



School of  
Healthcare Sciences  
Ysgol y Gwyddorau  
Gofal Iechyd

# Practice Based Learning | **HANDBOOK**



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## Disclaimer

The contents of this handbook are correct at the time of going to press. There can be a lengthy period of time between publishing this student handbook and commencement of the programme so please refer to [Learning Central](#) for the most up to date information. Where there is a difference between the contents of this student handbook and the information on Learning Central, the contents on Learning Central take precedence and represent the basis on which we intend to deliver our services to you.

Though every effort has been made to ensure that the content of this handbook is accurate, due to the nature of healthcare education, it may be necessary to implement some changes to the content and delivery of your programme in response to student driven enhancement activity and the need to remain responsive to developments in health and social care and in the professional context. Specifically, the nature of the coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic means that information and arrangements in relation to your studies outlined within this document may need to be revised to adhere to changing government guidelines in the UK, Wales or in the Higher Education sector. Any necessary changes will be communicated to you via the School and/or your Programme Manager.

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Please contact the Programme Administration Manager if you require this handbook in an alternative format: Jennie Ross ([rossj@cardiff.ac.uk](mailto:rossj@cardiff.ac.uk))

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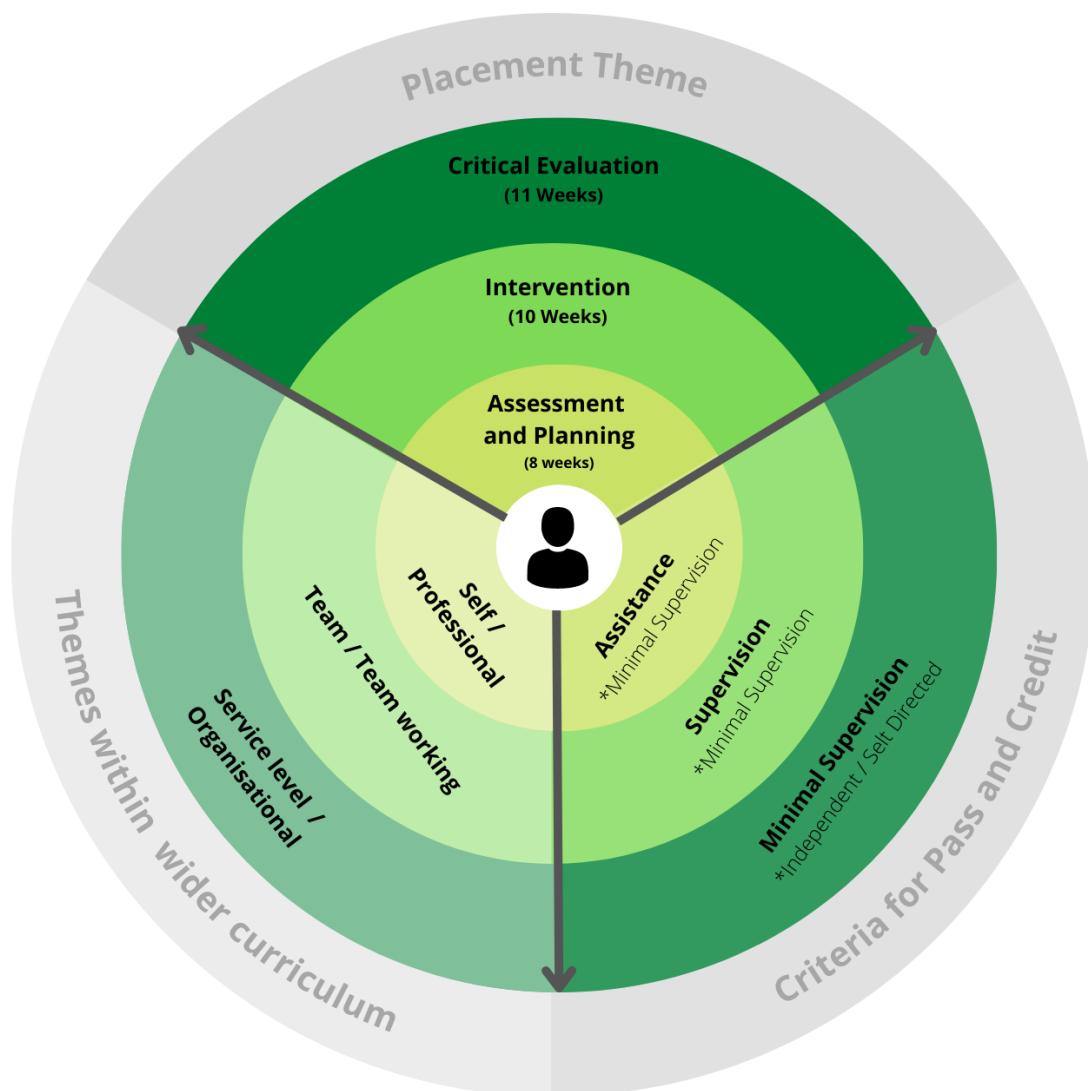
## **Introduction to Practice Based Learning**

Cardiff University has a long-standing reputation as one of the leading providers of occupational therapy education in the UK. (The Complete University Guide 2021). With over 58 years of experience in delivering occupational therapy education, the three-year BSc (Hons) Occupational Therapy, and two-year MSc (pre- registration) Occupational Therapy programmes are designed to enable students to develop the knowledge, skills and attitudes which are core to the occupational therapy profession and to practising as an autonomous occupational therapist. Successful completion of these programmes demonstrates that students meet the expected competencies of an occupational

therapy graduate and leads directly to eligibility to apply for registration with the Health and Care Professions Council (HCPC) and professional membership of the Royal College of Occupational Therapists (RCOT). Furthermore, all programmes are approved by the World Federation of Occupational Therapists (WFOT) which means that a student's qualification will be recognised in around 80 countries worldwide, enhancing their opportunities for international employment.

Studying occupational therapy at Cardiff University enables students to develop a strong identity as an occupational therapist in keeping with the profession's central philosophy and core purpose. The content of the programmes emphasises the centrality of occupation in human life, the relationship between occupation, health and wellbeing and the power of occupation to transform the lives of individuals, groups and communities. A varied profile of placement experience undertaken across the programmes allows for integration of theory with actual occupational therapy practice and students will gain an insight as to the wide-ranging employment opportunities available to them upon qualification.

In preparing students for a career in occupational therapy, the programmes of pre-registration study at Cardiff University offer an engaging, learner-centred experience based on established, evidence-based educational approaches and methods designed to synthesise academic and professional outcomes. The content has been informed and influenced by the views and opinions of our occupational therapy graduates, users of occupational therapy services, practitioners, and service managers. The programmes foster a commitment to lifelong learning and students will actively engage in continuing professional development throughout the duration of their programme, reflecting upon and recording their individual learning needs and achievements. An emphasis on scholarly practice also ensures that new graduates enter the profession as research-capable practitioners equipped with the skills and confidence to contribute to the evidence base which supports and informs current and future occupational therapy practice.



## Cardiff University Model for Occupational Therapy Practice Based Learning

The BSc and MSc (Pre-registration) Occupational Therapy Programmes both follow a 3 placement structure containing over 1000 hours of clinical experience. The placements incrementally focus on stages of the occupational therapy process and are connected to academic work reflecting a broadening understanding of the profession. Whilst the placements are not graded the level required to pass or achieve a credit increases with each successive placement.

Contact: [hcareotpracedu@cardiff.ac.uk](mailto:hcareotpracedu@cardiff.ac.uk)



## Section 1: Prior to commencing Placement

### 1.1 Disclosure and barring service and occupational health

Students must undergo an enhanced criminal record check via the Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) prior to commencing their programme and keep their own copy of the processed disclosure form. Students may be required to produce this document for the practice placement provider prior to the commencement of their placement and must disclose any changes in status during their time on the programme. A delay in the initial clearance process or a declaration of a change of status may delay a student's start date until satisfactory clearance is obtained. Certain placements may specify a requirement to carry out their own security checks on a student's details as per those routinely undertaken with staff. This can be a lengthy process and so students will need to provide the required information in a timely manner. The University is not responsible should a student lose their disclosure document.

Information regarding occupational health and immunisation requirements is provided as part of the admission process to the occupational therapy programmes. Students undergo an occupational health check and immunisation programme upon joining the programme and must be cleared by the University's Occupational Health department before commencing their first placement.

The guidance in the link below forms the basis of discussion between prospective/enrolled student and Student occupational health.

[1521731195HEOPS Occupational Therapy student fitness standards 2015 v5.pdf](#)

In addition, all occupational therapy students are required to complete the Student OH online questionnaire, this will be sent out at the appropriate time and students are asked to agree to appropriate vaccinations.

Students are encouraged to provide the practice-based learning team and practice educators with information about health matters which they believe may affect their performance whilst on placement to ensure they receive the appropriate support. Failure to notify the practice-based learning team or practice educator of health or personal circumstances that may impact upon their own or others' safety within the placement setting could lead to a student failing the placement (see section 13 of this document). Any student who has interrupted their studies or has withdrawn from placement for reasons of ill-health will require occupational health clearance prior to commencing any subsequent placement.

Students must complete The All-Wales Placement Passport prior to placement and communicate this to their personal tutor, to facilitate the identification of appropriate clinical placement learning experiences.

In accordance with principles of HCPC and RCOT you must declare any changes to good health, good character and fitness to practise status **annually during the enrolment process or at any stage during your course when changes in status occur.**

Please be aware that if you fail to disclose any changes to your good health, good character or fitness to practice or study and subsequently the University or placement provider become aware of this you may be withdrawn from placement and or your programme immediately without prejudice, pending an investigation.

The University, School and programme take matters concerning unprofessional conduct very seriously. In such circumstances, students may be referred to the School's fitness to practice team and/or subject to the University's disciplinary and behaviour procedures. Students must complete and sign a declaration form once per academic year which states that they will conduct themselves in a safe, effective and professional manner, with due regard to some



of the key areas of professional standards and conduct detailed below. It is the student's responsibility to notify the academic practice-based learning team if there are any changes to the information provided in this declaration form

### **1.2 Mandatory training**

During the course of your programme, you will be expected to complete elements of mandatory training. Some of these will happen in a physical learning environment and will appear on your timetable, whilst you will complete other elements as part of an e-learning package. Exact details of what you will need to complete and when will be communicated to you directly by your Programme Manager. You will be expected to provide evidence of completion of these mandatory training elements, usually prior to clinical placement. Again, each programme manager will confirm with cohorts directly.

Mandatory training components are not optional and must be completed alongside the schedule outlined by your programme manager. Failure to complete these elements will have implications for your ability to attend clinical placements.

### **1.3 Third party disclosure of your personal information**

We will share some personal contact information with placement providers. This information is used to inform allocation of some placements or to contact you with details of induction sessions or additional learning opportunities. Please note placement providers are bound by the General Data Protection Regulation (May 2018) and will only use your information for the purposes outlined above.

## **Section 2: Learning in practice placements**

Practice-based learning is fully integrated within the structure of the occupational therapy programmes.

The placements positioning within the programme timetable has been designed to maximise a student's learning by allowing for the effective transfer and application of theory to practice. Students' practice-based learning also informs their University-based studies, allowing for the sharing of new knowledge, skills and insights with peers as well as reflection on authentic, real-life experiences within learning activities and assessments. The synthesis and integration of University and practice-based learning is considered essential in facilitating the development of competent, inquiring and creative occupational therapists.

Preparatory sessions ensure that students are familiarised with the assessment process for each placement and the expectations of them as an occupational therapy student undertaking practice-based learning. Upon their return to the University setting, students will have the opportunity to discuss, reflect upon and evaluate their practice-based learning experiences with peers and this learning will have direct application within the modules and learning activities that ensue.

For further information on the BSc, or MSc (pre- registration) Occupational Therapy programmes and how placement is integrated please view the [BSc \(Hons\) Occupational Therapy Programme Handbook](#) , or [Pre-registration MSc Occupational Therapy Programme Handbook](#).

### **2.1 Where are practice placements located**

Placements for occupational therapy students at Cardiff University are spread across South, Mid, South- East and South-West Wales across a range of public, independent, private and third sector settings. Placements are commissioned by HEIW. The organisations which are commissioned to provide placements will be dependent on the year in which you commence the programme. We also receive placements from outside of the commissioning structure which may not correspond to the same geographical area. Students can be expected to travel to/ from

their allocated placement or to live in temporary accommodation for the duration of a placement as appropriate (see section 4).

Please note that only formalised reasonable adjustments, parental or other caring responsibilities will be taken into account when considering the geographical location and required travel time associated with a student's allocated placement (see section 13). Caring responsibility is defined according to the Carer's Trust definition used by Cardiff University Student Connect - [Supporting Student Carers](#). We are not able to consider pets or other outside commitments in relation to placement location. Students are expected to plan ahead to manage this eventuality.

