

Change of placement allocation procedure for students in the Faculty of Health Sciences (Nursing (all fields), including apprenticeships and Specialist Community Nursing, Trainee Nursing Associates, ODP, Midwifery, Paramedics, Physiotherapists)

The information in this document explains the process and associated criteria by which a requested change of placement allocation is considered by the Faculty of Health Sciences. The process for students requesting a change to an allocated placement is summarised in the accompanying flowchart on page 14 of this document.

Introduction

Healthcare programmes are characterised by periods of time spent in practice placements, and for most healthcare programmes it is a feature that up to 50% of it is spent in practice placements. The Faculty of Health Sciences take every step to ensure that students at all times before and after application stages are fully aware of the requirement to undertake varied practice placement experiences throughout the University of Hull's healthcare placement circuit which includes both North and South bank localities. Spending time in a real practice setting is an invaluable experience for students, as they work alongside qualified professionals who pass on their experiences and can support student learning.

Please visit the Placement Learning Unit webpage [CLICK HERE FOR LINK TO THE PLU WEBSITE](#) for further information, guidance and support regarding placements and the placement learning experience.

How are placements arranged and allocated?

Placements are a valuable resource to the Faculty and to students in their programme. The Faculty Placement Team has links with Trusts and other organisations from around the Yorkshire and Humber region. The majority of these links are based in Hull, Scarborough, Grimsby, Scunthorpe and surrounding areas; however, they do stretch much further than this. While students will experience placements in the main Trusts/organisations in these areas there are numerous other organisations and non-NHS places, such as nursing homes and clinics, social care placements and separate GP surgeries where students can be allocated.

Placements are allocated in partnership with placement providers. The Faculty of Health Sciences uses placements which are provided by the placement providers and availability of a particular placement is subject to a variety of conditions such as:

- Compliance with regulatory body standards,
- Availability of a suitably prepared registered health or social care professional in placement to support a student,
- Sufficient capacity of the placement to provide a place.

During *welcome week*, students are asked to complete a student information sheet which provides students the opportunity to inform the Placement Team of any special requirements and details about their transport situation. The Placement Team allocate placements using the information provided. The Placement Team endeavour to accommodate an individual's needs, but with the best of intentions they cannot ever guarantee that these will be met.

The information students provide on the form about their travel status will be used to allocate all their placements for the programme and although this may change due to individual circumstances, the Placement Team will only use the original information provided. If a student does not indicate whether they are a car driver or use public transport, all the student's placements will be allocated as if they are reliant on public transport.

The process of allocating a student a placement has to be followed in a timely manner. This is to ensure that students are notified of their placement in sufficient time to be able to put in place travel and childcare/carer arrangements and ensure that there is a period of time for the Faculty to review any requests to change an allocated placement, and where the request is upheld, to secure a new allocation for that student. The Placement Team will aim to let healthcare students know the details of their allocated placement 8 weeks before a placement starts.

Will a student be expected to travel to placement?

The Placement Team recognise that travelling to placement can be a daunting prospect but the experiences available in many of the rural, community and smaller villages/towns can be invaluable to students, enabling them to compare and contrast the differing social/economic profile of service users and the difference in local delivery of services.

The Placement Team ask students to inform them on the student information sheet if they have access to their own transport as there are a handful of practice placements in rural settings that are not served by public transport or, due to limitations in public transport, would make the journey unfeasible. However, this does not mean that those with their own transport will travel more

frequently than those without as the financial implications and increased transport times are relevant to all students. Those students without their own transport will always be placed in areas where public transport is available, but they must be prepared that this can be costly and often time-consuming.

Due to the size of the placement circuit, it is the Faculty of Health Sciences policy that all students must be willing to travel up to 2 hours in each direction. Journey time is calculated from a student's recorded term-time address to the placement.

The Placement Team use Google Maps™ when calculating travel to placement journey time. This does not take into account circumstances outside of the Placement Team control such as speed of traffic, delays, or how fast a student walks. The journey time calculated by Google Maps™ is considered to be definitive and will be used when checking any claims that a journey time exceeds 2 hours.

Will a student get a placement in the area they live?

The Placement Team covers a large geographical area when sourcing placements. For example, when the Placement Team need to allocate a Grimsby-area placement, much consideration goes into who to allocate, taking into account a variety of factors. However, living in Grimsby and being reliant on public transport does not guarantee that a student will get all or any of their placements in Grimsby.

How are students' individual needs considered when allocating a placement?

