Behaviours and Responsibilities section without warning.

Failure against any of the outcomes in the Professional Behaviours and Responsibilities section at the end of placement will result in an automatic failure of the whole placement. It overrides all other sections of CPAF. All warnings must be documented in the learner's ePAD as soon as possible after the event. If a student is failing one or more aspects of the Professional Behaviours and
Responsibilities at **any time, please contact us on the placement phone 07785286371 to discuss your concerns.**

It is the learner's responsibility to ensure ALL elements of the assessment are completed and submitted on their ePAD. Including: accurate hours and absence records, learning agreements, inductions, and assessment summary forms with % marks NOT grades (e.g., 2:1) where indicated. Failure to complete and submit forms on the ePAD by the end of placement **will be treated as a failure of the placement.**

Please note that completed ePAD forms will contain practice educator's names, signatures, and dates. These forms will be used by the learner in their assessed academic work.

Apprenticeship Placements:

All placements are pass / fail. For the two 30-credit practice placement modules apprentices complete, an accompanying piece of academic work directly related to their placement experiences and learning is assessed by the academic team. This constitutes 100% of the module mark but the CPAF element must still be passed.



The Learning Agreement

The learning agreement is incorporated within the learner's ePAD. Learners should arrive at placement with a draft of their learning aims formulated for discussion. Within the first week of placement, learners and their practice educator(s) will agree on learning aims and finalise the learning agreement in the ePAD. The learning agreement is primarily the responsibility of the learner to complete and should result in them progressing personally and professionally throughout their placement. The learner should reflect on their individual achievements, although they may also request guidance and input from their practice educator. The learner and practice educator should discuss learning needs and identify individual goals to achieve on the placement within the resources available.

The learning agreement should be reviewed half-way through and at the end of placement. It is a 'living' document and may be changed throughout the placement, as appropriate. During discussion the learner and the practice educator should consider the following:

- Emphasise what the learner could learn, available opportunities and what the educator feels this student needs to learn or develop.
- What are the clinical learning outcomes for the placement location?
- Have any unusual or unexpected situations arisen which might affect learner learning?
- What is the educator's own preferred teaching style? How well will it suit a relationship with the student?
- What did the educator learn from previous placement experiences 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 halfway feedback/formative marks

Learners must reflect upon their development throughout placements and receive feedback on specific strengths and limitations in their practice by the practice educator as often as possible. This will likely take place organically throughout the placement, but especially at the halfway and end points of the placement. Learners should be assessed in the middle of their placement and allowed to evaluate their own skills in consultation with their practice educator. The halfway assessment enables students to identify their strengths and weaknesses and gives them time to improve their skills before the end of placement assessment. We encourage use of feedforward or

goal setting with detailed comments or examples, to enable clear expectations. A halfway grade boundary for each learning domain should be awarded and recorded in the learner's ePAD.

Final feedback/summative marks

On completion of the placement, learners should again be encouraged to evaluate their own skills in consultation with their practice educator. We encourage the use detailed comments or examples to highlight reasoning for each boundary chosen within a domain and **a % grade** for each learning domain awarded and recorded in the learner's ePAD. (We recommend the use of the CPAF Marking Domain Tool to assist this process). Please also consider using feedforward here for the student to use on their next placement or in professional practice.

Ongoing assessment

It is expected learners will be continuously assessed throughout a placement, not just when formal halfway and final feedback marks are given. Each time the learner and educator work together, the educator should provide learning opportunities that allow the learner to fully participate in practice. In this way, learners gain practical experiences that they can reflect upon and learn from. If learning opportunities are provided, learners will become proficient in clinical reasoning, developing skills and professional behaviours.

Mastery of these developing skills and behaviours is measured through CPAF assessment criteria. It is imperative that, where a learner is **at risk** of not achieving the required standard as described in any part of the assessment criteria, the danger of failure process must be initiated (see below).

All practice placements **must** be passed for successful completion of the BSc, MSc, and BSc Degree Apprenticeship in Physiotherapy. However, learners can retake a practice placement in the case of failure at the first attempt. This is only allowed on two occasions. Learners that fail more than two placements on a first attempt will normally be required to withdraw from their programme.

All students are required to comply with the University of Essex regulations regarding conduct and professional suitability. Failure to meet these responsibilities can lead to the Breach of Professional Conduct, Fitness to Practice, and Termination of Training Procedure being invoked (University of Essex Work-based Learning Policy 7.8).

