

University of Essex

School of Health and Social Care

Speech & Language Therapy (SLT)

Placements Handbook

Academic Year 2026-2027

For use by:

- MSc, BSc, Degree Apprenticeship (DA) SLT learners
- Practice educators & facilitators
- Practice Supervisors
- Placement Leads/Teams
- Student advisors
- Anyone else supporting practice learning

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Table of Contents

Welcome to the SLT Placements Handbook	3
SLT Programmes at Essex University	3
Professional guidance documents	3
SLT Practice-based learning requirements	3
Roles & Responsibilities of practice educators & university staff	5
Learners' professional responsibilities	7
Placement Sourcing & Capacity	10
Fit to Place Process	11
SLT learner mandatory training requirements	11
Placement allocation	12
International Placements	13
Commencing a placement	14
Learner appearance in placement	14
Eating Drinking and Swallowing (EDS).....	15
Placement Learning Outcomes & Electronic Practice Assessment Document (ePAD)	16
Working Towards, Risk of Failure, No Opportunity	18
Risk of Failure (ROF) Process	19
Retrieval Placements	19
Use of AI whilst on placement.....	20
Learner placement hours	20
Retrieving missed placement hours	21
Sickness	22
Other absences	22
Managing learner disability / Reasonable adjustments	23
Learners' rights whilst on placement.....	24
Whistle-blowing and escalating concerns	25
Support for learners who raise concerns & complaints	25
Placement evaluation	25
What to do if ...? Information for Practice educators, student advisors and Placement module tutors	27
Flowchart for supporting learner's learning on placement and contacting the university (including ROF process)	28
What to do if ...? – Information for learners	29
Making contact with the School	30
Out of hours contact with the university	30
Appendix A.....	31
Appendix B.....	43

Welcome to the SLT Placements Handbook

These guidelines provide information to be used in conjunction with the electronic Practice Assessment Document (ePAD), which supports the learning experience in placement throughout the course of the programme. Further information about placements can be found on the website: Essex. The guidelines should also be interpreted alongside relevant programme [rules of assessment](#) (see department specific rules of assessment, sections on practice placements)

Please note: The term “learner” is used within this document to describe all pre-registration SLT students, whether they are on a self-funded degree pathway or an apprenticeship pathway. Where there is information specific to apprenticeship learners, this is specified.

Also, in line with a university-wide change, Personal Tutors are now called Student Advisors.

SLT Programmes at Essex University

The School of Health and Social Care offers many routes to registration as a Speech and Language Therapist with the Royal College of Speech and Language Therapists and Health and Care Professions Council. These programmes are offered at the Colchester Campus.

- BSc (3 years full time) / BSc (4 years full time with optional year abroad)
- MSc (2 years full time)
- Degree Apprenticeship (2+2 years)

Across all these programmes, the focus is on developing safe, competent, reflective and evidence-based practice through academic and practical studies including placement.

Professional guidance documents

All the programmes are developed in accordance with the Royal College of Speech and Language Therapists (RCSLT) Curriculum and Practice-Based Learning Guidance as well as the Health and Care Professions (HCPC) Standards of Proficiency for Speech and Language Therapists.

The following guidance and directives should be consulted by practice educators and staff supporting learners on placement alongside any other relevant RCSLT guidelines: -

- [Standards of Proficiency for Speech and Language Therapists](#) (HCPC, 2023)
- [Scope of Practice](#) (HCPC, 2026)
- [RCSLT Practice-based learning guidance](#) (2025)
- [RCSLT Practice-Based learning requirements](#) (2025)
- [RCSLT competencies in eating, drinking and swallowing for the pre-registration education and training of speech and language therapists](#) (2025)
- [Curriculum Guidance: Preparing pre-registration speech and language therapy workers for the professional workplace](#) (2025)
- [Artificial Intelligence \(AI\): principles for safe and ethical practice in speech and language therapy](#)
- [Speech and Language Therapy Learners – Standards of Medical Fitness](#) (HEOPS, 2026)

SLT Practice-based learning requirements

Practice-based learning provides the opportunity for learners to: -

- Apply theoretical knowledge in client-centred contexts
- Develop clinical skills e.g., hypothesis-testing, goal setting, intervention delivery.

- Develop interpersonal and therapeutic skills
- Develop reflective and evidence-based practice

During the programme all learners complete a combination of pre-clinical, block and transition to autonomous practice (TAP) placements. Practice-based learning settings for both block and TAP placements may be clinically focussed on paediatric / adult / mixed caseloads and or involve a research and leadership / clinical academic placement. This reflects the increasingly recognised role of SLTs in clinical academic posts across the UK and the growing role of SLTs in clinically based research. Placement settings are varied and may involve NHS; 3rd sector, local university, and a range of independent providers.

The RCSLT stipulate SLT learners receive a minimum of 562.5 hours / 75 days of practice-based learning through a combination of clinical and non-clinical learning environments. Therefore, the type of placement and practice-based learning opportunities vary significantly. See [infographic](#) below / next page: -

SLT Practice-Based Learning requirements

A minimum of 562.5 hours (75 days; a day = 7.5 hours) is required.

The hours can be divided as below:

Clinically based

Non-clinically based

A minimum of 375 hours (50 days) need to be clinically based practice learning opportunities with competencies supported and assessed by an SLT, in a **formal placement period**, in a range of professional settings. This can include any activities that are part of an SLT's role, for example:

- Working with clients
- All admin, planning, liaison and MDT work related to clients
- Training (delivering and receiving)
- Universal, public health, preventative work
- Research
- Leadership
- Project work

It may also include:

- Clinically based hypothetical scenarios e.g. role play when a client does not attend, or writing a report / intervention plan that is not otherwise required
- Indirectly supervised / role-emerging practice-based learning opportunities

The balance of these components can be agreed between the practice educator and the HEI, and should be driven by learner competence.

112.5 hours (15 days) minimum with adults	112.5 hours (15 days) minimum with children	150 hours (20 days) can reflect local service delivery needs
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Up to 187.5 hours (25 of the 75 days) can be non-clinically based practice learning opportunities with learning outcomes supported and assessed by SLTs and/or by other professionals.

This can include **observation placements as part of a formal placement period**, where an SLT is not present and the aim is for learners to understand people across the lifespan in different contexts e.g. nurseries / schools / care homes. Non-SLT Staff in the setting will support the learners.

This may also include **HEI-based clinical teaching or workshops which may or may not be part of a formal placement period**, involving:

- Formal simulated learning opportunities
- Placement briefings/preparation/ reflection / debrief
- Clinical scenario-based teaching / workshops
- Opportunities to meet experts with lived experience
- Practical role play workshops
- Practical interprofessional learning workshops

Learners may engage in any number of these opportunities throughout the duration of their pre-registration programmes.

The focus of these learning opportunities should be driven by learner competence.

Eating, drinking and swallowing (EDS) exposure hours are part of the 562.5 hours).

Please refer to: **RCSLT pre-registration EDS information**

60 hours of practice-based learning are needed overall, composed of a minimum of:

30 exposure hours from clinically based practice with **adults**

10 exposure hours from clinically based practice with **children**

EDS competencies 1, 2, 9, 10, 13 need **at least one sign off in a clinically based context**.

Formal simulation opportunities (clinically or non-clinically based) can count towards EDS exposure hours.

Roles & Responsibilities of practice educators & university staff

- See [RCSLT guidance](#) and [RCSLT Roles and Responsibilities Framework available on Moodle \(scroll down\)](#)

Practice education facilitator:

This is an additional role related to practice-based learning which is aimed at practice placement quality monitoring for non-medical professionals.

Practice Educators (Placement Assessor)

- a) A practice educator can be any SLT registered with HCPC. (See [International Placements](#) if placement is outside the UK)
- b) If learners have more than one practice educator there should be a lead practice educator identified to the HEI and learner. This practice educator takes responsibility to co-ordinate feedback to the learner and student advisor.
- c) If placements take place across two different services, a lead practice educator should be identified in each service.
- d) Practice educators should provide clear, supportive feedback ideally in written format. Feedback should be balanced, highlighting strengths and areas for improvement.
- e) It is essential that practice educators provide feedback by/at the interim assessment (mid-point of the placement).
- f) Practice educators and learners are encouraged to contact the university as soon as any concerns arise and to not wait until the interim point to allow sufficient time to resolve the concerns.
- g) On a group or paired placement, practice educators should provide individual feedback
- h) Learners on indirectly supervised or role emerging practice placements should be observed during their clinical sessions to support the development of clinical competence
- i) Practice educators are responsible for identifying if a learner is at potential risk of failure and should inform the learner directly of their concern at their earliest convenience via usual lines of supervision and contact the learner's student advisor via the single point of contact: hscplacements@essex.ac.uk
- j) Practice educators are responsible for completing the practice educator interim and final assessment forms on ePAD.

Student Advisor (University-placement link)

Student advisors act as a learner's primary academic and general contact within their department to help guide, support and connect them throughout their university journey. All learners are assigned a student advisor. More information about the role can be found [here](#).

If concerns are raised about a learner's performance on placement or if a learner has concerns about their placement, then the student advisor will support a 3-way collaborative discussion between the learner and practice educator. If the discussion is about a learner's performance or difficulty meeting the learning outcomes, then a 3-way collaborative 'risk of failure meeting' will be held.

All risk of failure meetings will be recorded by the student advisor and shared with the learner and practice educator with clear written SMART goals for the learner to take forwards with the aim to reach a positive outcome by the end of placement.

In addition to co-ordinating 3-way risk of failure meetings and documentation of these, student advisors are responsible for: -

- Collaborate with placement lead, programme leads & HSC placements to track and co-ordinate retrieval placements.
- Occupational health referrals of learner advisees regarding placement.
- Professional suitability group referrals & management of outcomes.
- Suspected (placement) academic offence referrals.
- Signposting to relevant services e.g., [extenuating circumstances/late submissions](#) ; referrals to university [social wellbeing inclusivity services 'SWIS'](#) ; referrals to [study wellbeing and intervention policy & procedure 'SWIPP'](#)

Placement Module Tutor

This is member of the university team, who has specific responsibility for placement modules within university or may lead on specific aspects of practice-based learning e.g., a specific type of clinical specialism or eating and drinking and swallowing competencies. They are available to provide supervision

to student advisors who may be less familiar with practice-based learning. Placement module tutors will lead on the planning and delivery of placement preparation teaching for their assigned placement modules. Placement module tutors are responsible for collating placement marks and communicating these to SLT admin teams by the module feedback deadlines.

It is the placement tutor's responsibility to co-ordinate a risk of failure meeting in a timely manner if the student advisor is unavailable due to annual leave or teaching commitments for example. It is not the placement tutor's responsibility, nor the placement leads responsibility to lead on all risk of failure meetings for learners on placement.

HSC Placements (hscplacements@essex.ac.uk)

- Single point of contact for SLT learners and practice educators on placement
- Re-direct practice educators/practice education facilitators to relevant student advisor for any placement concerns.
- Sourcing and allocating placements on PEMS.
- Tracking and co-ordinating retrieval placements with support from student advisors, placement lead and programme leads.

