



2026/27 Student Handbook

4th-Year Placement

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Quick Guide to 4th-Year Placement

ATTENDANCE

This is a statutory placement, which is defined in law as being 'at least four months' in duration. Thus, 100% attendance is required. You must report **any unexpected absences**, e.g., due to illness, during the placement to both your **Training Establishment** **AND** to your **Practice Educator**.

CODE OF CONDUCT

Comply with the APPEL Joint Schools Code of Conduct while on placement. The Code of Conduct is available [here](#).

COMPETENCY ASSESSMENT

Competency Assessment must be completed on the APPEL Virtual Learning Environment by both the student and their Preceptor. The dates for completion are:

- Formative assessment: completed by week 5, ending 4th October 2026.
- Summative assessment: completed by week 12, ending 22nd November 2026.

CRITICAL INCIDENTS

You must report all critical incidents to your Practice Educator, including but not limited to fire, burglary, hold-up, death or serious injury to staff or yourself – e.g., needle stick injury.

PATIENT SAFETY

Patient safety is your primary concern on placement. If you become aware of a potential patient safety incident, alert your Preceptor/a member of staff at the Training Establishment immediately.

PLACEMENT SCHEDULE

30 hours per week as agreed with your Training Establishment between Monday and Friday (8am-6pm) (excluding bank holidays). In addition to the 30 hours on placement, students must set aside four consecutive hours between Monday and Friday (8am-6pm) each week for academic activities.

The week of October Bank Holiday (Monday 26th October) students are required to complete only 22.5 hours during this week, as APPEL placement is not scheduled on bank holidays.

For the week of the Future of PharmacIE (Friday 23rd October), attendance at this event is counted as part of your placement time.

SUPPORT

Contact details of your Practice Educators and the APPEL Operations team are at the end of this handbook.

TRAVEL

Occasionally the opportunity may arise to undertake travel away from your Training Establishment, e.g., travel to a conference, an excursion to another placement site, or a placement related trip abroad. In these instances, please contact APPEL as soon as possible, as APPEL's governance and insurance responsibilities require that all travel away from the Training Establishment is risk assessed by APPEL.

Section 1 - 4th-Year Placements – Practical Information

When?

31st August – 18th December 2026

What time?

Students are required to complete 30 hours of placement each week. The hours of attendance must be of 'University character', i.e., **between 8am and 6pm on weekdays**. In addition, you must be available for four consecutive hours per week, between 8am and 6pm on weekdays, to allow uninterrupted time to complete academic work. You will attend placement for 30 hours each week according to a timetable agreed with the Training Establishment.

Lunch break: Breaks should be agreed with your Training Establishment, as appropriate. A lunch break must be taken, as agreed with your Training Establishment (this will usually be one hour in duration). Your lunch break is not counted as part of your 30 placement hours per week.

Bank holidays: APPEL placement is not scheduled on bank holidays in line with the university character of placement. You are only required to complete 22.5 hours on weeks which include a bank holiday.

Future of PharmacIE: APPEL's Future of PharmacIE event takes place on Friday 23rd October 2026. We **strongly encourage** all students to attend and make the most of this valuable careers event. Preceptors have been informed that attendance at Future of PharmacIE will count as a day of placement. A free bus will be provided for UCC students travelling from Cork. Please note that if you are unable to attend the event, you are expected to attend your placement on that day instead.

What happens if I miss some placement time?

- This is a statutory placement, which is defined in law as being 'at least four months' in duration. Therefore, 100% attendance is required on placement.
- The APPEL timetable is flexible and can thus accommodate attendance at discretionary appointments or events during the placement week.
- You must complete 30 hours of placement each week. However, where required and in conjunction with your Preceptor, you can decrease the number of hours on placement in one week and increase the number of hours in the following week(s) to complete the required amount of time, e.g., 35 hours during Week 1 and 25 hours during Week 2.
- **You must inform both your Training Establishment and your Practice Educator if you are unexpectedly absent from placement**, e.g., due to illness or bereavement or if you have a concern that you will not be able to attend placement for the requisite amount of time. The management of any absences from placement is a matter for your School of Pharmacy, who will manage absences in line with the School's policy on attendance.
- Your Preceptor will be asked to sign a 'Declaration of Satisfactory Attendance and Student Behaviour' to confirm that you have completed the requisite placement time (30 hours per week over four months, or equivalent).

Remember: One of the competencies you will be assessed against involves “Manages self - I am punctual and reliable”.

What do I do if a critical incident occurs on placement?