Learners not attaining the required level

If **at any stage** of the placement, there are **any** concerns about a learner's performance, **please immediately telephone 07785286371** and speak to the practice placement lead. **Do not wait for the half-way visit.**

The University of Essex uses a specific process for addressing performance concerns which must be adhered to. If a practice educator feels at any stage of a placement there are any concerns, they must immediately contact the placement coordinator; on **07785286371**, who will assist them with this process. **Please do not contact any other university lecturer, use any other contact number, or wait for the half-way visit before raising your concerns.**

It is likely that, through continuous assessment, a practice educator will identify the risk of failure well before the placement mid-way point. The earlier the process is initiated, the more likely it is that conditions can be addressed, and actions agreed that can support the student's progress. It is theoretically possible for the risk of failure process to be initiated right up to the final day of placement. However, this is only likely to happen in rare, exceptional circumstances.

The University of Essex process necessitates that a practice educator may not be able to fail a learner unless the following in danger of failure process has been followed. However, following the process does not prevent a student from passing the placement. The process should be considered as a tool for supporting those learners who are struggling to maximise their achievements. **Note the process should be commenced if a learner is AT RISK of not meeting the minimum assessment criteria**
BEFORE they are not meeting it.



University of Essex in Danger of Failure Process

1. A practice educator feels that a learner's performance is not of a satisfactory standard, or the student is at risk of not achieving the satisfactory standard.

2. The practice educator immediately contacts the University of Essex placement coordinator on **07785286371** and their concerns are discussed.

3. An in danger of failure meeting time is agreed. This meeting will take place within 48 hours of the practice educator raising concerns and will involve a lecturer from the University of Essex (likely the learner's Academic Advisor), the practice educator, and the student.

4. Before the meeting the practice educator will create a list of up to five indicators of the learner's poor performance; these must be aligned with the relevant placement assessment criteria.

5. Before the meeting, The University of Essex practice placement lead (or visiting tutor, if the danger of failure meeting coincides with the halfway placement visit) will discuss with the learner the issues raised and danger of failure process. This will enable the learner to prepare a draft action plan to assist them in improving their performance to the required level.

   At the in danger of failure meeting a lecturer from the University of Essex will discuss the learner's poor level of achievement with them and the practice educator, individually. The learner, practice educator, and the lecturer will then discuss as a group to agree on aims for an action plan to assist the learner in improving their performance to the required level. They must then complete in danger of failure form on the learner's ePAD. If any assistance/advice is needed ring **07785286371**

6. A follow up In danger of failure review meeting must be arranged for one week after the initial in danger of failure meeting.

   At the review meeting, the lecturer will discuss the learner's level of achievement both with the learner and with the practice educator, individually. The learner, practice educator and the lecturer will then discuss, as a group, the progress and agree to what extent the aims of the action plan have been met. The in danger of failure review form must be completed on the learner's ePAD. If the learner is now achieving the required pass level the learner can be signed off from the in danger of failure process.

   If the learner has made improvement in some areas but is still in a danger of failure, the aims to be met by the next review must be agreed and a further review date set for the following week.

If it is evident that the learner's level of performance is still not at the acceptable level, to achieve a pass, a decision can be made that the learner has now failed the placement. The placement assessment documentation must be completed to indicate failure of the placement. The learner should finish any necessary documentation and return any ID badges or access cards provided on arrival and this is deemed the last day of this placement.

If any assistance/advice is needed ring **07785286371**

7. If a further review meeting was agreed, stage 6 is repeated.

Examples of when educators should consider initiating the process:

- The learner has been working towards the assessment criteria, given sufficient opportunity to learn and develop, but has made little or no progress in the quality of their performance.
- The learner has been provided with sources of verbal and/or written feedback whilst working towards an assessment criterion but makes little attempt to act upon this feedback.
- The learner has been offered opportunities to reflect on their own performance, with respect to selected assessment criteria, to identify areas for development but demonstrates little or no insight into how they might enhance their own performance.



Fitness to Practise

In some cases, an educator may have significant concerns about a learner's conduct, behaviour, or performance that question their fitness to practise. Concerns about 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 practice.
- actions that are prejudicial to the development or standing of professional practice.

