

Ending paid HCS work opportunities for year 2 PTP students and reintroducing standard placements

FAQ's for Healthcare Science – July 2020

We would like to thank all students who have been able to come forward to support health and care services over this challenging time. Your valuable contribution is hugely appreciated and has been invaluable in supporting both patients and clinical teams.

All students are required to complete practice placements as part of their education programme. These placements are normally supernumerary and unpaid but to recognise the special circumstances and as part of the response to Covid-19 there has been an opportunity for year 2 healthcare science student placements to be paid.

NHS England are funding the monies for paid placements which are arranged between the universities and placement providers.

We committed at the outset of the pandemic to ensure that we would support students to complete their studies and progress in their programme. We are now looking at the transition back to supernumerary placements enabling students to progress with their education programmes.

What are the next steps for students?

We recognise that the pandemic has been disruptive, and it is important that we support you back onto your education programme. We therefore need to re-establish normal supernumerary placements in preparation of the start of the new academic year. Placements are important for developing skills and the best way to ensure students receive a mixture of academic, theoretical and safe practical learning.

There is clear commitment from Health Education England, universities and unions to do this.

Arrangements for the transition are decided and implemented by the government. In order to achieve this in England:

- Any paid placements need to have begun by 31 July 2020. No new paid placements can be created after this date.
- From 31 July 2020, we will begin to return to the supernumerary placement system, for those students continuing their studies. Any new placements after 31 July onwards, and into the new academic year, will be supernumerary.
- Employers and Higher Education Institutions (HEIs) should work with students in year two to aim to bring paid placements to a close no later than 31 August 2020. This should be part of a voluntary learning agreement between student, placement provider and HEI.
- Placement providers will be reimbursed for the costs of any paid placement for the duration of the student's contract/placement. This provides increased flexibility for ending employment arrangements.

I started my programme in spring 2018, what does this mean for me?

You can continue to opt into a paid placement up until 31 July 2020 and clinical hours while on placement will count towards the practice hours required to complete your programme. We will support you to complete your paid placement/contract and you will then progress onto a supernumerary placement, complete the practice and academic components of your programme, and be ready to join a professional register in 2021.

I have questions about my contract. Who should I speak to?

Most of your questions can be quickly resolved in discussion with your line manager. Contractual arrangements for students on paid placements were agreed locally and do vary between employers. Employers are speaking to those students who are on paid placements as fixed term contracts are ended. Students should speak to their employers about the best way to manage this given their own personal circumstances. If you are still unable to resolve your concerns you can contact your university or local union representative.

I have annual leave to take. What should I do?

Your entitlement to paid annual leave will be set out in your contract. Your line manager will be able to help you understand how much leave you are entitled to and enable you to book that time off. Annual leave hours will not be counted towards your required practice placement hours.

I have been off sick during my paid placement, how will that affect me?

If you have an NHS contract that means you have entitlement to NHS terms and conditions which will include paid sick leave. If you have any questions about this, please talk to your employer. Any hours away from your placement, including sick leave, will not count towards your practice placement hours.

I have not been out on placement as I have been shielding, how can I complete my programme?

Each individual circumstance will be different. Your university will be able to help you understand what academic and placement requirements you need to finish your degree and how these may be completed.

I still have some questions, who should I contact?

The first point of contact for questions about your programme or placements will be your university. If you have questions about your contract and work arrangements, please talk with your line manager or supervisor.

Most questions and concerns can be addressed quickly this way. If you are still finding problems, you can contact your local union representative who will be able to help and advise.