

# THERAPY PROJECT OFFICE

Guidelines for Good Practice in Practice Education

2008



Feidhmeannacht na Seirbhíse Sláinte  
Health Service Executive





# Contents

4	<b>Therapy Project Office</b>	
5	<b>Introduction</b>	
	Guidelines for Good Practice in Practice Education Project	5
	Project Process	5
6	<b>Guidelines for Good Practice in Practice Education</b>	
	Purpose	6
	Navigation	7
	<b>Stage 1: Preparation for Practice Education Placements</b>	<b>8</b>
	1.1. Guidelines for the Higher Education Institute (HEI) in preparation for Practice Education Placements	8
	1.2. Guidelines for the Placement Provider & Practice Educator in Preparation for Practice Education Placements	9
	1.3. Guidelines for Students in Preparation for Practice Education Placements	10
	<b>Stage 2: Practice Education Placement</b>	<b>10</b>
	2.1 Guidelines for the HEI during Practice Education Placement	10
	2.2. Guidelines for Placement Provider and Practice Educator during Practice Education Placement	11
	2.3. Guidelines for Students during Practice Education Placement	12
	<b>Stage 3: Post Practice Education Placement</b>	<b>12</b>
	3.1. Guidelines for the HEI post Practice Education Placements	12
	3.2. Guidelines for the Placement Provider & Practice Educator post Practice Education Placements	13
	3.3. Guidelines for the Student post Practice Education Placements	13
14	<b>References</b>	
15	<b>Appendices</b>	
	<b>Appendix 1:</b>	
	Practice Education Developments	15
	National Implementation Group	15
	Practice Education Team Members	15
	Practice Education Team Members	15
	<b>Appendix 2:</b>	
	Project Process: Developing the Guidelines for Good Practice	17

# Therapy Project Office

The Therapy Project Office was established in January 2007 to progress and initiate project activities on behalf of the National Implementation Group (NIG) for Clinical Placement Provision for Occupational Therapy, Physiotherapy and Speech & Language Therapy. The projects related to a number of key actions identified by the 'The Report of the National Planning Group on Clinical Placement Provision for Occupational Therapy, Physiotherapy and Speech and Language Therapy' (2004), under the three broad areas of:

- Practice Education
- Continuing Professional Development
- Quality Information for the Public

The Therapy Project Office was funded by the HSE and staffed by three project managers, representing the professional bodies of the Association of Occupational Therapists of Ireland (AOTI), the Irish Society of Chartered Physiotherapists (ISCP) and the Irish Association of Speech & Language Therapists (IASLT). A collaborative, project management model was applied throughout the process. The Project Managers also worked in partnership with the Higher Education Institutes, Therapy Services, the Department of Health & Children and the Health Service Executive to build on existing work and to drive the projects forward.

# Introduction

Alsop & Ryan (1996) view practice education as a process which facilitates the development of professional competence. Within the Irish context, for all of the professional educational programmes of the three professions, practice education forms a central part of the curriculum. It facilitates the integration of theory based learning with practice in graded developmental stages throughout the courses. It involves a partnership between the Practice Educator, the student and the Higher Education Institute (HEI). Good practices that exist are concerned with enhancing the learning outcomes for students and with the efficient management, and delivery of practices to promote quality outcomes for all partners throughout the practice education process. To meet these challenges and to ensure capacity for practice education placements, the National Implementation Group has guided the development and expansion of 'practice education teams' nationally. An overview of recent developments in the structural organisation of practice education in the Irish context and a glossary of Practice Education Team members are outlined in Appendix 1.

## Guidelines for Good Practice in Practice Education Project

This document presents Guidelines for Good Practice in Practice Education for use in the three professions of Occupational Therapy, Physiotherapy and Speech and Language Therapy within the Irish context. These guidelines are the outcome of one of the projects undertaken by the Therapy Project Office. Good practice in practice education is here presented as a set of guidelines that aim to support and enable the process of practice based learning for students. The guidelines are intended for use by the key stakeholders throughout the key stages of the practice education process, i.e. the before, during and after practice education placement stages.

It is acknowledged that these guidelines in no way pre-empt the role of the Health & Social Care Professionals Council in establishing standards for practice education, across the professions. It is envisaged that the guidelines in this document should be of value to all concerned with practice education, including the Council and should contribute to the on-going process of quality improvement.

