APPEL
An Chleamhnacht um Fhoghlaim ó Thaithí Chleachtadh na Cógaisíochta | Affiliation for Pharmacy Practice Experiential Learning



2027
Senior Preceptor Handbook
5th-Year Placement

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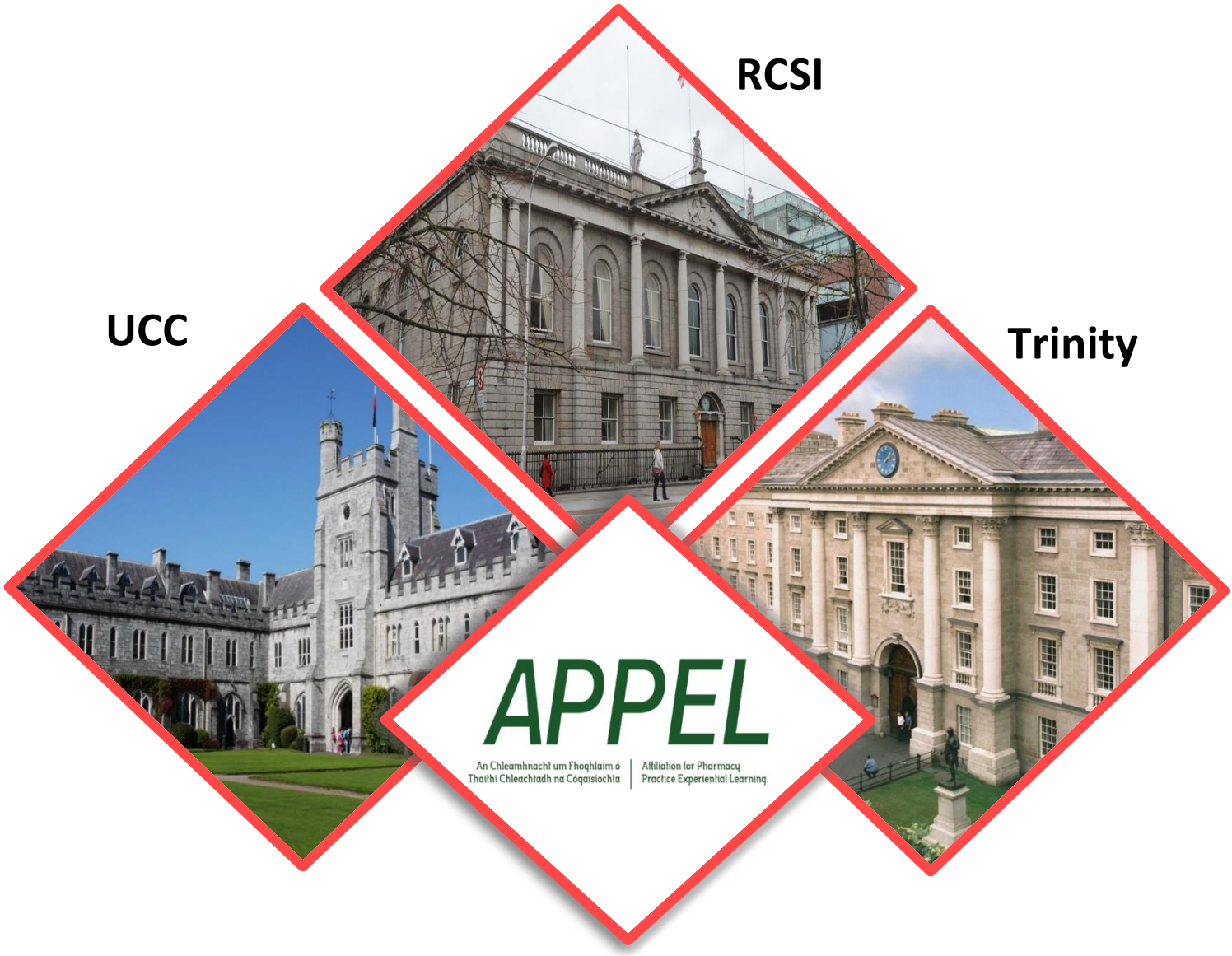
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What is APPEL?

APPEL (Affiliation for Pharmacy Practice Experiential Learning) is a unique consortium collaboration between the UCC School of Pharmacy, the RCSI School of Pharmacy and Biomolecular Sciences, and the Trinity School of Pharmacy and Pharmaceutical Sciences. APPEL facilitates the coordination and quality assurance the common experiential learning placements of all three integrated pharmacy programmes in Ireland. It is overseen by the APPEL Board, consisting of the three Heads of the Schools of Pharmacy in UCC, RCSI, and Trinity.

The APPEL team consists of Practice Educators based within the three Schools of Pharmacy, and Operations Team, led by the Director and National Coordinator of APPEL, based in the APPEL office. The team is available to support both Trainers and students throughout their experiential learning placements.

UCC
University College Cork, Ireland
Coláiste na hOllscoile Corcaigh

RCSI

Trinity College Dublin
Coláiste na Tríonóide, Baile Átha Cliath
The University of Dublin

Quick Guide to the 5th-Year Placement

ATTENDANCE AND PLACEMENT SCHEDULE

This is a statutory placement, defined in law as being 'not less than eight consecutive months' in duration. Thus, **100% attendance** is required by all students.

Students must complete 30 hrs on placement between Monday and Friday (8 am – 6 pm) (excluding bank holidays), except in **August 2027***. In addition, students must have four hours made available to them between Monday and Friday (8 am-6 pm) each week for their academic activities.

* In August of their 5th-year placement, students will be allowed to be on placement at the following times:

- No more than one late night/evening per week – not later than 9 pm
- No more than two Saturdays

Any concerns regarding students' attendance or punctuality must be reported to the APPEL Office or a Practice Educator as soon as possible. You will be asked to sign a 'Declaration of Satisfactory Attendance and Student Behaviour' after each Competency Assessment.

STUDENT CODE OF CONDUCT & CRITICAL INCIDENTS

Students must comply with the APPEL Joint Schools Code of Conduct while on placement. The Code of Conduct is available here. Breaches of the Code of Conduct must be reported to the APPEL Operations team or a Practice Educator as soon as possible.

