



College of Health, Wellbeing and Lifesciences
Applicant and Student Occupational Health Screening Policy

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Overview

The College is contractually and legally responsible for ensuring students enrolled on pre- health and social care pre-registration and qualification courses undergo health screening.

Students enrolled on courses within the Bioscience and Sports departments are not usually required to undertake health screening for their placement experiences. However, there may be occasions where they are elect to undertake a placement in a healthcare setting and therefore may be required to undertake health screening.

For degree apprenticeship programmes the student's employer will have contractually agreed to vaccinate the student to the required levels to undertake placement experiences as outlined in the Department of Health Green Book. The College is not responsible for providing vaccinations for these students, however, there may be occasions where the students employer does not have an established OH provider. Therefore, it may be required for the College to provide additional vaccinations.

In addition health screening requirements are likely to apply to doctoral students who decide to undertake research in a healthcare setting This work typically requires an NHS Research Passport.

This policy takes into account national policies and guidance from the College of Health, Wellbeing and Lifesciences contracted Occupational Health provider, Sheffield Occupational Health Service, who are based at Sheffield Teaching Hospitals NHS Trust.

1. Background Information

Although the College holds the responsibility, we depend on contracted health professionals to undertake the screening on our behalf.

Occupational Health screening of students enables the College to identify and prevent placement-related health problems as well as providing them with an assessment of functional capacity for undertaking placements and where appropriate can identify additional support or reasonable adjustments which may be put in place to support a student through their training.

2. Procedures for Pre-enrolment Health Screening

2.1. Pre-Registration / Qualification Health and Social Care Courses

All pre-registration / qualification health and social care students we train are subject to the same occupational health screening process, and at enrolment all new students complete an online enrolment task which includes an agreement outlining their responsibilities for the undertaking of professional requirements, including occupational health screening. Students agree to and acknowledge that if they do not satisfy the particular health screening requirements for their course within the defined timescales they may be required to withdrawn from their course. Re-enrolment in subsequent years is subject to completing the screening and is monitored by the Professional Issues Team. The College provides a free of charge occupational health screening process for its students which must be undertaken via SOHS as placements in a health and social care setting are a

requirement of their course. This however does not include the additional costs incurred from SOHS for non-attendance by applicants and students at appointments.

Applicants are screened before / on entry to the first year of their course. On confirming their offer of a place, the applicant is sent a welcome email which provides a link to an online health questionnaire via 'Cohort'. The applicant is required to complete the online questionnaire as soon as possible and no later than 21 days. After submitting the questionnaire the applicant should book to attend a suitable Pre-Course session. Reminders will be sent by the Occupational Health Cohort system and the Professional Issues Team on a weekly basis to those applicants who have not fully submitted their questionnaire. Any applicants who fail to submit the questionnaire within 12 weeks are rejected for non-engagement by the University and their place re-offered to another applicant.

Applicants are expected to provide full and honest full details on their questionnaire and any non or partial declarations by applicants which do not provide SOHS with a full and accurate medical history may result in their offer of a place or their enrolment being withdrawn.

On submission of the questionnaire the 'Cohort' systems automatically generate an initial response. Where the applicant has not declared any information which may need further investigation by SOHS the system generates a 'Cleared' result and the Professional Issues Team can confirm their booking to attend their chosen Pre-Course session.

Where the applicant has declared historic / current health or medical related information which may need further investigation by SOHS the system generates a 'Submitted' result. In this instance a Pre-Course session booking cannot be confirmed by the Professional Issues Team at this point. For questionnaires with a 'Submitted' result, the questionnaire will be reviewed by appropriately trained medical staff at SOHS, who may in turn contact the applicant to obtain further information (either in person or via third party specialists) and an assessment is made on their fitness for the course.

For those individuals who are assessed as fit and a result confirmed as a 'Cleared' the Professional Issues Team will then process their Pre-Course session booking.

For any individuals who have booked a place to attend a Pre-Course session but do not achieve a 'Cleared' result in time to attend, the Professional Issues Team will contact them directly, informing them of the reasons why their place to attend has not been confirmed and advise them to re-book on a different session in the future to allow a greater timescale for clearance. If appropriate the Professional Issues Team may also advise the applicant to follow-up their assessment with SOHS to speed up the process.

Applicants who do not achieve a 'Cleared' result for their health screening prior to their course starting will only be allowed to conditionally enrol.