For your safety and welfare, you must contact your Practice Educator or the APPEL Operations team if a critical incident arises while you are on placement. A critical incident is any actual or alleged event or situation that creates a significant risk of substantial or serious harm to the physical or mental health, safety or wellbeing of a student. Examples include, but are not limited to, death or serious illness of a member of staff or patient, fire, hold-up, needle stick injury, accident at work, or burglary.

What do I do if an opportunity to travel presents while on placement?

On occasion, a student undertaking an APPEL experiential learning placement will be offered the opportunity to undertake travel away from their Training Establishment as part of their placement. This may include, for example, travel to a conference, an excursion to another placement site, or a placement related trip abroad. In line with APPEL’s governance and insurance responsibilities relating to student placements, it is necessary that all travel away from the Training Establishment is risk assessed by APPEL. Please contact the APPEL Operations team at ops@appel.ie as soon as possible to start the approval process.

Where can I go for support during my placement?

Your Preceptor (and/or On-Site Supervisor) will provide support during your placement and be available for day-to-day queries.

Your Practice Educator is your first point of contact for support queries that cannot be managed by your Preceptor.

The APPEL Operations team is also available if you are unable to contact your Practice Educator. Contact details for APPEL team members are available at the end of this handbook.

Your Practice Educator and the APPEL Operations team receive many queries from students and no question is too small to ask. Examples of queries that Practice Educators and APPEL have previously received include:

- Unexpected absences from placement due to illness, bereavement, or other.
- Reasonable accommodations required due to personal health circumstances.
- Critical incidents arising on placements, e.g., robbery in the pharmacy.
- Support with finding opportunities to develop competency.

As a reminder of some of the support services that are available from your university, are listed in Section 4. If you have any questions, please contact your Practice Educator.



TOP TIP: If you have a question, check our website www.appel.ie for useful information. Practice Educators are happy to answer any question also, so make sure to stay in contact.

Section 2 - Preparing for your 4th-Year Placement

Dress code

An important aspect of being a professional is to dress appropriately for the workplace environment. Remember, dress code incorporates more than the clothes and shoes you wear – it is also important to ensure high standards of personal hygiene, wear appropriate levels of make-up/jewellery (if worn) and to ensure that hairstyle is appropriate for the environment.

Please note: There will be specific dress code requirements in some environments, e.g., short sleeves (for hand hygiene purposes), no ties (for health and safety purposes), no jewellery/make-up/watches/nail polish in some clinical/manufacturing environments. Ask your Preceptor regarding the specific dress code for your placement.

GDPR (General Data Protection Regulation)

In the Student Placement Agreement, which outlines your responsibilities as a student on an experiential learning placement, it states: *“I understand the importance of confidentiality with regard to patient information and commercial business information, and I shall keep any of this information which I come across during my placement confidential.”*

GDPR came into force on 25th May 2018 and strengthened the data privacy rights of all European citizens. It is imperative that you are familiar with your role in maintaining data privacy relating to your placement. Please undertake a short course on GDPR, offered free of charge by your HEI, prior to commencing your placement:

UCC students: <https://www.ucc.ie/en/ocla/legal-infocomp/informationcompliance/dataprotectiongeneral/>

RCSI students: <https://vle.rcsi.com/course/view.php?id=8520§ion=3>

Trinity students: <https://www.tcd.ie/dataprotection/training/>

Equality, Diversity, and Inclusion

APPEL'S EDI STATEMENT

APPEL is committed to promoting the values of equality, embracing diversity and inclusivity throughout our organisation, and to bringing awareness of EDI when collaborating with our stakeholders.

We believe all stakeholders with whom we engage can, and should, rely on APPEL to treat them in a respectful and dignified manner, free from discrimination.

One of the six core principles of the [APPEL Joint Schools Code of Conduct](#) is to “conduct yourself in a manner which enhances the service provided to society and which will maintain the good name of your College and profession”. One important aspect of this principle is to treat others with consideration and respect.

While on placement, you will have an opportunity to promote inclusion and diversity to your patients and colleagues. You also have the responsibility to be aware of your own unconscious bias.

You can learn more about Overcoming Unconscious Bias and Dignity at Work in these two short courses on HSeLand:

- [Equality and Diversity](#)
- [Dignity at Work \(revised 2022\)](#)

Just as it is your responsibility to treat patients and colleagues with dignity and respect, it is also your right to be treated as such. If you ever feel that this is not the case, please contact your Practice Educator or one of the student support services outlined in Table 3 in this handbook.

Practice Setting-Specific Advice

Training Establishments from each practice setting have offered feedback and advice to future students, which they can complete before placement starts to help set students up for a successful placement.

