

## School of Nursing and Allied Health (SoNAH)

## Pre-Registration Paramedic

## Placement Handbook – BSc (Hons) Paramedic Science

School of Nursing and Allied Health

Faculty of Arts Society and Professional Studies

Birmingham Newman University

January 2024

Contents

[INTRODUCTION 4](#_Toc159411042)

[Section One 4](#_Toc159411043)

[Practice hours 4](#_Toc159411044)

[Attendance 5](#_Toc159411045)

[Part-time work 7](#_Toc159411046)

[Simulation 7](#_Toc159411047)

[Range of placements and learning opportunities 7](#_Toc159411048)

[Holiday entitlement 8](#_Toc159411049)

[Working whilst studying 8](#_Toc159411050)

[Quality Assurance of Placements 8](#_Toc159411051)

[Practice Assessment Documents 9](#_Toc159411052)

[Professional Conduct 10](#_Toc159411053)

[Social Networking 10](#_Toc159411054)

[Confidentiality 10](#_Toc159411055)

[Service user/student relationship 11](#_Toc159411056)

[Record Keeping 11](#_Toc159411057)

[Providing Statements 12](#_Toc159411058)

[Section Two 13](#_Toc159411059)

[Support and Responsibilities 13](#_Toc159411060)

[Link Tutor 15](#_Toc159411061)

[Disability or Specific Learning Needs 15](#_Toc159411062)

[Accessing placement information 16](#_Toc159411063)

[Preparing you for Placement Learning 16](#_Toc159411064)

[Inter-professional learning opportunities in practice 17](#_Toc159411065)

[Student responsibilities and expectations 17](#_Toc159411066)

[Role of Personal tutor 18](#_Toc159411067)

[Section Three 18](#_Toc159411068)

[Policies 18](#_Toc159411069)

[Equal Opportunity 18](#_Toc159411070)

[Health and Safety 19](#_Toc159411071)

[Complaints 19](#_Toc159411072)

[Raising Concerns 20](#_Toc159411073)

[Risk Assessment 20](#_Toc159411074)

[Insurance/liability (use of own car) 20](#_Toc159411075)

[Placement Expenses 21](#_Toc159411076)

[Suitability (Fitness to Practise) 21](#_Toc159411077)

[Termination and suspension of placement 22](#_Toc159411078)

[Section Four 23](#_Toc159411079)

[Useful Information 23](#_Toc159411080)

[Practice Assessment Documentation 23](#_Toc159411081)

[Supporting students who are failing to achieve 23](#_Toc159411082)

[Further information regarding responsibilities and FAQs 24](#_Toc159411083)

## INTRODUCTION

This handbook is designed to provide an overview of placement learning and the associated regulations for the BSc (Hons) Paramedic Science programme at Birmingham Newman University. It is written for students but can be used to inform staff involved in supporting learning and assessment in practice. Any queries not covered by this handbook can be raised with the practice team/personal tutor or the Head of Practice Learning.

All the information contained within this handbook can also be found on: [Practice Placements - Information for Students (Nursing and Allied Health Courses) - Birmingham Newman University](https://www.newman.ac.uk/practice-placements-information-for-students-nursing-and-allied-health-courses/)

Other useful information and contact information for key staff can also be found here.

Successful delivery of the programme is dependent on effective collaboration between all key stakeholders. The key partners include:

Non-NHS placement providers that provide placement learning opportunities in a wide range of health and social care settings.

The NHS Trusts, who provide practice placements, and whose clinical staff actively engage in teaching and assessment of students in practice.

Students, who are responsible for undertaking planned learning activities to meet programme outcomes and inform the placement providers and the University if their learning needs are not being met, and to provide feedback through evaluations to enhance the quality of practice learning.

Health Education England West Midlands work closely with the NHS Trusts and University to provide adequate resources in practice to support student learning.

The University that manages and quality assures the programme and who works closely with its partners to ensure effective delivery and student support.

# Section One

## Practice hours

At Birmingham Newman University, Practice learning constitutes 1335 hours spread throughout all three years of the programme:

Year 1 – 1x2 week block, 1x10 week block = 12 weeks + 2 weeks Simulated Practice

Year 2 – 1x10 week block = 10 weeks + 2 weeks Simulated practice

Year 3 - 1x5 week block, 1x10 week block = 15 weeks + 2 weeks Simulated Practice

To provide you with a breadth of experience during course, we will endeavour to provide experience of the delivery of care across a range of practice settings, where possible across the four pillars of practice (clinical, education, research and/or leadership) in both the ambulance service and alternative health care areas of practice. Practice placement environments and locations vary, as will the people you work with: educators, service users and their carers and families.

To reflect the emergency provision of the paramedic profession your placement working pattern will normally include extended rotating shifts (normally 12 hours) including days, nights and weekend working. This specific working shift times will be advised during the placement allocation period, giving as much advance notice as possible. You will be considered supernumerary to the workforce during your placement.

All placements are classed as full time and you will work the equivalent of full-time hours during your non-ambulance placements (37.5hrs). During your ambulance service placements your hours will be an average of 30 per week, which will be made up of 2 long shifts per week, and 3 shifts some weeks. During a 12-hour ambulance shift you will be allocated a break of 30 minutes during the fourth and eighth hour of your shift when you will return to the Hub to take your break and use the facilities. Shifts may be rostered over any 12 hours of a 24-hour period including nights and weekends dependent on the working patterns of the placement area.