The Placement Team try to allocate placements fairly. For example, if a student has travelled a long distance for a placement, the team will look into placing the student closer for their next placement, if possible.

Each practice placement is audited regularly by a nominated lecturer (Link Lecturer) in conjunction with colleagues in the practice setting. They agree the number of students that can be appropriately supported at any one time as well as the suitability of the placement for the student's programme. The Placement Team work within these guidelines when planning practice allocations and also consider a number of complex factors e.g. student requirements for specific and varied experiences, placement availability and the range of students in the setting at any one time, equity of travel among students on all cohorts and on all programmes taking into account students' term-time addresses.

The Placement Team also considers individual needs to meet reasonable adjustments for declared disabilities/health issues and this will involve liaising with Student Support Services such as Occupational Health and the Learning Support Team. As these factors are considered at the point of allocation, a **placement will not be changed** unless there are **exceptional** circumstances.

What counts as exceptional circumstances?

Exceptional circumstances are defined as a problem that a student has recently encountered which goes beyond the normal difficulties experienced in life and that will affect the student's ability to attend their planned practice allocation. The criteria for exceptional circumstances are:

- 1) The student has an association with the placement that relates to their relatives or a critical incident. This would include situations such as having a relative who is an in-patient or client at the placement, a member of staff on the placement who is a relative or where the placement is associated with a bereavement or traumatic event in the student's life.
- 2) The student's personal situation has changed radically since commencing their programme. This refers to life changing events such as divorce, or bereavement which were unforeseen and impacts on the student's ability to attend the allocated placement. While the situation will be considered, a review should be undertaken to ensure that support is in place which is conducive to completing their programme.
- 3) Where travel to placement exceeds 2 hours. Students will inevitably be required to travel to placements during their programme but will not be expected to travel for more than 2 hours each way. However, if a student lives outside of the placement circuit this limit may not be possible due to the geographical location of the student's home and the available placement.
- 4) Health issues where the Occupational Health Department report identifies that health could be compromised in a particular clinical environment. A balance needs to be established in this case. Fundamentally, if a student is not fit, they are not fit for practice and patient safety is paramount. A change of placement would be a short-term solution and if ill-health continues to be a problem other solutions should be sought.

What does not count as exceptional circumstances?

- Concerns about routine childcare/carer responsibilities
- Previous experience with the client group
- Personal preferences
- Particular interest (or not) in a specific client group
- Concerns over public transport
- Concerns over travel
- Concerns over shift times

- Disruptions to shared travel arrangements
- Moving house
- Risk of adverse weather
- Paid work commitments or constraints arising from paid employment
- Minor illnesses/conditions (e.g. hay fever) or planned health appointments
- Disabilities for which reasonable adjustments have been made or where the student has experience or time to manage the situation.

Frequently asked questions:

Q: 'I don't want to go to there because.....'

A: Students will often have pre-conceived ideas about a placement or may have heard something has given them cause for concern and it would be wise to discuss this with their Personal Supervisor. Students may feel that they have a preference for working with medical elderly patients once qualified so feel that a placement on A & E is no use to them. Nevertheless, students should keep an open mind about each placement as the aim is to experience a variety of practice learning opportunities during their healthcare programme.

Q: 'What if the placement is too far away?'

A: All students are expected to travel at some point in their training.

Q: 'What if I can't get there for the shift start time?'

A: The view of Faculty and practice staff is that the shift start time is not negotiable. There are important clinical reasons why staff, including students, need to be ready for duty at the shift start time.

Q: 'What happens if I don't have my car anymore?'

A: Although it is recognised that car ownership can change, the Placement Team take the view that if a student was a qualified practitioner they would have to manage the change or lose their job and there are very few placements that cannot be accessed by public transport.

How and when does a student make a request to change an allocated placement?

If a student feels they have **exceptional** reasons to request a change to a confirmed allocation, to ensure equity of response, they **must not** approach the Placement Team or the Student Hub directly to seek a change.

The Placement Team always recommend that students take some time to let the placement allocation information settle in. It is common for students to react to their placement before looking into transport options, speaking to family and doing some research. Due to strict data protection, faculty staff are not permitted to discuss a student with the student's family or friends. This includes conversations about placement details. Students must not ask family members to contact on their behalf as faculty staff are not permitted to speak with them. For all students, the Placement Team recommend that they discuss any concerns about attending a placement and when considering to submit a request to change a placement with their Personal Supervisor. However, the Personal Supervisor **cannot** request a change of allocated placement on a student's behalf.