Wherever possible, appropriate placements are sourced for Welsh-speaking students who request a setting that offers bilingual learning opportunities (e.g. with a Welsh-speaking practice educator or in a geographical area where they are likely to be able to work with service users and their families through the medium of Welsh).

## **2.2 The Principles of Placement Allocation**

The practice based learning team work in partnership with Health Education and Improvement Wales (HEIW) and placement providers to ensure that Cardiff University occupational therapy students have access to a sufficient and diverse range of practice learning opportunities in accordance with the programme curriculum and standards set by the Health and Care Professions Council (HCPC) and the Royal College of Occupational Therapists (RCOT). Specifically, in accordance with RCOT requirements the occupational therapy programmes strive for students 'to experience a wide range of practice-based learning opportunities' (RCOT 2019, p40). Placement may be in-person on site, virtual or remote working or a combination.

This is the primary principle that guides the process of placement allocation by the practice-based learning team. Students are invited to complete a 'placement survey' once per academic year which is monitored by the Placement Support Team and the information from this informs their 'placement profile'. 'Placement profiles' include student information such as if they have a car available to them that they can use during placement, home/term address and formalised reasonable adjustments. Completed placement themes are also added to the 'placement profile.' Students are responsible for informing the Placement Support team of any changes to their 'placement profile' information by emailing [HCAREPlacements@cardiff.ac.uk](mailto:HCAREPlacements@cardiff.ac.uk)

As discussed in point 2.1, students' work or personal commitments **cannot** be considered when allocating placements and only formalised reasonable adjustments (e.g., health or disability-related or carer responsibilities) will be considered as part of this process (see section 13). Students are not able to arrange their own placements or request placements in specific areas of practice.

## **2.3 Placement Roles and Responsibilities**

Practice-based learning is organised, facilitated and managed through effective partnerships between the University, placement providers and students. Each of these stakeholder groups plays an important role in ensuring the successful planning and delivery of placements, thereby enhancing the experience of practice-based learning for all concerned. This section outlines the key roles and responsibilities of the University practice-based learning team, Locality Lead and Area Coordinators, contact tutors, practice educators and students.

### **2.3.1 The University Practice-Based Learning Team**

Named staff from within the occupational therapy academic team have specific responsibility for the organisation, planning and evaluation of all aspects of practice-based learning. Administrative support is also provided by the School's placement support team.

The practice-based learning lead oversees the strategic and operational management of placement, coordinates the placement team, and coordinates communication and training of practice educators. Each member of the academic

practice-based learning team takes responsibility for one placement (BSc) or all placements (MSc (pre- registration)) and contributes to the smooth running of placement allocation and communication and training of practice educators as well as quality assurance processes such as moderation and audit.

The practice-based learning team are responsible for allocating student cohorts to available placement offers, ensuring that each student completes the programme with a varied profile of experience.

The team ensures that practice educators are appropriately prepared for placements, offering bespoke training and support to occupational therapists who are new to the practice educator role as well as regular updates for more experienced practice educators. The training of practice educators is monitored by the Locality Practice- based learning Lead Coordinators.

Preparatory sessions and mandatory training are timetabled and delivered for students to ensure that they are aware of the expectations of them when undertaking practice-based learning and that they understand the assessment process and associated documentation. There is also opportunity for students to reflect on the placement experience upon return to the University setting.

The practice-based learning team play a key role in the quality assurance of practice placement provision.

### **2.3.2 The Contact Tutor**

Students are allocated a named contact tutor who is a member of the occupational therapy academic team who will be able to provide guidance and support before, during and after a placement. The contact tutor will undertake a formal review of a student's progress at the half-way point of a placement, which is conducted through a virtual/online meeting with the practice educator and student. A virtual/online meeting is agreed by all parties and may be appropriate where the placement would involve significant travel and where there are no concerns established about progress from either the student or practice educator. A face-to-face meeting could be conducted if requested and discussed with the contact tutor in advance.

In all circumstances, the contact tutor will compile a formal half-way report which provides a summary of the review and any advice or guidance offered to the student and/or practice educator. Once completed, this report can be viewed by the student on their MyProgress profile (see section 2.5.1 of this document). This report will be made available to the practice-based learning team for review as an element of the moderation process.

Contact tutors will:

- Make themselves available to students should they request a pre-placement tutorial to discuss their learning needs and any concerns they may have in advance of the placement. This is particularly important for students who may have struggled or not achieved a pass in a previous placement.
- Establish a date for the half-way review in negotiation with the student and practice educator. It is expected that the student will initiate this process by emailing the contact tutor with potential dates following discussion with their practice educator.
- Conduct a half-way review of progress, meeting with the student and practice educator separately allowing time for the student and practice educator to discuss this in confidence. This is followed by a shared evaluative discussion together and formulation of an action plan for the remainder of the placement.
- Ensure that general standards for the provision of practice-based learning are being met and alert the practice-based learning team of any issues or concerns.
- Document a summary of the above discussions within the half-way report, alerting the practice-based learning team of any concerns raised by either the practice educator or student and arrange a follow-up visit if required.
- Complete a failing/underachieving student report (please see the [Learning in Practice Module](#) on Learning Central) as appropriate, forwarding a copy to the practice-based learning team module lead.

- Make themselves available to students should they request a post-placement tutorial to reflect on the experience and discuss future learning needs. This is particularly important for students who may have struggled or not achieved a pass for the placement.

### **2.3.3 Locality Lead Coordinators and Area Coordinators**

Lead coordinators are experienced practice educators who assume an important role within their organisation/ locality /specialist area in coordinating matters pertaining to the planning and facilitation of student placements and in ensuring the quality of practice-based learning. Lead Coordinators act as a point of first contact for the practice based learning team and attend Lead Coordinators' meetings (organised by the practice-based learning team) as well as coordinate locality coordinator meetings (e.g. for a health board, local authority or large organisation) to provide and receive information relevant to practice-based learning and evaluate the effectiveness of procedures and processes.

Lead Coordinators will:

- Act as a liaison between the organisation and the practice-based learning team and disseminate relevant information to area co-ordinators/ practice education.

- Maintain a record of practice educators in the organisation including their educator training record.
- Collate offers from practice educators within their locality and return a completed offers sheet to HCAREplacements@cardiff.ac.uk according to the placement allocation schedule.
- Cascade requests for additional placements to the area coordinators/ practice educators.
- Ensure that details held by the practice-based learning team are updated and current.
- Coordinate training events for new or existing practice educators in partnership with the practice-based learning team at the University.
- Coordinate and/or attend regular coordinators' meetings as a key communication channel for practice based and University-based staff.
- Alert the practice-based learning team of any general concerns regarding the provision of practice based learning or those that relate to the progress, conduct or presentation of individual students.
- Demonstrate a commitment to quality assurance by working in partnership with the practice-based learning team in relation to audit and in actioning any required developments or improvements in a timely manner.

Some larger organisations (such as Health Boards) may have **Area Co-ordinators**.

Area Co-ordinators will:

- Oversee practice education placements within their team/setting/base.
- Act as liaison between lead co-ordinator and practice educators in their area and disseminates relevant information to practice educators.
- Collate offers from practice educators with their area and communicate these to the Lead Coordinator.
- Attend locality co-ordinator meetings representing their area and feedback relevant information to practice educators.
- Contribute to the completion of audits and demonstrate a commitment to quality assurance, working in partnership with locality practice-based learning Lead Coordinator.
- Support and mentor practice educators in the provision of practice-based learning for students, ensuring that quality standards are established and maintained.
- Alert the Lead Coordinator of any general concerns regarding the provision of practice-based learning or those that relate to the progress, conduct or presentation of individual students.

#### **2.3.4 The Practice Educator**

Practice educators are Health and Care Professions Council (HCPC) registered occupational therapists who have undertaken appropriate training to enable them to be able to support and assess an occupational therapy student in relation to identified professional competencies. These professional competencies are defined within the programme's assessment documentation for practice-based learning as mapped to professional and statutory body requirements and standards.

Practice educators will:

- Ensure that they are appropriately equipped to facilitate practice-based learning for a student, for example by attending regular practice educator training, and are familiar with the student's programme of study, the assessment process and related documentation. Practice Educators should complete New Educator Training followed by Educator Refresher Training.
- Liaise with their Area Coordinator/ Lead Coordinator to plan placement offers and make note of their timing to reduce the likelihood of unnecessary withdrawals when placements are allocated to students.
- Ensure that their details as held by the Lead Coordinator are updated and current.
- Respond effectively and efficiently to communication from the student in advance of the placement, including the negotiation of a pre-placement visit if feasible and the provision of relevant preparatory information (e.g., suggested reading, dress code, start and finish times etc.).

- Prepare and plan a suitable environment and context for effective practice-based learning in advance of the student's arrival e.g. formulation of an induction programme, identification of potential learning opportunities, informing other team members of a student's planned placement and implementing any identified reasonable adjustments.  
Explore a student's identified learning needs and preferred methods/style of learning, building upon this to formulate a collaboratively agreed learning contract to frame and guide the placement.
- Negotiate the use of half-day study hours (3.5 hours per week or a day every two weeks by mutual agreement of the educator and student) as well as the timings of supervision sessions (a minimum of one hour per week) which should be formalised in a written record that is signed by the practice educator and student.
- Negotiate a date and time with the student for the half-way review. The student will assume responsibility for initiating and agreeing arrangements with the contact tutor.
- Identify suitable learning opportunities to enable a student to meet their learning needs and provide regular constructive feedback on their progress.
- A review of progress at the half-way point should be undertaken using the PDF version of the assessment form (available via the link in the placement confirmation email received from the University) and discussed with the student and contact tutor as part of the half-way review.
- Communicate in an effective and timely manner with the Lead/ Area Coordinator and the Contact Tutor, particularly when there are concerns in relation to a placement, including a student's performance, professional conduct or general presentation and wellbeing.
- Complete the assessment documentation in an effective and timely manner, allowing time to discuss its content with the student, including a collaborative identification of future learning needs.

### 2.3.5 The Student

Students play an active role in providing the practice-based learning team with information to assist them in planning and organising their individual placements and work in partnership with practice educators to ensure that they get the most out of their placement experience.

Students will:

- Provide and regularly update the personal details required by the practice-based learning team for the purpose of allocating placement offers e.g., home and term-time address, telephone contact number, car driving status and insurance etc. (See section 2.2).
- Complete the School's Student Declaration form once per academic year and notify the practice-based learning team of any changes in circumstances.
- Liaise with the programme disability contact as early in the programme as possible to explore any reasonable adjustments that may be required for practice-based learning.
- Accept the placement that has been allocated to them by the practice-based learning team. Students are not permitted to source their own placements as it compromises agreed processes between the practice-based learning team and placement providers.
- Contact their named practice educator as soon as their placement is confirmed. A brief curriculum vitae could be provided (including an overview of their skills and work/placement experiences) and a pre-placement visit negotiated. Students should also confirm key requirements and expectations e.g. dress code, start and finish time, preparatory reading etc.).
- Attend all mandatory training and preparatory learning in the University setting and familiarise themselves with practice-based learning policies and the relevant assessment documentation made available to them on Learning Central.
- Adhere to the organisation's policies and procedures, [the Royal College of Occupational Therapists' Professional Standards for Occupational Therapy, Practice, conduct and Ethics \(RCOT 2021\)](#) and the

[Health and Care Professions Council's Guidance on Conduct and Ethics for Students \(HCPC 2016\).](#) Students should also ensure that they follow the [Health and Care Professions Council's Guidance on Social Media \(HCPC 2017\).](#)

- Negotiate and confirm a date for the half-way review in consultation with the practice educator and contact tutor.
- Report unplanned absences (e.g., due to sickness) in accordance with the requirements of the placement setting and the School of Healthcare Sciences.  
Participate actively in the placement and make the most of all learning opportunities as negotiated and agreed with the practice educator and as documented on the learning contract.
- Reflect on and respond in a professional manner to constructive feedback provided by the practice educator, assuming an active role within supervision sessions, employing feedback to develop their own practice.
- Communicate any concerns about the placement (including their own performance and wellbeing) to the contact tutor and/or practice-based learning team in a professional and timely manner.
- Complete the required student documentation as directed by the practice-based learning team on MyProgress.
- Complete an evaluation of the placement and compose a formal email or letter of thanks to the practice educator for facilitating the experience.
- Arrange a post-placement tutorial with the contact tutor or personal tutor to reflect on the experience and discuss future learning needs.

## 2.4 Supervision on Placement

Supervision is defined as;

A professional relationship and activity which ensures good standards of practice and facilitates development. There are many different models of supervision, however it generally:

- involves a professional relationship;
- is a process;
- is active and dynamic, with defined objectives;
- involves a range of activities;
- relates to standards, effectiveness and competence;
- relates to the acquisition and development of knowledge, skills and professional conduct;
- incorporates personal, professional and organisational elements;
- may involve simulation;
- involves reflection on practice.