All critical incidents (including but not limited to; fire, burglary, hold-up, death or serious injury to staff or the student – e.g., needle stick injury) must be reported to the APPEL Operations team or a Practice Educator as soon as possible.

SENIOR PRECEPTOR GOVERNANCE REQUIREMENTS

The accreditation requirements for a 5th-year Senior Preceptor requires that the Senior Preceptor be a PSI-registered pharmacist, qualified for a minimum of three years and has practised in the area in which they are supervising the students for at least two years. They should be able to accommodate regular contact with the student and comply with the requisite supervision requirements. They should not be absent for more than four weeks during the placement. Please see Appendix II for more details.

PATIENT SAFETY

Patient safety is the student's primary concern on placement, and **students must be supervised** accordingly to ensure patient safety. If you become aware of a potential patient safety incident concerning your student, you should report it to a Practice Educator or the APPEL office immediately.

COMPETENCY ASSESSMENT

There are two Competency Assessments during the placement:

- **The formative Competency Assessment which must be completed by 31st March 2027**
- **The summative Competency Assessment which must be completed by 31st July 2027.**

To meet the requirements of the placement, the student must achieve a **RDY (Ready for Independent Practice)** rating in all competencies in the **summative assessment.** If you have any concerns about a student reaching the required level of competence, please get in touch with a Practice Educator as early as possible to enable us to support you and your student.

SUPPORT

If you have any queries regarding the placement, make sure to get in touch with either a Practice Educator or the APPEL office (contact details on the last page of this handbook).

Section 1 – Practical Placement Information

When?

4th January 2027 – 27th August 2027

What time?

Students will attend placement for **30 hours each week** according to a timetable agreed with the Training Establishment(TE). The hours of attendance must be of 'University character', i.e. **between 8 am and 6 pm on weekdays,** except in August 2027*.

In addition, the agreed timetable should facilitate the student having at least **one half-day each week** (of no less than four hours, between 8 am and 6 pm on weekdays) to allow for uninterrupted time to complete academic work.

* In August of their 5th-year placement, students will be allowed to be on placement at the following times:

- No more than one late night/evening per week – no later than 9 pm
- No more than two Saturdays

Lunch break: Students must be provided with appropriate breaks in accordance with legislation - this time is not counted as part of their 30 hours placement time per week.

Bank holidays: APPEL placement is not scheduled on bank holidays. The student is required to complete 22.5 hours of placement time on the week of a bank holiday.

Mock PRE: The Mock PRE will take place in June. Students will not be available to attend placement on the day of the Mock PRE and should inform their Senior Preceptor of the date as soon as it is confirmed. As the Mock PRE is a mandatory educational activity, students will not be required to make up the placement hours missed. They will therefore only be required to complete 22.5 hours of placement time during that week.

The following reading/study weeks and holidays have been scheduled, and students will not be attending placements on these dates:

Bank Holidays	Dates
St Brigid's Day	1st February
St Patrick's Day	17th March
Good Friday	26th March
Easter Monday	29th March
May Bank Holiday	3rd May
June Bank Holiday	7th June
August Bank Holiday	2nd August

Holidays	
RCSI	7th – 18th June
UCC &Trinity	10th – 21st May

Reading/Study weeks	
UCC	22nd – 26th March 19th – 23rd July
RCSI	29th March – 2nd April 26th July – 30th July
Trinity	22nd – 26th March 19th – 23rd July

What will students be doing during the placement?

As this is the last placement your student will undertake before going forward to register as a pharmacist, it is their final opportunity to develop their competence under your guidance and supervision. At the end of the placement, students will be required to demonstrate the necessary level of competence to enable them to practice as a pharmacist independently.
During the placement, you should support your student's development in all the competencies of the PSI Core Competency Framework by facilitating them to undertake activities that will enable them to practice these competencies. A list of the competencies of the PSI CCF can be found in the induction and training plan here. A training plan will enable you and your student to plan a sufficient range of activities. A sample induction and training plan can be found on the APPEL website.

You will assess your student's competency on two occasions during their placement. You can support your student's development by giving constructive and supportive developmental feedback which will help the student to understand their level of competence and how it can be improved. Details on the Competency Assessment are found on page 18.

In addition to their time on placement, students will complete online modules and other academic components as part of their academic requirements. The online modules are aligned to the five domains of the PSI Core Competency Framework and will support the student in their understanding of the theory underpinning the relevant competencies. Academic staff are responsible for delivering and assessing the online modules and other academic components.

Where can I get support if I am unsure how to organise a training plan or activities for my student?

Please contact a Practice Educator (PE). The PE will support you to develop ideas for activities and can discuss the training plan with you. Contact details for PEs can be found on the last page of this handbook.

What are the 'Standards for APPEL Experiential Learning Placements'?

You will have learned about the Standards for APPEL Experiential Learning Placements as part of your APPEL Trainer Training. APPEL experiential learning placements are designed to be workplace-based learning experiences, which are overseen by the Schools of Pharmacy with the underpinning philosophy being that, while on placements, programme participants remain as students. The Standards were developed to promote the educational experience of students on placement and to support Training Establishments and Trainers in the delivery of such placements. Any staff member involved in supporting your student during the placement should be familiar with the content of the Standards. If you have any questions about the Standards, please contact the APPEL Operations Team or a Practice Educator.

What happens if my student misses some placement time?

- This is a statutory placement, defined in law as being 'not less than eight consecutive months' in duration. Thus, **100% attendance is expected on placement.**
- The APPEL timetable is flexible and can thus accommodate student attendance at discretionary appointments or events during the placement week.
- Students must complete 30 hours of placement each week. However, where required, a student 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, for example, 60 hours over two weeks. The expectation is that students will regularly complete 30 hours of placement time each week, and any deviation from this is an exception rather than a regular occurrence.
- If you are concerned that the student is not meeting the requisite amount of placement time or have any concerns regarding your student's attendance and punctuality, or if the student misses placement according to a pattern that may give cause for concern, e.g. every Monday, please inform either the Practice Educator or the APPEL Operations Team as soon as possible.
- During the placement, you will be required to sign a 'Declaration of Satisfactory Attendance and Student Behaviour' to confirm that the student has completed the requisite placement time (30 hours per week over eight months, or equivalent). You will be asked to complete the form twice, after the first (formative) competency assessment is completed and after the second (summative) assessment. If there are issues with

punctuality or attendance, please flag any issues early to the Practice Educator or APPEL office and don't wait until completing the form.

