

4th-Year Placements 2020 – Frequently Asked Questions for Students

The Schools of Pharmacy, PSI and HSE, have decided that 4th-year placements will go ahead, in line with current public health guidance, to enable you to fulfil the statutory requirements of completing a four-month placement in 4th year.

Planning for your placement within your Schools of Pharmacy and APPEL has continued at pace throughout the past few months with your health and wellbeing together with that of your Preceptors, placement teams and patients being the primary concern.

We have answered the following frequently asked questions (FAQ) to help explain any changes that are being implemented to facilitate the placements during this pandemic. **There are some actions outlined in this document that you must complete (please see the checklist attached in Appendix 3).** If you do not complete these actions by the specified date, it may jeopardise your participation in the four-month placement.

If you have any questions arising from this document, please contact the APPEL office or your Practice Educator.

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 **31st August – 18th 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. I am due to go on holiday abroad before my placement commences. Is there anything that I need to be aware of?

Or

Q. As an international student, I am returning to Ireland before my placement commences. Is there anything that I need to be aware of?

A. All students will be required to quarantine for two weeks following their return to Ireland from abroad. Therefore, please ensure that you return to Ireland no later than the **17th August** so that you are available to commence your placement on the 31st August.

Please note that a two week period of self-isolation is mandatory for students coming into Ireland from overseas. Please contact your Practice Educator in your HEI by the **10th August** if you have any queries about existing travel plans.

Q. Is it compulsory for me to go on placement at this time?

A. Completion of placement is required to progress through your Pharmacy degree; however, we understand some of you may have concerns. Please contact your Practice Educator(s) with any specific queries that you wish to discuss and we will address these with you on a case-by-case basis.

If any of the below criteria apply to you, you may not be in a position to start your placement as expected on the 31st August and may, in exceptional circumstances, require APPEL to seek an alternative placement for you. **Please contact your Practice Educator as soon as possible if any of the below apply to you:**

- If you have an underlying health condition that would put you at higher risk of serious illness, should you contract COVID-19. The HSE advice is available [here](#). If in doubt, please contact your GP or University/College Student Health for advice. Please contact your Practice Educator, and they will advise you of the processes to be followed according to your HEI policies.
- If you share accommodation with a member of a [vulnerable group](#) and are concerned, please contact your GP or Student Health for advice.

Q. What are the key placement dates for the 4th-year placements in 2020?

A. The placement dates are as follows:

- Student on placement: 31th Aug – 18th Dec 2020
- Formative assessment date: Completed by the end of week 5 (Sunday 4th Oct 2020)
- Summative assessment date: Completed by the end of week 12 (Sunday 22nd Nov 2020)
- Focused training period if required: 23rd Nov – 18th Dec
 - Please note that the placement continues until 18th Dec 2020 whether a focused training period is required or not.

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

A. In recognition that many placements have introduced new work practices to adhere to social distancing guidelines, the student timetable is being made more flexible and adaptable to accommodate the needs of the Preceptor, Training Establishment and the student.

- You are required to complete 30 hrs of placement time each week.
- This time on placement can be completed from Monday – Friday between 8 am and 6 pm.
- You must be provided with at least one-half day each week between Monday and Friday comprising no less than 4hrs to allow you to complete your online academic modules.
- There is no requirement for you to be off-placement on a Wednesday (as was the case for previous placements).
- The placement timetable should be agreed between you and your Preceptor:
 - Ideally, you 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.
 - You must be given adequate notice of your timetabled placement hours.
 - Your placement hours must occur over one continuous period on any given day.
- You must be provided with appropriate breaks in accordance with legislation.

Flexibility in the timetable has been introduced in response to COVID-19 and also a result of student feedback. As a result of the added flexibility, it is important to be aware that placement

hours may be adjusted to suit your needs and the needs of the Training Establishment. If you are concerned about your placement hours, please contact your Practice Educator.

Q. Why can I now be on placement on a Wednesday?

A. To be flexible, adaptable and to ensure operational effectiveness across all Training Establishments, the APPEL Board decided that the online academic modules would move to an asynchronous format for this year's 4th-year placement. Therefore, students are not required to be on-line at the same time on a Wednesday afternoon.

Further information regarding your Online Academic Modules will be provided to you by your module coordinators at your Pre-Placement Preparation Day, which will be delivered virtually.

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 4th-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. Due to physical and operational changes at my Training Establishment, they cannot accommodate a student on placement on-site for 30 hours a week. Can my 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 confirms that **remote experiential learning placements** will be accommodated and a feature of the 4th-year placement for 2020.

Q. Are remote experiential placements permissible?

A. APPEL has been approached by several Training Establishments who will require students 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 in their “*in-service practical training*” while on placement remotely. The advice received from PSI is that remote working does not appear to be contrary to the intention of these rules.

