

Supervisor Handbook

2nd-Year Placement



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Quick Guide to the 2nd-Year Placement

PLACEMENT SCHEDULE

UCC/Trinity	12 th -23 rd January 2026	Monday to Friday 09.30-17.00 with one hour lunch
RCSI	5 th - 16 th January 2026	Monday to Friday 09.30-17.00 with one hour lunch

Please note: Any change to the placement schedule needs to be discussed with and approved by APPEL in advance.

ATTENDANCE

- **100% attendance** is expected from students on placement.
- If a student is absent during placement hours for any reason, please inform the APPEL office by emailing ops@appel.ie.

CODE OF CONDUCT and CRITICAL INCIDENTS

- Students are expected to abide by their **APPEL Joint Student Code of Conduct** while on placement (available on www.appel.ie/resources). If you have any queries/concerns regarding your student's conduct, please contact the student's Practice Educator as soon as possible.
- Supervisors must report any **critical incidents** (including but not limited to fire, burglary, needle-stick injury, accident at work, hold-up, death or serious injury to the student, staff, or patient) to APPEL, as soon as possible.

PLACEMENT WORKBOOK

Students are required to complete a **workbook of learning activities** while on placement. Your student will be able to share their workbook with you. The purpose of the workbook is to support the student in achieving the following learning outcomes while on placement:

1. Observe, appreciate, and document the steps involved in the safe dispensing and supply of medicines
2. Observe, appreciate, and document the skills and behaviours of the pharmacist
3. Link documented activities to the PSI's Core Competency Framework (CCF)

SUPPORT

If you have any queries regarding the placement, you can contact a Practice Educator or the APPEL Office (contact details are available on [the APPEL website](#) or at the end of this handbook).

Background information

What is APPEL?

APPEL (Affiliation for Pharmacy Practice Experiential Learning) is responsible for the management of the common experiential learning placements of the integrated pharmacy programmes in Ireland. It is overseen by the APPEL Board, consisting of the Heads of the Schools of Pharmacy. The APPEL team consists of Practice Educators based within the Schools of Pharmacy and the APPEL office, led by the Director and National Coordinator of APPEL. The team is available to support both Trainers and students throughout their practice placements.

The 5-year Integrated Pharmacy Programme

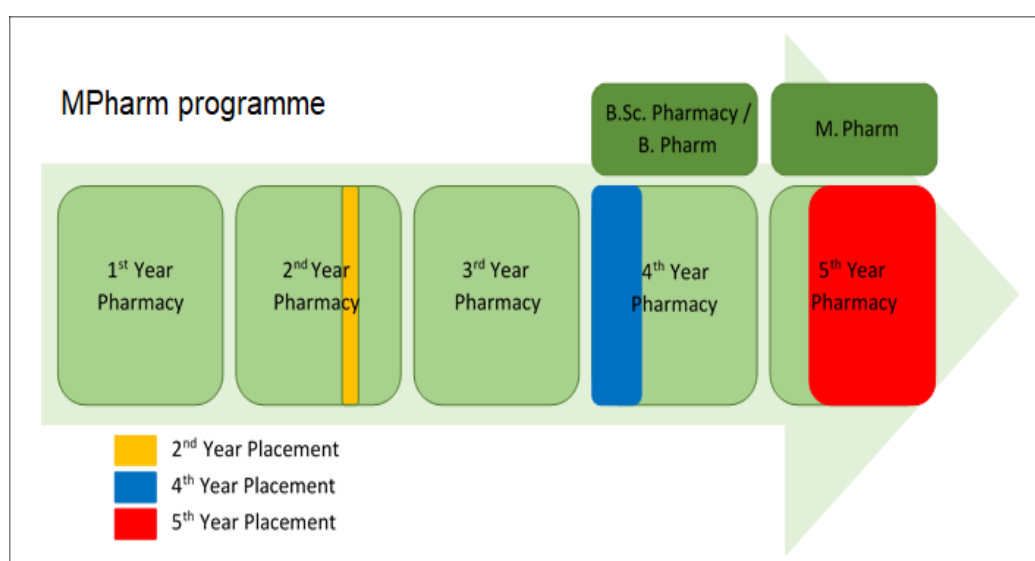
Students on the 5-year integrated pharmacy programme remain registered at their university for all five years and undertake three experiential learning placements during this time. These are workplace-based learning experiences, which are overseen by APPEL on behalf of the Schools of Pharmacy. The underpinning philosophy of experiential learning placements is that students remain as students while on placement.

