Discipline of Occupational Practice Education Team – Feedback Processes

The concept of feedback is becoming increasingly important in the field of Occupational Therapy (OT) Practice Education (PE). Our national regulatory and professional body (CORU; AOTI) highlight the importance of feedback in quality assurance in practice education. It is recommended throughout the literature that such feedback is multifaceted to include the perspectives of the student, the practice educator, the placement site and the university-based Practice Education Team (PET).

In line with all of the above, the TCD PET is ensuring to attribute increased focus to feedback processes in the context of practice education. Below represents a brief overview of the current TCD feedback processes.

Student perspective:

Students and Practice Educators are offered a visit from either the PEC or RPF at the halfway point of their placement. One very important aim of this visit is to provide the student with an opportunity to discuss any difficulties/issues he/she is having which may be impacting on his/her performance in the practice education context.

Students must attend a return day at the half way point of each placement. During this day students are provided with the opportunity to discuss their placement experiences with student peers and allocated practice tutors who are members of the TCD PET. On this day, students are also encouraged to speak with the PEC and/or RPF individually should they wish to raise any concerns regarding their placement experiences.

The TCD PET have recently introduced a student feedback form which is completed by each student post placement. The PEC and/or RPF review all of the feedback obtained in an objective and timely manner. This feedback is summarized and categorized. A generic email providing a comprehensive overview of the feedback obtained is then sent to all relevant placement sites. Should any highly negative and/or concerning feedback be identified by the PEC/RPF during the review phase such information will be discussed with the student on an individual basis before feeding back to the placement site. Feedback of this nature will be managed in a sensitive manner with the preferences of the student being appreciated and respected during the disclosure phase.
Practice Educator/ Placement Provider Perspective:

Another very important aim of the halfway visit is to allow the Practice Educator and the University the opportunity to exchange information. Such information may be regarding the student and/or the university. This information assists the university with ensuring that the students are adequately prepared for their placements and that sufficient support is being provided by the TCD PET to the Practice Educator and/or placement provider throughout the placement experience.

Although there is currently no formal TCD PE feedback form the importance of continuous review and feedback is explained and promoted on a regular basis - during our biannual TCD PE training; on our TCD PE website page and during any formal and informal contact with practice educators/placement sites throughout the academic year. To facilitate the provision such feedback the option of email and telephone contact is reiterated during all contact with students/practice educators/placement sites throughout the placement experience. All members of the PET present themselves in the most approachable and flexible manner to encourage the provision of honest and constructive feedback by students/practice educators/placement site.

A significant amount of feedback is obtained from our TCD Practice Tutors who meet as a team (in conjunction with other practice tutors, PEC and RPF) on a monthly basis. These Practice Tutors are on site and working with TCD students and Practice Educators on a regular basis. This feedback is collected and incorporated into all actions undertaken by the PET – including service development, research etc.

In line with CORU recommendations, the TCD PET is intending to compose a TCD PE specific feedback form. The structure and content of this form is in the discussion phase and the deadline for completion currently stands as April 2016.

From a Practice Educator perspective, please note that all feedback is welcomed by the TCD PET – whether positive or negative. The contact information of all members of the current TCD PET is available on our website at https://medicine.tcd.ie/occupational-therapy/practice-education/team/. Please feel free to contact us at any time.