Although the final decision as to whether to allow a student to commence a course or not lies with the College, this decision is in part based on the medical opinion provided by SOHS.

For those individuals who are not assessed as fit to undertake their chosen course either at this time or any time in the future, this medical opinion is communicated, with reasons why, to the Professional Issues Team. The Professional Issues Team will inform the Course Leader and the Student Support Advisor who will arrange for the applicant to meet them to discuss the outcome from SOHS and the implications of the decision. Following this meeting applicants will be deferred or rejected on medical grounds as appropriate.

2.2. Research Passport Students and Bioscience and Sports Courses

There are no pre-enrolment health screening requirements for these courses or students undertaking PhD's.

3. Health Screening During the Course

3.1. Pre-Registration / Qualification Health and Social Care Courses

Students are required to keep their Course Leader and the Professional Issues Team informed of any condition which may affect their ability to undertake their course. At the beginning of each new year of their course (either following progression or returning from a break in study) students are required to confirm whether or not there has been any change in their health.

If a declaration of a change in health is received from a student as above, the Course Leader will discuss further with the student to establish what if any impact the change may have on the students ability to undertake the course, and if a potential impact is identified the Course Leader should arrange for a referral to be made to SOHS for a health screening re-assessment prior to any placements via the Professional Issues Team.

Students who have a period of 4 or more week's sick leave (regardless of the medical or health condition) from the course at any stage should be referred by the Course Leader to SOHS for a health screening re-assessment on their resumption of studies and prior to any placements.

Students who have taken a break in study due to health reasons must be referred back to SOHS by the Course Leader for a health screening re-assessment prior to resuming their studies.

In any of the above instances where the Course Leader needs to arrange for a health screening re-assessment, a referral form must be completed by them. They should discuss with the student the reasons for the referral and gain their written consent. Both the referral and consent form will be sent to the Professional Issues Team who will process the referral and upload electronically the 'Cohort' Occupational Health portal. SOHS will review the referral and arrange to see the student within two weeks. If appropriate the outcome of the assessment will be discussed directly with the student at this appointment or further information may need to be obtained from third party specialists before a final assessment can be made. Once the assessment has been made by SOHS this will be communicated

to the student and the Professional Issues Team. The Professional Issues Team will then send this onto the referring Course Leader and Student Support Advisor. If appropriate the Course Leader will then arrange to meet with the student to discuss the content and implications of the assessment or arrange return to study / placement as appropriate.

In addition, as part of a Student Fitness to Practise investigation or Panel Hearing it may be identified by the Investigator or Panel that the student needs to be referred to SOHS for a re-assessment, In this instance an appropriate individual involved in the case should be identified to discuss with the student and complete the referral.

Should a student refuse to provide consent for a referral they will be in direct breach of their enrolment agreement. They will not be permitted to commence any placement activities until such a time that a re-assessment of their health can be carried out by SOHS. In the event of no re-assessment being able to take place due to lack of consent Student Disciplinary or Fitness to Practise procedures will be commenced as appropriate and may result in the student being permanently withdrawn from their studies.

3.2. Research Passport Students and Bioscience and Sports Courses

Students who elect to undertake a placement or research activity in a healthcare setting may be required to undertake additional checks prior to commencing. These checks may include health screening.

Once a student has identified and confirmed their placement / research setting the student should contact the area/department to identify with them any additional requirements they need to complete prior to commencing. These additional requirements should be confirmed in writing to the student, supported by any relevant NHS Trust policies.

4. **Appointment Cancellations and Non-Attendance**

Where applicants / students are unable to attend an appointment for their health screening they are responsible for cancelling and re-arranging the appointment directly with SOHS, regardless of whether they have already reported an absence to the University. Appointments cancelled with less than 48 hours' notice will be considered as non-attendance.

SOHS will notify the Professional Issues Team where applicants / students fail to attend two scheduled health screening appointments (either without notice or less than 48 hour notice). This will then trigger the need for authorisation to be provided to book a third and final appointment. The Professional Issues Team will contact SOHS and ask for a third appointment to be made and will also contact the applicant/student directly to inform them that a third and final appointment is being arranged. The contact will outline that failure to attend will initiate the withdrawal for non-engagement with Occupational Health process with the recommendation to the relevant Head of Department that the applicant/student is withdrawn from the course.

