



Quality Standards for Practice Placements

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Summary

The quality of the learners' clinical education, experience and support is the joint and equal responsibility of the education provider and the placements provider, exercised through on-going, strong and collaborative relationships and regular dialogue. These standards have been published in order that learners, and those individuals and organisations who support them, understand their responsibilities and expectations in relation to practice placement learning. The Standards apply to all practice placement sites that have been approved as part of the CoR's accreditation processes.

Introduction

With approximately 50% of each radiography programme being practice-based, the College of Radiographers (CoR) recognises the essential contributions made by practice placement sites in providing clinical training and support which enables learners to develop into competent practitioners.

Quality practice placement experiences, situated within a positive learning environment, support the development of learners to deliver safe and effective person-centred care.

The College of Radiographers believes that the quality of the learners' clinical education, experience and support is the joint and equal responsibility of the education provider and the placements provider, exercised through on-going, strong and collaborative relationships and regular dialogue.

The CoR's Quality Standards for Practice Placements has been published in order that learners, and those individuals and organisations who support them, understand their responsibilities and expectations in relation to practice placement learning. The Standards apply to all practice placement sites that have been approved as part of the CoR's accreditation processes.

Novel placements such as health centres with diagnostic imaging facilities or cancer support units, mobile facilities and private clinics may be incorporated into learners' practice education programmes. These opportunities are entirely appropriate although for such sites, the maintenance of effective standards of learner experience should also be evident.

The general environment apparent within a practice placement site may be judged by the cohesion of its work force, the education and development culture of the placement and the attitudes of staff towards supporting learners.

Indicators of practice placements that are likely to provide the necessary quality of clinical education and student support include evidence of a full and active continuing professional development programme for all of its staff; role development initiatives operating successfully; research and other

academic or clinical collaborative work with the education provider; plans to introduce advanced and consultant level practitioners and evidence that good clinical governance, risk management and health and safety policies and procedures are in place and operating effectively.

The regular monitoring and evaluation of practice placement sites is the collaborative responsibility of education providers and practice placement providers. Such systems should be systematic and measurable.

Glossary of terms

Educational Provider

The educational provider will, in most instances, be a Higher Education Institution (HEI) that is responsible for the delivery of an approved, accredited and validated programme of study. A member of the teaching team from the HEI who visits a learner's clinical placement is usually described as the liaison tutor/lecturer or similar.

Practice Placement

The nature of a learner's practice placement will vary but may be broadly defined as the place where the learner develops and enhances their clinical skills, professional conduct and behaviour. A radiography practitioner who helps to coordinate a learner's clinical education and acts as a link between the practice placement and the HEI is usually referred to as the liaison/link radiographer or similar.

Learners

While the College of Radiographers recognises that all individuals should be involved in continuing learning in order to maintain the currency of their knowledge and skills, it uses the term 'learners' in this document to refer to:

Learners at pre-registration level including:

- individuals training to be assistants
- assistants learning to become practitioners
- direct entrants to undergraduate and postgraduate programmes leading to accreditation at practitioner level and registration with a statutory regulatory body
- returners undertaking updating of their knowledge and skills to gain HPC registration
- overseas radiographers developing their knowledge and skills for registration and practice in the UK.

Practitioner

The term 'practitioner' is any recognised professional employed at practitioner level (the level achieved on qualification) or above, who is involved in the support of learners.

1. Educational Providers

To assure quality clinical learning, educational providers have responsibility to:

1.1 ensure that learning is both current and evidence-based

- 1.2** support the philosophy of lifelong learning through emphasis on key skills and learning strategies during the preparation of learners for practice, with continuous reinforcement of these throughout the programme of study
- 1.3** ensure that the academic standards of their awards are consistent and at the appropriate standard
- 1.4** audit both the quality and the capacity of clinical learning provision
- 1.5** audit the quality and consistency of clinical supervision regularly. Where risks are identified, they should be jointly addressed with the practice placement provider
- 1.6** ensure that their staff involved in practice placement learning are appropriately qualified, resourced and competent to fulfil their role(s)
- 1.7** have effective measures in place to monitor and assure the proficiency of their staff involved in the support of the relevant work-based and practice placement learning
- 1.8** review patterns of practice placement allocation to optimise use of available capacity across the year and across the working day/week
- 1.9** provide a designated member of the academic teaching team to be easily contactable should a query arise about a learner's curriculum or progress
- 1.10** ensure that an identified academic tutor/lecturer or similar visits the learners on a regular basis.
- 1.11** put in place arrangements to ensure that all learners have equity in learning opportunities without compromising the quality of clinical service delivery or clinical education and training provision
- 1.12** ensure that robust mechanisms are in place for the evaluation of the clinical education provision which encompasses input from learners and clinical staff, as well as the education provider.

2. Practice Placement Providers

Practice placement providers have the responsibility to:

- 2.1** ensure that there is a clear policy on the management of learners' practice placements
- 2.2** ensure that all clinical staff understand the importance and value of having learners within the clinical environment and that they are all required to assist in the learners' development
- 2.3** reflect the roles of clinical assessor/mentor/practice educator or similar in job descriptions
- 2.4** promote equality and diversity in all aspects of the practice placement
- 2.5** determine the maximum number of learners that the practice placement can manage and support effectively, taking into account the potential for multiple education provider involvement. Consideration also needs to be given to the number of learners that can be associated with individual examination or treatment rooms where it is expected that two or more learners will be rostered simultaneously
- 2.6** promote the importance of interprofessional learning, facilitating effective team working and promoting mutual understanding of roles and responsibilities

2.7 demonstrate ongoing staff training, to include a robust programme of staff development.

Practice placement providers have the responsibility with education providers to:

2.8 ensure that there is a robust agreement with the education provider(s) specifying the duties and expectations of each

2.9 have and use clearly established lines of communication and liaison

2.10 monitor and evaluate the practice placement site regularly in collaboration with the education provider

2.11 demonstrate compliance with current legislation including health and safety legislation and ionising radiation regulations

2.12 ensure that issues concerning learners are a standing item on the agenda at staff meetings, providing regular opportunity for dialogue and that the service responds to issues that arise

2.13 have effective measures in place to monitor and assure the proficiency of their staff involved in the support of the relevant work-based and placement learning

2.14 ensure and demonstrate that there is a range of clinical education opportunities available within the practice placement site

2.15 ensure that there is an appropriate range of imaging examinations or radiotherapy treatments, equipment and modalities available to support clinical education

2.16 provide good communication with, and effective feedback to, educational providers

2.17 be actively involved with curricula development

2.18 demonstrate effective collaborative arrangements and agree appropriate mechanisms for operation of the partnerships where more than one education provider is involved

2.19 jointly discuss and address issues relating to professional suitability and conduct of learners.

Practice placement providers have the responsibility to ensure that learners:

2.20 are provided with a full and formal induction to the department

2.21 have their attendance recorded and that the programme director or course leader is informed of notable absenteeism to be able to deal with this effectively

2.22 are clear about the expected learning outcomes, the relationship between theory and practice and the criteria for teaching and assessment in the placement

2.23 have an identified member of staff to take responsibility for learner placements, including day-to-day communication, liaison and feedback to the education provider(s) and clinical staff

2.24 are making the necessary clinical and educational progress. Where a learner's performance is not reaching the required standard, practice placement providers must make sure that proper discussions and actions take place and that records are made and maintained. It is important that discussion with the learner takes place and remedial measures are put in place as soon as possible, with clearly defined written objectives to assist the learner in reaching the required standard

2.25 have the opportunity to correct any deficiencies identified and that this is recognised as being a very important and supported part of the learning process

2.26 are provided with a practice placement experience that contributes to preparing them to become safe practitioners

2.27 are offered clinical education opportunities throughout the placement provider's normal operational hours which may include extended days and weekend working. As for standard weekday only working, proper consideration must be given to the support provided to learners and to how the extended working day or week is used to provide effective practice education

2.28 have access to the education providers' e-learning and electronic communication systems

2.29 understand that poor treatment or bullying of learners is taken seriously by managers and suitable action will be taken to deal with such behaviour using established local policies and procedures, including disciplinary procedures, as appropriate.

