

## 4<sup>th</sup>-Year Pharmacy Experiential Learning Placements 2020

### Preceptor FAQ on operational changes and considerations due to COVID-19

APPEL is cognisant that COVID-19 will have a significant impact on the four-month experiential learning placements due to take place from **31<sup>st</sup> August to the 18<sup>th</sup> December 2020**. In acknowledgement of the effect that COVID-19 may have on the student, on their Preceptor and on the Training Establishment, APPEL and the three Schools of Pharmacy have made significant changes to the operation of the placement for this year. The details of these operational changes are detailed below.

#### Q. Are there any changes to the dates of the 4th-year experiential learning placements for 2020?

A. No, the dates of the placement remain unchanged. Students will be on their experiential learning placements from **31<sup>st</sup> August – 18<sup>th</sup> December 2020**.

\*Please note that some students returning to Ireland from other countries may need to quarantine for two weeks before the commencement of their placement.

#### Q. My student was abroad prior to their placement commencing. What are the requirements for these students before they begin their experiential learning placement?

A. Most students, with limited exceptions, will be required to restrict their movements for two weeks following their return to Ireland from abroad.

All students are advised to be in Ireland no later than the **17<sup>th</sup> August 2020**. If the Training Establishment has any particular requirements in relation to restriction of movements, APPEL requests that you please inform the student.

## Q. Has the student timetable changed for the placement period?

A. In recognition that many placements will operate a Team A/Team B style rota, the student timetable is being made flexible and adaptable to accommodate the needs of the Preceptor, Training Establishment, and the student. Every effort should be made to maintain similarity to the university timetable where possible and the educational experience for students should be promoted at all times.

- The student is required to complete 30 hrs of placement time each week.
- This time on placement can be completed over Monday – Friday from 8 am – 6 pm.
- The student must be provided with at least one-half day each week between Monday and Friday comprising no less than 4 hrs to allow them to complete their online academic modules (please be mindful that the student may need to travel to/from their placement to complete these modules and that they should be able to finish their day at 6 pm).
- There is no requirement for the student to be off-placement on a Wednesday (as was the case in previous years).
- The placement timetable should be agreed between the Preceptor and the student.
  - Their hours of attendance should be similar to a university timetable between 8 am and 6 pm on **weekdays only**.
  - Ideally, the student would be given the same timetable each week; however; due to the impact of COVID-19, we acknowledge that this may not always be possible.
  - The student must be given adequate notice of their timetabled placement hours.
  - The student's placement hours must occur over one continuous period on any given day.
  - Students must be provided with appropriate breaks in accordance with legislation.

## Q. Due to physical and operational changes in our work environment, we cannot accommodate a student on placement on-site in the Training Establishment for 30 hours a week. Can the placement proceed?

A. APPEL is cognisant that government advice remains that, where possible, working from home should continue. In such circumstances, where a student cannot be on placement at the Training Establishment, APPEL can confirm that **remote experiential learning placements** can be a feature of the 4<sup>th</sup>-year placement for 2020 and will be accommodated.

### Q. Does a remote experiential placement meet the statutory requirements?

A. APPEL has been approached by several Training Establishments who will require the student to partake in remote placement activity due to the constraints of social distancing in their work environment.

Rule 14(1) (a) of SI 377 of 2014 states that a student completes their in-service practical training for “*at least four months in one of the establishments referred to in rule 15(1)*”. APPEL engaged with the PSI concerning the question as to whether a student can be considered to be partaking of their “*in-service practical training*” while on placement remotely.

The four-month placement differs from the eight-month placement undertaken in the fifth year of the course where the rules prescribe that the placement must take place “*at the premises*”.

The PSI Council have approved “*Guidelines for Remote Experiential Placements in the 4<sup>th</sup> year of the Pharmacy degree*” (Appendix II) which encompass the parameters of remote experiential learning. These guidelines are approved for the 4<sup>th</sup> Year placements in 2020 only.

### Q. Are there requirements as to the amount of time a student can be on placement remotely vs on-site at the Training Establishment?

A. No. APPEL is cognisant that government advice remains that, where possible, working from home should continue. Therefore, there may be circumstances where a student is on placement remotely for the duration of their four-month placement.