You are expected to work Bank Holidays when in practice if that service operates on Bank Holidays. If the placement area is closed on Bank holidays, you will negotiate with appropriate practice staff as to how this time can be made up (for example in non-patient facing activity) or alternatively deducted from the total placement hours. Shift start and finish times in 24/7 services are recorded using the 24 hour digital clock – please ensure that you have understood your shift times correctly.

You will need to record your Practice hours using the ARC system, which will be signed by your Practice Educator/supervisor/mentor – because of the nature of emergency work it is recommended that your attendance records at the end of each shift. Placement hours will be checked and recorded by the placement team after each placement.

## Attendance

100% attendance is required throughout your BSc (Hons) Paramedic Science programme. This includes learning in the practice placement environment.

Procedures for students to follow when absent from practice:

First day of absence

You are required to contact and inform the practice placement area and the Birmingham Newman Practice Partnerships team by email at practicepartnerships@newman.ac.uk

Failure to report non-attendance correctly will result in the absence being recorded as an unauthorised absence.

Absence of 3 calendar days or less

No self-certificate required unless previously requested by your Link Tutor.

Absence of 4 to 7 calendar days

Email practicepartnerships@newman.ac.uk with the continued dates of absence, reason and likely date of return to practice.

Absence of 7 calendar days or more

A sickness certificate signed by a hospital doctor or general practitioner must be provided on the 8th day of the absence to your link tutor/programme leader with a copy to practicepartnerships@newman.ac.uk

Absence preceding days off/annual leave/statutory days/study leave

If you are absent immediately prior to days off, which includes annual leave, statutory days, study leave or any other period of authorised leave from practice, you should notify the placement area and email Practice Placement partnerships as soon as you are fit return to work.

Professional behaviour is monitored on the Paramedic Practice Assessment Document (PAD). Persistent absence without explanation and/or poor timekeeping is unprofessional and not acceptable. If you are persistently late/absent an Action Plan will be developed and the link tutor alerted in relation to this to support the achievement of the required standard and Professional Values. Persistent unprofessionalism will normally result in Fitness to Practice procedures being instigated.

If your attendance falls below 75% for any placement, it will not normally be possible for you to continue the placement. This is due to being unable to meet the required Learning Outcomes for the placement or be assessed effectively using the PAD. You are advised to submit extenuating circumstances prior to the submission date if this occurs and you will be supported by your personal tutor in this process.

Students who are withdrawn from a placement will be required to undertake a placement in a similar area of practice during the retrieval period for the year of study (normally in July and August).

Please contact your personal tutor or placements team if you require any further information. Please refer to the SoNAH attendance policy (SoNAH Attendance Policy)

## Part-time work

You will find it difficult to work in addition to your studies and placement experience. It is important to be mindful of your health and wellbeing when considering the hours you work in addition to placement. If you do have a part time job, this needs to work around your theory and practice elements of the programme. You must not allow demands of paid employment to interfere with your ability to attend placement or with patient care – for example students must not undertake immediately preceding work on a day/night of the placement. Any paid work in a placement area (other areas of WMAS or health and social care) must not be counted as placement time. If a student is found to be working in paid employment when they should be on duty for placement, then this may be referred to Fitness to Practice.

## Simulation

Simulation is an artificial representation of a real-world practice scenario that supports student development through experiential learning. Specific simulation weeks have been identified in your course programme and these will support and augment your traditional practice learning to ensure that you have the best possible learning experience. These are counted towards your minimum of 1335 hours of learning in a practice-based environment. However, you are reminded that you should treat simulation weeks the same as clinical practice in relation to attendance, standards, and uniform policies.

## Range of placements and learning opportunities

Paramedicine has developed from the traditional ambulance emergency care environment into a range of additional emerging roles and your course is designed to integrate practice education in a variety of clinical areas. While many paramedics practise in emergency and urgent ambulance services, the roles within that service may include emergency ambulance clinicians, hear and treat clinicians, triage and clinical support, and other roles. Outside of the ambulance service Emergency Department paramedics, primary care roles, telehealth, frailty services, urgent care teams and advanced practitioner roles are developing, enhancing the career opportunities and utilising paramedicine skills in developing innovative health care. There are also areas of health care where paramedics may enhance their knowledge and skills to contribute to their underpinning knowledge and understanding of the patient journey. These may include areas such as cardiac care, obstetrics and midwifery, emergency departments and research.

A significant proportion of practice education will take place with our partners in West Midlands Ambulance Service University NHS Trust. You will also complete placements in non-ambulance areas, emerging roles and care-based settings. All of these will provide you with key skills and knowledge and experience to become an autonomous graduate paramedic.

The School of Nursing and Allied Health’s Practice Partnerships Dept will plan, monitor and allocate your placement learning opportunities to ensure you have a broad depth of learning opportunities to enable you to achieve the required proficiencies.

The variety of practice learning experiences that you will be offered are central to your success during your paramedic course and will ensure that you experience the variety of practice and gain an understanding of emerging roles and the contribution of other expertise that can enhance your learning experience.

You will be supported by paramedics and in some cases, other clinicians to facilitate you to apply theoretical knowledge to the practice of paramedicine therefore enabling you to learn and work towards safely achieving proficiency and autonomy in your future professional paramedic role. Please see Section 2 for further information.