Community Pharmacy Placements: Review your college notes prior to undertaking placement, e.g., notes on over-the-counter medicines/counselling. Consider how you will access a BNF.

Hospital Pharmacy Placements: Review your college notes prior to undertaking placement, e.g., pharmacology/clinical pharmacy notes. It may also be useful to revise any notes you have relating to Kardexes, lab reference ranges, renal dosing, accessing relevant guidelines, e.g., antimicrobial guidelines, opioid dosing guidelines, drugs in pregnancy guidelines etc. Consider how you will access a BNF.

Industrial Pharmacy and Role-Emerging Practice Placements: Computer literacy is an advantage for both industrial pharmacy and role-emerging practice placements. Your HEI offers Information Technology courses free of charge –please use the following link to enrol in the online course at your HEI:

UCC students: <https://www.ucc.ie/en/ittraining/icdl/enroll/>

RCSI students: <https://vle.rcsi.com/mod/page/view.php?id=231330> (Pharmacy Link)

Trinity students: <https://www.tcd.ie/hr/learning-and-development/linked-in-learning/>

Calibrating Expectations

Induction: Research shows that an essential step in a successful placement is to have an induction meeting with your Preceptor. APPEL have created a [template](#), which you should complete, in conjunction with your Preceptor. At this induction meeting, tell your Preceptor about your learning goals for the placement, as well as the factors, which are important to you to have a successful placement. Feedback from previous students encourages you to “express interest in particular sections you want to experience” and reiterates that “you get out what you put in, so take every opportunity”. At this induction meeting, you should begin populating the training plan section of your [Induction and Training Plan](#) under the guidance of your Preceptor.

Learning styles: Each of us favours one or more styles of learning. In advance of your induction meeting, please undertake the [Honey and Mumford Learning Styles](#) Questionnaire to identify your preferred learning style. By sharing this information with your Preceptor, you and your Preceptor will gain a deeper understanding and appreciation of each other’s learning (and teaching) styles.

Hints and tips from previous students:

Preparation

- “Brush up on clinical knowledge from the past three years”, “Put a plan to revise what you have studied in college – link it with real life”, “Brush up on OTC knowledge before starting placement if possible”
- “Be clear at start what exactly you want to learn”

Learning – “Use your training plan”

- “Use training plan as a tool to structure your placement learning”
- “Use training plan to decide what to do and as a starting point for feedback conversations with Preceptor”
- “Identify early in placement how you learn and how your Preceptor teaches.”
- “Ask Preceptor if there are specific training opportunities over the coming months.”
- “Review training plan regularly to see which competencies apply to various learning activities and to remember what you have to cover”

Practical Tips

- “Ask questions and get stuck in”, “don’t be afraid to ask for further guidance if you are ever unsure about something”
- “Integrate yourself with the entire team” “Get involved in as many service and training opportunities as you can” “Get involved in as many projects as possible”
- “Be prepared for an environment different to community and be aware of the self-motivation required to complete tasks in an industry setting”
- “It is not about knowledge; it is about skills”
- “Be eager, show initiative”
- “Try to find answers yourself don’t always go straight to asking the pharmacist. Learn how to find answers”
- “Be open to learn from every team member”

Section 3 - During your 4th -Year Placement

What will I be doing during the placement?

During your 4th-year placement, it is intended that you will be developing competencies in the three domains of the [PSI's Core Competency Framework](#) listed below:

- Domain 1 - Personal
- Domain 2 - Professional
- Domain 3 - Organisation and Management Skills

You should plan to be exposed to a sufficient range of activities to enable you to develop the 13 competencies in these three domains.

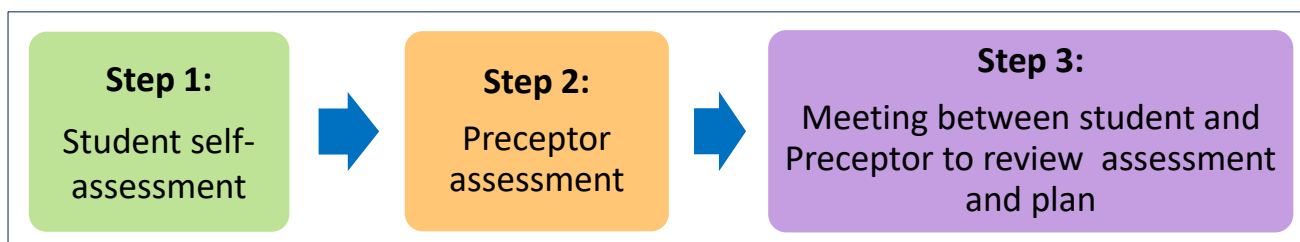
Having a live training plan, which you should update regularly, will enable you to plan a sufficient range of activities. You can access the training plan template [here](#).

