Practice Placement Handbook

for Students and Practice Placement Educators engaged on the:

- Diploma of Higher Education Paramedic Practice – Remote and Hazardous Environments
- BSc Paramedic – Remote and Hazardous Environments

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Introduction

Introduction to the Role of Practice Placement Educator

The purpose of this handbook is to provide information in a “user friendly” for the student, the sponsoring organisation and the Practice Placement Educators (PPEds). This will ensure all parities understand the role that Practice Placement plays in the overall programme and the will ensure that PPEds are able to fulfil the expectations and responsibility of their important role.

Effective communication and liaison between practice placements, PPEds, students and ORMS staff is essential in establishing a sound-working baseline. This handbook is the start point for this communication and we look forward to working with you.

The Remote and Hazardous Environments Programmes

The programmes are designed around a student being supported by their sponsor (which may be their employer or another organisation capable of facilitating the practice elements of the course). It takes people with little or no pre-hospital care experience and provides a structured learning course for them to develop the knowledge, skills and abilities to provide paramedical care in domestic, remote and hazardous environments.

The programmes are based on a part-time study model, with a number of elements including:

- Modules on which the student will receive tutor lead instruction.
- Placements where they will receive supervised instruction in different environments.
- Portfolio working to encourage reflective practice and explore the wider learning aspects associated with their practice developments.

Programme Structure

The BSc programme is designed to run over 6 years and is integrated with the student’s employment. There are step off points at the end of:

- two years (Stage 1 completion), Certificate of Higher Education, Technician – Remote and Hazardous Environments
- four years (Stage 2 completion), Diploma of Higher Education Paramedic Practice – Remote and Hazardous Environments.

The following should be noted in regard to the awards associated with the above programmes:

- The Certificate of Higher Education, Technician – Remote and Hazardous Environments Award DOES NOT lead to eligibility for HCPC registration as a Paramedic
- The Diploma of Higher Education Paramedic Practice – Remote and Hazardous Environments DOES lead to eligibility for HCPC registration as a Paramedic
- The BSc Paramedic Practice – Remote and Hazardous Environment DOES NOT lead to eligibility for HCPC registration as a Paramedic (this award requires the student to be registered with the HCPC as a Paramedic prior to progression from the Dip HE stage to the BSc stage or prior to entering the programme for BSc study through Recognised Prior Learning).
Placement Structure

Placements account for at least 375 hours per year of activity as this is a part-time course (usually 750 hours per year full time). Placements are defined as “Hub” or “Spoke” placements.

Hub Placements

Hub placements are Operational placements carried out in the students main operational setting. This is an environment where the student can gain access to patients requiring prehospital and or out of hospital care. This environment will form at least 50% of their practice time each year.

The Hub environment must provide the opportunity to develop skills and competencies in clinical practice, under the direct range of emergency and urgent calls and consolidation of theoretical knowledge into practice. The suitability of the placement is assessed through the educational audit process (specifically standard 3.5 of the educational audit document)

The vast majority of students will achieve this through a sponsoring organisation (which may or may not be their employer) utilising an ambulance emergency unit.

Some students may utilise their employment as clinical rear crew on an air ambulance or search and rescue asset as their Hub placement, though close attention must be made to the student’s access to the full range of opportunities offered on “Domestic Ambulances”. This is monitored during the practice support meetings held at the start and end of each semester between the student, their Practice Placement Educator and ORMS member of faculty.

If it is deemed that there is a gap in the opportunities being experienced, then an action plan is developed to place the student in an environment to close the gap.

Spoke Placements

Spoke placements are Clinical placements carried out in a specialist setting (usually hospital). This is a setting where the student can gain access to patients and perform clinical interventions under the supervision of a senior clinician. Clear educational objectives for each spoke placement are contained in the student’s Ongoing Record of Achievement (ORA). Spoke placements are usually a minimum of 40 hours in duration but must not exceed 160 hours in any one year.