If you have a significant concern about a student's Fitness to Practise then please contact the practice placement lead who will **advise on the appropriate action for any given situation.**

Failure of a practice placement

In the event of failure of a practice placement, arrangements for the learner to repeat the practice at a suitable time and in an appropriate location will be made. Whenever possible, the next scheduled placement will be the repeat placement. If a learner fails a placement on reassessment or fails two placements at the first attempt, they will be required to leave the programme, unless there are extenuating circumstances accepted as valid by the Board of Examiners. If a learner withdraws from a placement without university sanction, it will be deemed a failure, and a repeat placement will be required.

Consistency of placement assessment

The University of Essex uses a standardised assessment process, paperwork, and assessment criteria for all placements.

Practice educators who complete an induction workshop receive specific guidance about how to operationalise the assessment criteria. Practice educators are advised to pay close attention to the wording of their feedback and provide specific examples of the learner's practice to justify their judgements whenever offering written or verbal feedback. Practice educators are advised to base their judgements of learner's practice upon the preceding 3-4 days activity and to liaise with colleagues who have worked with the learner to formulate these judgments. We would also encourage the use of feedforward at both stages of assessment regardless of their level of achievement or placement number. This is useful for professional development even if they are

graduating soon. This can be documented either in each learning domain or in section 11 as appropriate.

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, a member of the academic team reviews the marks and feedback recorded in learner's ePADs for consistency between written feedback and awarded % scores.

Deferring and withdrawal from a placement

Placements cannot be deferred except in exceptional and unavoidable circumstances, such as unexpected illness, injury, or exacerbation of pre-existing conditions. In such circumstances, the issue must be discussed with the practice education lead on the placement phone, the student should self-withdraw, and an application for extenuating circumstances made. Please note that, in such circumstances, evidence to support the application will be required, and an assessment from the University's Occupational Health Department may be required before any deferral being approved.

Learners with pre-existing physical and mental health issues are expected to develop and adopt clear strategies to maintain a high standard of professional effectiveness and a safe working environment in accordance with HCPC 2023 revised Standards of Proficiency for physiotherapists. Learners are expected to engage in occupational health and Student Wellbeing and Inclusivity Services (SWIS) processes to support them with developing clear strategies as necessary.

Learners who fail to follow the above process will be perceived as not understanding the importance of pro-actively maintaining their mental and physical health and well-being, to meet fitness to practise
standards, and fulfilling their duty of care. This will result in a fitness to practise referral in accordance with HCPC 2023 revised Standards of Proficiency, and possibly an automatic failure of the professional behaviours and responsibilities section of the CPAF.

If you have any queries, problems, or would like any further information please do not hesitate to contact the practice education lead by telephone **07785286371**.

Student tasks on placement & the Transitional Portfolio

Throughout their placements, learners are expected to complete tasks to demonstrate their learning and development. These are compiled on the learner's ePAD. The first of these tasks is a skills journal, which is to be signed off by clinicians when **skills have been demonstrated safely and appropriately. Note, the skills journal is not a log of competency**. Signatures are

confirmation that a learner has been observed to complete the skill safely and appropriately, not that they are proficient at it. The log can be signed by non-physiotherapy staff if the practice educator is satisfied that the staff member is suitably competent.

Learners are also expected to demonstrate clinical reasoning skills, and this is to be evidenced by the completion of clinical reasoning forms (CRF) across their placements. Learners must complete at least three CRFs from different areas of practice. The emphasis of the CRFs is on the development of the learner's clinical reasoning skills and subsequent reflection.

Following each placement, learners are usually required to participate in a reflective post-placement workshop and produce a reflective appraisal of their placement experience. This reflection can be done on placement, with templates available on the ePAD for support.

All pre-registration programme learners are required to submit an electronic portfolio of their Physiotherapy knowledge, skills, and behaviours, which demonstrates their development over the course of the curriculum. Submission requirements for e-portfolio content can be found in related module guides and assessment briefs. Electronic portfolios can include a range of documents that are completed over the course of placements to evidence their learning and development.

Student Responsibilities and Rights

Learners have a right to a safe learning environment and to be treated in accordance with any applicable legislation. Placement providers must ensure the health and safety of learners on placement and the University will seek reassurance of compliance with health and safety standards in all placement areas. Learners 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).