How will the placement be assessed? - Competency Assessment

The placement will be assessed using the competency assessment tool. The purpose of competency assessment is to allow you to develop your competence throughout the placement, by allowing you to reflect on your own progress, receiving feedback from your Preceptor and then planning how you can develop. Your Preceptor will rate you on the level of supervision/intervention required when you are completing tasks to demonstrate the competencies.

It is a three-step process as described below.

Competency Assessment Process



Step 1 You will complete a self-assessment exercise and assign yourself a rating in each of the specified competencies, based on what you consider your competency rating to be.

Step 2 Your Preceptor will assign you a rating in each of the specified competencies based on their experience of your competency.

Step 3 A meeting is organised between you and your Preceptor to review the respective ratings together. The following should be discussed as part of this meeting:

- Ask your Preceptor for feedback that (i) identifies those areas where you have performed well, (ii) highlights where improvement is needed, and (iii) how this may be achieved.
- Identify the areas where you are not at the required rating; explore why this may be. Have you not yet had opportunities to develop this competency? or do you require more practice in certain activities to develop the competency? Consider and discuss with your Preceptor activities that may provide opportunities to develop these competencies and document these activities in the training plan.

Formative and Summative Competency Assessments

There will be two Competency Assessments during your placement:

- **Formative assessment:** **Week 5 - Deadline 4th October**
- **Summative assessment:** **Week 12 - Deadline 22nd November**

The difference between the formative and summative Competency Assessments is described below.

Formative Assessment: This assessment occurs early in the placement – week 5. This type of assessment is also known as assessment *for* learning, is to allow you and your Preceptor to identify competencies that you need to practise and improve upon and to support your competency development on placement. There is no expectation that students will have reached the required standard of competency by the formative assessment. The ratings achieved at this point **do not** contribute towards your overall assessment outcome.

Summative Assessment: This type of assessment is also known as assessment *of* learning. This Competency Assessment is the final one, and it is mandatory to achieve the required standard of a 'MIN - Requires minimal supervision' rating in all 13 competencies to pass the competency assessment component of the placement. This assessment occurs in week 12 of placement.

Focused Training Plans: If you have not reached the required standard by the end of week 12, you and your Preceptor need to contact a Practice Educator immediately. The Practice Educator will support you both in developing a focused training plan for the final four weeks of the placement to give you every opportunity to reach the required standard by the end of the placement.

The final Competency Assessment will remain open until the end of your placement to allow your Preceptor to amend any scores given at week 12 if required.

Competency Assessments Ratings

Both you and your Preceptor will use the rating system described in Table 1 below. You are expected to achieve a MIN (requires minimal supervision) for each of the 13 competencies by the summative Competency Assessment. If any of the competencies are not at a MIN (Requires Minimal Supervision) by the summative Competency Assessment, a focused training plan will be developed to give you the opportunity to build your competency in the specific competencies not at the required level.

Table 1: Competency Assessment Ratings

Level	Rating	Definition
N/A	Not Applicable	Not possible to evaluate the competency in the placement setting
CLO	Requires Close Supervision	Trainer has to do it themselves or walk the student through it (requires hands on guidance or constant direction)
MOD	Requires Moderate Supervision	Trainer has to prompt the student from time to time (demonstrates some independence but requires intermittent direction)
MIN	Requires Minimal Supervision	Trainer needs to be there just in case (student is more independent but unaware of all risks and still requires supervision for safe practice)

'Not Applicable' Rating

Domains 1, 2, and 3 were chosen to be assessed in the 4th-year placement, as it is thought they are applicable to all placement settings. However, in an exceptional circumstance, where it is thought a specific competency is not possible to demonstrate in a specific setting, this competency may be rated as 'Not Applicable'. In these circumstances both, the Preceptor and the student will be required to enter a reason on the VLE as to why this competency is not applicable.

Preceptors have been provided with some suggested activities that will help support competency development in Table 2; you can consult these if you are having difficulties with ideas of activities that may help develop your competencies, or you can contact your Practice Educator to ask for advice.

Please note: The Schools of Pharmacy reserve the right to further engage with students whose Competency Assessments indicate that a number of competencies could not be demonstrated in their placement, i.e., a number of competencies were rated as Not Applicable.