It is a requirement that for the smaller fields of nursing (Mental Health, Child and Learning Disability) that students contact their Personal Supervisor before submitting a Request to Change Placement form. This is because the placement opportunities for these fields are limited and more specific guidance about managing an allocated placement or confirming that the student's circumstances meet the specified criteria is needed before submitting the form.

Once a student receives their placement allocation information, they have **5 working days** to complete and submit the Request to Change Placement form. **Forms received after the 5 working day time frame will not be considered.**

For ODP students only: students must have discussed any reasons to request a change of placement with their Personal Supervisor. If the request is deemed to meet the exceptional circumstances defined in this document the Personal Supervisor will, in partnership with the programme director and the Placement Team, discuss the options available. The Personal Supervisor will notify the student of any decision regarding a change of placement.

Students must complete and submit the online electronic request form to the Placement Team. The form is available via this link:

<https://forms.office.com/r/Y0EpaekZDc>

Students **must** complete the form as fully as possible. There is the opportunity for a student to include documentary evidence to support their claim, and where possible and appropriate, students are expected to provide evidence to support their request. Examples of appropriate evidence include but not limited to:

- Occupational Health report
- Doctor/consultant letter
- Mapped journey that exceeds 2 hours

Request to Change Placement Form

Request for a change of placement due to exceptional circumstances must be made by completion of the correct form. The Request to Change Placement form is available via the link below and paper forms will not be accepted:

<https://forms.office.com/r/Y0EpaekZDc>

Guidance Notes for completing the Change of Placement Request form

Students are advised to read the accompanying guidance notes when completing the request to change placement form. The guidance notes are available on the [Faculty Placement Team website](#).

How is the student request considered?

A student request to change a placement will be considered as submitted and they will **not** be contacted to elaborate if they do not include sufficient information. Requests to change an allocated placement will only be considered against the exceptional circumstances stated in this document.

Requesting a change does not guarantee that it can be made. As practice placements are often at capacity this may result in an alternative placement not being available.

After the deadline for receiving student requests to change a placement, all forms received are screened to check for any students whose request indicates a need to be referred to the University's Occupational Health Department. Requests to change an allocated placement will be considered by a panel in the Faculty of Health Sciences. The panel will comprise of a member of the Placement Team, the Academic Lead for Nursing Programmes and the Associate Dean for Student Experience. If one or more of the panel members is unavailable, an additional member of staff may be co-opted onto the panel. Students cannot attend these meetings. The panel will meet 3 weeks after the deadline for receiving the Change of Placement Request form. This will allow time for any requests that require an Occupational Health referral for the referral to be made.

How will the student be notified of the decision?

The student will receive an email to their university email account directly from the chair of the panel (Associate Dean for Student Experience). If the request is upheld the student may also receive an email directly from the Placement Team with new allocation details. The timeframe for being notified of new allocated placement details will vary depending on how and when the Placement Team can source an alternative placement with our practice partners. However, the Placement Team will endeavour to notify the student as soon as possible so that the student has time to prepare and plan for their new allocated placement.

Can students appeal against the decision?

A great deal of time and due consideration is taken into addressing the complex requirements of practice allocation. This includes the panel assessing and considering information detailing 'exceptional' situations supplied by the student in their Change of Placement Request form.

It is after this stage in the process, a student remains dissatisfied, they may appeal a decision related to the 'Change of Placement Process'. This particular process is outlined below:

If you believe that the process has not taken relevant exceptional circumstances into full account, or if you believe that due process has not been followed, you may appeal this decision.

Any appeal should outline the clear grounds of appeal and include relevant details.

As a guide for inclusion in the appeal, details such as:

- *That there were circumstances (for which evidence can be provided) that the panel were not aware of at the time, and which impacts on your ability to attend the allocated placement*
- *That there is evidence of discrimination or bias in relation to the decision made by the panel*
- *That the process outlined in this document for placement allocation was not followed correctly, and that this calls into question the initial allocation and/or panel decision*

The appeal should be addressed, marked 'Strictly Confidential' to:

Placements Team – (Faculty of Health Sciences) fhs-placement@hull.ac.uk

The panel considering the appeal will consist of:

- Heads of Departments aligned to Nursing (all fields)
- Placement Team Lead (*if required*)