## Project Process

The project was carried out on a multidisciplinary basis across the three professions to produce one set of guidelines that are transferable across professions. In addition to input from collaborative working groups, the process has also been informed by both consultation and structured feedback from a representative group of Therapy Managers, practitioners and students. Details of the project process are documented in Appendix 2.

# Guidelines for Good Practice in Practice Education

## Purpose

It is proposed that these guidelines can be used as follows:

- As a reference document which can be applied at a local level, when there is a need to negotiate and clarify the key components of a placement for all those involved in the practice education process.
- To contribute to the future development of standards of good practice for practice education, across the three professions, within the Irish context.
- To provide a framework for all involved with practice education to identify what is currently working well and what could continue to be developed as part of a quality improvement process.
- To emphasise the partnership approach to practice education by outlining the interwoven roles and responsibilities of the key stakeholders at each of the three broad stages in the practice education process.

- In recognition of the diversity of practice education settings and support structures across the professions, **these guidelines are not intended to be used as an audit tool or to be considered as a list of essentials.**

## Evolving Roles and Responsibilities

Within this document guidelines for Regional Placement Facilitators (RPFs) have been included with the HEI section. However, it is acknowledged that RPFs can be employed by either the service provider or by the HEI. Therefore, they act as a strategic bridge between the HEI and practice education settings. It is also acknowledged that the role of a Practice Tutor and a Practice Educator can overlap and be interchangeable, depending on the resources of the practice education setting.

## Navigation

The Guidelines for Good Practice in Practice Education are outlined under three broad stages in the practice education process. At each stage, guidelines are presented for each of the three key stakeholders.

	Stage	Key Stakeholders
<b>Stage 1</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Preparation For Practice</li> <li>● Education Placement</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● The HEI</li> <li>● The Placement Provider and Practice Educator</li> <li>● The Student</li> </ul>
<b>Stage 2</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Practice Education</li> <li>● Placement</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● The HEI</li> <li>● The Placement Provider and Practice Educators</li> <li>● The Student</li> </ul>
<b>Stage 3</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Post Practice Education</li> <li>● Placement</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● The HEI</li> <li>● The Placement Provider and Practice Educator</li> <li>● The Student</li> </ul>

## Stage One: Preparation for Practice Education Placements

### 1.1. Guidelines for the Higher Education Institute (HEI) in preparation for Practice Education Placements:

- 1.1.1. The HEI has the overall responsibility for sourcing practice education placements. This may be a collaborative responsibility between the HEI and a Regional Placement Facilitator, in areas where such posts exist.
- 1.1.2. The Practice Education Co-ordinator should select and allocate practice education placements to students.
- 1.1.3. In promoting partnership, the HEI should ensure that all stages of the practice education process are planned, developed and implemented in collaboration with Placement Providers and Practice Educators.
- 1.1.4. The HEI should ensure that members of the 'Practice Education Team', i.e., The Practice Tutors, Regional Placement Facilitators and Practice Education Co-ordinators should contribute to the academic teaching programme in both the practice education setting and on campus, as set out in the terms of employment for each post.
- 1.1.5. The HEI should provide the Placement Provider/Practice Educator with practical information relating to the student and the placement arrangements, prior to the start of a placement. Information should include but is not restricted to the following:
  - Name of student
  - Student's stage on the course
  - Dates and length of placement
  - Name of Practice Education Co-ordinator
  - Contact details of person within HEI who is available for queries and in the event of difficulties
  - Overall learning goals for the level of practice education
  - Assessment criteria
  - All administrative requirements and documentation.
- 1.1.6. The Practice Education Co-ordinator should make contemporary information for both students and Practice Educators available in a practice education handbook.
- 1.1.7. The HEI should have documented procedures in place for dealing with grievances and should take the responsibility to ensure that all partners know where to access the information.
- 1.1.8. The HEI should prepare the student for practice education to include the following:
  - Equipping the students with knowledge and skills to facilitate their learning during practice education
  - Making the student aware of assessment procedures, including the student's responsibilities in the assessment process
  - Informing the student about the practice education sites and the learning opportunities that they offer to students.
- 1.1.9. The Practice Education Co-ordinator should ensure that all members of the practice education team should contribute to the preparation of students for practice education where appropriate.