This early practical experience helps students to:

- Contextualise their theoretical studies from the lecture theatre and practical classes.
- Learn new skills and competencies.
- Understand the range of roles undertaken by pharmacists in community and hospital pharmacies.
- Engage with pharmacists as potential future colleagues across a breadth of practice settings.

"It contextualised my learning (...) and helped me understand what (...) pharmacy involves beyond University-gained knowledge."

2nd-year student



Before the Placement

For you and your student to get the most out of the experience, it is important to be prepared for your student's placement. **Preparation as a Supervisor** is vital to ensuring that it is an enjoyable and rewarding experience for all.

Practice Educators prepare students before they go on their placement, including preparation relating to the following areas:

- Attendance and punctuality
- Code of Conduct
- Mobile phone use
- Professional dress
- Data protection and confidentiality
- Learning activities (in the placement workbook)

In addition, students are required to complete Infection Prevention and Control (IPC) Training in line with HSE guidelines for student placements.

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Preparing for your student's placement

Trainer Training

Information about the APPEL placement programme is available on the APPEL website (www.appel.ie/resources). Supervisors are encouraged to complete APPEL Trainer Training before the placement begins, however, this training is optional and is not a requirement of offering a 2nd year placement.

Meet the student at their pre-placement visit

APPEL requires students to phone their Supervisor in advance of their placement. A pre-placement visit can be organised if this suits the Supervisor.

The aim of this visit is to ensure that students know how to get to their placements, know what to wear, etc. You could also ask the student any questions you might have, for example:

- ✓ Previous relevant experience - this may be the student's first experience in a pharmacy/department.
- ✓ Confirm when the student will commence their placement, and ensure you have contact details for your student.
- ✓ Ensure the student has correct contact details/phone number for your pharmacy/department.
- ✓ Discuss the plan for Day 1 of the student's placement (see Student Induction below).
- ✓ Introduce the student to other members of your team.
- ✓ Ensure both you and your student have access to your student's Practice Educators' name(s), contact phone numbers and email addresses, and contact details for the APPEL office. These are available on the APPEL website (www.appel.ie/contact-us/) and at the end of this handbook.

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Plan Student Induction

As most of us in APPEL are pharmacists, we understand how busy a pharmacy can be, and we are aware that your student could arrive at the pharmacy/department at a particularly busy time. For this reason, a planned induction is required for your student (some aspects of this could be delegated to other staff members). The induction could include:

1. Showing the student the pharmacy/department layout and facilities, and explaining a typical daily routine in your pharmacy/department.
2. Telling the student about your pharmacy/department and discussing their role while on placement – what are your expectations, what are their expectations?
3. Providing the student with key policies and procedures, e.g. security, data protection and confidentiality, child safeguarding statement, open disclosure policy.

It is also important that all students receive a health and safety induction. Ask your student to help you plan for their placement - what would they like to do, what would you like them to do? Agree together in advance some learning opportunities that your student may avail of when your pharmacy/department is busy. **The APPEL 2nd-Year Induction Plan** is available on the resources page of the APPEL website (www.appel.ie/resources).

During the Placement

Supervision

All students on placement must be supervised by a PSI-registered pharmacist. It should be clear to staff, patients and customers that the student is not a registered pharmacist. Students have been provided with a **name badge**, which identifies them as pharmacy students. If you, as Supervisor, are not present for the full placement, please ensure that the pharmacist in charge is aware of the student's presence and can identify suitable activities for the student to observe/undertake.