The spoke placements require the student to achieve a variety of learning objectives. These learning objectives may be addressed in a number of different environments. Therefore, specific areas are not mandated; guidance is offered as to the most appropriate areas for the completion of the objectives. However, the specific area must have been audited and assessed as appropriate for the theme the learning objectives are addressing.
Spoke themes
The following themes are used for spoke placements:

**Support**
- Emergency Operation Control Centres (999 and 111 systems)
- Non-Emergency Services (i.e. Patient Care Services)
- Other Emergency Services

**Patient Assessment**
- Mental Health Unit
- Minor Injuries/Illness Unit
- Medical Assessment Unit
- Emergency Department
- Out-of-Hours (OoH) Unscheduled Care
- Allied Health Teams
- Surgical Assessment Unit

**Invasive techniques**
- Operating Theatres/Day Procedure Units

**Medical**
- Cardiac Care/Cardiac Catheterisation Units
- Minor Injuries/Illness Unit
- Intensive Care Unit (ICU) or High Dependency Unit (HDU)
- Medical Assessment Unit
- Out-of-Hours (OoH) Unscheduled Care
- Surgical Assessment Unit

**Trauma**
- Emergency Department
- Minor Injuries/Illness Unit
- Intensive Care Unit (ICU) or High Dependency Unit (HDU)

**Paediatrics**
- Paediatric Department/Wards
- Obstetric/Midwifery Units

**Obstetrics and Gynaecology**
- Obstetric/Midwifery Units
Duration and Timing of Placements

The Hub Placement is carried out throughout the programme and is a consistent area of practice that is completed concurrently with the spoke placements. The Spoke placements are timed to maximise their benefit based upon the theoretical knowledge gained in the modules. 40 hours of attendance in spoke placements is required after each module except modules:

- NU1999
- NU2993
- NU2996
- NU3992
- NU3995

ORMS doesn’t stipulate a particular spoke placement setting, it provides guidance on the most appropriate setting to achieve the learning objectives whilst linking to the modular content that the student has just completed. These are as follows:

Stage 1 spoke placements

**NU1995 – Working in Healthcare**
- Hub Placement
- Mental Health Unit
- Non-Emergency Services

**NU1996 – Preparing for Emergency Care**
- Hub Placement
- Emergency Operation Control Centres
- Non-Emergency Services, i.e. Patient Care Services

**NU1997 – First Response in Pre-hospital care**
- Single Response Vehicles
- Emergency Department

**NU1998 - Human Factors and Decision Making in Hazardous Environments**
- Single Response Vehicles
- Supportive Operational Units
- Emergency Operation Control Centres

Stage 2 spoke placements

**NU2990 - Public Health in Paramedic Practice**
- Mental Health Unit
- Out-of-Hours (OoH) Unscheduled Care
- Minor Injuries/Illness Unit
NU2991 - Paramedic Patient Assessment and Interventions
  • Operating Theatres/Day Procedure Units

NU2992 - Medical and Surgical Emergencies
  • Cardiac Care/Cardiac Catheterisation Units
  • Medical Assessment Unit
  • Surgical Assessment Unit

NU2994 - Trauma Emergencies in Hazardous Environments
  • Emergency Department
  • Minor Injuries/Illness Unit

NU2995 - Obstetrics, Gynaecological and Paediatric Emergencies
  • Obstetric/Midwifery Units
  • Paediatric Department/Wards

Stage 3 spoke placements

NU3990 - Leadership and Evidence Informed Decision Making in Hazardous Environments
  • Supportive Operational Units
  • Emergency Operation Control Centres
  • Allied Health Teams
  • Allied Emergency Services

NU3991 - Disasters and Environmental Emergencies
  • Supportive Operational Units
  • Emergency Operation Control Centres
  • Allied Health Teams
  • Allied Emergency Services

NU3993 - Research, Quality and Audit
  • Supportive Operational Units
  • Emergency Operation Control Centres
  • Allied Health Teams
  • Allied Emergency Services

NU3994 - Practice Project
  • Supportive Operational Units
  • Emergency Operation Control Centres
  • Allied Health Teams
  • Allied Emergency Services
Travel, accommodation and subsistence

The programme requires the student to attend face to face content at the ORMS facilities. In addition, the student will be expected to travel as part of their placements. This travel could include travel to:

- Various operational sites as part of the Hub placements
- Various sites as part of the Spoke placements

Any expenses incurred due to travel, accommodation and subsistence is the responsibility of the student and will not be reimbursed by ORMS or RGU.

In extraordinary circumstances expenses may be paid but only if pre-approved by ORMS in writing. Students should adhere to the following rules if claiming expenses.

Please note that ORMS is a limited company and as such has a degree of autonomy when setting rules for expenses. Occasionally there may be exceptions to these rules and students should contact the ORMS Admin Team on enquiries@orms247.co.uk for clarification if they are in doubt.

Documentation Required

The following evidence must be submitted when claiming for the following:

Travel
- Ferry/Flight Receipts if applicable.
- Public Transport receipts (i.e. rail/bus tickets etc). Copy of fare guide if relevant to your claim.
- Mileage is calculated as the shortest return distance from the students home address to the destination and is paid at the current published HMRC rate.