- 1.1.10. The Practice Education Co-ordinator should endeavour to give students notification of placement allocations in good time. However, due to circumstances beyond the control of the HEI, this may not always be possible.
- 1.1.11. The HEI should have clear selection procedures for circumstances where a student is involved directly in sourcing the practice education placement, such as in overseas locations.
- 1.1.12. The HEI should ensure that all pre-placement requirements are attended to e.g. Garda clearance, manual handling, vaccinations etc.
- 1.1.13. The HEI should provide Practice Educators with educational opportunities and support to develop their practice education skills for facilitating students on placement.
- 1.1.14. The HEI should provide clear and transparent guidelines and procedures that should be followed when a student does not reach the required level of competence, as specified in the assessment form. These should be in accordance with the HEI's regulations and professional requirements.
- includes a commitment to the practicalities of releasing staff from clinical duties to attend such educational courses.
- 1.2.3. The Placement Provider should encourage and support all Practice Tutors and Regional Placement Facilitators to contribute to the academic teaching programme in both the practice education setting and on campus, as set out in the terms of employment for each post. This includes a commitment to the practicalities of releasing staff from clinical duties to attend such educational courses.
- 1.2.4. The Placement Provider should ensure that the organisation is aware of the therapy service's involvement in student education and make local arrangements, as necessary, before accepting students for practice education placements.
- 1.2.5. The Placement Provider should notify the HEI of the number of students they can facilitate during the year and indicate the level of placement(s) that the site can offer.
- 1.2.6. The Placement Provider and the Practice Educator should provide information to the student about the site. This information should include a service profile, learning opportunities and any specific health and safety requirements.
- 1.2.7. The Placement Provider or Practice Educator should make the following information available to the student, before the placement commences:

## **1.2. Guidelines for the Placement Provider & Practice Educator in Preparation for Practice Education Placements:**

- 1.2.1. The Placement Provider should foster a culture that encourages all staff to participate in the provision of learning opportunities for students.
- 1.2.2. The Placement Provider should encourage and support all Practice Educators to attend practice educator training programmes in order to develop and maintain practice education skills. This
- Service address and contact details
  - Practice Educator's name (if possible)
  - Directions and transport information
  - Reporting time for first day of the placement

- Nature of service
  - Recommended reading or materials that would enhance preparation for the practice education placement.
- 1.2.8. The Placement Provider and Practice Educator should have an induction policy and process in place for students.
- 1.2.9. The Practice Educator should collaborate with the other members of the practice education team in co-ordinating the student's practice education placement.
- 1.2.10. The Practice Educator should familiarise him/herself with the assessment requirements and the expected learning goals for the student's level.
- 1.2.11. The Practice Educator should identify and plan the potential learning opportunities that the placement has to offer the student, which should include opportunities for multidisciplinary interactions.

### **1.3. Guidelines for Students in Preparation for Practice Education Placements:**

- 1.3.1. The student should participate in all preparations for practice education and familiarise him/herself with relevant practice education placement documentation.
- 1.3.2. The student should provide the Practice Educator with any relevant documentation prior to the commencement of the placement (including a letter of introduction and curriculum vitae if required).
- 1.3.3. The student should be prepared for the administrative responsibilities of practice education by ensuring that all documentation is acquired prior to commencement of placement, e.g. assessment, clinical reasoning forms.
- 1.3.4. The student should be familiar with the respective Professional Body's code of ethics, rules of professional conduct and standards of practice as applicable.
- 1.3.5. The student should comply with all HEI and/or site specific health and safety requirements prior to placement, e.g. Garda clearance, vaccinations.
- 1.3.6. The student should accept responsibility for his/her own learning and for managing professional relationships while on practice education placement.

## **Stage Two: Practice Education Placement**

### **2.1 Guidelines for the HEI during Practice Education Placement:**

- 2.1.1. The Practice Education Co-ordinator should ensure that there is regular contact between the HEI, the student and the Practice Educator (as required). This communication link may be established via the Practice Tutor.
- 2.1.2. The Practice Education Co-ordinator should be committed to promptly responding to any queries from either the student or the Practice Educator. When there is an alternate person designated to deal with practice education queries, his/her contact details should be clearly communicated.
- 2.1.3. The Practice Education Co-ordinator should collaborate with all parties in organizing student visits where appropriate.
- 2.1.4. The Practice Education Co-ordinator in collaboration with the broader practice education team should provide support for Practice Educators in carrying out student assessments.