Important points

- It is important to remember that **competency is demonstrated through actions and behaviour**, i.e., a student with excellent knowledge of communications theory may not have developed excellent communication skills, and a student with little knowledge of communications theory may be an excellent communicator. The activities you undertake on placement will contribute to your development of competency. If you are experiencing any issues with competency achievement, contact your Practice Educator.
- The [Standards for APPEL Experiential Learning Placements](#) states that you and your Preceptor must complete a [training plan](#) during placement to ensure that you are given the opportunity to achieve all the requisite competencies within the required timeframe. It is important to keep your training plan as a living document throughout your placement, i.e., you should update it regularly and keep track of all the activities you have undertaken, which demonstrate that you are building competency in the 13 competencies.
- To meet the competency assessment requirements of the placement, you are required to achieve a rating of 'MIN - Requires minimal supervision' in all 13 competencies.

Helpful Hints

Plan time for you to complete your self-assessment and remind your Preceptor to plan time for their assessment and the meeting with you afterwards. Remember you must complete your self-rating before your Preceptor completes their rating.

Regularly update your training plan with suggested activities to develop your competency.

Contact your Practice Educator if you and your Preceptor cannot identify opportunities for you to support your competency development, or if you have any queries regarding the competency assessment.

In the meeting between you and your Preceptor after your assessment (step 3), we recommend that you focus on:

- Competencies in which your competency level is lower than the required standard.
- Competencies in which there is a discrepancy in the competency level assessed by you and your Preceptor.
- Seek clarification from your Preceptor if you are unsure of what the required competency level looks like.

Table 2: Ideas for Developing Competency (provided to Preceptors)

Domain 1 – Personal	
Competency	<i>Suggested activities that will expose student to some aspects of this competence (activities may be sector specific)</i>
1.1 Demonstrates leadership	Encourage student to identify areas for improvement and bring them to team attention e.g.: ➤ In Industry setting: encourage student to participating in regular GMP walk-downs and communicate findings at team meeting, e.g., raise deviations, tap-ins, near-misses, and incidents as appropriate and not rely on other team members to take responsibility. ➤ In Hospital/Community setting: encourage student to lead by example with regard patient safety and dispensing procedures – clear neat and tidy workspace, following all SOPs, etc. ➤ Encourage student to proactively complete the near-miss log for errors. Discuss errors with colleagues to identify learnings and seek support to reduce errors.
1.2 Confidently makes sound decisions and solves problems	Give student tasks that will require decision-making e.g.: ➤ In Community setting: ask students opinion and encourage them to make a decision on how they would deal with certain scenarios, e.g., medicine shortages or deal with an ethical situation that may arise, e.g., improperly written CD prescription, emergency supply of controlled drug, doctor self-prescribing. Can advise student to use PSI ethical decision-making tool to guide themselves through the issue. ➤ Encourage student to use effective communication skills to relay accurate information to other healthcare professionals. ➤ In Industry setting: could set student an ethical decision around GMP issues, e.g., Reporting and documenting inconsistencies in the lab, risk versus benefit of batch release in different scenarios, risk versus benefit of removing products with low sales from a market.
1.3 Establishes and maintains collaborative working relationships	Involve student in multi-disciplinary team meetings, give student actions to complete from meeting outputs. Involve students in tasks that require consulting appropriate team members/experts as required when making decisions, e.g., consult a technical expert for a technical issue or HR for a HR issue or pharmacist with specialist expertise in hospital.

Domain 2 – Professional	
Competency	<i>Suggested activities that will expose student to some aspects of this competence (activities may be sector specific)</i>
2.1 Applies a “person-centred” approach	In Industry Setting Have student complete tasks that will involve the impact of role on the patient, e.g., considering does the PIL contain all relevant safety updates, considering does the batch conform to the necessary standards. Add student to a project team that requires consideration of how the patient will be affected by the project, e.g., considering how will research innovation/pricing of medicine/licensing of medicine affect the patient? How will changes be communicated to patient? Are patient’s views involved in the project?
2.4 Adapts to change and innovation	Give student a project which involves implementing changes, e.g., if changes in legislation occur give student project to take responsibility for all subsequent actions required, such as updating SOPs, planning staff training, etc. Give student responsibility for drafting a new/updating an SOP for a process/change in process, e.g., updating SOPs to reflect changes to process after introduction of the Common Conditions Service.

