



**Birmingham
Newman
University**

School of Nursing and Allied Health (SoNAH)

Pre-Registration Occupational Therapy

**Placement Learning Handbook – BSc (Hons)
Occupational Therapy**

School of Nursing and Allied Health
Faculty of Arts Society and Professional Studies
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INTRODUCTION

This handbook is designed to provide an overview of placement learning and the associated regulations for the BSc (Hons) Occupational Therapy 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](#)

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.

1. Professional Body Requirements

The BSc (Hons) Occupational Therapy programme is designed to fully comply with the requirements of bachelor's degree level study (OfS 2022) and the Standards required by the Health and Care Professions Council (HCPC 2017, 2022), and the Learning and Development Standards for Preregistration Education of the Royal College of Occupational Therapists (RCOT, 2022). Integration of theory and practice is central to the programme at Birmingham Newman University. Practice based learning provides you with opportunities to learn alongside practice educators, who will guide your learning and facilitate development of practice skills. Practice based learning is therefore an integral part of your programme.

The Royal College of Occupational Therapists (RCOT) require placements to be an integral part of a preregistration programme, facilitating 'the learners formation of their identity as an occupational therapist and develops learners to meet the professional standards for practice and the ethical and professional conduct expectations of the profession' (Learning and Development Standards for preregistration Education 2023). The programme has been accredited by the RCOT to meet the following standards:

- 5.1 Practice based learning must be integral to the preregistration programme;
- 5.2 The structure, duration and range of practice-based learning must support the achievement of the learning outcomes and the standards of proficiency;
- 5.3 The education provider must maintain a thorough and effective system for approving and ensuring the quality of practice-based learning;
- 5.4 Practice-based learning must take place in an environment that is safe and supportive for learners and people who access occupational therapy services;
- 5.5 There must be an adequate number of appropriately-qualified and experienced staff involved in practice-based learning;
- 5.6 Practice educators must have relevant knowledge, skills and experience to support safe and effective learning;
- 5.7 Practice educators must undertake regular education that is appropriate to their role, learners; needs and the delivery of the learning outcomes of the pre-registration programme;
This includes equality and diversity principles with the aim of strengthening the skills needed to develop a more inclusive and participatory profession.
- 5.8 Learners and practice educators must have the information they need in a timely manner to be prepared for practice based learning.

To meet Standard 6.4.1 Students who fail a practice placement component on substantiated grounds of fitness to practise concerns will be denied a retrieval attempt (RCOT Standard 6.4.1).

The standards can be accessed on the RCOT website where each is explained in detail to support the expectations for students, practice educators and the university: rcot.co.uk/publications

RCOT Membership

You are encouraged to register as a student member of the Royal College of Occupational Therapists (RCOT) at the beginning of your studies. There are many benefits to being a member of the RCOT, one of which, is the additional professional liability insurance cover that this provides for non-NHS external placements in the UK. Membership will also give you access to lots of very useful learning

resources that RCOT offers <https://www.rcot.co.uk/practice-resources/students/student-and-apprentices>

Practice hours

The RCOT and World Federation of Occupational Therapists (WFOT 2016) stipulates that students must successfully complete and pass a minimum of 1,000 hours of practice based experience (practice placement) during their programme. The requirement enables you to apply for membership as an Occupational Therapist with the RCOT. Completed hours of a failed practice-based learning component do not count towards the overall minimum requirement of 1000 practice-based learning hours.

At Birmingham Newman University, practice learning constitutes 1,200 hours (which may include up to 40 hours of assessed simulated practice) spread throughout all three years of the programme:

- Year 1 – 1x2 week block, 1x4 week block = 6 weeks
- Year 2 – 2x6 week block = 12 weeks
- Year 3 - 1x6 week block, 1x8 week block = 14 weeks

To provide you with a breadth of experience during the course, you will be expected to experience the delivery of care across a range of practice settings, across the four pillars of practice (clinical, education, research and/or leadership) with varying service delivery models. Practice placement environments and locations vary greatly, as will the people you work with: educators, service users and their carers and families.

To reflect the evolving nature of the Occupational Therapy profession your placement working pattern may include extended days (8-8) and/or weekend working. The specific working days and times will be advised during the placement allocation period, giving as much advance notice as possible (normally at least 4 weeks). 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 (37.5hrs). This is normally made up of 5 days of 8 hours with a 30-minute break for lunch.

