



## Students in Placement – General & COVID secure FAQs (For PE's)

### General FAQs

<b>Q1</b>	<b>Do I have to be a practice educator for students?</b>
	<p>Yes, as a paramedic, it is understood that as part of your job role you will mentor across a range of staff groups including HEI student paramedics, distance learning student paramedics, new ECAs and newly qualified paramedics. More information on this is available via the paramedic 'scope of practice', found on the intranet (available via: <a href="http://intranet.swast.nhs.uk/Downloads/SWASFT%20downloads/Clinical/Scope%20of%20Practice/ParamedicV2.pdf">http://intranet.swast.nhs.uk/Downloads/SWASFT%20downloads/Clinical/Scope%20of%20Practice/ParamedicV2.pdf</a>)</p>
<b>Q2</b>	<b>I'm unsure if I'm ready to be a practice educator, what can I do?</b>
	<p>Becoming a practice educator is a big step in your paramedic career. You will be given time to consolidate your learning as a NQP and transition in to a qualified paramedic before being asked to begin mentoring. Once the time comes, all paramedics will attend a mentoring course. Once this is complete will you be asked to mentor a university student as a named practice educator. If you continue to feel unsure of mentoring you can look to your OO and the practice placement team for further support and resources to help feel more prepared, of which there are many to help ensure that you are kept up to date and feel confident in mentoring. These include regular PE update days, a practice education resources page and additional information, all of which can be found via the CPD page on the intranet.</p>
<b>Q3</b>	<b>Can I have more than 1 student at a time?</b>
	<p>Yes, there are times when you may be required to have more than one student. You may be mentoring an ECA student paramedic as well as having a university student on placement with you as a 3<sup>rd</sup> person on the DCA. You may also find that you are allocated a university student but have another student placed on shift with you for ad hoc shifts whilst your student is not on placement with you.</p>
<b>Q4</b>	<b>I'm concerned about my student's progress, what should I do?</b>
	<p>Firstly, take the time to sit with your student and discuss your concerns. They may not realise that they are not achieving what they should be, they may give an explanation to what is stopping them from achieving their potential and highlight</p>



	<p>areas where they require further support. During this discussion produce an action plan between the two of you to work towards. Ensure you also discuss worries with the students HEI and personal tutor.</p> <p>If you continue to see areas of concern, discuss with the practice placement team and university to gain further guidance and support, including potentially gaining support from the LDO team who may be able to review your student. It's important that concerns are raised as early as possible to give the student additional support where needed and the opportunity to improve and meet the standards required of them to successfully complete their placements. Please ensure all meetings and action plans are well documented throughout.</p>
<b>Q5</b>	<b>My student is changing practice educators, how can I help with continuity of their learning?</b>
	<p>It's important to complete a practice handover form for the student and pass on to the new practice educator. This will help the new practice educator to have an overview of the student and their current aims. This can be found via the intranet. ('Practice educator handover log' found via <a href="http://intranet.swast.nhs.uk/practice-educator-resources.htm">http://intranet.swast.nhs.uk/practice-educator-resources.htm</a>)</p>
<b>Q6</b>	<b>I am not currently able to mentor due to personal reasons, what should I do?</b>
	<p>In some circumstances, we understand that mentoring may not be appropriate. If you find yourself in this situation, please talk to your OO. They will complete a 'temporary withdrawal from practice education' form for you, which will get sent to the practice placement team. This will be updated for you and ROC will be informed, allowing you to temporarily have a break from mentoring. This will then be reviewed by your OO on a monthly basis until you feel able to mentor again. You will be given support by your OO team with the aim to return to mentoring in the future. During the time that you are not mentoring you will be supported by your OO, practice placement team and staying well service where appropriate.</p>



## Covid secure FAQs

<b>Q1</b>	<b>Have placement arrangements changed because of COVID-19?</b>
	<p>As Covid-19 still remains in circulation, some things about placements may be different in 2020/21. For example, there is likely to be extra emphasis on risk assessment of individual students and there will be greater use of personal protective equipment (PPE). Consideration is being given for the placement opportunities to be undertaken in a variety of different stations, locations and departments to ease with COVID secure station arrangements. We have also been closely working with operations, ROC and our partner universities to ensure that the safety of all is maintained. We may have to consider postponing or delaying some placements for our students, so you may find that the student you have been working with or were due to have may no longer be on placement. We have had to be more flexible with placing of students, due to station outbreaks, closed stations and maximum numbers of staff &amp; students that can be on station at any one time. You may find that due to this, the student you have been assigned may be moved to another location or may have some shifts with another mentor. This is to help minimise risk but ensure that students can still attend placements.</p>
<b>Q2</b>	<b>Is clinical placement for students safe?</b>
	<p>As was the case pre Covid-19, no placement can be entirely risk-free. This is why the risk assessment process is important.</p> <p>The trusts student in placement risk assessment has been amended to take into account all the new COVID secure measures that have been put into place throughout the trust, both at an organisational and station level. Operations teams have been involved in ensuring that station risk assessments have been conducted and numbers of staff on stations have been taken into consideration when planning student allocations.</p> <p>Individual risk assessments will also be carried out for students by their respective universities. Any risks identified will be dealt with through their occupational health teams. You, as a practice educator, will be made aware of any potential concerns raised for your student by your PPC.</p>



