

## 5<sup>th</sup>-Year Pharmacy Experiential Learning Placements 2021

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

The Schools of Pharmacy, PSI and HSE, have decided that 5th-year placements will go ahead, in line with current public health guidance, to enable students to fulfil the statutory requirements of completing an eight-month placement in the 5th year of their academic studies.

Pharmacy students are considered as trainee healthcare workers. Their education and training are regarded as essential; therefore, they will be able to attend their experiential learning placements around the country. It is vital that they remain on placement to complete their training and successfully progress to graduation.

APPEL is cognisant that COVID-19 will have a significant impact on the eight-month experiential learning placements due to take place from **4 January to the 27 August 2021**. Our priorities are to ensure that students continue on their journey to graduation and to realise their ambition to become a pharmacist. We are equally focused on ensuring that your health and wellbeing and that of the team within your Training Establishment, your family, and friends are protected.

In acknowledgement of the effect that COVID-19 may have on the student, on their Senior Preceptor and 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 5<sup>th</sup>-year experiential learning placements for 2021?

A. No, the dates of the placement remain unchanged. Students will be on their experiential learning placements from **4 January – 27 August 2021**.

\* Please note that some students returning to Ireland from other countries may need to restrict their movements 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. All students travelling from a country, not on the COVID-19 Green List will be required to restrict movements for two weeks following their return to Ireland from abroad. The request to restrict movements does not apply to people arriving into Ireland from countries on the Green List. Please see travel advice [here](#). Therefore, where a student is travelling from a country, not on the COVID-19 Green List, they must ensure that they have returned to Ireland no later than the **21 December 2020** so that they are available to commence their placement on the **4 January 2021**.

**Q. What are the key placement dates for the 5<sup>th</sup>-year placements in 2021?**

A. The placement dates are as follows:

- Student on placement: 4 January– 27 August 2021
- Formative assessment date: Completed by the end of week 12 (31 March 2021)
- Summative assessment date: Completed by the end of week 30 (30 July 2021)
- Focused training period if required: 2 August – 27 August 2021
  - Please note that the placement continues until 27 August 2021 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 Senior 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 Senior 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. Are remote experiential placements permissible for the 5<sup>th</sup> Year experiential learning placement?**

A. No. The eight-month placement undertaken in the 5<sup>th</sup> year of the course must take place "*at the premises*" (See SI 377/2014).

**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 the student can fit into a new team.

More details on items to include in the student induction programme can be found in the Senior 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 5<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. Students are assessed against all six domains of the PSI Core Competency Framework (CCF).

**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 Senior Preceptor. No changes have been made to the Placement Agreement or the Accreditation documentation.

**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)
  - a. Introduction to Infection Prevention and Control
  - b. Breaking the Chain of Infection
  - c. Hand Hygiene for Clinical Staff
  - d. Putting on and Taking off PPE in Acute Healthcare Settings
  - e. Putting on and Taking off PPE in Community Healthcare Settings
  - f. Infection Prevention and Control
  - g. What is Corona Virus
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%20control/)
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 Senior Preceptor and Practice Educator.

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

Where a student is required to restrict their movements or self-isolate and is well, the student is required to study remotely at home during this time.

Students **may 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 Senior 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 Senior Preceptors from APPEL during the 5<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.



## The APPEL Team Contact Details

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