## Holiday entitlement

You will be allocated holiday weeks during your course, and these will be identified on your programme planner). It is not possible to authorise holiday outside of these agreed weeks, as this may affect your ability to meet the HCPC requirements for the course.

## Working whilst studying

Excessive working, which may affect your ability to study or may put patients at risk due to you are having insufficient rest, may result in an investigation which may affect your continuation on the course. You must not work instead of attending your rostered placement hours or theory hours. For Information, please access the Placement Learning Moodle topic for further support/information.

## Quality Assurance of Placements

Quality monitoring provides assurance that the quality of learning in practice meets the standards required by the relevant professional regulators and as such reflected in the Practice Placement Agreement between the University and Practice Providers. Regulatory oversight is extended by the HCPC for allied health programmes.

Before practice areas can be used for placement, they must meet pre-determined quality standards. Each placement area is assessed by an initial educational audit and thereafter annual educational audits are carried out. These audits aim to identify strengths as well as areas requiring improvement and action plans are developed in partnership between university and practice staff to enhance the learning environment.

A placement environment profile (PEP) is updated annually and provides you with an overview of the learning opportunities available in the placement environment. This profile can be accessed via the ARC placement management system.

An important aspect of quality assurance of placements is feedback from students. You will be asked to evaluate placements at the end of each placement. The university and practice staff collate and analyse your placement feedback and develop enhancement plans with the placement areas to improve the learning environment. These enhancement plans are monitored through our quality processes and the course management committee.

In addition to the internal mechanisms for monitoring quality as described above, there are a number of external reviews that may occur whilst you are on placement including monitoring visits by the HCPC or the Care Quality Commission (CQC) as part of their quality monitoring processes. External examiners for the BSc (Hons) Paramedic Science may also visit practice learning environments as part of their annual monitoring of the programme. These reviews will usually include a review of the placement areas and will involve meetings with practice educators/ supervisors/mentors and students.

## Practice Assessment Documents

Your paramedic practice assessment document (PAD) is designed to support and guide you towards successfully achieving the criteria set out in the Standards of Proficiency for Paramedics (HCPC 2022),

There is a different PAD for each year/level of study: Links to be inserted once finalised and uploaded to Moodle

Birmingham Newman University Paramedic PAD Year 1/Level 4

Birmingham Newman University Paramedic PAD Year 2/Level 5

Birmingham Newman University Paramedic PAD Year 3/Level 6

The Practice Assessment Documents make up a significant part of your overall programme assessment. They will need to be processed through formal university assessment processes. Continuous assessment is an integral aspect of assessment in practice, and you are expected to show evidence of consistent and progressive achievement. You should engage positively in all learning opportunities, take responsibility for your own learning and know how to access support. You will work with and receive feedback from a range of staff including your named practice educator/supervisor/mentor as well as other team members and you are required to reflect on your learning.

## Professional Conduct

As a student on the BSc (Hons) Paramedic Science programme at Birmingham Newman University, you are part of the paramedic profession. Behaviour that compromises the Standards of conduct, performance, and ethics HCPC (2023) may result in referral to the faculty fitness to practice panel and may ultimately lead to discontinuation from the course. Professional misconduct includes behaviour not directly connected to professional practice for example, involvement in any criminal activity.

Student paramedics are expected to use the registrant professional Standards to guide their practice. The Standards can be found on the HCPC website via the following link: HCPC (2022) [Standards of conduct, performance and ethics | (hcpc-uk.org)](https://www.hcpc-uk.org/standards/standards-of-conduct-performance-and-ethics/) and

Within this guidance you are expected to demonstrate a duty of candour which requires you to act with honesty and integrity by reporting immediately if something goes wrong. You are also expected to raise concerns if you become concerned about something that you experience in practice that may put patients at risk. HCPC guidance for raising concerns can be found here: [Fitness to practise - How to raise a concern / make a complaint about a health and care professional | (hcpc-uk.org)](https://www.hcpc-uk.org/concerns/raising-concerns/)

## Social Networking

Information posted on social networking sites, for example face-book or twitter, is considered to be in the public domain. If you post inappropriate comments about staff, service users and their families on social networking sites this will be investigated and referred to the faculty suitability panel. If the investigation reveals a breach of the Code, the consequences could lead to termination of study and potentially termination of contract of employment if the student is sponsored. Further information regarding the responsible use of social networking sites can be found on the HCPC website:

[Communication and using social media | (hcpc-uk.org)](https://www.hcpc-uk.org/standards/meeting-our-standards/communication-and-using-social-media/)

[Standards of conduct, performance and ethics | (hcpc-uk.org)](https://www.hcpc-uk.org/standards/standards-of-conduct-performance-and-ethics/)

## Confidentiality

Service users and carers have the right to know that any private and personal information that is given in confidence will be used only for the purposes for which it was originally provided, and will

not be used for any other reason. It is important that service users are not discussed outside the placement area and service user documentation must not be taken outside of the placement area. Any service user information used in assessments, must be anonymised so that they cannot be identified. Taking photographs of service users and/or their documentation will be deemed a breach of confidentiality and could result in discontinuation from the course.

Further guidance on confidentiality is available in the HCPC Standards.