What do I do if a critical incident occurs during the 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 well-being of a student. Examples include, but are not limited to, death or serious illness of a member of staff or patient, needle-stick injury to the student, student injury, fire, hold-up or burglary.

To support students' safety and welfare, the Preceptor/Training Establishment must contact a Practice Educator or the APPEL Operations Team if a critical incident arises during the placement. Each of the Schools of Pharmacy has additional support services, which can be offered to students if required. All details discussed with APPEL will be handled in a sensitive and confidential manner.

What do I do if an opportunity arises for a student to travel 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.

Before any such activity takes place, the Trainer should use the APPEL Risk Assessment Decision Tool to determine whether submission of an APPEL Risk Assessment Form is required. Further information and a copy of the Decision Tool can be found on the APPEL website, or on page 10 of this handbook.

If the Decision Tool indicates that a Risk Assessment Form is not required, the activity may proceed without submitting a Risk Assessment Form, provided that:

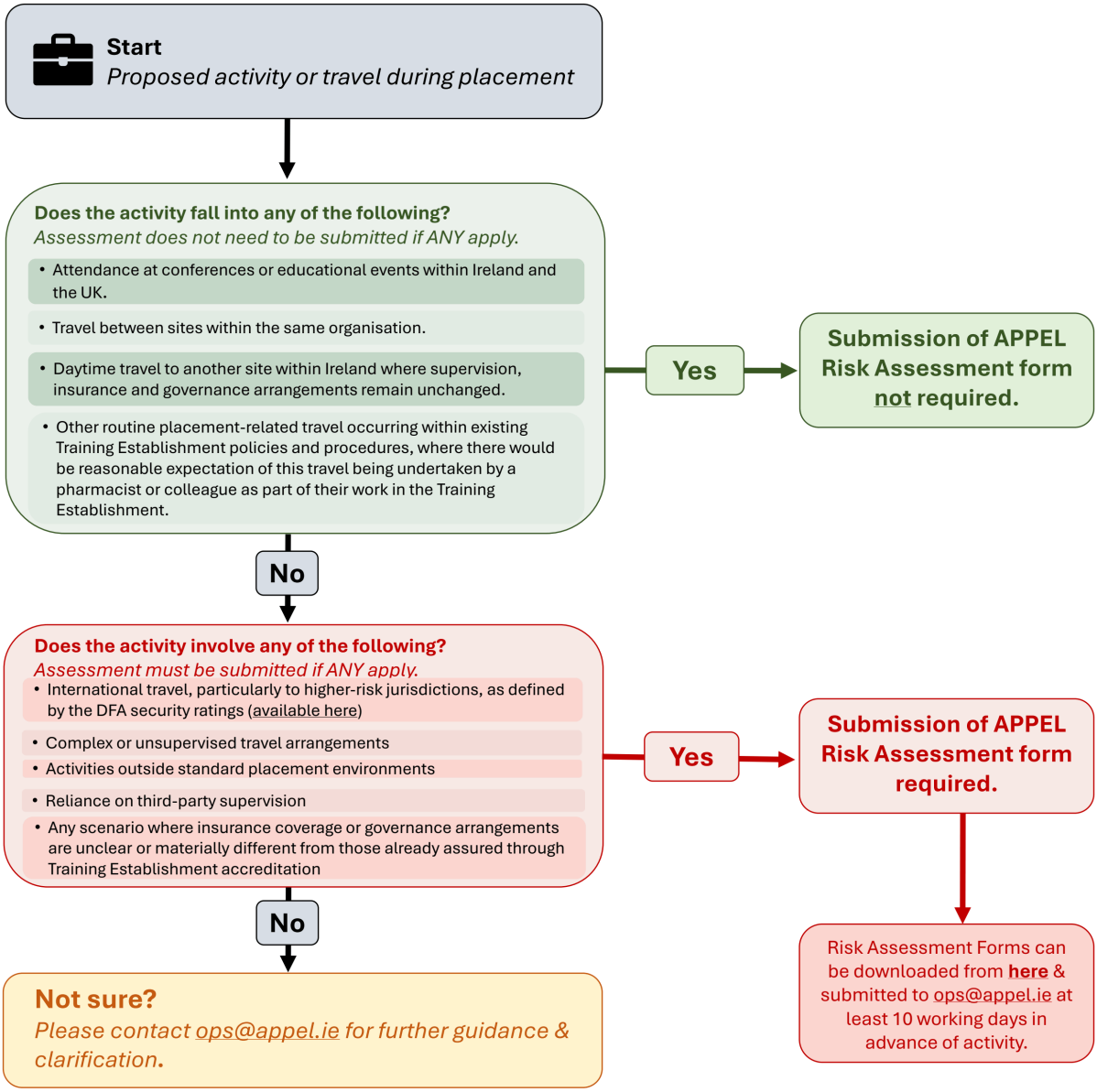
- the activity complies with the Standards for APPEL Experiential Learning Placements;
- appropriate local supervision and governance arrangements are in place; and
- the activity supports the student's learning and development during placement.

If the Decision Tool indicates that a Risk Assessment Form is required:

- the student and Trainer must complete and submit the APPEL Risk Assessment Form to the APPEL Office at least 10 working days before the planned activity.
- The activity should not proceed until the required APPEL review process has been completed.

Should you have any queries relating to this process, please contact ops@appel.ie.

Risk Assessment Decision Tool
For Activities and Travel During an APPEL Placement



- *Responsibility for assessing and managing risks remains with the Training Establishment under existing statutory and APPEL accreditation obligations.*
- *APPEL maintains authority to request additional / or require review where concerns arise.*

Can a student complete placement hours in different location or branch on a temporary basis?

No, only placement hours that are completed in the matched Training Establishment will be recognised. In exceptional circumstances, and if it is unavoidable due to a need for the student to move to a different location/branch on a temporary or permanent basis, placement providers should engage with APPEL **in advance** of any changes. Please contact the APPEL Operations team at ops@appel.ie as early as possible to discuss.