5. Information provided by Sheffield Occupational Health Service

Health screening of health and social care applicants is carried out for various purposes:-

- To confirm their fitness to complete the course including placements
- To indicate where additional support and adjustments are required for students to complete the placement aspects of their course.
- To confirm their fitness for employment within the NHS and Social Care environments at the end of their course.

The criteria for health screening of health applicants are the same as those which apply to NHS employees (appendix 2).

The criteria for health screening of social care applicants are the same as those outlined in the HEOPS guidance for Social Workers (appendix 2).

Following an assessment by SOHS a response for each individual student is provided to the Professional Issues Team.

5.1. Suitable for the course with no restrictions or adjustments

Where this response is received no further action is required by the College.

5.2. Suitable for the course with recommended restrictions or adjustments

Where this response is received the information is provided to the Course Leader and/or Disability Co-ordinator to assess whether the recommendations received are 'reasonable' and would enable the student to meet all course requirements as required by the relevant professional, regulatory or statutory body. Where appropriate placement areas are consulted with and risk assessed.

5.3. Not suitable at this time

Following an assessment by SOHS they may be of the opinion that an applicant and/or student may be suitable for their chosen course/profession following a period of recovery/stability and this will be communicated to the individual and College. On receiving this response the College will discuss the medical opinion with the individual and agree with them a deferred start date and re-assessment with SOHS.

5.4. Not suitable for course

Occasionally SOHS will reach the medical opinion that an individual is not suitable for their chosen course/profession in line with HEOPS guidance and other relevant guidelines and legislation. In this instance the College will discuss the medical opinion with the individual and inform them that they have not met the suitability requirements for the course. However, the College will discuss and support the individual in exploring other suitable courses (both professional and non-professional) where their health would not be a barrier.

6. Students who don't comply with Occupational Health screening

6.1. Pre-enrolment Health Screening

All offers made for courses in Appendix 1 are subject to satisfactory health clearance. Applicants who do not engage with the process at pre-enrolment stage will have their offer withdrawn. Late applicants or applicants who have shown some engagement but not completed the health screening process by the time they are due to enrol will only be conditionally enrolled until such as time that they have met the requirements and have been assessed as suitable.

6.2. Health Screening during the Course

Compliance with OH screening is a requirement of all courses outlined in Appendix 1. Upon enrolment to their first year all student agree to comply with the health screening processes throughout their studies. Students who fail to comply with the requirements will be subject to Fitness to Practise proceedings.

7. Post-registration Courses

Most students on post-registration courses are normally employed by and funded by an NHS Trust and will usually undertake the practical elements of their course at their place of employment. The relevant NHS Trust will already hold all relevant records on the professional checks undertaken as an employee, including occupational health screening, and therefore students are not required to undertake additional health screening with the university via SOHS.

However, should the student not currently be employed by an NHS Trust or elects to undertake a placement experience at a hospital outside the NHS Trust they are currently employed by the same occupational health screening arrangements for pre-registration students will apply (see section: 3.1).

8. Appeals

If a student wishes to appeal against a medical decision they must follow the appeals guidance found [here](#). They need to appeal within 10 working days of the medical decision and they must provide the 'Medical outcome appeal request' directly to the Professional Issues Team along with evidence and the grounds for the appeal. Should the College feel the student has provided sufficient grounds they can request a medical review from SOHS providing full information from the applicant / student. The outcome of this medical review will be final as far as the College is concerned and if an applicant or student is still not satisfied with the medical decision they can submit a complaint via the University's [Complaints Process](#).

Appendix 1

BSc (Hons) Nursing
PgDip in Nursing
MSc Nursing
BSc (Hons) Nursing (Learning Disability) and Social Work
BSc (Hons) Midwifery
MSc Midwifery
BSc (Hons) in Operating Department Practice
BSc (Hons) Paramedic Science
BSc (Hons) Diagnostic Radiography
BSc (Hons) Physiotherapy
MSc Physiotherapy (pre-registration)
BSc (Hons) Radiotherapy and Oncology
PgDip in Radiotherapy and Oncology in Practice
MSc Radiotherapy and Oncology (pre-registration)
BSc (Hons) Occupational Therapy
MSc Occupational Therapy (pre-registration)
BA(Hons) Social Work
MA Social Work
FDA Working with Children, Young People and Families
MSc Dietetics
Masters in Art Psychotherapy Practice
Return to Practice courses
MSc Physicians Associate
PgDip in Physicians Associates

Appendix 2

Health Screening and Immunisation Requirements for Students undertaking placements

The following health requirements are in place for students undertaking placements.