Learners have a right to be treated fairly and consistently, and with dignity and respect, wherever they study or undertake placements. Placements should also be free from undue stress, anxiety, fear, 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 can be found here. Learners should contact the practice education lead on **07785286371** if they feel they are being treated unfairly.

Learners have a responsibility to comply with the Code of Members' Professional Values and Behaviour (CSP 2019) 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 2023).

Within the first week of each placement, a learning agreement must be negotiated between the learner and the practice educator, which will consider the learner's needs within the parameters of the placement.

Informed consent must be gained for any intervention. All students must read Consent and Physiotherapy Practice PDO78 (CSP 2022)

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 the CSP's website: Quality Assurance Standards for Physiotherapy (2013): Code of Member's Professional Values and Behaviour (2019) and HCPC Standards of Proficiency (2023). Should a learner, at any time, have concerns they must discuss this with their educator or the service manager in the first instance. Learners must also inform the University of these concerns; either by discussing with your visiting lecturer or the practice education lead on **07785286371**. The lecturer will listen to your concerns and may involve other members of the team to establish further information. If appropriate, you may be removed from the placement. A representative from the University will take your concerns forward with the relevant authorities.

Out of hours support

If a problem arises whilst on placement and you require support out of hours, learners can contact the Student Wellbeing Support Line: open 24 hours a day, including over weekends and bank holidays. The number is 0800 028 3766.

If living in university accommodation, in addition to the Student Wellbeing Support Line, the usual 'out of hours' support services are provided by the Residents' Support Network (numbers posted in the kitchen of each accommodation) and the Patrol Staff who are always on duty.

If living on campus learners should contact the Patrol Staff at the Information Centre in the first instance. The number is 01206 872125. The Patrol Staff can, if necessary, contact the on-call Area Coordinator for the Residents' Support Network who will assist or contact Student Support management if required.

For further information, take a look at the following services and resources here.

If your request is not urgent, a message can be left for the placement coordinator on **07785286371,** who will return your call at the earliest time possible the following day.

Clinical Uniform and Appearance

Learners must wear the appropriate uniform while on placement as provided by the university (unless you purchase extra) and in line with local uniform policy, with suitable footwear. Learners must adhere to the 'Professional Clinical Appearance Code of Practice'. This includes guidance on appropriate footwear, dress, make up, nails, and jewellery. Any specific requests for reasonable adjustments will be considered individually, upon discussion with the SRES Placement Team. Uniform should not be worn to travel to and from placement. Learners should always wear a name badge unless this poses a risk to them or the patient and identify themselves as a physiotherapy student to service users and colleagues.

The School of Sport, Rehabilitation, and Exercise Sciences (SRES) will supply students with one pack of uniform for the duration of their studies. The pack contains 2 pairs of trousers, 2 tunics and 2 polo shirts, which, depending on the course being studied, are fitted for at the beginning of their course. If students require more uniforms, they can purchase them via the uniform supplier for the University. Please see ordering details on Pre Reg-Physiotherapy Moodle Page.



Items ordered are non-refundable unless there is a fault with them. For uniforms, queries please contact sres@essex.ac.uk.

Attendance

Precise hours of attendance will be agreed between the learner and the practice educator. It is anticipated learners work at least a **35-hour** week (excluding breaks). A practice hours log is kept by each learner on their ePAD so that the total clinical hours worked can be carefully monitored. The number of hours worked, and any absences must be verified by the practice educator in the learner's ePAD. If a learner is absent from any specific placement for more than 35 hours this may result in the placement being terminated by the University and the learner re-taking the placement as a first attempt later. This is so that educators have the necessary time to assess learners accurately and fairly. Lunch breaks must not be included in the practice hours.

Procedure in case of absence from placement

Learners must not be absent from placement for any reason* without having obtained authority for their absence in advance from the University of Essex practice education lead. Learners will only be authorised to take time off from placement in exceptional circumstances, for example, in an emergency. The only exception to this is illness.

If a learner is going to be absent from their placement due to ill health or an emergency, they **must**:

- Call the SRES physiotherapy placement phone on **07785286371** to inform the team of the situation by 0800 (where possible). If learners are unable to speak to a member of the team, please leave a message, detailing your name, contact number, and nature of your absence.
- Inform the placement before the start of the working day, following local absence reporting procedures and speak to their practice educator, explain their absence and to suggest when they are likely to return to work.
- Record the absence on their 'MyEssex' account the same day.