What do I do if I am concerned about the student's conduct?

Students are required to adhere to the APPEL Joint Schools Code of Conduct while on placement.

As part of the 5th-Year placement, students will be developing their professionalism. If a student is displaying any behaviours that would not be in accordance with the APPEL Joint Schools Code of Conduct or the PSI's Code of Conduct, please contact a PE or the APPEL Office. At this stage of a student's professional career, it is essential that such behaviours are highlighted to them, and they are given support to help them develop. Discussing a matter with a PE does not necessarily mean it will impact your student's progression. However, it will provide an opportunity for your student to receive appropriate feedback and support.

During the placement, you will be asked to complete a 'Declaration of Satisfactory Attendance and Student Behaviour' which asks you to declare that *"you are unaware of any reason, on the grounds of health or character, as to why your student might be unfit to be registered as a pharmacist in the future*". If your student's behaviour throughout the placement causes you any concerns about completing this declaration, please contact a Practice Educator as soon as possible.



If you become aware of any potential breaches of the APPEL Joint Schools Code of Conduct or any potential patient safety incidents during the placement, please contact PE or the APPEL office.

What are my obligations under the National Open Disclosure Framework?

Health care providers including Pharmacists in patient-facing, clinical settings have specific obligations under the National Open Disclosure Framework. All patient-facing pharmacists must ensure they are aware of the new legislation, the framework, and the overall expectations should a patient safety incident or adverse event arise. You will have learned about Open Disclosure when you undertook the APPEL Trainer Training, but can learn more by consulting the references signposted in this training, or by visiting the PSI website

What do I do if I am concerned about the student's performance or ability to reach the required level of competence?

All students develop competence at a different pace. Some students with lots of experience may perform to a very high standard and develop competence very quickly, whereas competency development make take longer for other students. Regular constructive and supportive developmental feedback and guidance from you will support the student in developing their competence.

If you have any concerns about your student's performance, please contact a PE as soon as possible. Highlighting concerns at an early stage enables support to be given to you and your student promptly. This will maximise your student's opportunities of having a successful placement and reaching the required standard. If issues are not raised until the end of the placement, students may not have the opportunity to focus on developing the competencies requiring improvement prior to the placement finishing. This may impact student progression.



If you are concerned about a student's performance, please contact a PE, as soon as possible.

What is the role of the Senior Preceptor?

As a Senior Preceptor, you will play a pivotal role in supporting your student's professional development and preparing them for practise as a registered pharmacist. Your student will have gained practical experience from their 4th-year placement and extensive academic knowledge from completing four years of their pharmacy degree. One of the challenges for your student will be to develop their skills further and to apply their knowledge in the practice setting in an effective manner.

In your role as a Senior Preceptor, you will have responsibility for guiding your student to develop the requisite skills and attitudes. You will guide them to build on their knowledge to become safe and competent pharmacists. In this regard, you will assume the role of teacher, facilitator, coach and role model during the 5th-year placement, as described in the APPEL Trainer Training. Some of the key roles and responsibilities are listed below as a reminder from your training.

Roles of the Senior Preceptor

Role	How do I do this?
Facilitator 'Helping to guide your student's learning.' Students are encouraged to take responsibility for their own learning, but an experiential placement is a different learning environment compared to the structured learning environment of the lecture theatre. To help students adapt to this learning environment, the student will look to you as a facilitator to help guide their learning.	• Discuss with your student if they have identified any areas for development from their 4th-year placement • Identify learning opportunities and recognise chances to broaden the student's learning experience. Your student should be competent in all competencies of the PSI CCF by the end of the placement. You can recognise, facilitate and support opportunities for your student to practice these competencies throughout the placement. • Take responsibility for creating and maintaining a suitable learning environment for your student. • Support your student in preparing a training plan to provide a framework for their learning and help ensure that they are exposed to a sufficient range of opportunities to develop their competency.
Role-Model 'Leading by example.'	• By instilling professional values and attitudes while mentoring and guiding the student through the complexities of your current practice, you will support your student's professional development. • Challenge your student's perceptions about the diversity of the role of the pharmacist.
Coach 'Improving your students' performance by providing feedback, guidance and support.'	• Provide timely, constructive and supportive development feedback in a structured manner throughout the placement. • Encourage self-directed and reflective learning. • Encourage the student to take responsibility for their own learning, e.g. ask the student to consider/discuss what they would do if they were the pharmacist. If the student is unsure of how to approach a situation, encourage your student to discuss how they could develop this behaviour.

Roles of the Senior Preceptor (cont)

Instructor/teacher 'Helping your student acquire knowledge and skills.'	• Share your expertise in your area of practice. • Teach the student about what you are doing. • Refer students to relevant guidelines, references and resources, and encourage them to know how they can find these in the future. • Students will bring their own attitudes, motivation and experiences to the placement, which in some instances may not be entirely compatible with your values, approach to learning and experience of teaching. In such situations, it is important for you to recognise that people learn in different ways and adapt your teaching style (in so far as possible) to one that suits your student's needs. • Be flexible in your approach to teaching. At the beginning of the placement, your student may require a lot of direction. However, as your student's competence develops, you may be able to delegate tasks and allow the student to take ownership under supervision. • Advise your student of the standard expected of a practising pharmacist.