[Standards of conduct, performance and ethics | (hcpc-uk.org)](https://www.hcpc-uk.org/standards/standards-of-conduct-performance-and-ethics/)

[Paramedics | (hcpc-uk.org)](https://www.hcpc-uk.org/standards/standards-of-proficiency/paramedics/)

## Service user/student relationship

The public, your University and the HCPC expects the highest standards from paramedic students and your relationship with service users and carers must be always kept on a professional level. You should promote and protect the service users interests at all times. You must always work with service users and their carers to:

* Facilitate their preferred role in decision making.
* Provide them with the information they may need when appropriate, in their preferred format, where possible.
* Modify your own means of communication to address the needs of service users.
* Support the communication needs of service users and remove barriers as far as possible.
* Care should be also taken regarding what personal information you share with service users and carers. You must never abuse your position as a professional for your own gain.

## Record Keeping

Full, clear and accurate record keeping is vital to the delivery of safe and effective healthcare. You have a professional responsibility to keep full, clear and accurate records for everyone you care for, treat or provide other services to. This is to:

* Safeguard continuity of care by providing information to colleagues involved in care and treatment.
* Ensure service users receive appropriate treatment that is in their best interests.
* Meet legal requirements or respond to Freedom of Information or Subject Access Requests.
* Evidence your decision-making processes if later queried or investigated.

What records you need to keep, in what format and for how long, varies depending on the setting you are working in and the subject matter of those records. You will need to refer to and adhere to their requirements. Please also use your information governance training to support your record keeping practice.

The HCPC Standards [Our expectations for your record keeping | (hcpc-uk.org)](https://www.hcpc-uk.org/standards/meeting-our-standards/record-keeping/our-expectations-for-your-record-keeping/) sets out the principles of good record keeping and should be adhered to all times.

* Complete all records at the time or as soon as possible after an event.
* Identify any risks or problems that have arisen and the steps taken to deal with them, so that colleagues who may need to access the records have all the information they need.
* Complete all records accurately and without any falsification, taking immediate and appropriate action if you become aware that someone has not kept to these requirements.
* Attribute any entries you make in any paper or electronic records to yourself, making sure they are clearly written, dated and timed, and do not include unnecessary abbreviations, jargon or speculation.
* Ensure your records are checked and countersigned by a qualified clinician who is acting in a supervisory capacity, or in emergency ambulance setting, records must be signed by all clinicians crewed together.
* Take all steps to make sure that all records are kept securely.
* Collect, treat and store all data and research findings appropriately.

Record keeping is assessed as part of your overall performance on each placement using the Paramedic PAD.

## Providing Statements

Occasionally you may be asked to make a statement about care that has been provided, or witness statements following an adverse incident. It is a requirement that you undertake this activity if asked to do so to ensure that public safety is maintained in practice. You should inform a member of the practice team/link tutor if asked to do this and they will support you through this process. In the emergency ambulance setting you may be required to complete statements related to criminal acts, sudden deaths, coroner statements or other public incidents, including violence and aggression towards ambulance staff.

Guidance for writing statements is provided by the University:

* You must be clear about the purpose of your statement and write it in mind that it will be used to make important decisions. It will potentially be read by internal and external panels in the settlement of any complaints or appeals about poor, unfair or unjust treatment. Statements may also be called upon in independent legal proceedings.
* The content of your statement must be both fair and accurate and you must be able to justify any comments/opinions you make. You will also be supported to make accurate and factual statements by the Operational Manager and your Practice Educator/Supervisor/Mentor.

Characteristics of a good report

1. Accurate and specific: Ensure that dates and times are accurate and be very specific about the people involved and exactly what happened. Do not elaborate, exaggerate, or speculate.
2. Factual and not based on hearsay: A fact is something real that can be proven or disproven, for example: “xxx was present on scene when we arrived to attend the emergency call, xxx opened the door holding knife and left the scene on our arrival”

In cases where there are insufficient facts, an inference can be made by those who examine the facts, that is based on reasoning which is believable if supported by those

facts.

Example:

“It was believed that xxx did assault the patient as xxx was present on scene at the time of the ambulance crews arrival and had possession of a weapon which was consistent with the patient’s injuries”

However, the person writing the statement need only report the facts that they saw/heard at the time and must not assert any subjective meaning to those facts.

# Section Two

## Support and Responsibilities

There is a range of support for you regarding your practice experience. Within WMAS there is a student champion and assigned placement lead at each Hub and contact details will be provided during your induction. They will take the main responsibility for your learning experience whilst they are on placement. They will actively support you and be able to assist you in addressing any concerns you have. You will be allocated a Practice Educator or Practice Supervisor in all placement locations. In WMAS they are often referred to as Named Mentors (senior) and Associate Mentors. You should be assigned a Named mentor who is responsible for your overall supervision although you may not work with them every shift. There are a number of associate mentors who you may work with on different occasions. You will also have a nominated Link Tutor who is an academic member of staff here at Birmingham Newman University.

Freedom To Speak Up (FTSU) champions are available at each Hub and they are displayed on a notice board at each location. In non-ambulance placements you will be allocated a Practice Educator/supervisor/mentor who may not be a paramedic, in these circumstances it is acceptable to be supervised by an alternate professionally qualified person e.g. a registered nurse if in care setting or hospital ward.

Practice supervision is considered to be a professional relationship which ensures good standards of practice are experienced and learnt and where your development as an paramedic is supported. Your placement educator will demonstrate through their practice, up to date knowledge and skills, which they will share with you for your learning.

