

FAQs

Student Placements in Private Practice

A meeting was held with the Practice Educator Coordinators (PECs) and members working in Private Practice, the queries and questions raised have been compiled into a FAQ document.

How much supervision does the student need, must they be supervised all the time?

The physiotherapists have overall responsibility for the patient. At the start of a placement, the student may be supervised more, as they progress through the placement, they will be supervised less. The student does not require direct supervision throughout the placement. Students in early year placements will only be observing. Students in later years and later in a placement can be more actively involved in elements of management, including assessment, rehabilitation, note keeping etc. This can be supervised indirectly.

Do patients pay for appointments if seen by a student?

Yes. The physiotherapist retains overall responsibility and management for the patient. The student can be involved in assessment, treatment and management, and as they progress through the placement will take on more of this. Students can spend additional time with patients after session finishes with physiotherapist eg extra free rehab time.

Can the student be involved in non-clinical aspects of the practice?

Yes, it is important for the student to be exposed to all aspects of private practice. The student can be involved in scheduling appointments, creating rehab physio tools programmes, quality audits, updating patient information sheets, creating infographics, etc

How many patients per day must the student see?

There is no prescribed number. For early year placements the student will be observing. On later placements they may start with 2-3 patients and as they progress through the placement see more. They would probably see around 5-6 maximum by the end of the placement. Students may also observe other patients in any given day over and above the patients the student is directly involved with. This would be similar in the public setting. The student will need longer time for elements of management and needs time to read and reflect and clinical reason following individual patient sessions.

I have a small practice and don't think I could have a student all the time. Could I still take a student for a placement ?

Yes. Placements can be shared between two private practices or practice educators working in public settings eg primary care, in the region.

I have a practice with a number of physiotherapists, can we all be involved?

Yes. One physiotherapist would be the lead practice educator. Shared supervision would be agreed from the start of placement. The student could spend time observing and be involved with treatments by other physiotherapists. This gives the student the opportunity to see different approaches to patient management.

I work in a very specialised area, could I still facilitate a placement?

Yes. This would be a great opportunity for a student to experience. It would be recommended the placement is shared between 2 practice educators within same practice or different practices, so the student has the opportunity of working in a the specialty, as well as more general.

What hours in the day are students on placement?

This is flexible, once agreed with the HEI and student. On average student do placements of 32-37 hours a week. These hours do not need conform to a normal 8h00 – 16h00 day. The student could start later and finish later, do weekend work etc, the natural workings of a private practice.

What is the level of input required?

The practice educator is responsible for the student once the placement starts. If there are any concerns the HEI can be contacted, and they will assist as required. The practice educator will be sent all documents ahead of time which include the placement agreement, practice education handbook, feedback forms, mid-way and final assessment form.

How much time do I need to commit for feedback and discussion each week?

This will vary on the student. On average it is 60 minutes a week. The mid placement assessment and end of placement assessments may be slightly longer. This time can be counted as CPD if there are elements of new and enhanced learning.

Will I receive training ?

Yes. The practice educator will be required to complete training prior the placement starting. This is on average 2-3 hours and will be provided by the HEI's.

Can I record any of the time as CPD points?

Yes. As per CORU CPD guidance, points are self-awarded based on new and enhanced learning. If you are taking a student for the first time there may be more new and enhanced learning than once you have been taking students for a while. However, as the student change there will always be new learnings and reflection. The training provided by the HEI's can also be used for CPD.

What are the challenges that other practices have had?

Managing time and space can be tricky in the beginning. The student needs space to write notes, read, work on clinical reasoning.

What are the benefits other practices have reported?

- Fantastic opportunity to give back to the profession
- Facilitating a student placement can assist with employment, both for the practice and the student.
- Students are prepared for working in private practice and having a positive experience can aid in recruitment
- Practices report it is a great opportunity to stay up to date on the evidence.

- Students can assist with those tasks you don't seem to have time to get too – updating patient handouts in line with evidence, creating infographics, updating the website etc
- Students can be involved in non-clinical aspects, a clinical audit, an audit on record keeping, data retention policy's etc
- Students bring enthusiasm and energy
- There may be opportunity to become involved in teaching within the HEIs if you are interested in being involved

Have other practices got any useful and practical tips?

Yes,

- Stagger your breaks, so the student and the practice educator have different breaks
- Involve the student in non-clinical aspects of private practice
- Have short regular debriefing sessions with the student

Contact the PECS directly to discuss student placements

University		PEC Name/s	Email
Trinity	BSc	Lucy Alpine	brennalu@tcd.ie
RCSI	BSc	Helen Heery	physioclinical@rcsi.ie
		Fiona Daly	
		Rebecca Sweeney	
UCC	MSc	Trish O'Sullivan	trish.osullivan@hse.ie
UCD	BSc	Sinead McMahon	sinead.mcmahon@ucd.ie
	Professional Masters	Denise O'Callaghan	denise.ocallaghan@ucd.ie
UL	BSc	Marie O'Donnell	Marie.ODonnell@ul.ie
	MSc		

The ISCP acknowledges the contribution from the Practice Education teams at the five Universities in compiling this FAQ document.



Professional Practice Unit
December 2022