APPEL

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



Student Handbook

5th Year Placement 2027

Table of Contents

What is APPEL? 3

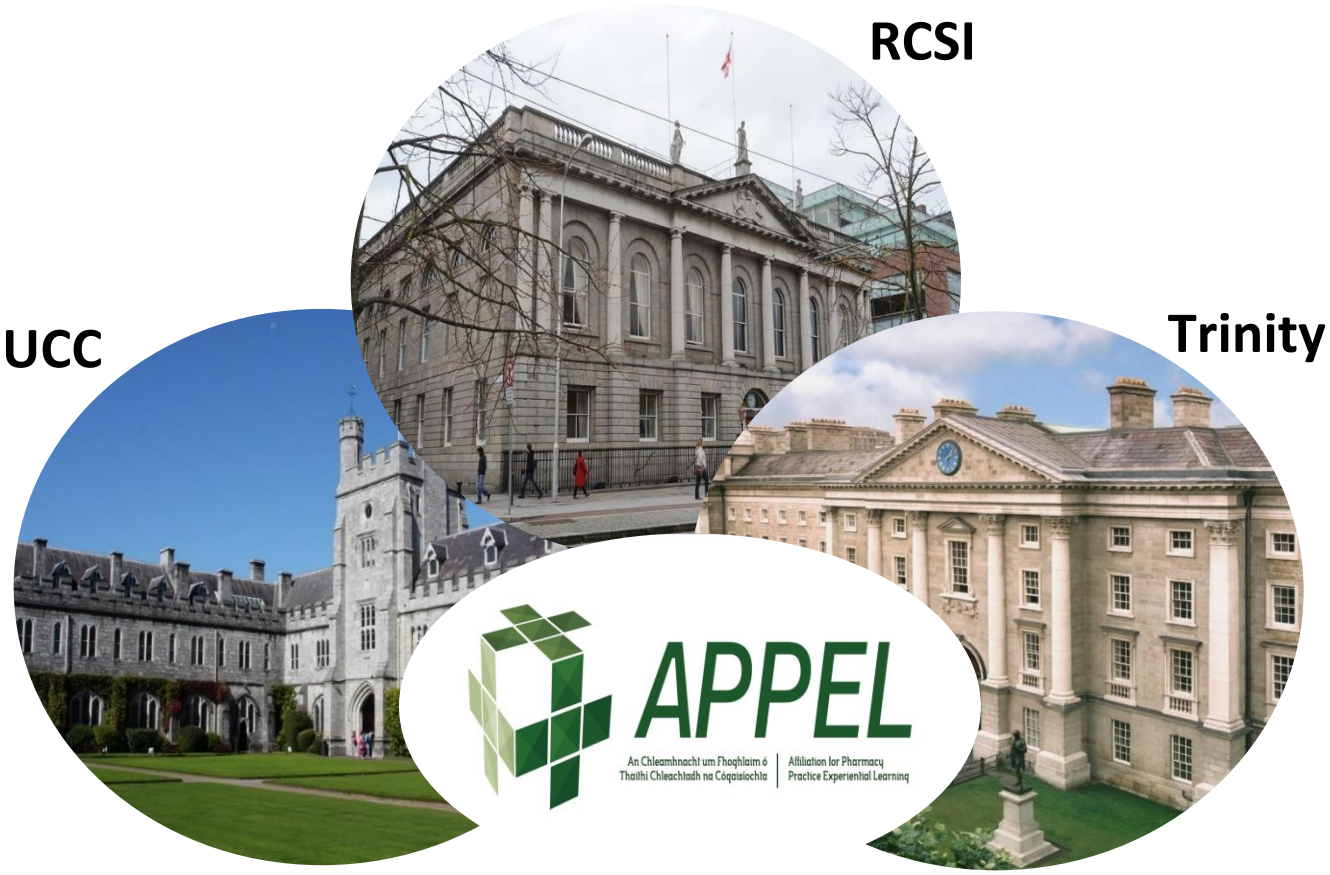
5th Year Placements – Practical Information 5

Preparing for your 5th Year Placement 11

During your 5th Year Placement 14

Abbreviations and Definitions 24

The APPEL Team Contact Details 25



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 of 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.

APPEL has created Standards for APPEL Experiential Learning Placements. These standards were developed to support Training Establishments and Trainers in the delivery of experiential learning placements, which promote the educational experience of students.

The APPEL team consists of Practice Educators based within the three Schools of Pharmacy, and the Operations Team, led by the Director/National Coordinator of APPEL. 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 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.** You must complete 30 hrs on placement per week between Monday and Friday (8 am – 6 pm) (excluding bank holidays), **except in August 2027 (see below)**. In addition, you must be available for four hours between Monday and Friday (8 am – 6 pm) each week for your 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 – no later than 9 pm
- No more than two Saturdays during August

Please report any absences during the placement schedule to both the **Training Establishment AND your Practice Educator** as soon as possible. Your Senior Preceptor will be asked to sign a 'Declaration of Satisfactory Attendance and Student Behaviour' after each Competency Assessment.

CODE OF CONDUCT

You must comply with the APPEL Joint Schools Code of Conduct while on placement. The Code of Conduct is available here.