**Named Practice Educator/ Supervisor/Mentor**

Your Practice Educators/Supervisors/Mentors will all have been suitably prepared for their role in support you in your learning journey and routinely receive on-going support and training for their role. In WMAS NHS Trust, they are usually referred to as Named Mentors and associate mentors. Named mentors may sign your summative assessments, whilst associate mentors may work with you and may assess examples in your PAD. In non-ambulance environments they may be referred to as supervisors or practice educators. They will each have an understanding of your course structure and course outcomes and are invested in supporting you to achieve in the practice learning environment.

Practice education/supervision/mentoring enables you to learn and safely achieve proficiency and autonomy in your professional role. All HCPC registered Paramedics are capable of supervising/educating/mentoring students, serving as role models for safe and effective practice. Your educator/supervisor/named mentor will be an HCPC registered practitioner who will undertake your assessment on your achievement as documented in your PAD giving you feedback, support and guidance along the way.

Your Practice Educators/Supervisors/Mentors will facilitate learning opportunities including any reasonable adjustments you may need to enhance the learning opportunities available to you on placement. They are encouraged to acknowledge those exceptional students who are exceeding expectations for their stage in practice or who have particularly commendable attitudes, behaviours, knowledge or skills.

If you are not meeting the required standards the practice educator/supervisor/mentor will highlight this as a development need. If there is a cause for concern, a prompt action plan should be instigated to address specific needs or concerns with a specified time-frame. It is important that you fully understand the requirements of any action plan, as failure to meet the requirements may result in a failure grade being awarded, which may affect your continuation on the course. If you are unclear regarding any aspects of an action plan, please discuss this with your practice educator/supervisor/mentor or a member of the practice team/link tutor as a matter of urgency.

Practice Educators/Supervisors/Mentors must ensure that:

* There is a clear policy in place for the management of students on placement in their department. This should include the health and safety of students on placement.
* Any practice staff involved with supporting paramedic students from Birmingham Newman University have received adequate training (where appropriate) to work with students and ongoing support is available.
* Students are provided with the relevant welcome and safety inductions and materials upon arrival to the placement.
* Students are treated fairly and consistently, and with dignity and respect. Placements should also be free from undue stress, anxiety, fear, bullying and harassment.
* Equality and diversity is promoted in the learning environment.
* Requirements for supporting learners are reflected in job descriptions for staff acting as practice educators or similar.
* The Link Lecturer is notified immediately of any issues or concerns that arise with students while on placement.
* They work with Birmingham Newman staff for the implementation of reasonable adjustments for learners with disabilities.
* Opportunities for students to learn from other members of the interprofessional and multidisciplinary teams is supported.
* An interim review, with completion of the interim assessment report.
* A final assessment meeting with the student takes place to complete the placement assessment documentation.
* Written records of the student’s progress and feedback on their performance is retained including any concerns related to professional conduct.
* The number of students (considering the involvement of other students from other institutions) does not exceed the maximum number of students the site can manage and support effectively.
* They work in partnership with Birmingham Newman University to complete an adequate audit, valid for the length of the student placement.

## Link Tutor

Each student will be allocated a Link Tutor for every placement. This is a member of the academic team at Birmingham Newman who will support both you and your educator/supervisor/mentor for the duration of the placement.

The link tutor is available for support at any point throughout the placement and will arrange a visit or TEAMS meeting with you at approximately mid-way through your placement. This visit may have many purposes such as;

* To enhance the relationship between the practice educator/supervisor/mentor and the student.
* Provide pastoral support for the student when appropriate.
* Provide educational support and advice to the student and practice educator/supervisor/mentor.
* Support the practice educator/supervisor/mentor in their role as mentor and assessor.
* Advise on the assessment procedures of the practice-based experience.

Documentation is completed for the visit and there is a section to be completed which addresses the overall impression of the placement, any concerns over placement standards, support for a student’s additional learning needs, and possible recommendations, if required.

## Disability or Specific Learning Needs

If you have a disability which requires reasonable adjustments you are encouraged to provide your practice educators/supervisors/mentors with a tutor awareness sheet, provided by the student support and wellbeing department at the university prior to your placement. The tutor awareness sheet provides useful information relating to reasonable adjustments that can be made to enable you to achieve your placement learning outcomes.

Further advice or support can be provided by the Student Support Services department.

## Accessing placement information

The process allocating placements will be clearly explained to you during induction week in your first year, and you will be reminded of this during welcome week at the start of each year and prior to each placement block.

You will be allocated to a range of approved practice learning environments identified as appropriate to meet your learning needs by the University within the West Midlands Region across the NHS, Government, Private or Independent Health Care providers. Your allocation will typically be available for you at least 4 weeks in advance of you starting within the practice learning environment. This allows you time to find out about the area and make contact in advance of the placement. You will be required to prepare a SWOT analysis and learning development plan specific to the placement which you will share with your educator in the first week so they can support you with personal learning objectives you have.

## Preparing you for Placement Learning

All of your modules relate to preparing you for practice-based learning. In additional you will normally have simulation-based activities preceding each practice placement to enable you to practice, develop and consolidate previous skills to maximise your practice learning experience.