SLT Placement Lead

This is a member of the university team responsible for the overall strategic delivery of practice-based learning across all SLT programmes. This involves: -

- Supporting placement capacity & expansion.
- Leading practice educator training.
- Assist with the development of the learner placement experience.
- Development of placement policies and procedures.
- Collaborate with student advisors & programme leads to monitor placement outcomes and facilitate the co-ordination of retrieval placements with HSC placements

MSc/BSc/DA SLT Programme Leads:

- Collaborate with the placement lead and placement tutors to consider necessary requirements of placement modules as a core part of each programme design and timetable e.g., planning placement dates and assessment timeframes.
- Final point of escalation with fit to place/failed placement/placement capacity matters.

SLT Subject Lead:

- Point of escalation with placement capacity & allocation.
- Point of escalation if placement paused by placement provider.

Director of Practice Partnerships

- Collaborations within the School of Health & Social Care and with other HEI's on overlapping policies e.g. audits and evaluations
- Raising concerns procedure i.e., discrimination, harassment & bullying, sexual safety raised within placement.
- DBS membership cases
- Liaison & collaboration with practice partners across the wider region

Learners' professional responsibilities

In line with professional and legal standards, there are university criteria for each learner to be deemed 'fit to place' prior to starting on a placement.

Components of the 'fit to place' process are:

- Completing a Placement Planning Form at the beginning of each academic year.

- Having satisfactory Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) clearance throughout the course of the programme and completing yearly declarations that DBS status has remained the same since the beginning of the programme.
- Subscribing to the DBS update service and keeping the subscription active for the duration of the programme.
- Receiving clearance from Occupational Health to be on the programme and completing yearly declarations that health status has remained the same since the beginning of the programme. Additionally, completing yearly declarations that present health status enables them to undertake practice placements.
- Agreeing to the [HSC Placements Learner Agreement](#)
- Completing all mandatory training. [See SLT Getting Ready for Placement Moodle Tile.](#)

Engagement with the 'fit to place' process is compulsory. If learners do not engage with the 'fit to place' process or complete the requirements by the deadline set, then an upcoming placement may be cancelled and their progression on the course may be impacted.

Learners must not attend placement until they have received confirmation via PEMS/HSC Placements Team that they are 'fit to place'.

There is an expectation placed upon learners that, by attending placement, they are declaring that they continue to be Fit to Practise in their role as a learner SLT. The [University's](#) Fitness to Practise procedures indicate that learners may be removed from practice placements if there are any concerns about their Fitness to Practise.

If learners have any reason why they feel that they are not able to perform to the best of their abilities, they must talk to their student advisor before entering placement (or as soon as reasonably practicable if issues arise during a placement block) and consider using the Extenuating Circumstances process.

Learners should also consider using the various forms of support available to learners at the University of Essex through the [Learner Services Hub](#).

Learners must be aware that, if they commence placement, they will be considered to have declared themselves 'fit'. Consequently, a claim for extenuation made during or after the placement based on circumstances that existed before the placement will generally not be supported by the Extenuating Circumstances & Lateness Committee.

Any incident or injury sustained while on placement must be reported to the practice educator and Student advisor, and Trust/local policy followed. We recommend that learners keep a copy of the incident report for their records.

Learners must always follow [HCPC Standards of Proficiency](#). Some key areas to consider are:

- Confidentiality must be maintained at all times. Learners need to be clear as to what information should be given to whom (e.g. what information can be shared with other professionals, relatives, patients/service users). See also [UK Gov Data Protection Guidance](#) & [The Data Protection Act 2018](#).
- Learners must not discuss patients/service users outside the practice area.
- Assignments related to placements must adhere to the School policy on maintaining confidentiality and anonymity which includes names and places and includes confidential referencing. This is especially relevant to placement reflections.
- Learners should not disclose inappropriate personal information about themselves to patients/service users.
- Permission must be sought from the placement area if documents are to be used for assignments. Learners must never remove documents from the clinical area or photocopy documents without permission. Confidential information must be redacted appropriately.

- Use of patient/service user care plans requires written permission from the patient/service user and the placement area. This permission should be included in the assignment if such documentation is used.
- The learners' practice educator must be informed prior to them escorting any patient/service user outside of the clinical area they are placed in. Learners should not normally accompany or escort a patient/service user away from the placement area. Exceptions can be made where learners have a good knowledge of the medical, nursing and care needs of the patient/service user and have the confidence and competence to accompany them with practice educator permission, or when a qualified member of staff is also present. The learner's practice educator remains accountable for the appropriate delegation of the task when the learner escorts patients/service users. Local policies on escorting patients must be adhered to at all times.
- Learners must not be directly involved in activities where staff need to implement "prevention of violence, management and aggression" strategies.
- Learners must not accept personal gifts from patients/service users or their relatives or friends.
- Learners should not use mobile phones/devices inappropriately (e.g., doomscrolling on social media during team meetings) and should follow local policy regarding the use of appropriate mobile phone/device use in certain situations (e.g., emergencies/lone working communications). Learners should follow local procedures and discuss with their practice educators if phone use is required as a part of placement for activities such as calling patients to book appointments with hidden caller ID.

Learners must behave in a professional manner at all times and act as an ambassador for the profession and for the University of Essex. If they are unsure of how to behave in a particular circumstance, they should seek guidance from their practice educator/student advisor.

If a learner's behaviour is considered to be unprofessional, the practice educator will bring this to the learner's attention during usual lines of supervision. If they do not respond appropriately, the Student advisor and placement tutor will be informed and further action taken. This may include a referral under the Fitness to Practise procedure within the School.

Learners must always communicate and behave respectfully in line with their professional code, including when liaising with other university departments and placement providers. Any reports of unprofessional behaviour will result in further action being taken.

Learners are expected to maintain collaborative and professional relationships with practice providers and their employees.

Learners must not arrange to meet patients/service users socially. Relationships, although friendly, must remain professional. Guidelines on the protection of vulnerable people (e.g. those with a learning disability or a mental health problem) must be adhered to.

If patients/service users or visitors display inappropriate behaviour (e.g. verbal comments, sexual harassment, lack of inhibitions, physical aggression), learners should discuss the behaviour with their practice educator, and where possible use the situation as a learning experience. Further discussion with a student advisor may be advised. On rare occasions, where continuation on a placement could be detrimental to a learner, discussion with the Programme Lead/Placements Lead may lead to finding an alternative placement.

Learners must follow the [RCSLT Practice-Based learning Roles & Responsibilities Framework \(2025\)](#)
In addition to this: -

- Learners must take opportunities to plan and deliver client-facing sessions independently when the practice educator and learner are confident that the learner is competent to do so. A graded approach towards this is key: supported by structured observation, modelling and coaching by the practice educator, and involving thorough planning and debrief sessions.

- Learners with reasonable adjustment plans are strongly encouraged to share plans to support their learning on practice placements with practice educators, so that they may benefit from additional support on practice placement.
- Learners on peer or group practice placements need to recognise their responsibility towards their peer(s), work co-operatively and collaboratively, and take shared responsibility for the activities in which they are jointly engaged.
- Learners must attend placement with professional/personal learning goals to agree with their practice educators and support their learning for the duration of placement
- Learners must take responsibility to seek out opportunities on placement to support their ability to meet the necessary placement learning outcomes with practice educator support.

Criminal investigations:

Learners are required to immediately notify the university (via their Student advisor or Programme Lead) if they are convicted of a criminal offence in a court of law or formally cautioned/reprimanded for a criminal offence by a police officer. This is a requirement of professional practice. Additionally, a requirement of the university's [Code of Learner Conduct](#) is that you must *"notify the Academic Registrar immediately by e-mailing the Learner Progress Team if you receive a formal police caution or if you are convicted in a court of law for any relevant criminal offence irrespective of whether the allegation is also being considered under the Code of Learner Conduct."*

Occupational Health support:

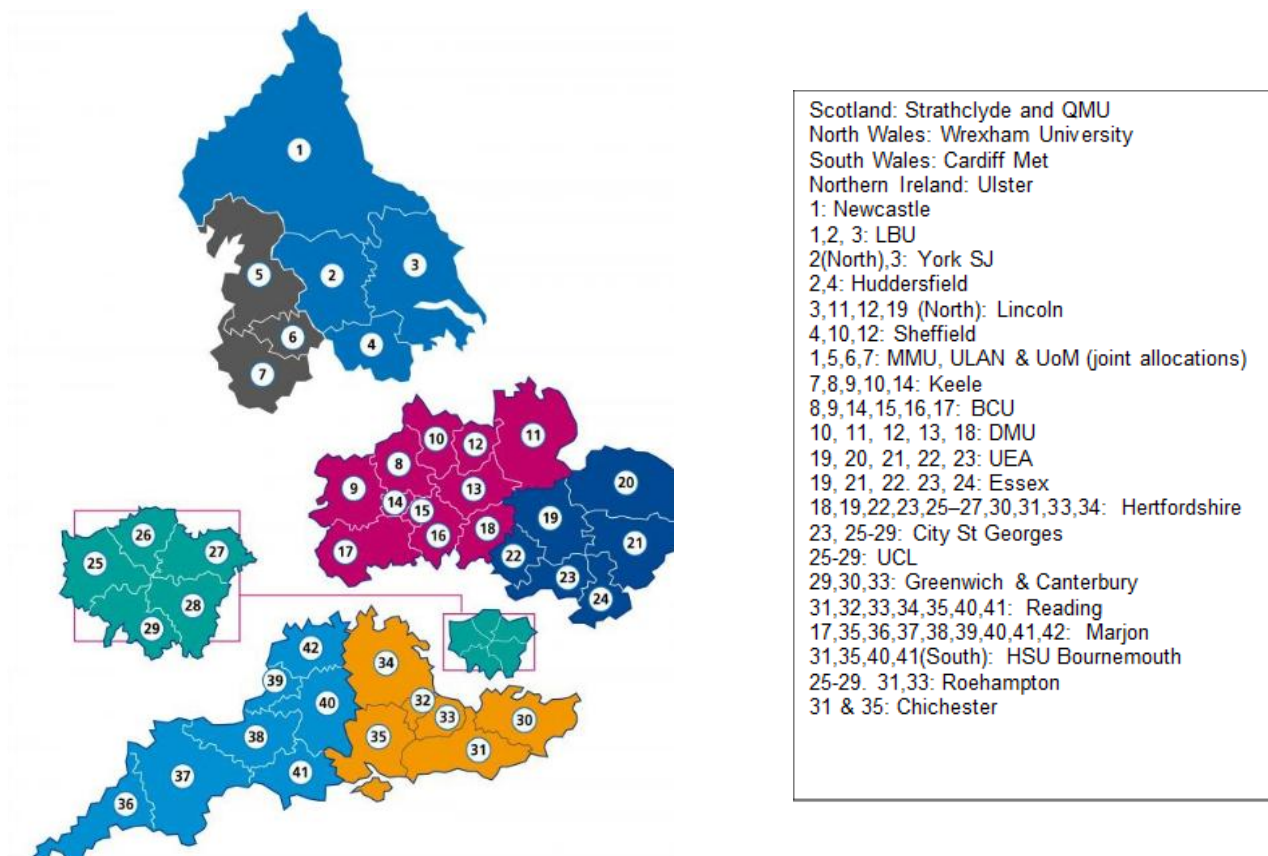
Learners must have received Occupational Health clearance and undergo a risk assessment prior to commencement of their first clinical placement. The university has a responsibility to ensure risk is managed, and a safe and effective learning environment is provided. Part of that is to respond to risk assessments before placement begins and throughout the programme. It is a learner's professional duty to engage with the Occupational Health department as/when required to assist in planning their learning.