Responsibilities of the Senior Preceptor

The responsibilities of the Senior Preceptor can be found in the Trainer Accreditation Form which you will be required to complete (please see Appendix II of this handbook for more details). Some specific responsibilities for a Senior Preceptor for a 5th-year placement are listed below:

Responsibilities of the Senior Preceptor

1. As a Senior Preceptor, you are responsible for the overall learning experience of the student - you should provide direct on-site supervision with regular face-to-face meetings as required.
2. Be available to your student for guidance and direction so they develop the requisite skills and attitude and build on their knowledge to become safe and competent pharmacists.
3. Be knowledgeable regarding the competencies in the CCF against which your student will be assessed.
4. Complete the student's Competency Assessments and provide regular feedback. The final (summative) assessment will involve you assessing your student's ability to apply the competencies required of a newly registered pharmacist to competently and independently practice pharmacy, as set out by the PSI. You should work alongside your student regularly and receive feedback from other staff to enable you to make a fair assessment of their competency.
5. Contact a PE as soon as possible if there are concerns regarding the student achieving the required level of competency.
6. Notify APPEL if a student is not meeting the requisite amount of placement time or you have any concerns regarding a student's attendance and punctuality
7. Contact a PE or the APPEL office immediately if there is a potential breach of the Schools of Pharmacy Joint Student Code of Conduct, potential patient safety concern or critical incident.
8. Contact a PE or the APPEL office immediately if you are no longer available to act as a Senior Preceptor or will be absent for more than four weeks throughout the placement.
9. Complete the 'Declaration of Satisfactory Attendance and Student Behaviour' twice during the placement

Placement Support

One of APPEL's primary goals is to support Senior Preceptors to undertake their roles. This support is provided in several ways. If you have any questions or concerns about the placement or your student before, during or after the placement, please don't hesitate to contact a Practice Eduator or APPEL. All contact details can be found at www.appel.ie or on the last page of this handbook.

Section 2 – Placement Planning

For you and your student to get the most out of the experience, it is essential to be prepared. Practice Educators will prepare students before they go on their placement, including preparation relating to the following areas:

- Taking responsibility for their own learning and using the learning experience provided on placement to develop the requisite knowledge, skills and attitudes to become safe and competent pharmacists
- Developing through experiential learning
- Attendance and punctuality
- Code of Conduct
- Professionalism; including dress code, GDPR and mobile phone use

Students have signed a student placement agreement, read a student handbook and attended a student Pre-Placement Preparation Session.

The PSI requires APPEL, on behalf of the Schools of Pharmacy, to accredit all Training Establishments and Trainers. The APPEL Operations Team will have been in contact with you regarding the accreditation requirements. Below is a checklist of the requirements to be completed.

Senior Preceptor's Pre-placement Checklist

1. Training Establishment's accreditation checklist

- ☐ Training Establishment accreditation form

2. Senior Preceptor's accreditation checklist

- ☐ Senior Preceptor training completed
- ☐ Trainer accreditation form completed
- ☐ Confirm can fulfil Senior Preceptor requirements:
  - Is a PSI-registered pharmacist for at least 3 years, with a minimum of 2 years experience in the practice setting in which they are precepting a student
  - Can provide direct on-site supervision with regular face to face meetings as required
  - Is on-site for a minimum of three days per week or equivalent
- ☐ Can comply with requisite supervision requirement - maximum absence during placement is four weeks

(continued overleaf)

3. Plan your student's induction

☐ Plan the time and date to complete the induction, and consider other staff who may be able to support you.

- Some helpful hints can also be found on page 14 and a sample induction and training plan is provided on the resources page of the APPEL website.

4. Brief your team about the student

APPEL experiential learning placements may be a new experience for many Training Establishments and staff. Therefore all staff members must be aware of the structure of these learning placements and the role of the student. Some topics you may consider including in your team briefing are:

- ☐ The student's name and when they will start
- ☐ What the student will know
- ☐ What the student can and cannot do
- ☐ Hours/scheduled activities
- ☐ Support/consider a buddy system
- ☐ Supervising the student

For staff involved in the day-to-day contact with the student, it will be necessary for them to be familiar with the Standards for APPEL Experiential Learning Placements.

5. Plan your student's training and supervision

All students on placement must be supervised. Supervision must be appropriate to ensure that patient safety is a prime focus. For the 5th-year placement, the legislation requires the student to be under the 'direct supervision' of the Senior Preceptor, so you must consider how you will do this.

☐ Before the placement, consider how your student will be supervised; it may be appropriate to have other pharmacists support you with this.

☐ As a Senior Preceptor, ensure those involved in the day-to-day supervision of your student are aware of their supervisory and support role and are willing to and capable of mentoring a student.

It should be clear to all staff, clients and members of the public that the student is not a registered pharmacist. Each student's School of Pharmacy will provide them with a badge identifying them as a pharmacy student.

Section 3 – During the Placement

Completing an induction and training plan is essential to ensure a good learning experience. A sample induction and training plan is provided here. Some additional hints and tips for an effective induction are:

Week One - Induction

Hints and Tips: Induction and Training Plan

- ✓ Sit down and discuss your plans for the placement with your student.
- ✓ Discuss your student's previous relevant experience, and ask your student about their expectations and objectives for the placement.
- ✓ Clearly set out your expectations and objectives for the placement.
- ✓ Document agreed expectations, objectives and a schedule for meetings in the training plan. You could ask your student to do this!
- ✓ Discuss and plan for key dates, e.g. Competency Assessments.
- ✓ Discuss how you like to teach and support and invite your student to describe how they like to learn, e.g. should the student ask questions as they arise, or does it work better to keep them until the end of the day?
- ✓ Ensure your student is introduced to key staff and their roles. Explain how other staff can support your student.
- ✓ Show your student the Training Establishment's layout and facilities and explain a typical daily routine in that environment.
- ✓ Provide your student with and arrange for training in any key policies and procedures, e.g. security, dress code, confidentiality and procedures specific to your TE.
- ✓ Ensure your student knows who to contact if they have a difficulty – for example feeling unwell, personal emergency, running late.
- ✓ Ensure both you and your student understand how to report student absence to APPEL and how to access APPEL supports.
- ✓ Agree suitable tasks for your student. Consider appropriate tasks that your student may be able to complete at busy periods.
- ✓ Ensure both you and your student have access to your student's Practice Educators' names, contact phone numbers and email addresses, and to the contact details for the APPEL Operations Team
- ✓ Complete a Health and Safety induction.

Placement Activities

During the placement, students should complete activities that will allow them to develop the requisite knowledge, skills and attitude to become safe and competent pharmacists, enabling them to professionally and independently practise as a pharmacist upon registration.

To complete the 5th-year placement, the student will be required to develop and demonstrate their competence in all of the competencies in the PSI's Core Competency Framework (CCFThe competencies are aligned to the five domains of the CCF:

1. Personal
2. Professional
3. Organisation & Management Skills
4. Pharmacy Care
5. Public Health

In your practice environment, you can help your student develop by providing the student with many activities and opportunities to practise and demonstrate these competencies. Encourage your student to practise these activities under your supervision and guidance and provide them with opportunities to develop the competence required for safe and independent practice.