Remember! This is the first experiential learning placement of the 5-year pharmacy programme. For many students, it will be their first experience of a pharmacy dispensary. It may also be their first time engaging with colleagues in a workplace setting and perhaps their first encounter with patients. Students generally approach the placement with great excitement and enthusiasm, but there may be some for whom it can also be a daunting experience, and they may be nervous and possibly a little overwhelmed, especially at the start of the placement. Despite the learning acquired in lectures, labs, role-plays and simulations in university, students are often surprised by the fast-paced, high-pressured and demanding environments typical of pharmacies, and they may feel uncomfortable interrupting you or other staff members to ask questions or clarify what they should be doing, especially when the pharmacy is busy. **Some students will endeavour to be proactive, but this may be difficult for those unfamiliar with the day-to-day activities of a pharmacy.** Experience from previous placements has shown that a comprehensive induction, as early as possible in the placement, as well as a good understanding of your student's placement expectations, can be invaluable in ensuring the student settles into the placement environment and the pharmacy team and that a successful placement is experienced by all.

To ensure that all students are adequately supported on placement, the designated Supervisor should be present as much as possible during the placement. In the case of any absence of the Supervisor during the placement, it is their responsibility to ensure that the student is adequately supervised and provided with suitable activities that support the student in achieving the prescribed learning outcomes while on placement. The 'Frequently Asked Questions' section of this handbook provides some suggested learning opportunities for students. Please note that these activities are suggestions only and may or may not be suitable for a student in your workplace. **Students must be appropriately supervised at all times in the pharmacy.**



Role of the Supervisor

As a Supervisor, you will guide and support your student's learning experience. Students are encouraged to take responsibility for their own learning and must complete the **placement workbook** they have been assigned by their School of Pharmacy. However, at this early stage of their studies they require supervision and may have questions for you. You can also share your insights as an experienced professional; students will benefit greatly from their interactions with you as a professional role model.

Contacting APPEL

APPEL ask you to get in touch if you have any queries and, if any of the following circumstances arise while your student is on placement:

- **Absence** – If your student is unable to attend placement during the scheduled placement hours, for any reason, please contact the APPEL office (ops@appel.ie). This includes absence for medical/dental appointments, illness, bereavement, university club commitments, etc.
- **Critical Incident** – For your student's safety and welfare, please contact a Practice Educator or the APPEL office if a critical incident arises when the student is on placement. A critical incident is any actual or alleged event or situation that creates a significant risk of substantial or serious harm to a student's physical or mental health, safety or well-being. These events are very rare, examples of which include, but are not limited to, injury to the student, death or serious illness of a member of staff or patient, fire, needle stick injury, accident at work or burglary.

Student Conduct

Students are required to adhere to the **APPEL Joint Student Code of Conduct** while on placement (www.appel.ie/resources).

The **six principles** of the Code are:

1	Your primary concern must be to maintain and improve the health, well-being, care and safety of patients. <i>Example: Ensure that patient safety is your primary concern – speak to the appropriate person if you think you have made a mistake.</i>
2	Develop your professional competence, skills, and standing to bring health gain and value to the community and society. <i>Example: Take responsibility for your learning on placement and only practice within your limits of competence.</i>
3	Be honest and trustworthy and show respect to others. <i>Example: Protect patient, prescriber and business confidentiality.</i>
4	Conduct yourself in a manner that enhances the service provided and maintains the good name of your profession. <i>Example: Communicate effectively and appropriately with patients/customers, your Supervisor, staff at the Training Establishment, and APPEL staff while on placement.</i>
5	Maintain your professional knowledge and competence. <i>Example: Engage with all opportunities to learn and develop while on placement.</i>
6	Be aware of your obligations under the Code of Conduct and do not breach the Code. <i>Example: Comply with all APPEL policies while on placement, i.e. the terms and conditions set out in the Student Placement Agreement.</i>



If you become aware of any potential breaches of the APPEL Joint Student Code of Conduct or any potential patient safety incidents during the placement, please contact APPEL. **At this early stage of a student's professional career, it is important that such behaviours are highlighted to students, so that they can be given support to help them develop.** Discussing a matter with a Practice Educator does not necessarily mean it will impact your student's progression, but it will allow an opportunity for your student to receive feedback and support.