COMPETENCY ASSESSMENT

There are two Competency Assessments during the placement; the formative Competency Assessment must be completed by **31st March 2027** and the summative Competency Assessment completed by **31st July 2027**. You must achieve a "RDY- Ready for Independent Practice rating" in all competencies in the **summative assessment**. If you have any concerns about reaching the required level of competency, please get in touch with a Practice Educator as early as possible, to enable us to support you and your Senior Preceptor.

CRITICAL INCIDENTS

You must report all critical incidents to your Practice Educator or the APPEL office (if the Practice Educator is unavailable). Critical incidents include but are 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 Senior Preceptor/a member of staff at the Training Establishment immediately.

SUPPORT

If you have any queries/concerns regarding your placement, please contact your Practice Educator or the APPEL Office (details on the last page of this handbook). Table 2 in this document provides details on the supports available to you, should various concerns/queries arise during your placement. If you are unsure who to contact, contact your Practice Educator, who will be able to signpost you to the most appropriate staff member/service.

5th Year Placements – Practical Information

When? 4th January 2027 –27th August 2027

What time? You are required to complete 30 hours of placement each week, according to a timetable agreed with the Training Establishment. The hours of attendance must be of 'university character', i.e. **between 8 am and 6 pm on weekdays**.

In addition to the 30 placement hours, you must be provided with 4 hours of protected time each week in which to complete academic work. This must be a weekday morning or afternoon and must be provided within the same hours (8 am to 6 pm).

In August of your 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

APPEL placement is not scheduled on bank holidays. In weeks with a bank holiday, students are required to complete 22.5 hours on placement.

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

Holidays/bank holidays: You are not expected to attend placement on bank holidays and a two-week holiday period has also been scheduled:

Holidays	
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
RCSI Holidays UCC Holidays Trinity Holidays	7th – 18th June 10th - 21st May 2027 10th – 21st May 2027

Reading/Study Weeks: In addition, the placement schedule follows a university timetable and therefore, two reading/study weeks have been set for students by their HEI as follows:

UCC Reading/Study Weeks
22nd – 26th March 2027

RCSI Reading/Study Weeks
29th March – 2nd April 2027
26th July – 31st July 2027

Trinity Reading/Study Weeks
22nd March – 26th March 2027
19th July – 23rd July 2027

Mock PRE: The Mock PRE will take place in June. You will not be available to attend placement on the day of the Mock PRE and you should inform your Senior Preceptor of the date as soon as it is confirmed by your School of Pharmacy. As the Mock PRE is a mandatory educational activity, you will not be required to make up the placement hours missed. You will only be required to complete **22.5 hours** of placement during that week.

What happens if I miss some placement time?

This is a statutory placement, which is 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 therefore accommodate attendance at discretionary appointments or events during the placement week. You should discuss this with your Senior Preceptor well in advance of any appointments/events so that your timetable can be modified to accommodate this.
- You must complete 30 hours of placement each week. However, where required and in conjunction with your Senior Preceptor, you can decrease the number of hours on placement on 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.
- It is anticipated that 'expected absences', such as attendance at events and appointments, will be managed by you, in conjunction with your Senior Preceptor, within the flexible placement timetable.

- **You must inform both your Senior Preceptor/Training Establishment and your PE if you are unexpectedly absent from placement,** e.g. due to illness or bereavement, or where 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 Senior Preceptor is asked to sign the 'Declaration of Satisfactory Attendance and Student Behaviour' to confirm that you have completed the requisite placement time (30 hours per week over eight months, or equivalent).

Remember: One of the indicative behaviours you will be assessed against is 'ensures punctuality and reliability'.

What will I be doing during my experiential learning placement?

As this is the final placement you undertake before you are eligible to register as a pharmacist, it is your final opportunity to develop competency in the core behaviours of a pharmacist, under the guidance and supervision of a Senior Preceptor. At the end of the experiential learning placement, you will be required to demonstrate that you are competent in all competencies of the Core Competency Framework (CCF) – this will be assessed in your final Competency Assessment by your Senior Preceptor. Additionally, the Professional Registration Exam (PRE) is aligned with the CCF.

In order to demonstrate the required level of competency in each of the competencies, you will have to undertake a number of different activities. Your training plan will enable you, in conjunction with your Senior Preceptor, to plan a sufficient range of activities so that you can demonstrate competency in each of the competencies .

A copy of the competencies and indicative behaviours are available in the sample induction and training plan.

It should be clear to all staff, patients and members of the public that you are a student on an experiential learning placement. **For this reason, you must wear the name badge your School of Pharmacy has provided to you, which identifies you as a pharmacy student.**

During the eight-month experiential learning placement, you will also complete three online modules (co-developed by UCC, RCSI, and Trinity academic staff), as well as other academic modules which will be specified by your School of Pharmacy. The online modules are aligned to the five domains of the PSI Core Competency Framework and will enable you to develop an understanding of the theory underpinning the competencies that you are expected to practise on placement.

What is the Professional Registration Exam (PRE)?