Pregnancy:

If a learner becomes pregnant during the course of their studies, they must follow [university guidelines](#). A risk assessment is required for each placement area, which is the responsibility of the placement provider to complete with the learner

Placement Sourcing & Capacity

Placements are subject to offers from placement providers. A learner may not be able to complete placement during the allocated period due to insufficient placement offers. The university will try to find a placement as quickly as possible which might mean completing it outside of normal periods or during the summer. It may also be outside of the geographical area. If a placement cannot be offered, then it might prevent timely progression to the next academic year or graduation. We aim to source placements within the East of England region in line with the agreed HEI National Placement Footprint. However, we note that this may be under review as new SLT courses join and 'patches' adapt over time.



All learners should be prepared to attend a placement within the Essex National Placement Footprint. However, we realise that some learners (especially often, apprentices) may be based further afield. While the expectation still remains, in exceptional cases apprentices and their workplace mentors may consider whether there are any local providers which may be make for a suitable placement. When this is the case, we ask you to notify the HSC Placement details with the self-identified provider information, so that this possibility can be explored by the university. It is important to note that **identifying a potential placement site to the HSC Placement team does not mean a placement is guaranteed**, as this will still be dependent on the provider agreeing to offer a placement outside their service footprint. For apprentices, placements can be provided by your employing organisation given that the team and client group is different to that in your usual working role.

For any learners, including apprentices, who have constraints on their travel, please ensure this information is provided on PEMS. For more information, please see “[Placement allocation](#)” section below

Fit to Place Process

It is learners’ responsibility to ensure they are fit to place in a timely manner. Failure to do so may result in a failed placement or delay in starting placement. The fit to place process includes attendance at basic life support, online mandatory training (see [SLT learner mandatory training requirements](#)) and completion of the PEMS planning form. Learners starting the course must complete an occupational health assessment.

If there are any changes to learner’s health the learner should contact their student advisor and placement module tutor and seek occupational health support.

See also learner’s professional responsibilities above

SLT learner mandatory training requirements

Below is a list of mandatory training requirements for all Speech and Language Therapy Learners in the School of Health and Social Care. Training can be accessed on [Moodle](#).

NHS England guidance, which came into force on 1st May 2025, regarding a universal agreement across the NHS in England to accept a core list of prior statutory and mandatory training has been considered when defining these requirements.

PREVENT and Oliver McGowan certificates of completion to be emailed to hscplacements@essex.ac.uk

** Any learner returning from intermission or repeating a year will be required to complete all of these courses upon their return, and then follow the defined yearly plan from that point onwards.*

Year 1	Year 2	Year 3	Year 4
Risk Assessment	Risk Assessment	Risk Assessment	Risk Assessment
Infection Prevention & control	Infection Prevention & control	Infection Prevention & control	Infection Prevention & control
Conflict Resolution	Conflict Resolution	Conflict Resolution	Conflict Resolution
Information Governance & Records	Information Governance & Records	Information Governance & Records	Information Governance & Records
Basic Life Support, CPR & Choking (practical)	Basic Life Support, CPR & Choking (practical)	Basic Life Support, CPR & Choking (practical)	Basic Life Support, CPR & Choking (practical)
Disability Awareness		Fire Safety	Disability Awareness
Moving & Handling			Moving & Handling
Basic Life Support, CPR & Choking			PREVENT
Fire Safety			Safeguarding Children
Oliver McGowan (Tier 1, e-learning only)			Safeguarding Adults
PREVENT			Oliver McGowan (Tier 1, e-learning only)
Health, Safety and Welfare			Equality & Diversity and Human Rights
Safeguarding Children			Health, Safety and Welfare
Safeguarding Adults			
Equality & Diversity and Human Rights			
NHS Values			

Placement allocation

It is not possible to accommodate learner's preferences for placement settings given placement capacity difficulties and the range of travel and occupational health needs of all learners. You will be assigned a placement that is appropriate to meet the learning outcomes for your course.

We aim to allocate placements up to 90 minutes travel time (one direction) from campus, based on their declared mode of transportation. If the learner's term time address is in Essex, we will try to assign, where possible, distances according to this postcode. It is sometimes necessary to source placements beyond the 90-minute travel boundary each way despite best efforts. For learners living outside of the Essex boundary, there is no guarantee regarding travel times. Learners may wish to consider sourcing temporary accommodation.

While access to a car is not mandatory for the programme, please note that having access to personal transportation may broaden the placement opportunities available. In some cases, placements may be more easily accessible, or more varied, for those with personal transportation. If learners do have access to a car, please be aware that they may need to add business insurance to their insurance policy (which

typically does not incur additional costs). It is the learner's responsibility to ensure they have the necessary coverage for placement-related travel. This, along with other information to help with allocation, can be indicated on your PEMS Placement Planning form. We ask that this planning form is updated as often as required with any changes so that we can provide you with the most suitable allocation. You can also email hscplacements@essex.ac.uk with any placement-related information.

Regarding travelling to a placement, learners should make the most of all available transport options, including car sharing with others if possible. Eligible learners *may* be able to reclaim travel or temporary accommodation costs from the [NHS Learning Support Fund](#). See [here](#) for advice regarding dual accommodation and travel costs.

Placement allocations are released on PEMS 6 weeks in advance of a placement commencing. In case there is a difficulty sourcing a placement, the placement allocation may be released on PEMS closer to the placement commencing date.

If a student has a requirement for a 'reasonable adjustment' in placement, they should request an Occupational Health (OH) referral from their student advisor well in advance of placement allocation. Failure to do so may result in significant delays. Once specific reasonable adjustments are suggested by Occupational Health, these will be considered to see if it is possible to accommodate them or not. Please note, a placement that can accommodate all the suggestions made cannot be guaranteed. Refusal to attend a placement that can accommodate needs will be counted as a failed placement.

Once a suitable placement has been allocated to a learner, they are expected to complete that placement. Switching of placements is not allowed and any requests made will be declined. Refusal to accept a placement on the grounds of location will be regarded as a failed placement due to a failure to comply with the course requirements, unless the learner has extenuating circumstances. If a learner decides to decline attending an allocated placement, then no alternative placement is guaranteed to be found.

Non-completion of a placement, unless paused on health grounds or extenuating circumstances are approved, will count as a 'fail'. For a single failed placement within an academic year, a resit/retrieval of that placement will aim to be offered. A failure of two separate placements on first attempt across the programme may result in withdrawal from the programme. Similarly, if a learner fails the same placement twice, they may be withdrawn from the programme. Any students required to withdraw from the programme will have to automatically be withdrawn from their placement.

If a learner has any learning outcomes *below* the 'pass expected' level (e.g., 'working towards' or 'risk of failure' recorded at interim and then does not attend the remainder of their placement, this will be recorded as a failed placement.

Learners should liaise with their student advisor regarding reasons for declining attendance on placement. There may be very good reason for non-attendance (e.g. health condition, personal circumstances, experiencing discrimination/bullying). Learners should be directed to the [Extenuating Circumstances](#) process as part of the support given by their student advisor, which is there to support learners in these instances.

International Placements

- See also [HSC International Placement Process Flowchart \(scroll down to 'International Placements'\)](#)

International practice placements may be permitted in certain circumstances, with a clear rationale, however, they cannot form the majority of a learner's practice placement experience; the majority of a learner's practice placement experience should take place within the UK. Typically, learners are permitted to complete one clinical and one non-clinical placement internationally during their programme and these are decided on a case-by-case basis to ensure suitability and quality of placements.

Quality standards for international practice placements

International practice placement providers need to be able to maintain the same standards of quality, for both practice educator and settings, as they would for any UK-based practice placements. Providers must meet the HCPC Standards of Education and Training SET 5 Practice-Based Learning. And practice educators should be offered practice educator training by the university.

The RCSLT recommends that practice educators who support international practice placements are:

- HCPC registered; or
- UK trained and registered with the professional body within a country that has a mutual recognition agreement with the RCSLT; or
- trained and registered within a country that has a mutual recognition agreement with the RCSLT.

Commencing a placement

Before learners arrive in a placement area, a practice educator must be identified.

Each learner should contact their placement at least four weeks prior to the commencement of the placement to find out who is their allocated practice educator, enquire about travel arrangements, clinical specialisms, what to wear, how to prepare for placement and to share any formal Occupational Health recommendations/Reasonable Adjustments. This is to allow sufficient time for practice educators to consider facilitating these adjustments if possible and for learners to prepare for the specific placement setting. Failing to contact a practice educator in a timely manner may result in a failed placement. In case a placement is allocated to the learner less than 6 weeks than the start date of the placement, the learner should get in touch with the placement educator as soon as their placement is assigned.

Each learner will receive an induction at the start of the placement. The structure of the induction will vary between placement providers. Attendance at an organisation's induction is mandatory for any placements within that organisation. Learners should be prepared to attend relevant mandatory training/induction training prior to commencing their placement in their own study time. Failure to attend and complete this will result in a failed placement unless there are extenuating circumstances.

Learner appearance in placement

- See also University of Essex [professional-clinical-appearance-code-of-practice .pdf](#)

Learners must dress in a way that supports a perception of personal and professional integrity, reduces the risk of cross-infection, and maintains safety.

The standards for professional clinical appearance whilst on placement can be found within the [University Policies](#) in the 'Professional Clinical Appearance Code of Practice' document (which is listed in the "Other University Policies" section).

Specific guidelines regarding dress and use of mobile phones in the clinical area are usually provided by placement provider areas. These guidelines must be followed.

Learners should avoid dressing in such a way that could be seen as culturally, ethnically, sexually, or politically inappropriate. The values and religious/cultural views of the patients/service user should be respected, particularly when visiting a patient/service users at home.

Any request made by a learner regarding dressing to meet religious requirements will be treated sensitively and agreed on an individual basis with the placement provider and student advisor in line with local policies. See [Moodle SLT Placement Tile](#) for email template for learners requesting adjustments to bare below the elbows policy.

In some placement areas, it is inappropriate to wear uniform. Learners will be guided by their practice educator/student advisor in relation to appropriate clothing. University of Essex uniform must be worn unless the placement area instructs otherwise.

The University of Essex uniform must not be worn except when undertaking programme placement activity or when otherwise requested by academic staff.

Learner badges/identity badges must be always worn on placement.

A high standard of personal hygiene must be maintained for the benefit of patients/service users and colleagues.

If a practice educator considers a learner to be inappropriately dressed, the learner will be sent off placement and will need to make up any time missed. If this persists, the practice educator will raise the matter with the relevant Student advisor for further action.