(RCOT, 2019 p16)

Formal supervision takes place weekly between the student and practice educator and should be a minimum of one hour. Practice educators and students should each retain a copy of the supervision record. Practice settings retain student supervision records for a minimum of 5 years or until the student graduates from the programme.

### 2.4.1 Models of Supervision

A variety of innovative models of supervision have been employed in support of occupational therapy students' practice-based learning. This has allowed for greater flexibility in provision (e.g. in relation to educators who work part-time or across sites) and increased opportunity for peer support. The more traditional 1:1 model of supervision within occupational therapy practice-based learning is now offered alongside the following variations:

**2:1 Model** – Two students working together with one educator. This provides students with an opportunity for peer supervision.

**1:2 Model** – One student working with two educators with joint or cross supervision. This is particularly useful when there is an experienced and inexperienced educator working together who would like to facilitate a placement.

**2:2 Model** - Two educators and two students working together – a combination of the above two models which provides opportunity for both peer supervision between students and cross supervision between educators.

**Long Arm Supervision** – A model used within non-traditional and role-emerging type placements where profession specific supervision is provided by a practice educator who is not based in the same setting as the student (see further details below).



### 2.4.2 Supervision in Non-Traditional Placements

Occupational therapy education at Cardiff University has a long history of developing new partnerships and working creatively with non-traditional placement providers to offer students a range of innovative placement opportunities. These include placements within private practice, the housing sector, the education and criminal justice systems and within charitable organisations and social enterprises. A number of students have published an account of their experience within *Occupational Therapy News* or other non-occupational therapy publications, thereby highlighting the diversity and value of the profession to other students, occupational therapists and the general public.

As outlined above, long-arm supervision is the model associated with non-traditional placement opportunities for occupational therapy students, where a HCPC registered occupational therapist may not be based within the placement setting (although increasingly there are occupational therapists working within such settings who facilitate placements for students). Where there is no registered occupational therapist within the placement setting, an occupational therapist from another setting or from the programme team will provide the long-arm supervision, meeting with the student on a weekly basis for a formal review. There is also an on-site supervisor (not an occupational therapist) who will provide guidance on aspects pertinent to the placement environment e.g., policies and procedures, day-to-day routines, roles of others etc.). Due to the limited day-to-day contact between the student and long arm supervisor, reflection plays an important part in supervision. The long arm supervisor encourages the student to review significant issues and will facilitate the process of learning to include the following:

- A review of the student's goals for the week
- Discussion of any critical incidents that have occurred
- Challenging the student to consider what has been learnt in light of these critical incidents
- Encouraging the student to apply theoretical knowledge to the practical element of their placement
- Questioning the student on specific professional issues that will stimulate thinking and research
- Providing advice in certain areas of expertise, i.e., the use of appropriate assessments, interventions etc.
- Signposting the student to access relevant resources from other areas
- Negotiating goals to achieve in the forthcoming week
- Support in the development of a learning contract and in achieving the placement learning outcomes
- The assessment of the students' overall professional competence remains the responsibility of the long-arm supervisor, though the on-site supervisor will provide feedback to inform the final report.

### 2.4.3 Alternative Placement Settings

There are some additional guidelines for 'Alternative placements' which may be in traditional or non-traditional settings. These guidelines include role-emerging placements, leadership placements and project placements and are aligned with the critical evaluation learning objectives. Students can expect that they may be allocated an 'alternative' placement for the critical evaluation placement. These are available in Appendix 1 and any settings planning on providing this type need to discuss it with the academic practice-based learning team via [hcareotpracedu@cardiff.ac.uk](mailto:hcareotpracedu@cardiff.ac.uk)

### 2.5 Peer Support

In recent years the occupational therapy programme has introduced a Peer Support mechanism for placements in response to student and practice educator feedback. A Peer Support handbook is provided for students to work through during sessions.

These sessions take place online on Wednesday afternoons 3pm – 4pm each week of a placement. Students are split into groups by the module lead and each group has a named tutor to report to if they have any queries.

The Peer Support groups are run by occupational therapy student mentors who have completed Mentorship training.

- BSc Assessment and Planning Placement (Level 4 cohort)– Supported by Level 5 Occupational therapy student mentors
- BSc Intervention Placement (Level 5 cohort) - Supported by Level 6 Occupational therapy student mentors
- BSc Critical Evaluation Placement – Level 6 cohorts run these sessions.

Peer Support sessions for MSc (pre- registration) students are run in the same way with 1<sup>st</sup> year students supported by 2<sup>nd</sup> year students.

## 2.5 Assessment of students on placement

Assessment of academic and professional competencies is essential in ensuring that students meet the regulatory standards and entry-level profile of an occupational therapist and that they are fit for practice. The curricula incorporate a diverse and creative range of assessment strategies and methods which are reflective of an inclusive, learner-centred approach and aligned to the intended learning outcomes of the programmes. As a requirement of the World Federation of Occupational Therapists (WFOT), students must also successfully complete the equivalent of a minimum of 1000 hours of assessed practice placement learning in a range of practice settings.

Placement	No. of Weeks and Hours Total
<b>BSc (Hons) Occupational Therapy</b>	
<b>Year 1 - Assessment and Planning</b>	<b>8 Weeks / 300 Hours</b>
<b>Year 2 - Intervention</b>	<b>10 Weeks / 375 Hours</b>
<b>Year 3 – Critical Evaluation</b>	<b>11 Weeks / 412.5 Hours</b>
<b>MSc (pre- registration) Occupational Therapy</b>	
<b>Year 1 - Assessment and Planning</b>	<b>8 Weeks / 300 Hours</b>
<b>Year 1 - Intervention</b>	<b>10 Weeks / 375 Hours</b>
<b>Year 2 – Critical Evaluation</b>	<b>11 Weeks / 412.5 Hours</b>

Placements are embedded within modules and are a required component of the module’s assessment schedule and are a compulsory element of the programme. Placements are zero-weighted and are assessed on a pass/fail basis.

Practice-based learning is a crucial element of the learning and assessment of all occupational therapy students and often holds significant meaning and importance within their overall experience of the programme. The assessment of professional skills and competence should be as objective and rigorous as possible to ensure that students meet a threshold level of competence in keeping with HCPC and RCOT requirements and in order that students themselves are satisfied with the overall quality and transparency of the assessment process. As described in this handbook, a practice educator holds responsibility for the assessment of practice-based learning, however, in keeping with the programme’s educational philosophy, students play an active role in their own learning and assessment and the process is characterised by collaboration between the practice educator and the student.

Detailed assessment criteria for each placement have been formulated by the academic programme and practice based learning team in accordance with the progressive nature of practice-based learning and expected skills and competencies of students at different stages of learning. In advance of the student’s placement, practice educators are provided with a link to the reference version of the assessment form for each placement that reflects both the focus of the placement and the level of competence that must be demonstrated by students in order to pass the

placement. Students are also provided with a copy of the assessment form for reference and are fully appraised of the assessment process during preparatory learning within the module.

Though there is necessary variation between each of the placement documents as described above, irrespective of the focus of the placement or the stage of learning, all students are assessed in relation to the following four areas of required professional competence:

- Communication and Collaboration Skills
- Organisation and Management Skills
- Professional and Reflective Skills
- Therapeutic Skills

The specific learning opportunities available to students in relation to the above areas will be influenced by the type of placement environment allocated to them (e.g. community, hospital, residential home, school etc.) and the nature of the health and/or social care needs associated with those accessing occupational therapy within that setting (e.g. older adult mental health, trauma and orthopaedics, learning disability, paediatrics etc.). In collaboration with the practice educator, practice-based learning is tailored to the student's own identified learning needs in relation to the learning opportunities afforded by the placement setting through the use of a learning contract.

Formal weekly supervision sessions of a minimum duration of one hour are scheduled to allow the student and the practice educator to review and monitor progress against the assessment criteria as captured within the more detailed learning contract. A written record of all supervision sessions, documenting the discussion and agreed actions, should be kept and signed by both the practice educator and student.

A formal half-way review is also conducted by a contact tutor from the programme team as described and a written report is produced to document the student's progress mid-way through the placement. This report is available to the student on their MyProgress profile with a copy emailed to the educator, or the student can download a copy for the educator on request. This half-way review process allows for early intervention to support both the practice educator and student in the event of any concerns being raised in relation to the placement or the student's progress.

In the final week of the placement the practice educator completes the required assessment form based on the student's performance as achieved by the end of the placement. The link to complete the educator assessment form is triggered by the student via their MyProgress profile. A copy of the assessment form should be provided to the student at least two days before the end of the placement, allowing for discussion and reflection on its content. The practice educator and student also work together to identify and record the student's future learning needs which will be relevant to subsequent practice-based and University-based learning. The student also has a responsibility for their own specific documents as directed by the practice-based learning team.

### **2.5.1 Placement Paperwork on MyProgress**

Placement paperwork is hosted on MyProgress and is accessed by the student's individual log-in. Educators do not have access to MyProgress but students and educators should review the student's MyProgress in supervision.

The placement paperwork includes:

- Policy checklist – completed by the student during the first week of the placement.
- Learning contract – a word document is available to the student on learning central. The student works with their educator to write their learning contract and this needs to be reviewed in supervision. At the end of the placement the educator signs off the learning contract and the student uploads a completed version of the learning contract their MyProgress profile.
- Half Way visit report – this is completed by the contact tutor at the half-way visit. Once submitted the form will be visible on the student’s profile. A copy will be emailed to the educator for their reference OR the student can download a copy to share with their educator.
- Future Learning Needs – completed by the student, in discussion with their educator, during the last week of placement.
- Timesheets/Hours record – Students submit their placement hours weekly and a receipt is emailed to the educator. Students and educators are encouraged to review students hours each week in supervision.
- Educator assessment form – The student will send a link to the educator to complete this form at the end of the placement. The educator must complete the report by the Wednesday of the final week of the placement. A PDF version of the educator assessment form is available for students to view on learning central and for educators to view via the link the email confirming the placement details. There is also a guide on this link for educators to explain how to submit the educator assessment form.

Guidance for using MyProgress and the above documents is available [here](#).

### 2.5.2 Assessment Criteria

Practice-based learning is a mandatory element of the programme and students must pass all placements to be awarded a BSc (Hons) Occupational Therapy, or MSc (pre- registration) Occupational Therapy. They are then eligible to apply for registration with the Health and Care Professions Council (HCPC) and for professional membership of the Royal College of Occupational Therapists. The placements allow for sequential development of skills pertaining to the creative problem-solving process in occupational therapy (RCOT 2019). By the final critical evaluation themed placement, the process should be completed and students are expected to demonstrate competence in, and integration of professional skills. Students must complete each practice placement successfully before proceeding to the next placement.

In keeping with professional body standards, students are permitted only one attempt at retrieval of a placement. Furthermore, if a student fails the first attempt at consecutive placements, they have failed the requirements of the preregistration programme and must be withdrawn. If a student fails the second attempt at a placement, they have failed the requirements of the pre-registration programme and must be withdrawn (RCOT 2019, p46). In situations where a student fails a placement but extenuating circumstances have been accepted their subsequent attempt counts as their first attempt.

A key component for recording evidence during placement is the learning contract. Cardiff University has a long and established history of employing learning contracts within University-based and practice-based learning to enable occupational therapy students to become actively involved in the negotiation of the learning process. The learning contract is a particularly valuable tool within practice-based learning as it allows for flexibility and promotes student self-direction in identifying how learning can be addressed and evidenced within the placement setting.

Formulating the learning contract is a negotiated, dynamic process, which can, in itself, be seen as contributing towards the learning process in that it allows the student to assume ownership and responsibility for his or her own learning needs. It is intended that the student should take an increased responsibility for the management of the contract as their practice-based learning experience develops.

Learning needs identified on the contract will be established from the perspectives of the University (as defined in the assessment criteria), practice educator and student. Learning contracts should reflect the student's prior life experience and learning from previous placements. This transferability of skills is important in professional practice and therefore, even though the student may have used a specific assessment tool in one setting, the principles of assessment are transferable into another setting. This allows the student to build on their previous learning and develop further skills within a different practice context. A well-formulated and employed contract will ensure that both the practice educator and student are fully aware of each other's aims and expectations throughout the placement and have an evidence base to support the assessment process. A contract ensures that responsibility for the learning experience is shared. It is an introduction to the appraisal /individual performance review process that the student will experience within their future employment.

Students are provided with a blank learning contract in advance of the placement, however practice educators should anticipate that they will require time in the initial two weeks of the placement to support the student to formulate its content. This should be a collaborative process undertaken between the practice educator and student, the practice educator being able to offer advice as guidance as to appropriate learning opportunities available within the setting that reflect the focus of the placement (e.g., methods of assessments employed, forms of intervention etc.). The Learning contract comprises four elements: *learning needs*, *learning resources*, *evidence* and *validation*. The learning contract should be reviewed weekly during supervision.