As the Senior Preceptor, you will want the best learning experience for your student and will want to create the best learning environment. You can discuss the following tips with other staff members involved in training the student.

Helpful Hints: Creating a Highly Productive Learning Environment

- Encourage your student to have an active role; professional skills cannot be learnt by observation alone.
- Provide your student with activities that require them to demonstrate learned skills and involve decision-making.
- Provide your student with opportunities to apply new knowledge and skills under supervision. These opportunities are best provided soon after the knowledge or skills are learnt.
- Provide activities that are of sufficient difficulty to be challenging, but are not discouraging.
- Discuss the learning task once it has been completed to help the student's understanding of their experience.
- Recommend that your student use a journal; this can be used to note new experiences, things they have learned, or things they wish to follow up. It could also be used as a revision tool or to note points for discussion with you.
- Encourage your student to have an inquisitive nature and to research things rather than expecting to be told the answer.
- Encourage your student to reflect on their practice, as this is essential for them to develop and refine skills.

Competency Assessment

This is the final placement students will complete before going forward to register as a pharmacist. Therefore, it is essential that students can demonstrate, albeit under the direct supervision of the Senior Preceptor, the competencies expected of a safe and competent pharmacist by the end of the placement. In Ireland, the competencies expected of a newly registered pharmacist for the first three years of their registration are those identified in the PSI Core Competency Framework. This framework is used to assess students during the 5th-Year placement.

The CCF contains five domains, each domain is underpinned by a number of competencies, and each competency contains indicative behaviours. These indicative behaviours describe some of the ways in which the competency may be demonstrated. During the 5th year placement, Senior Preceptors are asked to assess their student's perfromance against all competencies in the CCF, using the rating system described below

Level	Rating	Definition
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)
RDY	Ready for Independent Practice	Trainer wouldn't really need to be there (student performs completely independently, understands risks and performs safely

Table 1: Competency Assessment Ratings*

To assess that the student is safe and competent to pursue the profession of a pharmacist, the student must be Ready for Independent Practiceat the end of the 5th-year placement. Therefore, the rating required at the end of the 5th-year placement is RDY Ready for Independent Practice in all competencies

The School of Pharmacy will use the Competency Assessment results and the fulfilment of other academic requirements to determine if a student is eligible to sit the Professional Registration Exam and be awarded an MPharm degree.

How does the Competency Assessment process work?

You will rate your student's competency twice during the eight-month placement. The first assessment (formative assessment - also known as assessment **for** learning) should be completed by **31st March 2027.** The final assessment (summative assessment – also known as assessment **of** learning) should be completed by **31st July 2027.**

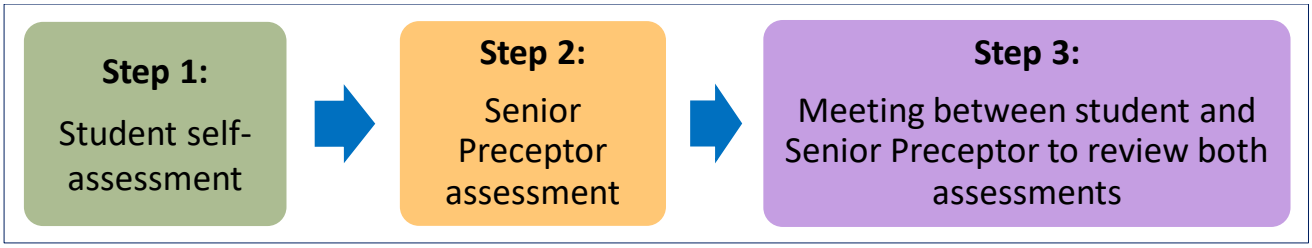
The formative assessment is undertaken to allow your student to identify competencies that they need to practise and improve upon. It indicates their performance to date. The ratings achieved at this point **do not** contribute towards the overall assessment outcome. It is completed by the end of month three to give you and the student sufficient time to identify practice opportunities to support the student's improvement and development. There is no expectation that students will have reached the required standard of competency by this first assessment.

The summative assessment, also known as an **assessment of learning,** is the final Competency Assessment and is undertaken by the end of month seven. In this assessment, the student is required to achieve a rating of "RDY - Ready For Independent Practice" in all compentecies to reach the required standard.

If they have not achieved a "RDY- Ready For Independnet Practice "rating in all competencies by the end of month seven, you should contact a PE immediately. The PE will support you and the student in developing a focused training plan for the final four weeks of the placement to give the student opportunities to specifically practise compentecies that are not yet at a RDY Ready for Independnet Practice rating. The final Competency Assessment will remain open until the end of the placement to allow the Senior Preceptor to amend any scores given at the end of month seven if required.

The student is required to be assessed against all compentecies in the CCF. However, if you believe that any of these competencies are not applicable in your TE, and the student cannot be exposed to that compentecy in your TE, please contact a PE. A full list of all competencies can be found in the induction and training plan here.

The Competency Assessment will be completed and recorded on the APPEL Virtual Learning Environment (VLE). The VLE will link each student with their Senior Preceptor and provides details of all of the required competencies. The Competency Assessment is completed in three steps:



Step 1 The student completes a self-assessment exercise where they assign themselves a rating in each of the specified compentecies, based on what they consider their competency rating to be.

Step 2 You rate the student in each of the specified compenticies based on your experience of the student's competency. Before rating the student, you may wish to get feedback from other colleagues who have been involved in the student's training. When completing your ratings, you may choose to enter on the VLE any feedback or comments specific to the compentecy you are rating. This particularly helpful when the student receives a Close or Moderate rating rating as it acts as a record of the feedback provided to students to support their development.