Accommodation
- Accommodation Receipts which must have the following:
  - Address of the accommodation
  - Provider
  - telephone number
  - student name
  - exact dates paid for
  - cost per night and a signature of receipt of payment
The Practice Placement Educator

The Practice Placement Educator (PPEd) is a key role in the development of students undertaking placements. The PPEd role is an important one in which they facilitate the student’s achievement of the learning outcomes through assessment, planning, clinical support and role modelling.

Link Tutor

Where a number of PPEds are co-located, a Link Tutor will be identified as the main point of contact. They will be the primary link between ORMS and the other PPEds, helping to manage students and pass information between ORMS and students/PPEds.

Qualities and Attributes

To become a PPEd, you need to be a paramedic registered with the Health and Care Professions Council (HCPC), with 12 months post registration experience. We also ask that you have a willingness to undertake the role and we will assist you in the event that you do not have a suitable educational background to assist students.

There are a number of other important attributes and qualities we look for in a PPEd. They should:

- Be able take a lead role in the co-ordination of student teaching and assessing requirements;
- Have a good working knowledge of the student’s educational and clinical course;
- Understand the expected learning outcomes for the student being supported;
- Participate with the student in reflective activities;
- Understand what creates a good learning environment and strive to achieve this within the clinical area and the mentor-student relationship;
- Facilitate the student in the identification and achievement of their own outcomes for the placement;
- Ensure that the student has a satisfactory number of supported hours during a placement;
- Ensure adequate cover with other associated PPEds when unavailable;
- Liaise with other associated PPEds to ensure continuity and fairness in teaching;
- Ensure that a safe level of supervision is achieved so that the student always works within the HCPC Standards of Conduct, Performance and Ethics;
- Meet with the student at regular intervals to discuss progress;
- Understand the assessment methods used within the course;
- Participate in the assessment process and have an understanding of a shared responsibility for the evaluation of the student’s clinical learning outcomes and verification of the achievement of competencies;
- Contribute to a supportive learning environment and quality learning outcomes for students;
- Be approachable, supportive and aware of how students learn best;
- Be willing to share their knowledge of patient care;
- Identify specific learning opportunities that are available within the placement area;
- Ensure that time is identified for interviews with students in order to assess learning needs and develop action plans when necessary;
- Observe students practising new skills;
- Encourage the application of enquiry-based learning and problem-solving to situations, as well as giving factual information;
- Build into learning opportunities the chance to experience the skills and knowledge of other specialist practitioners such as Emergency Care Practitioners;
- Provide time for reflection, feedback and monitoring of students’ progress;
- Ensure that students have constructive feedback with suggestions on how to make further improvements to promote progress;
- Seek evaluative feedback from students at the end of their practice placement experience.

Each student is required to have a PPEd in the clinical setting. Ideally, a degree of continuity helps the student to maximise learning benefits.

When work or other shift patterns mean that the usual PPEd is unavailable, then ORMS needs to be informed at the earliest opportunity to allow another suitable PPEd to be identified and briefed to help the student.

The role of the PPEd is multi-disciplined and skilled. A PPEd:

- Provides a safe learning environment for the student;
- Supports any learning by providing suitable resources for learning;
- Acts as a facilitator and coach, developing and refining skills of the student;
- They act as a teacher, imparting knowledge and developing early skills
- Identifies suitable learning opportunities for the student;
- Encourages reflection to develop future good practice;
- Support student self-directed learning;
- Provides a focus on the learning outcomes to be achieved;
- Assesses competency and knowledge;
- Manages the student to achieve the best learning outcomes.

Qualifications

As a PPEd, you should have completed an appropriate mentoring qualification, such as:

- a Degree level mentorship module
- ENB 998
- C&G 730
- Certificate in Education / PGCE
- TDLB Assessor Awards
- Practice Placement Educator Training (Approved by ORMS)

However, if you do not hold any of these qualification, ORMS may provide training to support you in this role.

Working Together

PPEds who are new to working with ORMS’ students are required to attend a briefing session prior to receiving their first student. These sessions may be carried out at ORMS or at distance. The aim is to increase awareness and understanding of ORMS’ philosophy, course content and use of practice assessment forms.
Study Days
During the year, ORMS will organise a number of events for PPEds who work with our students. Issues specifically related to students are covered, e.g. preparation of students prior to placement and assessment reports; curriculum development, etc. ORMS tutors also use these opportunities to meet with PPEds informally during the day.

There are opportunities to share and discuss general issues related to clinical/practice education and ORMS encourages clinical/practice education supervisors to identify areas of interest and topics for inclusion in the course.