Eating Drinking and Swallowing (EDS)

- [See pre-registration eating, drinking and swallowing competencies-competency and supporting documents](#)
- See NHS Hub e-learning modules <https://learninghub.nhs.uk/Resource/28281/Item>
- See also UCL/City [‘RCSLT Pre-reg EDS competencies co-created ideas for face to face activities with adults and children’](#)
- See also SLT Practice-based learning requirements above

RCSLT made EDS competencies a mandatory part of pre-registration SLT training for learner graduating in 2026 and beyond. There are 20 pre-registration EDS competencies in total. Learners must achieve 'double sign off' for a minimum of 16 competencies to graduate.

Competencies to prioritise during placement

Competencies 1, 2, 9, 10 and 13 require at least one occasion to be evidenced from clinically based practice with either children or adults

Signing off competencies

Learners will evidence their knowledge and/or skills (as appropriate) on two occasions to achieve each competency. You are not expected to achieve 100 per cent mastery to “pass”. EDS competencies are recorded on ePAD and signed by your Practice Educator or Lecturer.

If you experience issues with ePAD, you may use a paper version of the form:

[Pre-registration eating, drinking and swallowing competencies - competency and supporting documents | RCSLT](#)

EDS Hours

RCSLT recommends that learners gain **60 hours of EDS exposure**, including:

- **30 hours** from *adult* clinical practice
- **10 hours** from *child* clinical practice

From September 2025, these hours are *recommended rather than mandatory*. However, continuing to record your hours is strongly encouraged as it supports job applications and NQP goal setting etc.

Examples of what counts as EDS hours

- Observing or participating in mealtimes
- One-to-one assessments or therapy
- Work with families/carers
- Report or programme writing related to EDS
- Delivering or attending training
- MDT activities (ward rounds, meetings, case discussions)
- Discussions with families or carers about EDS needs

If a session involves communication, cognition and EDS, you may record the full duration.

EDS hours should be logged in the EDS section of ePAD, using the guidance document that outlines what counts as direct vs indirect activity.

Moving into Newly Qualified Practitioner (NQP) Roles:

All learners are required to download a copy of their EDS competencies and EDS hours from ePAD once completed to keep as evidence for moving into their future NQP roles.

Placement Learning Outcomes & Electronic Practice Assessment Document (ePAD)

- [See also EPAD moodle \(for learners\)](#)
- [See also Appendix A](#) for word document backup of placement learning outcomes

The electronic Practice Assessment Document (ePAD) records the development of each learner in relation to the learning outcomes and placement hours required for placement. Each learner is given a personal logon to their ePAD. An important part of each placement is that the learner records the details of each practice educator and their student advisor on their ePAD, giving them all access. They will then be able to identify the learning needs to be planned and achieved within a placement, review what has already been recorded to continue learning in a placement and complete any assessments or other documentation.

Within ePAD there are different tabs for each placement. The overview page shows overall placement hours logged by the learner. Once you click on a specific placement different tabs will be shown 'overview', 'placement forms', 'placement assessment', 'assessment document upload', 'supporting evidence', and 'competencies and EDS hours log'. The 'placement assessment' tab is the most important as this is where the learner and practice educator assessment forms are stored. If you have had significant issues with the ePAD system and resorted to using the word document ([see appendix A](#)) then we expect practice educators to upload the signed document into the 'assessment document upload' section of ePAD for the corresponding placement.

The content of the assessment forms was developed in collaboration with academic staff across the East of England to streamline the assessment process for placement providers. There are 5 sections: Communication, Partnerships, Leadership & Lifelong Learning, Research & Evidence-based practice and Professional Autonomy and Accountability and 29 learning outcomes in total. For each learning outcome learners are rated as either outstanding, pass good, pass expected, working towards, fail or no opportunity at the interim and final points of their placement. Placements are not graded.

Pre-clinical placements/conversation partner placements:

This is the first placement all learners during their first year of study across all programmes. The overall aim of these placements is to support learners to learn professional and communication skills that underpin future clinical placements and work-based learning. Two out of the five sections need to be achieved. These are: 'Communication' & 'Professional Autonomy & Accountability.' The relevant placement hours should also be completed for each of these placements. Learners and practice educators should consult the relevant module guides for further information regarding placement hours.

Block and Transition to Autonomous Practice Placements (TAP)

For block placements (block 1, block 2 & TAP) all 5 sections & 29 learning outcomes need to be completed. Although the 29 learning outcomes focus on the same areas across all block and TAP placements, as learners' progress level expected from learners increases in line with their progression through the course as described below.

Block 1:

ePAD should be completed twice, at interim and final.

This is the first clinical placement learners attend. See *practice-based learning requirements* for information regarding the type of placement offered. There is an expectation that a block 1 learner will move from observation into taking active participation in a part of a client's SLT journey (e.g., aspects of assessment and management) through to being able to independently plan and deliver an appropriate client session for less-complex clients on the caseload by the end of placement. Development and support are provided by the practice educator over the placement to establish new skills to the learners: to be proactive in clinical discussions and supervision, case notes and report writing. The expectation is that these are in place to a satisfactory clinical standard by the end of the placement.

Block 2

ePAD should be completed twice, at interim and final

This is the second clinical placement. See *practice-based learning requirements* for information regarding the type of placement that may be offered. By the end of block 2 learners should be able to independently plan and deliver appropriate client sessions for multiple clients, who may vary in clinical complexity. Some support may still need to be given for more specialist areas of knowledge. It can be assumed that clinical skills in supervision, clinical discussions and documentation are carried over from previous placements.

Transition to Autonomous Practice:

ePAD should be completed twice, at interim and final

It is expected that learners are independent in their ability to manage their own learning needs, reflect and review relevant evidence-based approaches to manage a small caseload reflective of the demands expected of a newly qualified practitioner. Learners should demonstrate safe and effective practice and work towards being ready to enter the workforce as a newly qualified practitioner. Learners should still receive regular supervision and support to achieve these skills.

Completing the ePAD

Learners are responsible for making their ePAD available to their practice educator and student advisor, by logging those staff appropriately. Additionally, they are responsible for guiding the practice educator to the sections of the ePAD which require completing on that placement.

The ePAD can be daunting but it is best to consider it as a webpage version of a word document. If there are difficulties accessing the ePAD this should be raised before or within the first week of placement and the ePAD helpdesk should be contacted (epadhelpdesk@essex.ac.uk). See [Appendix A](#) for a word doc version that can be used as a last resort and emailed directly to the student advisor by the practice educator.

ePAD should be completed twice (at **interim** and **final**) for all block and TAP placements. ePAD only needs to be completed at the end of a pre-clinical placement. However, if there are concerns during a pre-clinical placement then a practice educator should complete an interim ePAD and contact the university via hscplacements@essex.ac.uk to organise a 3-way risk of failure meeting with the learner and student advisor as soon as possible.

If a learner is meeting all learning outcomes at the interim point the learner still needs to continue to meet these learning outcomes for the remainder of placement and this does not necessarily mean they automatically pass the final ePAD.

The ePAD should be completed within 7 days of the final placement day but it is recommended to complete these before the learner finishes and leaves placement as it is best practice to have these discussions together before leaving placement. The learner should prepare for these meetings by completing the learner version of the assessment on ePAD.

The learner is responsible for ensuring all necessary components of the ePAD are completed within 7 days of the last day placement. After each placement, the module tutor/lead will review their allocated learners' ePADs and update university marksheets to record progress.

The learner is responsible for co-ordinating with their student advisor, placement module tutor and the ePAD helpdesk if extensions are required.

All relevant learning hours learning outcomes must be passed at the 'expected' level at least to pass the placement. If any learning outcomes are recorded as 'working towards' or 'fail' at final assessment, then the placement will be recorded as a failed attempt. Learners will not pass placement if there are more than two learning outcomes recorded as 'no opportunity' at final assessment. If more than two learning outcomes are recorded as 'no opportunity' by the final ePAD this will also be a failed placement. It is the learner's responsibility to liaise with their practice educator to ensure they have sufficient opportunity on placement to achieve all learning outcomes.

Working Towards, Risk of Failure, No Opportunity

If any learning outcomes are identified as risk of failure at interim then a risk of failure meeting should be held between the practice educator, student advisor and learner. The aim of these meetings is to discuss areas for improvement in a supportive way to ensure a successful outcome of placement by the final assessment.

Working Towards:

Practice educators and learners may identify a range of learning outcomes are below the expected pass level at interim and can be recorded as 'working towards.' The practice educator and learner should meet regularly to support the learner to work towards achieving these by end of placement. If there are multiple areas recorded as working towards at interim the practice educator should inform the university if they are concerned that it might not be possible to achieve these by the end of placement. If any learning outcomes remain as 'working towards' by the final point, then this will be a failed placement.

Risk of Failure/Fail:

If one or more learning outcomes are recorded as 'risk of failure' at interim the practice educator should contact the university via the single point of contact (hscplacements@essex.ac.uk) and a risk of failure meeting should be held as soon as convenient for learner, practice educator and student advisor. The learner should contact their student advisor for support. The risk of failure meeting will help to identify clear goals and an action plan to support the learner progress positively for the remainder of placement and identified goals should be reviewed on a weekly basis.

If 5 or more learning outcomes; or learning outcomes spanning more than one section are identified as risk of failure at interim, then the learner will be informed that they can remain on placement for the learning opportunities that they can ultimately take forward into a retrieval placement but that it is unlikely (although not impossible) for them to pass placement by the final point. Support and a clear written action plan and goals will be documented via the risk of failure process.

No Opportunity

It is acknowledged that different placements offer different opportunities. However, it is not acceptable for learners to have more than two learning outcomes recorded as 'no opportunity' by the final ePAD assessment for individual placements without agreement between the university placement module tutor, student advisor, learner and practice educator. Practice educators and learners should collaborate to find creative opportunities at interim for the learner to demonstrate these abilities by the final ePAD assessment. For example, case-based presentations or hypothetical situational discussions could be considered as evidence of learning. If there remain issues with these then the learner should seek advice from their student advisor/placement tutors. In exceptional circumstances it may be agreed between the placement tutors, student advisor, practice educator and learner that a certain placement setting may not accommodate all learning outcomes despite a creative approach. In such instances a record of this conversation and agreement must be recorded on ePAD.

Risk of Failure (ROF) Process

If a learner is identified as at risk of failure (*see placement learning outcomes and ePAD and working towards, risk of failure, no opportunity*) then a 3-way risk of failure meeting will be held between the learner, student advisor and practice educator. If the student advisor is unavailable in a timely manner, then the placement module tutor may support the initial process before handing over to the student advisor. The aim of this is to identify the learning outcomes the learner is struggling to achieve and discuss how to step these down and support the learner work towards achieving these by the end of placement.

To facilitate the process, it is helpful if the learner and practice educator identify specific learning outcomes to focus the discussion prior to the meeting. Learning goals and a clear action plan should be devised and written up. The student advisor then sends this to the learner and practice educator to summarise this. The learner should upload this in the 'additional uploads' section on ePAD.

Goals should be reviewed on a weekly basis. If the learner is developing and progress is moving in the right direction, then email confirmation of progress is sufficient on a weekly basis. If additional support is required, then further 3-way discussions should be held to review progress and ensure support is in place.

