The purpose of Supervised Clinical Experience, what to expect, what your responsibilities are and how to get the best out of the experience.

Supervised Clinical Experience

A students' guide

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How the Supervised Clinical Experience fits into your MSc course

The 30 credit specialised modules have a particular focus on developing your skills as a practitioner and have been designed to enable you sufficient time and opportunity to apply your learning from the tutor directed/taught element of the module to your clinical practice. As part of the module you will be required to identify specific areas of practice you wish to develop. The module will then support your learning and practice development, providing further tutor support in relation to your clinical skills and practice.

If you are undertaking the programme and are not currently working as a physiotherapist, supervised clinical experience (SCE) will be provided to ensure you have the opportunity to apply your learning from the 30 credit speciality module to clinical practice. The SCE differs from a traditional placement in that it is embedded within the 30 credit speciality module. The aim of the SCE is to reinforce your learning and provide opportunities to implement new management strategies; validating your learning within clinical practice and developing your confidence in a safe, supervised way. You will complete the taught sessions from the module prior to undertaking the SCE whereby you will then receive focused teaching and practical experience in clinical practice. The SCE will normally be delivered as a minimum ratio of two students to one tutor.

If you are undertaking the programme as a part time (PT) student working as a Physiotherapist you will be allocated a specific module tutor to discuss and agree how you plan to apply your learning within your own practice. You will be expected to identify specific learning objectives and opportunities in order to embed your learning from the module and develop further practical / clinical skills.

You will receive feedback from your tutor in relation to your Supervised Clinical Experience in preparation for the module summative assessment which will be based within the university and integral to the module's learning outcomes.

Your learning and reflections from the clinical application are key to your on-going development and will feed into the assessment task for the module.

How the Supervised Clinical Experience fits into your 30 credit module

The 30 credit elective modules all have the same assessment structure. They all have two tasks. The first task assesses the first three learning outcomes for your module which are focussed on the understanding and skills required for effective practice in your speciality area. This will be assessed as a viva, including practical application for some modules. The second task is a reflective piece of writing which will highlight key points of learning from your experience and how this has affected your approach to clinical practice.

Before your Supervised Clinical Experience

Before you go out into a clinical environment, there are a number of processes that need to be completed. If the processes are not completed, you will not undertake the Supervised Clinical Experience.

These processes are divided into those organised by the Professional Issues Team at Sheffield Hallam, those organised as face-to-face training and online learning for the whole group and those processes involving you as an individual.

Mandatory processes organised by the Professional Issues Team

The university are required to ensure that, before you go into a clinical environment, you:
1. are of good health and you have full immunisation against, for example, Measles, Mumps, Rubella, Tuberculosis, Chickenpox and Hepatitis B
2. inform us of any criminal convictions, any previous disciplinary investigations in the workplace, dismissal from any previous posts or any warnings or sanctions made against you,

You will be required to complete an online questionnaire about your health. The link for this will be e-mailed to you. Do your best to complete it from the information that you have. After completing the online questionnaire you will be invited to a meeting with a nurse from occupational health who will discuss any health issues, with a particular focus on your immunisations. If you require further immunisations - or you have no evidence of immunisations you have received already then you will be offered further immunisations. The cost of this is included in your course fees.

You will be required to submit an online application to be screened by the Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS). This used to be known as a criminal record check.

As part of the DBS screening process, you will need to present three forms of official ID to the Help Desk in the Robert Winston Building. They need to see originals but they will take copies of the documents straight away, so you will not have to surrender these documents. They will provide a list of suitable documents.

**Face-to-face training**
The university are required to ensure that, before you go into a clinical environment that you:

1. are trained in the principles and practice of informed consent
2. are trained in infection control
3. are trained in manual handling
4. are trained in basic life support

This training will be done in sessions timetabled as a part of your Supported Professional Development Programme. This timetable will be made available on the Blackboard site.

**Online training**
The university are required to ensure that, before you go into a clinical environment that you:

1. have a clear understanding of expectations in a clinical work environment, including any relevant policies, procedures and practices. To fulfil this, we have made the CSP and HCPC documents either here as weblinks or on the BlackBoard site.
2. have a good understanding of your responsibilities for health and safety, including fire awareness
3. are trained in the Equality and Diversity laws in the UK and the principles on which they are based,
4. are trained in managing confidentiality and information governance.