ORMS staff may also visit students on placements and will contact the Link Tutor/PPEd to organise a suitable time for this visit.

These visits are carried out to:

- Gather information from both students and PPEd/Link Tutors about experience and skills gained up to the point of the visit and to review the course and objectives for the placement;
- Ensure the experience on offer in the placement is used to the best advantage;
- Ask advice on behalf of ORMS on preparation and skills needed for the placement;
- Give feedback to both student and PPEd on achievements to date;
- Where necessary, check out whether the student is encountering any difficulties and take action as appropriate;
- Support the PPEd in the task of educating the student through information, advice and initiating other actions.

Issues, Disputes and Grievances
The ORMS Fitness for Practice policy reflects the processes employed by Robert Gordon University (RGU). In exceptional circumstances, it may be necessary to pay additional visits where the PPEd, Link Tutor or student requests this.

Whenever possible, the student and PPEd will be seen individually, but if appropriate, it is possible for both to be seen together.

Please contact ORMS (enquiries@orms247.co.uk) to discuss issues or to arrange visits.

Supervision
ORMS expects that a named Link Tutor will have overall responsibility for a student, although more than one Link Tutor may share the responsibility for the personal and professional development of students during the period of the placement.

Supervision involves the provision of support and encouragement on a regular basis and assistance in how to deal with the pressures of clinical work. In order to achieve good standards of practice, it is expected that Link Tutors and PPEds understand the concept and principles of supervision and apply these when developing a working relationship with the student.
Working with Students
ORMS has high expectations of clinical/practice placements; it requires considerable support from the student’s sponsoring organisation, dedication from the student and an ongoing effort from those responsible to provide support. To ensure that the student is supported effectively a maximum student to tutor ratio of 2:1 is required.

For experienced PPEds, this will be familiar ground; however, for those assisting a student for the first time it is understandable that time and some assistance is needed to understand what is required to support a student.

PPEds will be engaged in a number of areas to support a student’s learning; they have different demands to ensure each student obtains the most effective learning experience.

Portfolio Support
A key role of the PPEd is to guide the student in developing an effective portfolio of evidence, supporting what they have achieved and learned. The portfolio is the area where students can collect and reflect on evidence and the impact it has on their practice. This portfolio is referred to as the Ongoing Record of Achievement (ORA) and contains competencies relevant to HCPC requirements to become a Paramedic.

Structured Reflection
Students may require assistance in developing their reflective skills and we will support students and PPEds to achieve this.

Critical Reading
Developing critical reading skills is vital for all students given that a huge number of different papers and articles are published across a wide range of resources in any one year. Determining the value of what we read can be difficult, but a framework for critical reading will help students identify what is valuable and allow them to consider what may influence their own knowledge, skills and abilities when they practice.

Assessment
ORMS expects PPEds to follow the guidelines provided in the assessment of students’ knowledge, performance and professional competence. This involves assisting the student to attain and develop their competence in the clinical area, recognising competence and appraising the student’s performance through continuous and summative assessment.

If continuous feedback is clear, with written reports at suitable waypoints, the full-time report should not be a surprise to the student. It is expected where more than one member of the team is involved, that clinical/practice education supervisors consult colleagues and the other members of the clinical team before finalising half way/full-time reports.

ORMS can provide support and advice to students and supervisors throughout the process but it is essential to contact ORMS if the student is experiencing difficulty in any area.

Assessment Process in Practice
The student will work with the PPEd to embed the knowledge and skills they have developed on the modules into practice. This process of supervised practice ensures that patient care is not compromised whilst allowing the student to develop.
During the student’s time on placement they will endeavour to achieve a number of elements defined within their ORA. Each of these will be assigned to a stage as you will see in the ORA.

**Practice Support Meeting**

During the final month of each semester a “Practice Support Meeting” will be convened between the student, the PPEd and a member of Faculty from the associated professional practice module.

The purpose of this meeting is to:

- Discuss student progress;
- Address areas that require further development for the student;
- Establish action plans where necessary;
- Ensure equity of assessment from one PPEd to the next.

**Dealing with Issues**

The majority of students develop steadily during their clinical/practice placements. A motivated student, with assistance from their PPEd, should have a trouble free range of experiences and successfully overcome problems as and when they occur. However, a small percentage of students experience personal and professional difficulties, often when least expected, as a result of exposure to the pressures of clinical work.

It is not feasible to prepare students for every eventuality. However, PPEds need to be aware of a range of issues so that the problems can be recognised quickly.

