

**School of Health and Social Care
University of Essex**

**Agreement of student responsibilities with regards to Practice Placements:
Dental Hygiene & Therapy**

1. Introduction

While studying your course in the School of Health and Social Care, you will spend a proportion of time learning in a practice environment. These are called practice placements. Learning through practice placements is a professional requirement of your course, as stipulated by the relevant professional regulatory body. Most courses require you to complete a specified number of hours in a practice placement setting.

The University of Essex works in partnership with a wide range of local and regional placement providers. These partnerships ensure that your placement experience meets established quality assurance standards enabling safe and effective supervision and assessment whilst you support individuals who use and interact with health and social care services.

Undertaking and managing practice placements requires responsibility and commitment from you, the placement provider, and the University. This document outlines guidance on your responsibilities in managing practice placements and the level of commitment expected of you. It is provided to help you understand and prepare for these expectations.

Please read this information carefully and acknowledge that you understand the level of commitment required for your course. You will be expected maintain this commitment throughout the duration of your course. Further information is available on the Health and Social Care Placements [website](#). If you require additional clarification, please contact the Placements Lead for your course.

2. How We Allocate Placements

All practice placements and the numbers of students they can support are decided in partnership with placement providers and depend on capacity, suitability and professional body requirements. Placement capacity for a specific course approximates to the number of students recruited to the course (and similar courses at other universities).

Once a student has been allocated a practice placement, if they decline that opportunity this may be recorded as a fail and could impact your progression.

It is extremely difficult to change a placement that has been allocated. The University works closely with placement providers to ensure sufficient capacity is available to allocate students to placements. Allocations are made based on the following principles:

- The suitability and appropriateness of learning opportunities within a placement setting.

- The availability of agreed capacity within a placement setting.
- The range of learning experiences that students have had on previous placements.
- Where a student has declared a disability or health condition that has been evidenced and reasonable adjustments have been agreed, in accordance with reasonable adjustments (see Section 4).

3. Your Responsibilities in Managing Placements

The University and placement providers where you learn have committed to providing you with a range of support, and endeavour to meet their responsibilities in supporting your learning and development as you progress through your course. Details of the university's and placement providers' responsibilities are available in the [Student Handbook](#) and Programme Handbook for your course. Your placement or programme lead can direct you to these resources.

By accepting a place on this course, you acknowledge that you understand and accept certain personal, financial responsibilities, as well as the expectations of behaviour in managing your practice placement experience. These are outlined below.

I understand and agree that:

1. I am responsible for all planning of travel arrangements to and from placement.
2. I am responsible for travelling independently to and from my placement, arriving on time for the start of each shift and remaining until the end of the shift.
3. I am responsible for up-front travel and accommodation costs, which may be reimbursed through the [NHS Bursary Services Authority's Learning Support Fund \(NHS BSA\)](#).
4. If I use a car, I will ensure I have appropriate business-use insurance cover in place.
5. I accept that it may take some time for the NHS Business Services Authority (NHSBSA) who manages the Learning Support Fund to process claims and that the University of Essex is unable to accelerate this timescale. I will plan my finances accordingly.
6. I may be required to travel at unsociable hours.
7. I may need to travel up to 120 minutes each way from my registered term-time address.
8. I accept that if I live outside of Essex that it may be necessary for me to travel further than 120 mins or I may need to utilise temporary placement accommodation.
9. I may be required to work a range of shift patterns, depending on the requirements of the professional regulatory body, my course and specific placement settings.
10. I will not prejudge the quality or relevance of a placement before starting a placement.
11. I am responsible for ensuring personal commitments (e.g. childcare, employment) do not affect my ability to meet placement requirements (see Section 5).

4. Equality in Placements for Students with Disabilities, Long-Term Conditions and Learning Difficulties

There are specific circumstances where a student can make a formal request in advance for special consideration. These requests can only be made where a student has a disability, learning difficulty, or protected characteristic that places them at a substantial disadvantage or risk of harm.

These requests enable the university, in partnership with placement providers, to *consider* reasonable adjustments to avoid disadvantaging or discriminating against students with a disability or learning difficulty. Adjustments are considered reasonable where they mitigate the disadvantage the student might otherwise experience, are practical to implement, do not prevent the student from demonstrating the required standards of proficiency for successful completion of the course, and can be supported within available resources and funding.

Reasonable adjustments may include:

- Adjustment to shift allocation, journey time, providing specific resources or additional time for the student and their supervisors during placement.

In some cases, students may still be unable to meet professional standards even with adjustments. To request support, you must follow the [reasonable adjustments procedure](#).

If you choose not to disclose a disability or health condition through the [reasonable adjustments policy](#), adjustments cannot be made and this may affect your progression.

5. Students with Caring Responsibilities

As stated in Section 3, students must ensure caring responsibilities do not affect placement commitments.

You will be asked to declare caring responsibilities during planning. While these will be considered sympathetically, there is no guarantee they can be accommodated.

6. Other Requests for Specific Placement Arrangements

As outlined above, placement capacity generally reflects the number of students recruited to a course. As a result, requests for specific individual arrangements, outside of those covered in sections 4 and 5 above, are unlikely to be granted. Examples of such requests are provided below:

Financial hardship is not considered a valid reason for requesting specific placement arrangements. The NHS Learning Support Fund and the university's [hardship loans and funds](#) may provide financial support in these circumstances.

Personal preference is not considered a valid reason for requesting specific placement arrangements. All placements to which you are allocated are designed to support your development and offer appropriate learning opportunities.

7. Data Protection

Data Sharing: Under the Data Protection Act (2018) and in line with the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) the University will not disclose your personal data without your consent. For us to arrange and allocate your placements, manage attendance and respond to reference requests certain information including sensitive personal data may need to be shared with placement agencies.

Practice Assessment: Assessors may need access to previous placement records to evaluate your development. Consent is required to meet regulatory obligations.

8. Declaration

I confirm that:

- I understand and accept the responsibilities and expectations outlined in Section 3 of this document.
- I understand and accept the specific placements arrangements outlined in Sections 4, 5, and 6 of this document.
- I consent to my personal data being shared in accordance with the details outlined in Section 7 of this document.
- I have read the GDC Student Professionalism and Fitness to Practise Policy and understand the requirements and expectations.