**Individual plan and agreement**
Prior to the start of your Supervised Clinical Experience, you must agree a work plan with the clinical tutor who you will be with on the Supervised Clinical Experience. There will be a number of factors that feed into this:

1. Your reflection on the modules studied during semester 1, which will have been shared with your academic advisor. This may mean that you wish to include objectives for the SCE which build upon the learning that you have done in semester 1, such as your skills in patient assessment,
your understanding of evidence and your understanding of patient-centred care in your speciality area.

2. Your reflection on your achievement in Task 1 on the 30 credit module. This will be discussed with your module tutor who will help you prepare relevant objectives for the Supervised Clinical Experience.

3. The context in which you will be having your Supervised Clinical Experience. This may give you certain opportunities and may have some restrictions in terms of what you wish to achieve.

4. The Learning Outcome being assessed in Task 2 of the 30 credit module.
   a. Critically reflect on own current practice and rationalise appropriate strategies to optimise future practice (Cardiorespiratory Care)
   b. Critically reflect on own approach to managing people with neurological pathology (Neurological Therapy)
   c. Critically reflect on own ability to manage patients with neuro-musculoskeletal problems (Musculoskeletal Rehabilitation)
   d. Critically reflect on own approach to managing athletes within a variety of sport settings (Sport Injury Management).

The above information needs sharing with your clinical tutor as a discussion or over e-mail so that they are aware of what you want to achieve and have the chance to structure your Supervised Clinical Experience and your support around this. There will be limits to how possible it is to structure the experience around your learning needs, bearing in mind that they may not always be able to anticipate patient needs and that there will usually be a pair of students with each clinical tutor.

Prior to the Supervised Clinical Experience, you must sign an agreement with the SCE coordinator and your clinical tutor. This will show that you understand and will abide by the rules and regulations of the placement experience and the host organisation. A copy of this agreement is reproduced in Appendix 1 with the elements that the student needs to agree to highlighted.

**Key expectations**

**Uniform and personal appearance**
You will usually be expected to change into uniform once on-site in the changing facilities provided. You are expected to have high standards of cleanliness and hygiene during your clinical experience.

You should carry photo identification with you at all times in a clinical area. We suggest that you keep your SHU Card with you.

Your uniform will normally be:
- Navy blue or black trousers
- Navy blue or black socks
- Black flat shoes (not open-toed) or white trainers
- White tunic (worn with shirt and tie underneath for male students) or a white polo-shirt
- Hair should be short or tied back so that it is off the collar, nails unpolished and cut short. Make-up should be kept to a minimum. One pair of stud earrings and a wedding band are the only jewellery allowed.
- Most clinical environments in the UK expect clinicians to be bare below the elbow whilst working in any clinical area and whilst providing care to patients. This is to enable thorough hand washing before and after every patient contact. If this is an issue for you for religious or cultural reasons, please let your clinical tutor know this in advance of your SCE. Depending upon the local infection control policies, arrangements may be made for you to wear disposable sleeves during patient contact.

**Professional behaviour**

Prior to your Supervised Clinical Experience, you must be familiar with the Standards expected of you in a clinical environment. You must read the HCPC standards, available on the [HCPC webpage](#) regarding:
Although you do not have to be HCPC registered to undertake the Supervised Clinical Experience, we do expect you to conduct yourself in a professional and responsible manner throughout. If your behaviour is deemed to be unprofessional (i.e. you do not abide by the Standards of Conduct, Performance and Ethics) then your clinical tutor has the right to ask you to alter your behaviour or leave the clinical environment.

You are required to remain with your clinical tutor at all times during the Supervised Clinical Experience and you must not take part in any clinical practice involving patients/clients/service users or any other activities without the full authorisation of the person supervising you;

Confidentiality

Please read the Faculty Policy on Confidentiality.