*For Essex Sport Scholars, please seek advice from the SRES placements team if you have clashes between placement and your sporting commitments.

After placement, reported absences are usually cross-referenced, and any discrepancies are investigated and managed according to university policy and procedures. **Failure to follow the absence reporting procedure may result in referral to the Fitness to Practise process.**

Placement travel and accommodation expenses

Learners are required to meet any additional costs of placements and should plan for this before the commencement of the programme. These costs may include travel (fuel, additional car insurance, public transport costs, car hire etc), overnight accommodation, and additional laundry requirements. Some non-apprentice learners may be eligible to access the NHS Learning Support Fund, which will provide them with a non-means tested annual training grant, and reimbursement of excess travel or accommodation costs incurred due to undertaking practical training on a placement. This applies when learners require dual accommodation to attend placement, and when the cost of travel to the placement site is greater than the normal travel cost from their term-time residence to the university.

A claim form must be completed by the learner via an NHS LSF account online. Learners should retain all tickets/receipts for public transport, parking, and accommodation as evidence in the event of a claim being made. It is the learner's responsibility to complete and submit a claim and retain a copy if required for their records. All questions and queries related to claims should be directed to srespracticeplacements@essex.ac.uk.

Apprentices may be able to claim any travel and accommodation expenses incurred via their employer. This should be investigated with their employer directly.

We expect learners to commute daily within a 90-minute radius (by car) of the University Colchester campus and consider local accommodation if travel times are greater. This is the learner's choice and responsibility to decide their preferred approach.

Car insurance information

If it is necessary for a learner 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)

At the University of Essex, all physiotherapy students have completed a full check for previous convictions prior to commencing their first clinical placement. This will be revisited in the event of any changes throughout their training.

Occupational Health Clearance

Students who have applied to study health programmes are required to obtain Occupational Health (OH) clearance. This in two parts: part one – pre-course clearance and part two - placement clearance. OH clearance is necessary to ensure that you are physically and mentally fit

for all aspects of the course, and to protect the public who may be affected by your placement activities

Mandatory Training

All pre-registration health learners 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 records
- Infection Prevention and Control
- Safeguarding Vulnerable Adults
- Fire Safety
- Safeguarding Children
- Conflict Resolution
- Disability Awareness
- Equality, diversity, and human rights
- Health, safety, and welfare
- Risk assessment
- NHS values and the constitution
- PREVENT – first course
- Oliver McGowan course

These sessions are compliant with the Core Skills Training Framework underwritten by Skills for Health. **Failure to complete Fit to Place requirements, e.g., DBS, Occupational Health, and mandatory training, may result in the postponement of a placement until completed, and a possible referral for Fitness to Practise.**

Student Support

The practice educator

Practice educators are therapists who have been prepared for their role as facilitators of practice-based learning. For each placement, learners will be assigned a named practice educator who will provide supervision and negotiate the learning opportunities necessary to meet the required learning domains. Normally the practice educator supervises the learner's work during the time the learner 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 learner's competence, 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 learners about their progress against CPAF domains and the learning agreement. It is also to support them in the development of action plans and identification of learning opportunities. Learner's progress should be discussed with them regularly, including with the visiting lecturer, when a halfway visit is undertaken.

The practice educator is required to complete the learner's assessment documentation and discuss it with them. This enables the mutual validation of the evidence provided by the learner to support the acquisition of skills and an appropriate level of competence.

The practice educator is required to demonstrate through their practice and teaching the core skills and values illustrated in the NHS constitution (2023).

Equality Act (2010)

The Equality Act applies to universities and placement providers. The University of Essex recognises its responsibilities under the legislation and is committed to working in the best interests of people with a disability, therefore, aiming to generate a more 'enabling' environment and to create a nondiscriminatory culture, for the benefit of all university students, staff and visitors. Learners are encouraged to disclose to the University of Essex Disability Team in Student Support who have responsibility for assessing evidence and notifying those people who need to know once the confidentiality contract has been signed.