- 2.1.5. The Practice Education Co-ordinator in collaboration with the broader practice education team should be involved in researching and developing new approaches to practice education.

## **2.2. Guidelines for Placement Provider and Practice Educator during Practice Education Placement:**

- 2.2.1. The Placement Provider together with the Practice Educator should be committed to creating a positive learning environment for the student.
- 2.2.2. The Placement Provider should recognise that the Practice Educator requires the active support of colleagues to balance the other responsibilities of a work role with those of facilitating the learning needs of the student.
- 2.2.3. The Placement Provider and Practice Educator should, together, provide opportunities, for the student to obtain a broad range of experiences, both clinical and non clinical which should as far as possible include opportunities for multidisciplinary interactions.
- 2.2.4. The Placement Provider and the Practice Educator should collaborate with the members of the practice education team and the student to promote an integrated team approach to the co-ordination of practice education.
- 2.2.5. The Placement Provider should ensure that procedures are in place and arrangements made in the event of the Practice Educator's absence.
- 2.2.6. The Placement Provider should ensure that where there is more than one Practice Educator involved with the student, that there is a lead Practice Educator, who should be identified to the student and to the Practice Tutor/Regional Placement Facilitator (where applicable).
- 2.2.7. The Placement Provider should ensure that an induction process is carried out with the student. This may be done by the Practice Educator or the Practice Tutor, depending on the site resources. (An example of an induction pack is referenced at end of document, Kiely 2007).
- 2.2.8. Within the early stages of the placement, a learning agreement should be negotiated between the student and the Practice Educator which takes into account the required learning goals for the placement and the student's own learning needs and expectations. It is the joint responsibility of the student and the Practice Educator to draw up a record of the agreement and to regularly review same as part of the supervision process.
- 2.2.9. The Practice Educator should enable and guide the student to take advantage of the potential learning experiences of the placement in line with the learning objectives for the placement.
- 2.2.10. At the earliest stage, clear communications should be given to the student regarding who is responsible for assessing the student.
- 2.2.11. The Practice Educator should assess the student in accordance with the assessment requirements.
- 2.2.12. The Practice Educator should provide regular, structured supervision and constructive feedback to the student, throughout the placement.
- 2.2.13. The Practice Educator should promote reflection and encourage the development of the student's clinical reasoning.

- 2.2.14. The Practice Educator should ensure that each client has given consent to work with the student in accordance with local procedures. The Practice Educator should maintain responsibility for clients who engage with students as part of their practice education experience.
- 2.2.15. The Practice Educator should inform the HEI at the earliest opportunity if there is any concern about the student's ability to fulfil the practice education learning objectives.

### **2.3. Guidelines for Students during Practice Education Placement:**

- 2.3.1. The student should behave in a professional manner at all times by adhering to professional codes of conduct, ethics or standards of practice as applicable. This includes respecting the rights of individuals and issues relating to confidentiality.
- 2.3.2. The student should comply with all health and safety regulations as applicable to the setting.
- 2.3.3. The student should inform the Practice Educator and the HEI if he/she is absent due to sickness and should provide the HEI with a medical certificate in accordance with requirements.
- 2.3.4. The student should respond to feedback constructively.
- 2.3.5. The student should take active responsibility for his/her own learning and for communicating learning needs.
- 2.3.6. The student should actively engage in learning opportunities to progress the integration of theory and practice.
- 2.3.7. The student should complete all written assignments as specified in the assessment requirements, e.g. case study.

- 2.3.8. Within the early stages of the placement, a learning agreement should be negotiated between the student and the Practice Educator which takes into account the required learning goals for the placement and the student's own learning needs and expectations. It is the joint responsibility of the student and the Practice Educator to draw up a record of the agreement and to regularly review same as part of the supervision process.