Further guidelines for students and practice educators in Panopto recorded guidance here:

<https://cardiff.cloud.panopto.eu/Panopto/Pages/Viewer.aspx?id=2fa8e005-175c-4f2d-a471-18f8fa538d6e>

**For Cohorts starting in 2022 and onwards there is a requirement from HEIW to complete 150 hours of Inter-Professional Education (IPE) throughout their pre-registration course. This is captured on the Learning Contract and should link to reflections to further enhance learning.**

The following sections outline the assessment criteria for each of the placements.

### **Assessment and Planning Placement**

BSc (Hons) and MSc (Pre-registration) - To achieve a pass the student must achieve a competent standard at this stage. The student must demonstrate that they can **consistently** meet the objectives **with assistance**. The student must demonstrate evidence of being a safe practitioner. The student will fail if they have not reached a competent standard at this stage. The student will fail if they do not pass all the learning objectives.

The generic criteria for a pass, fail or credit within the assessment and planning placement are as follows:

#### **Pass**

- Passes all the essential learning objectives with assistance
- Produces a learning contract recording all essential learning needs with assistance
- Requires assistance to aid learning throughout the placement
- Pass in all the skill sections of the assessment form

#### **Fail**

- Fails to achieve a pass in one or more of the essential learning outcomes despite consistent support from the practice educator and contact tutor
- Produces a poor learning contract which omits some or all of the essential learning objectives
- Requires direction to aid learning throughout the placement
- Poor level of performance in one or more of the skill sections of the assessment form
- Demonstrates an inability to work safely without direction

## Credit

- Passes all the essential learning objectives with minimal supervision
- Produces a detailed and well written learning contract recording all essential and additional learning needs with minimal supervision
- Evidences a clear understanding of aspects of intervention and/or critical evaluation
- Requires only minimal supervision to aid learning throughout the placement
- High level of performance than would be anticipated from a Level 4/Year 1 student

## Learning Objectives BSc (Hons) and MSc (Pre-registration) Assessment and Planning Placement

### Communication and Collaboration Skills

- 1.1 The student communicates the results of assessments and intervention plan effectively to service users and appropriate others with assistance
- 1.2 The student records and reports all actions in a manner appropriate to the placement with assistance
- 1.3 The student forms constructive and professional relationships with service users, carers and colleagues with assistance
- 1.4 The student communicates an understanding of occupational therapy to service users and colleagues with assistance

### Organisation and Management Skills

- 2.1 The student demonstrates awareness of the effects that organisational, legal and professional factors have on the assessment and planning processes with assistance
- 2.2 The student adheres to the organisation's policies and procedures with assistance
- 2.3 The student prioritises their own workload and manages time appropriately with assistance
- 2.4 The student demonstrates an ability to work within the given resources with assistance

### Professional and Reflective Skills

- 3.1 The student reflects on the problem solving process to the assessment and planning level with assistance
- 3.2 With assistance, the student supports their professional reasoning with evidence based practice
- 3.3 The student adheres to the Professional Standards for Occupational Therapy, Practice, conduct and Ethics (RCOT 2021) & Guidance on Conduct and Ethics for Students (HCPC 2016) with assistance
- 3.4 With assistance, the student employs reflection and feedback to evaluate and develop professional strengths and identify continuing learning needs

### Therapeutic Skills

- 4.1 The student selects and professionally conducts appropriate assessments for each individual/group with assistance
- 4.2 The student explores and justifies the possible use of a model/models of practice relevant to the placement setting with assistance
- 4.3 With assistance, the student can examine factors which influence the outcomes of assessment and planning in occupational therapy
- 4.4 With assistance, the student can plan appropriate intervention programmes, recording the plan and priorities

## Intervention Placement

### **BSc (Hons) and MSc (Pre-registration)**

To achieve a pass the student must achieve a competent standard at this stage. The student must demonstrate that they can **consistently** meet the objectives with **supervision**. The student must demonstrate evidence of being a safe practitioner. The student will fail if they have not reached a competent standard at this stage. The student will fail if they do not pass all the learning objectives.

The generic criteria for a pass, fail or credit within the Intervention placement are as follows:

#### Pass

- Passes the essential learning objectives with supervision
- Produces a satisfactory learning contract with supervision, recording all essential learning needs
- Requires supervision to aid learning throughout the placement
- Pass in all the skill sections of the assessment form

#### Fail

- Fails to achieve a pass in one or more of the essential learning objectives despite consistent support from the practice educator and contact tutor
- Produces a poor learning contract which omits some or all of the essential learning objectives
- Continues to require direction to aid learning throughout the placement
- Poor level of performance in one or more of the skill sections of the assessment form
- Demonstrates an inability to work safely without continued assistance

#### Credit

- Passes all the essential learning objectives with minimal supervision
- Produces a detailed and well written learning contract recording all essential and additional learning needs with minimal supervision
- Evidences a clear understanding of aspects of critical evaluation
- Requires only minimal supervision to aid learning throughout the placement
- High level of performance than would be anticipated from a Level 5/Year 2 student

## Learning Objectives – BSc (Hons) and MSc (Pre-registration) Intervention Placement

### Communication and Collaboration Skills

- 1.1 The student communicates effectively the results of assessments, planning and interventions to service users and appropriate others with supervision
- 1.2 The student records and reports all actions in a manner appropriate to the placement with supervision
- 1.3 The student forms constructive and professional relationships with service users, carers and colleagues with supervision
- 1.4 The student communicates an understanding of occupational therapy to service users and colleagues with supervision

### Organisation and Management Skills

- 2.1 The student demonstrates awareness of the effects that organisational, legal and professional factors have on the assessment, planning and intervention processes with supervision
- 2.2 The student adheres to the organisation's policies and procedures with supervision

- 2.3 The student prioritises their own workload and manages time appropriately with supervision
- 2.4 The student demonstrates an ability to work within the given resources with supervision

### Professional and Reflective Skills

- 3.1 The student reflects on the problem solving process to the intervention level with supervision
- 3.2 With supervision, the student supports their professional reasoning with evidence based practice
- 3.3 The student adheres to the Professional Standards for Occupational Therapy, Practice, conduct and Ethics (RCOT 2021) & Guidance on Conduct and Ethics for Students (HCPC 2016) with supervision
- 3.4 With supervision, the student employs reflection and feedback to evaluate and develop professional strengths and identify continuing learning needs

### Therapeutic Skills

- 4.1 The student selects and professionally conducts appropriate assessments for each individual/group with supervision
- 4.2 The student explores and justifies the possible use of a model/models of practice and approaches relevant to the placement setting with supervision
- 4.3 With supervision, the student can examine factors which influence the outcomes of assessment, planning and intervention in occupational therapy
- 4.4 With supervision, the student can plan appropriate intervention programmes, recording the plan and priorities
- 4.5 With supervision, the student can undertake interventions as planned/modified and justify accordingly

### Critical Evaluation Placement

#### **BSc (Hons) and MSc (Pre-registration)**

To achieve a pass the student must achieve a competent standard at this stage. The student must demonstrate that they can **consistently** meet the objectives with **minimal supervision**. The student must demonstrate evidence of being a safe practitioner. The student will fail if they have not reached a competent standard at this stage. The student will fail if they do not pass all the learning objectives.

The generic criteria for a pass, fail or credit within the Critical Evaluation placement are as follows:

#### Pass

- Passes the essential learning objectives with minimal supervision
- Produces a satisfactory learning contract recording all essential learning needs
- Requires minimal supervision to aid learning throughout the placement
- Pass in all the skill sections of the assessment form

#### Fail

- Fails to achieve a pass in one or more of the essential learning objectives despite consistent support from the practice educator and contact tutor
- Produces a poor learning contract which omits some or all of the essential learning objectives
- Continues to require direction/assistance to aid learning throughout the placement
- Poor level of performance in one or more of the skill sections of the assessment form
- Demonstrates an inability to work safely without supervision

#### Credit



- Passes all the essential learning objectives independently
- Independently produces a detailed and well written learning contract recording all essential and additional learning needs
- Demonstrates synthesis in their approach to undertaking the entire problem-solving process
- Demonstrates ability to self-direct to aid learning throughout the placement
- High level of performance than would be anticipated from a Level 6/Year 3 student as an emerging professional.

## Learning Objectives – BSc (Hons) and MSc (Pre-registration) Critical Evaluation Placement

### Communication and Collaboration Skills

- 1.1 The student communicates effectively the results of the occupational therapy process to service users and appropriate others with minimal supervision
- 1.2 The student records and reports all actions in a manner appropriate to the placement with minimal supervision
- 1.3 The student forms constructive and professional relationships with service users, carers and colleagues with minimal supervision
- 1.4 The student communicates an understanding of occupational therapy to service users and colleagues with minimal supervision

### Organisation and Management Skills

- 2.1 The student demonstrates awareness of the effects that organisational, legal and professional factors have on the occupational therapy process with minimal supervision
- 2.2 The student adheres to the organisation's policies and procedures with minimal supervision
- 2.3 The student prioritises their own workload and manages time appropriately with minimal supervision
- 2.4 The student demonstrates an ability to work within the given resources with minimal supervision

### Professional and Reflective Skills

- 3.1 The student reflects on the entire problem-solving process with minimal supervision
- 3.2 With minimal supervision, the student supports their professional reasoning with evidence-based practice
- 3.3 The student adheres to the Professional Standards for Occupational Therapy, Practice, conduct and Ethics (RCOT 2021) & Guidance on Conduct and Ethics for Students (HCPC 2016) with minimal supervision
- 3.4 With minimal supervision, the student employs reflection and feedback to evaluate and develop professional strengths and identify continuing learning needs

### Therapeutic Skills

- 4.1 The student selects and professionally conducts appropriate assessments for each individual/group with minimal supervision
- 4.2 The student explores and justifies the possible use of a model/models of practice and approaches relevant to the placement setting with minimal supervision
- 4.3 With minimal supervision, the student can critically explore and consider factors which influence the outcomes of the occupational therapy process
- 4.4 With minimal supervision, the student can plan appropriate intervention programmes, recording the plan and priorities
- 4.5 With minimal supervision, the student can undertake interventions as planned/modified and justify accordingly
- 4.6 The student can critically discuss the reasons for evaluation and analyse the effectiveness of a range of evaluation tools with minimal supervision
- 4.7 The student can critically evaluate the effectiveness of the whole occupational therapy process used with service users/groups and modify accordingly to meet changing needs with minimal supervision.

### 2.5.3 Definitions of Competencies

In assessing a student's performance against the above criteria, the following definitions of competency should be employed:

- **Direction**  
The student needs regular prompting and the help of the practice educator to attempt a specified task, despite consistent support and access to opportunities for practice. S/He is unable without direction to safely/effectively undertake specified tasks to a level expected.
- **Assistance**  
The student needs prompting from the practice educator to plan for and/or complete and/or reflect upon the outcomes of a specified task. With assistance, they are able to execute tasks safely and effectively.
- **Supervision**  
The student needs to discuss plans before/during/after a specified task and the practice educator gives advice/support at more than one of these stages. The student can with supervision execute tasks safely, effectively and unaided.
- **Minimal Supervision**  
The student initiates and discusses his/her plans with the practice educator before, implements and feeds back after a specified task and the practice educator gives only minimal advice/support at any of these stages. The student with minimal supervision can execute tasks safely, efficiently and unaided.
- **Independent/ Self Directed**  
The student functions independently (as is applicable for the placement setting) whilst recognising their own learning needs. They request supervision/guidance, as and when appropriate. The student can execute tasks safely, efficiently and unaided.

*Please note that the student should demonstrate consistency over time at the level of competency being assessed for each individual placement.*

### 2.5.4 Awarding a Pass

- The practice educator gathers supporting evidence that the student has achieved the specific level of competence expected for each learning objective. The placement competency descriptors above will guide their award alongside the learning contract and evidence and examples from the student's practice.
- During the half-way review, the student's performance should be discussed and recorded on the half-way review form and an action plan for the remainder of the time on placement negotiated and recorded. The contact tutor will clarify the assessment process with the practice educator if required.
- At the end of the placement, the practice educator will complete the assessment form. **The written comments section must reflect the placement outcome/award.** The assessment form should be completed on the Wednesday of the last week of the placement and discussed with the student prior to the end of the placement.
- Once all educator forms are completed, an internal moderation process takes place.

### 2.5.5 Awarding a Fail

The School's *Procedure for Reporting and Supporting Pre-Registration Student Underachievement of Competence in Clinical/Placement Practice* (see the [HCARE Learning in Practice module](#) on Learning Central) should be employed when a student is assessed as failing to meet the required minimum standards of performance on placement. In addition, the practice-based learning team has produced Panopto video guidance on supporting struggling students which is available here:

<https://cardiff.cloud.panopto.eu/Panopto/Pages/Viewer.aspx?id=b7e9175a-8a62-41de-939e-a85101009d91>

The practice educator and/ or lead coordinator will be required to make contact and liaise with the contact tutor (who will alert the practice-based learning team) regarding any concerns identified. The concerns should be raised with the contact tutor at the **earliest opportunity** and not left until the half-way point. The concerns should also be discussed with the student at supervision and clearly documented.