Placement Workbook

Students have to undertake learning activities in their placement workbook while on placement. This provides focus and direction to students' learning on placement. Students are asked to observe and document the activities of the pharmacist and other members of the pharmacy team for their learning and development. Students may also participate in additional pharmacy activities, under appropriate supervision, with the permission of their Supervisor. It is important to note that students will only have completed about a quarter of their undergraduate training before this placement. Students from all Schools of Pharmacy will have covered some biology, physiology, microbiology, biochemistry, chemistry, calculations, pharmaceuticals, pharmacognosy, practice of pharmacy and pharmacology.

The Schools of Pharmacy/Practice Educators provide students with their placement workbooks. The learning activities are categorised under three main learning outcomes. There are set activities associated with each learning outcome, which students must either observe the pharmacist doing or undertake themselves under the supervision and guidance of the pharmacist. The students' learning activities are:

Observe, appreciate and document the steps involved in the safe dispensing and supply of medicines:

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- a. Follow a prescription journey, which encompasses all of the following steps: presentation, legal check, calculation, patient medication record entry, labelling and assembly, clinical check, risk management and monitoring
 - b. Follow a prescription journey for a drug with additional controls and identify how this differs from a regular prescription
 - c. Supply of non-prescription medicines
 - d. Sourcing of medicines and stock management

Observe, appreciate and document the skills and behaviours of the pharmacist

Focus on pharmacists in their capacity as a:

Collaborator

Communicator

Advisor

Manager

Life-long learner

Link documented activities to the PSI's CCF

Link the activities you undertook/observed to the competencies of the CCF

Hospital Placements

Following feedback from hospital-based Supervisors, examples of ways for the student to complete their learning activities in the hospital environment have been provided to students in their Student Handbook, available on the APPEL website [here](#). Please contact a Practice Educator if you would like any guidance around student learning activities.

At the End of the Placement

Supervisor's Report

At the end of the placement, **please complete the Supervisor's Report**. The purpose of this report is to capture your summary of the student's conduct and professionalism during their placement, to confirm that the student completed their learning activities in a safe manner and to verify that your student attended for their full placement. The report also enables you to **highlight to your student areas in which they could further develop and areas in which they performed well**. A brief discussion with your student regarding your recommendations for their further development will be beneficial in helping them reflect on their placement experience and identify competencies and skills to focus on in future placements.

Students will present you with this report and have been advised about how they should return this to their School of Pharmacy.

Feedback

Once the placement is over, we will invite you to participate in an anonymous online questionnaire to get your views on what worked well and how we could improve things. Please do not hesitate to provide open and honest feedback, as you will know best how we can improve this experience for all. We also welcome direct contact from Supervisors who may prefer to provide feedback over the phone or via email (ops@appel.ie).

Equality, Diversity, and Inclusion

In a diverse world, people are aware of their unconscious biases and have a desire to develop their cultural competence. As a pharmacist and Trainer, we know you are committed to treating all patients, colleagues and students with dignity and respect. You can learn more about Overcoming Unconscious Bias and Dignity at Work in these three short courses on HSeLand:

- [Equality and Diversity](#)
- [Overcoming Unconscious Bias in the Workplace](#)
- [Dignity at Work](#)

These courses have also been signposted for students. If you have any concerns about your student's behaviour in this respect, please contact a Practice Educator or the APPEL office.

Frequently Asked Questions

How are students allocated to their 2nd-year placement?

For the 2nd-year placement, students are assigned to their placement based on geographical location.

Can I get a good student back?

Students can return to a pharmacy/department for either the 4th or 5th-year placement (but not for both).

How do we manage patient and colleague expectations?

