HSC Practice Placement Hours Policy: Occupational Therapy (OT), Physiotherapy (PT) and Speech & Language Therapy (SLT)

Practice placements are arranged and allocated by the School of HSC and students are expected to undertake practice placements away from the Norwich area. Practice placements may be subject to change at short notice due to circumstances outside the control of the University.

Practice placements negotiated independently by students with practice education providers will not be recognised by the University (with the exception of the final practice placement for OT and PT). Students are allocated to practice education providers informed by their individual practice education profile and practice placement availability. By enrolment on a pre-registration OT, PT, SLT degree course the student agrees to attend all practice placements arranged by the School of HSC. Refusal by a student to undertake a practice placement allocated to them will normally result in the student receiving a fail grade for that practice placement.

The hours of assessed practice placement education is laid down by the relevant professional body and differs between the allied health professions (Appendix 1). Attendance at ALL sessions is compulsory unless otherwise indicated as there is an attendance requirement for the practice education units of 100%. Practice placements must be undertaken during the pre-arranged times stated by the School.

Absence Procedures

Sickness – Students must inform their practice educator and the School if they become unwell. The School procedure for certifying sickness must be followed whilst on practice placements. Periods of sickness must be recorded on the assessment form, and this will be entered on the student’s record in accordance with the requirements of the Clothier Report (1995).

Absence – Non sickness absence should be discussed with the practice educator but it is only the Course Director who will decide whether an absence is excused or non-excused. An excused absence usually constitutes an emergency situation. If a student feels these circumstances apply, they must contact their Course Director (using an excused absence form) who will consider their request. Any other absence (other than through sickness) will be deemed to be a non-excused absence. Please note that the School is required to report all absences on a student’s reference to potential employers.

Practice Placement Hours

The Health and Care Professions Council (2014 p.8) state that ‘The number, duration and range of practice placements must be appropriate to support the delivery of the programme and the achievement of the learning outcomes’. Due to varied nature of the four programmes there are two different policies for achieving the required hours for the programmes (Appendix 2 OT, PT and SLT). Practice education is an integral part of the programmes and a student must comply with the policy for their professional programme.
Appendix 1: Table of UEA Practice Education Hours

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Programme</th>
<th>Assessed Hours</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>BSc OT and BSc PT</td>
<td>1100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BSc SLT</td>
<td>525</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MSc OT and MSc PT</td>
<td>1073</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Appendix 2

OT and PT and SLT Practice Education Hours Policy

BSc OT and PT Hours

The requirement of the professional bodies is that students should complete a minimum of 1000 hours of practice education which has been successfully achieved. The practice placement periods within this course will enable the student to complete 32 weeks of assessed experience, achieving a minimum of 1,100 hours of practice. By enrolment on the BSc Course the student agrees to attend practice placements arranged by the School of Health Sciences therefore refusal by any student to undertake the practice placement allocated to them will normally result in the award of a fail grade.

In the first year Practice placement 1 (2 weeks) is formative, and does not contribute to the assessed hours, however the students are expected to complete a minimum of 30 hours per week which includes 2 hours of portfolio development. Practice placement 2 (4 weeks) requires the student to complete a minimum of 30 hours per week which includes 2 hours of portfolio development.

In years 2 and 3 there are 14 weeks of practice education (each has a 6 week and an 8 week practice placement), enabling the student to complete a further 28 weeks of 35 hours per week including 3 hours of portfolio development.

MSc OT and PT Hours

The requirement of the professional bodies is that students should complete a minimum of 1000 hours of practice education which has been successfully achieved. The practice placement periods within this course will enable the student to complete 29 weeks of assessed experience, achieving a minimum of 1,073 hours of practice.

In year 1 there are 7 weeks of practice education. During placement 1 (7 weeks) the students are expected to complete a minimum of 37 hours per week which includes 2 hours of portfolio development.

In year 2 there are 22 weeks of practice education. Placements 2 and 3 are 7 weeks in duration and Placement 4 is for 8 weeks. These second year placements enable the students to complete a further 37 hours per week including 2 hours of portfolio development.

BSc SLT Hours

The Royal College of Speech and Language Therapists (RCSLT) and Health & Care Professions Council (HCPC) require the successful completion of a minimum of 150 sessions of practice education in order to graduate (1 session is the equivalent of 3½ hours). A minimum of 100 sessions (350 hours) must be under the direct supervision or mentorship of a qualified Speech & Language Therapist. The expectation of the SLT programme is that students will work the same number of hours as a practising clinician; therefore in most cases the hours are easily achievable over the course of the two years of practice placements. The location of practice placements aims to reflect the areas where speech and language therapy is delivered: in the community and in acute settings; and with a variety of client groups including paediatrics and adults with acquired or developmental communication and swallowing disorders. The majority of practice placements are taken within health and education, but some are available in the private sector. The allocation to practice areas is informed by the student’s practice placement profile, which develops as the student progresses.
through the course. Each student will have a different pattern, but the aim will be to balance adult and paediatric experience.

**Portfolio Hours**

Students should complete the portfolio development hours on a weekly basis. These hours may be accumulated by the students (not SLT students) and taken on a fortnightly basis with the agreement of the practice educator. The time allowed for portfolio development should be arranged at the discretion of the practice education provider.

**Recording Hours**

The hours should be recorded on the front of the assessment form on a daily basis to ensure that an accurate record is kept. Students are requested to record full and half hours only. Any time missed due to sickness or other absence must be recorded on the assessment form.

- Lunchtimes only count towards the total hours if they are spent in clinical or departmental focused activities, e.g. formal staff meetings, in-service training, involvement in patient activity.
- Any absence from the practice placement must be reported by the student to the practice educator and the School.
- Students are expected to undertake further personal study to develop their practice placement learning. This will not be counted within the assessed hours.
- The hours accumulated on any practice placement which is failed will be voided.

There is an attendance requirement for the practice education units of 100%. A student who is unable to achieve a minimum of 80% of a practice placement experience through sickness or absence will normally be deemed as unable to successfully complete the required learning outcomes for the practice placement, and will undertake a deferred practice placement experience.

**Deferred Practice Placement Procedure**

This procedure applies to all practice placements which are 6 weeks duration or more and will be used where a practice placement is deferred due to sickness or personal circumstances:

- Students should have passed the interim assessment to enable the hours from the first half of the practice placement to be counted
- On undertaking the deferred practice placement students will normally complete the outstanding weeks from the midway point, plus one week of re-orientation
- The outstanding weeks, plus the week of re-orientation will count as assessed hours if completed successfully
- If students have not reached the midway point of the practice placement the whole practice placement will be deferred as completed hours have not been assessed
- If the student’s performance is raising issues of concern at the midway point, as documented in the assessment form, the whole practice placement will be deferred
- Both the interim and the final assessment will be considered for the final mark especially where there is a change of location or educator
- Deferred practice placements will normally be taken in sequence

In the case of intercalation (interruption of study) practice placement progress will be reviewed.

**Assessments Linked to Failed and Deferred Practice Placements**

Academic assessments linked to practice placement experience will normally be deferred where the practice placement is deferred. However, in the case of assessments that are largely reflective in
nature they will normally be undertaken and submitted at the prescribed time. If in doubt, students are advised to contact the module coordinator concerned for confirmation of procedure.