An early visit can be scheduled to address the issues raised by the student and practice educator and to devise an action plan. During the visit, the contact tutor should be made aware of any intention not to award a pass at this stage. The practice educator should highlight areas on the assessment form that are 'at risk' or in the fail band. It is important for the practice educator and/or the contact tutor to clarify with the student if there are any extenuating circumstances and to inform the student of their duties in relation to this. All details must be recorded on the Failing/Struggling Student Report Form as per the above policy. Further strategies can then be negotiated between all parties.

The practice educator must then contact the visiting tutor via email or phone on a weekly basis, or more often, in order that future strategies may be discussed or to determine if additional tutor visits are required.

The final decision to award a fail for the placement must be made in consultation with the student, practice educator and contact tutor and may require input from the practice-based learning team. Throughout the whole process the student must be informed of their performance and any decisions being made.

It is unacceptable to inform a student in the final week that they will fail, without this being discussed and the student having an opportunity to address the issues in the weeks leading up to the final week.

In keeping with professional body standards, students are permitted only one attempt at retrieval of a placement. Furthermore, if a student fails the first attempt at a consecutive placement, they have failed the requirements of the pre-registration programme and must be withdrawn. If a student fails the second attempt at a placement, they have failed the requirements of the pre-registration programme and must be withdrawn (RCOT 2019, p46).

### 2.5.6 Procedure for the Award of a Credit

For a practice educator to award a student a credit on practice placement they are required to liaise with the contact tutor for the placement. The practice educator will need to indicate on the Practice Educator Assessment document that they wish for the student to be considered for credit. Evidence and practice examples gathered by the practice educator, and included on the assessment form, will be essential to ensure that the student has met the criteria for the award of a credit.

This Award of Certificate of Excellence in Practice-Based Learning recognises the achievement of students who demonstrate excellence during practice placements. After completion of the final placement a Certificate of Excellence in Practice Education is awarded when a student has achieved a credit in three placements. Students who achieved a credit in two placements will receive a Certificate of Merit in Practice Education. Students who achieved a credit in one of their placements will receive a Certificate of Recognition in Practice Education.

### **2.5.7 Procedure after Placement for Fail/Deferral**

Two members of the practice-based learning team will review all documents pertaining to a failed placement to ensure parity and transparency. Where there is inconsistency or lack of clarity and evidence, the practice educator will be contacted for clarification before moderation. The moderation will occur after each placement and the outcome will be reported to the Examination Board.

### **2.5.8 Maladministration of Procedures**

It is imperative that practice educators follow the correct policy and procedure when assessing practice-based learning. Failure to follow policy and procedure (e.g., in cases where a student has been underachieving on placement) could be considered maladministration of procedure and the decision made regarding the award could be overturned at the Examination Board. If maladministration of procedures is suspected a member of the practice-based learning team will inform the practice educator and the lead coordinator that this is being investigated.

## **Section 3: Confidentiality**

Students should be aware of their obligations to safeguard confidential information. Service users must never be discussed (verbally or online) outside of the placement and anonymity of individuals, organisations and staff must be maintained when completing placement-related work or academic assignments. Where academic work requires specific reference to placement learning experiences students should, where appropriate, use pseudonyms for service users, placement settings, staff etc. At all times students should adhere to RCOT and HCPC guidelines in relation to confidentiality as well as the regulations/policies of the placement organisations

## **Section 4: Travelling to your practice placements**

Due to the geographic spread of our practice placement providers, it is inevitable that some students will need to travel longer distances to reach their placement than others. Unless a student can provide evidence of exceptional or a sudden change in circumstances, our expectation is that all students will attend the practice placement they have been allocated.

We recognise that some students choose to study at Cardiff University irrespective of where they live and the additional travelling time that this incurs. All students should expect to travel to/from their placement. The guidance in the rest of this sections sets out the School of Healthcare Sciences guidance and processes in relation to placement travel.

### **4.1 Using public transport and planning your journey**

All students will have to use various modes of transport (i.e., a combination of walking, buses and/or trains) to get to practice placement. Accommodation may be available where a daily commute is not feasible.

Please see the [HCARE Learning in Practice module](#) on Learning Central for further details.

Websites which may help you plan your journey via car or public transport:

[Traveline Cymru](#)

[Google maps](#)

[AA route planner](#)

There may be other students who are on placement with you or near you and you may be able to share transport. If you choose to do this, please insure this is in line with your car insurance policy. You will need business insurance.

#### **4.2 Use of personal vehicles**

In addition, if students intend to use their own motor vehicle, they will need to have completed the 'Permission to Use Vehicle Form' (see 'Forms' tab in the [HCARE Learning in Practice module](#) on Learning Central). It is the student's responsibility to obtain confirmation from their insurers that they have adequate cover for all risks associated with the use of the motor vehicle whilst travelling to and from placement (for example, 'Business' insurance). This should also cover carrying passengers if the student will be taking other students with them. Students travelling by private motor vehicle should be aware that they do so at their own risk. The provision for reimbursement of the costs of travel by private motor vehicle do not constitute any acceptance of liability by the university, NWSSP or any other NHS body for the risks arising from the use of the private motor vehicle concerned.

Additional mileage/travel costs may be claimed if a student must travel to other placement sites, and/or to service users' home addresses (if the student is not given free transport). Any community mileage incurred must still exceed the cost of the student's daily mileage to and from their normal place of study. Community mileage on its own will not be reimbursed if it is not in excess.

#### **4.3 Use of personal vehicles for transporting patients**

You must NOT use your own car to transport patients under ANY circumstances.

#### **4.4. Accommodation (LINK TO ULTRA TO BE ADDED)**

The School will approve a request by a student if their allocated placement is outside the county of Cardiff, and one or more of the following are satisfied:

- The student does not have access to a car for which business insurance is held, and would have to travel on one or more public transport vehicles with a journey time in excess of an hour
- The student does not have access to a car and there are no public transport links close to the location
- The student does have access to a car, but the travel time to the placement would be in excess of one hour as determined by the cheapest / quickest route using a recognised route planner. One hour is the current average commute to work in the UK (ONS 2016). AND/OR
- The student's ISAN/formalised reasonable adjustments identifies that temporary (placement) accommodation is required.

A completed Temporary Placement Request Form (available on the 'Accommodation' tab of the [HCARE Learning in Practice module](#) on Learning Central) should be submitted by the student within 72 hours of being notified of the placement allocation. This is to enable appropriate accommodation to be sourced. It is the students responsibility to arrange and book accommodation for their clinical placements.

#### **4.5 Placement travel / accommodation expense claims**

Full guidance regarding placement expense guidance can be found on the 'Forms' tab of the [HCARE Learning in Practice Module](#)

Claims must be submitted no later than three months of the last date of each individual placement, however, we would encourage students to submit claims at regular intervals, such as fortnightly or monthly, or in line with your placement timesheet submission date(s).

## **Section 5: Notification of practice placements**

Placements are arranged in collaboration with our practice placement providers. We aim to notify students eight weeks before the commencement of placement. Please note that notification may be delayed, or changes made to practice placements, at very short notice for many reasons, i.e., changes in service/care provision or other factors, which are beyond the control of the programme/School.

### **5.1 Where and when can I find the details of my placements?**

Placement information is released to students eight weeks before the placement start date. If there is a delay to this process, then the module lead will communicate this via a Learning Central announcement to students. Placement details are uploaded to the Placement List folder on [Learning Central](#). For Cohorts starting in 2022 and on they will also be available via the InPlace online placement management platform.

### **5.2 Requesting a Change of placement**

Students cannot request a change of placement unless there are exceptional circumstances. Students who are unsatisfied with their allocated placement should submit a change of practice placement request form (available on the [HCARE Learning in Practice module](#) on Learning Central) to the programme manager and practice education lead. There are criteria that need to be met for a change of placement to be considered and supporting evidence may be required.

### **5.3 When do I contact my placement?**

Once the placement information is available students need to contact their named practice educator as soon as possible to arrange a pre-placement visit and introduce themselves.

### **5.4 Cancellation of placement**

Due to the nature of continuous changes in practice, even confirmed placements can be cancelled due to unforeseen circumstances. You should be prepared for this situation to occur, try not worry or become anxious. The placement team, academic placement leads, and our placement partners will be working to secure you a placement.

Unfortunately, there are occasions where the availability of allocated placements is impacted by unforeseen circumstances which are outside of the University's control. Service restructures and relocations, sickness absences or employment moves may result in a late withdrawal of a placement offer by an organisation or individual practice educator. Where this occurs prior to a placement commencing, the practice-based learning team will work to establish a suitable action plan with the practice educator and locality coordinator to maintain the placement offer wherever possible or, if necessary, secure a different placement opportunity within the same organisation. Should this not prove viable, the practice-based learning team will work to identify and secure a new placement and will, wherever possible, ensure that the student is able to commence the placement in a timely manner. The student will be kept informed of the situation throughout this process.

Should unforeseen circumstances arise that impact on a placement already commenced by a student, an action plan will be initiated by the placement provider, the student and a member of the practice-based learning team. This will identify the impact of the circumstances and determine the viability of the placement in relation to the student's available learning opportunities and overall experience. In rare circumstances where a suitable action plan cannot be

put into place and the learning experience is compromised, it may be necessary to neutrally withdraw the student from the placement. This action would be taken as a last resort only and would necessitate extensive discussion between the provider, the student, the practice-based learning team and the programme manager.

In exceptional circumstances if an appropriate placement is not sourced in a timely manner by the university, the placement team will work closely with the student to develop a plan to determine when this placement will be completed.

### **5.5 Can I arrange my own placement?**

Students are **not permitted** to source their own placements as it compromises agreed processes between the practice-based learning team and placement providers.

### **5.6 Bilingual / Welsh Language Placement Opportunities**

Wherever possible, appropriate placements are sourced for Welsh-speaking students who request a setting that offers bilingual learning opportunities (e.g., with a Welsh-speaking practice educator or in a geographical area where they are likely to be able to work with service users and their families through the medium of Welsh). This cannot be guaranteed.

### **5.7 Further information about my placement**

Further information about your placement can be obtained during the pre-placement visit. You can ask your practice educator for relevant information such as uniform/dress code, start/finish times, description of the services, suggested reading and any other relevant information you need to be aware of before your first day.

## **Section 6: Uniform / dress code**

The principles and expectations stated within the placement host organisation uniform policy must be adhered to. There may be placement areas where the [All Wales NHS Dress Code](#) would not be suitable, in these circumstances students will be expected to follow the dress code policy that applies to the placement area / health board. Where students are not obliged to wear the All Wales/ NHS uniform you are required to present a smart and professional image as advised by the placement area.

### **6.1 What do students wear on placement or in clinical skills labs?**

You will be expected to wear the uniform provided by the School unless advised otherwise by the placement area or clinical skills lab team. The majority of placement areas also have guidance on wearing jewellery/ watches which students are expected to adhere to.

If you are considered inappropriately dressed, you may be sent off-duty and be reported absent. Any such absences will need to be made up. If inappropriate dress or any other failures of the principles set out within the All Wales/NHS Dress code is a persistent problem, the Programme Manager will be informed, and you may be referred to a Fitness for Practice panel.

Students must wear their Cardiff University Student Name Tag at all times on placement. These tags are provided by Programme Support along with student uniform.

### **6.2 How many uniforms will be issued?**

Each student will receive:

- 2 tunics
- 3 polo shirts
- 4 trousers

### **6.3 How should uniform be laundered?**

You should follow the guidance as detailed in the [Department of Health publication Uniforms & workwear: Guidance on uniform and workwear policies for NHS employers.](#)

### **6.4 Action to take if uniform becomes too small / large, is in a state of disrepair or if a student becomes pregnant?**

If you require an alternative sized uniform during your course, you will be expected to purchase replacement uniforms. Some pre-worn uniforms may be available for you to exchange, which will incur no charge. In the unlikely event your uniform is in a state of disrepair you will be expected to purchase replacement uniforms, you will not be able to exchange your uniform for any pre-worn uniform.

In the event that new uniform is ordered this will be co-ordinated by the programme support team.

If you become pregnant then you should contact the Programme Support team who will arrange for you to have replacement uniforms that may be pre-worn.

All queries regarding uniform should be directed to [HCAREOTProgrammeSupport@Cardiff.ac.uk](mailto:HCAREOTProgrammeSupport@Cardiff.ac.uk).