A student becomes eligible to sit the PRE once they have successfully passed the Competency Assessment (i.e., reached a "RDY- Ready for Independent Practice" rating in all competencies) on their 5th-year experiential learning placement, in addition to the attendance and academic requirements of their M. Pharm programme. There are two opportunities to sit the PRE each year, in September and in February. This is an examination composed of a number of Objective Structured Clinical Examination (OSCE) stations. A mock PRE will be held prior to the first opportunity to sit the PRE, to familiarise all students with the exam format – your HEI will provide you with further details in due course.

Dates for the mock and the two opportunities to sit the PRE will be disseminated to students by their individual HEI.

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 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 9 of this handbook.

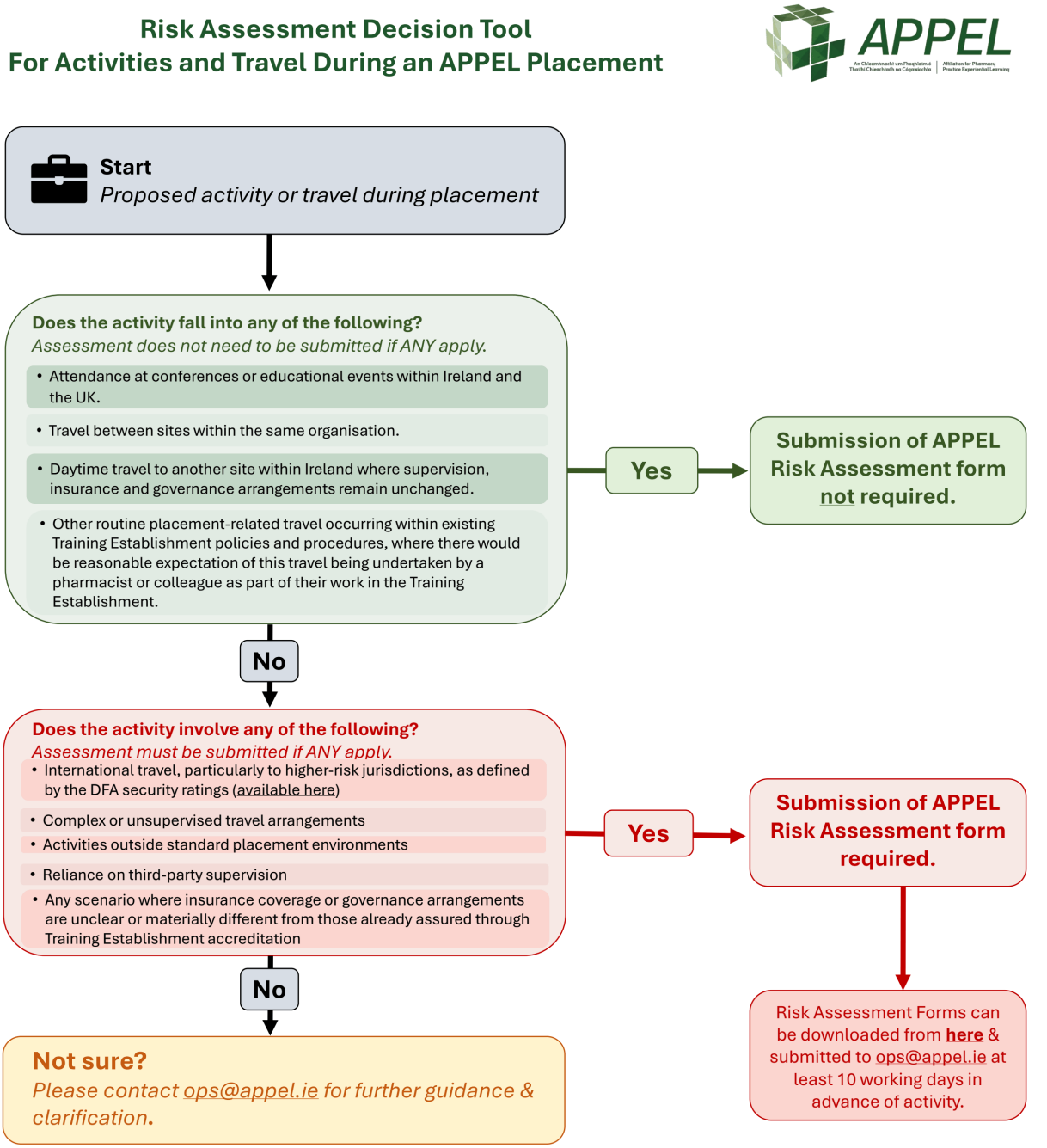
If the Decision Tool indicates that a Risk Assessment Form is not required, the activity may proceed without submitting a Risk Assessment Form, provided that:

- 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.



- *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 I complete placement hours in different location/branch on a temporary basis?

No, only placement hours that are completed in the APPEL-accredited Training Establishment to which you have been assigned to will be recognised. In exceptional circumstances, your placement providers should engage with APPEL regarding moving your placement to another Training Establishment **in advance**. A number of requirements must be fulfilled before any move can take place. Please contact your Practice Educator or the APPEL Operations team at ops@appel.ie if this situation arises.

