

Radiotherapy and Oncology (RONC)

Student Working Hours in Practice Guidance

The following guide has been produced for Students, Academics, Placement Learning Tutors, Practice Educators and Mentors to enable all parties to work closely together to ensure that the same information is given to students and placement partners.

Principles of The European Working Time Directive [EWTD] (1998) - please refer to the Working Time Directive (WTD)

Student Working Hours in Practice

- Students may undertake a range of shifts from the outset of their programme if the placement area is also working shifts.
- The shifts that students work will be identified by the practice area and will be influenced by: the normal shift patterns worked on the area they are allocated to, the working pattern of their mentor and the numbers of students requiring supervision. This is to maximise placement opportunities for students.
- There may be an opportunity for a student to negotiate to work long days (maximum 11 hours per day). Students should not expect to always work this type of shift, as it may not be appropriate and long days can only be worked with the agreement of the mentor and the Placement Learning Tutor (PLT).
- Students should normally work 30 hours per week in practice.
- The hours worked [excluding breaks] must be recorded in the student's attendance record on Pebblepad and confirmed by the PLT.

Students' working hours and breaks

In order to provide clarity on breaks:

- During an 8-hour day or more, a rest period of at least 30 minutes should be taken. Again, the time allocated for this break should not be claimed for in the hours worked. So, if a student works 8 hours, with a 30-minute break, they will record 7.5 hours worked in their attendance record.
- During a long day (more than 11 hours) an adequate rest period of at least 60 minutes (may be split into two 30-minute breaks) should normally be taken. These breaks should not be claimed for in the hours documented in their attendance record. So, if a student works 11 hours, with a one-hour rest period, they will record 10 hours worked in their attendance record.
- In addition, a concessionary 15-minute break during the shift may be permitted at the discretion of the service, which can be included in the hours worked.
- Breaks cannot be added onto either end of the day to shorten the shift.
- ***NB in exceptional cases, shorter breaks may be taken based on student need. However, this should not become routine practice, nor should students routinely use this to shorten their working shift. This should be agreed with the PLT and the mentor.***
- Flexibility about when breaks are taken must be negotiated within the placement area. In certain circumstances (e.g. attending an unwell patient) timing of breaks may be delayed.

However, it is important that students recognise the effects of fatigue on performance and concentration. If a student expresses personal problems the mentor should encourage the student to contact their PLT/ Student Support Advisor/ Course team.

Study Days

All RONC students receive one self-managed time day per week. These are set days as follows;

- Year 1 BSc- Wednesday
- Year 2 BSc- Thursday
- Year 3 BSc- Friday

Any issues with these study days should be discussed with the PE and PLT. Should days need to be changed then evidence should be provided in line with the local policy.

Bank Holidays

- Whilst on placement, student Therapeutic Radiographers are not expected to work Bank Holidays and can take these in addition to allocated study day where these fall on different days. If the student needs to attend placement to gain competency in an area they are working in they may do so but this time cannot be carried over.
- These specific days off are recorded in the attendance record as a Bank Holiday [BH], these hours are NOT included in the weekly worked total and NOT viewed as absence.
- It is important to note that 7.5 hours are allocated to each Bank Holiday [even if a shift pattern would ordinarily be longer]. So, if there is one BH during a week, the student will be required to work 22.5 hours during that week and if there are two BHs during a week, then the student will be required to work 15 hours that week. Student Therapeutic Radiographers on Placement are eligible for the statutory bank holidays listed on the university “Key Dates” guidance.

Sickness and Absence

- 100% attendance is expected in both academic and clinical placement.
- All sickness, special leave, compassionate leave and absences must be recorded on the student's attendance record
- If a student does not attend the required number of hours to achieve competence, then this time may result in attendance during the refer blocks to get back on track.

Attendance Monitoring

- The ideal is that students completing the programme attend for 100% of both the academic and practice requirements of the programme.
- However, it is recognised that students may face a number of challenges during the programme which require a period of sickness or special/compassionate leave.
- It is important for the student to recognise they should keep sickness and absence to a minimum and can be required to attend refer placements should their attendance be insufficient.
- **NB: future employers often request the number of days and the number occasions when sickness and/or absences have occurred. The University will monitor closely sickness and absence and provide these for references.**

Reporting Sickness and Special/Compassionate Leave

- It is the responsibility of the student to notify their Placement if they are not able to attend.
- Students must ensure that they formally notify their placement area, using the correct local procedures, if they are unable to attend placement for any reason.
- Good practice is to contact before the placement area is due to start and students should ensure that a clear message is given. If calling students should note the name of the person spoken with and the date/time of the phone call.
- Students should also contact the clinical department and email the PLT
- Students must contact on each day they are not attending placement, unless they have a medical certificate which indicates they will be off sick for a period of time.
- Please note that students should report both 'Practice Placement Absence' and Taught Session Absence' by completing the Student Absence Form.
- If the student 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
- If the student 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.
- If sickness exceeds 7 consecutive days (usually 4 placement days), the student is required to submit a medical certificate to the Student Support Officer/ PLT.
- Any unauthorised absence should be documented as a concern by the mentor in the Student's Assessment documents and the PLT notified.
- Special Leave/Compassionate Leave can only be agreed by the PLT. Students should report their absence to the placement area as described above and on the first day of absence, contact the PLT to discuss their needs.
- If a student is referred to the Occupational Health Department or A&E whilst on duty, please inform the Course / Year Lead / Clinical Lead.

Consistently poor attendance

- Poor attendance may impact upon achievement of competence and achievement of the professionalism requirements which would lead to attendance of refer placement.
- Students with poor attendance on placement will go through the stages identified in the SHU Process for dealing with Absence from placement, which is as follows:
 - **Stage 1:** Conducted by the PLT:
 - **Stage 2:** Cause for concern form completed and escalated to the Year Leader with action plan set
 - **Stage 3:** Referral to the course leader
- 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 student may need to temporarily withdraw from the programme and join a later cohort or may need to withdraw from the programme.

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS (FAQs) CAN BE FOUND IN THE PLACEMENT HANDBOOK.