## **Section 7: Whilst on placement**

### **7.1 HCPC/RCOT and programme requirements for practice**

In addition to the general standards of conduct required of students of Cardiff University as outlined in the [Cardiff University Student Handbook](#), [School of Healthcare Sciences Student Handbook](#) and the [BSc \(Hons\) Occupational Therapy Programme Handbook](#), or [Pre-registration MSc Occupational Therapy Programme Handbook](#) students of the BSc (Hons), and MSc (pre-registration) Occupational Therapy programmes are expected to demonstrate professional standards and conduct in keeping with the requirements of the Health and Care Professions Council (HCPC) and the Royal College of Occupational Therapists (RCOT). It is therefore essential that students familiarise themselves with and abide by the following key documents before, during and after practice-based learning:

- [Royal College of Occupational Therapists. 2021. Professional Standards for Occupational Therapy, Practice, conduct and Ethics London: Royal College of Occupational Therapists.](#)
- [Health and Care Professions Council. 2016. Guidance on conduct and ethics for students. London: Health and Care Professions Council.](#)
- [Health and Care Professions Council. 2017. Guidance on social media. London: Health and Care Professions Council.](#)

Students will also need to follow the policies and guidelines set out by the placement organisation/ setting.



## 7.2 Working Hours on Placement

### 7.2.1 World Federation of Occupational Therapists 1,000 Hours requirements

In line with educational standards set by the World Federation of Occupational Therapists, all occupational therapy students must complete a minimum of 1000 hours of supervised and successfully assessed practice placement (WFOT 2016). Practice-based learning provides students with the opportunity to develop professional competence and a unique professional identity within a range of primary, secondary, tertiary and non-traditional health and social care settings. It involves a dynamic partnership between the practice educator and the student and complements University-based learning by offering an opportunity for rehearsal and reflection on practice. A practice placement is the most effective arena for students to learn from and work in partnership with users of health and social care services, their families, carers and other multidisciplinary or multiagency team members. It provides an authentic, real-life learning environment and context for the assessment of an occupational therapy student's professional competence.

Across the whole programme the 1000 hours can include hours recognised as prior learning (for example a previous OT programme if transferred), a maximum of 40 hours of simulated practice based learning and a maximum of 3.5 self directed study per week (counted as study leave on placement).

The hours for each placement are set out as follows and are based on a 37.5hour week (7.5 hour day):

Placement	No. of Weeks and Hours Total
<b>BSc (Hons) Occupational Therapy</b>	
<b>Year 1 - Assessment and Planning</b>	<b>8 Weeks / 300 Hours</b>
<b>Year 2 - Intervention</b>	<b>10 Weeks / 375 Hours</b>
<b>Year 3 – Critical Evaluation</b>	<b>11 Weeks / 412.5 Hours</b>
<b>MSc (pre- registration)</b>	
<b>Year 1 - Assessment and Planning</b>	<b>8 Weeks / 300 Hours</b>
<b>Year 1 - Intervention</b>	<b>10 Weeks / 375 Hours</b>
<b>Year 2 – Critical Evaluation</b>	<b>11 Weeks / 412.5 Hours</b>

### 7.2.2 Time-keeping on Placement

Whilst the majority of teams operate Monday to Friday with 7.5 hour days there is an increasing trend towards alternative patterns of service delivery. Placements can vary but may necessitate early starts, late finishes, 12 hour days and weekend working.

Students are expected to arrive promptly at the agreed start of their working day and to work to the hours of the placement setting. They should keep appointment times and return from all breaks in a timely manner. Poor time keeping will be assessed as unprofessional behaviour within the assessment process.

Students are required to work the hours and shift patterns stipulated by the placement setting. The hours completed by a student during practice-based learning are recorded on MyProgress. If a student is unable to work certain shift patterns due to disability or caring responsibility this needs to be identified as a formalised reasonable adjustment and discussed with the practice based learning team.

As with all timetabled sessions within the University setting, attendance of practice-based learning is compulsory and poor attendance may necessitate investigation in accordance with School procedures.

Students' placement hours are monitored closely by the practice-based learning team and, where there is a shortfall in hours for a placement, these will be made up as soon as possible through negotiation with the practice educator and student on a case by case basis. Where significant time has been lost from a placement, the impact upon the learning opportunities available to a student as well as their ability to achieve the required proficiencies will be explored by the practice-based learning team, the practice educator and student. In certain unavoidable circumstances it may be necessary for a student to withdraw and repeat the placement at an identified point in the future (e.g., placement re-take block in the Summer).

In keeping with professional standards, **failed placement hours cannot be counted** towards the minimum requirement of 1000 hours (RCOT 2019).

### 7.2.3 Study Time

Students are entitled to a half a day (maximum 3.5 hours) of study time per week during practice-based learning (RCOT 2019 pg 39). With the practice educator's agreement, they may take this as one whole day per fortnight. If taking one whole day per fortnight then the study time worked should match the time worked in placement. E.g., if a student is working 7.5 hours per day in the placement setting then they can work 7.5 hours on their study day.

The timing of study leave should always be jointly negotiated between the student and practice educator in order that key learning opportunities are not missed. Study leave is recorded in the same way as practice hours. See section 7.2.3 of this document.

Students are not permitted to accrue study leave in order to complete the placement earlier than the scheduled end date or to arrange extended periods of leave during the placement weeks as this may place them at risk of failure.

Practice educators should make the practice-based learning team of any such requests by a student or where there are any concerns regarding the negotiation of study time.

### 7.2.4 Working from home during placement

Some placements require students to work from home. This may be due to the placement setting working remotely or a student may not be able to attend the workplace for a particular reason e.g., self-isolating (but not unwell) due to COVID-19. In these situations, a clear plan must be discussed between the student and the practice educator as to what work the student is expected to undertake, clearly linked with the university learning objectives and how this work and hours can be evidenced by the student. Supervision must still take place each week and can be done virtually over Teams or Zoom. The contact tutor can provide support and advice on working from home and students/ practice educators should get in touch with contact tutors if they have any queries. You may be asked to contribute to additional risk assessments to ensure that you are able to work safely from home. Key considerations are around the student having access to a safe space in which they can sit for extended periods and being able to maintain confidentiality.

### **7.3 Will the placement arrange my working hours around my part-time job?**

No. All placements are full time. It is understandable that students may have part-time jobs while studying on the course. Students need to plan in advance how they can manage their time and well-being on placement if they are working part-time at the same time. Please be aware that not all placements operate Monday-Friday as some services operate out of hours and at weekends. The working hours of the placement can be clarified during the preplacement visit.

### **7.4 Bank holidays**

The University will close on all bank holidays. If your placement is open during a bank holiday your shift pattern may require you to attend. If your placement is closed during a bank holiday, you must ensure you complete the required hours for that placement week.

Occasionally placement periods may coincide with public (bank) holidays. These days **cannot** be taken in addition to allocated study hours. Doing so may result in the student having a shortfall of placement hours. Where the student is unable to attend the placement setting on a bank holiday, it is imperative that the student is proactive in negotiating with their practice educator from the outset of the placement how to incorporate these hours within their overall study allowance for the placement. For example, if a bank holiday occurred in week 2 of the placement, a student may negotiate not to take a half-day study in week 1 and to combine this with the study leave allocation in week 2 to offset the bank holiday.

### **7.5 Annual leave**

You are **not** able to arrange annual leave outside of the weeks indicated on the programme plan. Annual leave **cannot** be arranged during theory or placement weeks, and you must adhere to the designated times allocated for annual leave within your programme plan.

### **7.6 Lone working**

Please see the Lone Working Policy available on the [HCARE Learning in Practice module](#) on Learning Central.

### **7.7 Interpreting for service user/carers if I can speak their language?**

Only formal interpreting services should be used.

### **7.8 Library and IT Services**

Details of library and IT services whilst you are on placement are available via the [intranet](#).

## **Section 8: Recording placement hours**

The recording of placement hours is an essential and important aspect of placement. Students must ensure that they record their hours accurately on MyProgress on a weekly basis. Practice educators are responsible for overseeing student hours. Students and practice educators must inform the contact tutor or a member of the academic practice-based learning team if there are any concerns regarding student hours.

### **8.1 Timesheets**

While on placement students submit timesheets weekly on MyProgress. Students must log the hours they have worked (including study time) and any sickness/absence. Lunchtime is not included in the placement hours. Students

will then be prompted to input their practice educators email address and an email receipt will be sent to their practice educator.

## 8.2 Sickness / absence on placement

If you are sick/absent you must contact the placement (**before** the shift commences) and follow their local absence reporting policies on the first day **and** inform the School as soon as possible by emailing [HCAREstudentabsence@cardiff.ac.uk](mailto:HCAREstudentabsence@cardiff.ac.uk)

Please include the information below when e-mailing:

First Name  
Student number  
Intake (cohort)  
Programme of study  
Reason for Sickness/Absence  
Personal Tutor

Placements will often request a telephone call to notify them of sickness / absence. Student are expected to follow local policy. Email or text is not sufficient unless this is the agreed procedure in the specific setting.

Within 2 days of return from sick leave a Sickness Absence Notification form must be completed via the following link: <https://cardiff.onlinesurveys.ac.uk/student-sickness-absence-notification>. You can normally self-certify sickness of up to 7 days. Medical certification is required for absences of more than 7 working days. Please refer to the website for exceptions (<https://intranet.cardiff.ac.uk/students/study/changes-to-your-studies/short-term-absence>).

Further information regarding what to do if you are sick on absent can be found on page 9 of the [School of Healthcare Sciences Handbook](#) and in the [Academic Regulations](#).

## 8.3 Unauthorised absence

This is failure to report for duty when on placement, that has **not** previously been negotiated/authorised, and is not sick leave. This demonstrates unprofessional behaviour that reflects negatively on you in terms of professional accountability, ability to communicate, show respect for others and meet professional standards. It could result in failure to meet programme requirements and/or referral to a fitness to practice panel.

## 8.4 Authorised absence

This is absence which has been authorised by the programme manager, examples include compassionate leave for a bereavement or carers leave. Whilst on placement you will be required to show evidence of your authorised leave to your practice educator.

Applications for authorised planned absences should be made via the following link: <https://cardiff.onlinesurveys.ac.uk/student-special-leave-application>

## 8.5 Personal appointments

You will be expected to arrange personal appointments during your off-duty hours. Any time missed will be added to the overall make up time.

### **8.6 Making up placement hours**

Students are unable to make up placement hours on future placements unless there are exceptional circumstances which must be discussed with the practice-based learning Lead and the programme manager. It is important that if students lose hours through sickness or exceptional circumstances that this is communicated to the practice educator and the contact tutor at the time, during that placement so that action can be put in place to try and address this. This may require input from the practice education lead and programme manager.

### **8.7 Maximum working hours in practice**

Placement hours are calculated based on a 37.5 hour working week (7.5 hours days – not including lunch breaks). Students should work to the time as close as possible. Students are not expected to work beyond 37.5 hours a week unless this is agreed with the practice educator and contact tutor/ placement module lead.

### **8.8 Paternity leave (For partners to the mother this includes same sex couples)**

You are entitled to take up to two weeks paternity leave, however this will be added to any authorised/unauthorised leave you have taken during the programme, you will be required to make up this time.

## **Section 9: Infection control**

Please do not attend placement if you are unwell. It is important that you adhere to the NHS/University/ Health Board / Placement provider policies in relation to diarrhoea and vomiting. These illnesses have the potential to spread very quickly amongst ill / compromised patients and can result in fatalities and many beds blocked/closed. Check with your NHS Health Board / placement partner Infection Control and follow their advice. This will usually be 'stay away home until you have been symptom free for at least 48 hours. Please follow the sickness absence process as detailed in section 8.2 of this document then stay at home until symptoms of these infections have ceased for at least 48 hours.

## **Section 10: Jury service**

Students on placement are not exempt from Jury Service. You can return your form back to the courts and ask for a deferment, however before doing this please speak to your personal tutor who can provide a formal supporting letter explaining the course requirements to enhance your request for a deferment. Please note that if a deferment is not granted by the court you will be expected to do the Jury Service. We will work with you to manage for this disruption to your programme.

## **Section 11: Professional Behaviour**

You are an advocate of Cardiff University and your chosen profession. You should always therefore uphold the reputation of your profession. You should display a personal commitment to the standards of practice and behaviour set out in the [Professional Standards for Occupational Therapy, Practice, conduct and Ethics \(RCOT 2021\)](#) and [Guidance on Conduct and Ethics for Students \(HCPC 2016\)](#). You should be a model of integrity and leadership for others to aspire

to. This should lead to trust and confidence in the profession from patients, people receiving care, other healthcare professionals and the public.

You are required to uphold the principles of your profession in your personal life as well as your student life. Failure to do uphold the principles of your profession may affect your fitness to practise and ability to complete your programme.

### **11.1 Social Networking Sites**

Used properly, social networking sites such as Facebook are a great way to find old friends, join interest groups and share information. However, you should remember that anything posted on a social networking site is in the public domain. Students should also ensure that they follow the [Health and Care Professions Council's Guidance on Social Media \(HCPC 2017\)](#).

What may be considered to be letting off steam about a situation at work can potentially be read by someone who may take offence at the content of a posting and could result in a formal complaint against you and a fitness to practice referral made.

Social media is a constant in many of our lives and is an important communication tool that many of us use. Indeed, many employers are now also using social media channels to screen candidates, so it is important that your “digital footprint” presents a positive image of you and that you are aware of the positive and possible negative impacts social media can have on your life.