These important issues may include:

- A student’s apparent lack of interest or commitment;
- A student’s lack of ability and possible failure to reach the required standard;
- Shortness of time available for a student to modify his/her performance;
- How a student copes with disease and distress;
- An under/over confident student;
• A student who demonstrates unprofessional or unsafe behaviour;
• How a student copes with personal and family issues alongside clinical work;
• A student who is frequently off sick, withdrawn or extremely tired/fatigued.

Students at any stage may be affected and often a key element in dealing with situations is prompt action by PPEds. This places great demands on the PPEd’s time, energy and confidence, and it is recommended that they establish a personal support network, either within the Department/clinical team or through ORMS contact system.

ORMS needs to be kept informed of any problems so that assistance and support can be offered in good time.

Safety
ORMS recognises the importance of safe practice and incorporates this directly into the Clinical/Practice Placement Assessment Report. These issues are discussed during the clinical briefing sessions and ORMS ensures that students:

• Are current with patient moving and handling techniques;
• Attend health and safety lectures;
• Are instructed in first aid and basic life support;
• Are advised to receive clear guidance, during clinical/practice placement induction, of the:
  • Consent for treatment policy;
  • Lone working policy;
  • Accident and incident reporting policy (including needle stick injuries if appropriate to the placement);
  • Have a clear comprehension of their role, as a student, within the clinical/practice placement setting;
• Are responsible for their own car insurance and safe travel when travelling to placements.

Student Conduct
Students also need to be aware of how to behave during their placements and PPEds may have to advise and guide them accordingly. ORMS may ask you to comment how you feel a student behaves against the standards normally expected from a health care professional.

Accident and Incidents on Placements
Accidents or incidents may occur despite your best efforts as a supervisor and compliance with risk assessment/management implementation.

Each clinical/practice placement setting should have clear policies and procedures to follow in the event of an accident or incident (including “Needlestick injuries”).

Where an accident or incident has occurred in response to unsafe practice or requires the student to take a period of sick leave, please inform the Link Tutor or ORMS as soon as possible.
Sickness
ORMS ensures that students have clear guidelines to follow should they become ill during clinical/practice placements. Students are expected to inform their clinical/practice education supervisors immediately they become ill and provide a self-certificate for the first 6 days. A doctor’s certificate is required from the 7th day. This is sent directly to the student’s supervisors, who then forward this to the administration team at ORMS.

Students may require emergency health care whilst on placement resulting from, for instance, an accident at work. Serious and sudden need can be dealt with through the local casualty department.

In some cases, work related health problems may be dealt with by the local Occupational Health department. However, health care needs may be less dramatic or serious, but still an issue (e.g. infections) during clinical/practice placements.

Supporting Students
ORMS will provide the Link Tutor and PPEd with all the relevant documentation for a student’s placement and can provide detailed advice on what is required.

PPEd Online Course - Indicative Content
To support PPEds and Link Tutors, ORMS provides an online course to assist with their development.

Learning Outcomes
- Role of the Link Tutor and PPEd
- Methods of Learning, Teaching and Assessment
- Mentorship, Coaching and Preceptorship
- Portfolio Development
- Reflective Practice.

Practice Placement Audits
All locations where practice placements occur will be reviewed to assess their suitability for students to undertake a practice placement. Usually, because of the geographically dispersed nature of students, this would be undertaken by a Link Tutor with assistance, as required, from ORMS.

A copy of the ORMS Practice Placement Audit is available on our website.

Student Handbooks
A student handbook is available for students which has more detailed information about the course.

Practice Placement Reviews
ORMS staff or our external reviewers, as part of our quality assurance processes, can review all practice placements. In the event of you being asked to participate, we will contact you ahead of the review to inform you of what is expected.
Practice Placement Feedback
Students have the opportunity to provide feedback on their placements. The feedback will usually be in a written format and forms part of the Quality assurance systems for the programme.

Standards of Conduct, Performance and Ethics
As successful completion of Stage 2 of the course allows the student to apply for registration as a paramedic with the HCPC, and Stage 3 will be undertaken as a registrant paramedic, your attention is also drawn to the following documents:

- HCPC Guidance on conduct and ethics for students (bilingual): [http://www.hpc-uk.org/assets/documents/1000509FStudentGuidanceBilingualFINAL.pdf](http://www.hpc-uk.org/assets/documents/1000509FStudentGuidanceBilingualFINAL.pdf)

**ORMS and RGU acknowledge the personal and professional standards espoused within these documents and will consider taking appropriate action against a student who is suspected of acting in contravention to the standards laid out in these documents, even if the act falls outside of stated ORMS or University policy specifications. This measure is to protect the professional reputation of ORMS the University and of the profession and, ultimately, to protect the public.**