What is the role of my Senior Preceptor?

Your Senior Preceptor will play a pivotal role in supporting you on your journey through your experiential learning placement to professional autonomy. Professional autonomy means that following successful completion of the 5th-year experiential learning placement and the PRE, you will be an independent, self-directing professional pharmacist who is wholly responsible for all decisions and judgements you make. Your Senior Preceptor will guide you to develop the requisite skills and attitude and will enable you to build on your existing knowledge and experience so that by the end of the experiential learning placement, you will have the skills, knowledge and expertise required to be registered as a safe and competent pharmacist and to practise autonomously.

Induction: Your Senior Preceptor will plan an induction for you prior to your experiential learning placement. It is expected that your induction will be carried out at the start of your experiential learning placement so that you can become familiar with the practicalities of your new learning environment.

Training Plan: Your APPEL Training Plan is designed to guide you and your Senior Preceptor in planning activities which will provide you with the opportunity to develop all the CCF competencies. The Training Plan is a downloadable, editable list of all competencies you are expected to achieve, with space for you to populate it with activities. You are required to complete a Training Plan, in conjunction with your Senior Preceptor, to ensure that you have identified opportunities to develop competency in all of the required competencies. The Training Plan should be treated as a living document – you should take responsibility for updating it, to document which activities you have undertaken and to identify which competencies you need to focus on.

Supervision: All students on an experiential learning placement must be supervised to ensure that patient safety is a prime focus. Remember that your 5th-year placement is your final opportunity to practice the competencies of the CCF, in a supportive, experiential learning environment, in which you can seek the guidance, and benefit from the experience, of a qualified pharmacist. The legislation for the 5th-year experiential

learning placement states that the experiential learning placement should be under the direct supervision of the Senior Preceptor. This means that your Senior Preceptor will be directly supervising you during the experiential learning placement; however, there may also be times during your experiential learning placement when your Senior Preceptor is unavailable, and another pharmacist will supervise you. If this occurs, there should be a significant level of interaction between you, the Senior Preceptor and any other pharmacist involved in your supervision. The legislation further states that a Senior Preceptor must directly supervise one student completing a 5th-year experiential learning placement. However, the Senior Preceptor can supervise up to three students in total, if there are other pharmacists employed at the Training Establishment, who can assist with the supervision of the students.

To support you in your development on your experiential learning placement, APPEL require Senior Preceptors to be employed for a minimum of three days per week or equivalent. Additionally, your Senior Preceptor should miss no more than four weeks during the experiential learning placement. If your Senior Preceptor is not available as outlined above, please contact your Practice Educator, as alternative arrangements may have to be made.

Declaration of Satisfactory Attendance and Behaviour: Your Senior Preceptor will be asked to sign this declaration twice during the placement (after each Competency Assessment) to confirm that you have met the attendance requirements of the placement and to confirm that they have no concerns about your fitness to register as a pharmacist.

Hints & Tips from Previous 5th Year Students

Students who completed the 5th-year placement in previous years have kindly shared their advice on lessons learned over the course of their placement, and we hope you can benefit from their tips:

Time management

At the start of your placement, use the planner included in the Induction and Training plan which has been pre-populated with the important APPEL dates. It is strongly recommended that you additionally populate this planner with important dates related to your online academic modules and any additional modules run by your Higher Education Institution (e.g., project deadlines, assignment deadlines and so on). Many students accepted extra hours at their Training Establishment (on top of placement hours) and then regretted this, as they later realised that many deadlines for academic work were fast approaching. By managing your time from the very beginning, your availability to take on extra hours will be clearer.

Training Plan

One of the main goals of the eight-month experiential learning placement is to develop competency in all competencies of the CCF. The APPEL Training Plan to enables you to document which activities you are undertaking on placement linked to each competency (N.B. one activity, e.g. leading an audit project, may allow you to practise many competency of the CCF). This is a downloadable, editable document in which you can document your activities for each competency. A strong recommendation from previous 5th-year students is to use this template training plan – start filling it out early in placement and update it regularly. This will facilitate tracking of your competency development and will enable you to identify any competencies, which are more difficult to achieve early on so that a training plan to develop those competencies can be put in place well in advance of the summative Competency Assessment.

Be Assertive!

Many students stated that one of their main regrets was lacking confidence/assertiveness at the beginning of placement. If they could begin their placement again, they would:

- ask more questions (which they cannot find the answer to themselves),
- ask their Senior Preceptor for more meetings,
- request feedback more frequently from their Senior Preceptor, and
- ask to be involved in activities of interest to them in the Training Establishment.

Seek Support

Students stated that they would seek support with competency development from their Practice Educator much earlier. The earlier you realise that there may be difficulties with achieving competency in certain competencies in your particular Training Establishment and contact your Practice Educator to discuss these, the greater the possibility of focused training plans being put in place to facilitate competency development. Additionally, a table of who best to contact when you need support with various issues has been developed (see Table 2 on page 22 below).