Step 3 A meeting should be organised between you and the student, where you can review your respective ratings together. The following should be discussed as part of this meeting:

a) You should provide constructive feedback that (i) identifies those areas where the student has performed well and (ii) highlights where improvement is needed and how this may be achieved. The provision of feedback is particularly important for the first assessment to ensure the student is best placed to achieve the required rating in the final assessment.

b) Discuss where any differences have arisen between your ratings – seek to understand why the student felt they were that rating and provide honest and constructive feedback. It is important to check the student's understanding of the feedback provided.

c) Identify the areas where the student is not at the required rating; explore why this may be? Have they not yet had opportunities to develop this competency, or do they require more practise in certain activities to develop the competency? Consider and discuss with the student activities that may provide opportunities to develop these competencies and ensure that the student updates their training plan.

d) Record the feedback given at each assessment on the VLE; record actions that should be completed, and provide your student with guidance on amending the training plan as required.

Helpful Hints: Completing the Competency Assessment

- Arrange a time to complete Step 2 of the Competency Assessment and a time for the meeting with your student to discuss the feedback and ratings from your assessment (Step 3 of the process) well in advance of the required deadlines to allow for unexpected delays.
- Check your student understands the feedback you are providing and record your feedback on the VLE.
- Using the training plan template. Put a plan (with dates) in place that establishes opportunities to enable your student to be exposed to activities that will help them reach the required level of competency.
- If you believe that any of the compentecies are not applicable in your placement setting, please contact a Practice Educator.
- Seek help early. If you have identified or have concerns about your student's development of competency contact a Practice Educator.
- During the first (formative) assessment, when discussing compentecies which require improvement, students have identified the following as helpful:
    - Examples of what their Senior Preceptor would expect to see if the student was demonstrating the compentecy.
    - Guidance on how they could develop their competence in that compentecy.

Competency Assessment Questions

How would I rate a student at the first assessment, if they haven't been exposed to that compentence yet?

You should rate your student "Clo Requires Close Supervision"

It is important at this stage to think and plan for opportunities that your student could engage in to develop this competence on the placement. The student should update their training plan acccordingly, with suggested activities and time frame of when they will complete activities to expose them to this comepetence. If you have concerns or need support or suggestions of activities that may expose students to certain compentence, contact a Practice Educator.

What do I do if my student is achieving CLO (*Requires Close Supervision) *in the first assessment?

The first assessment is to help Senior Preceptors and students to identify the student's current competence and put a plan in place to help the student achieve the required level of competence before the final assessment. At the first assessment, the student will only have completed approximately three months of their placement and may not have been exposed to many opportunities to develop their competence in all compentecies. The Senior Preceptor should look at the areas in which the student is achieving ***CLO (*Requires Close Supervision)** ratings and consider possible reasons for these ratings, e.g. is it due to lack of exposure to relevant activities or do they need additional support in this area? The Senior Preceptor should provide honest feedback to their student and agree a plan with their student to address these areas. If the Senior Preceptor has any concerns, they should contact a Practice Educator.

Competency Assessment Questions

Why is the final assessment completed at the end of seven months, when the placement lasts eight months?

The final assessment is completed at the end of seven months, to allow time for a focused training period if the student is having difficulty achieving the required level of competency for certain competencies.

What happens if I feel my student is not reaching the level of RDY "Ready for Independent Practice" at the final Competency Assessment?

Once you have concerns about your student's competency level, please get in touch with your Practice Educator as soon as possible. **If you feel your student is not Ready for Independent Practice , you should rate the student at the appropriate level, in the final competency assessment.**

Once the final assessment is completed, a Practice Educator will review all assessments and contact the Senior Preceptor and student in every case where the required standard has not been met. The Practice Educator will then support the student and Senior Preceptor to prepare a focused training plan, to facilitate opportunities for the student to develop their competence in the final four weeks of placement.

If after the four-week focused training period, the student still has not reached the required competency level, the School of Pharmacy, may recommend an additional training period for the student. APPEL will liaise with the student to find a suitable Training Establishment to complete the additional training period.

What if I am going to be on holidays when the final Competency Assessment has to be completed?

If you feel that the student has demonstrated their competence to the required standard and you are confident that you can provide an accurate assessment of the student before the final assessment date (31st July), early completion of the Competency Assessment can be facilitated. If the Competency Assessment is going to be delayed, you are required to inform a Practice Educator or the APPEL office. If you think that the student may not achieve the required *) level RDY Ready for Independent Practice*in the final assessment, it is essential that this information is relayed to the student and a Practice Educator, as soon as possible. Any delay could have an impact on the duration of the student's focused training period, which needs to be avoided. The Practice Educator/APPEL and the Senior Preceptor will discuss and agree the appropriate actions in these circumstances.

Feedback

We greatly appreciate your open and honest feedback on what is working well and how we can make things better so that we can improve this experience for everyone involved. Please get in touch with APPEL at any time during the placement if you have any feedback or suggestions.

At the end of the placement, we will send you a placement evaluation – we appreciate you taking the time to complete the evaluation.

Competency Assessment Clinics

Completing the formative Competency Assessment can bring up questions for Senior Preceptors. To assist you with any questions you may have and support you in providing learning opportunities for your students, the Practice Educators will hold Competency Assessment Clinics after the formative Competency Assessment has closed. You will be invitied to register to attend one of these clinics, by email, in the lead up to the formative Competency Assessment.

Placement Support

One of APPEL's primary goals is to support Senior Preceptors to undertake their roles. This support is provided in several ways. If you have any questions or concerns about the placement or your student before, during, or after the placement, please do not hesitate to contact us. All contact details can be found at www.appel.ie or the end of this handbook

Additional Training

Equality, Diversity, and Inclusion

In an increasingly diverse world, people are becoming 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 (Revised 2022)

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

Open Disclosure Training

Open disclosure is an open, consistent approach to communicating with patients and the relevant person(s) when things go wrong in healthcare. The National Open Disclosure

Framework was published in 2023 and aims to promote a clear and consistent approach by health and social care providers, including pharmacists, to open communication with patients and any relevant support person following a patient safety incident or an adverse event.

Below are links to Open disclosure training which are available to all pharmacists. Additional pharmacist specific resources may become available over time.

- IIOP – Online Training Module – Open Disclosure- available here
- HSEland - Module 1 Communicating effectively through open disclosure, Module 2 Open Disclosure:applying principles to practice– available here
- HSE webinars – available here
- PSI Resources – Open Disclosure - available here

Frequently Asked Questions

What do I do if the student is unwell or absent?