As above, if a significant number of learning outcomes are identified in this process, then the learner can be informed that they can stay on placement for the learning opportunities but that it is unlikely (although not impossible) to ultimately pass the placement.

- See [Appendix B](#) for Risk of Failure paperwork to be completed by student advisor during the risk of failure meeting
- See 'Flowchart for supporting learner's learning on placement and contacting the university (including ROF process)'

Retrieval Placements

Learners should consult the department's [rules of assessment](#). Learners who fail two separate placements at first sit may be withdrawn from the course. Learners who fail the same placement twice may be withdrawn from the course. Learners cannot trail placement modules into a new academic year.

Retrieval placements will be considered in line with rules of assessment. A case-by-case approach may be considered with collaboration between the learner, student advisor, placement module tutor, placement lead, programme leads and HSC placements. The length and timing of retrieval placements may depend on the number and extent of learning outcomes identified in the previous attempt. This ranges from learners who may be required to re-sit the entire block placement and other learners who may be supported with practice-based and simulated learning environments within the university.

If 1-2 learning outcomes are below the 'pass expected' level at final assessment (i.e., 'working towards' or 'risk of failure'), the student advisors may ask the current practice educator / placement provider to consider extending the learner's current placement to work towards these learning outcomes. However, the placement provider is under no obligation to extend the placement. For apprenticeship learners this would require further discussions including with their employers. Any retrieval placements for any learner would need to be considered in line with timetabled commitments and the wider programme.

Retrieval placements are likely to take place during vacation periods. There is no guarantee that retrieval placements can be sourced within year and learners may be delayed in progression through the course due to timings of retrieval placements, placement capacity constraints and timetabled commitments.

Learners are encouraged to liaise with their student advisors to support them through this process as this can be a stressful time. Learners may also wish to consider applying for [extenuating circumstances](#) to support this process.

Withdrawal/Intermission:

If the same type of extenuating circumstances claim is used repeatedly the learner should consider intermitting from their studies until these recurring issues are resolved. See also

<https://www.essex.ac.uk/learner/intermission/thinking-of-intermitting>

Use of AI whilst on placement

It is acknowledged that AI (artificial intelligence) is becoming more commonplace in everyday life and may become more recognised as a tool in current/future practice. Whilst the University has no formal position on the use of AI in placement settings (e.g. when participating in documentation of direct patient care or in care planning), the following points should be used as a guide to inform learner's practice to ensure they remain safe and effective practitioners.

1. Learners are required to follow [RCSLT AI guidance](#) in place at the time of practice, and to update their practice in line with any subsequent guidance once issued.
2. Learners must follow their placement organisation's guidance/policies on the use of AI in that specific organisation (if these guidance/policies exist).
3. Learners should use all the expected templates/guidance for documentation found in that placement organisation.
4. AI should only be considered as a tool to supplement clinical judgement, and not as a replacement for it. As with any tool used in clinical practice, it requires critical thinking to use it safely, ethically and effectively. [Information governance](#) and patient confidentiality should be maintained at all times in line [with HCPC standards of proficiency](#).
5. Regardless of whether using AI or not, learners must ensure documentation is not generic, but is personalised appropriately to the service user/patient.
6. Learners must continue to prioritise the importance of collaborating with service users/patients during the creation of any management plan.

Please note: None of these points of guidance override the University's stance on the use of AI during *academic assignments*, which includes all documentation found in the ePAD. It is considered an academic offence to *"use artificial intelligence, machine learning, or other automated technology to create written material that you then submit as your own original work"* (quoted from the [University's academic offence procedures](#)). A learner using AI to write entries for their ePAD would therefore be considered a breach of this policy, and would be treated as an academic offence. Similarly, if a learner produces a session plan or report that was AI generated will be treated as an academic offence.

Learner placement hours

The RCSLT clearly states the number of hours required for learners to complete as part of their pre-registration course. All hours should be recorded on ePAD. See *practice-based learning requirements*.

Placement preparation sessions contribute to total number of practice-based learning hours and are therefore mandatory to attend and record on ePAD. A paper register of placement preparation sessions will therefore be taken. Attendance records at these sessions may be considered as part of any risk of failure process on placement. Absence from any of these sessions may result in a placement being cancelled and considered a failed placement.

During block placements one day a week is allocated to learners for placement preparation. During these days learners are expected to spend 7.5 hours working on placement preparation activities. Such activities may include but are not limited to reading relevant best practice guidelines; familiarising yourself with assessment or intervention materials, preparing informal assessments, writing session plans or

clinical reflections. Placement preparation days count towards total placement hours and should be logged on ePAD.

Please note, apprentices need to record their placement hours on ePAD **twice**: you should be logging practice-based hours through your placement timesheets (signed off by your practice educator) AND be recording these as off-the-job hours (signed off by your mentor). Your off-the-job hours record must reflect your placement hours, for the duration of placement.

Learners should not be working on non-placement university assignments whilst attending placement and their placement preparation days must be protected for placement practice-based learning tasks which may include specific placement local induction training.

Retrieving missed placement hours

Health or personal reasons may lead to learners falling into deficit in their practice-based learning hours. See *Sickness* below if relevant.

Learners should be aware of any hours not completed during the programme; however, the student advisor will be able to provide this information if required. If learners fall into deficit with theory or practice hours, they must discuss this with their student advisor, and Programme Lead and agree how this deficit will be made up.

Please note, all time on placement (including retrieval placement hours) are assessed against the placement learning outcomes as part of a placement. Therefore, a learner cannot have enough hours to pass placement without also completing the placement learning outcomes on ePAD.

The following information is dependent on the learner's route of study. Learners should ensure they are reading the correct block of information below – either for the self-funded route, or for the apprenticeship route.

For self-funded route learners:

If a learner has missed previous practice hours, they may wish to make up this time during a current placement block. Learners must not work more than an *average* of 48 hours per week across a placement block.

However, retrieval hours can only occur if all the following conditions are met:

- It has been agreed in advance by the practice placement area.
- It is not having a detrimental impact on the learner's physical or mental health or wellbeing. (If this does occur, they must immediately revert to standard placement hours).
- It is not having a detrimental impact on patient care due to impaired performance of the learner.
- If a learner requires additional hours that cannot be made up during an existing placement, a retrieval placement will need to be arranged in collaboration with the learner, student advisor and programme lead, who will then liaise with HSC Placements to source the retrieval.
- These principles should only be applied to learners requiring retrieval of missed hours, not for enabling learners to 'get ahead' with placement hours. The student advisor/Programme Lead are within their rights to remove any hours achieved by 'getting ahead' as they could be deemed as 'unauthorised'.

For apprenticeship route learners:

- If a learner has missed previous theory or practice hours, they will not be able to make these up over-and-above their normal contracted hours. This is due to the rules around apprenticeships.

- If a learner needs to make up any theory or practice hours, then they must discuss this with their Student advisor, Programme Lead and HSC Placements and agree how this deficit will be made up in partnership with a representative from the learner's employing organisation.

Sickness

If a learner is unable to attend placement due to sickness, they must follow the below steps:

1. Call the placement area immediately, including repeatedly calling until they have got through to speak to someone if there is no answer in the first instance. Speak to the Practice educator or the Manager of the placement if possible, or with a senior member of staff clearly stating that sick leave is being taken. If possible, they could also give an estimation of how long they might be off for. It is good practice to take the name of the person whom absence has been reported to. Learners also need to be aware of the process for that area in reporting ongoing sickness and reporting being 'fit for duty' again.
2. Update their educator and the university by email at the end of each day of absence advising whether or not they are able to return the following day.
3. Add a timesheet to their ePAD as "Off – Sickness" for that day. The number of hours recorded should be the total duration of the shift that they have missed.
4. Complete an absence form on [My Essex for learners](#). Learners can self-certify for sickness up to 7 consecutive days. However, a doctor's certificate will be required for any additional time off sick. The learner must also email their Student advisor if they are absent, (or identify they are likely to be absent) for more than 7 consecutive days.
5. Learners must follow the placement setting policy on returning after sickness absence e.g., for vomiting or diarrhoea, learners must be symptom-free for 48 hours prior to returning to placement. They should follow the process above for notifying their placement setting and the university
6. **For apprenticeship route learners only** – Inform their 'home placement' manager & programme lead and course administrator hsccolapp@essex.ac.uk

Any absences will need to be made up to meet the required placement hours. Please see the previous section on '[Retrieving missed placement hours](#)'.

Extended periods of sickness may impact on the learner's ability to continue on the programme. This must be discussed with the learner's Student advisor/Programme Lead.

Following a period of sickness, learners may be required to attend a confidential appointment with the Occupational Health Service for a health assessment.

Other absences

Learners are entitled to compassionate leave or special leave (e.g. emergency carer's leave) at the discretion of their Student advisor/Programme Lead. However, any absences will need to be made up to meet the required placement hours and ensure ample opportunity to meet the required learning outcomes for each placement.

Absence from the placement that is not sick leave or approved leave is unacceptable. Absences should be reported to the placement area by the same process as set out in step 1 of the 'Sickness' section. Steps 2, 3 & 4 should also be followed, with the ePAD timesheet being logged as "Off – Absence" for anything that is not personal sick leave.

Dentist, doctor or other personal appointments should not be arranged during placement / placement preparation days, except for urgent treatment (which would be counted as sick leave).

If learners have a pre-arranged meeting/ with a university staff member during a placement day/ placement preparation day which are not urgent or obligatory then the learner should aim to reschedule them.

At all times during placement (except when on an allocated break), learners should inform their practice educator if they are leaving the clinical placement area and the reason for this.

Unauthorised absence, lateness and poor timekeeping are considered unprofessional behaviour which can also put others (and the learner themselves) at risk. If a Practice educator/student advisor considers a learner's behaviour to be unprofessional after raising the matter with the learner in the first instance, the relevant Student advisor will be informed and further action taken via the implementation of an action plan. If there is no further improvement after a week of placement then this may result in a failed placement.

Managing learner disability / Reasonable adjustments

- See also RCSLT [Learners on Placement – Supporting SLTs with disabilities in the workplace](#)

The University of Essex supports the social model of disability and is committed to equal opportunities. It recognises its responsibilities under legislation and is committed to working in the best interests of people with a disability and therefore aims to generate a more 'enabling' environment and to create a non-discriminatory culture, for the benefit of all university learners, staff and visitors.

In line with [The Equality Act](#), learners have an opportunity to disclose specific needs which may impact on the learning experience and discuss these with university staff and with their student advisor and practice educator(s). Disclosure of a disability and/or health condition is not mandatory but is highly recommended. Disclosure enables the university and practice placement providers to make reasonable adjustments, in line with The Equality Act (2010), to ensure that learners are not disadvantaged in accessing learning and assessment.

Within the Speech and Language Therapy Subject Team, it is the learner's responsibility to share any reasonable adjustments that are recommended (most commonly via a report following a meeting with Occupational Health or the Learner Wellbeing & Inclusivity Service) with the placement provider prior to placement. We appreciate that this can sometimes feel daunting. If learners would like support with this, or if they are experiencing difficulty in liaising with the placement provider about this, the learner should seek advice from their student advisor and seek further support from the learner union if needed. Learners can update their PEMS planning forms with this information, but this is **not** relayed on their behalf to the placement provider/practice educator. It is the responsibility of the learner to share this information with the practice educator/ placement provider in a timely manner prior to placement.