As an example, if the working pattern is:

0830 – 1630 the total placement hours recorded for the day is 7.5 hours.

7.5 hours x 5 days = 37.5 hours for the week total.

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.

The expectation is that you will work 37.5 hours per week. You must not spend more than 48 hours per week on placement. This is a legal requirement, but also safeguards your health and well-being and that of those in your care.

Reasonable adjustments will be considered as applicable in the allocation of placements with extended working hours and/or weekend working. Please be aware that as a qualified occupational therapist, there may be a requirement to be involved in some unsociable hours.

You will need to record your Practice hours on the Practice Placement Assessment Form (PPAF) which will

be signed by your educator/supervisor at the end of each week or end of placement. Placement hours will be checked and recorded by the placement team after each placement.

Attendance

100% attendance is required throughout your BSc (Hons) Occupational Therapy 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 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, and may result in a referral to a Fitness to Practice Panel.

Absence of 3 calendar days or less

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

Absence of 4 to 7 calendar days

Email Newman Practice Partnerships 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 personal tutor/programme leader with a copy to Newman Practice Partnerships

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 programme leader when you are fit return to work.

Professional behaviour and attendance is monitored in the Placement documentation which is located on the ARC system. 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. Students who fail a practice placement component on substantiated grounds of fitness to practise concerns will be denied a retrieval attempt (RCOT Standard 6.4.1).

If your attendance falls below 75% for any placement, it will not normally be possible for you to continue on the placement. This is due to being unable to meet the required Learning Outcomes for the placement or be assessed effectively using the Placement documentation. 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).

Students will be withdrawn from a pre-registration programme if they fail their second attempt at any practice-based learning component.

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 night/evening work preceding or on the day of the placement. Any paid work in a placement area (i.e. as a Bank Occupational Therapy assistant or therapy support worker) must not be counted as placement time and should be declared to the Professional Lead due to any potential conflict of interest. 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., Up to 40 hours of assessed simulation may be utilised within your planned 1200 hours of practice placement. 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

The pre-registration standards require you to learn in a range of practice settings, with links to the service user's journey reflecting the current and future configuration of services. Your practice based learning experiences may take place in:

- different sectors of health and social care including the independent sector, local government, the NHS and voluntary organisations.
- different settings including peoples homes, GP practices, high street clinics, acute hospitals, care homes, gyms, companies and many more.
- the four pillars of practice – clinical, education, research and leadership – at all levels.

Practice based learning experiences across different sectors, settings and pillars of practice will provide you with the opportunity to understand the breadth of occupational therapy practice. Whether your placement involves providing rehabilitation, leading a service, researching new insights or supporting others to develop, it will help you to understand the importance of your skills as an Occupational Therapist across different environments and the many ways in which you can make a difference to people's lives.

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. You will receive as a minimum, a placement in a community setting, an inpatient (acute) setting, a physical health setting and a mental health setting. You should also expect to receive a placement where you experience how Occupational Therapists can shape delivery of health and social care for example in a leadership, education or research environment. This will be monitored by the Practice Partnerships Dept, who will keep a record of the practice-based learning experiences you have completed, to ensure that allocations are made across the spectrum of practice areas as identified above. This information will be stored and maintained securely by the University in the ARC system (placement management system), to allow for fair allocation of all practice based learning experiences. The Placement Lead will also review allocations on a regular basis to ensure that a breadth of experience and opportunities are given to each student during each practice placement and across level of study. If you are required to repeat a placement, your retrieval placement will be undertaken in a similar practice area but at a different location.

The wide variety of practice learning experiences that you will be offered are central to your success during your occupational therapy course and will ensure that you experience the variety of practice expected of an occupational therapist to meet the holistic needs of people of all ages.

You will be supported by a range of people to facilitate you to apply theoretical knowledge to the practice of occupational therapy therefore enabling you to learn and work towards safely achieving proficiency and autonomy in your future professional occupational therapy 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 flowthrough (course calendar). It is not possible to authorise holiday outside of these agreed weeks, as this may affect your ability to meet the HCPC / RCOT 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 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 further 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) Occupational Therapy 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/practice supervisors and students.

Practice Assessment Documents

Your practice assessment document, known as the Practice Placement Assessment Form (PPAF) is designed to support and guide you towards successfully achieving the criteria set out in the Standards of Proficiency for Occupational Therapists (HCPC 2022), the Learning and Development Standards for Pre-registration Education and the Professional Standards for Occupational Therapy Practice, Conduct and Ethics (RCOT, 2021).