Where possible, where a student’s Preceptor or On-Site Supervisor is on-site at the Training Establishment, we recommend that the student is on-site at the same time and on the same days. However, we appreciate that this may not be possible due to social distancing requirements within the Training Establishment.

### Q. Are there additional requirements that I need to consider as a Preceptor or On-Site Supervisor if my student is on placement remotely?

A. Completing a placement remotely will be a new experience for everyone. This will likely be the first time the student will experience completing a placement remotely. To support you in offering a remote experiential learning placement, the PSI have approved “*Guidelines for*

*Remote Experiential Placements in the 4<sup>th</sup> year of the Pharmacy degree*” (Appendix II) and APPEL have attached the “*Preceptor guide for supporting a remote experiential placement*” as an appendix to this document (Appendix I). It is important to read both documents to ensure you have considered and can fulfill all of the additional considerations for remote experiential learning. Examples of some of the additional requirements are:

- Appropriate student support systems
- Consideration given to induction and ongoing communication between the student and the Preceptor/On-site Supervisor
- Appropriate remote learning environment for the student experiential learning placement

**Q. Is there additional information that I should add to my induction and training plan due to the impact of COVID-19 on the experiential learning placement?**

A. It is important, at the outset of the placement, to provide your student with an induction programme, which familiarises them with the practicalities of their new learning environment. Time and effort invested in induction assists with faster integration and a more effective learning environment for the student. COVID-19 has introduced many changes to the workplace environment, which the student will be unfamiliar with and which should be included in the induction plan, for example:

- Training Establishment policies and procedures on social distancing, hand hygiene, respiratory etiquette, wearing of face-masks, PPE, etc.
- Consider providing students with the below documentation, where applicable, for their review:
  - SOPs
  - Health and Safety documentation
  - Covid-19 Protocols
  - Training Manual
  - Any other placement related paperwork

- Ways of working, e.g. how handover occurs between teams, if social distancing requires split teams.
- Practices that have been implemented for COVID-19, but are not standard practices, e.g. the student may not be aware of the changes to prescription legislation, methods introduced to minimise patient contact.
- Cultural and linguistic issues that need to be considered as part of the new ways of working, e.g. implications on face-to-face communication while maintaining social distancing and wearing PPE such as facemasks.
- Hints and tips on how student can fit into a new team.
- Outline of the activities/projects that students will be completing

More details on items to include in the student induction programme can be found in the Preceptor Handbook and the sample Induction and Training Plan provided on the resources page of the APPEL website.

### **Q. Will the assessment of placement be the same as usual?**

A. Yes, there is no change to the assessment of the placement. At the end of the 4<sup>th</sup>-year placement, it is intended that students will be able to demonstrate a required level of competency in the relevant behaviours in the PSI's Core Competency Framework aligned to the three domains listed below:

- Professional Practice
- Personal Skills
- Organisation and Management Skills

**Q. Do I need to complete any additional documentation in consideration of the impact of COVID-19 on the placement?**

A. No, there is no additional paperwork required to be completed by the Training Establishment or the Preceptor/On-Site Supervisor. No changes have been made to the Placement Agreement or the Accreditation documentation.

Where a student is on placement remotely, the Preceptor and On-Site Supervisor will need to read the “*APPEL Guidance for Supporting a Remote Experiential Learning Placement*” (Appendix I).

**Q. What additional pre-placement preparation has my student completed in consideration of the impact of COVID-19 on the placement?**

A. Students are required to complete the following additional activities in advance of starting their experiential learning placement:

1. Students must complete the following online courses available at [www.hseland.ie](http://www.hseland.ie)
  - Introduction to Infection Prevention and Control
  - Hand Hygiene for Clinical Staff
  - Putting on and Taking off PPE in Acute Healthcare Settings
  - Putting on and Taking off PPE in Community Healthcare Settings
2. Students must review the following videos on the HPSC website in advance of commencing their placement.
  - Correct donning and doffing of PPE on the HPSC website [www.hpsc.ie](http://www.hpsc.ie)
  - Review of the Infection Prevention and Control (IPC) Guidance, including IPC COVID-19 Guidance and educational videos on [www.HPSC.ie/infection\\_control/](http://www.HPSC.ie/infection_control/)
3. Additionally, students must read and understand the following documents and consult the following webpages:

- Guidance to minimise the risk of transmission of COVID-19 infection in pharmacies  
<https://www.hpsc.ie/a-z/respiratory/coronavirus/novelcoronavirus/guidance/pharmacyguidance/>
  - The information provided by their University on COVID-19
    - <https://www.ucc.ie/en/studenthealth/flu/>
    - <https://www.rcsi.com/dublin/coronavirus/students>, or
    - <https://www.tcd.ie/about/coronavirus/>
4. Students will be obliged to download the “COVID Tracker Ireland” and to log in and update this tracker daily.
5. Students will also be required to log into the APPEL Virtual Learning Environment daily and record the following information:
- Record that they have no symptoms of COVID-19 before they go on placement
  - Depending on their Training Establishment they may need to record where they were on-site throughout the placement day: e.g. Dispensary, Ward X, etc. This may be required in the event of an IPC incident such as an outbreak.
    - Students can only be on placement at the appointed APPEL accredited Training Establishment. Please inform APPEL where a student needs to change their Training Establishment in advance of that change occurring.

### **Q. What is the process to be followed if a student develops signs of COVID-19 during placement?**

A. If a student is at home when they develop [symptoms](#), they must not go into placement, and must not leave home. They must self-isolate and phone their GP or Student Health Services (info below). Students must also contact their Preceptor and Practice Educator.

If a student develops symptoms when they are at the Training Establishment, they must inform their Preceptor or On-Site Supervisor and must leave the site immediately. They should self-isolate in their home and contact their GP or Student Health Services, from home.



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Where a student is required to restrict their movements or self-isolate and are well, and where the Training Establishment cannot accommodate a remote experiential learning placement, the student is required to study remotely at home during this time.

Students will need to complete additional placement time (60 hrs. = two weeks of restricted movement) over the remaining weeks of the placement. How this additional placement time is completed is to be agreed between the student and their Preceptor. Students will need to keep their Practice Educator informed as to how and when this additional time is completed.

Where a student is unwell, the student's college/HEI sick policies apply in these circumstances. Students must inform their Practice Educators when they are unwell.

### **Q. What support will Preceptors and On-Site Supervisors receive from APPEL during the 4<sup>th</sup>-year placements?**

A. Practice Educators and the APPEL office will be available to respond to any questions or queries that you may have regarding the placement. The APPEL website has relevant information and resources and APPEL will email important updates and information as it arises.



## Appendix 1: APPEL Guidance for Supporting a Remote Experiential Learning Placement

Completing a placement remotely will be a new experience for everyone. This will likely be the first time the student will experience completing a placement remotely. While some students will adapt very quickly and have no concerns with using different communication forms and learning in a remote environment, others may find it more challenging and require additional support. This guide will help you plan and consider aspects of the placements to maximise learning opportunities and support for the student.

It is broken down into two parts:

1. Considerations prior to placement
2. Considerations during placement

### Part 1: Considerations prior to placement

1. You may wish to consider some of the **practical requirements** if the student is completing the placement remotely:

The student's home workstation and requirements – does your Training Establishment have guidance to support your employees that you can share with students?

- Has the student access to an appropriate environment to facilitate a remote experiential learning placement? E.g. light, heating, quiet environment.
- Has the student an appropriate chair and table/desk?
- Is there a Health & Safety Officer that can support the student in setting up an appropriate workstation and placement environment?

IT requirements – does the student have access to all the technology they require?

- Does the student have access to a company laptop or if necessary use of a personal laptop?
- Does the student have access to a reliable and secure internet connection?
- Does the student have remote access to the Training Establishment network?

- Does training need to be completed prior to accessing the Training Establishment systems and can training be done remotely?
  - Does the student know who to contact for IT support?
2. You may wish to consider the **supervision and support requirements** when preparing a student for a remote experiential learning placement:

### Supervision of students on placement remotely

- Consider how you will dedicate time to the student under challenging circumstances (daily check-in if on placement remotely, handover if splitting time between the office and home).
  - Consider setting daily/weekly/monthly deliverables for students to ensure they are on track – if not, check-in with them to see if they understand what they are doing.
  - How will the student be introduced to the other team members? Consider including the student in team chats/group emails so that they feel a part of the team.
  - Clear communication - speaking in person gives us visual and audio cues which helps us communicate. Conversing remotely removes a lot of that extra information, so consider how you can make your communications extra clear and concise. Emails are more likely to be wrongly interpreted than in-person conversation, so we recommend that you consider proofreading your communications even more carefully; this will be particularly important for students who are new to the team.
  - A student on placement remotely may require more support than if they were in the Training Establishment. Does the student know who to contact for support, further assistance or training? Aside from the Preceptor or On-Site Supervisor is there a team member that the student can “buddy-up” with for support over the placement period?
3. You may need to consider how the **induction programme** planned at the outset of the placement may be impacted by the student being on placement remotely.

### Induction and training plan considerations where a student is on placement remotely

- Have you considered in advance an outline of the activities/projects that students will be completing? Can these activities be completed remotely? Do these activities allow

students to meet the learning outcomes and to develop and practise the required skills and behaviours?

- Are there online resources that students could complete as part of their induction, and can these be accessed remotely?
- Plan the time and date to complete the induction and consider other staff who may be able to support you.
- Do you have a dress code that the student must adhere to when on placement remotely?
- Please refer to the 4<sup>th</sup>-Year Preceptor Handbook for further information on induction.

## Part 2: Considerations during placement

### 1. Induction

It is important, at the outset of the placement, to provide your student with an induction programme, which familiarises them with the practicalities of their new learning environment. Time and effort invested in induction assists with faster integration and a more effective learning environment for the student. Along with the normal requirements for induction which are discussed in the Preceptor training and handbook, additional items which you may wish to consider for remote experiential learning placements are:

- Health and Safety Training – in addition to your Training Establishment’s normal health and safety training, there may be additional health and safety requirements for remote working which are relevant for students on placement remotely.
- Training Establishment policies and procedures on social distancing, hand hygiene, respiratory etiquette, wearing of face-masks, PPE, etc. If the student is completing some placement time remotely and some on-site at the Training Establishment, they will need to be familiar with all policies and procedures.
- Consider providing students with the below documentation, where applicable, for their review:
  - SOPs
  - Covid-19 Protocols

- Training Manual
- Any other placement related paperwork
- Ways of working: Are there new practices in place that you need to advise the student on, e.g. if social distancing requires split teams you may need to advise the student on how handover occurs between the teams?
- How would you like the student to communicate with you and other members of the team - email, phone call, virtual meetings? For some students, this will be their first experience in this type of communication, so consider providing them with some hints and tips on what you find works well.
- How can you encourage students to contribute regularly to team emails, virtual team meetings, chats and social events such as team quiz nights, remote team tea breaks, etc. For some students, this will be their first experience using this type of communication; you may be able to give them some hints and tips on what you find works well.
- Practices that have been implemented for COVID-19 but are not standard practices.
- Are there any cultural and linguistic issues that need to be considered as part of the new ways of working, e.g. implications on face-to-face communication while maintaining social distancing and wearing PPE such as facemasks?
- Fitting into a new team will be easy for some students but may be more difficult for others. This adjustment may be more challenging due to amended work practices in place due to COVID-19. Have you any hints and tips for your student on how they can fit into the team and maximise team-based activities in this environment?
- Some people have found working remotely can lead to challenges in staying motivated and keeping on track with tasks and activities. Have you considered how you can support your student with this, e.g. setting daily/weekly/monthly deliverables for students to ensure they are on track?
- Unexpected staff changes due to COVID-19 - have you considered an extra pharmacist (if available) do the Preceptor training in case they need to take over from the Preceptor?

If you would like to discuss any questions or concerns relating to remote experiential learning placements, please contact a Practice Educator or any member of the APPEL team. We would



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also be delighted to receive any feedback you may have on what has worked well and any advice that we may be able to improve upon, based on your experience.



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## Appendix II - Guidelines for Remote Experiential Placements in the 4<sup>th</sup> year of the Pharmacy degree”



# Guidelines for Remote Experiential Learning Placements in the 4<sup>th</sup> Year of the Pharmacy degree

## 1. Background

The five-year pharmacist qualification in Ireland is a PSI-accredited five-year fully integrated Master's degree programme in pharmacy. On successful completion of the five-year programme, graduates will then be eligible to apply to the PSI for registration.