The purpose of this information being shared prior to placement is to plan – as much as is feasible - how the learner's specific needs will be reasonably met to facilitate learning, whilst ensuring required professional standards of proficiency and values are not jeopardised. Further information about reasonable adjustments can be found in the university's Reasonable Adjustments Policy P.14 (accessible via the [accessibility and wellbeing support](#) webpage).

It can be daunting to have these conversations, and it may be helpful to consider using an 'individual learner adjustment passport.' These templates are available from the university's Occupational Health services. The demands of placement are different to the academic demands of university study, so it is advised to consider these differences when planning for adjustments. In new environments or when a disability is new to a learner flexibility of adjustments may be required. We advise learners to work with their practice educators and/or student advisors to review their reasonable adjustments as needed whilst on placement, and where possible, identify new or alternative adjustments. If this is not possible and practice educators are concerned about not being able to continue to meet the reasonable adjustments it may be necessary to pause/withdraw the placement formally and consider formal occupational health reviews taking into account the new information that has arisen from this experience.

All staff have a responsibility to ensure that they do not:

- Treat a disabled person less favourably than someone else for a reason relating to the person's disability.
- Indirectly discriminate against a learner with a disability by failing to make a reasonable adjustment when they are placed (or are likely to be placed) at a substantial disadvantage in comparison with a person who is not disabled.
- Disclose a disability to others without a learner's permission to forward this information to relevant colleagues. Learners are encouraged to disclose information to Occupational Health and/or Learner Wellbeing & Inclusivity Service, who have responsibility for assessing medical evidence and notifying the relevant people once they have a learner's permission to do so.

All learners have a responsibility to:

- Disclose their disability to a member of the Occupational Health and/or Learner Wellbeing & Inclusivity Service so appropriate adjustments may be discussed.
- Check with their funding body if they are eligible for [Disabled Learners Allowances for assistance with costs](#) related to their disability.
- Notify Occupational Health and/or Learner Wellbeing & Inclusivity Service of changes in their circumstances and/or requirements, so that information remains up to date.

Learners' rights whilst on placement

Learners at the University of Essex have the right:

- To be placed in a safe learning environment in accordance with current legislation (including [sexual safety](#)). If learners have concerns regarding their safety, they should immediately discuss these with their Practice educator/student advisor and inform their Student advisor/placement tutor.
- To attend a placement that has been audited for the purposes of pre-registration education.
- To receive support from placement staff (practice educator) and university staff (student advisor/placement module tutor/placement lead/programme lead) during their time on placement.
- To receive the support of another member of staff assigned to supervise their learning when their practice educator is not available on placement.
- To receive timely feedback regarding their performance.
- To be aware of the possibility of failure and be given opportunity to address problems with their practice educator/learner adviser/placement module tutor/lead).
- To receive a fair assessment of their performance which includes the views of those who have participated in and supervised their learning in practice.
- To not to be left alone with patients/service users in a placement area without any responsible member of staff being present and contactable within the locality.
- To be treated and to treat each other with dignity and respect regardless of age, disability, gender identity, marriage and civil partnership status, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex, sexual orientation, socio-economic background, political beliefs and affiliations, family circumstances or other irrelevant distinction. The university celebrates diversity, challenges inequality and is committed to sustaining an inclusive and diverse community.

If a learner has concerns that they have not been assessed by a practice educator in accordance with the practice assessment process set out in the ePAD and this placement handbook, then they should first raise this with the organisation's placement education team as soon as possible, if the organisation has this provision. If not, then the first point of contact should be their student advisor. The learner's practice educator should be encouraged to liaise directly with the student advisor to discuss concerns and identify a solution. If a resolution cannot be found, then the learner should follow extenuating circumstances processes.

Whistle-blowing and escalating concerns

In situations where learners are concerned about any aspects of care delivery they must adhere to guidance within the [UK Gov Duty of Candour](#) and [HCPC duty of candour](#)

If at any time learners have concerns regarding the standard of care or SLT practice in a placement, or observe poor clinical practice, they should discuss this with the Practice educator / service manager in the first instance. They should also inform the Student advisor/placement module tutor of these concerns.; the most effective way of doing this is to email the Student advisor/placement module tutor, who can follow up on their concerns and may involve other members of the team to establish further information.

In larger organisations there are often Practice Education Teams who learners can also escalate practice-based concerns to e.g., via the practice education facilitator.

If learners do not feel comfortable with raising the concerns directly with staff, then they can complete a [raising concerns form](#) instead.

If appropriate, the decision may be taken to remove a learner (or learners) from the placement area. The SLT Placements Lead and Director of Practice Partnerships will take the concerns forward to ensure that due process is followed, and relevant professional bodies are informed.

Support for learners who raise concerns & complaints

The university recognises that raising a concern and complaint in practice requires courage, but it is in line with professional requirements. Therefore, there are several ways in which learners can seek support once a concern has been raised.

A learner's Student advisor can meet with a learner to support them with writing statements or other evidence that might be required for an investigation. The RCSLT also provides guidance which can be consulted [here](#).

Learners can access the [Learner Wellbeing & Inclusivity Service](#) who can offer a range of face-to-face, telephone and online services. The [Learners Union](#) also has support services available for learners. If a concern is more specific to sexual violence, harassment or hate crime, then learners may prefer to use the [Report + Support](#) service.

An opportunity to 'debrief' once the investigation process is over can be arranged with the Student advisor.

Placement evaluation

To evaluate the learning environment, it is expected that learners complete an evaluation of each placement via a form on PEMS.

This information will be utilised by the university and placement providers to monitor and evaluate the clinical learning environment. Learner feedback influences good practice to be encouraged as well as affecting change to be made if required. Therefore, we strongly encourage you to be open, honest and constructive when providing placement feedback.

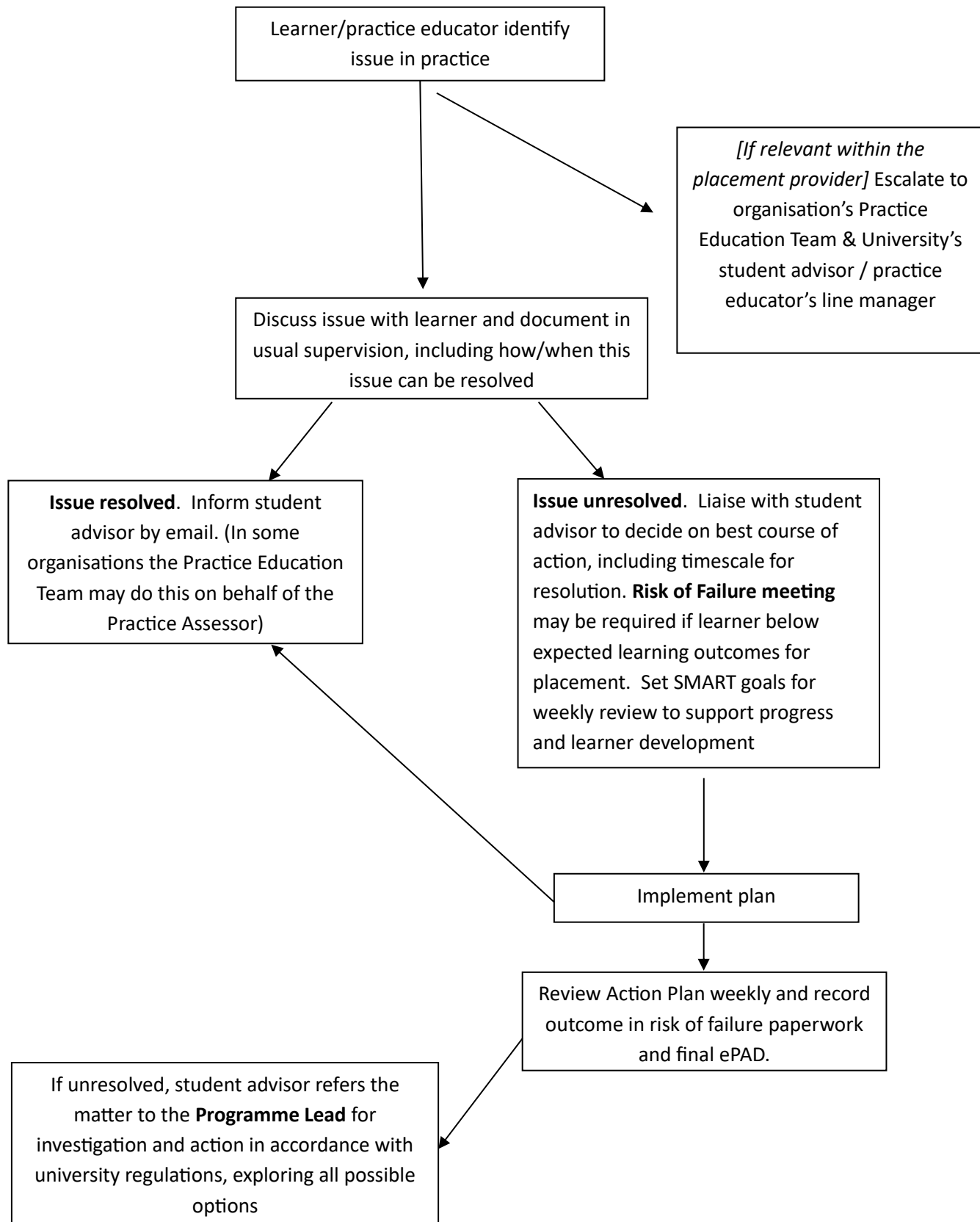
Anonymous information from all placement evaluation is used by the Practice Education Governance Committee for each placement provider, and is part of the education audit process used by Universities within the East of England to maintain and enhance the standard of educational experience in clinical areas.

If learners are experiencing any issues within their placement, they should bring them up whilst the placement is still ongoing. This enables them to be addressed in a timely manner and for learners to be supported at the time. Learners are encouraged not to leave reporting of placement issues until the point of completing the placement evaluation form.