### **Stage Three: Post Practice Education Placement**

#### **3.1. Guidelines for the HEI post Practice Education Placements:**

- 3.1.1. The HEI should record student grades according to university requirements.
- 3.1.2. The HEI should provide clarity and guidance to the student who has not reached the required level of competence, as to his/her options and rights in accordance with the HEI's regulations and professional requirements.
- 3.1.3. The HEI should facilitate opportunities for Placement Providers, Practice Educators and students to participate in structured feedback on all stages of the practice education process.
- 3.1.4. The HEI/Practice Education Co-ordinator should review and respond to all post practice education placement feedback from the relevant stakeholders. This feedback should be used to contribute to a quality improvement process and to collaborative planning.
- 3.1.5. After the student's practice education placement, the HEI should

facilitate the student to reflect on his/her learning outcomes and to incorporate learning into personal learning plans for future practice education.

### **3.2. Guidelines for the Placement Provider & Practice Educator post Practice Education Placements:**

- 3.2.1. The Placement Provider & Practice Educator should ensure that all assessment forms and/or student documentation are returned to the HEI within the required time frame.
- 3.2.2. The Placement Provider & Practice Educator should seek and review feedback on the student's experience of the placement. This feedback should be used to contribute to a quality improvement process and to collaborative planning.
- 3.2.3. The Placement Provider & Practice Educator should communicate any changes affecting practice education placements as soon as possible to all relevant parties.

### **3.3. Guidelines for the Student post Practice Education Placements:**

- 3.3.1. The student should ensure that he/she has completed and returned all written and administrative requirements within the required time frame (e.g., case studies, record of hours, assessment forms).
- 3.3.2. The student should participate in HEI led post placement feedback and review, which should include reflecting on personal learning and identifying future learning goals for practice education.
- 3.3.3. The student should individually reflect on his/her learning experiences and refer to his/her reflective diary / learning portfolio.
- 3.3.4. The student should ensure that he/she has identified personal learning needs for the next placement.
- 3.3.5. The student who has not reached the required level of competence for the level of the practice education should be receptive to guidance from the HEI regarding his/her options and rights in accordance with the HEI's regulations and professional requirements.

# References

Alsop, A. & Ryan, S. (1996). *Making the Most of Fieldwork Education: A Practical Approach*, Chapman & Hall, London.

Bacon, P. & Associates (2001) *Current and Future Supply and Demand Conditions in the Labour Market for Certain Professional Therapists*. Report, commissioned by DOHC, Ireland.

Chartered Society of Physiotherapists (2003). *Clinical Education Guidelines*. UK. [www.csp.org.uk](http://www.csp.org.uk)

Department of Occupational Therapy (2006). *Practice Educators Handbook*. National University of Ireland, Galway

Higgs, J. & Edwards, H. (1999). *Educating Beginning Practitioners – Challenges for Health Professional Education*. Butterworth-Heinemann, Oxford

Kiely, R. (2007). *Occupational Therapy Student Induction Pack & Resource File (Therapist Guidance Document)*.

Available on request from: [rosaleen.kiely@hse.ie](mailto:rosaleen.kiely@hse.ie)

National Planning Group (2004). *Report of the National Planning Group on Clinical Placement Provision for Occupational Therapy, Speech and Language Therapy and Physiotherapy*. Ireland

Royal College of Speech and Language Therapists. (2006). *National Standards for Practice-Based Learning*. [www.rcslt.org](http://www.rcslt.org)

# Appendix 1

## Practice Education Developments

### National Implementation Group

Following the recommendations of the Bacon Report (2001) on Workforce Planning for the Therapy Professions, additional professional educational programmes for Occupational Therapy, Physiotherapy and Speech and Language Therapy were established. While this has augmented the supply of qualified therapists to meet the demands of the growing Health and Social Care Services, there have also been corresponding challenges for the existing therapy services to meet the increased demand for practice education placements, created by these additional educational programmes. As a result of these challenges, focus has been put on the issues of capacity and quality in practice education, at a national level. Support structures are being put in place through the establishment of practice education teams across the regions. Such initiatives are being guided by the Action Framework of the 'Report of the National Planning Group on Clinical Placement Provision for Occupational Therapy, Speech and Language Therapy and Physiotherapy (2004)'. This strategy document was initially developed and continues to be implemented within a partnership approach by the relevant stakeholders at both national and regional levels. The key partners in the process are the Higher Education Institutes (HEI), Health Service Executive (HSE), Therapy Managers, the Professional Bodies of Occupational Therapy (OT), Physiotherapy (PT) and Speech and Language Therapy (SLT) and the Department of Health & Children (DOHC). Collectively forming as the 'National Implementation Group' (NIG), these partners have given placement capacity their first priority while continuing to build in quality initiatives as identified in the above mentioned action framework. These guidelines for good practice in practice education should make a constructive contribution to fulfilling Object 48 of the National Implementation Group's 'Action Framework':