The pharmacy undergraduate programme involves the integration and dispersal of practice placements for students throughout the five years and enables placements of varying durations in the three main areas of pharmacy practice, in community, hospital and industry. This includes placements in community and hospital pharmacies during second, fourth and fifth year and placements in industry and other practice areas (health service, regulatory etc.) in the fourth Year.

The fourth-year placement allows students to take up non-clinical placements such as in Role Emerging Practice (REP) (i.e regulatory, health service) and industry.

The legislative background is derived from the PSI (Education and Training)(Integrated Course) Rules 2014

([https://www.thepsi.ie/Libraries/Legislation/SI\\_2014\\_0377\\_PSI\\_Education\\_and\\_Training\\_Integrated\\_Course](https://www.thepsi.ie/Libraries/Legislation/SI_2014_0377_PSI_Education_and_Training_Integrated_Course)

[Rules\\_2014.sflb.ashx](#)) . These Rules set out the criteria for 4<sup>th</sup> year placements, and in accordance with Rule 14(1) (a) a person pursuing a Masters degree in pharmacy (..) shall complete.. *'at least four months in one of the establishments referred to in Rule 15(1) and which shall be undertaken during the fourth year of the course, (...)'*.

## 2. Purpose

With the COVID-19 pandemic, organisations have had to change their way of working and many employees are now working remotely to adhere to social distancing requirements and infection control in line with Government public health guidelines. And this has impacted on certain experiential learning placements where the organisations are requiring students to work remotely. These guidelines will ensure that the 4<sup>th</sup> year placement students in non-clinical placements such as in Role Emerging Practice (REP) (i.e regulatory, health service) and

industry will not be disadvantaged undertaking a remote placement and will receive a full and proper placement where they can reach the necessary competencies required.

### 3. Guidelines for Remote Experiential Learning Placements

- 4th-year placements in 2020 can be undertaken either entirely at the Training Establishment premises, entirely remotely or a mixture of the two, depending on the adapted operational practices at the Training Establishment, due to the public health advice to reduce the transmission of COVID-19.
- The placement must meet all applicable national legislative requirements, criteria and obligations.
- The ethos of the placement must provide and reflect a positive and professional example of pharmacy practice in line with the CCF.
- The organisation in which the placement is undertaken must ensure that patient safety is safeguarded and the public is protected in line with the PSI's CCF and all relevant legislative requirements.
- All Training Establishments and Trainers will be accredited following APPEL's usual and approved processes.

Where a student is undertaking their experiential placement remotely, APPEL must ensure the following is provided, at a minimum:

#### **Student support systems:**

- Supports for students will be strongly emphasised at the pre-placement seminars, to encourage, insofar as is possible, early contact with Practice Educators for any student who has any issues or concerns relating to remote experiential learning.
- Advice and guidance for maximising experiential learning, including remote experiential learning, will also be provided as part of the pre-placement preparation.

#### **Induction and ongoing communication considerations for students on placement remotely:**

- The importance of a thorough induction meeting and regular supervision /check-ins with either the Preceptor, On-site Supervisor or a nominated 'buddy' will be emphasised at the mandatory Trainer-Training events and in the supplementary guidance provided by APPEL to Preceptors and On-site Supervisors.
- Written guidance on remote experiential learning for 4th-year placements will be provided to students. It will include information on topics including how to prepare in advance of the placement and ensuring an appropriate level of access to necessary



resources. Similar guidance on remote experiential learning will also be provided to Training Establishments.

**Preceptor and On-site Supervisor support systems:**

- Specific, live, online training sessions for Preceptors on the impact of COVID-19 on 4th-year placements, including guidance and advice on supervising remote experiential learning placements, will be provided in addition to the mandatory Trainer - Training.
- Written guidance on remote experiential learning for 4th-year placements will be provided to Training Establishments. It will include information on topics including how to prepare in advance of the placement and ensuring an appropriate level of access to necessary resources. Similar guidance on remote experiential learning will also be provided to students.

**Review and monitoring arrangements:**

- At a minimum, 35% of students on placement will receive quality assurance contact from a Practice Educator. In addition to the students already in the algorithm for a priority visit, consideration will be given to contacting students undertaking remote experiential learning placements as a priority.

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