There is a different PPAF for each year/level of study:

- PPAF Year 1/Level 4
- PPAF Year 2/Level 5
- PPAF Year 3/Level 6

The PPAF 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 as well as other team members and you are required to reflect on your learning.

Professional Conduct

As a student on the BSc (Hons) Occupational Therapy at Birmingham Newman University, you are part of the occupational therapy profession. Behaviour that compromises the RCOT Professional Standards for Occupational Therapy Practice, Conduct and Ethics (2021) and/or The Standards of conduct, performance, and ethics HCPC (2022) 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 occupational therapists 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 (2023) [Standards of conduct, performance and ethics | \(hcpc-uk.org\)](https://www.hcpc-uk.org/standards-of-conduct-performance-and-ethics) and the RCOT Professional Standards for Occupational Therapy Practice, Conduct and Ethics (2021) [Professional standards for occupational therapy practice, conduct and ethics - RCOT www.rcot.co.uk](https://www.rcot.co.uk/professional-standards-for-occupational-therapy-practice-conduct-and-ethics).

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 [via the following link](#)

HCPC good health and good character guidance for students, and professionals can be accessed [Standards of conduct, performance and ethics | \(hcpc-uk.org\)](https://www.hcpc-uk.org/standards-of-conduct-performance-and-ethics)

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/communication-and-using-social-media)

and in The Standards (2018).

[Standards of conduct, performance and ethics | \(hcpc-uk.org\)](https://www.hcpc-uk.org/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. 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 and the RCOT [Professional standards for occupational therapy practice, conduct and ethics - RCOT](https://www.rcot.co.uk/professional-standards-for-occupational-therapy-practice-conduct-and-ethics)

Service user/student relationship

The public, your University and the HCPC/RCOT expects the highest standards from occupational therapy 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
- 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; and
- 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/our-standards/our-expectations-for-your-record-keeping) sets out the principles of good record keeping and should be adhered to all times

- a) Complete all records at the time or as soon as possible after an event, recording if the notes are written sometime after the event
- b) Identify any risks or problems that have arisen and the steps taken to deal with them, so that colleagues who use the records have all the information they need
- c) 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
- d) 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
- e) Take all steps to make sure that all records are kept securely, and
- f) 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 PPAF form.

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/personal tutor if asked to do this and they will support you through this process.

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.

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 did not record the observations on the child that she looked after on X date”.

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

Example:

“It was believed that xxx did not carry out the planned visit to client X on 26 January 2011 as there was no record of any care delivered, and the travel sheet did not include the address of the client. When questioned xxx initially said that she had not visited and later claimed that she had, but was unable to give an account of her findings”.

2. Support and Responsibilities

There is a range of support for you regarding your practice experience. There will be a nominated person within each practice learning environment who will be registered as an Occupational Therapist with the HCPC. 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. They are referred to as your Practice Educator or Practice Supervisor. They may also arrange for you to work alongside other members of the occupational therapy team. You will also have a nominated Link Tutor who is an academic member of staff here at Birmingham Newman University.

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 occupational therapist 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

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

Your Practice Educators/Supervisors 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 or practice supervisor 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 or a member of the practice team/personal tutor as a matter of urgency.

You may also be supervised by other registered allied health professionals, for example Physiotherapists, social workers and speech and language therapists as part of your placement. Each of these registered practitioners will support you in line with the scope of their own practice. They will offer you support, feedback and guidance throughout your practice learning experience and will inform your overall practice assessment by feeding back to your practice educator on your progress. However, a HCPC registered Occupational Therapist will have overall responsibility for your placement (including the care based placement in Level 4) and will sign your PPAF. Your practice educator will ensure that all practice staff understand the importance and value of having students

in the practice environment to support your professional development.

Practice Educators 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 occupational therapy students from BNU 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. Education providers may offer the training directly or facilitate access to training for their students. A local policy for ensuring this training has been undertaken should include defining the responsibilities for training provision, managing the administrative function and following up learners who have not completed the relevant training.
- 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 and engage with CPD/lifelong inclusive of equality and diversity principles, with the aim of strengthening the skills needed to develop a more inclusive and participatory profession.
- Requirements for supporting learners is reflected in job descriptions for staff acting as practice educators or similar.
- The Link Tutor is notified immediately of any issues or concerns that arise with students while on placement.
- They work with 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.
- Students receive a minimum of one hours formal supervision weekly with an HCPC registered Occupational Therapists, which will include feedback on performance, a review of the placement learning outcomes, a review of the students learning contract and areas for future learning.
- A mid way review, with completion of the mid-way assessment report.
- A final assessment meeting with the student takes place to complete the placement assessment documentation.
- Written records of the students 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.

