

**School of Health and Social Care
University of Essex**

Agreement of student responsibilities with regards to Practice Placements

1. Introduction

While studying your course in the School of Health and Social Care, you will spend a proportion of time learning in a practice environment. These are called practice placements. Learning on practice placements are a professional requirement of your course, which are stipulated by the professional regulatory body, and most courses require a set number of hours to be completed in practice placement. The University of Essex has agreements with a wide range of local and regional placement providers. These agreements are required to ensure that your placement experience meets a minimum set of quality assurance standards to provide you with safe and effective supervision and assessment whilst caring for the people who use and interact with the services provided in placement settings.

Undertaking and managing practice placements requires responsibility and commitment from you, the placement provider and from the university. The information provided in this document sets out guidance related to your responsibilities in managing practice placements and the level of commitment required from you. We are providing you with this information so that you can consider how you can meet the level of commitment required.

Please read the information carefully and acknowledge that you understand the level of commitment required for your course. You will be required to commit to these responsibilities for the duration of your course. Further information can be found on the health and Social Care Placements website, but if you require any additional clarification please contact the Placements Lead for your course.

2. How we allocate placements

All practice placements and the numbers of students they can support are decided in partnership with placement providers and depend on capacity, suitability and professional body requirements. Placement capacity for a specific course approximates to the number of students recruited to the course (and similar courses at other universities). As a result, it is extremely difficult to change a placement that has been allocated. We work very hard to ensure that there is sufficient capacity to allocate students to placement based on the following principles:

- The appropriateness of learning opportunities available in a placement setting;
- The availability of agreed capacity to allocate students to a placement setting;
- The learning experiences that students have had on previous placements;
- Where a student declares a disability or health condition that has been evidenced and reasonable adjustments have been agreed, in accordance with the reasonable adjustments procedure¹.

¹ Also see section 4: Equality in placements for students with disabilities

3. Your responsibilities in managing placements

The university and the placement providers where you learn have committed to providing you with a range of support, and endeavour to meet their responsibilities in supporting your learning and development as you progress through your course. Details of the university's and placement providers' responsibilities are available in the [Student Handbook](#) and Programme Handbook for your course. Your placement lead or programme lead can direct you to these resources.

By accepting a place on this course you are acknowledging that you understand and accept certain personal and financial responsibilities and expectations of behaviour in managing your practice placement experience. These are outlined below.

I understand and agree that:

1. I am responsible for all planning of travel arrangements to and from placement;
2. I am responsible for travelling independently to and from placement to arrive at the start of a shift and to remain in the placement until the conclusion of the shift;
3. I am responsible for up-front costs of placement-related travel and accommodation, that I may be able to claim back using the [NHS Bursary Services Authority's Learning Support Fund \(NHS BSA\)](#).
4. If I use a car to travel to placements then I will ensure that I have business cover agreed with my insurer;
5. I accept that it can take some time for the NHS BSA who manage the Learning Support Fund to process claims and that the University of Essex is unable to accelerate this timescale. I will make financial plans to account for this;
6. I can expect to travel at unsociable hours;
7. I accept that I may have to travel up to 120 minutes each way as estimated from my registered campus to some placements;
8. I can expect to work a range of shift patterns, depending on the requirements of the professional regulatory body, my course and specific placement settings;
9. I shall endeavour to not prejudge or make assumptions about the quality or relevance of a placement before starting a placement;
10. I am responsible for arranging caring or other personal commitments (e.g. childcare, employment, hobbies etc.) so that they do not affect my ability to meet the responsibilities outlined above².

4. Equality in placements for students with disabilities, long-term conditions and learning difficulties

There are specific circumstances where a student can make a formal request in advance for special consideration. These requests can only be made where a student has a disability or learning difficulty or other protected characteristic that puts them at a substantial disadvantage or risk of harm. These requests can enable the university, in partnership with placement providers, to make *reasonable* adjustments to avoid disadvantaging or

² Also see section 5: students with caring responsibilities

discriminating against students with a disability or learning difficulty. Adjustments are considered reasonable where they mitigate the disadvantage the student might otherwise experience, where they are practical to implement, where they do not inhibit the student from demonstrating the standards of proficiency required to complete the course successfully, and where the cost and resources can be covered from budgets and other sources of financial support. Reasonable adjustments related to placement may include:

- Consideration of where a student should be allocated to a placement;
- Providing specific resources, additional time or other supports for the student and their supervisors during placement.

There may be some disabilities that, in spite of reasonable adjustment being made, prevent the student from fulfilling the requirements of their course as set out by the relevant professional regulatory body's Standards of Proficiency or Fitness to Practise criteria.

If you consider yourself to have a disability that warrants reasonable adjustments and would like to have these considered in how you are supported in placement then you will need to follow the [reasonable adjustments procedure](#). This procedure is designed to support you and that ensure that the university and practice placement providers do not discriminate or exclude you from opportunities to participate, engage and learn that would be available to those without protected characteristics.

5. Students with caring responsibilities

According to the agreement in section 3 it is expected that students will have made arrangements to ensure that caring responsibilities do not affect their ability to meet their commitment to managing placements. The professional regulatory body that validates your course sets a minimum requirement for the number of hours of learning expected in practice placement. Your course has been designed to enable you to spend sufficient time in placement to achieve the practice placement hours required by the regulatory body.

When completing the placement planning form we ask that you declare if you have caring responsibilities. Whilst these declarations will be considered sympathetically, there is no guarantee that the university or the placement provider will be able to honour such requests.

6. Other requests for specific placement arrangements

As stated above, placement capacities approximate to the number of students recruited to a course. As a result, any other requests for specific individual arrangements, outside of those covered in sections 4 and 5 above, are unlikely to be granted. Some examples are provided below:

Financial hardship is NOT considered a valid reason to request specific placement arrangements. The NHS Learning Support Fund and the university's [hardship loans and funds](#) may provide a source of financial support in these circumstances.

Personal preference is NOT considered a valid reason to request specific placement arrangements. All placements to which you are allocated are relevant to your development and offer appropriate learning opportunities.

7. Data Protection

Data Sharing: Under the Data Protection Act (2018) and in line with the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) we are not allowed to disclose any of your personal data without your permission. In order for us to arrange and allocate your placements, to deal with attendance queries and reference requests certain information including sensitive personal data may need to be shared with placement agencies.

Practice assessment: As you progress through the course, each practice placement experience will build upon previous placement experiences. In order to make a judgement on your development, those who have responsibility for assessing your practice may need to be able to review your assessment record and achievements in previous placements. To comply with regulatory and legal standards, you will need to consent to assessors being able to review these assessments.

8. Declaration

I confirm that I understand and accept the responsibilities and expectations that are outlined in section 3 of this document

I confirm that I understand and accept the specific placement arrangements outlined in sections 4, 5 and 6 of this document.

I consent to my personal data being shared in accordance with the details outlined in section 7 of this document.

I confirm that I have read the GDC Student professionalism and fitness to practise policy, and are aware of the requirements and expectations.