If the student is unwell during their placement, please excuse them from attendance and/or help them get medical care, as appropriate. If you are concerned about a student's health, attendance, or they are not meeting the requisite amount of placement time, please contact a Practice Educator or APPEL Operations Team as soon as possible.

Why do I have to inform APPEL of any concerns regarding student attendance and complete the 'Declaration of satisfactory attendance and student behaviour' at the end of placement?

The placement is defined in law as being 'not less than eight months in duration'. For the student to fulfil this legal requirement - 100% attendance is required on placement. The Schools of Pharmacy have to ensure this legal requirement has been fulfilled, so they have to monitor and manage all attendance. If a student is not attending placement, APPEL and the Schools of Pharmacy need to be made aware of this to address the situation and offer the student any supports required. During placement, students remain registered with their HEI, and each HEI, therefore, has a duty of care to their student.

Can I stop the placement, mid-placement?

If you are not certain that your Training Establishment will be able to take a student for the entire duration of the placement, please inform APPEL before the placement starts. In cases of emergency or serious and unexpected shortage of staff to supervise the student, please contact APPEL as soon as possible.

What if the Senior Preceptor is going to be on extended leave during the placement?

Senior Preceptor accreditation documentation states that the Senior Preceptor must be on site for a minimum of three days per week (or equivalent). They should not be absent for more than four weeks during the placement. If the Senior Preceptor is going to be on extended leave or there is a change of circumstance during the placement, you need to contact the APPEL office immediately.

What happens if there is a change in Senior Preceptor during the placement?

If you are aware there will be a change in Senior Preceptor, you must notify the APPEL office immediately, and they will discuss with you the necessary arrangements for paperwork and accreditation of the new Senior Preceptor. You must ensure there is an adequate handover of information regarding the student's progression and competence between the Senior Preceptors.

Why do the placement hours have to be completed Monday to Friday between 8 am-6 pm?

The placement hours have been organised to be similar to a university timetable. Students will be completing other academic work outside of the placement hours, and the placement timetable has been organised to allow some flexibility while also ensuring students have sufficient time to complete this work.

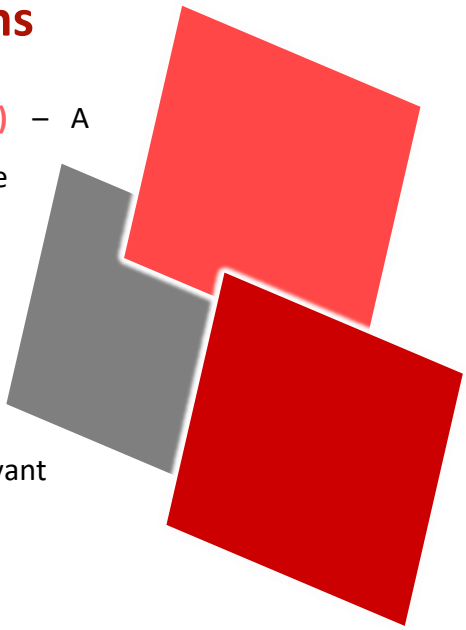
In August of their 5th-year placement, students will be allowed to be on placement at the following times:

- No more than one late night/evening per week – no later than 9pm
- No more than two Saturdays during August

What Infection Prevention and Control (IPC) preparations has my student completed?

Students are required to complete a suite of IPC training courses on HSEland in line with annual HSE requirements for clinical student placements.

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/Senior Preceptors will assess a student's competency in the relevant compentencies in the CCF.

HEI – Higher Education Institution.

MPharm – Masters Degree in Pharmacy.

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/Trainers, 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 or RCSI School of Pharmacy and Biomolecular Sciences or Trinity School of Pharmacy and Pharmaceutical Sciences.

Senior Preceptor – A registered Pharmacist who is overseeing the experiential placement of 5th-Year student(s).

Trinity – Trinity College Dublin, The University of Dublin.

Training Establishment (TE) – The specific location providing the placement.

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

VLE – APPEL Virtual Learning Environment – APPEL's virtual classroom where students and Trainers can engage in certain activities. For students, this includes the academic modules relating to their placement, and for Senior Preceptors, this includes online Trainer training. Both students and Senior Preceptors will use the APPEL VLE for Competency Assessment, and the APPEL VLE also hosts the placement matching system.

5th-Year Placement – Statutory eight-month experiential learning placement in the fifth year of the five-year integrated pharmacy programme.

Appendix II – Placement Governance

APPEL has a defined quality assurance process for all placements. Students, Senior 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

Student Placement Agreement and Student Handbook

Students must complete a placement agreement and read the handbook before placement, which contains the terms and conditions of the APPEL placement. A copy of both of these can be found on the APPEL website.

Senior Preceptors

Each student will have a named Senior Preceptor assigned to them for the placement. The role of the Senior Preceptor is to supervise the student placement directly and support the student in their development as a pharmacy professional. The Senior Preceptor may, while directly overseeing the student placement, ask other colleagues to assist in the supervision of the student.

Each Senior Preceptor is required to:

- Undertake APPEL Senior Preceptor accreditation. Each pharmacist wishing to act as an APPEL Senior Preceptor must complete a number of declarations, including a connections declaration, a declaration that they will complete the APPEL Trainer Training, and the legal declarations required by SI 377/2014
- Complete the required APPEL Trainer Training
- Be a PSI-registered pharmacist, qualified for a minimum of three years and has practised in the area in which they are supervising the students for at least two years.
- Provide direct supervision onsite with regular face-to-face sessions.
- 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 Senior Preceptor has no concerns about the student's fitness to register as a pharmacist.

Training Establishments

The PSI requires APPEL to accredit all Training Establishments. This process includes the completion of certain declarations, including a connections declaration and the legal

declarations required by SI 377/2014, a Joint Written Agreement for Student Vetting, and the Placement Agreement. This agreement outlines the responsibilities of both APPEL and the Training Establishment in their respective participation in student placement(s). It details placement requirements, including insurance, induction, health and safety requirements, the suitability of placement environment, and the Training Establishment can provide the student with adequate supervision. These declarations and agreements are contained within the Training Establishment Accreditation Form which must be renewed every two years.

The APPEL Team Contact Details

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