During practice education launch sessions your placement assessment documentation will be explained and you will be reminded of the professional expectations whilst on placement. There will be a series of mandatory placement learning experience training which has to be attended and/or completed prior to placement. This will include Basic Life Support, Patient Handling, Information Governance and Safeguarding as well as others. If you do not provide evidence of successful completion of required mandatory training, you will not be allowed to attend placement. In addition to this, you will be expected to attend any practice environment specific induction. Throughout your practice learning experiences you will be required to demonstrate a high standard of professional conduct which is in line with the relevant ethical and legal frameworks, underpinned by the values and responsibilities as specified by the HCPC.

You can expect a short induction period to your placement, which should include:

* Orientation to the practice setting, introductions to staff, location information such as cafes, departments.
* Use of IT and log-in, access requirements and ID cards.
* Communication systems.
* Timing: start and finish times and break times.
* Changing facilities.
* Health and safety and local policies and procedures including, manual handling, bullying and harassment, sexual safety and freedom to speak up.

Help and advice on practice related issues can be found on the course Moodle page.

## Inter-professional learning opportunities in practice

Paramedics are expected to be able to work effectively and collaborate with the interprofessional team and wider organisations, understanding both your own and others jobs roles. During your placement, you may have the opportunity to work and learn with other professionals. These experiences enhance your awareness and understanding of possible services or support networks that contribute to care delivery.

You may or may not be in direct contact with patients, clients and service users whilst undertaking these experiences. Allied practice learning experiences may either be allocated in advance and / or arranged locally during the placement. There is room to record these experiences and achievements in the final section of your PAD which will be used to inform and contribute to your Practice assessment of your achievement.

Practice areas may also have a range of educational sessions that can be accessed by students, for example, learning zones, skills training and learner forums. Further information about these is available from the practice educators/supervisors/mentors in your placement areas.

## Student responsibilities and expectations

As a student of a professional healthcare course, there are expectations that you need to reflect on and meet when you undertake practice based learning. You are representing your profession, you are representing Birmingham Newman University and most importantly you are representing yourself – maybe even to your future employer!

You are expected to:

* Read and familiarise yourself with the contents of the Paramedic PAD and the Placement Handbook provided by the university and ensure you have understood the requirements and relevant policies.
* Arrive on time, dressed according to the Uniform Policy and be ready to learn.
* Ensure you have your personal issue Personal Protective Equipment with you at all times during practice placement – including protective footwear, high visibility jacket, and helmet.
* In relation to the learning outcomes for the module, recognise the purpose and understand the assessment criteria outlined in the PAD.
* Complete the initial SWOT analysis to develop your individual learning needs and identify any areas for development, including a learning development plan, before discussing your learning needs with your PEd at your initial interview during the first week.
* Engage in formative learning and reflective self-analysis at appropriate stages and record this at interim to develop your learning needs as you progress.
* Ensure you regularly scan and save an electronic back-up copy of your achievements.
* Take initiative to ask for regular formative feedback and take steps to implement this into feedforward actions.
* Contact your Link Tutor or the practice education team at the university without delay should you have any concerns, questions or any other issues arise (see Placement Handbook)
* Notify your placement Supervisor/PEd/Operational Manager (OM) immediately if any urgent issues arise during working time and email the university. It is recognised that you may be undertaking shifts outside of regular working hours and the university will contact you at the earliest opportunity.
* Exercise initiative in regular reviewing of your own progress and be proactive in recording competencies where it is appropriate to complete these.
* If there are any genuine mitigating circumstances causing difficulties with attendance, progress or hand-in of PAD it is your responsibility to inform the University at the earliest possible opportunity.
* If you have any physical or mental health conditions that may affect your ability to participate in practice education, or you are or become pregnant you must inform the University at the earliest opportunity by contacting your link tutor and emailing practicepartnerships@newman.ac.uk
* If you have any concerns about the placement experience, please complete refer to the procedure for reporting concerns Practice Placements - Information for Students (Nursing and Allied Health Courses) - Birmingham Newman University

## Role of Personal tutor

Your personal tutor is also available for support when you are on placement. Please contact them in the normal way.

# Section Three

## Policies

## Equal Opportunity

Students can expect equal treatment during placement, whatever their race or religion, gender, sexual orientation, age, or whether or not they have a disability. Students must act in accordance with the placement provider’s Equal Opportunities Policy. Students who discriminate against or harass other students, employees or clients of the Trust may face disciplinary action.

You must introduce yourself to every service user when you first meet them and explain who you are. You must provide information to all service users before working with them so that they can make an informed decision if they wish to participate in any paramedic intervention with you. You should also be aware that service users may refuse care from a student and should have the opportunity to decline care from a student.

## Health and Safety

Before joining the programme, students are required to have a satisfactory occupational health clearance and enhanced Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) check. These will be repeated before employment as a Paramedic following qualification. The occupational health provider will advise students about any immunisations required to reduce the risk of contracting infection. Students who decline immunisations may be restricted from working in certain areas, which may affect their ability to meet the standards of proficiency required. If you are concerned about the need for immunisations, you are advised to discuss this fully with the occupational health provider and your personal tutor so that we can ensure that any health and safety risk is fully assessed.

Whilst in placement you should take reasonable measures to ensure your own health and safety and that of others. For example, you should employ safe moving and handling techniques, safe disposal of sharps, correct hand washing techniques, keep fire exits clear and remain observant for hazards within the work environment. It is your responsibility to familiarise yourself with local NHS trust/organisation health and safety procedures and to comply with these at all times.