<b>Q3</b>	<b>I have been told that my student is at an increased risk, what does this mean for the incidents that we attend?</b>
	Each of the students who present into this category would have been spoken to by the university Occupational Health team. They will have individually been assessed and are aware of the risks associated with Ambulance placements. Speak with your student to find out what advice they have been given and support them in implementing this. For example, it may be that the student has to sit in the front of the vehicle while confirmed COVID or AGP cases are dealt with. Whatever they have been advised to do, please do support them and challenge behaviours that may be upsetting to the student.
<b>Q4</b>	<b>I have a student from a BAME background, should I encourage them to have a "Your Review" with the operations team?</b>
	Yes. Please do encourage them to have this conversation with your local operations team and to convey any concerns back to the Practice Placement Coordinator (PPC) for your university.
<b>Q5</b>	<b>Are the students being FIT tested and Hood trained?</b>
	Yes. This is being completed prior to commencement of their placements by trust trained FIT testers on all available masks within your areas. . FIT testing is due to cease for all roles (students, paramedics, HART, MRU) by March 2021. Students will however, still be required to have powered hood familiarisation. Powered hoods are being kept on all vehicles with enough to accommodate students as part of the crew (3 hoods on DCAs, 2 hoods on RRVs).
<b>Q6</b>	<b>My student complains of signs and symptoms of COVID, what process do they follow?</b>
	Advise them to contact the sick line and book sick as per normal protocol. Students will follow the same procedures as per all employees of the trust and have testing available to them, so encourage them to call your local CCC to arrange this. If you have concerns raised to you, please speak with your local county coordination centres who will advise you further. Please also raise this with your university PPC for awareness.



<b>Q7</b>	<b>What happens if the COVID-19 infection rates go back up or there are local lockdowns?</b>
	<p>Local health and social care services may have to respond to future waves of Covid-19 infection and local scenario planning is happening now. It is conceivable that this could affect student placements but HEIs and placement providers aim to keep arrangements as normal as possible for students in any future waves.</p> <p>Healthcare students are considered to be essential workers. This means that they should be able to access childcare for school age children during a lockdown and travel to their placement.</p>
<b>Q8</b>	<b>I don't have my student for all of their shifts, why?</b>
	<p>This has been done to enable COVID secure environments on stations. To effectively manage the increases in numbers that student placement brings, there may be the requirement to place a student with alternative practice educators on a different station for a period of time.</p>
<b>Q9</b>	<b>How will not having them affect completion of their documentation?</b>
	<p>Some of our partner universities have adapted their sign offs to reflect the changes in placement provision (for example, those with Plymouth students, there has been a move from practice educators having the summative sign off, to the universities now having this and practice educators having the formative sign off). Speak with the other practice educators and find out how your student has progressed throughout the shifts with them. If you are still unsure, speak with your PPC who may be able to provide advice and support or involve a PPEd/LDO to offer you both guidance and support to enable competency sign off. Alternatively, speak with the university programme lead for your student who will be able to offer advice.</p>
<b>Q10</b>	<b>I'm concerned that having a student heightens my risk of Covid, is there anything I can do?</b>
	<p>Understandably Covid is a worry for many and we all want to minimise our risk as much as possible, that is why we are working very hard to ensure that safety is maintained as much as possible during this pandemic for both staff and students. We continually undertake and review risk assessments for students and their placements, and have a number of strategies in place to</p>



help ensure everyone's safety. We are arranging placements in accordance to maximum numbers per station highlighted by risk assessments to ensure this is never exceeded. This may result in some student's placements being postponed until safe for them to attend. Students are having additional FIT testing, occupational health reviews and are following the same PPE guidance directed to staff, therefore meaning that working with a student is no different to working with other members of staff.

If however, this is continuing to be a worry, in extreme cases (if you are deemed vulnerable or if you have been placed in to a work based bubble to minimise risk) there is the option of a temporary withdrawal of mentoring, which is reviewed on an individual basis. If you feel that this may be something that you are eligible for and feel you need, please speak to your Operations Officer for guidance.