Domain 3 – Organisation and Management Skills	
Competency	<i>Suggested activities that will expose student to some aspects of this competence (activities may be sector specific)</i>
3.1 Manages Self	Allocate a project/responsibility that requires student to manage their own workload, deadlines and be completed in an efficient manner. Examples of student projects/responsibilities completed in the past are: ➤ Updating SOPs, staff training, completing an audit project ➤ Taking responsible for verifying and processing one HSE community drug scheme (community) ➤ Preparing training for new product release, review guidelines and validation protocols (industry) ➤ Updating IV monograph/quick reference guides (hospital)
3.4 Contributes to continuous quality improvement and risk management	Give student responsibility for completing an audit and reporting back findings to team, e.g., PSI pharmacy self-assessment audit, antimicrobial audits or venous thrombosis audits in hospitals, participating in GMP walk-downs and communicating findings at team meeting in industry setting. Have student complete a root cause analysis for a process investigation or review error log. Present findings to team and identify strategies to reduce risk.

Competency Assessment Queries

1. What do I need to do to pass the placement?

To meet the required standard for the placement, you must meet the **attendance requirements** and reach a rating level of “MIN - Requires minimal supervision” in **all** 13 competencies.

2. What do I do if I am achieving a rating of “CLO – requires close supervision” or MOD – requires moderate supervision” in the formative assessment?

The formative assessment is an assessment *for* learning. The purpose of a formative assessment is to help Preceptors and students identify the student’s current competency and discuss opportunities to help the student achieve the required level of competency before the summative assessment – you should update your training plan accordingly. By the formative assessment, you will only have completed five weeks of placement and may not have been exposed to many opportunities to develop competency. If you have any concerns, contact your Practice Educator.

3. Why is the final assessment completed at the end of week 12, when the placement lasts 16 weeks?

The final assessment is completed at the end of week 12 to allow time for a focused training period during the last 4 weeks if a student is having difficulty achieving the required rating for certain competencies.

4. When can you use the Not Applicable (N/A) rating?

The competencies assessed as part of the 4th-Year Competency Assessment were chosen as it was believed they could be demonstrated in all practice settings. On the exceptional occasion that a competency cannot be demonstrated in a specific Training Establishment, the Preceptor can rate that behaviour as Not Applicable. Feedback from Preceptors indicated that some Preceptors found that certain competencies initially did not appear to be applicable to their setting, but on taking a wider view of the competency, they often found ways to assess the competency. Examples of how some competencies can be demonstrated can be found in Table 2, Practice Educators are happy to speak with you and/or your Preceptor regarding ideas for developing competency in certain competencies in your setting.

Please note: The Schools of Pharmacy reserve the right to further engage with students whose Competency Assessments indicate that a number of competencies could not be demonstrated in their placement, i.e., competencies were rated as ‘Not Applicable’.

5. What if I am concerned about being exposed to enough activities to develop my competency or reaching the required level.

Having an active training plan and seeking advice from your Preceptor will help you plan to be exposed to a range of activities that will help develop your competency, if you have any concerns or looking for advice on ideas for activities contact your Practice Educator.

You need to take responsibility for your own learning and ensure you get exposed to a sufficient range of activities, if you have any concerns seek advice and contact your Practice Educator.

Section 4 - Getting the Most from Your Placement

It is important that you take responsibility for your own learning while you are on placement and be an “advocate for your own learning”. There are three key elements of “advocating for your learning needs on placement”. These are:

1. Understanding your needs - You should have a clear idea of what you need to achieve on placement and have a live training plan that you refer to regularly and discuss with your Preceptor to enable you to be exposed to sufficient activities that will allow you to achieve your learning needs.
2. Knowing what kind of support might help.
3. Communicating these needs with others.

Training Establishments can be busy placements, having a plan of activities that you can complete will help ensure you are exposed to all areas you need, to develop your competency.

Other strategies that research has shown can help you get the most out of your placement are covered below. In a Canadian study (Jackson, 2015), the strategies employed by pharmacy students to ensure success in their placements included:

- Appear interested at all times and show that you value this experiential opportunity.
- Show enthusiasm for learning.
- Demonstrate independence.
- Show initiative and make contributions in the experiential setting.
- Be inquisitive, but expect to answer (most of) your own questions.
- Never make anything up!
- Integrate yourself into the placement environment.
- Embrace spontaneous learning experiences.
- Be respectful of the Training Establishment environment.
- Be appreciative of the time and energy being invested in you by your Preceptor and other staff members of the Training Establishment.
- Consider your experiential placement as an extended job interview.

Jackson, L. D. (2015). Strategies pharmacy students can use to ensure success in an experiential placement. *Can Pharm J (Ott)*, 148(6), 308-313.

Seek support if necessary

There are many supports available to you through your university. Some examples of queries that a student may face and where to seek support are covered in Table 3. Any concerns raised by students to Practice Educators will only be communicated to those who need to be made aware (e.g., Head of School, APPEL Director and National Coordinator, Student Support Services, or others as appropriate). It is important to remember that we can't provide support if we are unaware there is an issue. Any supports which are available to you during your time in university are also available to you while you are on placement, e.g., your mentor/tutor and year co-ordinator.