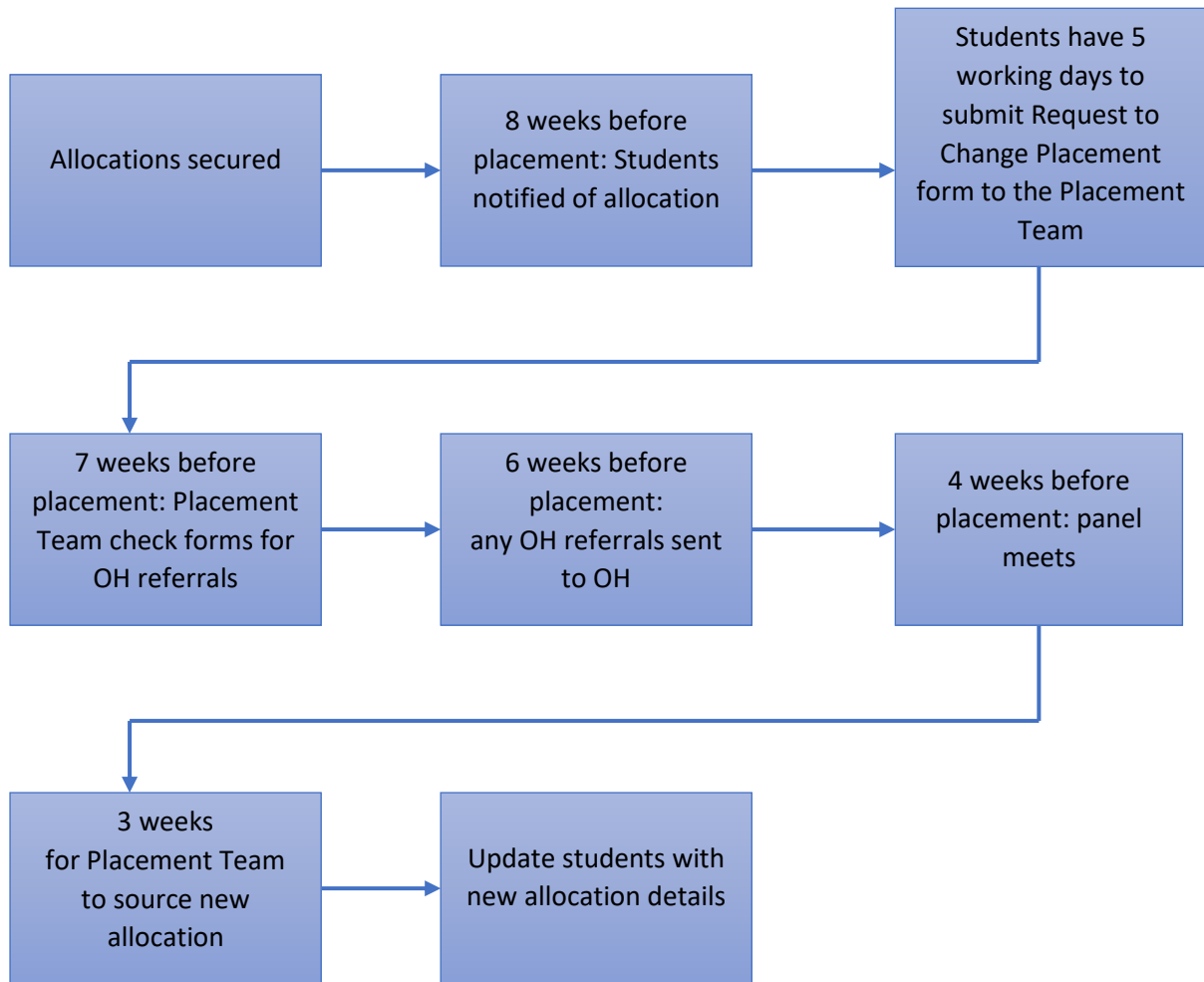
It is important to be aware that you cannot appeal simply to question the placement provided; you must be able to show that there has been some defect in the process by which that decision was reached. Please visit the Placement Learning Unit webpage [CLICK HERE FOR LINK TO THE PLU WEBSITE](#) for further information, guidance and support regarding placements and the placement learning experience.

What if my request to change placement is not supported by the faculty?

If a student still considers that they cannot attend their allocated placement, they will need to speak to their Personal Supervisor (in the first instance) about possible plans which may include an application for a suspension of studies until their circumstances have resolved so that they can meet the requirements of their programme. There are also practical measures which may be suggested such

as car share or temporary relocating to the placement area using funded accommodation such as bed and breakfasts or, where available, trust accommodation.

Overview of Faculty of Health Sciences Placement Allocation Process



REQUEST TO CHANGE PLACEMENT FLOW CHART