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

- treat a student with a 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 University of Essex learners and hence learners are encouraged to discuss any disabilities and strategies with them. The learning agreement in the learner's ePAD is used to ensure an opportunity to disclose specific needs that may impact their learning experience and discuss these with their practice educator. If the learner hasn’t supplied any information about a disability or learning need before the placement, practice educators must ask all learners whether they want to disclose a disability or specific learning need during the induction process. The learning agreement statement: **I have disclosed a disability or specific learning need to my educator** must be completed in the ‘factors that may impact learning’ form and the date saved in the ePAD.

If a learner 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 on **07785286371** if the learner has given their permission for their disability to be discussed. Should learners 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 later be used to gain extenuating circumstances if the student underperforms during the placement.

After each placement, learners participate in a debrief at the university. They are designed to support learners in articulating and making sense of their placement learning as a whole and help plan for a formal written placement reflection.

If a learner discloses a disability but withholds permission to discuss their disability, confidential advice is available from the Student Wellbeing and Inclusivity Service (SWIS). Click here for more information.

Information on reasonable adjustments and disability support can be found here. All Students have a responsibility to:

- disclose their disability to the SWIS at the University so that appropriate adjustments may be discussed.
- check with their funding body if they are eligible for Disabled Students Allowances for assistance with costs related to their disability.

Whilst SWIS provides initial advice to all learners, it is the learner’s responsibility to contact them if they require individual advice at other times and to notify SWIS of changes in their circumstances and/or requirements. Learners whom SWIS identifies as requiring reasonable adjustments that may impact upon their placement learning will have discussed these needs and how they could be

managed in the practice environment with their personal tutor and/or the practice education lead. Learners are encouraged to discuss these with their practice educator pre-placement.

Support for Practice Educators

Practice placement visiting

For learners completing level 5 placements, a lecturer from the University of Essex (most likely the learner's student advisor) will usually 'visit' the learners and educators at least once during the placement, usually in the middle of the placement. These 'visits' usually take place remotely, via Zoom or Teams, and will be organised by the lecturer. Practice educators and/or students may request additional and/or face-to-face visits if they have concerns by contacting the placement mobile on **07785286371**. 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 the university environment. It is **NOT** expected this visit should coincide with the learner's 'halfway' formative feedback.

Lecturer visits are not routinely conducted for learners on level 6 placements but should the practice educator or learner wish to have a halfway visit, they can request one by contacting the placement mobile on **07785286371** or by the learner contacting their student advisor directly to check availability.

If a visit is undertaken or not, completion of learning agreements and assessment forms is monitored by the programme during placements via learner's ePADs.

The Visiting Lecturer

The visiting lecturer is a member of the university 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 activities where appropriate. However, the academic staff member is primarily concerned with the student's educational development, and the lecturer's knowledge of the content and structure of the physiotherapy programme enables them to help students to set their current experience within the context of their theoretical work. It is helpful if the discussion involves the practice educator as well as the student, as this helps to emphasise the link between academic and practice learning contexts. As mentioned above, the visiting lecturer will most likely be the learner's student advisor, but in some cases, it will be another member of staff well-known to the learner if the former can't happen.

The visiting lecturer ensures the placement setting can provide relevant experiences for learners and that appropriate communication mechanisms are in place to explore all issues related to learner placements. Placement visits also facilitate monitoring of how prepared learners have been for their placement experiences. Following a placement visit, the visiting lecturer formally feeds back to the practice education lead who uses the information to inform quality assurance processes (See placement evaluation below). Effective communication between the university and the practice educator is essential if the placement is to be an effective and productive learning experience.

The practice education lead is available to support the placement process at all stages, from initial setup, 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, although placement visits are recorded in the learner's ePAD.

If you need to contact a member of university staff urgently or if you are worried about a learner's level of performance, please telephone **07785286371** immediately. Do not wait for the halfway visit, as this will limit the time available to improve the situation.

Placement evaluation

After each placement, learners and educators are invited to provide feedback about their placement experience. Learners are emailed a hyperlink from PEMS to complete an online placement evaluation. Practice educators complete a short questionnaire via their login details with their learner's ePAD (in the 'end' tab).

We ask learners and educators to complete these honestly, professionally, and constructively to allow our placements to continue to improve. Learners will not receive notification of their next placement allocation until an evaluation for the previous placement has been completed.

Practice educators can log in to PEMS to view learner evaluations. Both learner and educator feedback are reviewed by university placement coordinators to continue to monitor placement experiences. Placement quality and monitoring are discussed at Physiotherapy Programme Committee meetings, team meetings, and agenda practice education leads may also table placement quality issues at the relevant organisation's Practice Education Committee.