What to do if ...? Information for Practice educators, student advisors and Placement module tutors

Issue	Action to be taken
Issues around professionalism noted, such as... Learner absence or lateness (e.g. unauthorised absence, excessive absence, lack of punctuality, request for compassionate leave) Poor learner performance or concerns about professional behaviour	• Discuss the issue with the learner, with support from other relevant staff within the placement provider organisation and/or university. <i>[Please see the flow chart on the following page for further detail of this process]</i> • Ensure that the content/outcome of conversations are documented in usual supervision records on placement. • Inform the learner's student advisor. The contact information for that person can be found on the home screen of the learner's ePAD. Alternatively, the appropriate placement module tutor can be informed. • Ensure absences are documented in the learner's ePAD via timesheets accurately. • If this continues following feedback then a risk of failure process may be considered.
Clinical incident or accident involving the learner	• Follow the placement provider's policy on reporting a clinical incident/accident (e.g. Datix reporting). • Inform the placement provider's Practice Education Lead/Team and the Link Lecturer/Practice Education Lecturer. The Link Lecturer/Practice Education Lecturer will then inform the learner's Student advisor. • Where possible, provide a copy of the incident/accident form to the Link Lecturer/Practice Education Lecturer. • The Student advisor will decide if any further action is required.
Learner has difficulty with their academic studies	• Direct the learner to seek help from their Student advisor.
Learner has personal difficulties that are impacting their placement or academic studies	• Support the learner as best as possible within the resources and policies available within the placement organisation. • Direct the learner to seek help from their Student advisor as soon as possible.
You are having difficulties with accessing the learner's ePAD	• Visit the EPAD homepage to access user guides. • Email epad helpdesk (epadhelp@essex.ac.uk)

Flowchart for supporting learner's learning on placement and contacting the university (including ROF process)



What to do if ...? – Information for learners

Issue	Action to be taken
You are going to be absent or late e.g. you are not well enough to attend placement, you have been delayed and are not going to be on time for placement, you need to request compassionate leave	Follow the information in the 'Sickness' and 'Other absences' sections of this guide.
You are concerned that you are not learning enough or not having enough time with a Practice educator.	- Discuss the issue with the practice educator or the Service Manager. - If the problem is unresolved, inform the organisation's Practice Education Team (if they have one) and your Placement Lecturer/Student advisor, who will work with you to resolve the issue.
There is a clinical incident or accident involving you, the learner.	- Follow the placement provider's policy on reporting a clinical incident/accident (e.g. Datix reporting). - Inform the placement provider's practice educator and student advisor / placement tutor. - If possible, keep a copy of the incident/accident form for your records. - Your Student advisor, placement tutor and practice educator will support regarding further actions as indicated.
You are having difficulty with your academic studies	Contact your Student advisor to discuss the problems you are having. They will be able to signpost you to the appropriate resource/person/team to help.
You have personal difficulties that are impacting your placement or academic studies	- It may be beneficial to explain the difficulties you are facing to your practice educator, so they can support you as best as possible within the resources and policies available within the placement organisation. - Contact your Student advisor to discuss the problems you are having. They will be able to signpost you to the appropriate resource/person/team to help. - Consult the University Learner Services Hub
You are having difficulties with accessing the learner's ePAD	- Visit the EPAD homepage to access user guides. - Email (epadhelp@essex.ac.uk) Review ePAD guidelines & video tutorials available on Moodle Page

Making contact with the School

[The School of Health & Social Care](#) at the University of Essex welcomes inquiries about teaching opportunities for SLTs in practice.

The School maintains partnerships with healthcare providers across Essex from a range of clinical areas by:

- Providing sessional teaching to learners on specialist subjects.
- Maintaining Service Level Agreements for placement provision.
- Collaborating for projects and research studies.

Useful Contacts

Role	Name	Email address
HSC Placements – single point of contact	HSC Placements Team	hscplacements@essex.ac.uk
ePAD Helpdesk (Technical Support only)	ePAD Helpdesk	epadhelp@essex.ac.uk
SLT ePAD Lead	Nameeka Najam	Nameeka.shahid@essex.ac.uk
Dean of School of Health and Social Care	Professor Winifred Eboh	w.eboh@essex.ac.uk
Head of SLT Subject Team	Rachael-Anne Knight	r.knight@essex.ac.uk
SLT Placement Lead	Jess Foulkes	Jessica.foules@essex.ac.uk
MSc Programme Leads	Dr Draško Kascelan	d.kascelan@essex.ac.uk
	Dr Sara Garib-Penna	sgarib@essex.ac.uk
BSc Programme lead	Dr Shamala Sundaray	s.sundaray@essex.ac.uk
Degree Apprentice Leads	Dr Katie Chadd	Katie.chadd@essex.ac.uk
	Nameeka Najam	Nameeka.shahid@essex.ac.uk
SLT Basic Life Support Training Leads	Dr Nelly Joye	Nelly.joye@essex.ac.uk
	Dr Shamala Sundaray	s.sundaray@essex.ac.uk
Director of Practice Partnerships	Tracey Williams-Macklin	tswill@essex.ac.uk
SLT Placement Module Tutors	May Burgher Sarah-Jayne Nameeka Najam Jess Foulkes Kirsty Amos María Miranda Rivera	Mb26317@essex.ac.uk s.pipe@essex.ac.uk nameeka.shahid@essex.ac.uk Jessica.foulkes@essex.ac.uk Kirsty.amos@essex.ac.uk mpmira@essex.ac.uk
SLT Eating, drinking & swallowing modules lead	Kirsty Amos	Kirsty.amos@essex.ac.uk
HSC Lead for Apprenticeships	Nikki Williamson	nwill@essex.ac.uk
Head of Operations & Business Services	Anisa Salim	anisa.salim@essex.ac.uk
Learner & Academic Services Manager	Jonathan Wright	j.wright@essex.ac.uk

Out of hours contact with the university

If an urgent problem arises whilst learners are in practice and they want to contact a member of university staff 'out of hours', they should contact the Security Team who will be able to provide immediate advice and signpost learners to further support:

- **Colchester campus** – 01206 872125
- [Emergency contact information Essex University](#)
- **Urgent Mental Health:** NHS '111' + Option 2
- **Immediate danger** – please call '999'

Appendix A

BSc and MSc Speech & Language Therapy Placement FINAL Assessment Form

Student

Year of Study

Practice Educator(s)

Dates of Placement

*Location of Placement and
Client Group*

Final Mark:

Pass

Fail

Weeks	1					2					3					4				
Placement Hours																				
Weeks	5					6					7					8				
Placement Hours																				
Total Hours:																				
Absences: Dates & Reasons																				
<u>Please record number of hours worked by the student in the grid above</u>																				

As the student's Practice Educator I confirm this is a true and accurate record of their placement performance and the hours completed.

Educator Name:

Educator Signature:

Date completed:

Please ensure the following sections are completed.

Educator comments on student performance:
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Please consider:

- *How the student has settled into the placement and developed over the weeks*
- *Strengths and areas to focus on within the assessment form*
- *Any specific goals to work towards moving forwards*

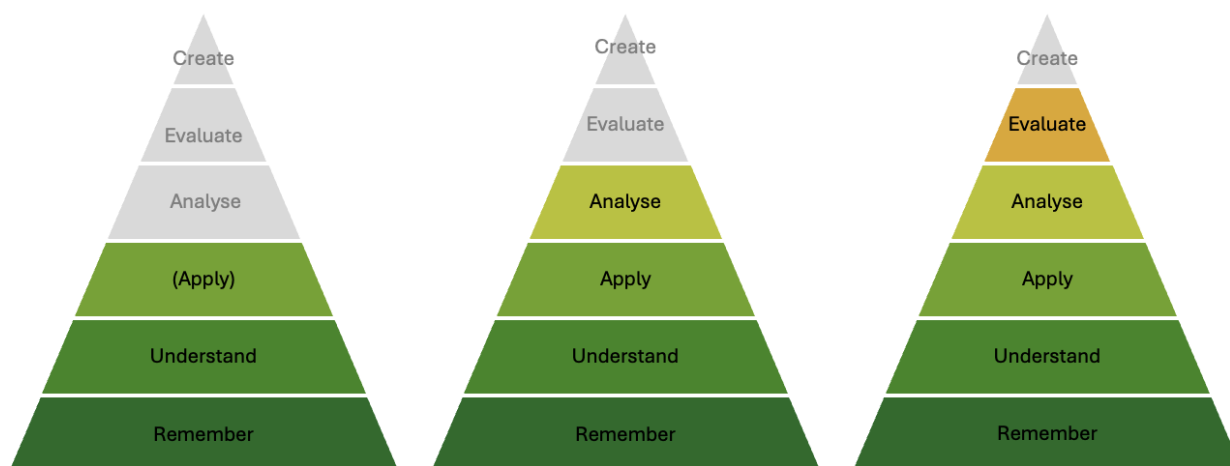
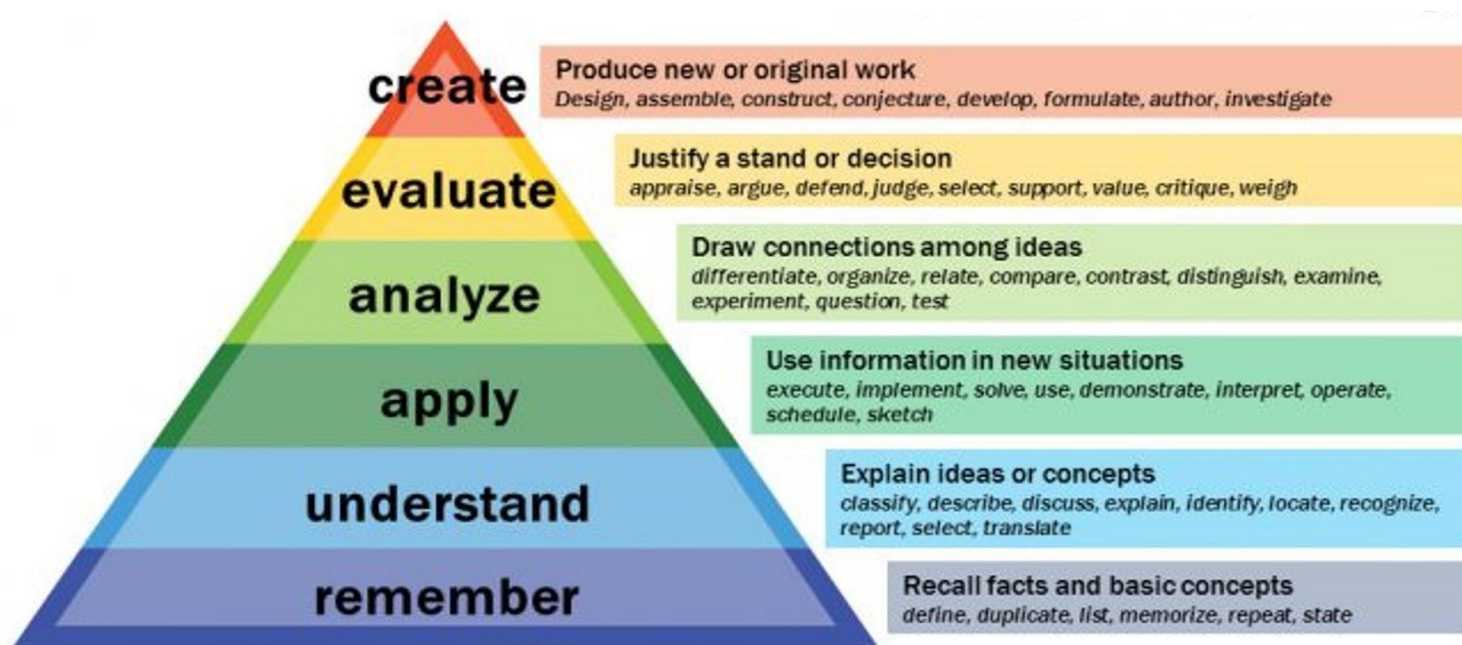
Student comments on placement experience:
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Please consider:

- *How you have settled into the placement and developed throughout*
- *Strengths and areas to focus on within the assessment form*
- *Specific professional and clinical skills acquired on this placement*
- *Any specific goals to work towards moving forwards*

Progression over the Programme

This is a guide to support the differentiation of questioning and clinical ability as students progress through the programme (for MSc programme, accelerated progression would be expected).