All students undertaking practice-based learning have equivalent support from practice educators, regardless of the setting or the award level.

Models of Supervision

You can expect to experience a variety of models of supervision during your placements. This ensures greater flexibility and maximises your learning opportunities. Models may include:

- 1:1 model where one student works alongside one Practice Educator.
- 2:1 Model where two students work together with one Practice Educator. This provides

learners with an opportunity for peer learning and supervision.

- 1:2 model where one student is working with two Practice Educators with joint or cross supervision. This is particularly useful when there is an experienced and inexperienced educator working together who would like to facilitate a placement, or where two educators job share or both work part time.
- 2:2 model where two Practice Educators and two students work together – a combination of the above two models which provides opportunity for both peer supervision between learners and cross supervision between educators.
- Collaborative Learning in Practice -CLiP model where a number of students work together with support and mentoring of an educator. Students are encouraged to take a lead in their practice. This model is sometimes known as Student Led.
- Long Arm Supervision Model - where the day on site supervision is not provided by an Occupational Therapist. A HCPC registered Occupational Therapist provides professional supervision with regular on site and/or remote contact and is responsible for the overall assessment of the placement. The Care Based Placement in Level 4 adopts a model of Long Arm Supervision.

Link Tutor

Each student will be allocated a Link Tutor for every placement. This is a member of the academic team at Newman who will support both you and your educator/supervisor 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 and your educator/supervisor at approximately mid-way through your placement. This visit may have many purposes such as;

- To enhance the relationship between the practice educator and the learner;
- Provide pastoral support for the learner when appropriate
- Provide educational support and advice to the learner and practice educator.
- Support the practice educator 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. See Appendix 1.

If you have a disability which requires reasonable adjustments you are encouraged to provide your practice educators/supervisors 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. There is also scope to document any individual needs on the PPAF to share with your educator/supervisor.

Further advice or support can be provided by the Student Support Services department. More information is [available here](#)

Accessing placement information

The process of 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 and/or Social 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 learning contract / placement development plan with up to four learning objectives 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 addition you will normally have simulation based activities in the week preceding each practice placement to enable you to practice, develop and consolidate previous skills to maximise your practice learning experience.

During these 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/RCOT.

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.
- Communication systems, including telephones and bleeps.
- Timing: start and finish times and break times.
- Changing facilities.
- Health and safety and local policies and procedures including, lone working, manual handling, bullying and harassment.

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

Access to facilities

Whilst on placement you can normally register with your local Trust library to get access to the local IT resources and online databases. This service is in addition to normal university library borrowing rights and access to the university electronic resources. A limited range of books and journals is available in ward/department learning resource areas. It may be possible to get online access from the placement area. If you require a password for online access, please ask your Practice Educator/Supervisor who should be able to organise this for you or signpost you to other assistance. Please be aware, some placement areas do not have library facilities.

Inter-professional learning opportunities in practice

Occupational Therapists 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 will normally have the opportunity to work and learn with other professionals. These experiences aim to 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. You should have a nominated practice supervisor who should provide feedback on your performance whilst undertaking the experience. There is room to record these experiences and achievements on your PPAF 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 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 Newman and most importantly you are representing yourself – maybe even to your future employer!

You are expected to:

- Adhere to all HCPC and RCOT standards including the guidance of The Standards of Conduct, Performance & Ethics (HCPC 2023) and RCOT Professional Standards for Occupational Therapy Practice, Conduct and Ethics (2021).
- Adhere to assigned organisation/unit/team policies, procedures and standards for care.
- Arrive on time and ready to learn every day.
- Adhere to uniform/dress code policy (see course handbook).
- Communicate your learning needs and objectives to the practice educator; and express any concerns and problems immediately to the practice educator or link/personal tutor.
- Communicate sickness and absences to appropriate persons in a timely manner.
- Attend scheduled tutorials and updates.
- Provide a safe environment for care.
- Keep contemporaneous records of care provided.
- Alert the practice educators of any problems with the placement that might prevent the satisfactory completion of the placement.
- Work within your sphere of competence/scope of practice.
- Immediately declare any change in your health or good character status to your personal tutor.
- Disclose any unsafe practice witnessed in accordance with the raising concerns policy.
- Attend the preparation for practice sessions and any inductions or mandatory training prior to commencement of placement.
- Attend the relevant practice support sessions and other sessions organised by the practice team or timetabled by the university.
- Take responsibility for completing the relevant sections on the PPAF form before and after placement
- Take responsible for submitting the PPAF form by the published deadline
- Complete the evaluation of placement learning at the end of each placement.