Preparing for your 5th Year Placement

Mandatory Infection Prevention and Control (IPC) Training

In advance of commencing your placement you are required to complete certain IPC training requirements, which will form part of your Student Placement Agreement declaration. **This training must be completed for each clinical placement, regardless of whether you have completed them in the past.** Please retain your certificates of completion in a safe place as APPEL may request evidence of completion as part of its quality control processes.

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.

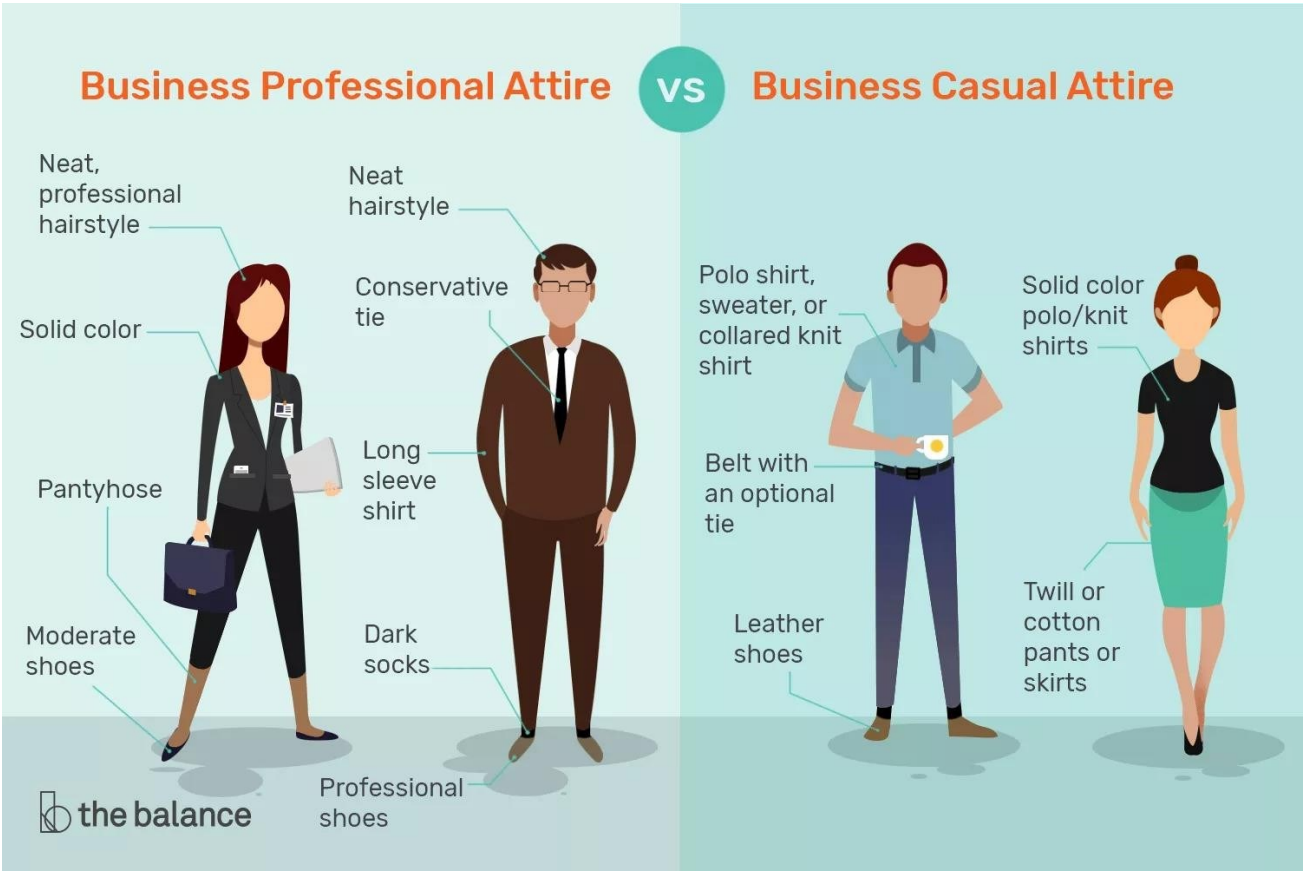


Fig. 1: Business professional and business casual dress codes

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/mod/page/view.php?id=231330
- 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 Diversion
- 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.

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 an Induction and Training Plan template, which you should complete, in conjunction with your Senior Preceptor. At this induction meeting, tell your Senior 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 Senior Preceptor.

Learning styles:
Each one of us favours one or more styles of learning. In advance of your induction meeting on placement, it is advised to undertake the Honey and Mumford Learning Styles Questionnaire, to help you identify your preferred learning style. By sharing this information with your Senior Preceptor, you and your Senior Preceptor will gain a deeper understanding and appreciation of each other's learning (and teaching) styles.

During your 5th Year Placement

1. Competency Assessment

This is the final placement you will complete before you are: 1) eligible to complete the PRE, and 2) upon successful completion of the PRE, able to register as a pharmacist. Therefore, it is expected that you will demonstrate, albeit under the direct supervision of your Senior Preceptor, the competencies expected of a safe and competent pharmacist by the end of your experiential learning placement, i.e. those described in the CCF under the following five domains:

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

The competencies listed in the PSI CCF are those expected of a newly registered pharmacist for the first three years of their registration in Ireland. To facilitate you to develop the required level of competency in each of these competencies, your Senior Preceptor will help you to identify opportunities and activities that will allow you to practise these competencies. You will be actively developing your competency in a number of different ways and on a number of times while on your experiential learning placement, under the guidance and supervision of your Senior Preceptor. Competency development requires you to actively undertake tasks related to the competency, as professional skills cannot be acquired by observation alone.