"Map existing good practice and incorporate into new models of clinical education"

### Practice Education Team Members

#### ■ Practice Education Co-ordinators

These posts are funded by the HSE at senior therapist grade. The Practice Education Co-ordinator role is to co-ordinate, strategically manage and develop the quality and capacity of practice education for students. Co-ordinators work closely with therapy managers and practitioners, the relevant therapy discipline within the university, students and relevant professional bodies. Responsibilities also include the support of Practice Tutors, Regional Placement Facilitators and Practice Educators

#### ■ Practice Tutors

These posts are funded by the HSE at senior therapist grade. Tutors are based in practice education sites as determined by student placement requirements. The post may be based intermittently in the relevant university as determined by educational/service needs. The purpose of the post is to develop the capacity and quality of the practice education programme and to support both students and Practice Educators.

#### ■ Regional Placement Facilitators

These posts are funded by the HSE at senior therapist grade. Regional Placement Facilitators are based in the practice education site / HEI. The purpose of the post is to develop the capacity and quality of the practice education placements and to support both students and Practice Educators in the development of student training healthcare facilities in a defined geographical area.

(Job specifications, terms & conditions, HSE)

The Practice Education Team work in collaboration with:

- **Placement Provider**

The Placement Provider refers to the therapy service/department that is actively involved in practice education through the provision of practice education placements.

- **Practice Educator**

This is the title given to the individual therapists who educate, monitor and mentor students when they are on placement. Practice Educators are supported in their role by the other members of the practice education team.

Practice education teams are in the process of developing and therefore, the full potential of this formal support structure is still evolving. The roles within the teams have also evolved regionally to respond to local needs. A subgroup of the NIG was established in 2007 and is currently working on clarification and evaluation of these roles as well as identification of support, networking and specific training needs. On a national level, the roles and responsibilities of practice education teams should continue to be reviewed and monitored in the context of evolving local needs and to ensure that the mutual interests of all stakeholders are best served.



# Appendix 2

## **Project Process: Developing the Guidelines for Good Practice**

The process of devising these guidelines began by identifying and analysing local, national and international practice education guidelines available across the three professions of Occupational Therapy, Physiotherapy and Speech and Language Therapy. Nationally, practice education handbooks from all the disciplines, proved to be a valuable resource in outlining the roles and responsibilities of the partners. From international resources, particular reference has been made to two documents, namely, the *Clinical Education Guidelines (2003)* of the Chartered Society of Physiotherapists (UK) and *The National Standards for Practice-Based Learning (2006)* of the Royal College of Speech and Language Therapists (UK).

The next stage in the process involved the establishment of collaborative working groups for each of the three professions comprising of Practice Education Co-ordinators from all

of the Occupational Therapy, Physiotherapy and Speech and Language Therapy courses. In the case of Occupational Therapy, the membership was broadened to include Practice Tutor and Regional Placement Facilitator representation as three of the personnel in the Practice Education Co-ordinator posts were in the process of changing jobs at the time of setting up the working groups. These three groups have also worked on other projects related to practice education in collaboration with the Therapy Project Office.

In addition to input from these working groups, the process has also been informed by both consultation and structured feedback from a representative group of Therapy Managers, practitioners and students to ensure that the views of all stakeholders have been taken into consideration. The structured feedback included a process of prioritizing the guidelines statements. The guidelines were also reviewed by external readers. The document was amended on the basis of all feedback.





## Authors

Aine Clyne \_\_\_\_\_ Project Manager, AOTI  
Charlotte McCoubrey \_\_\_\_\_ Project Manager, IASLT  
Vanessa Hamilton \_\_\_\_\_ Project Manager, ISCP



ASSOCIATION OF OCCUPATIONAL THERAPISTS OF IRELAND