Please note: Your Practice Educator will inform you before passing information on.

Table 3: Signposting Support Services for Students

Query/Concern relates to:	UCC	RCSI	Trinity
Competency development, ideas for learning activities, Competency Assessments, concerns that some behaviours may be rated as 'not applicable.'	ruth.mccarthy@ucc.ie (Ruth McCarthy)	practiceeducators@rcsi.ie (annteresamorgan@rcsi.ie or jameshoran@rcsi.ie) (Anne Teresa Morgan or James Horan)	appelplacements@tcd.ie
Experiential learning, e.g., placement timetable, delayed induction, absence from placement.	ruth.mccarthy@ucc.ie (Ruth McCarthy)	practiceeducators@rcsi.ie (annteresamorgan@rcsi.ie or jameshoran@rcsi.ie) (Anne Teresa Morgan or James Horan)	appelplacements@tcd.ie
Proposed Preceptor changes/ Proposed Training Establishment changes/ Absence of Preceptor for >4 weeks.	ruth.mccarthy@ucc.ie (Ruth McCarthy) OR ops@appel.ie	practiceeducators@rcsi.ie (annteresamorgan@rcsi.ie or jameshoran@rcsi.ie) (Anne Teresa Morgan or James Horan) OR ops@appel.ie	appelplacements@tcd.ie OR ops@appel.ie
Concerns that you might be unable to meet the attendance requirements of the placement, e.g., if you are asked to stay at home from placement to follow Public Health advice etc.	ruth.mccarthy@ucc.ie (Ruth McCarthy)	practiceeducators@rcsi.ie (annteresamorgan@rcsi.ie or jameshoran@rcsi.ie) (Anne Teresa Morgan or James Horan)	appelplacements@tcd.ie
Critical Incident.	ruth.mccarthy@ucc.ie (Ruth McCarthy) OR ops@appel.ie	practiceeducators@rcsi.ie (annteresamorgan@rcsi.ie or jameshoran@rcsi.ie) (Anne Teresa Morgan or James Horan) OR ops@appel.ie	appelplacements@tcd.ie OR ops@appel.ie
Accessing VLE, technical queries relating to VLE.	ops@appel.ie		
Module run by HEI.	Relevant module co-ordinator at HEI		
Medical illness.	Student health / GP		
Student wellbeing; e.g., feeling anxious, overwhelmed, isolated or otherwise requiring mental health supports.	Student counselling and development Chaplaincy Niteline Peer Support *links to services here	Student Welfare Office Email: swo@rcsi.ie Confidential one-to-one support and advice for students, can facilitate onward referral to Student Counselling service . CoMPPAS Assistance Programme (Spectrum) Visit https://rcsi-sap.spectrum.life/login Compass Moodle Site	Student Counselling Services: https://www.tcd.ie/StudentCounselling/ 24-hour crisis text line text: TCD50808

Reasonable accommodations.	Disability Support Services access@ucc.ie	Learning Access and Facilitation services Learningsupport@rcsi.ie	Disability Services: https://www.tcd.ie/disability/
Equality, diversity and inclusion, e.g., discrimination based on ethnicity, religion etc.	ruth.mccarthy@ucc.ie (Ruth McCarthy) or Student Supports UCC	practiceeducators@rcsi.ie (annteresamorgan@rcsi.ie or jameshoran@rcsi.ie) (Anne Teresa Morgan or James Horan) OR swo@rcsi.ie (student welfare officer)	appelplacements@tcd.ie Equality Office TCD https://www.tcd.ie/equality/contact/

Adhere to the Student Code of Conduct

As you are a registered student at your School of Pharmacy while on placement, you must adhere to the APPEL Joint Schools Code of Conduct for all placement-related activities (this is available for viewing and downloading [here](#)). The six core principles of the current Code of Conduct are:

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

Adhere to Student Responsibilities

What are my responsibilities as a pharmacy student on placement?

As a pharmacy student on placement, you have responsibilities, some of which are set out below. Please read the following section carefully and seek clarification, if needed, from your Practice Educator. Any deviation from these responsibilities could be a potential breach of the Code of Conduct.

Please note that a student on their experiential learning placement cannot act as, or act as the replacement for, a qualified pharmacist.