The four-month placement differs from the eight-month placement undertaken in the 5th year of the course where the rules prescribe that the placement must take place “*at the premises*”.

APPEL, together with the PSI, have drafted guidelines which encompass the parameters of remote working. These guidelines were approved by PSI Council on 23 July 2020.

Q. How will I know if my placement is being changed to a remote experiential learning placement?

For some placements, due to social distancing requirements, Training Establishments may be working remotely, as the government advice is to work from home where possible. If this is the case for your Training Establishment and you will be completing your placement remotely, **the APPEL office will ensure that you will be notified of this change by 14 August 2020**. APPEL will also ask your Preceptor to contact you to discuss the considerations as documented in the remote experiential learning guidelines.

If you have any questions or concerns about remote experiential learning, please contact your Practice Educator as soon as possible.

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. These circumstances will be addressed in the guidelines issued by APPEL and approved by the PSI Council.

Q. Are there additional requirements that my Preceptor or On-Site Supervisor or I need to consider if I am on placement remotely?

A. Completing a placement remotely will be a new experience for everyone. This will likely be the first time you will experience being on placement remotely. Additional training and guidance will be given to your Preceptor to support you in completing your placement remotely.

Your Preceptor may adopt some of the following strategies to support you in a remote experiential learning placement:

- Checking if you have access to an appropriate learning environment, e.g. a desk, chair, lighting, appropriate IT.
- Having regular check-ins with you.
- Setting daily/weekly/monthly deliverables to ensure that learning outcomes are achieved.
- Inviting you to partake in team communications, e.g. chats/group emails.
- Encouraging you to ask questions over email, on the phone or at a virtual meeting, if anything is unclear.
- Providing contact details for you to use when you need support, e.g. a ‘buddy’ or the Preceptor themselves.

If you have any questions or concerns about completing your placement remotely, please contact your Practice Educator as soon as possible.

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

A. Yes, additional documentation and pre-placement preparation are required to be completed in advance of you starting your placement due to the impact of COVID-19 on the placement.

1. In addition to the Student Placement Agreement, students will be required to sign a **COVID-19 Supplemental Student Undertaking/Declaration (Appendix 1)** and to review the **Personal Support Plan Questionnaire (Appendix 2)**.

2. All students are required to complete the following online courses in Infection Prevention and Control before you being your placement. These courses are required to be completed by your HEI and the Chief Clinical Officer (CCO) of the HSE. These courses are available at www.hseland.ie. Students must create an account on the site and register as “volunteer”.
 - a. Introduction to Infection Prevention and Control
 - b. Hand Hygiene for Clinical Staff
 - c. Putting on and Taking off PPE in Acute Healthcare Settings
 - d. Putting on and Taking off PPE in Community Healthcare Settings

3. You will need to confirm to APPEL and your School of Pharmacy that these courses have been completed by signing the **COVID-19 Supplemental Student Undertaking/Declaration** and submitting certificates which are provided when these courses are completed.
 - a. Please note the certificates are available on a separate tab on the web-page when the courses are completed.

4. The following videos are available on the HPSC website and need to be reviewed by students in advance of commencing your placement.
 - Review of videos on correct donning and doffing of PPE on the HPSC website 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/
5. 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 your 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/>
6. Students will be also be obliged to download the “COVID Tracker Ireland” and to log in and update this tracker daily.
7. You will also be required to log into the APPEL VLE daily and record the following information:
 - Record that you had no symptoms of COVID-19 before you attended your placement
 - If your Training Establishment is a HSE site, e.g. hospital, addiction services, you must record where you were on-site throughout your placement day: e.g. Dispensary, Ward X, etc.
 - Further information will be provided to you regarding this requirement to record this information on the APPEL VLE in advance of your placement on the pre-placement preparation day.
 - In additional to the above, your training site may have additional specific requirements such as logs etc., which you will be required to complete.

Q. What if I have been unwell before starting placement?

A. Students who have been unwell either generally or with COVID-19 [symptoms](#) in the 14 days prior to placement will need to contact their GP or University/College Student Health for advice. You must also contact your Practice Educator.

Students who displayed any of the COVID-19 symptoms must have followed [HSE guidance](#) of 14-day self-isolation from the first onset of symptoms and be five days free of symptoms before starting placement.

Q. What if I develop signs of COVID-19 during placement?

A. If you are at home when you develop [symptoms](#), do not go into placement, and do not leave home. You must self-isolate and phone your GP or Student Health Services (info below). You must also contact your Preceptor and Practice Educator.

If you are at your placement site when you develop symptoms, you must inform your Preceptor or On-Site Supervisor and must leave the site immediately. You should return home alone and not use public transport. You should self-isolate in your home and contact your GP or Student Health Services, from home.