As previously mentioned, you are expected to develop a training plan, in conjunction with your Senior Preceptor. The purpose of a training plan is to identify competencies, which still require attention, while also documenting activities you have undertaken which have allowed you to develop and demonstrate your competency in other areas. It is envisaged that you will need to update the training plan on a regular basis, in particular after the formative Competency Assessment. In the beginning, it is likely that you will need more guidance from your Senior Preceptor on the activities you can undertake to develop competency. As you settle into your role in your Training Establishment, updating your Training Plan will become your responsibility.

If you or your Senior Preceptor have any queries regarding the competencies or the activities you are undertaking, please contact a Practice Educator.

Competency Assessment Process

There will be two Competency Assessments during your experiential learning placement – one formative and one summative.

- **Formative: To be completed by 31st March 2027**
- **Summative: To be completed by 31st July 2027**

The Competency Assessment ratings are recorded on the Competency Assessment tool on the APPEL virtual learning environment (VLE). There are three steps to the Competency Assessment process (Fig. 2). Firstly, you need to self-assess your competency for each of the competencies. Secondly, your Senior Preceptor will assess your competency in each of the competencies. When your Senior Preceptor is documenting their ratings, they will be able to view your self-assessment ratings. The next step is for you and your Senior Preceptor to schedule a meeting to review your progress. This will allow you to identify competencies, which you should focus on developing, as well as guide you in updating your training plan.

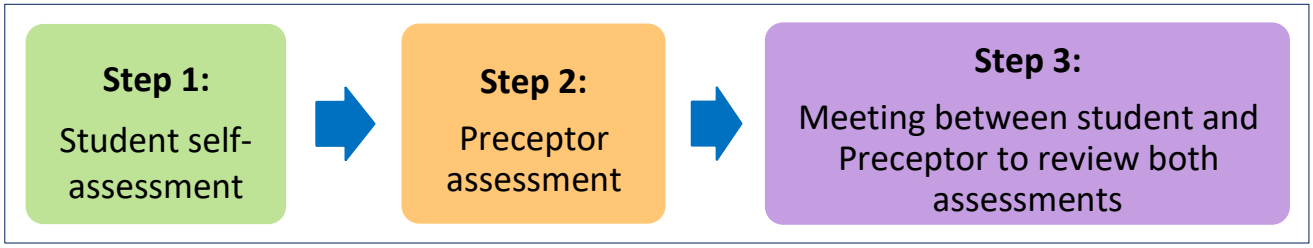


Fig. 2: Competency Assessment Process

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

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

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

→ Your Senior Preceptor should provide constructive feedback that (i) identifies those areas where you have performed well and (ii) highlights where improvement is needed and 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? In collaboration with your Senior Preceptor, identify activities that may provide opportunities for you to develop these competencies and document these in your training plan.

Helpful Hints

When you meet with your Senior Preceptor to review the Competency Assessments, we recommend that you particularly focus on the following areas:

- Competencies in which your competency level is lower than the required standard – it is recommended that you discuss potential opportunities for development in these competencies with your Senior Preceptor.
- Competencies in which there is a discrepancy in the competency level assessed by you and your Senior Preceptor – try to understand the reason for the difference by asking your Senior Preceptor for specific examples of how you can improve in these areas.

Competency Assessment Ratings

By the summative Competency Assessment, you are required to achieve a "RDY-Ready for Independent Practice" rating in all competencies of the CCF. You must meet this criteria in order to be eligible to sit the PRE.

The competency assessment ratings are explained below (Table 1). A "RDY – Ready for Independent Practice" rating means that Trainer wouldn't really need to be there (student performs completely independently, understands risks and performs safely . In order to achieve a RDY-Ready for Independent Practice rating in the Competency Assessment, it is likely that you will need to undertake several different activities on a number of occasions related to each competency.

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

Focused Training Plan: If you do not achieve a" RDY- Ready for Independent Practice" rating in all competencies in the summative Competency Assessment, you should contact a Practice Educator immediately. The Practice Educator will support you and your Senior Preceptor in developing a

focused training plan for the final four weeks of the placement to give you opportunities to specifically practice competencies, which are not yet at a" RDY-Ready for Independent Practice" rating. The final Competency Assessment will remain open for your Senior Preceptor until the end of the placement, to allow your Senior Preceptor to amend any scores given if required.

What is the difference between the formative and summative Competency Assessments?

Formative Assessment: This type of assessment is also known as assessment ***for*** learning. Therefore, the purpose of formative assessment is to allow you and your Senior Preceptor to identify competencies that you need to practise and improve upon and to support your development on placement. The ratings recorded at this point **do not** contribute towards your overall assessment outcome. The formative assessment needs to be completed by the 31st March 2027, so that you and your Senior Preceptor have sufficient time to identify practice opportunities for all competencies, which do not meet the required standard at this point. There is no expectation that you will have reached the required standard of competency by the formative assessment.

