PSI

The Pharmacy Regulator
An Rialtóir Cógaisíochta

Guidelines for Remote Experiential

Learning Placements in the 4th year of the

Pharmacy MPharm Programme

July 2021

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.

Purpose

With the COVID-19 pandemic, organisations have had to change their way of working and many employees are now working remotely or working remotely to a greater extent. This has impacted on certain experiential learning placements where the organisations are requiring students to work remotely also. These guidelines aim to ensure that the 4th 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.

Guidelines for Remote Experiential Learning Placements

- 4th Year placements 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.

- 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 or where remote working conditions apply, 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.

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

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.