Pre-clinical

Block Placement 1

Block Placement 2 & TAP

Level of Support Required for Practice Based Items

Block 1

There is an expectation that block 1 student's will, by the end of placement and following observation, practice and guidance with other clients, be able to independently plan and deliver an appropriate client session for a less-complex client on their caseload. Development and support may be needed over the placement to establish skills new to the students: to be proactive in clinical discussions and supervision, case notes and report writing. The expectation is that these are in place to a satisfactory clinical standard by the end of the placement.

Block 2 and TAP

By the end of block 2 and following orientation to this new client group and the specific administrative preferences of the setting, the student should be able to independently plan and deliver appropriate client sessions for multiple clients, who may vary in clinical complexity. Some support may still need to be given for more specialist areas of knowledge. It can be assumed that clinical skills in supervision, clinical discussions and documentation are carried over from previous placements

Learning Outcomes

Category	Block 1	Block 2 and TAP
Communication	• Use and reflect on the range of communication, negotiation and therapeutic skills used in interactions with service users, carers and other professionals.	• Demonstrate flexible communication, negotiation, and therapeutic skills in interactions with service users, carers and other professionals.
Partnerships	• Completion of a small service improvement project.	• Completion of a small service improvement project.
Leadership & Lifelong Learning	• Implement appropriate assessment and therapy activities according to the needs of the client and analyse the evidence base which supports clinical decision making. • Identify and prioritise their own personal and professional learning needs and experiences through reflection, supervision, and use of CPD activities and tools.	• Formulate intervention plans integrating theory with practice through appraisal and application of the evidence base to support clinical decision-making. • Identify and prioritise their own personal and professional learning needs and experiences through reflection, supervision, and use of CPD activities and tools, recognising and reflecting on factors which affect the transition from pre-registration SLT to qualified professional.
Research & Evidence-Based Practice	• Evaluate the effectiveness of intervention and make adaptations as necessary	• Articulate clinical reasoning and demonstrate the ability to plan, negotiate, implement and evaluate intervention in response to differing needs and circumstances of clients.

Professional Autonomy & Accountability	• Conduct themselves in a manner that reflects the professional roles, responsibilities and behaviours of a Speech and Language Therapist to ensure safe practice towards clients and themselves. • Record and report relevant client information in a way that is accurate, objective, concise and transparent.	• Articulate and exhibit responsibility, initiative, and autonomy in carrying out the professional roles, responsibilities and behaviours of a Speech and Language Therapist in order to ensure safe evidence-based practice towards clients and themselves. • Synthesis and record relevant client information in a way that is accurate, concise and transparent.
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Summary Sheet

Please add in the number of items in each descriptor. “Not applicable” can only be used where the ‘N/A’ cell is white within the category (pages 6 onwards). Students must pass all other items.

Assessment Category	Pass			Fail	No Opportunity
	Outstanding	Good	Expected		
Communication					
Partnerships					
Leadership & Lifelong Learning					
Research & Evidence-Based Practice					
Professional Autonomy & Accountability					
Totals					

Descriptors

- **O - Outstanding:** The student’s performance reflects a consistently **exceptional demonstration of competence**. The student shows initiative and mature judgement clearly beyond the expectations for the level of the practice placement. Within each assessment component there is evidence of an outstanding ability to reason, justify and develop their performance.
- **G - Good:** The student’s performance reflects a consistently **enhanced demonstration of competence** for the level of the practice placement. The student assumes greater responsibility for their learning and development and a strong level of performance is evident.
- **E - Expected:** The student’s performance reflects a consistently **sound demonstration of competence** for the level of the practice placement. The student responds appropriately to the supervision process and positive progress is evident throughout the learning experience.
- **F - Fail:** An overall fail mark is awarded to a student who fails to demonstrate the expected competence for the level of the practice placement. The student will have demonstrated significant weaknesses and an inability to take responsibility for self-development or professional commitments.
- **N/O – No Opportunity:** The student has not had an opportunity to demonstrate this skill or attribute. NB: if this cell is grey, these opportunities must be provided by the

end of the placement.

COMMUNICATION	Indicators / Examples	Pass			Fail	N/O
		O	G	E		
1. Communicates with people in a manner which is consistent with their level of understanding and preferred ways of communicating	- Informed consent and capacity - Making communication accessible					
2. Communicates with people in a manner which is sensitive to their identity, culture, and background.	Being culturally aware; checking preferred language and terminology					
3. Acts in ways that are non-discriminatory and respectful of others' beliefs and perspectives.	- Being culturally aware; non-verbal communication - Considerations for the intervention process					
4. Use initiative and act responsibly in a way that is sensitive to the culture of the setting	- Responding to client's emotions/engagement - Coping with emergency situations					
Totals						
EDUCATOR: Justification for marks awarded						
STUDENT: Justification for marks awarded						

PARTNERSHIPS	Indicators / Examples	Pass			Fail	N/O
		O	G	E		
1. Works as part of an MDT and understands the roles of other members of the team	• Able to identify the roles of others related to the client • Engage in MDT discussion					
2. Makes referrals to other professionals in a timely and appropriate way	• To other members of the MDT or other health services • To tertiary services					
3. Identifies and collects relevant information through appropriate formal and informal assessment, including discussion with service user/carer	• Holistic and dynamic assessment • Ability to complete the ICF / IP for that service user					
4. Collaborates with relevant others to co-construct a therapy management plan based on functional outcomes and clearly defined goals.	• Person-centred planning • Utilising the ICF • MDT planning					
5. Demonstrates an understanding and use of preventative strategies	• Universal-level intervention • Health promotion/prevention					
6. Discharges service user appropriately, agreeing a point of closure with the client/carer and informing other professionals	• Discharge from service • Completing a piece of work / block of intervention					
Totals						
EDUCATOR: Justification for marks awarded						
STUDENT: Justification for marks awarded						

LEADERSHIP & LIFELONG LEARNING	Indicators / Examples	Pass			Fail	N/O
		O	G	E		
1. Is involved in training other professionals, raising awareness of communication problems	- On client-specific care or at service level - Through written/verbal means					
2. Select, plan, and implement therapeutic interventions effectively using a problem-solving approach.	- Using enquiry to reflect - Adapting plans during and after sessions for efficacy - Delivery of sessions from a session plan.					
3. Continuously evaluates the efficacy of the therapy management plan, and modifies as appropriate	- Evaluation of every task/session - Step up and down planning					
4. Engage appropriately in supervision, demonstrating reflection and self-awareness and respond appropriately to feedback	- Arrives to supervision prepared - Demonstrates problem-solving and is active in supervision - Uses feedback to support self-directed learning					
5. Demonstrate responsibility for own learning needs and identify areas for future professional development	- Able to utilise study time effectively - Can source and engage with helpful resources					
Totals						
EDUCATOR: Justification for marks awarded						
STUDENT: Justification for marks awarded						

RESEARCH & EVIDENCE-BASED PRACTICE	Indicators / Examples	Pass			Fail	N/O
		O	G	E		
1. Can utilise care pathways, clinical and professional guidance to plan intervention	- Follows Trust/setting guidance on delivery of services - RCSLT and NICE guidance					
2. Interprets assessment information and produces an appropriate therapy management plan using evidence-based practice	- Utilises theoretical models and/or norms to interpret data - Uses this to select an appropriate intervention					
3. Is able to use current critically appraised research to inform practice	Knows the rationale for selection of intervention, and quality of research applied.					
4. Articulate clinical reasoning in documentation and discussion.	- Intervention programmes - Reports - Supervision					
Totals						
EDUCATOR: Justification for marks awarded						
STUDENT: Justification for marks awarded						

PROFESSIONAL AUTONOMY & ACCOUNTABILITY	Indicators / Examples	Pass			Fail	N/O
		O	G	E		
1. Keeps accurate and contemporaneous records	RCSLT guidelines are followed					
2. Maintains all aspects of patient/client confidentiality	GDPR & information governance					
3. Follows the clinical administration processes	- Use of records system - Admin processes unique to the setting					
4. Demonstrate the ability to manage time effectively and prioritise workload.	- Meets deadlines set - Can use gaps in the timetable meaningfully					
5. Makes and justifies independent decisions on less complex client's diagnosis and care	Clients appropriate to the level of training can be managed autonomously					
6. Display safe therapeutic practice towards clients, colleagues, and self.	Health & Safety legislation and policy					
7. Practice within the legal and ethical boundaries of the profession	Works within boundaries of profession and stage of training.					
8. Demonstrate a professional attitude and appropriate personal presentation.	- Time keeping for placement hours and meeting/session times - Dress code is met - Use of mobile devices					
9. Measure and evaluate the effectiveness of interventions	- Outcome measures - Refer to RCSLT and NICE guidelines					
10. Report and / or present information effectively.	- Case notes - Reports - Explanations to client/carers					
Totals						
EDUCATOR: Justification for marks awarded						
STUDENT: Justification for marks awarded						

Appendix B

Pre-registration Practice Education Risk of Failure

This form is an official record of the under-performance of a pre-registration health student/apprentice. It is completed by the university lecturer in discussion with the Practice Educator/Facilitator and the student/apprentice. The use of the form signifies the failure of the student/apprentice to perform at a satisfactory level, which, if improvement is not demonstrated, is likely to result in the student/apprentice failing the placement. The form outlines the areas of poor performance and is used to create an action plan to assist the student/apprentice in improving their performance to the required level. A copy of this form is given to the student/apprentice, the Practice Educator/Facilitator and the university lecturer. The original must be given by the lecturer to the placement administration office for confidential storage in the student/apprentice's placement file. Practice Educator/Facilitator copies must be treated as confidential documents and must be destroyed when the student/apprentice finishes the placement.

Date completed: [Click here to enter a date.](#)

Student/apprentice:

Programme of study: [Click here to enter text.](#)

Level and type of placement:

Clinical speciality (if applicable): [Click here to enter text.](#)

Placement locality: [Click here to enter text.](#)

Practice Educator/facilitator: [Click here to enter text.](#)

University lecturer: [Click here to enter text.](#)

Overview of Meeting:

	Indicators of poor performance: (these must be aligned with the relevant placement assessment criteria)
Indicator 1	
Indicator 2	
Indicator 3	
Indicator 4	
Indicator 5	

	Objectives to be achieved by first review: (these should include what action will be taken and how success will be demonstrated)
Objective 1	
Objective 2	



	Objectives to be achieved by first review: (these should include what action will be taken and how success will be demonstrated)
Objective 3	
Objective 4	
Objective 5	

Date of Review (Usually 1 week after this form is completed and then weekly until student/apprentice is performing at the required level or has failed the placement).	Click here to enter a date.
Student/apprentice signature	Click here to enter text.
Practice educator/facilitator signature	Click here to enter text.
University lecturer signature	Click here to enter text.