Students must complete an online self-declaration on an annual basis to confirm that there is no change to their health or DBS status. However, students should report any change to their health or DBS status as soon as it occurs to the University. Failure to report any changes questions your ability to comply with HCPC Standards (HCPC, 2022), particularly in relation to a duty of candour, as failure to report changes could put the public at risk. Consideration of any changes to health or character status is made through the faculty suitability processes.

Some independent sector placements may require an additional enhanced DBS check prior to placement commencement. It is the student’s responsibility to ensure that all relevant paperwork is completed as promptly as possible to enable the placement to proceed.

## Complaints

Birmingham Newman University is committed to providing a high-quality service to students undertaking professional programmes. This extends to all experiences both within the institution and in the placement areas. If you have any grievance relating to your placement, you should raise this with the practice educator or practice team/link tutor in the first instance. If the matter is not settled at this level, it may be pursued in accordance with the complaint's procedure. Complaints relating to events occurring in placement will be managed in accordance with the trust’s/organisation’s complaints/grievance procedure.

On occasions service users may complain directly to students. If this happens you should inform your practice educator/supervisor/mentor or the manager of the placement area immediately.

## Raising Concerns

As a healthcare professional, you have a professional duty to report any concerns that put the safety of the people in your care or the public at risk. You will be fully supported by the university following any escalation of concerns. The Health Care Professions Council (HCPC) have provided detailed guidance about raising and escalating concerns that can be accessed from the following link [Fitness to practise - How to raise a concern / make a complaint about a health and care professional | (hcpc-uk.org)](https://www.hcpc-uk.org/concerns/raising-concerns/)

The School of Nursing and Allied Health have also produced guidance for students about the procedure to follow if they witness bad practice in placement. Further information can be obtained from the practice team/personal tutor or on the Moodle placement topic.

## Risk Assessment

The risks associated with student placements can be separated into two categories:

* Foreseeable injury or ill-health arising out of failure to provide appropriate safety equipment.
* Foreseeable injury, ill-health because of the placement, i.e., negligent working practices on the part of or in relation to the student placement.

In order to minimise any risk to service users, staff or students, you should make known any conditions that may impact on your health and safety to facilitate any necessary risk assessment before placement.

Pregnant students; Please let your personal tutor know if you become pregnant. This is to allow the appropriate risk assessment to be completed. It is your responsibility to let your placement know. You will be unable to participate in WMAS placement on an emergency ambulance if you are pregnant. In such circumstances a risk assessment should be completed, and the appropriate action determined. The outcome of this may be that an alternative placement is required. If a risk assessment is not completed by your practice educator/supervisor/mentor, please contact a member of the practice team to arrange this as soon as possible.

Students must comply with all health and safety policies whilst in placement.

## Insurance/liability (use of own car)

If journeys are made for the purposes of undertaking practice placements, after arrival to the normal place of work, for example undertaking community visits, attending educational sessions, attending conferences, etc., checks should be made with your motor vehicle insurance company to ensure that insurance cover is provided for business use. If you do not have business use cover your insurance may be invalid. You are required to provide evidence of appropriate insurance cover to your practice educator (as appropriate to the placement area).

## Placement Expenses

You may have additional placement expenses for travel and accommodation which may be reimbursed by NHS Bursaries (NHS Learning Support Fund) if the requirement exceeds that of attending university, requires transport out of normal operating hours, or requires additional accommodation to that of the usual term time location. You may need to cover these expenses initially before any applicable reimbursement is received. For more information and to see eligibility see the NHS learning support fund (LSF). Please note that this government bursary is available to Home students only and that International students are not eligible for support for travel and accommodation.

## Suitability (Fitness to Practise)

Fitness to practise (suitability) is defined as suitability to be registered with, or to be recommended for entry onto a professional register without restrictions. The purpose of fitness to practice is to project the public, uphold professional standards and to safeguard public confidence in the paramedic

profession. The HCPC defines someone as fit to practice if they have "the skills, knowledge, character and health to practise their profession safely and effectively".

Examples of issues on placement that may lead to fitness to practise concerns include:

* A health and safety breach of practice.
* Inaccurate or falsified placement information.
* Unsafe practice, incompetence or requiring too much supervision.
* Unprofessional behaviour, such as lack of respect or poor attitude, dishonesty, breaching patient confidentiality, failure to follow the required dress code, poor time keeping or poor attendance.
* Disruptive behaviour, or inappropriate use of social media.
* Safeguarding concerns.
* Poor mental or physical health or a serious physical impairment that interferes with the ability to practice safely.
* Failure to seek help or engage with appropriate services for own health issues.
* Poor communication or language skills.

Students who fail a practice placement component on substantiated grounds of fitness to practise concerns will be denied a retrieval attempt .

The School of Nursing and Allied Health (SoNAH) recognises that academic success does not necessarily equate with the professional requirements for registration and aims to assure itself that you have the capability for safe and effective practice without supervision. The school has a suitability panel for the purpose of the following:

* Consider the suitability for admission of students onto a professional programme where fitness to practise is called into question.
* Consider your fitness to practice when you have declared a change in the status of your health or character during the duration of your course.
* Consider evidence where there are concerns about your fitness to practise and decide whether further action is required.

