

Occupational Therapy Apprenticeship Working Hours in Practice-Based Learning Guidance

The following guide has been produced for Learners, Academics, Placement Co-ordinators, and Placement Educators to enable all parties to work closely together to ensure that the same information is given to Learners and placement partners.

Principles of The European Working Time Directive [EWTd] (1998)

Learners will not normally be on practice-based learning for any period longer than 14 weeks therefore the EWTd rule is not legally binding. However, learners and mentors must be aware of the requirements of the Placement Provider's Working Time Regulations Policy for protecting the Health and Safety of Staff from the risks of working excessive hours.

Learner Working Hours in Practice

- Learners will undertake shifts which reflect the hours of the practice-based learning provider from the outset of their programme.
- Learners may work weekends from commencement of the programme as appropriate to the practice-based learning setting.
- **The shifts that learners work will be identified by the practice-based learning area.**
- There may be an opportunity for a learner to work flexibly. Learners should not expect flexible working, as it may not be appropriate, and this can only be arranged with the agreement of the placement educator in consultation with the university (if required).
- Learners should normally work 37.5 hours per week in practice-based learning. **This includes half a day study leave (3.5 hours) for a full week of practice-based learning which is counted in the total placement hours.**
- (If relevant within your organisation) If the learner is on a contract for less than 37.5 hours (e.g 30 hours) the learner could work full time hours for the placement if in agreement with their employer or would work their normal working hours; which may then require a block to be extended (up to 2 weeks) to gain the required number of placement hours. Working days are based on the work pattern of the clinical educator and service need.

- If occupational therapy learners are absent from practice-based learning for any reason, they should follow the procedures set out by Sheffield Hallam University and the practice-based learning setting. Learners are required to complete a minimum of 80% of the practice-based learning experience in order to pass. **It should be noted that if a student completes the minimum possible hours on each practice-based learning experience, they will not achieve the 1000 hours required for professional registration.**
- The hours worked, excluding breaks but including study, must be recorded in the learner's assessment documentation and signed by the placement educator. The record of practice-based learning attendance spreadsheet should also be completed and signed off.

Learners' shift hours and breaks

In order to provide clarity on breaks the University is proposing the following:

- Please follow your placement provider guidance for work patterns including when to take breaks
- Flexibility about when breaks are taken must be negotiated within the practice-based learning area and in line with your placement provider's Health and Safety Governance procedures. In certain circumstances timing of breaks may be delayed. However, it is important that learners recognise the effects of fatigue on performance and concentration. If a student expresses personal problems the educator should encourage the student to contact their Academic Advisor/Learner Support Officer.

Bank Holidays

- Whilst on placement, occupational therapy learners will only be required to attend practice-based learning on bank holidays if this reflects the working pattern of the practice-based learning experience. This should be negotiated with the educator and where relevant alternative day off should be arranged.
- These specific days off are recorded on the learner's timesheet as a Bank Holiday [BH] by the educator and/or student and **these hours are NOT included** in the weekly total.
- **Learner occupational therapists may be concerned that due to the Bank Holidays, the total number of hours worked on practice-based learning will be less, but this is accounted for in the training plan, and they are not required to make up these hours.**

Attendance Monitoring

- The ideal is that learners completing the programme attend for 100% of both the Theory and Practice requirements of the programme.
- However, it is recognised that learners may face a number of challenges during the programme which require a period of sickness or special/compassionate leave.
- It is important for the learner to recognise they should keep sickness and absence to a minimum as future employers are often interested in the number of days and the number occasions when sickness and/or absences have occurred.
- The University will monitor closely sickness and absence to ensure learners are eligible for registration as qualified practitioners.

Reporting Sickness and Special/Compassionate Leave whilst on Placement

- It is the **responsibility of the learner** to notify their educator, university and employer if they are not able to attend
- Learners must ensure that they formally notify the practice-based learning area, **using the correct local procedures**, if they unable to attend for any reason.
- **Learners must also inform their employer of any sickness/compassionate leave as they would do when in practice through their normal sickness reporting mechanism**

Reporting Sickness and Special/Compassionate Leave whilst on Practice-Based Learning

- In addition, learners should report sickness on the first day following the guidance below:

Please note that learners should report both '**Practice Placement Absence**' and '**Taught Session Absence**' by completing the [Learners Absence Form](#). If not currently logged in to Google Drive, clicking on the link will require the student to log in using their university email address as per the below example (**username@my.shu.ac.uk**). This will then take the student to the Sheffield Hallam University login page where they would login using their single sign on Sheffield Hallam University login details. The HWB Student Absence Google Form for will then open for completion.

New Google Form [Learners Absence Form](#)

Example Email Login username@my.shu.ac.uk

Google
Sign in
to continue to Forms

Email or phone
b2058763@my.shu.ac.uk

Forgot email?

Not your computer? Use InPrivate windows to sign in. [Learn more](#)

Create account

NEXT

Sheffield
Hallam
University

Please enter your username and password to access the SHU systems relevant to your area of work or study. Your username and password should be the same as those you currently use to log into SHU applications.

[Forgotten your password?](#)

Username
b2058763

Password

Logon

- The learner will be prompted to complete all details required to record their sickness absence.
- If the learner has been sick and this has been reported correctly, according to local and SHU policies, then this should be recorded as 'sick' [S] in the attendance record and verified by the mentor.
- If the learner does not follow the correct procedures for reporting sickness to the placement, then this must be documented as 'Absent' [A] in their attendance record and verified by the mentor.
- **When returning from sickness/leave, it is important that learners notify the University, employer and the Placement Area.**
- The university practice liaison tutors, placement provider and employer should be informed as soon as possible when a student feels their illness is likely to make them absent from placement for more than 5 days.
- Learners who have a period of absence due to illness prior to their placement may also be required to obtain occupational health clearance stating that they are fit to start their placement.
- Apprentices who require longer than 4 weeks absence from work or placement will require a break in learning and this would need to be discussed with the work-based mentor and apprentice coach
- **If a student is referred to the Occupational Health Department or A&E whilst on duty, please inform the University (s.lacey@shu.ac.uk) and employer**

Consistently poor attendance

- Learners need to meet the HCPC requirements for number of practice-based learning hours and consistently poor attendance may mean they fail to do this.
- In addition, poor attendance may impact upon achievement of competence.
- Learners with poor attendance on practice-based learning will be seen by their academic advisor, placement coordinator and/or course lead and may be referred to the Fitness to Practice panel.
- The aim of this process is to ensure that the student receives the support they require as well as to ensure that they understand the long term implications of consistently poor attendance.
- **It is important to note that if attendance continues to be poor, the learner may need to temporarily withdraw from the programme and join a later cohort, or the student can be asked to leave the course.**