If you need to contact a member of university staff urgently or if you are worried about a student's evaluation, please telephone **07785286371**.

Practice Educator Development

The School of Sport, Rehabilitation, and Exercise Sciences at the University of Essex adopts a blended approach of face-to-face workshops and online resources to achieve CPD support for all practice educators.

- Clinicians who would like an introduction to or further information on being a placement Educator can access training via NHS Futures or the NHS Learning Hub.
- There are also many Physiotherapy Placement resources on the OpenEssex website.
- OpenEssex has an easy automated online registration. To log in and register: Type https://open.essex.ac.uk/ into your browser (please be aware that the course works better in Google Chrome than in Internet Explorer). You will be asked if you are returning to the website, or if it's your first time here. If it's the first time, click on 'Create new account'. Follow the instructions. You will be sent an email telling you how to confirm your account details.
- Experienced practice educators wishing to be updated on physiotherapy programme and curricular developments should register to receive the Physiotherapy Placements Bulletin by emailing sresplacements@essex.ac.uk
- For practice educators and education leads seeking to explore, problem-solve, and challenge some of the complexities of supporting learning in the workplace, we are happy to facilitate bespoke workshops either virtually or in your workplace to aid accessibility. These can be requested at any time, and training needs negotiated with the SRES Placements Team.
- The CSP continues to promote the importance of quality practice education and has produced and reviewed guidelines, publications, and learning resources for educators, which are available via the CSP e-portfolio (www.csp.org.uk) and include an online networking space for educators across the UK. Educators are signposted to these resources during visiting tutor visits and educator workshops.
- For educators with an interest in formal study the University of Essex offers range of CPD modules relating practice education.
- Two infographics have been produced to summarise key information and guidance for completing practice placements successfully. There are versions for students and practice educators (See appendices).

Ethos, structure, and content of the physiotherapy programmes

The ethos and aims of our physiotherapy curriculum at Essex encourage & foster the qualities seen below:

- Autonomy & self-direction
- Ability to problem-solve & think critically
- Skills to empower, relate to, & educate those we work with
- Sound knowledge & professional skills
- Capacity to reflect & appreciate life-long learning.

The accelerated MSc is a two-year programme studied at academic level 7.

The BSc is a three-year programme studied at academic levels 4, 5 and 6

The BSc Degree Apprenticeship is studied over three years and 1 term, at academic levels 4,5 and 6.



All programmes are divided into 4 streams with each stream studied at all academic levels:

1. Personal Development of self and others
2. Professional Craft Skills
3. Propositional Skills
4. Preparation for Practice

In personal development of self and others - Learners explore and develop their understanding of Physiotherapy and the broader role of the Physiotherapist in contemporary and evolving practice, before applying, evaluating, and analysing approaches to developing themselves as professionals and others such as service users and peers. In the final stages of their programmes, students are equipped to promote and lead change within the healthcare environment.

In professional craft skills – The programme recognises the change in health delivery and equips students to meet the challenges of first contact practice and multi-pathology presentation. There will be
an explicit shift in the integration of clinical specialties, promoting a blurring of these specialties to recognise the predicted future working approach of a graduate physiotherapist.

In propositional skills - adopting a research approach that enables students to find and appropriately use the best evidence, as well as being encouraged to help promote the use of evidence-based practice and contributing to the evidence base.

Placements all sit within the preparation for practice stream. Which also includes, service improvement, exploration of CPD, and the idea of 'being comfortable with the uncomfortable'. At the completion of the learners' period of study, the modules will ensure University of Essex graduates are fully prepared to meet the challenges of contemporary physiotherapy practice.

Each of the themes is divided into specific modules.

The modules studied by BSc students are:

Year 1: Applied anatomy & physiology; Physio led assessment; Practice based decision making and Understanding self and others

Year 2: Physio led interventions; Promoting health and activity; Research methods and

Placements 1, & 2.

Year 3: Research project; Leadership of self and others; Preparation for practice and Placements 3, 4, 5.

The modules studied by MSc students are:

Year 1: Applied anatomy & physiology; Physio led assessment; Physio led treatment; Promoting health and activity; Critical inquiry; Understanding self and others and Placements 1 & 2.