Summative Assessment: This type of assessment is also known as assessment ***of*** learning. The summative assessment is your final Competency Assessment and must be completed by the 31st July 2027 . This Competency Assessment is the final one, and it is mandatory to achieve the required standard to be eligible to sit the PRE.

Competency Assessment Questions

1. ***Why is the first (formative) competency assessment completed so early in the placement?***

   The first assessment is a formative assessment (assessment for learning). It is undertaken early in the placement, to allow you to become familiar with the competencies and to identify competencies that you will need to practise and improve upon prior to the summative assessment. By completing the first assessment by the 31st March, this provides you, along with your Senior Preceptor, sufficient time to identify practice opportunities to support your competency development – you should ensure that you document this in your training plan. The ratings achieved in the first Competency Assessment do not contribute towards the overall assessment outcome. There would be no expectation that you will have reached the required standard of competency by this first assessment.

Competency Assessment Questions (cont'd)

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

   The final assessment is completed at the end of seven months, to allow time for a focused training period for any competencies that are not yet at the required standard "RDY -Ready for Independent Practice"

3. ***How would I rate myself at the first assessment, if I have not been exposed to a competency yet?***

   You should use the "CLO-Requires Close Supervision" rating. It is important at this stage to think and plan for opportunities that you could engage in to develop this competence on the placement. You should update your training plan accordingly, with suggested activities and time frame of when you will complete activities to expose you to this competency. If you or your senior preceptor have concerns or need support or suggestions of activities that may expose you to certain competency, contact a Practice Educator.

4. ***What do I do if I am worried that I will not achieve the required rating (*RDY-Ready for Independent Practice) *in the summative Competency Assessment?***

   In the first instance, it is important to discuss your concern with your Senior Preceptor. Throughout the placement, you should be updating your training plan – by keeping your training plan up to date; you can identify any areas of concern earlier in the placement. If both your Senior Preceptor and you remain concerned that you will not achieve the required rating in the summative Competency Assessment, you must contact your Practice Educator as early as possible. Your Practice Educator can support you and your Senior Preceptor with ideas for potential opportunities to develop the particular competencies. It will be the decision of your Senior Preceptor as to whether the suggested activities can be undertaken in your Training Establishment.

Competency Assessment Questions (cont'd)

5. ***What do I do if I have not achieved a "RDY -Ready for Independent Practice"in every competency in the summative Competency Assessment?***
   Contact a Practice Educator as soon as possible. They will support you and your Senior Preceptor in developing a focused training plan. The focused training plan documents opportunities that you can undertake, which are designed to facilitate you in improving your level of competency.

   If after the focused training period, you have not reached the required competency level, your School of Pharmacy, in conjunction with APPEL, will recommend an additional training period. APPEL will liaise with you to find a suitable Training Establishment to complete the additional training period.

2. Placement Support

One of APPEL's primary goals is to support students before, during and after their experiential learning placements. We are more than happy to support you with any queries about the practicalities surrounding experiential learning (e.g., schedule, attendance, Senior Preceptor changes) or Competency Assessment and development of competency. We will handle queries or concerns with discretion. Issues/concerns raised by students 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). Please note: Your Practice Educator will inform you before passing such information on. The most important thing to remember is that we cannot provide support if we are unaware there is an issue. All contact details for Practice Educators and the APPEL Office can be found at www.appel.ie or on the last page this handbook.

There are many other supports available to you through your HEI – please see Table 2 below for examples of some of the main contacts for students with particular queries or concerns. Please also remember that any supports which are available to you during your time in university are also available to you while you are on placement, i.e., your mentor/tutor and year co-ordinator.

Table 2: Signposting Support Services for Students of UCC, RCSI and Trinity on APPEL Placements

Query/Concern relates to:	UCC	RCSI	Trinity
Competency development, ideas for learning activities, Competency Assessments, if you are concerned that you may not be exposed to certain competencies	practiceeducator@ucc.ie (Ruth McCarthy)	practiceeducators@rcsi.ie (annteresamorgan@rcsi.ie or jameshoran@rcsi.ie) (Anne Teresa Morgan or James Horan)	ENISHEAC@tcd.ie (Eimear Ni Sheachnasaigh – on leave) COUNIHMU@tcd.ie (Muireann Counihan)
Experiential learning, e.g. placement timetable, delayed induction, absence from placement	practiceeducator@ucc.ie (Ruth McCarthy)	practiceeducators@rcsi.ie (annteresamorgan@rcsi.ie or jameshoran@rcsi.ie) (Anne Teresa Morgan or James Horan)	ENISHEAC@tcd.ie (Eimear Ni Sheachnasaigh – on leave) COUNIHMU@tcd.ie (Muireann Counihan)

