General Guidelines for Practice Placement Education
Practice Placement A (PPA): Catering Module

Overview of PPA
There is a requirement that undergraduate Human Nutrition & Dietetics students undertake a 4 week (35hour/week) unpaid catering placement in an institutional setting at the end of year 1/beginning year 2. Students at this point should have a foundation knowledge and basic skills in food preparation, catering administration, dietetics, nutrition, food science and communications. All students have had Garda Vetting, meet occupational health requirements and have insurance provided by college. College provide written confirmation to this effect before the placement commences.

The catering placement is invaluable as students learn to integrate knowledge acquired during year 1, while also providing an opportunity for students to apply this into practice around how a catering department works; how it engages with the department of Nutrition and Dietetics; general food safety in preparation; hygiene regulations; calorie counting; creating sample menus for patients with specific needs and/or food allergens etc. It is essential to note that these students while have had some have some basic culinary studies they are not of a similar training level as culinary arts students.

While students must undertake a 35hour week due to travel logistics it may not always be possible for them to commence work at the regular catering department start time. Where this is the case it is recommended the student commences at 8.30 (latest) and works independently in the afternoon on project work as requested by the supervisor.

During PPA student should as a minimum undertake the following:
1. Observe food production methods.
2. Identify & be familiar with food safety policies and how they are locally implemented.
3. Evaluate menus (including special diet and allergens)
4. Observe food delivery systems to ward level.
5. Identify and describe the role of dietetic personnel in the context of the placement setting.

* We would hope that the student would also be able to help catering personnel in return with their knowledge regarding nutrition and dietetics, and undertake a small project based around some aspect of menu analysis, special diet, allergens, etc.

There is no obligation for the student to spend time with the dietitian if there is on attached to your facility. However if there is an opportunity for them to meet and be exposed to the collaborative working of the catering team including the dietitian this can only be beneficial.

On completion of the placement the student will be able to:
1. Describe the processes of meal production, selection, service and delivery within the institutional setting.
2. List the food portion sizes used within the institutional setting.
3. Outline how nutrition principles can be applied to food services within the institutional setting.
4. Evaluate the impact of food service regulations, standards and guidelines on the nutritional quality, hygiene and temperature regulation of food service systems.
5. Identify the role of food services personnel in the delivery of nutritional care.
6. Recognise the limitations of institutional food services systems in the delivery of nutritional care.
7. Critically analyse the food served in terms of population recommendations.
8. Appreciate the importance of integrating nutrition and dietetics in the provision of food services in institutions.
9. Recognise the actual or potential role of nutrition professionals in the Health Service Executive (HSE) and other institutional settings.

The placement is assessed using a short form which is primarily filled out by the student, then reviewed and signed off by the catering supervisor at the end of the placement. The role of the catering supervisor in assessment is to verify the information provided by the student in the form, comment on areas of exposure during the placement and where warranted insert a comment on performance. Note Part 2 of the form gives guidance as to areas that the student should be exposed to during the placement.

NOTE: the form must be signed by the student and the catering manager at the end of placement and the signed original returned to college either scanned/in post.

Guidelines for Practice Placement A:
It is the responsibility of the placement provider to:

- Provide a named lead supervisor to the student during the placement.
- Treat the student in a professional way and not take advantage of the unpaid work placement in terms of expectation to work overtime etc.
- Ensure the student is aware of the local health and safety, and infection control policies & requirements.
- Ensure the information input by the student into the assessment form is correct.
- Communicate directly with college (PEC) immediately if any concerns occur during the placement.
- Be aware from the assessment form what areas the student requires exposure to during the placement and aim to ensure the student receives as varied and wide an exposure as possible.
- Give clear feedback to the student in relation to their performance during the placement, documenting in the form any concerns relating to recurrent issues of poor performance i.e. continued lateness despite being reminded or unprofessional behaviour.
- Ensure you have personally signed the assessment form.
- Sign off that the student has worked the required 140 hours in total.

It is the responsibility of the student to:
- Present punctually on a daily basis.
- Always act in a professional manner with other staff, service users and colleagues.
- Always dress professionally making sure you are neat, tidy and clean and wearing the uniform as advised by the placement site.
- Comply with local health and safety and infection control policies.
- Wear protective safety shoes in the kitchen area.
- It you are unable to attend on any day due to illness you must notify the catering supervisor and college authorities (PEC & cc Sheila Walsh preferably via email) immediately. Where students are ill for 3 days or more a sick cert will be required by college.
- Find your own accommodation if your placement location means you have to live away from home, you may be able to get local advice.
- Act within your scope of practice, taking direction & feedback on board from your placement supervisor and other catering personnel.
- Complete the placement assessment form, ensuring it is signed by both parties on completion of the placement.
- Any planned leave must be discussed & agreed by college (PEC) well in advance of placement.

Note there is a requirement to undertake a specific number of total hours in this placement (140 hours) so as to achieve final accreditation of placement modules and achieve the final degree, therefore hours missed either planned or unplanned may have to be made up at another point.

College must be informed of any missed days as soon as possible during the placement and an attendance form must be signed off at the end of placement by the supervisor.

College authorities can be contacted before, during or after placement via the below:

Meave Graham, Practice Education Coordinator (PEC) 01- 8962477 meave.graham@tcd.ie
Sheila Walshe, School of Medicine Admin TCD 01- 896 2100 swalshe@tcd.ie
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