Year 2: Research project: Developing self and others: Leadership of self and others; Preparation for practice and Placements 3,4, & 5.

The modules studied by BSc Apprentices are:

Year 1: Applied anatomy & pathophysiology; Physio led assessment; Practice-based decision making and Understanding self and others.

Year 2: Physio-led interventions; Promoting health and activity; Research methods and Placement 1.

Year 3: Research project; Leadership of self and others; Placements 2 and 3.

Year 4: Placement 4 and Preparation for Professional Practice

For more information on specific themes and module content, please see the programme information box on our Open Essex webpage.

References

Chartered Society of Physiotherapy (2011) Code of Members' Professional Values and Behaviour: Online at https://www.csp.org.uk/publications/code-members-professional-values-and-behaviour (accessed 9.9.2019)

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Moore A., Morris J., Crouch V. and Martin M. (2003) Evaluation of physiotherapy clinical educational models: Comparing 1:1, 2:1 and 3:1 placements *Physiotherapy* 89 (8). pp. 489-501.

Parliament of the United Kingdom (2010) Equality Act: Online at http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2010/15/contents (accessed 9.9.2019)



Appendices

Appendix 1

All learners complete a written reflection after each placement for inclusion in their portfolios. The structure of this piece of work is not specified but below is an example of a recommended template. **University of Essex – Placement Reflection Pro-forma & Guidance**

Placement Start Date

Placement End Date

Name of Clinical Educator

This is the only place where you will use their name - it will automatically be removed when you share/publish the document.

NOTE: IDENTIFYING INFORMATION ABOUT PLACEMENT LOCATION OR PATIENT DETAILS SHOULD NOT BE INCLUDED in the reflection and/or attached evidence

What? Summary of the placement context

Briefly describe the placement experience & identify no more than three elements that you will reflect upon. These elements are something that has made you stop and think. It might include the interaction with particular (unnamed) patient or something that consistently challenged you, or it might have been a major incident e.g. a safety issue or whistle-blowing or suspected abuse. No names or identifying features please. Do not try to analyse the situation (that comes next - just describe)

So What? Unpick the issues

This is your analysis of the key issues. Questions you might wish to ask and then answer are: why did situation x occur? What went well / not so well and why? Should anything else have happened? What was my role? Was it appropriate? To help you unpick the situation you should review any relevant literature, polices or regulatory guidelines that will help you draw conclusions and complete the 'now what' section below. (Approx. 600 words)

Now What? What does this mean for YOUR practice

For the points raised above, what impact does this experience and refection have on your ongoing practice and how might your practice need to change (or stay the same). Again, support these with references. (Approx. 400 words)

Action Plan

From the above, summarise the actions you now need to take to implement your learning into practice.
Here you should be completing the reflective circle and therefore there should be no "new things" here.
For example, don't suddenly include "I need to improve my note writing on my next placement" if you have not discussed note-writing in the refection.

Remember your action plan should be:

Specific

Measurable

Action Orientated (How will you achieve this)

Realistic

Timed

For example: before the start of my next placement (Timed) I will have read about the Driscoll model of reflection (Specific & Action orientated) and have written a short practice reflection using the model which I will critically review afterwards (Measurable).

Supporting Evidence

Describe and upload (by clicking the rosette) any relevant supporting evidence that directly demonstrates the process of your development from the reflection above. E.g. reflective diary, annotated papers, summaries of papers, mind-maps, posters, presentations or pages from your assessment book, note: IDENTIFYING INFORMATION ABOUT PLACEMENT LOCATION OR PATIENT DETAILS SHOULD NOT BE INCLUDED in the reflection and/or attached evidence

Reference List

Provide a reference list for your reflection. Use the SHHS referencing guidance.

Driscoll J (2007) Practising clinical supervision: a reflective approach for healthcare professionals Edinburgh: Balliere Tindall

Please link your last reflection

Please attach your last placement reflection so that we can see the development of your reflective writing (click the rosette)

Appendix 2

Educator top tips for placement success



Appendix 3

Students' top tips for placement success



Appendix 4

OpenEssex (previously Moodlex) instructions for non-University of Essex users

Practice educators are directed to the OpenEssex platform to access further guidance or CPD information. The specific webpage on OpenEssex is called: Physiotherapy Placement Resources.

Programme and policy information about our programmes and practice education can be found here:.