Conduct that would be deemed as falling short of professional standards include:

* Physical or verbal abuse of a service user
* Persistent lack of competence or health conditions that impair fitness to practise including alcohol or drug dependence.

If it is considered that your conduct is incompatible with the paramedic profession, then you may be referred to the University Fitness to Practice Panel.

## Termination and suspension of placement

A placement can be terminated or suspended under any of the seven following circumstances:

1. It is considered that the practice of a student is damaging and/or dangerous to service users and/or to colleagues.
2. Failure to demonstrate competence/develop competence in response to formative feedback and/or adhere to an agreed action plan.
3. It is considered that the practice of the student is bringing or has brought the Trust/institution or agency in which they have been placed into disrepute or is bringing or has brought the profession into disrepute.
4. The student is deemed to be at risk to themselves or from others.
5. It is considered that the placement has broken-down irretrievably.
6. It is considered that the practice learning opportunities are inadequate.
7. Attendance is less than 75%

The termination and suspension of placement policy can be accessed from the practice team/personal tutor or on the Moodle Practice topic.

# Section Four

## Useful Information

## Practice Assessment Documentation

All students on the BSc (Hons) Paramedic Science Programme will be utilising the Birmingham Newman University Paramedic Practice Assessment Documentation.

Students in the 1st year/Level 4 - will be assessed on a will be assessed using a graded approach (0-100%). You will receive a percentage mark.

Students in the 2nd year/Level 5 - will be assessed using a graded approach (0-100%). You will receivea percentage mark.

Students in the 3rd year/Level 6 - will be assessed using a graded approach (0-100%). You will receive a percentage mark.

If you need these resources in an alternative format, please let the placements team know.

Supporting students who are failing to achieve.

If your Practice Educator/Supervisor/Mentor feels that there may be a problem with your performance towards achievement of the learning domains of the placement assessment she/he/they will speak directly with you about their concerns. They will also discuss this with your Link Tutor. Many students are anxious if they are notified that there is any problem, however it is important that students are aware of the exact nature of the problem if they are to work towards resolving it.

Once a problem has been identified they will focus on listening to you, but you will be expected to be honest and direct in your response and take responsibility for your own learning needs. Your Practice Educator/Supervisor/Mentor and Link Tutor will work together to offer support and encouragement and pay attention to anything you say in relation to course demands, personal/health problems, etc..

Your Practice Educator/Supervisor/Mentor and Link Tutor will work together with you to create a plan of action from a reasonable starting place and with realistic goals and may obtain assistance from other practice support staff. They will make sure that this is adopted as a plan towards helping you achieve your own goals whilst making you aware of your own key responsibilities. They will talk with you about appropriate learning and development opportunities to make progress and arrange for these opportunities to be provided.

Times for a mutual review of the progress of the action plan will be set. You will discuss your progress towards the agreed goals during these reviews.

## Further information regarding responsibilities and FAQs

## Student responsibilities

* You should take responsibility for your own learning and know how to access support
* Engage positively with all learning opportunities.
* Understand the assessment requirements.
* Work with and receives written feedback from a range of staff (including identified practice educators/ supervisors/mentors)
* Reflect on learning and develop action plans to meet future learning needs.
* Provide feedback on learning experiences.

## FAQs

Q: When should I contact my placement area?

A: It is advisable to contact your placement area in advance of starting your placement to obtain the information you need to enable you to prepare.

Q: Will I have a named contact in placement?

A: Yes. You will have a nominated person to support you and address any concerns.

Q: Who will supervise me on placement?

A: You will be supported by a practice educator, supervisor or mentor who will support your learning and can contribute to assessment.

Q: Who will assess me on placement?

A: Your allocated Practice Educator/supervisor/mentor. You will have a nominated practice educator for your placement, who is responsible for assessing and confirming proficiency and achievement.

Q: Will there be support from the University when on placement?

A: Yes. You will have a named link tutor. The link tutor will liaise with your practice educator/supervisor/mentor. If you have any concerns on placement, you should raise these with the university as soon as possible.

## Practice Educator Responsibilities

Practice educators/supervisors/mentors are usually registered HCPC professionals with current knowledge and expertise and are appropriately prepared for the role.

Conducts assessments, informed by feedback from practice educator/supervisor/mentor.

Makes and records objective decisions, drawing on records, observations, student reflection and other resources,

Periodically observes the student.

Gathers and coordinates feedback from other relevant people.

Engages with communication with link tutors or delegated other at relevant points.

## FAQs

Q: What is my role in assessing the student?

A:. You will undertake initial, interim and final assessment on the students achievement as documented in the placement assessment documentation giving the student feedback, support and guidance along the way.

## Link Tutor Responsibilities

Link tutors are academic staff working within the university as part of the programme team.

Work in partnership with the practice educator/supervisor/mentor to support the student on placement.

Have an understanding of the student’s learning and achievement in practice.

Enable scheduled communication and collaboration between academic and practice partners.

## FAQs

Q: What is my role in relation to student assessment?

A: You will not be directly assessing the student, but you will provide support to educators on elements of the assessment e.g. placement assessment documentation and for example how you measure objectively and with parity.

Q: What is my responsibility when a student’s performance causes concern?

A: If a student requires an action plan, you should liaise with the educator/supervisor or delegated other for reviewing progress and ensuring support is available.