Proposed Senior Preceptor changes/ Proposed Training Establishment changes/ Absence of Senior Preceptor for >4 weeks.	practiceeducator@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	ENISHEAC@tcd.ie (Eimear Ni Sheachnasaigh – on leave) COUNIHMU@tcd.ie (Muireann Counihan) OR ops@appel.ie
If you have any concerns that you might not be able to meet the attendance requirements of the placement (e.g. if you are asked by your Senior Preceptor to stay at home from placement if you are following Public Health advice etc.)	practiceeducator@ucc.ie (Ruth McCarthy)	practiceeducators@rcsi.ie (annteresamorgan@rcsi.ie or jameshoran@rcsi.ie) (Anne Teresa Morgan or James Horan)	ENISHEAC@tcd.ie (Eimear Ni Sheachnasaigh – on leave) COUNIHMU@tcd.ie (Muireann Counihan)
Critical Incident	practiceeducator@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	ENISHEAC@tcd.ie (Eimear Ni Sheachnasaigh – on leave) COUNIHMU@tcd.ie (Muireann Counihan) OR ops@appel.ie
Accessing APPEL VLE, technical queries relating to APPEL VLE	ops@appel.ie		
Discussion forums, word counts, learning units, submission deadlines for assignments on VLE	Relevant academic module co-ordinator		

Module run by HEI, e.g. thesis, reflective practice	Relevant module coordinator at HEI		
Medical illness	Student health/ GP	Student health/ GP	Student health/ GP
Student wellbeing; e.g. feeling anxious or overwhelmed or isolated or 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 SiteCounselling Service CoMPPAS Student Assistance programme, available 24 hours a day, 365 days a year, by calling: freephone 1800 851340 (or to access from out of Ireland: +35315180277) WhatsApp: Text 'Hi' to 00353873690010	Student Counselling Services: https://www.tcd.ie/Student_Counselling/ 24-hour crisis text line text: TCD50808 https://www.tcd.ie/Stude nt_Counselling/ 24-hour crisis text line text: TCD50808
Reasonable accommodations	Disability Support Services	Learning Access and Facilitation services Learningsupport@rcsi.ie	Disability Services: https://www.tcd.ie/disability/Disability Services: https://www.tcd.ie/disabil ity/
Equality, diversity and inclusion, e.g. discrimination based on ethnicity, religion etc.	practiceeducator@ucc.ie (Ruth McCarthy)	practiceeducators@rcsi.ie (annteresamorgan@rcsi.ie or jameshoran@rcsi.ie) (Anne Teresa Morgan or James Horan) Or swo@rcsi.ie (student welfare officer)	ENISHEAC@tcd.ie COUNIHMU@tcd.ie (Muireann Counihan) (Eimear Ni Sheachnasaigh) Equality Office TCD https://www.tcd.ie/equali ty/contact/

3. Placement Governance

STUDENTS

You are required to:

→ Sign and abide by the Student Placement Agreement

→ Abide by the Schools of Pharmacy Joint Code of Conduct (see student responsibilities below)

→ Read the Student Handbook

→ Attend the Pre-Placement Preparation Session

Responsibilities

- Be aware of the terms and conditions of the APPEL placement, which are contained in the Student Placement Agreement.
- 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.
- 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 Senior 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.

SENIOR PRECEPTORS

Your Senior Preceptor is required to:

→ Undertake APPEL Trainer accreditation

→ Complete the required training

→ Be a PSI-registered pharmacist with at least three years' post-registration experience and a minimum of 2 years' experience in the field of pharmacy practice in which they are supervising your placement

→ Directly supervise student(s) on placement with regular face-to-face meetings as required. Other registered pharmacists can assist with supervision - if this is the case, there should be a significant level of interaction between you (the student), your Senior Preceptor and any other pharmacist who supervises you in your Senior Preceptor's absence.

→ Have a maximum absence during placement of 4 weeks

→ Sign the Declaration of Satisfactory Attendance and Student Behaviour twice during the placement (after each Competency Assessment) 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

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.

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 assess students' competency in the relevant behaviours in the CCF.

ECTS – European Credit Transfer and Accumulation System.

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.

PRE – Professional Registration Exam.

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 (a) 5th-year student(s).

Trinity – Trinity College Dublin, The University of Dublin.

Training Establishment – The specific location providing the placement.

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

VLE – APPEL Virtual Learning Environment – A virtual classroom in which students of UCC, RCSI and Trinity and their Trainers can engage in certain activities. For students, this includes the academic modules relating to their placement, and for Senior Preceptors, this could include 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 5th year of the five-year integrated pharmacy programme.

The APPEL Team Contact Details

APPEL Operations Team

www.appel.ie

ops@appel.ie



Louisa Power
Director and National Coordinator APPEL



Rachel Hamilton
Operations Manager



Balazs Balogh
Operations Coordinator



Conor Walsh
Operations Support Pharmacist

UCC Practice Educator



Ruth McCarthy

ruth.mccarthy@ucc.ie

087 6252 794

RCSI Practice Educators



Anne Teresa Morgan

annteresamorgan@rcsi.ie

087 3601 548



James Horan

jameshoran@rcsi.ie

087 7044 119

TCD Practice Educators



Muireann Counihan

counihmu@tcd.ie



Eimear Ní Sheachnasaigh
(currently on leave)