Practice placement providers have the responsibility to ensure that clinical staff:

2.30 are clear about the expected learning outcomes, the relationship between theory and practice and the criteria for teaching and assessment in the placement

2.31 are fully supported when acting as a learner's supervisor/mentor/assessor or similar

2.32 provide the relevant information about all learners' progress and performance to the programme director/course leader, informing them immediately should any individual learner give rise for concern

2.33 undertake education and training specifically associated with enabling them to be effective in their various roles relative to learners' practice education and development. Good practice would encourage clinical staff to gain recognised qualifications or academic credit, and College of Radiographers practice educator accreditation for their development

2.34 fully understand the arrangements for pastoral support for learners in the placement

2.35 with named specific roles relative to clinical education such as, liaison/clinical tutor/professional development facilitator or similar, provide both academic and pastoral support for the learners. This may involve informing clinical colleagues of changes of circumstance or particular needs that a learner may have

2.36 understand that poor treatment or bullying of learners will not be tolerated and action will be taken to deal with such behaviour using the established local policies and procedures, including disciplinary procedures, as appropriate.

3. Learners on Clinical Placements

3.1 be proactive in identifying their own learning needs and to articulate these clearly

3.2 contribute as a partner in the achievement of their learning outcomes

3.3 take responsibility for planning and auditing their own learning and progress in conjunction with the clinical staff and their educational provider

3.4 be conversant with the curriculum of their own programme of study, including methods of assessment and the role played by the clinical supervisor in the assessment process

3.5 take a proactive approach in contributing to their own learning and the learning of others. Learners need to work together with academic and clinical colleagues to ensure that they understand what is expected of them and how their success will be judged

3.6 be aware of, and be compliant at all times with local rules, practice placement providers' policies, statutory and professional regulations and codes of conduct and behaviour

3.7 be aware of their direct responsibilities for the safety of patients in their care at all times

3.8 know their limitations

3.9 maintain confidentiality at all times

3.10 raise any valid concerns about the practice placement experience

3.11 inform the educational provider of any changes to personal circumstances. This includes illness and criminal record bureau (CRB) status

3.12 maintain high levels of attendance and punctuality. If learners are unable to attend their practice placement, it is their responsibility to inform both the education provider and the practice placement

3.13 attend their practice placement in a uniform that complies with workplace regulations and standards and the placement and education providers' requirements.

4. Practitioners

Practitioners supporting learners in the workplace have the responsibility to:

4.1 be familiar with the programme curriculum and design

4.2 understand the standards and achievements expected at each level of training and have a clear understanding of the learning outcomes expected to be achieved by each learner

4.3 offer a level of supervision appropriate to the competence and experience of the individual learner

4.4 be aware of their direct responsibilities for the safety of patients in their care at all times when supervising learners

4.5 develop teaching and supervisory skills for professional practice from pre- registration level onwards

4.6 act as a resource for learners seeking information and guidance

4.7 provide special consideration to identifying supportive learning opportunities for first year undergraduates, where the highest level of attrition occurs

4.8 meet with the learner to establish a supportive relationship for the learner

4.9 provide the learner with opportunities to comment on their training; provide support and enable the learner to discuss any problems they identify

4.10 hold regular review meetings to evaluate the learning objectives to ensure they are being or have been met, giving feedback and highlighting areas that may need additional work and

assistance

4.11 clearly identify failing learners as early as possible in their learning, and provide support as soon as is practicable

4.12 encourage participation in self and peer evaluation to facilitate personal development and contribute to the development of others

4.13 be educationally prepared to fulfil the role in facilitating learners' clinical education.

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