Health Assessments

All students to have undergone health screening at, or prior to commencing their course, to Higher Education Occupational Physicians / Practitioners (HEOPS) Social Work Students - Standards of medical fitness to train.

Immunisation Requirements

Radiographer/Physio/OT/Orthoptics

Testing for immunity and infection

This should be in accordance with current DH guidance or an equivalent evidence based standard. This will change over time. Students should protect service users, colleagues and themselves by being immunised against serious communicable diseases when vaccines are available. The current DH guidance recommends the following:

- a. TB – Evidence of immunity and freedom from TB disease.
- b. Measles, Rubella and Chickenpox – Evidence of immunity.
- c. Hepatitis B – Immunisation is only indicated for those exposed to unfixed human blood or tissues. This immunisation is for the protection of the student and not service users. Some training environments may expose students to increased risk. Local risk assessment should be undertaken to establish the risks. Students should be offered this immunisation if they are at risk but the decision to accept the immunisation is that of the student after provision of adequate information about risks and benefits.

Social Work and Social Care

Testing for immunity and infection

Students will automatically commence the immunisation programme to facilitate the accessibility of a rich and varied placement experience. Students should protect service users, colleagues, and themselves by being immunised against serious communicable disease when vaccines are available. The current DH guidance recommends the following:

- a. TB – Evidence of immunity and freedom from TB disease
- b. Measles, Rubella, Chickenpox – Evidence of immunity
- c. Hepatitis B – Immunisation is only indicated for those exposed to unfixed human blood or tissues. This immunisation is for the protection of the student and not service users. Some training environments may expose students to increased risk. Local risk assessments should be undertaken to establish the risk/ Student should be offered this immunisation if they are at risk but the decision to accept the immunisation is that of the student after provision of adequate information about risks and benefits.

If students choose not to undertake testing for immunity and infection due to personal health or religious reasons then this should be brought to the University's attention at the earliest possible opportunity. It will not preclude them from the course but will limit placement opportunities by restricting access to placement with an immunisation requirement, such as drug and alcohol services, homeless shelters,

hospital settings etc. To make an informed decision, students should discuss this first with Occupational Health who can report on a decision.

Nursing/ /ODP/Paramedics

Testing for immunity and infection

This should be in accordance with current Department of Health (DH) guidance or an equivalent evidence based standard. This will change over time. Students should protect patients, colleagues, and themselves by being immunised against serious communicable diseases when vaccines are available and there is no contraindication. The current DH guidance recommends the following:

- a. Tuberculosis (TB) – Evidence of immunity and freedom from active TB disease.
- b. Measles, Rubella and Chickenpox – Evidence of immunity.
- c. Hepatitis B – Immunisation and tests to check response to be offered to all students.
- d. Hepatitis B, C and HIV – Antibody tests for infection to be offered to all students.
- e. Additional health checks for students who undertake exposure prone procedures (EPP) are described in detail in online DH guidance. i.e. Full Hepatitis B, C and HIV screening will be offered.

Students should seek specialist medical advice and diagnostic testing if they are, or could be, a carrier of a serious communicable disease such as hepatitis B or hepatitis C.

Midwifery

Testing for immunity and infection

This should be in accordance with current Department of Health (DH) guidance or an equivalent evidence based standard. This will change over time. Students should protect patients, colleagues, and themselves by being immunised against serious communicable diseases when vaccines are available and there is no contraindication. The current DH guidance recommends the following:

- a. Tuberculosis (TB) – Evidence of immunity and freedom from active TB disease.
- b. Measles, Rubella and Chickenpox – Evidence of immunity.
- c. Hepatitis B – Immunisation and tests to check response to be offered to all students.
- d. Hepatitis B, C and HIV – Antibody tests for infection to be offered to all students.
- e. Pertussis vaccine (Whooping cough) – Evidence of immunity.
- f. Additional health checks for students who undertake exposure prone procedures (EPP) are described in detail in online DH guidance. i.e. Full Hepatitis B, C and HIV screening will be offered.

Students should seek specialist medical advice and diagnostic testing if they are, or could be, a carrier of a serious communicable disease such as hepatitis B or hepatitis C.

Ownership and version control

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