

**Supplementary Advice to the Education Standards:**

**Student Clinical Placements**



## **Student Clinical Placements**

### **Background**

The General Chiropractic Council (GCC) is the regulator for the chiropractic profession in the UK. Our overall purpose is to protect the public and our duty is to develop and regulate the profession of chiropractic. We do this by setting standards of education for individuals training to become chiropractors, and by setting standards of professional conduct for practising chiropractors.

In September 2017 the GCC published its Education Standards that set out what people have to achieve at the point of graduation from recognised chiropractic programmes.

In April 2019 the GCC's Education Committee requested supplementary advice be considered for clinical placements to ensure all students receive the same experience whether in an external chiropractic clinic or an in house student clinic. This advice is expressed as steps that institutions 'could' or 'should' take but it does not indicate any new regulatory requirements or standards.

Clinical placements can be defined as any arrangement in which a chiropractic student is in an environment that provides chiropractic services to patients. Students can be actively involved in patient care or they can be observing.

### **General Advice on Clinical Placements**

This section sets out general principles that institutions should consider as they set up and design their clinical placements.

#### *Organising clinical placements*

1. It is important that chiropractic students receive clinical experience and placements, this should start early in the undergraduate curriculum.
2. When organising clinical placements for individual students, institutions should be aware and inform placement providers if a student has specific requirements in relation to their clinical placement, e.g. make reasonable adjustments for students with disabilities to enable them to have the same opportunities to undertake a range of clinical placements as other students; this may include putting students in placements with good transport links or which are otherwise easy to access.

#### *Relationships with clinical placement providers*

3. Institutions should have formal, written agreements with all clinical placement providers.

4. Such agreements should:
  - a. set out roles and responsibilities for the placement.
  - b. contain the learning objectives for that particular placement and the arrangements needed to ensure that students have appropriate learning opportunities to meet the learning outcomes.
  - c. clarify who is responsible for organising the placement both within the institutions and the placement provider
  - d. outline the process whereby either party can raise concerns as to the way the placement is run and how these problems will be addressed
  - e. set out the induction processes for students
  - f. clarify insurance cover for the duration of the student's placement.

### *Patient Safety and Rights*

5. The safety of patients should be the primary concern of institutions, placement providers and students.
6. Patients should be informed that students are present at a clinic for the purpose of learning. This should include information about their right to refuse to take part in education without prejudice to their care and how they can object to the involvement of chiropractic students in their care.
7. Where students are more directly involved in patient care, for example being present in consulting rooms or observing treatment, specific consent should be obtained from the patient to ensure that they are comfortable having a student present. This consent should be obtained by the registered healthcare professional responsible for the treatment. The professional should explain to the patient how the student will be supervised.
8. Where a student undertakes any element of treatment, the responsibility for obtaining the patient's consent to this lies with the healthcare professional for that treatment and is obtained and recorded prior to treatment commencing.

### *Preparing students*

9. Students should be adequately prepared for all clinical placements. They should be made aware by their institution of the expectations of being in an employment environment and the need to behave as if they are employees. Institutions should ensure that their students fully understand that they must explain to patients and colleagues that they are students and not qualified chiropractors.
10. Induction is required for every placement. The requirement for an induction should be part of the agreement with placement providers.
11. The GCC Code outlines key areas of professional practice and behaviour that students are expected to follow.
12. Institutions should ensure that students are aware that if they have any concerns about the amount of supervision they are receiving or feel that they

are being asked to work beyond their level of competency they must immediately stop the work that they are doing at that time.

### *Clinic Practice Management*

13. Clinical Supervisors for internal and external placements must be appropriately qualified and trained. This should include training in equality and diversity legislation relevant for the role. Clinical supervisors must be registered with the GCC.
14. Institutions should have robust and transparent processes in place to sensitively manage concerns raised by students, e.g. observing poor practice.
15. Institutions should have robust and transparent processes in place to sensitively manage concerns raised by staff regarding students in practice.

### *Evaluation*

16. Institutions should evaluate the effectiveness of their clinical placements. This should include the regular collection of student and patient feedback relating to placements, and from those involved in supervising and delivering the placement. Feedback is used to inform and further improve the learning experience.
17. Institutions should monitor what each student has done clinically across all locations and rotate students across placements where possible.
18. Institutions should ensure that their quality assurance mechanisms are able to check that there is consistency across student placements.