Role of Personal tutor

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

3. 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 occupational therapy 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 an Occupational Therapist 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/personal 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 [Student-Complaints-Procedure-2023.docx \(live.com\)](#)

On occasions service users may complain directly to students. If this happens you should inform your practice educator 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/fitness-to-practise/how-to-raise-a-concern/)

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;
- and**
- 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. For example, if you are pregnant, it is advisable to avoid exposure to certain toxic substances. You are also advised to avoid contact with chicken pox, cytomeglo virus, and MRSA.

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 so that you can be supported and the local risk assessment be completed. In such circumstances a risk assessment should be completed, and action taken to minimise harm. The outcome of this may be that an alternative placement is required, or adjustments made to the placement. If a risk assessment is not completed by your practice educator, 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). Students should not at any time, transport service users in their own car.

Placement Expenses

You may have additional placement expenses for travel and accommodation. These expenses 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 protect the public, uphold professional standards and to safeguard public confidence in the occupational therapy 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 (RCOT Standard 6.4.1).

If the fitness to practise concerns were related to a learner's own health and then their health improved enough to be deemed fit to practise, then a second attempt may be offered.

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:

- a) Physical or verbal abuse of a service user
- b) 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 Occupational therapy 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

Learners will be withdrawn from a pre- registration programme if they fail their second attempt at any practice-based learning component (RCOT Standard 6.4.3).

4. Useful Information

Practice Assessment Documentation

All students on the BSc (Hons) Occupational Therapy will be utilising the PPAF (Practice Placement Assessment Form).

Students in the 1st year/Level 4 - will be assessed on a Pass/Fail basis. You will not receive a percentage mark.

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

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

RCOT Resources

[Webinars for new and returning occupational therapy learners - RCOT](#)

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

1st year/Level 4 - For BSc (Hons) Occupational Therapy students on PP1 in their first year please use: (PPAF - Level 4)

2nd year/Level 5 - For BSc (Hons) Occupational Therapy students on PP2 and PP3 in their second year please use: (PPAF – Level 5)

3rd year/Level 6 - For BSc (Hons) Occupational Therapy students on PP4 and PP5 in their third year please use (PPAF – Level 6)

Supporting students who are failing to achieve

If your Practice Educator/Supervisor 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 exactly what the problem is 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 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 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 review

Further information regarding responsibilities and FAQs

Student responsibilities

You should take responsibility for your own learning and know how to access support

- Engages positively with all learning opportunities
- Understands the assessment requirements
- Works with and receives written feedback from a range of staff (including identified practice supervisors) and service users
- Reflects on learning and develop action plans to meet future learning needs
- Provides feedback on learning experience

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 who will support your learning and can contribute to assessment.

Q: Who will assess me on placement?

A: Your allocated Practice Educator. 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. If you have any concerns on placement you should raise these with the university as soon as possible.

Practice Educator Responsibilities

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

- Conducts assessments, informed by feedback from practice supervisors
- 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 midway 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

- Works in partnership with the practice educator to support the student on placement
- Has understanding of the student's learning and achievement in practice
- Enables scheduled communication and collaboration between academic and practice educators

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.

Key Contacts

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Appendix 1
Link Lecturer Visit Form



BIRMINGHAM NEWMAN UNIVERSITY

LINK TUTOR FEEDBACK

BSc OCCUPATIONAL THERAPY

NAME OF STUDENT:

NAME OF LINK TUTOR:

Placement No:

| YEAR ? | PLACEMENT ? |
|---|-----------------------------------|
| ? weeks | ENTER PLACEMENT AREA AND LOCATION |
| Prior to the midway point of the placement has the student or the practice educator contacted you to raise any queries or concerns? | |
| Summary: | |
| Date of initial contact: | |
| Checklist | Comments |
| Health and Safety Requirements | |
| SWOC | |
| Learning Agreement | |
| Professional Behaviour and Responsibilities | |
| Pillars of Practice | |
| Placement Learning Outcomes | |
| Placement Attendance/Hours | |