Take a look at our [#Social 7 campaign](#) to learn more about how to avoid the pitfalls and make good use of social media.

### **11.2 Professional Relationships**

You should always maintain clear professional boundaries in the relationships you have with others. Therefore, you should never arrange to meet patients/clients, their family members or carers socially, either during or after the placement. You should not accept any gifts, favours or hospitality that might be interpreted as an attempt to gain preferential treatment.

### **11.3 Mobile Phones**

Respect the practice environment, practitioners you are working with, and ultimately clients in your care, by NOT texting, making phone calls or using any of the facilities available on your phone in the presence of patients/clients or their families. This guidance also extends to other technology such as smartwatches which connect with mobile phones.

Good practice would be to switch off your mobile phone as you arrive in practice settings to avoid temptation.

You should always adhere to Health Board or placement provider policies regarding personal mobile phone use. Never take photographs of patient / client situations.

### **11.4 Smoking while wearing uniform / on duty**

Please refrain from smoking or using electronic cigarettes when wearing uniform whilst on duty. Please adhere to the placement setting smoking policy.

### 11.5 Chewing gum

Please refrain from chewing gum whilst on duty – this does not create a good impression.

## Section 12: Raising and escalating concerns

You have a professional duty to report any concerns that put the safety of the people in your care or the public at risk. Speaking up on behalf of people in your care and clients is an everyday part of your role, and just as raising genuine concerns represents good practice, 'doing nothing' and failing to report concerns is unacceptable.

If students have a concern while on placement then they are advised to inform their practice educator and/or their contact tutor at the earliest opportunity.

[Health Inspectorate Wales \(HIW\)](#) has also published useful guidance.

The school has developed a clear procedure and an incident report that you should complete when raising your concerns. This is available on the [Learning in Practice module](#) on Learning Central.

All incidents which occur either in University or whilst the student is on placement MUST be reported via the incident report form to the School Safety Officer whether there is a Datex report and internal/police investigation in the placement or not. The link for the process, to include the form is <https://intranet.cardiff.ac.uk/staff/supporting-your-work/health-safety-and-environment/procedures-guidance/report-an-accident-incident-or-near-miss>

## Section 13: Student Disability, Reasonable Adjustments and Placements

If you have a disability, or a qualifying physical and/or mental health condition that has a '*substantial and long-term negative effect on your ability to do normal daily activities*' ([Equality Act 2010](#)), each undergraduate programme has a dedicated Student Disability and Wellbeing Lead who will liaise with the university [Student Disability Service](#) to implement recommended reasonable adjustments to enable you to engage with your studies. Some recommended adjustments, that are assessed as realistic and proportionate, can also extend to making specific accommodations within the placement learning area to support you and mitigate against your experiencing disadvantage. These may require your participation in risk assessments and /or attending [Student Occupational Health](#) appointments.

If you have a disability, (or a qualifying physical and/or mental health condition), please arrange to meet with your programme's Student Disability and Wellbeing Lead early in the programme to discuss your reasonable adjustments that have been recommended for you following your assessment by the Student Disability Service. If you are uncertain of your needs or potential adjustments that may support you, and/or you have not yet disclosed your disability/health needs to the university, you can get in touch with the Student Disability Service by completing the [disability support form](#), which can be found on the main page of the Student Connect portal. You can also get in touch by submitting an enquiry to [studentconnect@cardiff.ac.uk](mailto:studentconnect@cardiff.ac.uk) or call +44 (0)29 2251 8888. You are also encouraged to share and discuss your recommended reasonable adjustments with your supervisors when planning to commence a placement, but note you are not required to disclose your actual disability or condition. A range of university supports for disability can be found on your [student intranet](#).

### **13.1 Equality, diversity and inclusion**

We are committed to supporting, developing and promoting equality and diversity in all our practices and activities and to allowing all members of our University community to exist in an inclusive learning, working and living environment where they are treated with dignity and respect. This has direct relevance to your learning on placement.

We are committed to advancing equality on the grounds of age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion and belief (including lack of belief), sex and sexual orientation and to fostering good relations between different groups.

Our [strategic equality plan](#) aims to promote equality and achieve equality improvements across Cardiff University as required under the Equality Act 2010. It applies to all areas of your academic and social life at Cardiff University. If you feel that you are being discriminated against, bullied or harassed by other students or the University, we urge you to seek advice. You may find guidance on the [student intranet](#) useful.

### **13.2 Student Placement Risk Assessment**

The student placement risk assessment (available on the [HCARE Learning in Practice](#) module on Learning Central) was developed to provide information to the student on general health and safety prior to their placement and to help provide specialist advice and guidance for students with additional support needs e.g. Student Disability Service reasonable adjustments, occupational health advice. This includes pregnancy.

#### **13.2.1 Pregnancy**

Students may become aware they are pregnant during the course of their studies and while on clinical placement. You must inform your practice educator, personal tutor and placement module lead so that a risk assessment can be undertaken as per local policy.

The risk assessment is essential to assess any potential risks in relation to your pregnancy – failure to declare that you are pregnant could put you at risk.

## **Section 14: Support in practice**

If you require support while you are on placement then you can seek this from your practice educator or contact tutor. You can also liaise with your personal tutor. If you require support in relation to reasonable adjustments then please liaise with the placement module lead and the Student Support and Disability Lead for the occupational therapy programmes. You may also need to liaise with Student Disability Service as set out in section 13.

## **Section 15: Quality Assurance**

The quality of practice-based learning is formally monitored, both internally and externally, using a variety of mechanisms to ensure that students are provided with a quality placement experience. Such monitoring activities include specific sources of feedback from students, practice educators, coordinators, service managers and programme staff as well as regular audits of placement provision. These mechanisms ensure that issues pertaining to quality are monitored, effectively reported on and addressed.



### **15.1 Student Feedback**

Student feedback is supported through placement debriefing sessions which provide an opportunity for verbal feedback with the practice-based learning team and peer exploration of any issues or themes that arise. Students may provide placement-related feedback to the practice-based learning team, programme manager or their personal tutor at any time.

Student evaluation is an essential tool to monitor the effectiveness of placements in supporting you to achieve your learning outcomes and to give constructive feedback to the placement. The web link for the evaluation will be placed on Learning Central for students to access. The evaluation link will remain open for two weeks after the end of each placement.

Students are reminded to maintain confidentiality by not naming specific members of placement staff. If you feel that you did not have a good experience on your placement – please be professional and give constructive advice that will help the placement to improve the experience for future students.

A key aspect of becoming a professional practitioner is to raise concerns at the time they occur rather than waiting to complete the evaluation – students have lots of support available to them in practice to guide them with raising concerns - see section 12.

Programme management meetings and student-staff panels also serve as appropriate forums for feedback on practice-based learning. Student feedback is often meaningfully employed to inform practice educator training.

### **15.2 Practice Educator Feedback**

Practice educator and practice setting feedback is also essential to occupational therapy placements. The academic practice education team has established links with placement providers and there are various opportunities for practice partners to provide feedback including at the Lead Coordinator meetings (chaired by the Lead for Practice Based Learning) and locality coordinator meetings which a member of the academic practice education team attends.

The half-way visit report, completed by the contact tutor, also fulfils an audit function, with contact tutors being responsible for monitoring standards and reporting any variances or concerns to the practice-based learning team. This information is captured within the contact tutor's half-way report. All practice areas are part of a biennial audit cycle using a formal tool designed to ensure that the placement area is continuing to support the student learning experience and assessment process in accordance with required standards. Feedback from placement providers is also encouraged and supported through the availability of a dedicated and responsive practice-based learning team, via the contact tutor's half-way review and during training events. Representatives from the practice-based learning team attend regular liaison meetings with locality coordinators, where open and honest discussion and feedback between partners ensures that any concerns in relation to the quality of the design and implementation of practice-based learning can be addressed.

Practice educators, who are occupational therapists with a minimum of one year's post-qualification experience, are offered a range of training opportunities to develop and enhance their skills. The practice-based learning team are committed to the delivery and support of training for New Practice educators and also refresher training with an established training programme running throughout the year. Practice educators are encouraged to complete an evaluation form and the feedback provided contributes to the review of the educator training programme.

There is an expectation that practice educators will attend practice-based learning training every three years as a minimum standard. Any educators due to take a student will also be offered the opportunity to attend an 'Educator Placement Preparation Meeting' in the weeks prior to the placement starting to clarify expectations and processes.

Practice educator training is monitored by Locality Lead Coordinators and the frequency that practice educators need to attend refresher training can be determined by the individual occupational therapy service. Practice educators who have completed suitable educator training delivered by another University may be permitted to take a student without having to complete the new educator training. However, they will be expected to ensure that they are familiar with the marking criteria and Cardiff University placement processes. They are encouraged to complete an update or refresher educator training session as soon as possible. In this circumstance, support is available from the Practice Education Team.

In accordance with School and University guidelines, moderation is undertaken following scheduled placement periods to review, on a sample basis, the quality of practice placement assessment documentation. Relevant general recommendations are subsequently made to enhance the quality of the process and disseminated to students and practice educators through the feedback channels outlined above. Placement documentation for students who have been recommended for the award of a credit will also be reviewed as part of the internal moderation process. The staff moderating will evaluate the evidence presented by the student and their practice educator in support of this award and inform both parties of their assessment and outcome.

### **15.3 Audit**

The provision of high-quality practice-based learning is viewed as a partnership responsibility between placement providers and the University. This is achieved through a collaborative approach to auditing practice placements in accordance with the standards and policies outlined above. In accordance with University and School policy, all new placement settings and providers are assessed in terms of their capacity to facilitate a learning experience that will allow students to meet the required learning outcomes as well as identifying any broader risks to either the student, School or University. This is achieved through completion of a placement provider audit document. The audit is a self-assessment process at both placement and organisational level and is undertaken with the involvement of the practice-based learning team. Placement support team monitor the Local Level Agreements for placement organisations.

## **Section 16: Academic Placement Lead and Placement Support Team**

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*Be proactive, enthusiastic and professional*

*Enjoy your placement; make the most of a wide range of learning opportunities with practice educators who have a rich and varied experience in practice and research.*

*Do not sit back and hope that learning will just happen – it is up to you too!*

We hope that you have found this handbook useful – if you have any constructive feedback or helpful suggestions for future editions - please e-mail Jennie Ross - [rossj@cardiff.ac.uk](mailto:rossj@cardiff.ac.uk)

## Appendix 1 Guidelines for Critical Evaluation Placement 'Alternative' Placement models

**Please note: Work is currently underway between Cardiff University and the University of South Wales to expand the guidance below and provide additional support, ideas and guidance as to how learning objectives can be met in different settings. It is anticipated that this project will result in a joint document released in the 2023 – 2024 academic year.**

**To gain an update on progress or receive a copy following release please contact [hcareotpracedu@cardiff.ac.uk](mailto:hcareotpracedu@cardiff.ac.uk)**

In line with WFOT and RCOT guidance a wide range of placements should be provided for students studying occupational therapy. In recent years the variety of practice experiences has increased and as such some 'alternative' placement models have emerged. This document provides guidance on the following type of placements:

- Role Emerging Placements
- Leadership Placements
- Project based Placements

Definitions of each of these placements can be seen below as well as the requirements for such placements.

### Definitions

#### Role Emerging Placements

Role Emerging placements offer a student the opportunity to work in a setting that does not have an occupational therapist in-situ (College of Occupational Therapists, 2006). Research on role emerging placements suggests that students are placed at least in pairs, to ensure they can readily access peer support throughout the placement. There are currently two different types of Role Emerging placements:

*1. Role Emerging Placements with third sector or private providers*

Students are placed within an organisation that has indicated that they are interested in exploring the role of occupational therapy within their service. The organisation may have some understanding of the role and are hoping to explore how occupational therapy can enhance their provision to service recipients.

*2. Role Emerging Placement: Practice Development Placement*

This role emerging placement happens within a host statutory organisation, such as a Health Board. The organisation will have an established occupational therapy service and the placement will be offered in a setting within the organisation where occupational therapy currently does not offer a service.

#### Leadership Placements

Leadership placements, are hosted by a statutory organisation. They offer a student the opportunity to take part in a placement project, which will concentrate on service improvement, service development or audit.

This might be focused on:

- a) A specific project or a range of smaller projects e.g., within an occupational therapy service
- b) A leadership role including placed along those in management or clinical lead posts (as a split placement with a clinical team or as the whole of the placement).

### **Project based Placements**

Project based placements can take place with a team who are currently delivering a funded or unfunded project. This could be a service development project, a service evaluation or a research project. The student will have the opportunity to work on a 'live' project that has relevance to occupational therapy.

Examples of projects / include:

- An existing or new service development / service evaluation / research project.
- A scoping project of pre-identified areas for exploration / improvement.

A project could already be underway within a service or 'rolling,' so could be continued by future critical evaluation students.