- You must not share any information collected or obtained on your Supervised Clinical Experience in any publication or with a third party with the consent of your clinical tutor.
- You must not remove or copy any documents or software belonging to the placement provider.
- When you report and reflect upon your experiences, you must not disclose the name of any person (patient, family or staff) or any organisation (the clinic, hospital or Trust). This applies to university activities and also to your social media presence.
- You will have access to personal information about individuals during the course of your SCE. You must keep this information confidential. Breach of confidential data, including any personal data, may result in disciplinary action under the University's disciplinary regulations for students and may be an offence under the Data Protection Act 1998.

At the start of your Supervised Clinical Experience

It is important to be aware of local policies, procedures and practices. For example, the organisation in which you are based may have local policies on emergency situations, fire safety, accident reporting, managing aggressive behaviour, responding to complaints, risk assessment. There will be a short Induction organised either at the start of your Supervised Clinical Experience or shortly beforehand that will, as a minimum, consider local policies on medical and fire emergencies.

Gain a contact number for your clinical tutor that you can use to inform them of sickness or any other emergencies that may prevent you from attending and provide them with a contact number for you.

During your Supervised Clinical Experience

Keeping in touch
During the Supervised Clinical Experience, you have responsibilities to both the university and the clinical organisation.

If you are off-sick, please inform the clinical tutor first, usually by phone. Then inform Nicky Snowdon by e-mail. If you miss one of your scheduled days due to sickness then we may not be able to accommodate a replacement day for you. However, it is important that you are in good health in a clinical environment. If your SCE suffers because of your sickness, we will consider your case individually with the help of the Student Support Officers.
If your clinical tutor is off-sick, you will not be able to stay in the clinical environment with any other member of staff. If the clinical tutor is off-sick, they will contact you directly to warn you not to travel to the clinical centre and your missed time will be re-arranged for another time.

You need to maintain communication with your academic advisor and your allocated module tutor during the SCE period to demonstrate that you are engaging in study on an ongoing basis. We suggest that you meet your module tutor at least once during this time period and that you submit at least three relevant reflective pieces of writing to them via PebblePad. This will enable you to develop a clear idea of what you need to submit for Task 2.

Relevant pieces of reflective writing might include:

- a reflection on the experience of patient assessment - for example, how well did you clinically reason during and after the assessment? how well did you manage the inter-personal communication?
- a reflection on your practical skills
- reflection on your communication skills and inter-personal skills with your patients
- a reflection on the use of evidence in the context in which you are working
- reflections on how your practice has developed since before the Master's course commenced
- reflections on new approaches to physiotherapy treatment and patient management
- reflections on your ability to engage with the wider healthcare team in holistic patient management.

Bear in mind that although you may be still on your SCE or you may be waiting to go out for your SCE, other students may already have completed theirs. Wherever possible you should meet with your colleagues and attend sessions organised as part of the course to support your colleagues and to learn from others.

What clinical work will you do?
Exactly what sort of work you do on your SCE will depend upon the context in which you will be working. You should talk to your clinical tutor prior to the SCE to find out about where you will be going so that you can make sure you are prepared and have read around common conditions in that area. You will definitely observe patient management and clinical practice but depending upon the area where you are working this may involve one-to-one time with patients or may involve working with a group of patients or liaising with the wider healthcare team.

You will all have a chance to shadow your clinical tutor and to observe them with patients. Most of you will be able to assess and treat patients yourselves, though you will always be supervised by the clinical tutor when you do this. Whether or not you get to assess and treat patients yourselves will be the decision of the clinical tutor alone because they retain responsibility for the patients under their care.

However, it may be helpful for you to understand how the clinical tutor will be making their decisions about whether you should be assessing and treating patients yourselves:

- the main factors will be your understanding of patient management and your behaviour on the SCE itself. So,
  - when you observe what the tutor does, observe carefully and be prepared for them to ask you questions about what you might have done in that assessment, what you think the assessment has found and what you think the treatment options might be.
  - Also, even if the tutor or your colleague is leading the interaction with the patient, be engaged and friendly with the patient. Be quiet when needed but stay alert and be involved if the tutor, or the patient, indicates that they would like you to be more involved.
- the tutor will be aware of how well you managed on Task 1 of the 30 credit module and this will influence their decision about how much patient management you lead on. Your reflection on
Task 1 will also be taken into account. If you did not do well on Task 1 but you feel that you know why and you know what you need to improve upon then, this will come across as professional and self-aware and will maximise the chances that your clinical tutor will be happy for you to be assessing and treating patients yourself.