Responsibilities

- Be aware of the terms and conditions of the APPEL placement, which are contained in the Student Placement Agreement (available for access [here](#)).
- Adhere to the policies and procedures of the Training Establishment in which you are placed.
- Ensure that you are directly supervised when carrying out any activity that could affect patient safety. Report any potential patient safety incident to a member of the Training Establishment staff immediately. Patient safety is the most important consideration while on placement. **A student on their experiential learning placement cannot act as, or act as the replacement for, a qualified pharmacist.**
- Maintain professional standards of behaviour at all times.
- Attend placement according to the APPEL placement schedule.
- Report all unexpected absences, e.g., due to illness or bereavement, to your Training Establishment AND your Practice Educator.
- In conjunction with your Preceptor, arrange your placement schedule to accommodate anticipated absences where possible, e.g., attendance at a planned appointment.
- Contact a Practice Educator if a critical incident occurs while you are on placement.
- Contact a Practice Educator if you believe that your placement is not being provided in line with APPEL's standards, if you have any concern regarding your health, safety, ability to achieve competencies, or any placement-related queries.
- Treat all staff with respect and courtesy. It is essential that you never say or do anything to discredit the Training Establishment, the staff of the Training Establishment, APPEL, or your HEI.
- Inform APPEL of any connections to your Training Establishment or Trainer, which only become apparent when you are on placement.
- Dress and personal appearance must be neat, clean, and appropriate for the placement environment. You should also be aware that jewellery, piercings, and false nails/nail polish are considered unacceptable in some workplaces, as these may pose a health and safety risk.
- Respect privacy and confidentiality, in line with GDPR. This rule applies to all information you are privy to. Specifically, you are required to:
 - Respect patient and prescriber confidentiality.
 - Keep confidential all business matters relating to the Training Establishment.
 - Treat all verbal discussions with strict confidentiality, during and after placement, and be aware of the volume at which you speak.
 - Observe data protection legislation, i.e., GDPR, which includes undertaking your activities in a manner that preserves the privacy of individuals' personal details, e.g., names, phone numbers, addresses, etc.
- Never mislead or allow customers/patients/Training Establishment staff to think that you are a registered pharmacist. Wear your student badge at all times while on placement.
- Take all due care with Training Establishment equipment and other property.
- Turn off any mobile phones/tablets you have with you. Access them only on breaks and in appropriate locations, unless requested otherwise by a staff member at the Training Establishment.
- Contact APPEL regarding any matter that may require consideration in the arrangement of your placement or the activities you undertake during your placement, e.g., pregnancy, allergy, infection etc.

Be aware of Placement Governance processes

APPEL has implemented a quality assurance process for all placements. Students, Preceptors, and Training Establishments are all required to partake in the governance processes, as described below, to ensure that placements are a rewarding and enjoyable experience for all.

STUDENTS

You are required to:

- Sign and abide by the Student Placement Agreement
- Read the Student Handbook
- Attend the Pre-Placement Preparation Seminars and undertake all designated pre-placement activities

PRECEPTORS

Your Preceptor is required to:

- Undertake APPEL Preceptor accreditation
- Complete the required training
- Be a PSI-registered pharmacist
- Be in regular contact with their student (at least one communication every 4 weeks)
- Have a maximum absence during placement of 4 weeks
- Sign the Declaration of Satisfactory Attendance and Student Behaviour at the end of the placement to confirm that each student has met the attendance requirements of the placement and to confirm that the Preceptor has no concerns about the student's fitness to register as a pharmacist.

TRAINING ESTABLISHMENTS

Your Training Establishment is required to:

- Undertake APPEL accreditation – placement agreement, declarations, insurance, vetting, health and safety, suitable placement environment, provides induction and training etc.

Finally, enjoy your placement! See some top tips below:



TOP TIPS:

- At your initial meeting with your Preceptor, ask them how you should contact them if you have a question that cannot be answered by another staff member at the Training Establishment.
- Take responsibility of your own learning on placement and be an advocate for your own learning.
- Have an active training plan.
- Contact your Practice Educator if you have any questions or concerns.

Appendix I - 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.

Competency Assessment – The process by which Preceptors assess students' competency in the relevant behaviours in the CCF.

GDPR – General Data Protection Regulation

HEI – Higher Education Institution.

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

Preceptor – A registered Pharmacist who is overseeing the experiential placement of (a) 4th-year student(s).

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 or RCSI School of Pharmacy and Biomolecular Sciences or Trinity School of Pharmacy and Pharmaceutical Sciences.

Trinity – University of Dublin, Trinity College.

Training Establishment – The specific location providing the placement.

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

4th-Year Placement – Experiential learning placement in the 4th year of the five-year integrated pharmacy programme.

The APPEL Team Contact Details

APPEL Operations Team

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