The student can be introduced to patients and colleagues as a pharmacy student on an experiential learning placement as part of their pharmacy undergraduate training. The student has been provided with a name badge. Feedback from previous 2nd-year students indicated that students felt they greatly benefited from the opportunity to improve their communication skills with patients in a “real-life” environment. Under supervision, students are encouraged to interact with patients and reflect on these interactions in the context of their own professional development. Students are reminded before they go on placement to be mindful not to treat the patients they meet as “case studies” but to be respectful, courteous, and empathetic.

How can my experience of supervising a 2nd-year student become part of my own CPD?

APPEL has developed sample CPD cycles based on feedback that pharmacists shared regarding their experiences of supervising students. These sample CPD cycles are available on the APPEL website at www.appel.ie/resources.

What can a student do when the pharmacy team is busy?

There will be times during the student's placement when the pharmacy/department becomes busy. Students could take advantage of these times to **complete their placement workbook**. Some students may complete their learning activities quite quickly and be eager to avail of additional learning opportunities.

APPEL suggests setting an agreed list of learning opportunities at student induction to encourage and enable the student to direct themselves in their learning at busy times **Students with no previous experience in a pharmacy may find it difficult to be proactive in the unfamiliar environment of a pharmacy/department. They will benefit from help in identifying self- directed learning opportunities.**

The following are suggested learning opportunities for students. Please note that these activities are suggestions only and may or may not be suitable for a student in your workplace. **Students must be appropriately supervised at all times in the pharmacy.**

- Look at the types of medication stored in the pharmacy fridge. How does the pharmacist ensure the fridge is maintained at an appropriate temperature?
- Find out what is meant by the term 'unlicensed medicine'. Where are these medicines stored in the pharmacy, and how are they ordered?
- Look at the Pharmacy-only (P) medicines sold in the pharmacy. For each medicine, consider what information you would gather from a patient who wants to buy one of these medicines and what counselling you would provide in each case.
- Find out what pharmacy services are provided by the pharmacy.
- How does the pharmacy dispose of medicines returned by its patients?
- Does the pharmacy provide any services to local nursing homes or residential care units? Find out how the pharmacy helps with medication management (e.g. blister packs, venalinks, weekly dispensing).
- Find the PSI's pharmacist duty log. What is the purpose of the duty log, and what information is recorded therein?

Interprofessional activities:

On previous placements, students identified opportunities to observe interprofessional activities as a highlight of their placements. We understand that these opportunities may not occur frequently. However, we would welcome any opportunity provided to students to accompany the pharmacist to a meeting/service delivery that involves interacting with other healthcare professionals. Examples could include: visiting a nursing home; attending a hospital multidisciplinary meeting or lecture.

Abbreviations and Definitions

Affiliation for Pharmacy Practice Experiential Learning (APPEL) – A collaboration between the three Schools of Pharmacy to manage the experiential learning placements for the integrated pharmacy programmes.

CCF – The PSI's Core Competency Framework.

GDPR – General Data Protection Regulation.

HEI – Higher Education Institution.

Learning Activities – The activities your student needs to complete and document while on their 2nd-year placement.

Practice Educator – An employee of one of the Schools of Pharmacy who also works with APPEL and acts as a liaison between APPEL, the Training Establishments/Supervisors, the students, and their School of Pharmacy.

PSI – Pharmaceutical Society of Ireland.

RCSI – Royal College of Surgeons in Ireland, University of Medicine and Health Sciences.

School of Pharmacy – UCC School of Pharmacy, RCSI School of Pharmacy and Biomolecular Sciences, or Trinity School of Pharmacy and Pharmaceutical Sciences.

Supervisor – A registered pharmacist who is supervising a 2nd-year student on placement.

Trinity – University of Dublin, Trinity College.

Training Establishment – The specific location providing the placement.

UCC – University College Cork, National University of Ireland, Cork.

2nd-Year Placement – Experiential learning placement in the second year of the five-year integrated pharmacy programme.



The APPEL Team Contact Details

APPEL Office, Operations Team

	Katherine Morrow – <i>Director & National Coordinator</i> Sarah O’Kelly – <i>APPEL Operations Manager</i> Conor Walsh – <i>Operations Support Pharmacist</i> Balazs Balogh – <i>Operations Coordinator</i>
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