**What if there are problems?**

Your clinical tutor will be the first point of support for you whilst you are on the Supervised Clinical Experience. Remember that these individuals are all trained and experienced physiotherapy tutors themselves; they have been employed because we trust their teaching skills.

If you have any problems that you do not wish to discuss with the clinical tutor, Nicky Snowdon is the main person you should go to if you have any problems relating directly to the SCE. As usual, you also have Katie Elliott, the Student Support Officer, to go to for wider support on the course as well as your module tutor and academic advisor.

To clarify these roles:

"**Clinical tutor**" means the individual in charge of you and your patients in the clinical environment. They are employed as associate lecturers at Sheffield Hallam and you should have had a chance to meet them and work with them during the module.

"**Module tutor**" means a member of the module team who will usually be a member of the "in-house" teaching team at Sheffield Hallam. The module tutor will have reviewed your feedback for Task 1 with you, will help you prepare your Action Plan for the SCE and will review your reflections on PebblePad during the SCE period. For some of you, your "module tutor" will be the same person as your "clinical tutor".

"**Academic advisor**" means the member of staff that maintains an overview of your work throughout the whole course and is there to support your learning at any point and to meet with you to review your course at intervals. This may be someone from outside the module team.

If your behaviour is deemed unacceptable whilst on Supervised Clinical Experience, the clinical tutor shall notify Nicky Snowdon and a meeting will be held between yourself, the clinical tutor and Nicky. You will have a chance to explain your behaviour but if this is not considered satisfactory you may not be allowed to continue on the SCE and may be called to an Academic Conduct Panel at the university.

**What feedback will you receive from your clinical tutor?**

We are not asking the clinical tutors to provide written feedback on your achievement on the SCE. However, they will give you feedback each day on that day’s activities and will give your ideas for preparing for the next contact day.

It is a good idea to record feedback that you receive from the tutor so that you can reflect on both your strengths and your areas of weakness. Remember that feedback may be about your communication, your reasoning, your practical skills and your understanding of wider patient management and that all of these areas are relevant to the reflective account to be submitted for Task 2.

If you feel that you have done well with the experience, you may be keen to request that the clinical tutor writes you a reference for applying for future work. However, you should discuss this with your clinical tutor **before the end of the Experience** rather than afterwards.
After your Supervised Clinical Experience

We hope that you enjoy your Supervised Clinical Experience. This is a relatively new part of the course for our full-time students and we are keen to evaluate your experiences. There will be both a questionnaire evaluation and also some face-to-face discussion sessions held in the regular class contact and in the Staff-Student Committee at the end of semester 2. Please help us to improve the course by engaging in these.

Sharing experiences underpins the ethos of the course. You will therefore be expected to present your practice-based learning from both a clinical and a service context. This will either be in the form of a conference-style presentation on-campus, or online presentations and web discussions. This acts to expand your learning experiences providing greater insight into the range of contexts in which physiotherapists practice as well as developing your presentation skills.

You should not make additional contact with the clinic or the clinical tutor after the Supervised Clinical Experience. For example, do not request additional clinical time with them. If you want to make further contact afterwards, please do so through Nicky Snowdon or one of the other university staff. This may seem unfriendly, however, previous students have made repeated contact after placement experiences and this has added significantly to the work required by the placement providers. It is one of the behaviours that make it hard for Sheffield Hallam to obtain placement experience for future physiotherapy students.

As described on page 2, you are required to write a reflective piece for Task 2 on your 30 credit module. You should use the reflections that you have written during the SCE to inform this but you should also analyse your own approach to patient management, your practice and your abilities after the SCE to inform this piece of work. Remember that a good reflective piece of writing demonstrates what you have learnt in detail, applies this to your practice as a therapist and includes detailed plans for your future learning showing that you understand how to progress your own abilities.