### **Requirements for 'Alternative' Placements**

'Alternative' placements are available for students on the pre-registration BSc and MSc Occupational Therapy programmes, who are due to embark on their Critical Evaluation placement.

Although the three types of placement stipulated above are different, there are some similarities. These include some of the requirements for the placement as well as the evaluation of these placements. It is recommended that both the student(s) and educator will meet in advance of the placement to explore the placement details.

### **Pre-Placement Arrangements:**

1. Settings identify prospective placements using the placement packs and indicate number of students. The following codes can be used:
  - a. REP – Role emerging placement
  - b. L – Leadership
  - c. R - Research
2. Setting/ educator to liaise with Lead Coordinator and team (manager/ MDT etc) and to liaise directly with the university practice placement team.
3. An audit will need to be completed if the setting has not taken a student before (the placement team at the University can support with this process)
4. University identify prospective student/s.
5. Pre-placement visits may need to be arranged in advance of 'usual' allocation to explore the plans for the placement in detail. This may be done virtually or face to face in line with all other pre-placement visit arrangements.
6. Further visits/ communication between student and setting take place if required.

### **Evaluation of these placements:**

Educators / settings may wish to evaluate the outcome of these placements (whether this be role emerging, leadership or research). Educator feedback will be collected, this is in addition to existing student feedback by the academic practice team following an alternative placement. Findings could be discussed in lead coordinator meetings /newsletters (these can be anonymised) and used to plan future placement opportunities.

### **Alternative Placements in more detail**

## **Role Emerging Placements**

Role Emerging placements offer a student the opportunity to work in a setting that does not have an occupational therapist in-situ (College of Occupational Therapists, 2006). For example, students might be able to design and implement a service without direct day to day supervision of an occupational therapist.

### **Are the Placement Learning Outcomes the same?**

The Learning outcomes for a role emerging placement remain the same as any other Critical Evaluation Placement and students will need to achieve these outcomes to pass the placement.

What differs is the type of supervision that is on offer. This is explained in more detail under the sub-section “long armed supervision”.

### **Different types of Role-Emerging Placements**

Whilst all role-emerging placements have one thing in common; they are based in a setting and/or an organisation that does not currently have occupational therapy services, they do differ in respect to how they are organised.

#### ***1. Role Emerging Placements with third sector or private providers:***

Students are placed within an organisation that has indicated that they are interested in exploring the role of occupational therapy within their service. The organisation may have some understanding of the role but are hoping to explore how occupational therapy can enhance their provision to service recipients.

The organisation may be charitable or third sector or a private enterprise. They will be required to undertake a University Placement Audit (two-yearly) and Placement Risk assessment prior to students beginning their placement. As part of the audit process, they will need to ensure that students have a designated onsite mentor (non-occupational therapy) who they can consult with daily. The Practice Placement Team at the University will work closely with the organisation to ensure they are fully aware of the expectations of a role emerging placement.

The student will have access to weekly supervision with an experienced occupational therapy educator either from within the organisation, a sister organisation, or the University. Please refer to the subsection on long armed supervision.

#### ***2. Role Emerging Placement: Practice Development Placement***

This role emerging placement happens within a host statutory organisation, such as a Health Board. The organisation will have an established occupational therapy service that adheres to the two-yearly University Audit process and are happy to take the lead on auditing and risk assessing the new setting.

The placement will be offered in a setting within the organisation where occupational therapy currently does not offer a service e.g., Staff Health and Wellbeing or within an organisation that they work collaboratively with e.g., schools and care homes.

The placements offer the occupational therapy service the opportunity to explore the role, enhance the awareness and understanding of the scope of occupational therapy and cement more integrated practices.

The outcome of a recent role emerging, practice development placement:

*‘the placement allowed us to see if there was a role for mental health OT’s in care homes and we have subsequently obtained funding for a temporary OT post in the behavioural support team that will look at psychosocial interventions for distress/ ill-being.’*

Students will have a designated mentor onsite and will be offered long armed supervision with an experience educator from within the host organisation.

### **How are students assessed?**

A learning contract will be used to identify and monitor the student's development across the placement. The longarmed supervising educator will assess the student against the placement learning outcomes and their identified learning needs. The assessment will be based on the evidence that the student brings to supervision, feedback from others and potentially some limited observations of the students in-situ. The student and educator will still receive a half-way visit from a University Contact Tutor.

### **Long armed supervision**

Students on a role-emerging placement will be supervised at arm's length, that is their Educator will not be based in the same place as them. They may either be located in another part of the service, a sister organisation or at the University.

This does mean that long armed supervisors are not on site to observe practice and students will need to find other ways of sharing what they have planned and implemented and what they have learnt. Reflection becomes a key means of sharing developments at weekly supervision sessions.

One educator commented about a role-emerging placement:

*"It really highlighted the value of written reflections for the students, and to see the development of this over the course of the placement was really exciting".*

Long armed supervision demands a different way of working but has been seen by many colleagues as a useful extension to their educator skills. The University offers support and education with respect to Long-armed supervision and for those new to the role, continued guidance, as required.

One educator remarked:

*'This placement enhanced my supervision skills by learning how to provide long-arm supervision and influence practice from afar. One bit of learning to reflect on for me was being mindful to take into account the whole learning journey when looking at the learning objectives, as having had many students over the years I tended to focus on what I observed and needed to remind myself that much of the long-arm approach relied on how the students reflected on what they had done and feedback from others.'*

Another commented:

*'For me personally it really challenged my supervision skills, in a good way, developed my coaching skills and changed my perception and expectations of 'traditional' placements.'*

In conclusion, role -emerging placements offer organisations the opportunity to contemplate how they might extend their service and demonstrate the impact of occupational therapy in a new setting. They offer practice educators the opportunity to enhance their supervisory skills and students the chance to develop and refine a range of high level professional and leadership skills that will prepare them for an ever changing and diverse practice environment, on graduation.

### **Leadership Placements**

Leadership placements offer a student the opportunity to take part in a placement that has an element of service improvement, service development or audit such as:

- a) A specific project e.g. within an occupational therapy service
- b) A placement alongside those practitioners in management or clinical lead posts (as a split placement with a clinical

team or as the whole of the placement\*).

The requirements for a leadership placement are stipulated above. In addition to this, the educator is to have demonstrated some leadership skills and have some experience of leadership/ management roles/ responsibilities with some evidence of in house or external leadership/management training and/or MSc/ higher education.

\* For leadership settings advice will need to be sought from setting HR/Unions regarding student involvement in staffing issues e.g., recruitment/ sickness absence.

### **Supervision**

It is anticipated that the majority of Leadership placements will have an occupational therapy educator in situ. If this is not the case then an on-site mentor will need to be allocated and long-arm supervision provided by an Occupational Therapist from another service or from the University.

A learning contract will be used to identify and monitor the student's development across the placement. The educator/ long-arm supervisor will assess the student against the placement learning outcomes and their identified learning needs. The assessment will be based on the evidence that the student brings to supervision, feedback from others and potentially some limited observations of the students in-situ. The student and educator will still receive a half-way visit from a University Contact Tutor.

### **How are students assessed?**

The Learning outcomes for a leadership placement remain the same as any other Critical Evaluation Placement and students will need to achieve these outcomes to pass the placement. An interpretation of the critical evaluation learning outcomes is provided in the appendix. The educator will use the existing assessment form but will use the information in the appendix to guide their assessment of the student in relation to the leadership theme of the placement.

### **Project based Placements**

These placements will take place with a team who are currently delivering a funded or unfunded project. This could be a service development project or a research project. The student will have the opportunity to work on a 'live' project that has relevance to occupational therapy.

Examples of projects/research include:

- An existing or new project/ research
- A scoping project of pre-identified areas for exploration/ improvement

Any project could be 'rolling' so could be continued by future critical evaluation students.

### **Supervision**

The student will be allocated a mentor from the team and a University staff member will provide long armed supervision (please refer to page 5 for more information regarding these roles). This may be in addition to a practice based educator or organisation link person.

A learning contract will be used to identify and monitor the student's development across the placement. The longarmed supervising educator will assess the student against the placement learning outcomes and their identified learning needs. The assessment will be based on the evidence that the student brings to supervision, feedback from others and potentially some limited observations of the students in-situ. The student and educator will still receive a half-way visit from a University Contact Tutor.



### **How are students assessed?**

The Learning outcomes for a project based placement remain the same as any other Critical Evaluation Placement and students will need to achieve these outcomes to pass the placement. An interpretation of the critical evaluation learning outcomes is provided in the appendix. The educator will use the existing assessment form but will use the information in the appendix to guide their assessment of the student in relation to the research theme of the placement.

### **Project based Placement Record Form**

This document will be shared with the student, contact tutor and educator in advance of the commencement of the placement

1. Is there a title for your service evaluation / service development project / research project?
2. Service evaluation / service development / research often require permission from Research and Development (R&D) Have you checked with your organisation's R&D department?
3. What was the outcome of the discussion with R&D?
4. What is the timeline – e.g., what is expected during this placement?
5. What are the aims / objectives of the project?
6. What supervision support does the educator have within the organisation? / named supervisor for this service evaluation / service development / research project.
7. Does the educator need additional supervision support from the University or local ORiENT mentor or champion?

## **Appendix 2 – BSc, and MSc Critical Evaluation Placement Learning Outcomes – Guidance for Leadership and Project Based Placements**

The learning outcomes for the critical evaluation placement also applies to leadership placements. Please see comments written in purple for guidance as to how these learning outcomes might be adapted for those placements in a leadership setting. These only give examples so you are welcome to add in other suggestions or talk these through with our placement team/contact tutor in occupational therapy.

### **Communication and Collaboration Skills**

- 1.1 The student communicates effectively the results of the occupational therapy process to service users and appropriate others with minimal supervision (The student is able to communicate the results of the occupational therapy / leadership / research process to appropriate others. This might include feeding back results of audits or projects and communicating how this might impact the occupational therapy process/service/service users)
- 1.2 The student records and reports all actions in a manner appropriate to the placement with minimal supervision
- 1.3 The student forms constructive and professional relationships with service users, carers and colleagues with minimal supervision (This might not necessarily include service users however they demonstrate an ability to form constructive and professional relationships with those appropriate to the setting)
- 1.4 The student communicates an understanding of occupational therapy to service users and colleagues with minimal supervision (Please see 1.3)

### **Organisation and Management Skills**

- 2.1 The student demonstrates awareness of the effects that organisational, legal and professional factors have on the occupational therapy process with minimal supervision
- 2.2 The student adheres to the organisation's policies and procedures with minimal supervision
- 2.3 The student prioritises their own workload and manages time appropriately with minimal supervision
- 2.4 The student demonstrates an ability to work within the given resources with minimal supervision

### **Professional and Reflective Skills**

- 3.1 The student reflects on the entire problem-solving process with minimal supervision (The student demonstrates the ability to reflect on the entire problem-solving process relevant to the setting e.g., implementing change, carrying out a research project)
- 3.2 With minimal supervision, the student supports their professional reasoning with evidence-based practice
- 3.3 The student adheres to the Code of Ethics and Professional Conduct (RCOT) & Guidance on Conduct and Ethics for Students (HCPC) with minimal supervision
- 3.4 With minimal supervision, the student employs reflection and feedback to evaluate and develop professional strengths and identify continuing learning needs

## Therapeutic Skills

- 4.1 The student selects and professionally conducts appropriate assessments for each individual/group with minimal supervision (This might be assessment of the problem/need for the project/change/initiative/research project and the ability to identify goals/aims)
- 4.2 The student explores and justifies the possible use of a model/models of practice and approaches relevant to the placement setting with minimal supervision (and/or models of leadership/change management/service improvement/research theory)
- 4.3 With minimal supervision, the student can critically explore and consider factors which influence the outcomes of the occupational therapy process (The student can critically explore and consider factors which influence the outcomes of a project/ service improvement initiative/ leadership and how this may impact on the delivery of occupational therapy services)
- 4.4 With minimal supervision, the student can plan appropriate intervention programmes, recording the plan and priorities (This might be planning a project or service development plans or research project)
- 4.5 With minimal supervision, the student can undertake interventions as planned/modified and justify accordingly (This might include implementing a project/change/initiative/research)
- 4:6 The student can critically discuss the reasons for evaluation and analyse the effectiveness of a range of evaluation tools with minimal supervision (This might include evaluating the effectiveness of a service or service improvement initiative/project/research (as a whole or a stage of it) e.g. through audits or other relevant evaluation tools) 4:7
- The student can critically evaluate the effectiveness of the whole occupational therapy process used with service users/groups and modify accordingly to meet changing needs with minimal supervision (This might involve evaluating the project/service development/research and evaluating how this has impacted on the occupational therapy delivery. This might also include consideration of the sustainability of the project/change/initiative/research)

## **Appendix 3 – All Wales Placement Passport**

### **All-Wales Placement Passport**

***This is a student owned document to be shared with each placement***

The current version of this can be found on the [HCARE Learning in Practice Module](#) on Learning Central