UCC Student Health

Telephone: 021-4902311
Address: Student Health Department, Ardpark, College Road, Cork
Website: www.ucc.ie/en/studenthealth

RCSI Student Health

Telephone: 01-4022300
Address: Mercer's Medical Centre, Stephen Street Lower, Dublin 2
Website: www.mercersmedicalcentre.com

TCD Student Health

Telephone: 01-8961591 or 01-8961556

Address: College Health Centre, House 47, Trinity College, Dublin 2

Website: www.tcd.ie/collegehealth

Q. Where can I get accurate and up to date advice on how to protect myself and others while on placement?

A. Please adhere to local guidance provided by your Preceptor and Training Establishment in relation to:

- Social distancing
 - Use of PPE
 - Health and Safety Protocols – laundering outfits, personal hygiene, restricting your movement if you are a close contact of a person with COVID-19.
- ❖ You must check your emails and communications regularly for information from your School and College/University throughout your placement period as the situation has the potential to change rapidly. This information can be found at the following links:
- <https://www.ucc.ie/en/studenthealth/flu/> and
 - <https://www.rcsi.com/dublin/coronavirus/reopening> and
 - <https://www.tcd.ie/about/coronavirus/>
- ❖ For updated health information on COVID-19, please see the [Health Protection Surveillance Centre](#) (HPSC) and [the HSE](#) websites. We strongly advise that all students read and familiarise themselves with this guidance and keep abreast of the most up to date information available at all times.
- ❖ The Irish Institute of Pharmacy (IIoP) has a dedicated COVID-19 information hub for pharmacists <https://iiop.ie/content/covid-hub>.
- ❖ For updated travel information on COVID-19, please see the [DFA Travel Advice](#).
- ❖ Updates from the Department of Health can be found [here](#).

- ❖ Updates from the PSI can be found [here](#).
- ❖ The HPSC has published guidance to minimise the risk of transmission of COVID-19 in pharmacies. The guidance can be found [here](#).
- ❖ A COVID-19 HSE Clinical Guidance and Evidence repository are available [here](#). This site provides a national, easily accessible source of clinical guidance and latest research evidence to equip the clinical community in Ireland to respond to COVID-19. This also contains a specific section on pharmacy and drugs management and will be a particularly useful resource to all of you in your experiential learning placements.
- ❖ The HRB National Drugs Library is also collating clinical, and patient care research and harm reduction resources related to COVID-19 and this information can be found [here](#). There are several recently published papers [here](#), and this website is a beneficial resource for all students in sourcing information on COVID-19 matters from mental health, smoking, grieving, harm reduction etc.
- ❖ Information on “Communication skills for staff wearing Personal Protective Equipment (PPE)” can be found [here](#).

Q. In circumstances where I am unable to go on placement, due to a requirement to restrict my movements, how will this impact my placement?

A. Where you are required to restrict your movements (see HSE information [here](#)); and you are well, you are requested to complete your online academic modules during this time. These can be released to students early in circumstances where a student may not be able to attend their experiential learning placement.

By completing the online academic modules during a period of restricted movement, students will free up time to be on placement in lieu of time spent on academic modules.

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.

Q. In circumstances where I am unable to go on placement, due to a requirement to self - isolate how will this impact my placement?

A. Where you are required to self-isolate (see HSE information [here](#)); because you:

- have symptoms of coronavirus
- are waiting for a test appointment and your test results, if you have symptoms of coronavirus,
- have had a positive test result for coronavirus
- have any cold or flu-like symptoms, such as sore throat, runny nose, blocked nose, cough or wheezing,

but you are feeling well; you are requested to complete your online academic modules during this time for the reasons outlined above.

Where you are unwell; your college/HEI sick policies will apply in such circumstances.

Please keep your Practice Educator informed at all times.

Q. What supports are available to me at this time?

A. Your Practice Educator(s), Heads of School and the APPEL team are available to offer you support and assistance as required. Please note that all academic staff across all three HEIs will be contactable via email and by phone.

Your Schools of Pharmacy / Higher Education Institution will remain in contact with you throughout this time.

Appendix 1: COVID-19 Supplemental Student Undertaking/Declaration

Undertaking Experiential Learning Placements - Infection Prevention and Control (IPC)

Student Name (Block Capitals)			
School of Pharmacy (tick one)	UCC	RCSI	TCD
Your university email address:			
Training Establishment name and address for 4th-year experiential learning placement			

In advance of the experiential learning placement as part of studies at the University/College listed above (“**University**”), I acknowledge I have a personal responsibility to protect myself, patients and the general public from the potential of COVID-19 virus transmission, and to comply with Public Health Advice. Accordingly, I will ensure:

1. I am aware of and have familiarised myself with, COVID-19 symptoms. Please see: <https://www2.hse.ie/coronavirus/>
2. I will not present myself to my experiential learning placement (or to the University) if I have symptoms of COVID-19 or acute infections such as symptoms of viral respiratory tract infection or gastroenteritis.
3. In the event that I develop COVID-19 or other communicable infectious disease (for list see <https://www.hpsc.ie/notifiablediseases/listofnotifiablediseases/List%20of%20Notifiable%20Diseases%20February%202020.pdf>), I will immediately notify my Preceptor and the Practice Educator in my School so the School can communicate with the relevant HSE service (where applicable)/Training Establishment, in case it has implications for patients and staff.
4. I commit to providing a record of daily declarations that I am free of symptoms of COVID-19 relating to each day that I present for placement, completed on the day of placement prior to my attendance at the Training Establishment.
5. Where required, I commit to maintaining a daily readily accessible record of the clinical areas I was assigned to and at what times. This may be required in the event of an IPC incident such as an outbreak.
6. I will keep myself up-to-date, and comply with, with current Public Health Advice regarding COVID-19.
7. I am aware that if I am declared a close contact of someone with COVID-19 (as communicated by for example the contact tracing service) that I am not to present to my

Training Establishment (or to the University) and should avoid public places for 14 days after the last day of close contact with the COVID-19 case.

8. In advance of commencing my experiential learning placement, I will comply with all Infection Prevention and Control training required by my School and the HSE.
9. I will ensure that I abide by, and comply with, the rule of 'bare below the elbows/bare above the wrist' while on placement, where applicable.
10. I acknowledge I have been (or will be) provided with training in the performance of hand hygiene in advance of my placement and will undertake competence review at least once in each academic year.
11. I will comply with Infection Prevention and Control directions given by the HSE, my Preceptor and other Clinical staff at all times when I am in clinical areas, and any other measures the HSE or my Preceptor has in place to prevent the emergence of COVID-19 in while I am on placement.
12. I will cooperate with requirements for management of outbreaks or other incidents of infection, including providing samples for testing where required.
13. I have considered the Personal Support Plan Questionnaire provided below, (Appendix 2), should I need to self –isolate, restrict my movements or quarantine.

I acknowledge my placement is subject to Public Health Advice which may be in place from time to time and that public health advice may result in changes to arrangements during the course of my placement.

Data Protection

Any information disclosed to the University pursuant to this declaration will be treated with the highest standards of security and confidentiality and processed in accordance with the University's Data Protection Policy. The University is collecting this personal data in light of the COVID-19 pandemic and to implement the requirements of the HSE in relation to the undertaking of experiential learning placements. The legal basis for processing this data is based on protecting vital interests and for the reasons of public interest in the area of public health.

Signed:

Print student name:

Student number:

Date:

Appendix 2 - Personal Support Plan Questionnaire

We are conscious that you may be moving to accommodation away from support networks such as family, relatives and friends for your placement. Support networks such as this would be vital to any student who may become unwell as a result of a COVID-19 infection or who may be required to self-isolate. In this context, you should consider your personal support plan while away from home should you need to self-isolate.

What to Consider for Personal Support Plan

1. Are you living alone at the moment or will you be living alone?
2. If you are living alone at the moment or will shortly be living alone, have you identified a person nearby such as a friend, fellow student or relative, who may be contacted in case of emergency?
3. Have you registered with a General Practitioner Doctor near your current location?
4. Do you have any underlying medical conditions which require prescribed medication and if so, do you have a friend, fellow student or relative, who can collect medication on your behalf from a pharmacy should you be required to self-isolate?
5. Should you be required to self-isolate, do you have the ability to order and make payment for food and provisions via online supermarket delivery?
6. Do you have a mobile phone which can be used to seek help during any period of self-isolation or in case of an emergency and have you provided this number to your emergency contact person?

Appendix 3 - Actions to be completed

Actions to be completed	Deadline
1. Review the HSE guidelines on vulnerable people. a. If this applies to you, or to anyone that you live with, contact your Practice Educator.	14/08/20
2. Complete and Return the COVID-19 Supplemental Student Understanding/Declaration (Appendix 1). This needs to be emailed to ops@appel.ie	24/08/20
3. Complete the HSELand e-learning courses and submit certificates to ops@appel.ie one week before the placement start date <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 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 	24/08/20
4. Review the videos available on the HPSC website on donning and doffing of PPE and on IPC guidance	24/08/20
5. Read and understand the Guidance to minimise the risk of transmission of COVID-19 infection in pharmacies and the information provided by your University on COVID-19	24/08/20
6. Download COVID tracker app and remember to log your symptoms daily	24/08/20
7. Record symptoms on the VLE. If working in more than one site, this information must also be recorded. (Further information will be provided in advance of you starting on your placement).	Daily from 31/08/20
8. Familiarise yourself with and remember the Government policies on Travel, Quarantine and Self-Isolation.	30/08/20